

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

March 2nd, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about what Americans can do to calm their anxieties regarding war, communism, and economic collapse. In the interview segment, ER's guest is the creator of the radio soap opera "Portia Faces Life," Mona Kent

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Mona Kent

[ER:] Good afternoon, this is Eleanor Roosevelt. I'm happy to welcome you for another visit here in my living room at the Park Sheridan 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:] Thank you, Mother. Many of those who listen to radio and their legion, listen avidly to the daytime dramas that are called soap operas. While many pseudo-intellectuals are prone to poke fun at this form of entertainment and refer to it as "sob stuff," psychiatrists have agreed that it contributes a worthwhile form of escape to many whose lives are not altogether content. Mother's guest today is Miss Mona Kent. Miss Kent is the creator of *Portia Faces Life* and many other radio dramas. Very few of you have not suffered along with Portia and compared many of her problems to yours. Many of us have wondered how a writer can consistently invent new problems day after day, five days a week, [Elliott Roosevelt laughs] year after year as Miss Kent has done, but she'll tell us all about it herself. Mother's mail continues to be full of interesting letters, one of which we're going to chat about today. But first, a word from our announcer who has a message from the sponsors who make this recorded program possible.

[Break 1:39-1:52]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother, I have here a letter on which I noticed you've made a notation for reply, so I'd like to read the letter to our listeners. It's from Mr. Eland Gerald of New York and reads, "Economically, I belong to the white collar class, my husband being the editor," -- I see that it says husband so it must be Mrs. Eland Gerald. [ER: Mhm] "--my husband being the editor of a motion picture trade magazine. But intellectually, I feel a bit above that economical status, which is not an enviable position. I had a college education and was trained for the teaching profession, but have devoted my life in rather an old-fashioned cause, that of caring for my family. The years I've lived almost equal yours, but God has given me vitality, health, and optimism, and I seldom realize that so many years have passed. Now I come to the crux of my letter. What, outside of maintaining a cheerful and constructive attitude and praying, can I possibly do to hold at a distance this all-absorbing threat with which we seem to be faced?" (3:12)

[ER:] Well, I suppose what she means is the threat of war. Uh I don't know whether she means that or whether she means uh the threat of communism. Um now if um -- the two are really practically synonymous because it is, as uh the Secretary of State said, um the threat of the arming in communist countries which has forced the rest of the free world to arm for protection and defense, and therefore has brought about this feeling of imminent danger of another war, which um is uh one of the things that everybody dreads. Um I-I think you put your finger on one important thing, namely the maintaining of a calm and cheerful atmosphere. I think that the security given by that kind of an atmosphere will keep us all on an even keel, will keep us all thinking more objectively. Um and then I think if we think more objectively, we'll study this whole question and realize that the great enemy we all fight, really, is the poverty of the greater part of the world, the fact that the unrest really basically springs from uh the-the

hunger of such a great part of the world. So that one of the things we then can set ourselves to do is to try and support our government and the United Nations in any-any effort they make to alleviate these basic things that lead to the spread of communism, that lead to the possibility of appeal by the communists to people who are miserable, and bring about in that way the threat of war which makes us all um constantly wonder uh what lies just around the corner. (5:50)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, uh maybe the threat of war is uh primarily at the basis of all of this fear that we have. Uh but I think that there is a fear that rests in a lot of people's minds, uh an economic fear, a fear of destruction not from war but, very possibly, from a collapse of our whole economic system that might bring on uh something that would be just as bad as war, which would be because of unrest that we might establ -- have communism or fascism in some form -- a dictatorship in any way uh that would take over in this county.

[ER:] Well, I think that is true. If we learned um from the past, um I think we can avoid a collapse of our economic system. Um we must, however, uh control inflation. We must um submit to a controlled economy eh and taxation to meet the things that must be done at present, and then we must return to normal, uh not the way we did last time, without waiting till we were ready eh for the removal of restrictions, but we must do it really gradually and wait for the readjustment of our economy eh to uh peacetime conditions. (7:33)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, uh that partially, but I tell you that I have a feeling, and maybe there are others that uh sort of feel it with me, uh I have a feeling uh about our leadership in this country in both parties uh that in many ways-- most of the leaders in both parties have uh all too little uh real knowledge and-and real courage about the future and real uh belief in the steps that must be taken. Uh you-you-you hear so many statements made by uh leadership in both parties that certainly doesn't sound as though it was uh basically thought-out and had real uh belief in the American system to the point where uh it was following through on a program which would eventually bring us out.

[ER:] Well, um that may be true. Someone else said to me the other day that they had a feeling that one of our troubles in this country was that the people were not certain that their leaders actually understood the problems before them and um were unafraid. Um that, of course, is um very difficult to-to tell and it's something which I've heard before or about um many other leaders, and uh I don't know of any way to prove that um the leaders of a country are giving confidence to the people and are giving them real leadership. It's very [Elliott Roosevelt and ER overlap] hard to prove that. (9:26)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I -- I'd like to sort of put it on a concrete basis. For instance, there have been several people lately who have gotten up and made great speeches on the advisability of our uh retiring behind the walls of the oceans and let the rest of the[ER and Elliott overlap] world go hang --

[ER:] We just can't -- we just can't retire, there's no way [Elliott Roosevelt and ER overlap] of retiring.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes, but you know -- but you know, there's a lot of people who don't know why you can't do it, and I haven't seen any of our national leaders stand up and explain it in words of one syllable to the American people why we can't do that.

[ER:] Well, I think perhaps uh they-they don't think it really necessary. I was very much --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But [ER: I-I] Do you think it's not necessary when uh when there are even great newspapers that come out and--the-the editors of great newspapers, surely they have enough education to know that you can't retire behind a wall. Look what happened to the China when they build the wall all -- the Great Wall of China around them. (10:35)

[ER:] Well, we're not thinking of building that kind a wall. But Elliott, don't you see it's rather natural. Now, one of the papers in which my column appears took me very much to task for having said um that we, as yet, were more immature than the British in our relation to foreign affairs. Um and yet, you are pointing out the very thing that I, perhaps, said rather badly. Eh I'm much aware that um it's very new for me to think of questions primarily eh from how they affect the world rather than thinking first how they affect me and my country. That's because for a-a long while it's only been necessary for me to think of how anything would affect me and my country. Now suddenly, we have become the most powerful nation in the world and we are plunged into a position where we must think primarily of how any new situation affects the world as a whole, and we are affected with the world. Uh-uh we can't retire behind-ind the barriers of our oceans because they're not barriers anymore, you can fly across any ocean today

[Elliott Roosevelt: That's right] in very short time. But quite aside from that, we can't any longer concentrate on um our own interests because they are closely tied now to the interests of the rest of the world and the world needs leadership and we're the only people who can give it.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I think that's right, and I think that we must take pride in the support of our government uh taking a forward and leading position in the world, but now I hope that's a good answer for Mrs. Gerald uh because we've got to pass on at this time to another part of our program, and so now we'll turn the microphone over to our announcer. (12:56)

[Break 12:56-13:02]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother's guest today is a top-flight writer of radio soap operas, her most notable being uh *Portia Faces Life*, which has been running for -- well, we let the author tell you. Mother will uh-will you take over and introduce your guest today?

[ER:] Gladly, Elliott. I myself have always been curious to know how the authors of the daily radio dramas can possibly get enough ideas to sustain the story five days a week over a long period of time. So I am very happy to have as my guest today Miss Mona Kent.

[Mona Kent:] I'll be happy to be here too when I stop getting over so being so frightened. I'm really quite nervous, and after all the years I've looked at these contraptions you'd think I wouldn't be.

[ER:] Well, there's nothing to be nervous about! First of all, Miss Kent, I'd like to know how long you've been writing for radio.

[Mona Kent:] Oh dear, it'll be uh-- well I'm not writing for radio now, but about fifteen years.

[ER:] About fifteen years? [Mona Kent: Fifteen years.] Well, as Elliott says, your best known series is *Portia Faces Life*, have you written others?

[Mona Kent:] Oh yes, I've written *The Carters of Elm Street*, *The Happy Gilmans*, *Captain Midnight*, *Betty and Bob*, -- Oh dear, I sound old don't I? -- [ER and Mona Kent overlap] *Myrt and Marge* --

[ER:] Were they all the same type?

[Mona Kent:] All but uh—well, *Captain Midnight*. *Captain Midnight* was uh a-an adventure show for children about a flyer.

[ER:] Oh, I see. So, you-you um write most of them for grown-ups?

[Mona Kent:] Most of -- well most of them are what we call daytime serials for women, a dramatic -- a melodramatic story that goes on and on and on.

[ER:] I see. How do you go about getting a program on the air? Do you get the idea first and sell it, or do you write on order so to speak?

[Mona Kent:] Well, it's a little of both. Now you take with *Captain Midnight*, we knew that a client needed a story for children and yet with *Portia Faces Life*, *Portia Faces Life* was already on the air and they called me in to write it, and I inherited the uh main character, the uh plot, and-and then-then it was up to me to take it from there --

[ER:] And you had to go on from there? [Mona Kent: Yes, from there.] And-and keep -- sustain the interest and keep developing it.

[Mona Kent:] Or else.

[ER:] Or else? [ER Laughs] Well, I should think that would be terribly difficult. How can you judge whether or not a particular series has audience appeal? (15:34)

[Mona Kent:] Well, Mrs. Roosevelt, you-you really can't. After a long period of time, you get uh a-a feel, I'm -- it's, I suppose, like uh oh-- how does a producer of a play know? He doesn't until the curtain goes up. [ER: No.] You've got various ideas, I mean you think it might work but you never can tell. It's-it's up to the audience to say yes or no, and if they say yes, well then you're in and you feel fine, if they say no, you try again.

[ER:] And then you go on developing along the lines. [Mona Kent: Along the lines, yes.] Do your listeners ever give you ideas?

[Mona Kent:] Well, yes and no. I mean uh--of course the theory of inertia is a great one. A lot of listeners never uh get over the inertia, if they like a program they don't write in. A lot of listeners --

[ER:] That's--you mean uh -- you mean it's just like, for instance, in political life? You rarely hear from people who agree with you, but you always hear from people who want to beat you over the head? [ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh] [Mona Kent: Precisely, precisely.] And it's exactly the same thing in this?

[Mona Kent:] Its -- the fan mail goes the same way. Uh if the -if -- very few of the letters really are constructive, I mean they get very angry with you, but uh if they're doing a good job and they like it, very few people overcome their inertia well enough to-to uh--

[ER:] Then you really must be glad -- Kate Smith once told me she would rather a great deal have letters that um were disagreeable letters than have none at all, and that's the way you feel, I imagine.

[Mona Kent:] Oh definitely [ER: Definitely]. Of course if you get enough disagreeable letters you-you have to react to them, but it's better to get -- well, I mean it's better to know some people than not to

[ER: You know some people are listening] know any at all. Yes, you know people are listening.

[ER:] That's very interesting. Are you waiting for radi -- are you writing for radio now?

[Mona Kent:] No, no I'm not writing very --

[ER:] Well, but *Portia Faces Life* is still on, who's doing it?

[Mona Kent:] A man by the name of Mr. Hector Chevigny, he took it over the first of September, when I resigned from it.

[ER:] How long did you write it?

[Mona Kent:] Well, if I had stayed on until October 4, 1951, it would have been ten years exactly.

[ER:] Ten years?

[Mona Kent:] Yes.

[ER:] Good heavens. (17:44)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well that's-that's [ER: They--] enough show for five days a week, too. [Elliott Roosevelt Laughs]

[ER:] Good heavens, well you must have taken *Portia* -- I don't-don't happen to have listened to it, but you must have taken *Portia* through every known kind of-of experience. [ER laughs]

[Mona Kent:] Well, practically. [Mona Kent and Elliott Laugh] Although, Mr. Chevigny's doing a very fine job now, so he's thought up some more adventures for her.

[ER:] He thought up some more adventures. [Mona Kent: Yes] Gracious. Well, um now what are you doing?

[Mona Kent:] I'm uh trying to sell a series to television. This however, is a-a child's show, uh it's uh neither an adventure story nor a uh -- well, the *Captain Midnight* was a straight adventure, there were black planes and he went to places like uh up in the uh Tibetan mountains, but this is half fantasy and half real. It's what -- something I've wanted to do for a long time.

[ER:] And, um you're writing it as a series [Mona Kent: As a series for uh --] for television, a series primarily for children?

[Mona Kent:] Yes, children from say five to ten --

[ER:] Well, that ought to really improve the children's hour so to speak. (18:51)

[Mona Kent:] Well, thank you. I-I-I believe it will, but can I convince a client? [Mona Kent laughs]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Uh, do you think that uh television will eventually have um many uh dramatic shows similar to radio soap operas?

[Mona Kent:] I think so, yes.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I read somewhere, not very long ago, uh a statement that they felt that they wouldn't do very well on television because uh uh people age and uh after all uh you couldn't have them perpetually stay young, the same cast, and that therefore, it would uh -- you'd have to have your characters, instead of staying uh sweet uh and uh seventeen or twenty-one or twenty-five -- whatever it is -- uh that they'd have to go on and age as the actors aged.

[Mona Kent:] Well you know, I uh think that would uh rather help the stories. I'm a far more interesting person now than I was at twenty. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm] Probably, our-our daytime serial heroines would be far more interesting if they would uh grow up and maybe then all the adventures that they go through -- you could see them mature both physically and emotionally and it might help the story content. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm] (20:07)

[ER:] Actually, that might be um -- [ER coughs] that might-might be possible because um the-the range of years isn't so great that it would make a-a great difference, and make-up could be made to look whatever age you wanted. Might be --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But after all, you know, these shows have been going on uh [ER overlaps Elliott Roosevelt: Ten years doesn't age --] ten, fifteen years. [Elliott Roosevelt laughs]

[ER:] Ten years doesn't age people much. [ER, Mona Kent, and Elliott Roosevelt laugh: That's true.] Ten years is rather -- uh is rather--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But the [ER: Immaterial] children of the families in these stories-- [Elliott Roosevelt Laughing]

[ER:] Oh, well the children of course grow up in ten years, that's true! Have you ever tried to estimate how many thousands of words you've written?

[Mona Kent:] Well uh, a girl I know at Rinehart Publishing and I sat down one day and we figured out that you count the average length novel, seventy-five thousand words. I have written, in ten years, eighty novels, [ER: Well--] in other words eight novels a year for ten years. [ER: Oh my!] Including one novel I wrote uh with -- that had published, so that makes eighty-one.

[ER:] Did you --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Were -- did you write these on the typewriter yourself or do you dictate -- how do you uh--?

[Mona Kent:] I dictate them on a uh Sound Scribe and then uh um a secretary takes them off and then I-I edit them after she's typed them. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm] (21:33)

[ER:] Oh you talked? You had one of those Dictaphones, [Mona Kent: Yes] those machine things? [Mona Kent: Mhm] That's a good idea because then um it's not so much effort to um talk them.

[Mona Kent:] I used to type them and then -- oh my that's -- because they run about eleven pages--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, don't -- aren't there uh-uh several people in this business who uh have a whole uh staff of writers and they -- all they do is to figure out story line and then they give it over to a writer, or do you just uh go do every one of the things you sell?

[Mona Kent:] Well I did all of it myself. I plotted it and I wrote the dialogue too. But there are some who do just the plotting and they have dialogists who uh --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Isn't that what uh -- I be -- I used to know the [Anne & Frank] Hummerts quite well and uh it seemed to me that they uh -- on theirs, that they had other writers who -- they just outlined the story for that day to one writer and the next day to another writer and so on and uh they -- [Elliott Roosevelt laughs] and that way they got many, many soap operas done in a day.

[Mona Kent:] Oh, I think they'd have to -- one writer would at least have to handle a particular story sequence. I don't think one writer could take it today [Elliott Roosevelt: Uh-huh] and another writer tomorrow, maybe thirteen weeks each one would do. I never worked for the Hummerts so I don't really know. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm, mhm]

[ER:] Hm, Well uh I- I should think if you divided it up like that and had different writers on different days, the characters would lose their continuity because um there is some-- such a difference of conception of what a [Elliott Roosevelt: Mother I --]person is like.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I think I ought to interrupt here for just a second and uh allow our announcer to come in and then we'll come right back to this discussion because I think that we'll have to find out how Miss Kent really gets all of this uh material [ER: all right][ER laughs] and keeps it going.

[Break 23:29 - 23:35]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now we come back to Mother's interview with uh Miss Mona Kent, uh probably one of the real veterans of radio, the author of uh many of the so-called soap operas of our uh radio life, uh probably best known for her authorship of *Portia Faces Life*. Mother, would you want to take over again?

[ER:] Yes, indeed I do because uh Miss Kent said that she had written a novel in these past years besides the nearly uh eight novels a year that she wrote for radio. Uh what happened to the novel that you wrote, did you publish it?

[Mona Kent:] Yes.

[ER:] You did? And um uh was it easier to write than the other type of thing or harder?

[Mona Kent:] No, it was much harder um in this way, I had always been able to trust the dialogue to someone else for its interpretation and when it came to writing in narrative form, I used way too many adjectives. I got so purple I had bushels of old adjectives all around the room by the time I cleaned it up, and I was still overwriting because I-I didn't have the-the staff of actors to take the thing I wrote and then interpret it from there and I think I tried too hard. I'd like to write another one now that I've, well learned my lesson I hope.

[ER:] Well it eh -- you feel then that it was not really well enough written -- that you could write a better one today?

[Mona Kent:] Yes, I do. I was learning -- I was learning [ER: you were learning] on that one I think.

[ER:] Well, everybody has to learn, so I think it would be fun to have you try now and see what you -- what you've learned, because you certainly have had a lot of experience. Where do you get your material for such a continuous output?

[Mona Kent:] Well you know, I have a theory -- will you forgive me if I have a theory? [Mona Kent laughs] --that nobody ever leads a dull life, that there isn't such a thing as-as dullness. And when I go down the street, when I get up in the morning, when I talk to people, when I'm on an elevator, there are stories all around the place. All people need to do is just look at each other often or listen to someone else talking or just walking down the street and there are stories, far more than I would ever be able to write if I could write ten times as fast as I do, that have never been written, but are right there. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm] (26:01)

[ER:] Well that's a good idea. If you can just get your certain frame of mind that everything you do has a story in it, I suppose you're always um picking them up and then embroidering uh through your own imagination on what the people have told you.

[Mona Kent:] Yes, and that can be tricky sometimes too. [Mona Kent laughs]

[ER:] That can be tricky too. [ER laughs]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, [ER: well] why-why-don't you uh try an experiment on Mother and see whether uh-uh you can make a dramatic series out of uh say a per-- uh just any old day in her life?

[Mona Kent:] Well you lead- lead such an exciting life it's uh [Mona Kent laughs] -- let's take the un-uh-exciting part of it -- what about your breakfast?

[ER:] Well, I happened to have breakfast this morning at seven AM in um Annapolis [ER laughs] -- Annapolis, Maryland and-and um I had it with President and Mrs. [Richard] Weigle of Saint John's College. And um they um -- their two little girls, one of them--the youngest one, uh woke up just before I left, we left at twenty minutes past seven and um President Weigle drove me into Washington to take the 8:55 plane, and the little one woke up and came to the top of the stairs with her panda to say goodbye and she had said to her mother the night before, "Is this really the lady who lived behind the bars -- the bars, you know outside of the White House? [ER and Mona Kent laugh] Out below the lawn?" And she had stood with her face glued to the bars apparently. [Elliott Roosevelt and Mona Kent laugh] Eh so the only real thing she was interested in was to know if I was the lady who once had lived behind those bars . She was only four so -- [ER laughs] I hadn't lived there since she had looked through them but I was quite amused. And her little sister, age six, could hardly wake up, she looked half asleep. She just came out and stood beside her and wouldn't even say good morning or goodbye and she is six and goes to um school already.

And, um, then the maid was up to get us breakfast, a very nice colored maid, but she had only arrived yesterday and apparently had had a most exciting first day because last evening I was rather late in getting there because the plane was late and uh they had the whole senior class for buffet-supper to meet me at supper and then I went over and spoke and -- so um I think the maid was still a little dazed this morning when she came in with Mrs. Weigle bearing part of the breakfast and saucer. And then we drove into Washington and I took the plane and um met two or three people on the plane, as usually happens, who wanted autographs and read the paper and um arrived here and came home to the house and um just before I got to the hotel, ele-- the ele-- the uh taxi man turned around and said, "I just must ask you Mrs. Roosevelt, I thought you always traveled with a bodyguard, but you're all alone." And I said, "Well that's an idea many people seem to have, but I just never have had a body guard, not even when I lived in the White House." [ER laughs] And he said, "Well I just couldn't believe it when I took you all alone." So, then I came in, left my bag, and went off, and um got into a taxi and started eh down the street and the boy driving said, uh "Mrs. Roosevelt, where's Jimmy?" And I said, "Well he's out on the West Coast now." "Well," he said, " will you tell him that I'd sure like to see him again? I haven't seen him since we were in the Pacific together." [ER laughs] So I said, "Yes, I'll sure tell him." [ER laughs and Elliott Roosevelt coughs] By that time, I had reached the dentist and then um [Elliott Roosevelt: Came back] I went on doing various errands and ended with a lunch with John Goldman and uh a lady. That's all I know of my morning. (30:33)

[Mona Kent:] You have a story there already, you're busier than Portia! [Elliott Roosevelt laughs] You-you told there at least the wonderful story of the little girl wanted to know the lady behind the bars, the maid that you knew, the-the - the taxi driver. You've told us a story that out-- we could-- if we were going to put it on the air dramatized, we have at least six months of story there just in your one morning. [ER

and Elliott Roosevelt laugh] Because each one of them--they are very human, very warm. I love the one of the little girl looking through the bars [ER and Mona Kent Laughs] and also the panda too, that's a nice touch. But you'd have no trouble at all -- you'd have no trouble at all writing uh a daytime serial.

[ER:] I could do it every day, could I?

[Mona Kent:] Oh you -- yes, easily! One day would give you all the material you'll need for six months.

[ER laughs]

[ER:] I -- I think I'd have a dreadful time writing it, but you perhaps you could write it [ER and Mona Kent laughing]. I'd have a terrible time writing it I think. I write a column every day and I find that its quite hard thinking up things to put in the column -- no, I don't really find it hard, I find it quite easy but um the choice is hard.

[Mona Kent:] It's a wonderful thing, Mrs. Roosevelt, as busy as you are -- and you know, that's--that's what I've noticed, busy people often miss so much. They don't have time [coughing] to--to listen about the little girl behind the bars, they don't have time to realize what a tizzy the maid would be in because this being her first day, and I'll bet she was all full of stardust too. I can imagine them--the taxi driver who hadn't seen Jimmy since uh the South Pacific. I know when I get awfully busy I'll go "bzz-zt-zzz" and miss half the wonderful things that are happening around me.

[ER:] Ah yes, but then I'm a reporter.

[Mona Kent:] Well, I'm a fictionalizer [ER laughs] I guess. [ER, Elliott Roosevelt, and Mona Kent laugh]

[ER:] But if you're a reporter, you notice, you see -- you--you always notice what's going on around you and um I--I'm trained to notice because I must use some of it somehow to write a column six days a week. And um I don't always use uh half of what I notice but um some of it I've got to decide is worth writing a column about.

[Mona Kent:] Well, may I ask you a question now? Doesn't it make your life exciting to notice these things?

[ER:] Oh yes, of course, much more fun to notice. I'm always so surprised about people who don't notice anything as they go through life. I've um -- uh I think it must make life so boring eh because if you do notice, everybody's ready to tell you things. For instance, I got in from the country yesterday and um the little elevator boy was taking me up said um, "Well Mrs. Roosevelt, you don't waste much time! You've got just about time to get brushed up and start on the show haven't you?" [ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh] I thought that the elevator boy to be interested as to how much time I had before the show in the afternoon!

[Mona Kent:] Did you--did you deliberately train yourself or is it something you--you uh --?

[ER:] Oh no, I trained myself.

[Mona Kent:] I think I did unconsciously. I don't have any--any--any conscious uh feeling that I said -- I said to myself "I'm going to start noticing. I'm going to start looking around, I'm uh" -- its--its uh a matter of feeling too.

[ER:] Well, I think it's a matter of feeling and once you begin to do it, life's much more interesting. But, I think with me it was also uh the fact that it wouldn't ever have occurred to me that anything happening to me was interesting uh until uh someone wanted me to do a column and said "do it." I was in the White House then and it seemed to me natural that the White House would be interesting and um-- so I started um noticing things that would be interesting to tell people about the White House. And then the same man who was trying to train me to write a column everyday eh said, " but just notice as you go along every day because you won't always be in the White House, you'll be traveling around, you'll -- sometimes with Franklin, sometimes alone, or you'll be doing other things. Now, notice and you'll find that life is full of interests." And um that started me off uh learning to uh to notice.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Miss Kent, being a uh person who gets your information from noticing other people, you'd have a wonderful time going around with Mother because uh everybody speaks to her and tells her all about their problems. But, I think we have to bring the interview to a close right now. So Mother, I'm afraid uh we have to move on to another part of the program.

[ER:] Alright, thank you very much.

[Mona Kent:] Thank you.

[Break 35:23 to 35:31]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Here's a message of importance to every American. What kind of everyday citizens are we, you and I? Would we be proud to come face-to-face with those fearless patriots of 1776 who signed the Declaration of Independence? Could we say to them "we're working daily to preserve that heritage of freedom which you gave to us at such great cost to yourselves and to many others?" Well, work we must to maintain our great American heritage, work daily, hourly, not only for our own sakes but for the sake of freedom-loving people everywhere. Our American heritage of freedom requires more conscientious attention from the individual and any other form of government, but what wonderful dividends it pays. Ours is the greatest wealth of freedom, rights, and privileges the world has ever known. Let's keep it that way. Freedom is everybody's job.

[Break 36:39-36:41]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now it's time to close the program and to remind you that you've been listening to the Eleanor Roosevelt Program which comes to you each Monday through Friday at this same time. And this is Elliott Roosevelt speaking and wishing you all good day.

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