

## THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

December 1, 1950

Description: In the opening segment ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a question about the differences between the Democratic and Republican Parties. In the second segment, ER discusses the infiltration of the Communist Party, USA with FBI informant Angela Calomiris. At the end of the recording are snippets of interviews from other episodes.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Elliott Roosevelt, Angela Calomiris, Helen Hayes, Major Alexander de Seversky, Jose Ferrer, Ezzard Charles, Tallulah Bankhead, Douglas Chandor, Abe Burrows, Rene Plevin

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[ER:] Good afternoon, this is Eleanor Roosevelt. I'm happy to welcome you for another visit here in my living room at the Park Sheraton Hotel. As usual I have a guest that you will be anxious to meet and as usual Elliott will assist me on the program. And now here is Elliott.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] This afternoon you're going to hear a thrilling account of the experiences of a lady FBI agent who successfully posed as a Communist Party member for seven years. Mother's guest is Ms. Angela Calomiris, the courageous young woman who faced the constant danger of recognition by the very communists she worked with. We'll hear their recorded interview in a short while, but first, mother and I are going to try to answer a rather challenging question: "What is the fundamental difference between the Republican and Democratic Party?" I know that you're eager to get started on this discussion, mother, but before you do we have some important messages from our sponsors who make this program possible.

(Break 1:02-1:05)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother, the other evening I met a very charming lady eh of middle age who wanted to have a question put to you on this program uh in this usual opening session of yours and mine. And so I'm going to give you the question just the way it was given to me, I tried to answer and I'm going to see how close your answer comes to mine. The question was "what is the fundamental difference between the Democratic and Republican Parties?" Their platforms as published are practically the same and why should the Democratic Party be considered more liberal than the Republican Party.

[ER:] Well, it's, I suppose, a little difficult for me to answer that because ever since my marriage I have been a Democrat. [Elliott Roosevelt: But you are from a Republican family.] I was brought up by my grandmother, and um my grandmother I don't think knew that there was such a thing as a political party of any kind, and as long as I was a child um I knew that I had an uncle who was active in politics and I wasn't very sure that my grandmother approved of activity in politics [Elliott Roosevelt laughs].

[Elliott Roosevelt:][Elliott Roosevelt laughs] It wasn't considered just uh [ER: No.] quite gentlemanly

[ER: Not, no.] in those-those days.

[ER:] I had a kind of faraway interest in him but almost as though it was something a little out of the orbit of uh the life in which my grandmother moved.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Of course, you know it's just possible that no one knows who this uncle is that you're talking about [Elliott Roosevelt laughs].

[ER:] Well my uncle was Theodore Roosevelt [ER laughs] and so I grew up—when I finally grew old enough to know him I suppose I was a Republican. I think I followed him. Um I had already, of course, by the time he broke with the Republican Party and became a Bull Mooser, I mean with one part of the Republican Party, I was already a Democrat.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes, but I seem to remember way, way back in the early letters that one Franklin D. Roosevelt at one time uh tended to side with the uh—his Republicans uh cousin.

[ER:] Oh there isn't any question about that, in fact, I think the real reason that um Franklin went into politics uh was because of Uncle Ted's appeal to all the young people. Um he made a tremendous appeal, his personality was a very compelling personality and he made a great appeal to young people at that time. And was, I think, a leader of the youth that had ideals and wanted to go into politics, but of course you must remember that your father's tradition was Democratic. His father and his father's side of the Roosevelt family had always been Democrats and only became Republicans in Lincoln's time. They were Lincoln Republicans, but then they went right back to being Democrats. (4:29)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, why was it that they changed over, I'm-- just as interesting sidelight on history?

[ER:] Oh that was purely on the question of slavery of course.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] They were against the Democratic Party because the Democratic Party favored slavery.

[ER:] And because Lincoln was a great man and a great leader and they sided with him in the war.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, that's rather interesting because uh as I remember uh the descriptions of Grandfather Roosevelt and his father must have been somewhat the same type of gentleman, they were uh sort of country gentlemen ah who had very little to do with the so called common man approach.

[ER:] Oh no! Now I never-I never knew um father's father, uh but he um--and he was as you say a country gentleman in rather the English tradition of the squire, but you must remember that the English tradition was one of knowing all your neighbors and having a tremendous responsibility in your neighborhood.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes, but Lincoln was uh such a homespun character and uh Stephen Douglas was the polished gentlemen uh of the old school, I would think that he would have been much more attractive to—

[ER:] No, Lincoln stood for certain fundamental things like liberty, and um uh there was no question I don't think in the minds of any of--and the unity of our country. I think those two things probably influenced um uh father's father.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, now you've established that in uh Grandfather Roosevelt's time, father's father's time, the Democratic Party stood for slavery and the Republican Party ah was the party of progress. Then in Theodore Roosevelt's time he certainly was known as a progressive and uh advocated—

[ER:] But he had to break away from the traditional Republican Party to be a progressive. Do you see?

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, did he really have to? Because uh when he was president he initiated the anti-trust laws in this country and they were passed into the record books.

[ER:] Yes he was, he was a progressive, but he found when he left the uh power that uh—and he had fought if you remember uh the side of his Party which was reactionary. Now he found that that came back into power--that's what made the Bull Moose, the division within the party. Now the Democratic Party became gradually a-a slightly, let us say, more liberal party through um, as time went on, individuals who stood out, like Woodrow Wilson, and uh they hark back to the early traditions of our history when Thomas Jefferson was a liberal, do you see? [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And they revived the things that Thomas Jefferson had stood for. Um eh as you remember, Thomas Jefferson freed his slaves. [Elliott Roosevelt: That's correct.] Eh that was in a way, you-you can't follow this out, but I would say that um the Republican Party had-had in it uh more of the people who uh had an interest in personal privilege. [Elliott Roosevelt: Well, now I I'd like to challenge that.] and therefore they gradually become a more conservative party. Now they don't say so, oh, in fact they frequently after a Democratic reform has been made adopt it and insist that they would administrate it better.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes, but I'd like to challenge that statement that the Republican Party has more uh so called representatives of vested interest uh in it. Uh let's take the largest bloc of Democrats in the United States, those in the southern states. Certainly those uh Democrats uh could not be said to be on the side of uh say uh the more liberal thinking. (9:00)

[ER:] No, that's our great difficulty today, that in both parties, in the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, there is a division and there are reactionaries in both parties and there are liberals in both parties. And personally I think it is very difficult for people um at times because um we don't really have a clear cut division of reactionary against liberal.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] In other words the American people, uh in--if you just take it party for party uh they don't get any clear choice.

[ER and Elliott Roosevelt overlap]

[ER:] No they don't. No, that's quite right.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, then doesn't it mean then that we're coming down to uh a question of picking the individual and when we go into the into the ballot booth, we're-we're looking at the individual, we're not looking at the party.

[ER:] No, not entirely. Not entirely because even a very good individual can never get away from the major influence of his party. And you have to realize that your major influence back of a Republican today will be stronger even than the reactionary influence in the Democratic Party [Elliott Roosevelt: Well now, I--]. That we would have to go on discussing.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I think that you are expressing a Democratic point of view on that and I will take the side of the Republicans and say well now I just wonder whether really and truly the reactionaries of both parties haven't uh ganged up tighter and if there wasn't just as strong reactionary group in the Democratic Party to stop of the wheels of progress so to speak, if you're a liberal. Now I do think we have to go onto another section of our program. I wish we had more time because I think that [ER: I'd like to argue further with you on that.] Alright, we'll come back to this on another day.

(Break 10:57-11:09)

[ER:] In our discussions on this program you've heard me state my views on communism and communists but they've been opinions and observations. Today with me in my drawing room is a young lady who can tell us how the Communist Party actually operates in the United States, what the members

are like. She is Ms. Angelia Calomiris who for seven years, long years, was a member of the Communist Party by special request of the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation. It gives me pleasure to introduce to you a young lady of great courage, Miss Angela Calomiris. (11:56)

[Angela Calomiris:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt.

[ER:] Miss Calomiris, will you tell our audience how you became a member of the Communist Party and why?

[Angela Calomiris:] Well, uh how could have happened to anybody listening. I was getting ready for work, it was in 1942, and the last five minutes is very important and I was already going to be late. The doorbell rang and two gentlemen appeared at the door. And they said we're from the FBI and immediately I thought, oh my heavens what have I done? And they uh--I didn't quite believe it either, so was my aunt, well uh they showed me their cards and asked if they could come in and talk to me and they did. They asked a lot of personal questions and I had the feeling that they knew the answers before I gave them and I was very annoyed at this, as I think anyone would be. Uh I got to the boiling point when they asked me uh did I intend to be uh married uh shortly, and I said uh I wasn't thinking of it at that point. Well, uh we got into a discussion of politics and I said I had eh rung doorbells for eh President Roosevelt. And uh they asked me uh what I thought of the Non-Aggression Pact. And that was uh a strange question to ask me. I was a photographer, or uh beginning in my photographic career, and as many artists back in '42 and earlier than that, I felt that art and politics had nothing to do with each other, what have I got to do with politics? So uh when they asked me this question, I said well uh all I know is what I've read in the papers, however they were waiting to hear the uh Communist Party line on that, and of course that probably would have disqualified me. Uh today I realize that back in '42 the Party had uh--the Communist Party in America--had uh decided uh along with the Soviet Union, as a matter of fact they followed the Soviet Union's lead, that the war which had been previously been called an imperialist war was now a people's war and it was ok for the Yanks to come over and-and help win it. And uh I did not give that answer, and uh well they they said, "what are your immediate plans," and I felt -- I said that I felt that every American's uh main object now should be to win this war and never mind what your private uh interests and uh your career uh-- about you career. Well, um I had a plan to go into the Marine eh force or into the WAVES or the WAC and if I weren't, or if I wasn't passed by any of these services I planned to take a war job. And they said "oh no don't do that, that's why we're here," and they suggested that I go into the Communist Party of America and observe it. Well, this was quite a shock to me because in forty-two we were allies, and uh I gasp and I said, "Well, why?" and they said, "Well," and I said, "Can't you find out everything you want to know in uh the papers?" and they said, "No the kind of information we want to know uh is not usually printed in the papers, and in the Party you always have advance uh the advance program of the uh Soviet Union which is always carried out in the Party here." Well, I still was not quite convinced and I said, "I'd like to think it over," and uh they said, "Well, uh they would not press me but it was important." And after they left I um ran to the mirror to see if I had overnight changed to glamour girl or something. And my idea of a spy was strictly uh grade B movies and uh I was still the same girl, but uh I felt that this was a-a pretty-serious um proposition. And uh I was not really qualified to judge whether I could do this work or not, and I thought well now these men have must have investigated me and they have come to me for a reason, so I will accept and that's how it started. And the reason I accepted was because I was asked and I felt that somebody believed I could do this job and that it was necessary, and there are a lot of jobs that are not pretty jobs, they're work that has to be done and somebody's got to do them and I had no reason for not doing it. (16:04)

[ER:] Well, that was a very good reason, I think, and so it um from there I'd like go on and ask you um something about your book *Red Masquerade*, which you recently published. You uh--the first chapter is entitled "Who, Me?" And uh I'd like to ask the same question: Why did the FBI pick you for this difficult work, what background led them to choose you?

[Angela Calomiris:] Well, I asked the same question too, and they—they couldn't give me all the answers but they did say that the uh Communist Party always looks for the person who is uh disgruntled with life in general, uh they seek the people who have had a rather difficult row to hoe. Uh my background I should – uh I was told anyways would be considered underprivileged however I never thought of it as such. And uh that was one reason, um another reason uh they said that uh in looking for uh people to do undercover work they sought the type of person who could inspire confidence without giving it away, who was friendly without being uh too chatty, who uh had no responsibly to any individual, who would uh keep their mouth shut about the details of their work about above all who was who was an American citizen and a loyal American. And I guess I fit the bill.

[ER:] I think all those were good reasons for picking you, but it is rather remarkable to just pick one person out of uh-uh the numbers of people that they could have chosen. You do wonder how it happened. Eh did they give you any assurance of protection in case you got into trouble of any kind.

[Angela Calomiris:] No, they were very frank with me. They said, “look if anything happens to you,” this is official, of course, “if anything happens to you this will not be recognized, we don't know you.” Uh I personally feel that any of the agents I ever worked with would have moved eh heaven and earth to get me out of jail if I had been picked up in a strike or anything like that, but officially I would not be recognized.

[ER:] Officially uh you were just doing something like being a soldier and if you got shot you got shot.  
[Angela Calomiris:] That's right, and that's the way I felt about it.

[ER:] Well, that's a pretty fine way to think about it, I think. Um but I would wonder how you'd make-- how you'd managed to get into the party without arousing any suspicion?

[Angela Calomiris:] Well, Mrs. Roosevelt, I belonged to a photographic group known as the Photo League as far back as 1938, and uh the league at the time had quite a few communists, in fact, the entire executive board were communist. And they were constantly bringing up literature to the to the club rooms, uh selling The Daily Worker or giving it away, and always I had been approached uh to join and I politely said no, I'm interested in documenting photography uh I don't see that communism has anything to offer me. And I felt that my problem was a pretty individual problem. Uh also I'd been working as a playground uh director on a WPA uh part-time project and I had been approached there, and it would have been just as simple for me to have uh been recruited from either one of these two sources. Uh the Photo League, uh well I don't want to get ahead of my story, but I was recruited through executive members of the Photo League. (19:32)

[ER:] Oh that's interesting, did you use then your own name, you must have because people knew you?

[Angela Calomiris:] Oh they knew me. I wasn't in the Party officially until I-I was told I should take another name. And they gave me the name of Angela Cole, and for once in my life – [ER: Angela what?] Cole – C-O-L-E . And once in my life I had a nice simple last name. [ER and Angela Calomiris laugh] That's the only bargain I got. (20:00)

[ER:] Well, were you working at another job while you were a member of the Party right along?

[Angela Calomiris:] Yes uh I-I—as I said I had this playground job, which I was uh requested to continue at so there would be no suspicious of uh any sudden changes, and then uh, oh, about a month or two later I uh got a job with a professional photographer Hal Phyfe and I worked in his studio anywhere from 6 months to a year.

[ER:] Worked there as much as a year?

[Angela Calomiris:] That and-and I opened my own studio.

[ER:] He never knew?

[Angela Calomiris:] Oh nobody knew. That was part of the agreement; I was to discuss my work with no one, ah no friends, no family, no one.

[ER:] Well that was wonderful, that you could-that you could keep it as secret as that. Well now we have to wait—stop for a minute.

(Break 20:55-21:10)

[ER:] You were and are a photographer. Was this helpful in your Communist work?

[Angela Calomiris:] Well I think it was more helpful to the Communists than it was to me or the uh FBI. I had been warned uh when I joined the Communist Party not to ask for any specific assignments, let them ask me and do as I was told, and uh for me to ask uh people to uh let me photograph them, would certainly have been—become quite suspicious. And so I just continued doing my work, and when people thought my photographs were good why they started coming to me and it was just like fly waking into the spider's den. I always supplied an additional print to the to the Bureau and we did do hundreds of pictures.

[ER:] That's really quite wonderful, and uh how-how were you able, as long as uh this was very secret and you managed to keep it so. How were you able to make reports to the FBI and send in your pictures and that sort of thing?

[Angela Calomiris:] Well, uh I would first uh make an oral report so that everything was fresh immediately after a meeting or-or after a discussion or class or whatever the incident might be. I was instructed only to report on communist activity in any front or any party or group that I was part of. Uh the reports would be made orally and then they were type written, and sometimes I would be up to three or four in the morning type writing them. But I had to record them that way and only facts were of importance and each fact was thoroughly checked so that encourages all undercover people to only report facts that are known. And um later on when my life became rather hectic because I was doing an awful lot of photographic work and I had uh acquired a rather um high position in the Party, I was a section organizer, uh the task of-of doing the typing of the uh reports became too much for me and I did use a Dictaphone. But uh I would be recording these late at night in my studio and uh there's a little courtyard outside and I could just hear my voice traveling out there, so after a while I had to go back to the type writer anyway. But uh that was the chief way, and then uh we mailed them sometimes to uh mail drops, or uh I would meet an agent in the subway and hand him the New York Times and my report would be in the New York Times, or uh I would uh get into a car and drive to a certain uh location that we had arranged and meet an agent there. There were all different ways. (23:52)

[ER:] Did you talk uh--did you talk on the telephone without any fear?

[Angela Calomiris:] Uh yes, uh I think um at first we might all tend to dramatize the fact that we're doing something a little unusual. I used to whisper it, I used to go out to the corner and and call from pay booths, but I found out that it's just as simple and perfectly ok to use my studio or home phone and I did.

[ER:] I see, well now what part--what sort of organization does the party have? What is required of its members?

[Angela Calomiris:] Well the uh Communist Party uh pretends to be a political party, uh it is not, it's a conspiracy, it's different fro-than any party that we- we have in America. Uh it's-it's dedicated to a foreign power and it is controlled by a foreign power, uh namely the Soviet Union. Uh the sort of work, uh -what it requires of its members actually is the whole of their lives and certainly in the seven years that I worked for it - uh in it rather uh that is what they extoled.

[ER:] You just must give up your freedom of thought and action completely.

[Angela Calomiris:] Well you don't even have time to think [ER: I see.] because you are given such a plan of action [ER: So much to do, yes.] that uh you just do [ER: You don't really think.].

[ER:] Now did you have to attend meetings regularly, and to study?

[Angela Calomiris:] Yes, I don't believe I've ever missed a meeting in in all these seven years I've uh been in the Party. Uh there were meetings almost every night, in some cases there were three and four meetings in one night. We'd go to one meting to be told what to say at the next and so on down the line. Uh study groups at all time. Uh when-when the party decided that you were leadership material such as they decided in my instance uh they sent me to training schools [ER: Good heavens.] ah at time—

[ER:] [ER laughs] Did you have try to convert others to communism [Angela Calomiris: Yes.], what exactly were your duties?

[Angela Calomiris:] Well I started out as a Jimmy Higgins in the Party, Jimmy Higgins was a—is a mythical character he's um uh a fellow that was supposed to have sold uh Party literature and done the the-the menial jobs in the Party, and I did that. I sold party literature, and I sold the Daily Worker, and uh I went around to uh and knocking on doors and asking for contributions for phony causes um all in the name of the Party of course. Um later on I became a-- what is known as a functionary which is an official in the party and then I was telling people how to do the things that I had learned to do. And uh—but at no time did I decide what was to be done, in other words, I never incited or uh planned uh the program of the Party, I merely carried out like a minor official what the top told me to do.

[ER:] Were you able to have any kind of social life outside of the party or just have to exist within that group? (26:52)

[Angela Calomiris:] Well, as I said when you're a, what the Party calls, a politically conscious comrade you have very little time for anything but uh the Party. Uh I did have some friends before I joined the Party, and I still have those friends, I saw very little of them. Uh when they would ask me to go someplace or have dinner or go to a party, uh I would say I'm sorry I have an assignment, you see I was self-employed as a photographer and I could always use that excuse for anything. While they thought I was making piles of money, but [Angela Calomiris laughs]—

[ER:] Well did you have any narrow escapes and did they suspect you of um of--at any time in the Party?

[Angela Calomiris:] Yes, about nine months uh before uh I took the witness stand in the trial of the eleven top communist leaders. Um there was an attempt to drop me from the Party, uh I was becoming a little popular, really I can't say what they had against me, I was becoming a little too popular uh with the members and there's an awful lot of jealousy in the Party, you've no idea. And uh I was asked one day to just drop out, and so I said "look I've given seven years of my life, I've--this is my-this is my life I'm not dropping out. What have you got against me?" and they said, "Well you're anti-Party and this covers a multitude of sins, you're anti-Party, you associated with anti-Party people and you've made anti Party

statements.” And I said, “Fine now I want to see our party super democracy” which had been hammered into me for years uh, “I’d like to see some of this for myself, I want a trial.” Well to the day I took the stand I never did get a trial.

[ER:] You never got the trial.

[Angela Calomiris:] I went from one person to another. I threatened to take it to the convention, and my reason for pursuing this was to find out if they knew I was an agent well then I would have to find out how, how they had investigated, who had told them, so that I could prevent other undercover people from being exposed.(28:53)

[ER:] Were there--were there many other undercover people?

[Angela Calomiris:] Well, uh you say were, I think there still are undercover people, I can’t say whether there are many, I should think the-the uh Party is well covered, put it that way.

[ER:] I see, well now, how did you finally free yourself from being a party member?

[Angela Calomiris:] Well in in October of 1948, um after the indictment had been handed down, um on the Smith Act, uh the agents that I was working with came to me and asked me if I would testify in the uh trial with the leaders as a government witness and my first answer was sure. And uh so that’s really what started it all. And then I took the stand, the day I took the stand I was still a Party member, I was a matter of fact an official in one of the branches of the Party of the financial secretary and I was also a student at the Marxist Institute. And uh—

[ER:] Well now, weren’t you afraid of what would happen to you?

[Angela Calomiris:] Oh that’s uh a funny question. Um I-I really don’t know how to answer it, uh yes I was afraid, uh I was not afraid of what I was doing uh and I was not afraid of the Party as such. I feel that the Party eh plans their program and I know that the Party does very well. It would be very foolish for them to do anything like try to get rid of me uh after the trial. If they had known I was going to testify I would put nothing past them, however uh I have had a body guard for a period of time, and I-I felt that I really just had no freedom then. So um I’m just a philosophical Greek I say what’s going to be is going to be.

[ER:] Well, what do you think of the Smith Act which would outlaw the Communist Party and under which the eleven communists were recently convicted under Judge [Harold] Medina? (30:54)

[Angela Calomiris:] Uh I think the Smith Act is-is uh the only um only legislation that uh we had to-to enable us to make some attempt at curbing the Communist Party. I hope the Smith Act is upheld. And I would like to point out, Mrs. Roosevelt, that so many people who have been under the influence of the Communists Party and who-who are not members but are willing to be uh deceived by the Party have fallen for the line that the Smith Act was an act to control thought. The Communist Party leaders were not tried for anything they believed or for their ideals; they were tried for their actions, for advocating and teaching the violent overthrow of our country. And I learned that.

[ER:] You believe the Communist Party is actually controlled from Russia.

[ER and Angela Calomiris overlap]

[Angela Calomiris:] Well, Mrs. Roosevelt, I was told that by the leaders themselves. We were taught that.

[ER:] So now what can curb the spread of communism in our country?

[Angela Calomiris:] Oh I think there are two things that come to my mind. One is well thought out legislation, such as the Mundt-Nixon bill. Uh I don't think the McCarran Bill uh is going to do anything to uh curb the Communist Party. It's going to do more to make martyrs of them, and the Communists are—they thrive on martyrdom. The other suggestion is-is one that I think uh most of us are starting to realize now, we've all got to feel more responsible about who we elect, who is in our state department, who is in our government agencies, we just can't feel the way that I felt eight and half years ago: what have I got to do with politics, what have I got to do with this country?

[ER:] Thank you so much. The time has come when we must close, and thank you for being with me today.

(Break 32:42-32:45)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] You've been listening to the Eleanor Roosevelt Program which comes to you each day Monday through Friday at 12:30 and at 660 on your dial, and this program originates from Mrs. Roosevelt's living room at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. This is Elliott Roosevelt speaking and wishing you all a very good afternoon.

(Break 33:06-33:10)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] This is Elliott Roosevelt, the guests who have visited the Eleanor Roosevelt Program make up an impressive roster, ranging from the first lady of the theater to the Premier of France, and including famous people in all important fields in our national and international life today. You will now hear portions of interviews which recently took place on the Eleanor Roosevelt Program. Helen Hayes, who has earned the unofficial title of First Lady of the Theater, was complaining about lack of competition from the younger generation.

[Helen Hayes:] It-it really comes to pass that most of the stars of today in the theater, most of us who are uh box office attractions, are flirting with fifty or over it and that none of the youngsters have come along to elbow us out of the way. I've been talking about this on radios and in the press for a long while and nothing's happened, and now I've decided to do something about it. And I'm a producer. And the whole purpose of my being a producer is to find, which I will do – I think after all my years of experience I'll be able to ferret out two authentic talents, a young man, a young woman, who have already played on Broadway in New York plays but who've never been given that next step to a great leading role. And I'm going to put them in two of the finest roles I know: the leads J.M. Barrie's Mary Rose.

[ER and Helen Hayes overlap]

[ER:] Oh I think that would be most exciting because I've always thought that finding talent and then helping to see it grow would be a terribly exciting thing. That's really what you're doing.

[Helen Hayes:] But that's really what you do in the theater. Every actor discovered a new young actress in the company, was always on his toes to help. Not any more I don't know what's happening.

[ER:] Not anymore, isn't that curious.

[Helen Hayes:] Well, they say that they all rush out to Hollywood, that they use the theater as a spring board. But I know so many of these youngsters and I know they wouldn't go to Hollywood if the theater offered them any continuity of opportunity.

[Elliot:] Major Alexander de Seversky, the outstanding aviation authority, thinks the United States government made a serious mistake.

[Major Alexander de Seversky:] I was in Hiroshima and Nagasaki studying the effects of atomic bombs so were the Russian experts and officer. During atomic bomb tests at Bikini we very carelessly invited Professor [Simon] Alexandrov and Dr. [Mikhail Grigorievich] Meshcheryakov who are great expert physicist and expert in atomic bomb. Who had the same access to the same data as most of our experts and even some of the members of presidential evaluation committee. So they know just as much eh about the atomic bomb and its effects as we do.

[ER]: Do you think we did wrong to let them see those experiments or go to Nagasaki and Hiroshima?

[Major Alexander Seversky]: I personally think yes, we did wrong. Of course, in those days eh the phycology was entirely different, people that the atomic bomb was an apocalyptic force, that there was no defense against it. And we sort of eh wanted to exhibit it to the whole world to see what waits them if they will precipitate the world into another war, but as we found out that was not a barrier to eh resort to force. And uh now, of course, hindsight always better than foresight, uh how it's naturally was a great mistake, we supplied our potential enemy with all the necessary data for them to compete with us for the domination of this new and devastating explosives. (36:75)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother and the versatile star of stage and screen Jose Ferrer discovered they share a common admiration for Cyrano de Bergerac.

[Jose Ferrer:] I remember seeing theater in all those different countries when I was about 16, and seeing very great actors and I saw [Benoit-Constant] Coquelin do Cyrano, [Jose Ferrer: Oh that must have been wonderful.] and I saw some other things that I will never forget. I saw a wonderful performance by Mounet-Sully of Oedipe roi when he was going blind and almost the most wonderful thing was the reaction of the audience to him. When he finished, the whole French audience was on their seats and I was a little American girl who'd never seen an audience rise and stand up on their seats and yell at the top.[Jose Ferrer: Oh you must have been thrilled.] And I was way up in the gallery because I had very little money, and I just was thrilled.

[Jose Ferrer:] And of all the roles for him to be playing, isn't that a wonderful.

[ER:] Wasn't that a wonderful thing. [Jose Ferrer: Yes] And to remember that I'm always so glad that I saw those things. But I saw eh theater in in Italy and theater in Germany. I never liked it as much in Germany, though I do think it's a beautiful language.

[ER and Jose Ferrer overlap]

[Jose Ferrer:] Particularly when you understand it, now German always sounded uh unattractive to me until I began to understand it, and then I've done some singing of German lieder, as you know as you you-you come into contact with-with men like [Heinrich] Heine and [Johann Wolfgang] Goethe then and-and it's fabulous.

[Jose Ferrer and ER overlap]

[ER:] Well, then you get the most beautiful poetry.

[Jose Ferrer:] Yes, the most lyrical.

[ER:] And I do think that German poetry is very beautiful.

[Jose Ferrer:] It's extraordinary.

[ER:] Very beautiful.

[Jose Ferrer:] Well, you know I was in Montreal last week and I ran into Françoise Rosay the wonderful French actress. And we began to talk about Cyrano and she had seen Coquelin as a girl and she remembered and she told me about him. Now there had been a project afoot for me to play Cyrano in French in Paris possibly next year in order to prepare the French people for what they may consider a very you know sacrilegious thing, which is to do Cyrano in English. And I was excited about this, until she began to describe Coquelin's performance. And this terrified me so that I don't think I'll ever have the nerve. But her description of his voice you know made you feel that uh perhaps you should go back to kindergarten and study about acting because it was something so advance and so extraordinary, and the way- the way she recited some of the lines the musicality she put into them was absolutely thrilling.

[ER and Jose Ferrer overlap.]

[ER:] Well, I- I- I couldn't uh do anything like that, but I can remember perfectly the impression that made. And I'm an old woman now [ER laughing] it made most tremendous impression, I've never forgotten it. I saw Sarah Bernhardt do L'Aiglon the same—in the same period. She was getting older, you see.

[Jose Ferrer:] Yes, they toured here together in 1903 here.

[ER:] And I saw [Eleonora] Duse do some of her first plays here. But I saw her do it in this country first and then in Italy. And I-I think you remember the great actors [Jose Ferrer: Oh yes.] and actresses that you've seen [Jose Ferrer: Yes.] as a young person, they make, the awkward part of it is they make most terrible standards [Jose Ferrer: That's right.] that everybody else is judged by later on.

[Jose Ferrer:] And for those of us who have to follow in their footsteps a little tough because we're battling a memory we're not even battling a reality [ER: No.]. It's important to have that memory, the emotional memory of the of the kind of truth that they manage to create for you on that evening is something to be cherished, and uh it's those kind of, I think, uh life lines from one generation to another that uh keep cultures alive and give us something to aim for always.

(Break 40:32-40:34)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother admits to the world heavy weight champion Mr. Ezzard Charles that she hasn't yet become a fight fan.

[ER:] I have to be perfectly truthful with you. I've never seen a fight of any kind, either on television or in-in any actual uh being there, so—

[Ezzard Charles:] Well, the next time we have a fight out near wherever you are I will send you a few tickets and –

[ER:] It's isn't a question—I don't think I'd be a good person to have tickets, because while I realize very well that there are tremendous number of fine points that one should understand. I've heard people talk about it enough. I know that there is a tremendous amount of skill that goes into it, and-and besides the training, the physical training and the hardening, but um I-I just have the feeling I probably wouldn't

enjoy it very much because eh I would worry all the time as to who was getting hurt. [ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh] That would be my reaction.

[Ezzard Charles:] That's supposed to be a thrill of it all is-is when a man is knocked out, or-or he's helpless and he can't help himself. It seems brutal of me to talk about it but to actually watch a match you will see uh the skill and the sportsmanship that's displayed in a boxing match and I do believe that you would enjoy one if you would ever take the time out to see one.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, Mother, I think –and I should eh sort of bring you up to date a little bit on the boxing game. Uh I do follow it and I'm very much interested, and I'd like to tell you that uh our new worlds' champion Mr. Ezzard Charles is known as one of the cleanest fighters that there is in the game today.

[Ezzard Charles:] Thank you, Mr. Roosevelt.

(42:24)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Tallulah the Bankhead and Mother seem to enjoy a friendly argument about the role a woman should play in public affairs.

[ER:] But now it's rumored you see that you, the daughter of our former distinguished speaker of the house, might desert the stage for a career in diplomatic life. Is there any truth to this rumor that you might follow in the footsteps of our illustrious minister to the Duchy of Luxembourg, Madam Mesta.

[Tallulah Bankhead:] Mrs. Roosevelt, the Democratic Party can rest in peace. I am not going to enter politics, so I won't lose any votes for anybody on our side.

[ER:] I don't feel that it's a good thing to rest in peace. [Tallulah Bankhead laughs] I don't want to rest in peace. I think it would be boring. [Tallulah Bankhead: Well the press are in peace.] I think it's wonderful when women go ahead and do these sort of things.

[Tallulah Bankhead:] Well, I just haven't got the eh the uh [coughing] facilities and I haven't got the eh training. I follow as you know all national and international politics always because if you don't follow those I think you're very insular, very stupid, and there's not else these days with the world the way it is but to be as up as you can within the limitations of your own intelligence and your understanding and--of the thing. But I really am a very rabid reader, uh avid reader I mean, of-of all that's going on. As you know I watch the UN everyday on my television, and it was a great pleasure the last time I was your guest over there. But as for my going into politics, I think I'll leave that to the sirs in the Bankhead family [coughing]. Actually you know my father wanted to go on the stage so that's where I got that from. [ER: Well that does tie in. ] He's not going on the stage and I'm not going into politics.

[ER:] Does tie in closely together and I think it's encouraging that in these days we seem more and more women at least who are enormously interested in world affairs.

(Break 44:17-44:20)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Douglas Chandor who painted portraits of both of my parents is almost as famous for his stories as he is for his oils.

[Chandor:] Ah well, I suppose probably people listening on their eh radio would like to hear uh one or two things about Mr. Churchill, I could tell that. Uh we had lots of fun uh when we were painting him. He

uh asked me uh when I'd got about halfway through with his picture to shave down his waste a bit [ER laughs]. I was a little hesitant, so he just couldn't wait so he picked up a brush and did it himself. As soon as he's gone, ah I scraped off all the paint he'd put on [ER and Douglas Chandor laugh]. I- I- I was—[ER: And of course because he's a painter so he felt he could do it.] Oh yes, he thought—he was determined to do it a little bit better, you see. [ER: Yes, mhm.] But I was painting him in his Air Force uniform [ER: Yes, I remember.] and ah two of his metals were missing. So for fun I put in a couple of back number ribbons [Elliott Roosevelt laughing]. He spotted them at once [ER: Oh he did?]. And he said, “Why you've given me a metal for the Crimean War of 1852. And what's that one? Good heavens it's Waterloo” [ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh]. Mrs. Churchill then chimed in, “Oh it doesn't matter my dear, I'm sure you were there in spirit” [ER, Elliott Roosevelt, and Douglas Chandor laugh]. She was having me do her portrait at the same time as a-as a birthday present for her for- her husband, ah-ah and when I'd almost finished and I said and “Now I must put in your dimple,” and she said, “I don't think it's a real dimple, when I was a child I had a tooth pulled there I think it's simply suction.”

(Break 46:01-46:03)

[Elliott Roosevelt]: Abe Burrows whose gifted sense of human has shown in the top draw of almost every department in show business is also something of a philosopher and psychologist.

[Abe Burrows:] You know I guess wit and humor requires more security than any other form of expression. Uh when you frighten – you watch a man who's frightened at a party and he'll be the least witty man at the party uh.

[ER:] I never thought about that, I guess fear does take away from your power of um of seeing things as funny.

[Abe Burrows:] A good example of that I think is women. Women uh who-who because they were less secure for so many years, there was a much smaller body of humor came out of women. [ER and Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And as women become more secure you will see women taking their place as humorists, uh but when they were kept in a lesser position they weren't very witty because you can't be witty when you're frightened.

[ER:] You know I never thought of that, you're shy and you're frightened and, therefore, you haven't—I I've always felt that I lacked a sense of humor and I think perhaps that's the reason, I never thought of it.

(Break 47:09-47:12)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] The Premier of France Monsieur Rene Pleven recorded a Christmas message for the Eleanor Roosevelt program.

[Rene Pleven:] I first want to express my thanks to Mrs. Roosevelt for giving me the opportunity to associate France and her people through this Christmas message. A few years only after the last war, the peace of the world is again threatened by forces of aggression. Brave men of many nations and particularly from the United States are now fighting them in Korea and Frenchmen are also fighting a hard war in Indochina for the same ideal of freedom. On this day of Christmas, the thoughts of the people of the United States and of France will go to their soldiers in the Far East. After the ordeal of the war who's destructions are still apparent all over France and Europe it is hard to be pressed with a new challenge, not only to peace but to our common ideal of Christian civilization but our duty is to face it. Once more the American and the French people are united in the defense of peace and freedom. (48:41)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] In future programs we intend to bring to you the Secretary of the Treasury Mr. John W. Snyder, Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, Senator William F. Knowland of California, Secretary for Air Thomas K. Finletter, Federal Housing Administration James F. Foley, Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews, Senator Owen D. Brewster of Maine, Speaker of the House Mr. Sam Rayburn of Texas, the Secretary for the Army Mr. Frank Pace, United State Senator from New York the Honorable Herbert H. Lehman, and Major General Alexander R. Bolling Army Assistance Chief of Staff for Intelligence. These are some of the uh speakers who will come on this program to be interviewed by mother who are in the political life of our country, also in addition there will be many stars of the stage, the screen, and many outstanding writers, and many people from all walks of life.

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Transcribed from holdings at Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL)

File(s): 72-30(302)

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First Edit: Andreas Meyris

Final Edit: Seth LaShier

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