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MAXWELL AFB, AL 36112

# U.S. AIR FORCE ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

USAFHRC FILE NUMBER K239.0512-1640

WOODI ISHMAEL

6 AND 13 DECEMBER 1984



donated to the

**United States Air Force  
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by

AIR FORCE ROTC  
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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEW  
OF  
MR. WOUDI ISHMAEL

BY  
MR. JAY GODWIN  
AIR FORCE ROTC HISTORIAN

Date: 6 and 13 December 1984

Location: Troy, Alabama

01084502

MICROFILMED BY TIM

## BIOGRAPHY

Woodi Ishmael

Telephone: 566-0945

107 Franklin Drive

Troy AL 36081

## VITAL STATISTICS

Born 1 February 1914, Lewis County, Kentucky. Married, 1939 to Gwen Williams of Ft. Thomas, Kentucky. One daughter, married and living in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Grade and high school at Portsmount, Ohio, Graduated 1932. Four years at the Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, graduating 1936 with diploma. One night term of painting at Art Students League, New York.

Education is a continuing process. Over the years I have continued to study the works and lives of artists; European, American and even touching on the Oriental, particularly the Japanese.

More recently in the past five years, I have done extensive research and study in oil painting techniques from the Renaissance through the Impressionist period.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

For over twenty years until 1961, I painted in all mediums for industry, advertising and illustration and covers for magazines as well as illustrating over thirty-five books.

Since 1961, I have written and drawn a weekly syndicated column for the Associated Press Newsfeatures titled: "The Power of Faith." Most of the time has been spent on painting (oil and watercolor) and portrait commissions with spare time for lectures and demonstrations.

In 1956, I developed a program on the visual relationship of music and art where I draw in rhythm to music. This along with talks on practical art techniques and the column have been given to schools, colleges and clubs.

In 1964, I was the only courtroom artist at the Jack Ruby trial who transmitted three or four drawings a day via wire photo to Worldwide A.P. affiliates.

September 1971, I became Assistant Professor of Art at Troy State University, Troy, Alabama, teaching drawing and painting.

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, PORTRAITS, AND TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

For the past twenty-five years have been one of the Official Air Force artists. Have made over a dozen official trips and have produced over one hundred fifty paintings and drawings, half of which were donated and are now a part of the Air Force Historical Art Collection.

Portrait commissions for the Air Force include three Chiefs of Staff, sixty-two drawings of all the Air Medal of Honor winners and nine portraits hanging in the Air Force Academy. Travel with the Air Force has taken me to Air Bases and cities throughout Europe and England, Central America and the Far East.

In 1963 was sent to Panama to document and to participate in the USAF Tropical Survival School, spending six days in the jungle.

April 1966, traveled to the Far East with the Air Force stopping in Hawaii, Guam, Phillipines and Okinawa, but most time was spent in Viet Nam and Thailand sketching and collecting material for paintings. I had a ten day delay in route in Japan to interview religious leaders for my column.

Commissioned by the Garrett Corporation to go to Tierra del Fuego to do a painting of that remote area of the world. The following year they sent me to Frankfort, Germany for another painting.

February 1968 was "Artist in Residence" on the S.S. United States for a three continent cruise. Lectured, taught with demonstrations and did portrait sketches.

June 1969, went to Mexico City to paint the portrait of Senora Garcia Barragan, wife of the Mexican Defense Minister.

August 1970, painted "Neil Armstrong's First Flight" for the Neil Armstrong Museum in Ohio.

October, November 1970 was "Artist in Residence" on HMS Queen Elizabeth II for a thirty-seven day three continent cruise. Ports of call were Las Palmas, Canaries, Dakar, Luanda, Durban, Capetown, Rio, Bahia, Curacao and St. Thomas. I prepared and delivered fifteen lecture-demonstrations for the cruise.

February, March 1971 was "Artist in Residence" on HMS Queen Elizabeth II for three two-week cruises in the Caribbean.

January 1972 painted official portrait of Mrs. George Wallace, wife of the Governor of Alabama.

May 1972 painted portrait of General George Decker, Retired Chief of Staff of the Army.

May 1972, One Man Show, Shumacher Gallery, Capital University, Columbus, Ohio.

August 1972 sent to Clark AFB Phillipines to paint Jungle Survival School.

May 1973, One Man Show at Montgomery Museum of Fine Art.

June, July 1973, trip to Spain and Portugal for study and painting.

August, September 1974, painted portraits of Justice Harwood, Coleman, and McCall, Supreme Court Judges of the Supreme Court of Alabama.

November 1974 painted portrait of Dr. Ralph Adams, President of Troy State University.

April 1975 painted portrait of Judge Richard T. Rives of the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals, Fifth District.

August 1977 painted portrait of General Harold Vague, Judge Advocate General of the USAF.

September 1977 painted portrait of Dr. Leslie Wright, President of Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama.

#### HONORS

May 1975, elected to Phi Kappa Phi, National Scholastic Honor Society.

#### PUBLICATIONS

"The Power of Faith" published in book form by Simon Schuster, 1965.

#### EXHIBITIONS

Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio State Fair, University of Michigan, New York Manhattan Savings Bank and Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. Schumacher Gallery, Capital University, Columbus Ohio. Also, many portraits and paintings are in private collections.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That I, Woodi Ismael, have on 12-6-84 & 12-13-84, participated in an oral-magnetic-taped interview with JAY Godwin, ROTC HISTORIAN, covering my best recollections of events and experiences which may be of historical significance to the United States Air Force.

I understand that the tape(s) and the transcribed manuscript resulting therefrom will be accessioned into the United States Air Force Historical Research Center to be used as the security classification permits. It is further understood and agreed that any copy or copies of this oral history interview given to me by the United States Air Force and in my possession or that of my executors, administrators, heirs, and assigns, may be used in any manner and for any purpose by me or them, subject to security classification restrictions.

Subject to the license to use reserved above, I do hereby voluntarily give, transfer, convey, and assign all right, title, and interest in the memoirs and remembrances contained in the aforementioned magnetic tapes and manuscript to the Office of Air Force History, acting on behalf of the United States of America, to have and to hold the same forever, hereby relinquishing for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, and assigns all ownership, right, title, and interest therein to the donee expressly on the condition of strict observance of the following restrictions:

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Woodi Ismael DONOR  
Dated 1 Mar 1985

Accepted on behalf of the  
Office of Air Force History by

Hugh A. Coleman  
Dated 7 April 1985

Woodi Ishmael (Photo 1)

107 Franklin Drive

Troy AL

Native of Kentucky

Mine was one of the last of the Tom Sawyer-Huckleberry Finn boyhoods. I had a creek and a river, the Ohio, that I lived by. My grandparents lived in Kentucky although I spent my childhood in Portsmouth, Ohio. I spent all vacations & weekends visiting them. They lived in a village on the Kentucky side about 15 miles West of Portsmouth. There was a creek there called Kenny-Kinick, fish and swim and that sort of thing.

First airplane I ever saw was at this village. A Barnstormer had a "Jenny." He landed in one of the fields and we went out to see it. I was fascinated with it, I started making model airplanes out of orange crates. I suppose that's the first time I was conscious of aircraft. I went to the air shows in Cleveland a couple of years, that was in the early 30's if I'm not mistaken. There they tried to talk me into joining the Air Force, but I was going to be an artist instead. I often wondered what would have happened if I'd joined the Air Force then, of course I was only 18 or 19. May be best the way it turned out. I think one year Jimmy Doolittle won the races, if I'm not mistaken, I think it was '32. But it wasn't until '55 that I really got involved with the Air Force.

My childhood was very conservative, had a grandfather who was a lay minister, fundamentalist. Both parents were interested in music primarily. They tried

to make a musician out of me, it didn't work. I think the happiest day of my life was when I broke my finger playing baseball and had to quit playing the piano. But they did do one thing for me that was very good. My dad was an opera buff and whether I wanted to or not every Saturday afternoon in the winter when the Texaco had the opera on radio, I had to sit with him and listen to the opera. It was a chore, and I did it.

In those days kids did what they were supposed to do. I still sit and listen to the opera on Saturday afternoons from that early beginning, and I usually have been at the studio and will turn on the opera and listen. So it gave me a background of music and then my wife went to conservatory music in Cincinnati and I had a brother who was a musician except he died in 1961 so music has played an important part of my life. I don't play anything now, which is just as well. As a matter of fact I tell our band director here that I'm very quiet when I create. I don't make any noises.

Other than that, some of the other things I remember; I remember the monkey trial, the Scopes trial. I remember when Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic. I was born in 1914 so, let's see, the Scopes trial was '25, Lindberg, when was his flight, '27?

Godwin: I believe so.

I wanted to be an actor in high school and maybe I have been the character of an artist over the years as an act. Most people don't think I look like an artist. I've been accused of being the Chairman of the Board. I agree that I am, I'm Chairman of the Drawing Board!

I've often thought of writing a book. And I would divide it into the first half would be the "back 40". I think it took me 40 years to learn how to live 30, but I did most of my living and most of my creative powers in the last 30 years and the Air Force has had a very, very important part of it.

Godwin: You mentioned your brother. How many children were there?

There were just my brother and I. And he was a pianist/organist and also sang, but he was killed in an accident in '61.

Godwin: So your family was really artistic.

At least my parents were but they had no knowledge of drawing or painting. I drew my first picture when I was six, I believe. I had whooping cough, measles, pneumonia right in a row. And I wasn't reading well enough to read to myself, my mother didn't have time or my grandmother when she was visiting us didn't have time to read to me. So one day they gave me some crayons and a shirtboard and I made a drawing. And it was a western scene, indians, cowboys, corrals, the whole damn bit and they thought it was pretty good. I don't know whatever happened to the picture, it was personal.

I still, over in the studio, have two drawings. One was my grandmother milking a cow that I did when I was seven I believe. The other was my grandfather playing his cello. Drew that one when I was 12. As I look at it today, and I'm a little shocked at my awareness. His left hand he had cut his forefinger with a - well, it was a knife that they used to pull back, make shingles - and he cut his finger with that and it shriveled on him, it was

sort of bent. I was aware of that finger and drew it. That was my mother's parents. Now my father's parents I never knew. Well, I knew my father's father but my paternal grandmother died before I was born.

The Ishmael family went into Kentucky about 1825 from Virginia. They went into Virginia before the revolution. I've often said they were probably kicked out of debtors prisons and sent to Virginia and then they were kicked out of Virginia and went to Kentucky. Two brothers went to Kentucky - one was a doctor and the other was a land grabber, farmer, etc. And my side came from the farmer. I'm the last of my particular branch. I had a daughter and her name is changed so that's the end of the Ishmaels. Maybe it's just as well.

Godwin: Ishmael is rather an unusual name, isn't it?

There are still Ishmael's in Wales and England. It was changed during Cromwell's Reign when a lot of English took biblical names; zealots, puritan zealots, and geneologists told a cousin of my father's one time, it's probably in the family tree of "Isham."

Near Paris Kentucky, which is north of Lexington, they settled and at one time there was a whistle stop on the L & N railroad called Ishmael Chapel. There was a chapel there and also the family homestead. The homestead burned but it's been in my lifetime because I remember seeing it as a kid. And the chapel's still there, so there's still an Ishmael Chapel.

There are a couple of Ishmael's in Oklahoma City. Every once in a while I hear from one somewhere around the country that I never heard of before. Two

in Oklahoma City, one's dead now, but he was a doctor and the other is an oral surgeon. My daughter lives in Oklahoma City, too.

Godwin: Do you recall about your family tree?

I take the dim view of that because it's like the potato. The best is often in the ground. I get a little teed off at people who make a big deal out of family trees. Invariably, if they went back far enough, they'd find pirates, or illegitimacy or all sorts of things. Nobody's exempt from that so why don't we leave it alone.

Godwin: Woodi, you made a very interesting statement, which I would like for you to sort of expand on. You mentioned that you wanted to be an actor and that somehow art really relates to acting or acting relates to art. Is that what you said?

More or less. The funny thing was, my dad wanted me to be a dentist and when I got out of high school and I wanted to go to dramatic school. We compromised and I went to an art school.

I started out doing illustration. I never liked illustration particularly, except book illustration. And when you do illustration, you're actually director, producer, actor, casting director, the whole bit when you put the illustration together. The reason why I never liked illustrating magazines was because each magazine had its own format. You had to fit that format and you didn't have the creative process that you would have had.

Oh, book illustration was very good. I did about 35 books when I first went to New York and I enjoyed that very much. The money wasn't that good. It may be better now, but when I first went to New York in 1939, book illustration was at a very low ebb. And I actually did better with my advertising illustration, particularly in heavy industry. That was about the last to go.

Godwin: Where did you go to art school?

Cleveland Institute of Art. Then I had a couple of winters I studied at the Art Student's League in New York at night.

Godwin: Well, being a layman, could you tell us some of the techniques and some basic talents you had to have before you even began art school?

Drawing would be the first one. You had to draw. Drawing, then working with paint/water color, but drawing is the basis of all of it. It goes back, we know that the caves in Spain and Portugal, or Spain and France, drawings there are about 20 thousand years old, and they're highly sophisticated drawings so man was drawing thousands of years before that. I'm sure the drawing was before the written word, maybe before the spoken word.

It's interesting to watch a child and you see the evolution of man in the one child, a baby. Give him, at the age of six months or thereabouts, give him a crayon or pencil and he'll scribble. And those scribbles will become drawings, and by two or three years, he's drawing and communicating. He learns about his environment through his drawings. Out on the refrigerator are all the drawings my grandson makes, a lot of them. My wife puts them up

do. I got a pad, some crayons, sat him down, put his head where I wanted it and started the drawing. He never took his eyes off my hands as I went over that paper, and in about 25-30 minutes I had the drawing, tore it off and gave it to him. He took a long look at it and then looked at me, turned to the interpreter and asked the interpreter if I'd do his brother who was the second honcho. So I did one of his brother. I knew I couldn't do any more or I'd use up all my day.

So they wanted me to see a, some work that the military was doing for this group. They had dammed up two springs and put in some pipes so they'd have running water for bathing, and washing utensils and what not. They wanted me to go down and see that, it was a beautiful little glade where these two springs were. There were a couple of Montagnard soldiers taking a bath in one of them, there were women and children in the other one washing some utensils, pots and what not. Well, I knew I couldn't draw so I got my poloroid camera, and poloroid film, started photographing the kids. And we had a production line, I take the photograph, pull it out, let it cook and give it to the Major and he would put the goop on it. The Chaplain would wave it in the air to dry it off and hand it back to me and I'd show it to the kids. They learned to count so we counted up to ten while it was developing. I bet I used up a couple of rolls, at least two rolls of poloroid film.

During that time the Chief was standing back watching, a big smile on his face. We were having an absolute ball. Well it was time to leave, I started back to the jeep, the interpreter says the Chief wants to see you. So I walked back over to the Chief. We stood there and looked at each other for a

on the refrigerator and he is learning his environment about his surroundings through his drawings, so its a learning device. Most adults draw about the age of seven or eight cause at that time a child becoming self-conscious, sometimes he'll do a drawing and somebody will say "what is it"? And that gives him an inferiority complex.

If I had my way, there would be drawing taught, the way I teach it, in every school in the country. It's a learning process as well as being a third language, or second language. It can be a language, I've used it as a language. Being in countries where you couldn't speak the language, take a sketch pad and start drawing I get exactly what I want. And with primitive peoples, they recognize you as something different if you can sit down and draw for them because it's a communication.

You want a story? This bracelet, it's a brass piece on a piece of silver now, but when I was in Viet Nam in '66, went up to Pleiku. As a matter of fact, I went up to Pleiku to see Bernie Fisher, to do a story on Bernie. And when one day we went out to this Montagnard village. In those days they had what was known as Civic Action Program, you know about that. And a Major was in charge of it and he was working with this village, he wanted to know if I would go out with him, I said sure. So we took two jeeps, a Major, interpreter, two guys riding shotgun and a chaplain.

We went to this village, and when we got there we met the Chief who was a little guy, about 5'2", wizend, wrinkled, probably about 45. He had on a loin cloth and a GI shirt, so the Major said why don't you do a drawing of him? I said alright. So the interpreter tried to explain to him what I was going to

minute, he took out a knife and knicked my thumb and knicked his thumb and we exchanged blood. He clasped my hand and put my hand on his and his hand on mine, stood there for fully a minute just looking at each other, and he took this brass thing and wrapped it around my wrist. Made me a member of the tribe. And as I walked back to that jeep I had tears in my eyes because I realized he was paying me the highest honor he could and I had transcended 5000 years of culture and this guy and I understood each other. I got back to the jeep well, the Major says; "hell, it took me three months to get one of those". Yeh, but you can't draw!

Godwin: So drawing really is an international lanugage?

Oh, yeh.

Ishmael: Is that the type of thing you want?

Godwin: Yes sir. That's exactly what I want. What I want to -- Let's back track a little bit. Can you tell me a little bit about your formal training, when you were in college and if you had any professors or teachers that may have influenced the approach that you took in your art?

Actually I have four men who taught me drawing, or three actually; who taught me drawing in art school that stressed drawing very, very strongly and each one of them, each of them had a different approach to it which gave me three approaches. I think it wasn't until after I got out of school and over the years developed my own thinking and my own work that I really began to learn.

Art school was, oh it was, well when you get out of college you're not worth much, are you? So it's a continuing process, this business of learning. Actually, I think I've learned more about drawing and painting since I've been teaching here than I ever knew before because I had to communicate at their level. And the first time I recognized that was when I was artist in residence on two cruise ships: SS United States, Cruise in '68 and Gwen and I spent three months on Queen Elizabeth II in '70 - '71. And I had what was called art classes, which was actually a lecture/demonstration, there was as many as 85 - 90 people. And I had to communicate and I had to learn how to communicate.

And I think that's where I developed the skill of communicating and also, recognizing what I can give you in two or three sentences what it takes to learn to draw. And anybody can learn to draw. It is a learnable skill. Now, unfortunately, most of the people who are teaching drawing today don't know that much about it. I've had drawing teachers tell me, well, I never demonstrate for my students because I don't want them to work like me. Well, the hell with that jazz, they just can't draw.

I'll give it to you. When I look at a subject, I see the shapes; in other words I think abstractly as to how those shapes relates to each other and I put them down, I either put them down on the paper or mentally put them down as abstract shapes. And once I get the shapes interrelated, all I got to do is convert it back to realism, I've got my drawing. It's as simple as that. But, the unfortunate thing is that most people can't think abstractly. That's one of the things wrong with religion in this country. The oriental thinks abstractly about his religion. We don't. It's got to be an old man with a long white beard sitting on a gold throne.

Godwin: You mentioned three things in college.

Oh, you mean the three that the men taught me?

Godwin: Yes sir.

Well one of them showed form without a light source. In other words actually drew the form. If it was a round arm he drew it round with no light source. The second man was interested in showing form with a light source. In other words the light would be coming in, well I'll give you my hand here; coming in from here and there'd be a shadow side here and a light side there and that would give you the form. Then the third man was more interested in giving a drawing a life, making it live, giving it action.

It's very difficult to explain what I mean by giving a drawing life but you can see drawings that have life. I can give you examples of it. I don't have any around here, but maybe I do. Hokusai the great Japanese block print artist, at 70 wrote that up until he was 70, he had never made a drawing of any importance. And by the time he would be 90 he would have learned all about drawing, all the flora/fauna, all the things it would take to make a drawing. He said at 110, every drawing he made, even every line he made would be imbued with life. Now that's abstract thinking too, but it works. And even today I know when I'm doing a good one and when it's not very good. Of course, we reach a point where nobody else knows that except us!

Godwin: If you don't mind, just for my personal information, I didn't understand the three forms that you meant. The light.

Well, one is form without lights.

Godwin: Okay, now what does that mean. Did you draw without light?

For example. I can put in shadows and shading, but it wouldn't be from a light source it would be just a shadow and shading to create the feeling of form. That give it to you?

Godwin: Yes sir.

Whereas the other would be with a light source. I get a sense of form. Now with light is on you, I see form with the lights coming from two or three different directions. And it isn't simple. Now when I do a portrait, a portrait sketch, I will use one light source. And I'll have a shadow, intermediate tones and highlights.

The big thing, one of the big things in drawing, is value. Now value does not mean the price of it, it means the darks and lights of a given surface, running from black to white and one of the best ways of describing that would be on a piano keyboard. Middle C would be 50% gray; working into the treble you'd go to the white, working into the bass you'd go to the black. Now you can play everything in the treble, you can play everything in the bass and I have my students at times paint me a white egg on a white eggcup on a white saucer on a white tablecloth with one light source. Now if they can learn to do that. It's very simple. All you have to do is take your darkest gray which may be only 40%, work from there to white. Value is a difficult thing to teach too, it's hard for students to recognize. They think mostly in terms

of line. There is no such thing as a line in nature. Line is when you have a change of color, change of value or a change of shape, so it's a line.

Godwin: Woodi, I don't want to lose this thought, but I made a note here and what I want to do is switch my tape now.

(End Tape 1, Side 1)

Well, as I said, definition would be darks and lights of any given surface. Corot, the French landscape painter, made the statement, now painting, the first thing was a drawing or design. The second was value. Now that's how we read a painting, or read a photograph, is by the values. And the third was color.

Whenever I criticize a painting of someone's, invariably it's the values. They mix up. And as a matter of fact, I harp on it so much that one class I had over here at school, at the end of the quarter they gave me a card that said, 'Value, Value, Value, Value' because that was all I talked about. I have theory on color, but if the values aren't working the colors aren't going to do a bit of good. And if the values work, you can use any color and it'll work. You know you can have purple grass, green skies, and if the values are right, you're not going to pay too much attention to it.

Godwin: Is this related to perspective, I've heard that term?

Well perspective was developed in the 15th century by an architect and a couple of painters. All we know is linear perspective. And the theory of

linear perspective is a pretty good theory but you can't rely on it for everything. The Egyptians and Babylonians had a theory of perspective and everything was, the bottom of the page was closest to you, and as you went up the sheet the things at the top were the farthest away. Size had nothing to do with it. The size of the people is based on their station in life -- if Pharaohs were the biggest, peasants were the smallest. So that was their concept of perspective. I had a whole year of perspective, even the perspective of light and shadow. And it became quite a complex thing. You can draw a spiral staircase using perspective but you have vanishing points and eye levels all over the place. You're better off if you try to avoid it.

More and more they're eliminating the theory of perspective and relying on the eye to develop your feeling of things distant and close. It's one way of giving you a feeling of space, example: a six foot man three feet from you is going to be one height and if he's fifteen feet from you, he's going to be smaller. Railroad tracks, they get narrower as they go away. That's perspective. And you can let your eye do the work for you. Because the theory of perspective can be out of line. Primarily there is no such thing as a straight line, everything curves, even the earth, all lines curve, eventually.

Godwin: Is that sort of related to there is no east and west, that you're, east is going west and west is going east?

Pretty much. Or, one of the better; you lay on the beach, look out, you see the edge of the ocean. If you go up 300 feet, you still see the edge of the

ocean. And if you go up, 60,000 feet, it's going to curve on you but it's straight when you're on the ground.

Godwin: You mentioned in your resume about your studies of the European artists and the Japanese artists. Do you just want to give us some relationship and your feelings about their influences on you and so on.

Yeh. I think the main difference between the Oriental and the occidental artist is the fact the oriental thinks of things in flat space. We have more of a sense of form. It wasn't until the middle of the last century when the Japanese wood block artists were brought into Europe that, the European artist was conscious of flat surface. And oh, Van Gogt, Manet, number of the impressionists were influenced, even James McNeil Whistler was influenced by the Japanese.

Artists that influenced me most would have been Velazquez, Goya, Van Dyck, and on the Orientals I'd say Hokusai, Hiroshige, and Utamaro. All three were block print artists and very, very good. I have an original Utamaro downstairs that was late 19th, uh 19th century because a grandfather of a friend of mine bought it in Japan about 1894. And so it's fairly valuable.

An interesting thing about the Japanese block print artists was that the blocks would wear out, other artists would copy them and make other editions. Now the original editions were the most expensive, the things that were done in the 20th century would be the least expensive. I picked up things over there for, oh, for \$5 - \$10 that have been 2nd editions, 3rd editions, but the

Hokasi was probably one of the greatest draftsmen of all times, rating right along with Raphael or Michaelangelo. I have been very interested in the comparison of the two cultures.

Godwin: Did the study of these artists influence you in a technical sense, philosophical or both?

Both. Velazquez had tremendous influence on my concepts of portrait painting. Goya, philosophically. Rembrandt, I never got too interested in him. I've always liked the impressionists. Monet had a tremendous influence on me. Most of the impressionists, they were, they saw things in a different light, in a completely different way. It was a whole new concept because they didn't like what the academicians were doing, they wanted to break away from it and even, now today we think of the impressionists as being fairly conservative. And in their first shows, they were booed practically out of existence. They were so radical.

Picasso has had an influence, particularly philosophically. See, Picasso was an old master at sixteen. He could draw as well as any of the Italian masters when he was 15 or 16 years old. He had no place to go except for where he went. He's no doubt one of the great artists of the 20th century.

An interesting story about that: back in the early 50s, I knew Norman Rockwell fairly well, and Time Magazine had an interview with Picasso. They asked him who was the most absolute painter in the world today. He said Norman Rockwell. So a few days later I saw Rockwell at the Society of Illustrators in New York and I asked him, "What'd you think about what Picasso

said?" He said, "you know it's a funny thing. I can't take a Picasso book to bed with me cause it keeps me awake all night." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "He has taught me more about color, and color design than any other one man." Now here are guys who were poles apart, yet had a great understanding of each other. As the average layman would never expect. So they each had their place.

Godwin: You mentioned Goya as being the most influence on you philosophically. If I'm not getting too personal can you just explain, explain that.

Yeh, first place, Goya was, uh, he had a tremendous insight into people. He did two paintings, one of a carnival, or, which was a Mardi Gras thing. The other one was a madhouse, and you saw the same expressions in both cases. His portrait of Charles the IV and his family, when Hemingway saw it; he called it a masterpiece of loathing because, well, he painted them the way they were: imbeciles. The Queen was a nymphomaniac and insatiable. The King was a dud.

When you go through his whole life and all the paintings he did, he was very, very honest. He was probably the first painter to ever show war in its real light. He didn't glamourize it. His 3rd of May, his etchings on the horrors of war are very, very honest and very realistic. Yet he could turn around and do a very sensitive portrait of a child. His education was very limited, but his insight was just unbelievable. Does that give you.

Godwin: Yes sir, and I think this has probably influenced you, in other words, getting, trying to obtain this insight.

Yeh, it has. As I look back over the last 50 years, it's been a crazy career because I've done a little bit of everything. I've tried everything once and twice if I liked it. I couldn't be limited to one thing. I had a one man show in Columbus, Ohio in '72 at the Capital University and the Vice President came to look at the show. He said it looks like five men have done this show, not one. Cause I've done so damn many things over the years. Over in the studio there's a scrap book of the last, oh, from '41 and a little bit of everything.

I did a syndicated column on religion for 17 years called the "Power of Faith." And then, my work with the Air Force, I never made any money on it except for the portraits, but it was predominant. And it had a tremendous influence on my life ever since.

I came to Troy State because of the Air Force. Dr. Adams, who's the president, and the JAG, and in February of '71 he was at Maxwell and he ran into another JAG from up north Alabama, Hy Lumpkin. Hy asked him what he was looking for and he said he was looking for a working artist to come to Troy State. He said there was only one guy you'd have and that's Woodi Ishmael. He knew who I was cause he'd seen my stuff and he called the Pentagon. They said well if you want to get a hold of him, you better get a hold of him in a hurry cause he's leaving for six weeks in the Carribbean on the QE-2. And, he called me, told me that when I get finished with the QE-2, come on down, have a look. I'd been wanting to come south; I'd been wanting to teach. So it was ideal.

Godwin: I think we might just back up a little bit. I think what we're saying is that technically you're an artist.

Right.

Godwin: Good. What is your, this I think goes back to the insight; what are you trying to convey? (in your art?)

Oh God, I don't know. I did a show over in Saint Simon's Island a few years ago, and one of the newspaper writers reviewed the show and comments and one of the things he said I liked. He said, Woodi Ishmael gives us a moment of quiet peace in a troubled world.

I like that.

Godwin: Do you think that pretty well describes your art?

Pretty much broadly. I'm not up to letting anybody down or I don't have any axes to grind, right. And, it was a funny thing. When I went to New York, the idea was to survive. Of course, being a child of the depression, as you probably were, it was a matter of survival. You had to learn to survive, and I was sort of a damn fool to go to art school, but the idea of survive, but we did. And when I reached 40, decided I wasn't going to make a million bucks, so I decided to start doing what I wanted to do. And I survived and still did what I wanted to do!!!

Godwin: Well, you mentioned that education is a continuing process, and I think what I want is to delve into that a little bit. You keep searching in other words.

Yeah, right. Every painting you do is a new one. You start at the beginning. And I haven't painted since I had the lung operation. I haven't done any painting or drawing. I haven't felt like it. But, up until that time, I worked every day. On weekends, I'd go over to the studio/school. I go in, put in at least three or four hours on Saturday or Sunday, depending on how busy I was. So, even with the portraits you start at the beginning. It's a whole new process. If you repeat yourself, you're not growing.

When I lost the eye, it didn't bother me too much cause the right eye was operated on first and I had 20/20 vision in it. And the left eye was operated on in the next year, which was '74 and it went to hell in a basket. And so, didn't bother me, and didn't slow me down. I probably painted some of the best paintings I have done since I lost the eye. But with this lung thing, it's slowing me down. It wasn't til six months ago or a year ago that I didn't realize I wasn't immortal, because of enthusiasm. And I never realized I was 68 or 69, but all of a sudden now I realize that I'm no kid any longer. I'm happy to do this because I may be able to give somebody something to think about.

Godwin: I think we'd like to talk some about your research and your studies. You've really done some research in all painting techniques. And, actually, if you aren't giving away too many secrets, how has your research benefitted you and how can future artists derive something from this, Woodi? We can take as long as you want to on that.

Well, my suggestion is if they really want to learn is to go back to nature. If you want to learn how to paint a landscape, study nature, look at nature and think from nature. It's ever changing, but even so, I look out here now. As the sun goes in and out, I see changes constantly. But you have to learn to recognize them and be able to put them down.

Painting, oil painting is entirely different from water color. And in painting with oil, you have the opportunity to make changes, work over it, and work over it, whereas, watercolors, they serve an exotic medium from the standpoint that put it down and leave it alone. And there's no way of working it too much. Yeah. You're limited to your, the amount of work you can do. I can take any one of these paintings in here in the house, oil, and work over them if I wanted to. So you're never finished if you don't want to be.

People ask me how long it takes to do a portrait. You know I've done them in six hours, I've done them in two hours, I've done them in a month. So you never know. All depends on what you want. That one of Gwen, I worked on that off and on for three years.

She changed her hair four or five times and I had to change the hair every time. But, I would say go back to nature, study nature. Unfortunately, today the kids are looking for an easy way out. And there's no easy way out.

Godwin: Is this in life or in art that you're talking about or both?

Both. I had a very good friend who's a Choco Indian in Panama. He's chief. Antonio Zarco. I did an interview with him and ran it in my column one time. And he made a statement I'll never forget and it was on nature. And boy, every college could quote it. He said, all nature is good but there's bad in it. When we misuse nature we get only the bad. And I paraphrase it to life. All life is good but there's bad in it and when we misuse life we get only the bad. And most of us misuse it at times.

As I look back on it, I guess we're all just kind of lucky that we made it this far and as well off as we are. I gave up the idea of making money at it when I was about 40, as I think I told you. And the funny thing is I made more money since then than I have before. My first trip with the Air Force was in '55. I spent a month with SAC. I had to go out and be checked out by Lemay at Offutt. And since we were both Ohio boys, we hit it off pretty well. Then I went to Carswell, Davis-Monthan, and what was it now; California.

Godwin: Edwards.

No, it wasn't Edwards that time. It was a SAC base near Los Angeles. Forgot where it was. But, and Jack Ryan was head of Carswell. I heard the other day he had died.

Godwin: I think you mentioned some of your illustrated work. Ishmael, "Yeah." Godwin: You mentioned that you had about 20 years in advertising and illustration and I know that there's a lot of memories of those 20 years.

I had the Mack Truck account for 12 years which is a record. And I had Olin-Mathison Chemical for about 10 and Colorado Fuel and Iron for about 10. Heavy industry was a big thing. I did a lot of book/magazine illustrations. It was a funny thing. Every time I'd do a magazine illustration, the magazine would fold: Literary Digest, Woman's Home Companion, American Magazine. And I had illustrations in all three of those magazines, the last magazine they published I had an illustration in! Saturday Evening Post, Cosmopolitan, they didn't, I never really liked it because they were holding my hand.

Now, in the case of advertising, on Mack Truck I was part of the creative team and was able to give my two cents worth in as we went along and most of the time we'd do six national ads a year and the rest would be trade papers and that sort. I got so damn tired of doing Mack Trucks, nuts and bolts, I was glad to give up when the time came. But we went through five administrations, which was pretty good for the agency.

Actually, (I don't know?) whether you remember Jesse Stewart or not, Kentucky poet and writer. Probably one of the great regional writers in this country. He died just this year. He had a tremendous influence on me. I did a lot of illustrations of his, for his books as well as his magazine stories, and poetry. As a matter of fact, the first two illustrations I ever sold was for some of his poetry for Southwest Review, which was a literary magazine published by I think it was Southern Methodist, yeah. And is no longer in existence. I got \$25 for three wood cuts.

Godwin: What was the gentleman's name?

Jesse Stewart.

Godwin: Jesse Stewart. Woodi, can we talk about Jesse some more as soon as I change the tape.

Sure. Want to talk about Jesse?

(End Tape 1, Side 2)

Godwin: You mentioned Jesse Stewart. Let's expand on him a little bit, if you don't mind.

Well, Jesse was one of the inspirations of my life. He was from the hills of Kentucky, strictly mountaineer stock, got his education from Vanderbilt and Peabody, became a teacher and wrote poetry. His first book was published with 1300 sonnets and I think when he died, I think he had 59 books under his belt. He's the Poet Laureate of Kentucky and the young man, he was raised in a place called W Holler, in the outback Greeny, Kentucky. He finally bought the whole damn Holler which was 100 acres and Kentucky bought half of it, and it's now a Jesse Stewart Memorial type of thing. He taught at the American University in Cairo, he made two trips around the world for the State Department, and not only was a fine writer but an educator as well. He never really caught on in this country. He was more recognized and appreciated in England. As a matter of fact, they have a lot of these things in anthologies and I illustrated many of his short stories, poetry, and a number of his books.

Jesse was very dynamic man. Walk into a room, and he, whether he wanted to or not, he'd take over. And he educated, was an educator and had a great deal of influence on a great many people, including me. Funny thing, I graduated from art school in 1936 and that year he won a Guggenheim Fellowship, \$3,000 and was going to go to Europe and spend the year in Europe on \$3,000. He spent one whole night practically, until 3:00 in the morning trying to talk me into borrowing \$3,000 and going with him.

My God, right out of art school. I just soon try to borrow a million today as \$3,000 then so I didn't go and I've often wondered what would have happened had I gone with him. I'm sure it would have changed my whole life. He went to Europe and spent three months in the Edinburgh, University there, and then went down to London, spent some time there and then crossed Europe and wound up in Athens, Greece. Married a delightful, very fine woman, they had a good life together, and there was one daughter who's teaching at the University of Florida now. Unfortunately, his life ended tragically. When he was 49, he had his first heart attack, he had a series of them. Finally, the stroke two and half years ago paralyzed him, and he spent the last year and a half comotose. Finally dying, I think it was late spring.

Godwin: What are some of the inspirations that you got from him? What are some of the influences?

Oh, his simple concepts of life. He was very conscious of the seasons, and of the change of seasons and the rebirth of seasons. His poetry, as I said, his first book, I think either his first or second book, was the sonnets. And one

of these books, first books, started out as a term paper at Vanderbilt which they flunked him on. Wound up as a book! His dynamic personality had about as much to do about it as anything.

I saw him oh, two or three times after I moved down here. We corresponded occassionally, but I used to see him a lot in New York. When we lived in New York, he'd come to New York to his publishers. I know one time he came, and one night he was staying at the YMCA over on West 23rd Street, across from the Old Chelsea Hotel. He called me one night about dinner time, and he says what are you doing. I said, "nothing." He says I met Edgar Lee Masters today, Spoon River Anthology. He's living over in the Chelsea and he invited me over tonight. Want to go with me? And I said, you better believe it. So we went over and spent the evening with Edgar Lee Masters and while we were there, his next door neighbor was John Sloan, the painter; he came in.

Listening to those two guys for, oh hell, I was about 25-26, was unbelievable because Edgar Lee Masters was a walking history book of the literary world of the early part of the century. And Jesse and I were fascinated by it, but I've always been interested in literary people. I like literature, I liked history, and going to art school I didn't have a liberal arts background, really. But, actually I believe my high schooling was better than what they're getting in college these days, cause I had good literature courses, good history courses, and I had Latin and French.

Godwin: You mentioned that you were studying and relating art to music?

Ishmael: "Oh, yeah." Godwin: "What do you mean by it?"

I would draw in rhythm to music; whatever came out. It all happened, oh I can't remember when it was, but the principal of the elementary school where my daughter went to school was a good friend of ours and National Book Week, one year, he asked me if I'd come and talk to the kids. I said, well look, talking about illustrations and books can be pretty dull for 4th and 5th graders. I said let me think of something. So I got the idea of taking music that they would understand and drawing in rhythm to it either patterns or abstractions or realism if it represented anything to me or them. So I got some records, he said, well if you keep them occupied for 20 or 30 minutes, fine.

I got the records and took the record player with me and Gwen did the record playing and an hour and a half later they were wanting more. It really took off like a rocket. So I started doing it for schools and women's clubs and that sort of thing, and I would do anything from, oh, Bach, Beethoven, the Big Band sound, you name it. And for example, I would do the thing using DeFalla's Fire Dance, and I would do abstract flames to the rhythm of DeFalla's Fire dance.

And when I started messing around with the Air Force, I would do it at various Air Force Bases, Wive's Clubs, and that sort of thing. Interesting, funny thing happened one time. I was down at Randolph and I was doing a portrait of Sam Maddox, and he was ATC Commander. And Gwen and I were down there, I took her with me, and a Lieutenant Colonel by the name of Gil Amelio heard about the drawing and thought it was an unusual thing and he said why don't you do it for us. And I said, well, we'll have to get some materials and some records and he said, well that's no problem. So they got the materials and

records and he got me an easel and I did it for the, I guess it was the Wive's Club one night. God, I had a roomful of people and the ratchet on the easel didn't hold on one piece and that thing started sliding down, and I kept going down with it and going down with it. I wound up laying on my side on the floor finishing that drawing!! Brought down the house. It was a great act.

But, after my eyes went I gave it up because of the dust, using very soft chalks, and getting too much dust so I decided an hour's program was like eight hours of solid work. It'd take too much out of me and I was slowing down. I wouldn't admit it but I was.

Godwin: 1961, you wrote a column for the Associated Press, news features?

Seventeen years of that.

Godwin: Why did you call these features the Power of Faith?

Well, I didn't start it. There was another artist that had it and it was AP's syndication and it was basically a vignete copy and drawing of people, places and things to exemplify the power of faith and I went across the board in any religion.

There are approximately six or seven great religions in the world and I didn't limit it to Christianity, or Judaism, but I used a lot of the Oriental religions. All of them as a matter of fact, including Shinto and Taoism. There were many, but I would use them every once in a while. And I kept it until 1978, before I ran out of material.

When I came down here, I decided to do the Bible. It took me from '71 to '78 to do the whole Bible. The Old Testament was easier because it was more or less historical.

Godwin: Explain to me what you mean by, you actually painted.

Ishmael: I made a drawing.

Ishmael: As a matter of fact, they'll be some of them in this book. And a paragraph, a copy, and in those days I was going all over the world so, consequently, I could pick up stories from practically anywhere. Oh, here's one on Martin Buber. I got a couple more in there. That gives you an idea?

Godwin: Yes sir, it sure does. Tell me about some of what you remember in your research behind these people.

Well, actually a lot of it was research, a lot of it I'd pick up stories where ever I happen to be. Rio, you have the Christ of Corcovado. And a lot of it was interview. In the case of Buber, he was dead so there was a guy at Sarah Lawrence College who was an authority on Buber. I went to him and got some stories of his, read a couple of Buber's books. Buber was Jewish, a Jewish philosopher, yet he was a very strong adherent to Christianity. And he wrote a book called, I am Thou, which was a very, very fantastic philosophical book. Let's see if there's anybody else. Here's a couple more. There's a guy who, that's ...

Godwin: Dryden.

Dryden who was one of the first NASA people. He was with a minister, I think it was New Hampshire. And that's, who's that gal?

Godwin: Mary Baker Eddy.

Yeah, that's Mary Baker Eddy. But one a week for 17 years got a little thick. And when I came down here, I knew I wasn't going to be travelling much and most religious organizations have good PR people. They'd send you stories; the Mormans, they could keep you busy with stories if one wanted to use it. But when I came down here I decided to do the Bible. They said the Old Testament was easy because a lot of it was historical and literature.

The New Testament was more difficult. Once you got past the four gospels, you got into Paul and of the 26 books in the New Testament, he wrote 14 of them. I never had much use for him any way. He was woman hater. But, of course I couldn't do Revelations, practically impossible to do drawings on Revelations. And another one I didn't do, Song of Solomon. I couldn't draw them the way I'd want to because they would accuse me of being porno. There are a lot of books, particularly in the Old Testament that have no business being and the Song of Solomon was one of them. I did a series of, I think it was eight pieces, on how the Bible was developed, various stages of development. And it was amazing in the beginning how there were books that should have been in the Bible and weren't, and there were books that were in the Bible that shouldn't be there. And when you stopped to consider, not only with all the translations but in the Middle Ages, the Monks copied, had to copy the books and the mistakes that they made.

I've asked this question many times and even ministers don't know: What Bible was used in this country during the Revolution? It was the Geneva Bible which was known as the Britches Bible because when God ran Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, it said that he made them put on britches. Well if I spent as much time in seminary, I could have been an Arch Bishop by now. I have seven scrap books over in the studio of all that stuff. If you want to go through that book, you can. Let me look through there and see if there's anything you want. Let's see if I can find that portrait. No, not here. Yeah, slides. You can ask questions and I can talk and look.

Godwin: Well, I'm interested in your continuing to talk about the Bible, Woodi and a couple of things you picked up.

Maybe I shouldn't talk about the Bible.

Godwin: Yeah, some people tell me that they can read the Bible one time and get their concept of it and read it a week later and get an entirely different concept.

Ishmael: Oh yeah. As a matter of fact, you can prove or disprove anything you want to with the Bible. My feeling is that in the wrong hands, it's the most dangerous book in the world. I don't like what's going on in this country now with the fundamentalists taking over. When I started that column, there was a great ecumenical movement in the country. You don't hear anything about it anymore.

Godwin: What's taking over? Why don't you hear about it?

Because the fundamentalists, the Falwell's, and Jimmy Swaggart and people like that. I think it's dangerous. If my grandfather had been alive when I was writing this column, oh I'm sure he was revolving in his grave. I think the biggest problem, I think I mentioned it earlier, is the fact that we cannot see things in an abstract sense.

People ask me if I believe in God. Sure. I believe that we see it all around us. Seasons, growth, change. But we have to think of it in an abstract sense. For example, they say that we're created in God's image. That means that he's like a man. It doesn't mean that at all, because in Genesis it says in the beginning God created the world, created. So farther along he said he created man in his own image. We are the only animal in the face of the earth that is capable of creativity so creativity is the image. Now that's an abstract thought, but it makes sense. So that we are, we're God-like in that respect.

You find very few artists that take a strong religious view. They all have their own.

Godwin: Why is that?

Well, I think it's primarily because they see things in a different light. There is one of the portraits.

Godwin: That's your self-portrait. (Photo 1)

Yeah, that's a self-portrait. Now, OK.

Godwin: I'd like to pursue the, if you don't mind, we may be saying things that we said before, but I'm very interested in your viewing things in a different light. What do you mean?

When I talked about it, the image of God. The image is creativity. That's seeing it in a different light. I mean I don't believe he's an old man with a long white beard sitting on a gold throne. Another thing I find that disturbs me a great deal, particularly with the electronic evangelists. They reported a Christ as God instead as the son of God.

Now I've had people question me and want to know if I believe in Christ as the son of God and I said sure, we're all sons of God so I'm not going to limit it to one man. We had a minister in New York, in Larchmont, New York where we lived, who kept after me to come to church and I never came to church. Finally I told him one day, I said I'm about my Father's business on Sunday morning.

Godwin: What was that?

I said I'm about my Father's business on Sunday morning. He said what do you mean. I said I'm painting pictures. That was what I was put here for so why not. Doing that column for 17 years changed my attitude a great deal.

Mahatma Gandhi said one time, if everybody follows their religion to the letter of the law, there'd be peace on earth. People don't. If Christianity, which is over a fourth of the population of the world of Christians, but if it weren't so fragmented and would present a solid front, it could change the whole world. But look how fragmented it is. You got Baptists fighting

Methodists when you get into the Protestant religion, and then you got all the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholicism. I did a series one time of Christianity around the world. In China, he's Chinese. In Africa, he's black. There's a famous painting in India called the Blue Christ. They painted him blue because the Hindu believed that all Gods were blue, so they painted a blue Christ.

When I went to Vietnam and went to Japan, it was interesting to listen to the Vietnamese or the Japanese who were supposedly Christians talk about Christianity cause they put it in their frame of reference which was their culture, their history, their heritage and it wasn't like anything I ever heard. But it was the way they felt about Christianity. I couldn't argue with them.

Godwin: Well, you know what I think is we've got a very good background and maybe we can get in to some details on the association ...

Ishmael: with the Air Force?

Godwin: With the Air Force and even association with other organizations. Didn't you do some work for the Army?

Ishmael: No. The only thing I ever did for the Army, I did a portrait of George Decker who was Army Chief of Staff in the early '60's I believe.

Ishmael: No, I've never, outside of that portrait for the Army which they asked me to do, that's the only military organization I've ever worked for. When I got involved with the Air Force, the high command was very art oriented and very history oriented.

Let's see, the Air Force became a separate service in 1947, and the Army wouldn't give them any paintings. Now the military, various services have always had painting history. Of course, the Marines go back to the Revolution. And the Air Force was caught with no paintings so they first tried to get a couple of so-called fine artists do some paintings for them and they sent them to Europe; fooled around over there for a couple of months or so and came back, never produced anything. So they came to the Society of Illustrators in New York and wanted to know, they couldn't pay us; they had money that they could use for per diem, travel and that sort of thing; asked us if we'd be interested.

Well, we were and the first trip was in '54, it was an indoctrination across the country in "gooney birds". I didn't make that one, I was on the second trip, and there were two of us spent a month with SAC in early '55.

Godwin: What we thought we would do, Woodi, this is no way to tie you to any specific thing, but you mentioned that you first started with the Air Force in 1954, 1955.

Ishmael: '55 yeah.

Godwin: What I have here are some photos of your art and if we could just, I know you have a lot of stories in each piece that you did and may not have all of them but, for instance, maybe you could just talk about that one.

That was one of the first ones I did at Carswell and the B-36, the crew was on the ground, and as a matter of fact, I started that thing on the spot, then I took some photographs and finished it up when I got back. I was fascinated with the shapes that the aircraft made on the ground; the spaces as you can see there of propellers, wing and what not. (Photo 2)

Godwin: What do you think of the B-36?

I flew a mission with them. It was bigger than all hell. It was three floors from the ground to the cockpit. When they got up, we went up about 35 thousand feet and they pressurized the cabins at about 12 thousand feet and they turned the smoking light on and I lit a cigarette and damn near passed out! They never flew any battles you know. I painted the last B-36 to be scrapped in Davis-Monthan, when was that, '58 or '59 something like that.

Godwin: Look at that photograph. (Photo 3)

(End Tape 2, Side 1)

Godwin: Did you get to know these man here on the ground?

Not necessarily that crew. I did know the crew I was with.

Godwin: Was this painting here or at (pause) Carswell?

That was also at Carswell. The magnitude of these things was just unbelievable as you can see here. And the tail, oh golly, must have gone up at least six or seven stories. But that was the first trip I had -- in '55.

Godwin: Tell us, they asked you to come out to Carswell and do your rendition?

What they wanted was a couple of us to be indoctrinated in SAC and do some SAC paintings. They said we had to go to Omaha and get it okayed by Curt Lemay and then went on from there. I didn't do any painting in Omaha. We were stuck there for three or four days because of a snowstorm. This was in February and I near froze to death flying an old B-25 to Carswell. It was colder than hell. Actually I was sitting on a jump seat behind the pilot and co-pilot so I was a little warmer. The guys in the back, half of them wound up in the hospital with pneumonia from that trip.

You ever flew in a B-25; it's the noisiest, hottest in the summer and coldest in the winter you ever saw. I didn't want to but we put on parachutes and I came in into the belly, when I got in I said I'm going to have trouble getting out of this thing when we have to jump. The flight engineer said, don't worry about it, I'll be right behind you. He'd make sure I get out. We were at Carswell, we went down to Bergstrom because they had a, I think it was F-84s, there was a squadron of F-84s who were with SAC in those days.

Godwin: Is this still part of Carswell?

Yeah, this was a flight when the B-36, that was the navigator. (Photo 4)  
Those were old. Yeah, the same thing. That was a radio operator. (Photo 5)  
February '55.

Godwin: Do you remember anything in particular about these individuals?

No. We were only out for about three or four hours. In those days they were making 30 hour missions. That was too damn long, I didn't want a 30 hour mission to be in that airplane. I remember one thing. One night we were picked up by my project officer; matter of fact he and his wife were down here last weekend, we've been friends ever since. We were on our way out to the Officer's Club for dinner when all of a sudden a hell of a black smoke came off the runway. And one of those big things hit the runway, and sheared off his landing gear and skided 3,000 feet. Burned it.

Everybody got out except one guy in the back, they lost him. But these guys were jumping and they hit the ground running, everyone of them broke their heels. Well you can imagine, you know, hell, you're up (Godwin: three stories) at least two or three stories. As a matter of fact, that's the only accident I ever saw on the runway. No, I never saw another one. But when a plane like that would go up in smoke, it was a real burn out. Then when we went down to Davis-Monthan they had, I think, the first squadron of B-47s.

Godwin: That might be a nice series here, oh this is SAC night missions, they have those. I remember that one. (Photo 6)

Oh yeah, now that's a B-47, that was at Carswell. (Photo 12)

Godwin: At Carswell?

No, at Davis-Monthan.

Godwin: Did you fly in the B-47s?

No, there wasn't any place to put me. They didn't have much room in those things. I did one painting of a B-47 as though I were in it but I got my photograph of the interior on the ground. Yeah, that was the same trip.

Godwin: Was that the same trip at Carswell?

Yeah. What's that one.

Godwin: Let's see what these are? Warming up a drone at Eglin. You did quite a few at Eglin I believe. (Photo 8)

Yeah, I was down there three or four times. As a matter of fact, Bobby Burns, General Bobby Burns, was then the Commander at Eglin, Air Proving Ground, it was called in those days and he had me down there three or four times. As a matter of fact, I went down there one time when they had the fire power show, they used to have fire power shows twice a year, and I did a painting of the F-86s coming in dropping napalm on what they called the factory. (Photo 9)

Godwin: Was that Napalm Bombing, yeah, that's it.

That's one of them except that wasn't the one that I gave Bobby down there. This is one of them. I'd forgotten this one. But I thought it'd be very dramatic to be in front of the factory and see those F-86s come over and drop the napalm. Well, nobody's gonna stand out there and do it cause they could miss. So I got some models of F-86s, put them on wires on my backyard and built a model of the factory and laid down on my stomach and took photographs of it so I could get a realistic view of what it would be like of them coming over. And did that and I gave it to Bobby Burns and I got hell for it at the Pentagon. And he had it hanging in the Officers Club down there and when the Officers Club burnt, after the fire they couldn't find the painting. Somebody stole it. I'd completely forgotten.

Godwin: Oh, here's one I think that's real.

Oh yeah. That was when they had the first B-52 at Eglin, and they landed them with parachutes. Yeah, a friend of mine saw that painting and saw the close value of the parachute against the sky. He looked at it and he said to me, he says you can't paint that well. (Photo 10)

Godwin: What's that in the foreground?

It's a radar scanner.

Godwin: That's what brings them in?

Yes.

Godwin: This was another... (Photo 11)

Oh, that was the Thunderbirds at Eglin. It's where they did the bomb burst, they came in on the deck and go up and spread out and I know. I saw them do it so the next morning I went down to see them and they gave me a blackboard demonstration of this thing, so I knew exactly how it worked when I painted it cause I had to paint it from memory practically. Were they called the Skyblazers, the guys in Europe? There was a team over there too, they did this upside down, they started from the top, scared the hell out of you as they broke out on deck.

Godwin: These may not be in sequence timewise. Ishmael: Pretty much.

Godwin: Oh yeah, here are some SAC night missions, I believe you remember that one I'm sure. (Photo 12)

Well that's where I was sitting in the aircraft and got this wing and I brought it back and wondered what I was going to do with it and one night Gwen picked me up at the railroad station. When we went home, as I walked in the door there was a moon and a, probably a B-47, made a flight around the moon. I said there's my picture. So I used that plus these two.

I'm probably the only artist who ever did any paintings from an airplane. I did two, one was the painting I did in Vietnam flying with Bernie Fisher and I have a reproduction of it over in the studio, a big print of it. It's the only one I got. And Bernie and I went out one morning, in an Al-E. Funny thing is I went up there to Pleiku there were all these air commandos and there were about 30 of them and boy, you know, sandbags and all and when I got

there I started meeting these guys and everyone of them said, you gonna fly with us, you gonna fly with us, you gonna fly with us. I didn't have guts enough to say no! So I said yeah, so I decided to fly with Bernie, he was a devout Mormon. I figured if anybody had God on his side, he would. So I flew with Bernie. And we went out one morning, and that old Al-E could stay out for four or five hours and there was a convoy coming up highway 19 from the ocean so we went out and covered that convoy.

We were flying along and I noticed that the shadow of the aircraft was just on the other side of the road and these guys in the trucks could see the shadow of the aircraft. That's pretty interesting. So I told Bernie, I said, let's do a bypass of these things. One at about 250 and one about 350 feet and see what happens. I said and put the shadow just on the other side of the highway. So we got a truck, and these trucks were about 1500 yards apart in case of the ambush. So we got this one truck and we went around two or three times and I photographed and I used up I think two rolls of film getting everything I would need to make the picture.

And Gwen titled the picture, The Comfort of a Shadow, cause I'm sure that shadow made these guys feel pretty good. And next to the rest of the morning, oh we got a call from a FAC aircraft and they said that they found a cachet of stuff at the bottom of a, actually where two streams came together. So we went and destroyed that. We were out from about 7:00 - 11:30. And when we got in the aircraft Bernie says, we're having an offensive south of us, I may be called down there. Still want to go with me? What the hell, you know. Of course when I got back to the Pentagon I got a little hell for flying with him. It was worth it.

Godwin: Here's one on the Starfighter. (Photo 13)

Yeah, what is it, the 104? I spent four or five days with the first squadron of that airplane at Hamilton. And there was a kid by the name of Scrappy Johnson who made an altitude record with this aircraft. He went up to I think it was 88,000 before his engine flamed out on him, and he coasted to 96 straight up. Turned around and came back down, his engine caught on and he landed. But I know I saw him one day doing a bypass and I took photographs of him. I got two noses and one tail. I couldn't keep up with him, they were going so damn fast. That was in '58, I went down to Edwards.

Godwin: Was that at Edwards?

No, that was at Hamilton. We went down to Edwards and spent a couple of days there and the information officer was a guy by the name of Charlie Brown. And he wanted a Charlie Brown cartoon. So I knew the editor back in New York who handled Schultz' stuff, I got him a Charlie Brown cartoon and sent it to him.

But one day when we were there, he said he was gonna take a newspaper reporter out to interview, Ivan Kincheloe, who flew a chaseplane (Photo 14). And, well I went with them. We sat on Kincheloe's patio and had a beer and this guy interviewed him and while he was doing that, I was sitting there with my camera just taking snapshots of Kincheloe and various facial attitudes, and his wife Dorothy sitting next to me said what are you going to do with those. And I said I don't know. I said if I get any good ones, I may do a drawing of it. So I got back I had them developed, and I had two or three good ones and

he looked like a fighter pilot. He had the Wild Blue Yonder look in his eye. So I decided I had better do a drawing of it.

Well that July, I was going to go to Europe for a month with the Air Force, this was May and I don't know, for some unknown reason I decided I had to finish that drawing before I went to Europe. As a matter of fact, I finished it about a day before I left and wrapped it and my wife mailed it after I'd gone, mailed it to Dorothy. I was over there for a month and when I got back, Gwen met me in Washington and we spent the weekend with these friends of ours, had a party Saturday night and Sunday morning I went out to get the Sunday paper and on the front page I had found out why I had to get that drawing done, he'd been killed the day before. Now things like that happen sort of scares you. Yeah, he was flying a chase plane and he was too damn low, his engine flamed out on him, he was too low. To get out of that airplane, they had to flip it over and fall out. He was too low to fall out of it and the parachute open, so he crashed in. That kind of story you want?

Godwin: Yes sir. We're getting into the B-52s now. (Photo 15)

Oh for God's sakes. That was at Eglin too, it was the first B-52 they had down there. As a matter of fact, downstairs, when Lemay liked this thing so well he had it in his office, also downstairs there was a photograph of Lemay and I in his office with this painting on the wall.

Godwin: Did he take it with him when he left?

I don't think so!!

Godwin: Oh, here's Hamilton again.

Oh yeah. I think I made prints of this and I gave one to General John Carpenter, he's in Montgomery, isn't he? (Photo 16)

Godwin: Right, I believe I heard his name. I believe he's retired.

I gave a print of this, the reason why they liked it because I think yeah, here it is down here on the bottom, I had a quote from Sir Walter Scott:

Sound, sound The Clarion fill the fife,  
To all the essential world proclaim  
One crowded hour of glorious light  
Is worth an age without a name.

One of these days I may write a book. If I do, I'll call it One Crowded Hour.

Godwin: These look like photographs.

Yeah, as a matter of fact, most of them you have a hell of a time getting a photograph of.

Godwin: Oh yeah, this is Bushy Park. (Photo 17)

Oh yeah. These kids, Bushy Park was the school for dependents in England, and these kids were making rockets. Matter of fact, they got to a point where they had to make them stop because they were getting too damn good at it. I

went out there one day and they were playing with these things, they had officers around to keep them under control. That was '58 too.

Godwin: See here, as we're coming up year by year.

Ishmael: Yep.

Godwin: Berlin Airlift. (Photo 18)

I was thinking about this painting the other day. It was a final approach to the Tempelhof and that was '58. You know they went down, on the final approach, he went right down over a graveyard with apartment buildings on each side to get into the runway. And when we got into the area, we had a MIG fighter follow us all the way in. We were flying in a "Goony Bird".

Godwin: Is that a Goony Bird cockpit?

Yes.

Godwin: Is this one of the flights where you said you actually painted while you were in the aircraft?

Not in this one, no.

Godwin: Do you have any words on the Berlin Airlift?

Ishmael: No, of course, that was after the airlift. That was '58 and the airlift was what, early 50s. Went up to Berlin on Friday, had a Friday night in Berlin and then went to Copenhagen on Saturday and Sunday. It was sort of a boondoggle.

Godwin: Oh, was this in Iceland and the Azores? (Photos 19 & 20)

Yeah, both of these were done from memory. This one's Azores and, if I remember, we were going over in '58 and I was standing up in the cockpit behind the co-pilot. It was a bright moonlight night and we could see the island down there with these big billowy clouds, I made just a little pencil sketch. And about six months later I made this one and coming back on that trip we stopped at Keflavik and that was done the same way. It was, actually, to make that thing look authentic, I had to get a map out and see exactly what the lay of the land was.

Godwin: These were done from memory? Ishmael: Yeah.

Godwin: Did you, you landed at both places?

Ishmael: Yeah. In going over, we landed at Azores and came back to Keflavik.

Godwin: Oh here's some back in the states, in 1960 I believe you were at Holloman?

Oh yeah. Let's see, that was '61.

Godwin: Believe it was 1960.

Yes, that's White Sands. Some of those I haven't seen in years.

(End Tape 2, Side 2)

Godwin: You went to the tropical survival school I believe in 1963. Ishmael:  
Right. Godwin: In Panama and I'd just like you to tell us all about your  
experiences down there.

Well, I flew from Charleston to Howard Air Force Base in Panama. There are  
two bases you know, Howard and Allbrook. And when I got to Howard, a Colonel  
Bob Gleason saw me and said we got you set up at the Intercontinental Hotel  
and I said you're crazier than hell. I'm not going to the Intercontinental.  
I want to be with the troops and he said well, the air conditioning is out in  
the BOQ, VIP quarters at Allbrook, I said well, that's alright. So, they  
didn't know what to expect. A guy from New York, name of Ishmael, coming down  
there to paint pictures and I could have had lace on my underwear, you know.  
They didn't know.

Well, when I told them I wanted to stay with the troops, that sort of gave  
them an idea and I went over to Allbrook and got squared away and went to see  
the head of the survival school, H. Morgan Smith. Morgan and I have become  
very, very good friends over the years. When I walked in he said, what do you  
want to do? I said I want to go to the survival school. He said OK. Well  
the first day was in a classroom, the first afternoon. And the next morning  
we went out and spent three days in the jungle, up the Chagres River. And

there were 12 troops and two instructors, they were Panamanian. And they flew us in from a helicopter pad to a pad in the jungle, then we walked for maybe an hour or two, maybe an hour. Of course, in the jungle, an hour's walk you may get a mile or a mile and a half cause you cut your way through and when you look back, you can't see where you've been. It's so damn thick.

And we spent the next two days learning how to survive in the jungle. There was one over and under 22-4-10 shotgun that we could get food or water, turkey, small animals that we could eat, although nobody got any. And we learned what you could eat, what you couldn't eat, anything the birds didn't eat, you didn't eat. Anything with a milky stem you didn't eat. I know we were passing one tree had the most beautiful, oh, looked like plums except they were orange, on the tree not touched. So I asked one of the instructors, I said what's wrong with it? He said taste it. You talk about a bitter taste in those things, wouldn't hurt you. There's no poison but the bitter taste and the birds didn't touch it.

We finally got to the place where we were going to bed down. They built a lean-to and we all had jungle hammocks. And we stayed in the jungle hammocks at night and you got in it when it got dark and you didn't get out until it got light because of the nocturnal animals. You could hear them walking around under you. There were javelinas and all the snakes were nocturnal. We were in the heart of the bushmaster country which was very rough although I didn't see a snake all the while I was there.

And I sketched, photographed the guys at work. They had to make a clearing and build a smokepot so that the aircraft that was coming in the second day,

they dropped some supplies and maps for them to get out. I was gonna go out with the instructors. The third day, the instructors and I left about 5:00 in the morning, as soon as it got light and we walked probably three miles to the Chagres River. And then there was a canoe there and we went down the river in the canoe. The boys had to get back to camp, escape and evasion and the Indians were paid a dollar for every hat they got from the men that were going back.

And as we went down the river, we passed the Indians, a family, Antonio Zarco and his sons were the ones who were trying to catch the guys and they had left the canoe for us at the river. We got in the canoe and we went down to Zarco's home. I got to know Zarco. I saw him two or three times. He was up here a couple of times. Antonio Zarco was a Chief of the Choco Indian tribe and he was a brilliant man. A native, loin cloth type. I interviewed him for my Power of Faith Panel one time. I had to have Morgan interpret for me because he, Zarco, spoke no English, he always spoke pidgin Spanish, and he made a statement that, maybe I told you this. I didn't.

He made a statement on ecology I thought everyone should know. He said all nature's good but there's bad in it, and when we misuse nature, we get only the bad. And I paraphrase that for students. All life is good but there's bad in it, and when we misuse life, we get only the bad. I went to his house. As a matter of fact I still have, somewhere around here, some baskets that his wife and daughters had woven. And they lived in a house that was about 10-12 feet off the ground and the only way you could get up into it was on a notched log. At night, they'd turn the log over so nothing could get up.

And then, from there down, we went all the way back to Madden Lake in trucks that would take us back to camp. We went down in a big, long canoe with an outboard motor on it. But those three days were fascinating because I got a number of pictures, paintings. I think I got five watercolors out of that little trip and I learned a great deal. As a matter of fact, what I learned there put me a good stead of my trip to Viet Nam couple of years later. You never should be afraid of the unexpected. Most people are killed by panic rather than anything else. I saw guys panic. There was one young fellow from New Jersey who had never been out in the woods at all and boy, he went ape.

It was a rewarding experience and you got to a place where you weren't afraid of the jungle even though there were things there that could harm you. At night you'd get into your hammock and you were perfectly safe. You'd zip up and completely be closed. I know one night I got into my hammock and one of the boys was learning English and so he got into his hammock with a flashlight and was reading his Spanish/English dictionary. I zipped when I should have zipped and the next thing I knew I had that thing upside down. My arms pinned behind me against the tree. I couldn't even move and I yelled for Antonio to come get me out. He flashed the light over and saw the predicament I was in and boy they just, he and the other chap, I can't remember the other chap's name, just howled laughing at me. And they got out of their hammocks, came over and straightened me out. They bribed me that if I pay them off, they wouldn't tell about it when they got back to camp. Well, of course, that didn't make any difference to me.

When I got back to Allbrook, walked into the headquarters for any information, for the survival school. Morgan was there. He looked at me and said well,

I'll be damned. You did get back, didn't you. Well of course I was mud up to my knees and I hadn't shaved for three days and I probably looked like hell. But I had survived it and got some paintings out of it. I was in Panama about 17-18 days. It was a great experience. Morgan and I went up to El Valle which was an extinct volcano up in central part of Panama and fascinating place. The only place in the world where you'd find golden frogs and square trees. The trees were actually square. When they cut them, you'd see the so called rings were actually squares all the way down. It was a very fertile area. They cut down trees and put fenceposts in, the fenceposts would start growing! I think that's about it. I had about five paintings out of that area.

Godwin: I have some of the paintings here.

I think there were five watercolors. Well, that was not one of the watercolors.

Godwin: Oh it wasn't?

No, that was one weekend. We went up to a, I'll be damned, I'd forgotten about that one. Went up to a village 50 miles from the road, completely isolated and it was a Panamanian village. And I went up with the flight surgeon and the, Bob Gleason, the Colonel. We landed in this, actually the main street. These people were Panamanians, they weren't Indians. And the only Adobe house in the old village was the general store. The flight surgeon was treating them of all sorts of diseases and they were completely, I never saw anything like it, they were completely honest people.

I know Saturday night, all of a sudden I couldn't find my camera. I'd forgotten where I'd put it. Before I left Sunday, I found it. It was laying exactly where I put it. In one of the chairs on the porch of the Adobe building. Nobody touched it and the surgeon told me that he'd leave his medicine anywhere he wanted to when he left. It'd be there when he got back. They were gentle people. Saturday night it rained and the red bugs got bad. And it wasn't until I got back on Sunday to Allbrook and took a shower that they came out on me and I must have had two or three hundred red bugs all over. It was a mess. There were two villages: Guanico Areba and Guanico Ababa.

Godwin: You mentioned these were not Indians but Panamanians. What's the difference?

They were Spanish, a lot of Chinese of all things. Most of them were Spanish or Spanish-Indian. They weren't pure Indian if there was any Indian in them. For instance, the Indian will eat a boa constrictor. These people wouldn't. And they found one near the village, oh, on Saturday morning before we got there. And the flight surgeon went out and killed it with his own hands. Of course, he was a big hero. But they buried it, they wouldn't eat it. And, incidently, boa constrictor's are very, very good.

Godwin: It is? Does it taste like chicken or boa constrictor?

It tastes more like Lobster.

Yeah. (Photo 21) That's one of the watercolors that I did. It was very, very wet. Actually, I used myself getting dressed in that scene. In front, you see a vine, known as a watervine. If you need pure water, you cut the vine up high and then you cut it down low, and it'll run out and you'll get water. It rained every day, every afternoon and when we built the lean-to, you were able to get water off of the lean-to.

Godwin: Tell me about the watervine, I don't quite understand that. How does that work?

Well, if you put a nitch in it up high, it would let air in. Then if you put another nitch down below, the water would come out because of the air.

Godwin: Oh, I see. That's the teamwork. (Photo 22)

Oh yeah, that was the Army and the Navy working together on a parachute drop. Actually, they were getting this ready for Viet Nam. A lot of Air Commandos down there and groups of Air Commandos and doctors, people like that. But this was a group, Army and Air Force working together on that job.

Ishmael: There's another one of those watercolors. (Photo 23) These guys had the pemican. You know what pemican is. It's nothing but hog bash. And they could make stuff with it and make a soup out of it and it wasn't very good. Living with the instructors, I had rations. And it was a funny thing, in the jungle, the only thing I ever wanted was carbohydrates. Anything else didn't appeal to me.

Oh, that's Antonio Zarco. (Photo 24) That was done a few years ago. He is middle or late 50s there.

Godwin: How many were in his family?

Oh, there were, I think three boys and three or four girls. His wife died after I'd been there and he married again. He married a 15 year old! I haven't seen him in about four or five years but I understand he's still, Morgan was here to see me a few weeks ago and he had been down there, had seen Antonio. And Antonio wanted to know how the man was who made faces on paper! That's the way he put it. But he was up here one time. As a matter of fact, he came up, he taught all the astronauts how to survive in the jungle, the first astronauts. And so they brought him up to Huntsville, gave him an award and I saw him when he was here that time. What else you got?

That's Antonio's home. (Photo 25) I'd forgotten I did that. We had a dentist with us and he was doing one of the, I think it was one of the children or somebody in the family. I'd completely forgotten about that one. I did more down there than I thought.

Godwin: Did the dentist actually work on the natives?

Yeah, they were working on the natives.

Godwin: Did we talk about that one?

No we didn't. (Photo 26) That was one of the watercolors. And here they, as you see, they had opened up an area and had put in this fire for smoke and smoke signals. All these were watercolors. Watercolors with drawings.

Godwin: Do they still operate the school that you attended?

No. I went to two survival schools. This one and the one at Clark. And I went to the one at Clark in '72 and that was phased out a couple of years later.

Godwin: We're going to get to that one. Alright, I have those.

Have you got some of those things?

Godwin: Yeah, sure have. I think we're progressing real well. Sort of documenting history through your art, you know. But let's just back up a little. Well the next year we'd like for you to talk a little bit about the Jack Ruby trial experiences, if you don't mind?

Oh yeah, sure. Well that was '64, right? Twenty years ago. AP, I was doing that syndicated column for them, that syndicated piece called the Power of Faith. They knew I could draw well. I could draw fast. So they called me one day and wanted to know if I wanted to go to the, Jack Ruby trial. I said sure. Well, before I went down there, I did some sketches in a night court in my home town so I'd get the feel of what it'd be like working in the, well, nobody was posing for you. You had to catch them on the run. So I went to Dallas and I was there for a month. I did, at least 200 drawings in that

month. Except that only about two a day or maybe three would go out over wire photo. I was the only guy there who was on wire photo. In other words, once I did my drawing, we put it on the wire, every newspaper in the country could have it inside of ten minutes. And we do one for the a.m.'s and one for the p.m.'s.

It was a trying experience. I lost 15-20 pounds that month because I was on a diet during the day. I wouldn't eat much so I wouldn't go to sleep in the courtroom. Then you'd have a few drinks at night, and have a steak and go to bed and do the same thing again the next day. I noticed the other day Melvin Belli is over in India getting ready to sue somebody. Everybody at that trial who was in the trial, including me, was out to make a name for themselves. The judge, he figured it was his last chance of immortality. The DA wanted a federal judgeship. Melvin Belli and I figured it would make him a, what was the name of the monkey scopes trial lawyer?

Godwin: Clarence Darrow?

Ishmael: And he figured it was the trial of the century. Of course, I figured I was going to make something out of it. As a matter of fact, I had probably more coverage that month than I ever have before or since. It was interesting from the standpoint that you were actually visualizing what was going on at the time. And also, one of the interesting things about is was the fact that I found out that people depending on how nervous they might be would go through a series, a cycle of positions when sitting in a chair. Now the DA was not a nervous man and his cycle was limited to maybe three or four positions. I could start a drawing of him on Monday, I'd find the same

position on Friday. Others would make more of a cycle. Belli would change his position quite often. Ruby never did. As a matter fact, I have the only autograph Ruby gave during that trial.

I did a drawing of Belli and Ruby in conference one day so when I asked Belli to sign it and I said could you get Ruby to sign this for me? And he said sure. So Ruby signed it. He wanted to know who the artist was and Belli told him. So every time he came into the courtroom, he looked for me. And I'd smile, he would recognize it. But it was a mistake to do what they did. He should have been put away and that was it. Wasted a hell of a lot of money. And he beat them in the end because he died of cancer two or three years after the trial. It was a fascinating experience. I didn't want to do it again. Once was enough. Of course, they still have people covering trials and things particularly on TV. Not much for the newspapers but on TV. And some of my things went on TV too. But I still have a scrapbook somewhere of all the stuff I did.

Godwin: Here's something I know you will have some interesting things to talk about. You painted General Lemay, I believe it was in connection with his retirement in 1965. (Ishmael: Yes) Can you relate some of your experiences with General Lemay through the years, what kind of person he was?

It was very funny. I met General Lemay in '55 when I went on that month with SAC. And I suppose I'd see him once every, or twice a year from then on until he retired. And over those years I doubt if, ten years, I doubt if more than two dozen word passed between us. Never talk much.

And did I tell you this last week? When he retired and had an office in the Pentagon. I was in there one day. His secretary wanted to know if I wanted to see him. I said sure, I'll see him. I'd like to see him. Walked in. He was very friendly. We sat down, ordered coffee and we talked for an hour and a half about everything under the sun. He just did not have the time and he was too dedicated to what he was doing to get involved with people other than people he was involved with. I haven't seen him since. I understand his health is failing. He must be almost 80 at this point. He was a legend in his own time. The painting I did of him was in front of an old, I don't even remember what kind of an airplane it was. You got a picture of it.

Godwin: Yes, I've got it here. (Photo 27)

Well, you see it was an air coolant engine. And I did two of them. I did one for the Air Force and Mrs. Lemay said I'll pay you anything you want if you'd do another one. I did the other one. I sent it to her and she never did pay me so I told her to send it back! I called, what was his name? He was a JAG who retired and went to teach at the Ohio State Law School. And the ROTC at Ohio State is a Lemay detachment. As a matter of fact, I think the ROTC building is called Lemay Building. He went there, you know. So I called Al Kuafeld, and told Al I had this painting of Lemay and wondered if the ROTC unit in Ohio State would like to have it. He said I'll check with them and let you know. He called me back in about a half hour and he said they'd love it. So I was going out there and I took it out with me and they had a big presentation. It's still hanging in Ohio State, the second one.

Godwin: The one you sent to his wife? Ishmael: Yes.

Godwin: What type of person was he, General Lemay?

I think he was two different personalities when he was retired. He was a very relaxed sort of a guy. When he was still in and when he was Chief of Staff, even when he was head of SAC, it was all business and no foolishness. Even at parties, he would carry a glass of scotch around with him, but he'd never drink it. I heard the story one time that a gal came up to him and started some small talk. He was very abrupt and he says I just don't have time for it. Which he was probably right, he didn't. Very, very dedicated. I think he made some mistakes particularly when he ran for vice president with George Wallace. That speech he made in Pittsburgh was probably right! It just didn't come over the way he meant it. A lot of people didn't like him. He wasn't a hail-fellow, well-met. But if you could understand his dedication and his purpose, why, you'd have it.

Godwin: I believe it was 1965 you painted General McConnell and you said something about the pensive mood he was in. What do you mean by it. Tell us a little bit about that.

Well, he was having these problems with MacNamara, as most of them did. I don't remember saying that he was in a pensive mood. That was his official portrait, wasn't it?

(End Tape 3, Side 1)

Godwin: Let's see. I have two portraits, I believe, here. (Photos 28 & 29)

One's a drawing and this is the official one, yeah. I did a couple of others. I did one with enlisted men and then I did (tape ended)

Godwin: Woodi, I'm going to ask you to back up just a little bit and relate the story again that the special mission that General McConnell wanted you to do.

Oh, he called me one day and wanted me to do a little chore for him, was the way he put it. And that was to go to Mexico and do a portrait of the wife of the Defense Minister of Mexico. And the reason was that the Mexican government had not been a member of the Interamerican Defense Council. They would always send observers but never participate. And McConnell decided it was time that they did. So he went down and spent a couple of weeks with old General Garcia Beragon, who was the Defense Minister and was then in his, oh 73 - 74. And when he came back, and he and the old General got along famously. They both loved to hunt and fish and ride.

And when he got back, he decided he wanted to send him a present. He thought a portrait of his wife would be very nice. So he says, we'll send you down, take you down Monday and pick you up on Saturday. You'll have four days there. And I would do sketches, oil sketches and crayon sketches and photographs and what not, bring it back and do the portrait. So they sent me down in a Sabre Liner, what's that. A T-38, T-39? You know, that little four passenger jet. They sent me down on Monday and the Air Attache at the Embassy took care of me and went out and saw her on Tuesday morning and set things up and I worked from about 9:30 until 12:30 or 1:00 every day that week.

I had a Mexican Brigadier General as an interpreter cause she spoke no English and I spoke no Spanish to speak of. And I had four days of sketching and a delightful time. Finally found a place up on the balcony, the second floor, where the light was good. It was north light and what not.

The first morning we got there, she came down. She was a perfect 54. 54-54-54. And she had on a black dress with daisy's appliqued on it, but the petals were loose and they flopped in the air. I said, oh my God. What am I gonna do with that? So she asked me how I liked them. I said it's a lovely dress, but I want something simpler that will not conflict with your face. And the Air Attache looked at me and he said, hell, you should be in the State Department! Anyway, she said she had a blue dress. And she went back up and put on the blue dress and it worked very well. I used every device in the book to make her look thin. I had her hold a fan, broke the silhouette of her torso with the fan. And cut her way down and got her to a place where she looked pretty good.

And then, at night, our Attache took me to parties. And one night I went to the folklore ballet and things like that. And in the afternoons I could sight see. Went to the pyramids and saw the church, one of the big Saints there in Mexico City, and museums and what not. So it was a very pleasant week. Came back and did the portrait and General McConnell sent it down to him. And he was very pleased with it. Wrote a very glowing letter back about my visit. And he gave me, the old General Beragon, gave me his plaque. It's that one right there. The bottom one. And we never talked about it. McConnell and I never talked about it and, hell, this is the first time I've ever mentioned it. I suppose it's alright now to mention it. But, things like that, he gave me an opportunity to be in the cat-bird seat, really.

One day he called me and he had to go to Paris for a weekend to see Sargent Shriver. Wanted to know if I wanted to go with him. So we flew over Thursday night and back Sunday afternoon. You don't go to Paris for a weekend very often! And many times I went out to the Academy with him. He called every once in a while. His wife said that I was the only civilian he ever cottoned to. He didn't have much use for civilians. He came down here a couple of times and saw us when we first moved down here. But now he has to use a walker and I think he fell and broke his hip. And he's in this nursing home in Bethesda, MD. As a matter of fact, when I had my recent operation, he called and I talked to him. But we were very, very close friends. And outside of his problems with the bottle, he was a brilliant man.

Let's see. I knew Twining. I knew Lemay, I knew him. I knew Jack Ryan. I met Tommy White but I never got to really know him. But of all of them, I think McConnell was the most, well, he was one of the most brilliant they had. Funny thing. Chiefs of Staff have all been different and apparently they fit their time. Twining, I did a drawing of Twining and it's hanging out in the Academy. And one afternoon, I was gonna do it from life, and he and Maude were living in an apartment in Arlington. We went down and spent the afternoon with them. I did a drawing and some of the tales he told, you wouldn't believe. And he hated the Viet Nam War. He thought it was the most ridiculous thing we've ever done. And he was right. Of course, he died a few years ago. That's about it on McConnell.

Godwin: Do you remember some of the tales that General Twinning told you?

Oh yeah, he told the one about when he was in that, you know he was lost in the Pacific for about 23 days and General Everest was the one that found him. But they were in a, I think it was a rubber raft and the Albatross flew over and he shot it. And he divided up all the meat. He kept the entrails and he ate the entrails. That was probably the most nutritional part of the whole darn bird. The rest of it was tough. I remember he was talking about how men reacted in a condition like that. One guy went nuts. One died. I guess in a thing like that you separate the men from the boys.

Godwin: Is this the World War II? Ishmael: Yes. Godwin: Shot down.

They were shot down, I think. Weren't they? Godwin: And landed. Crash landed in the sea.

Ishmael: Yes and they were in a rubber raft. And I think Hank Everest, they were flying out to start a finding. And they finally came back in and they called the mission off. Hank says, no I'm going one more time. And he went out one more time and, by God, that's the time he found him. They brought him in. So if it hadn't been for that, and that's how, I am sure, how Everest got his stars.

Godwin: For that rescue mission?

For that rescue mission.

Godwin: Oh, I had one thing in here. The R & R in Matagorda. (Photo 30)

Ishmael: Oh yeah. Godwin: That looks like a desolate place.

Yes, it's funny. I was down, that's when I was working on his portrait. I went over to the house for dinner one night with he and Sally and he said you wouldn't believe it but there's a tree on a beach in Matagorda Island. I said, oh hell, there wouldn't be a tree on a beach in Matagorda Island. Yes there is. I want you go down and have a look at it. So I went down to Matagorda Island, as a matter of fact, I went down there at least three or four times cause it was a bombing range and they had people who ran the bombing range were also conservationists and they've built up a good hunting area because of deer, duck, quail, turkey and some excellent fishing. So, by golly, there was that tree on a desert. Well, it wasn't actually a tree. It was a huge tree that come in, the trunk had sunk into the sand. And this limb was sticking out and I painted it. And we called it R & R at Matagorda. But I went down there at least three or four times to hunt and fish with them. And sooner or later, Proxmire got a hold of it and that ended that! But it was an R & R for generals and friends!

Godwin: That sort of looks like the coast in Viet Nam in some respects.

Yes, it does.

Godwin: I believe in 1966 was when you had your first chance to go to the Far East? Ishmael: Yes. Godwin: And we'd just like for you to start off, take as much time as you want, just to sort of take us through your experiences over there.

Well, getting over there was rather interesting. I went from Travis to Hickam in a 141. And then a contract flight from Hickam to Guam. I spent about

three days in Guam and saw the B-52s take off. As a matter of fact, the Base Commander and I went down to the runway, on the runway one night when they were taking off. And we actually at this spot where the wheels were up for the lift off. My God, you never heard such racket in your life. I think there were, oh, 18 of them took off that night. And they probably all carried more fire power than we had in World War II.

Then from there, I went to Clark. Had a hell of a time getting out of Clark. There was a WAF Captain who didn't want us to go, apparently because she kept putting us off and putting us off and got in there on Friday, "I guess it was. And the information officer there was an old friend of mine. He was in the hospital with hepatitis. So then his wife had me for dinner on Saturday night with the head of the hospital, a Dr. Terro.

And I had an experience on Sunday morning that was rather interesting. He had three guys that come in from Subic Bay who had been very badly burned. Two of them had died. The third one was living and they didn't know why because he had 90% of his body was burned and it was so bad but he was still living. So Terro asked me, he knew I had cameras, and he said will you take some pictures for me tomorrow morning and I said sure. So they brought the guy in to dress him, take the bandages off and put on whatever they put on and I was in the usual green robe and the whole bit and Terro said you're not going to faint on me, are you? And I said no, I'm not going to faint on you. So when they brought the guy in, I said the best place for me to stand is on that table over there, look down on him. He said, you get up on the table? And I said, sure. Why not? He said you sure you won't faint. I said doctor, I'm not gonna faint. So I got up on the table and I shot a roll of film of this guy.

He died the next day. But I've never seen a turkey burnt as bad as he was. Horrible. So I got my pictures, got him his pictures.

And I think we went out on Monday night landed at Tan Son Nhut. Spent a couple of days at Tan Son Nhut and Saigon and I went to Pleiku. I knew the information officer there, Bill McGinny. And it was just after they'd put in a request for a Medal of Honor winner for Bernie Fisher. He said why don't you go up and get the Bernie Fisher story. I said alright, I could use it in my column and I could also do a painting on it which I did. As a matter of fact, the Bernie Fisher picture is hanging up there in the ROTC headquarters.

Godwin: Yes sir.

Ishmael: You've seen it. So I went to Pleiku. When I got there, here was 30 guys, old jet jockeys, flying A1E's. And they were living with sandbags around, doing their own cooking and had a bar. I met Bernie who was a devout Morman. When I got there every guy I met said you gonna fly with us, you gonna fly with us. I didn't have guts enough to tell them no! So I said yeah, and I decided to fly with Bernie. Well, Bernie was going out the next morning, and the old A1E, what is that called? Skyraider could stay in the air for four and a half - five hours. It was great for close air support and ground cover and that sort of thing.

So Bernie was going out the next morning, I decided to go with him. And they had a hell of a time trying to find a helmet big enough for me. I kept hoping they wouldn't but they did. And we got in the airplane. When we got in the airplane, Bernie says, hey, you don't have to go you know because there's an offensive south of us here. I may be called down there. I said well, I'm

this far along, I might as well go on with you. Might get destroyed either way. Most of the morning we spent doing close air support for a convoy coming up highway 19 up to Pleiku. And I got one of my best pictures over there that morning. As we were going to fly along the highway, I could see the shadow of the airplane on the other side of the highway and I'm sure that the guys who were driving these trucks could see it too and it was probably a certain comfort to the fact that there was a plane covering them. (Photo 31)

The trucks were about 1500 yards apart in case of ambush. I noticed that for a while and finally I told Bernie, I said do a bypass at different levels with your shadow on the other side of the highway. I said make it 200 feet and make it 350 feet. So he did a couple of bypasses and I started photographing. And I had to photograph the wing, the inside of the canopy and what was on the ground. So you couldn't get it all in one photograph. That was the advantage of paintings. Was the fact that you could construct a painting and get everything you wanted to tell the story, whereas a photograph wouldn't do it. And I shot two rolls of photographs and maybe a couple of little quick doodles on a pad. And from that I got my painting of the close air support. Later on in the morning, the FAC aircraft told us of a cachet that had been found. We went up and destroyed it. We got back to Pleiku about 8:30. Did I tell you about the, going to Montagnard village?

Godwin: No

The Montagnard Village. Well, you know, about the Air Force, military, all the military have what is known as civic action. The civic action where they worked with the various indigenous tribes and helped them build schools, build

things for them. Or, in the case of this Montagnard village they put in two, piped in, two springs. Well, they wanted me to see it. So the Chaplain, a Major, who was in charge of things, and interpreter and drivers and two guys riding shotgun. We took two jeeps, went up to this village. When we got there, here was the Chief, a little guy, oh hell, he wasn't more than 5'2", wizend, wrinkled, you know, the loin cloth and a GI shirt. And the first thing that was suggested, I do a sketch of him. So I did. I spent about a half an hour doing a sketch of this Chief. I set him down, put his head where I wanted it, got a pad. And he never took his eyes off my hands as I was drawing. When I finished, I tore it off and handed it to him. He looked at it and he looked at me, asked the interpreter if I'd do his brother who was the second honcho. So I did his brother.

I realized I couldn't draw all day so they wanted me to see the springs. We walked down there and the kids in a village like that, are the most important thing. Everybody takes care of them. And of course, they all had on nothing but their birthday suits. And as I walked down to the springs, I had five kids on each hand. Each of them had a hold of a finger. A lot of laughing and a lot of carrying on. We got down there and I saw all that, and I knew I couldn't sketch so I got a poloroid camera, and some film, started taking pictures of them. We had a production line going. I'd take the picture, the Chaplain would put the goop on it and the Major would wave it in the air and hand it back to me and I'd show it to them. I taught them to count to ten because it took to the count of ten to develop the film. I must have used up two or three rolls of film. The old Chief was standing back there, big smile on his face.

Godwin: You know you have a painting called Montagnard Madonna. (Photo 32)

Ishmael: Yes, I know. Godwin: Was this in the same trip?

Ishmael: No. It was the same trip but it wasn't the same tribe. That afternoon, we went over to another tribe that was near that was having a funeral. A baby had died. And it was sort of like an Irish Wake, they had a band and they had jugs of wine and food. I drank the wine but I wouldn't eat any of the food. And as I was shooting, I would shoot into a group that Montagnard Madonna was a group of women sitting on the ground. And it wasn't until I got back to the states and had the film developed that I saw this picture, there must have been at least five or six women there. And she was sitting there with a baby, a boy, between her legs and the expression on her face, to me, expressed Viet Nam.

So I painted that one and as a matter of fact, that one has gotten more mileage than any other picture I've ever done. It has, and it changed thinking in the face of paintings of the Air Force. I was painting something they saw. I wasn't doing any hardware. I was painting the environment. I think that's as important as the hardware. There are plenty of guys who can paint the hardware and do a good job of it so I started doing more of that sort of thing. I thought that was important.

Godwin: We have that painting Montagnard Madonna.

I've got one down downstairs too. Have you got one there? Oh, yeah.

Godwin: What you said was interesting. What do you mean that sort of changed your thinking or

It changed my thinking particularly cause I felt that this was important because it was what the military saw, was the environment that they were in. And that boy was actually nursing. You notice he's got a little bracelet on his ankle, too. You know the Montagnard's were not Viet Nameese. They were more like the tribes in Southern Luzon. And how they got there and how long they've been there, nobody knows. And of course, they have always been second class citizens, the French treated them as second class citizens and the Viet Nameese did. They help people and they make fantastic fighters. They fought for us. And they're primitive. They're a very primitive society.

I drank their wine and it was very interesting. They have these jugs about, oh, maybe almost three feet high and the women would chew up the rice and spit it into the jug and there'd be a layer of rice, and a layer crushed sugar cane, another layer of rice, crushed sugar cane, layer on quite a ways, then they filled it with water and let it ferment overnight. And in that country it would ferment overnight. And then you would take a bamboo straw, piece of bamboo run it down and there would be what was known as cheater stick which laid across the top; the water would come clear up to the top, lay across the top of the jug with another piece down about an inch and a half and that was how much you were suppose to drink. And you'd kneel down and drink it. Most people when I tell that story to them, is very repulsive to them and you think that women would chew up the rice but once it fermented, it was alcohol.

I saw the same thing in Panama, San Blas Islands. The Indians down there made their liquor the same way, approximately. Except they boiled it. They would take corn, chew it up, spit into a vat and then crush the sugar cane and put that in it and then boil it until it got as black as your shoe and then cool

it. The way they cool it would be pour it into huge canoes and all the members would sit there with fans and cool it down. Then they'd have a party, would last three or four days and the hangovers must have been hell cause I tasted the stuff. No way.

(End Tape 3, Side 2)

Godwin: We're still in the Far East and in Việt Nam. Let me show you some of the paintings I have here. This is the one you related to, about Bernie Fisher.

Right. Yeah, that's it.

Godwin: What is this photo here or painting? (Photo 33)

That is a photo, it isn't a painting and that was where the A1E pilots lived. And they had a patio and we usually had our cocktails out on the patio.

Godwin: Here's some I think will probably bring back some memories. I seem to remember that one of the Jolly Greens. (Photo 34)

Oh yeah, I'll be damn. Yeah, I went up to Udorn to spend, actually I was only there 24 hours and I spent a day with that squadron of Jolly Green Giants and I got, I'd forgotten about this drawing, but I also got a painting out of one of the stories they told. Oh God, I'd completely forgotten about that one.

Godwin: Is this the painting you're talking about here? Ishnael: Yeah

Godwin: What's the name of that one? (Photo 35)

I don't know what it's called, but I met the pilot who had been down for 24 hours. He was in Laos and they had a hell of a time getting him out. He was up in a box canyon and enemy were all around him. So he had a radio and they told him to walk down to the end of the canyon. They tried to get him out. It took him all day to get down to the end of the canyon. Fortunately he was from Idaho so he knew that type of country and he, as a matter of escape and evasion getting down there and the chopper tried to get him out and tried a couple of times and couldn't make it. They had him to get up on a high little rise in the canyon and the chopper made one more attempt, at that time when the red light was on, but they finally got him out and brought him back and after that experience, the only thing he had wrong with him, he had a little scratch on his forehead cause when I saw him a few days later he had a bandaid on.

Godwin: Did the Jolly Greens tell you any more of their experiences over there, rescue?

Oh yeah, there were a number of experiences they had and they lost one helicopter, one crew, oh, when the daggone thing blew up. They were quite a bunch of guys. But they were bringing them out every chance they could get. That's the only painting I did of it. I was in Udorn. I flew up one night with a courier flight. One night a courier flight would go to Udorn, Bangkok and back to Tan Son NHut. And the next night they'd go from Tan Son NHut to

Bangkok to Udorn and back. So I picked them up the next night about 3:00 and got back into Tan Son NHut about six in the morning. Over there, I was flying at night and working in the day. I got to a place where I could sleep standing up!

And after I left Thailand, I went to Japan, had a few days R & R, I also had a delay in route in my orders because AP picked up a tab for another week or ten days in Japan. They had money over there they couldn't get out so that was the only way they could spend it. So they gave me a couple of thousand dollars. I picked up stories for my column, went to Hiroshimá which was a very interesting experience. I took a night train to Hiroshima. And I was the only American on board, all Japanese. We left Tokyo at 6:00 at night. I went in, found my car and my berth, sat down.

Few minutes later, oh there were some guys on the other side of the aisle, some in front of me, a few minutes later this young lady, Japanese, and her husband came in and she was in full Japanese regalia. Headdress the whole bit and very pregnant. So they kissed goodbye and he left. She sat down opposite me. She had the lower berth and I had the upper and she sat there and was crying. Well, it was a little embarrassing cause everybody was looking at me. I didn't have a damn thing to do with it. So I decided to get up and leave. And I went to the next car which was a first class car and then there was the diner. So I went through the first class car to the diner and there were two little Japanese girls had the seats apart, setting there curled up and as I passed, they giggled which they always do.

And I went out to the diner and had dinner, a couple drinks and dinner with two Japanese men and a Japanese gal. Fortunately, the gal spoke excellent English so we were able to have a good conversation. They were very curious about the fact that I could eat as well as they could with chopsticks. And I'd used chopsticks and it would break them up. I'd go into a restaurant, eat with chopsticks and all the waiters would gather around, watch me because apparently a lot of Americans couldn't. Anyway, on the way back through the first class car, these two little gals giggled at me again.

I got back to my pullman, it was only about 7:00 and all the berths were made up. I didn't want to go to bed and what was I gonna do. So I said well, I'll get a sketch pad and a poloroid camera, I'll go back and talk to those little girls. So I got a sketch pad and some pencils, a poloroid camera and film and went back and sat down with them. Well their English was about as good as my Japanese, maybe three or four words.

But the funny thing, Jay, was the fact that we sat there all evening and could communicate. How we did it, I don't know. I took poloroid shots of them, made sketches of them. They ran a beauty parlor in a town near Nagasaki. They'd been on a buying trip to Tokyo and one was 19 the other was 21. And I told them that I had a 21 year old so from then on it was Papa San. They were sitting opposite me. All of a sudden they looked at me and they started talking to each other. One jumped up on the seat and pulled down a bag off the rack and got out a needle and thread. My pocket was ripped and she was going to sew up my pocket for me and, which she did. She sat on my lap and sewed up my pocket for me.

I told Gwen, I said if I ever had that kind of service at home, we'd be something. Well, I took poloroid shots, gave them the poloroid shots, some sketches of them. Finally a little boy across the aisle was enjoying our fun so much I invited him over. So he came over. The four of us had a great time together and I still don't know how we were able to communicate. But we were. So it was getting around 10:30/11:00, I asked them if they'd like some coffee. They said yes. So we went to the diner and they had, I think they had tea, and I had coffee. But they wouldn't let me pay for it. They bought their own tea. So we said good night and I went to bed. It was a very uncomfortable night because the berths are so damn short and I'm so doggone tall. And I never did see the little Japanese girl again, the pregnant one.

I was awake the next morning, oh golly, I, in those days woke up early and we were due into Hiroshima about 7:30 and it must have been 5:30 when I got dressed. Diner wasn't even open. And I went and sat down the aisle from the two girls on the opposite side. Finally they started stirring, woke up and made themselves fresh and we all went to breakfast. Again, they wouldn't let me pay for breakfast. And we were getting ready coming into the outskirts of Hiroshima and I went and got my bags, stood in the vestibule and they followed me and stood there looking up at me. They didn't say anything, finally, one of them ... oh, on our way back from breakfast they stopped, made me sit down, one of them jumped up and pulled down another bag, they gave me a present. It was a yoyo that lights up cause I'd been giving them pictures and what not. While in the vestibule waiting for the train to stop, one of them looked up at me, took her forefinger and made the sign of tears running down her cheek. They were going to miss me. That was very touching. I got off the train and the last I saw of them was they were standing in the vestibule, each of them showing me that tears were running down their face.

I called it Night Train to Hiroshima, of course, from then on it was the horrors of Hiroshima. I went down to interview a Japanese who had been saved by the Jesuits, and he wanted to be a Jesuit priest which he eventually was. But the day of the bomb he was swimming in one of the rivers, or I think seven tributaries of one river going through the city. He was swimming in one of the tributaries and he was diving into the water when the bomb exploded, so it got him on the back. And the Jesuits found him and saved his life and he wanted to be a Jesuit priest. His family were Buddhists and here was a case of a family of Buddhists who educated their son to be a Jesuit priest. And so I met him, got his story, went to see all the horror of the bombing and then spent part of the afternoon in the hospital where they were treating these people and got a train back that night to Tokyo.

That was a part of it and I picked up some other stories around Tokyo and I spent an evening with a Japanese, actually, no he wasn't Japanese, he was American who taught at one of the Japanese universities. And I visited a number of the new Japanese religions or sects. A lot of them sprang up after we took over Japan. Some of them were, well Buddhism in Japan was never very strong because the priest didn't do much and there was one Buddhist sect where the laymen did all the work and that was called Risho Kosegai and they had built up a tremendous denominational group. I think there were about 50 or 60 new sects of Buddhism and, of course Shintoism, Emperor worship, went out. There was another one called Soko Gaikai, which was a very militant group.

You see Christianity went into Japan in 1640 and today less than 10% of the Japanese are Christian, yet since World War II, 30 million bibles have been either sold or given away in Japan with only, I think about 950,000

Christians. I met a Japanese Doctor Watanabe who was the cultural advisor to the Air Force in Japan and I had lunch with him one day and then spent part of an afternoon with him and it was very interesting. He said he was a Christian. He said I still have a Buddhist and Shinto Shrine in my home. His grandfather was a Samurai warrior, had been converted to Christianity listening to the organ music and his father had been a Baptist minister all his life. But Doctor Watanabe said I have two souls and I find no conflict between them which is a very unusual thing. Probably that's one of the reasons why we don't understand the Oriental.

He saw no conflict between being a Christian and having Shinto and Buddhists shrines in his home. I went down to Okinawa for a couple of days. I didn't paint down there. I just went down to see it. I wanted to see the Teahouse of the August Moon. I went up when I was in Naha which is one base and then Kadena is the other base, but I didn't do any painting there and all my time in Japan was spent, well I was at Tachikawa, and I was at, what was the Headquarters?

Godwin: Fuchu.

Fuchu was headquarters, yeah. I was at Tachikawa, at Fuchu and I stayed at the Armed Forces Hotel. What was that called? You ever stayed there?

Godwin: Yes, but I've forgotten.

I've forgotten the name of it. And the rest of the time was spent sight-seeing. Went up to Akoni, and went to Kyoto, which is a fantastic city. You know it was the only city that wasn't bombed in Japan because they were trying to save the culture. Well that about does it.

Godwin: Oh I wanted to just back up just for a minute before we leave. Viet Nam, now do you have any thoughts about this? You know the Jolly Greens really exemplified the actual value we place on life, I think. Ishmael: Oh yeah, right. Godwin: And what I'd like for you to do is just tell me a little bit more about your experiences and thoughts about your visit to Viet Nam and not only that, the whole Viet Nam situation as you saw it.

Well, in '66, it was an adventure for me, it was an experience. At that time I wasn't too conscious politically. I had seen the start of it in Panama in '63. I was more interested in the visual than the, it wasn't until after I got back a few years later that I got aware of the political aspects of it.

As a matter of fact, I feel it was one of our big mistakes of our country was what we got involved in over there. Twining said years before, that we should never be involved in a ground war in Southeast Asia. I have a feeling if Truman had left MacArthur alone in Korea, we'd have never been involved in Southeast Asia. We have a faculty of being on the wrong side a lot of times. I think we were then. Ho Chi Minh at one time was very favorable to the United States. And we saw what happened to the French. We knew what happened to them and we were no different from that. But when I was there, they say it was a big adventure and being with the Air Force, you saw very little of the nitty gritty.

It was very funny, one day I was at Tan Son Nhut, and we had a control tower on the opposite side of the field from the commercial control tower. We were standing on it and we looked back and knew that the Viet Cong were somewhere in the back. I said one of these days they're gonna blow up this control tower. They did the next day. Fortunately I was on my way to Pleiku, but they got it. When I was in Tan Son Nhut, I stayed with a group of officers in the building in Saigon and we had Chinese mercenaries guarding the building, big wall around it, iron gates and what not. And to go out and eat at night, you were very careful where you went. We went to the Rex where the restaurant was up on the top floor. One night we went to a Chinese place called Cheap Charlie's. It was on the ground floor, but we got way in the back cause they had a habit of throwing them hand grenades occasionally, but I never saw anything like that.

Even in Pleiku, the night I left, I was waiting for a 130 to come in and he was due in about 12:00 and he didn't get in til about 1:30 and all of a sudden the lights went up, flares went up on the runway. I went out to see what was happening. The sergeant said you better get back inside. Viet Cong were all up and down the runway. So I got back inside. That night it was kind of boring sitting in that operation, fairly good size room with benches that looked like church pews. And I decided I wanted to draw something and I wasn't going to start drawing the guys cause there were too damn many guys there. And there was a gal there from ABC, blond, and she was a bit of a bitch and I didn't want to draw her.

But there was a group of Viet Nam air commandos and they had one Viet Nameese WAF with them. She was in fatigues and she was gorgeous. Beautiful, black,

shiny hair and very lovely face. So I went up to the captain who spoke English and I said, would she pose for me? And explained to him who I was and what I did and he said, sure. I'll get her to pose for you. So she sat down and posed for me. Of course, it was entertainment for all the guys and I put her head where I wanted it and made a sketch of her. I spent, oh, I spent at least 45 minutes on it. Got a damn good one and I tore it off and gave it to her.

She took one long look at it, a long look at me, jumped up and ran out of the building and I never saw her again. I asked the captain. I said, what was wrong? Didn't she like it? He said, oh, she thought it was great. He said but she was so shocked and she had never seen herself as somebody else saw her. I said does she have a mirror? And he says oh, yeah. She has a mirror but that doesn't mean anything to her. But apparently I just shocked the hell out of her and she never did come back! I wonder how many of those drawings are still around?

Godwin: Oh, she kept the sketch?

Oh, I give her the sketch. Sure. Yeah, if I had a dollar for every one I gave away, I'd have a fair amount of dollars. Any more on Viet Nam?

Godwin: Oh, I just wondered if you had any thoughts, picked up any thoughts the men felt over there?

Well, when I was there, I wasn't conscious of any drugs. And most of them were pretty doggone dedicated. Most of the guys I ran into both non-coms and

commissioned officers were there to do a job. There was a F-100 squad at Tan Son Nhut and the commander was my age. Was 52. I said what in the hell is a guy like you over here fighting a war. He said well, it's the only war we've got, cause most of those guys, well, I don't know whether I should call them war lovers or not but at least they were dedicated soldiers. I don't know whether in '66, I don't know whether drugs were that bad or not. Now I didn't see many, oh, I did see some enlisted men but not too many. In the Air Force you got these non-coms or commissioned officers. So I have a feeling what I saw when I was there was a fairly clean operation.

Godwin: There's no animosity about the war

No, I don't think politically. I don't think they stopped to consider it politically.

Godwin: At that time. Ishmael: At that time.

Godwin: Just like you. Ishmael: Just like me. No, I think the political implications came later.

Godwin: And still coming. Ishmael: And they're still coming, right, right. Yeah, as I look back on it, we were damn fools. Course the argument was that we had made the commitment. Did you ever hear of Piet Hine? He was a Danish mathematician and poet and he wrote a thing one time, during World War II he wrote what he called "Grooks". They were little pieces of poetry that would confound the Germans. And one of them I've always thought pretty good. How does it go? Oh hell, I'll think of it in a minute. Oh, one of the other

ones, everything's either concave or convex and whatever we dream is always of sex. Oh, the noble art of losing face may some day save the human race and turn into eternal merit what weaker minds would call disgrace.

So there's nothing wrong with saving face or rather not saving face and I think there's where we made our mistake. We thought we had to, I think we think it now. The Lebanese situation, for God's sakes. We have no more business over there than the man in the moon.

Godwin: Where's this?

Lebanese. Lebanon. Do you think we have?

Godwin: I think a lot of it may be saving face.

Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. I think that we don't have to. Well.

(End Tape 4, Side 1)

Well, as I said as far as the Viet Nam war goes, I don't suppose there's much that any individual can do about it. Look what's happening to Westmoreland right now.

The artist is never very political. As I told a senator one time. I said senator, when an artist talks about politics, this is kind of stupid. But when a politician talks about art, it's really stupid! My experience with the

Air Force and the traveling and the painting all over the world with them has had quite an influence on my commercial life.

Garrett Corporation in 1965 sent me to Tierra del Fuego to do a painting for them. Do you know where Tierra del Fuego is? They're the islands on the other side of the Straits of Magellan, tip end of South America. And for about five or six years they were building a painting collection and each year would have a very prestigious VIP calendar. I think they only sent out four or five thousand of them to executives around the country. And they'd pick artists and in '65, the theme of the calendar was isolated areas around the world that had been opened up by aircraft, because the Garrett Corporation is in the aircraft business. They make environmental systems, air conditioning, that sort of thing plus other things too. And I was one of the artists picked to go.

There were a list of places to go and on that list was Tierra del Fuego. Well in 1949, I was given a book on Tierra del Fuego for Christmas. And it was an autobiography of a man who's father was the first English missionary in that part of the world and I was fascinated with it. And if it was up to me, I'd sure like to go there sometime. Well, I had the opportunity cause in '65 I went to Tierra del Fuego, 11,000 miles from New York to do a painting for the Garrett Corporation. And it was a very rewarding experience. Learned a great deal about people. I found out one thing that the farther away you get from civilization, oft times the more civilized people are.

This is a very remote area of the world. You have Englishmen, Scotsmen, Italians, some Spanish, but not many. The Indians are all died off. I met

one half-breed. She was a wood carver. Probably the southern most wood carver in the world and I bought two pieces from her. They're around here somewhere. The English went in there. The Scotch went in as shepherders cause at one time that was the biggest production of wool in the world. Punta Arenas Chile around the turn of the century, was the wool capital of the world. I was gone about a week. The experiences would fill a book.

Godwin: You were at this Island?

As I said, the Indians had all died off. There were two tribés, the mountain tribes - Yagan's, and the ILNA's. When Darwin went through there in 1836 I think it was, he figured he found the missing link because they wore no clothes even in the winter time. They'd wrap a skin around them and when they stopped to work or to fight, they'd drop the skin and even in sub-zero weather would be naked.

He went through the Beagle's Channel. There was the Straits of Magellan and then the next crossing south would be the Beagle's Channel which was named after his ship, the H.M.S. Beagle. But, the writer of this book was Bridges, his father was a missionary named James Bridges. His name was Lucas and his family was still there on a ranch that he had developed and I met his sister and some cousins and that sort of thing. But, it's 28,000 square miles and only 14,000 people. One person every 2 square miles. It's a very hospitable land, believe it or not. In the plains, temperature never gets lower than, oh, 15 - 20, but never goes higher than 45 or 50. I was there in October which was their spring. The winds are in the spring and early summer, the winds are constant, 24 hours a day at about 45 or 50 knots.

Sheep, tremendous sheep ranches. I spent a couple days on a sheep ranch known as the Ostancia. And was 150,000 acres was 150,000 head of sheep. That's an awful lot of wool. At one time, the whole Argentina area was owned by one man, but it's been broken up since and he doesn't have it any more. Of course, he's dead. But Garrett sent me down there to do a painting.

It was quite an experience. I got stuck in Punta Arenas, Chile for a weekend because I was coming back by Santiago, Chile. Chilean airlines were on strike and I couldn't get out and I had to hire a car. Traveled 185 miles back to Argentina. That was some drive. All we saw were sheep, granaco; was a form of a cross between a llama and a deer, and believe it or not, ostrich. In that area of the world they have a small ostrich. Not as big as the ones in Africa. Very desolate, very barren area. Well, it could be a long story. That's another one.

Godwin: Let me just take you back, Woodi, here. Why don't you tell me something about Captain Kincheloe? Ishmael: Oh, Ivan Kincheloe?

Godwin: Yes.

Ishmael: Did I ever put that story on tape? Godwin: Very little of it, very little. You mentioned it last week.

Did I tell you about doing a drawing of him? Godwin: No, you didn't.

Well I was, let's see, I went to Europe in '58 - July - and May I went out to Hamilton to do a painting of the first, oh, you showed the painting, the first 104 Fighter Squadron. And then from there, I went down to Edwards for a few

days. And the information officer at Edward, his name was Charlie Brown. And he wanted an original cartoon from Schultz' about Charlie Brown and I later got him one.

But while I was there one afternoon, there was a guy from New York News who was out to do a story on Kincheloe. So Charlie Brown and I and this reporter went out to Kincheloe's and he had a very lovely wife and a little boy who was, I think about two years old. We were sitting on their patio and he was being interviewed and I was sitting there with a beer talking to his wife and I had a camera with me. I started taking photographs of him. I must have taken, oh hell, 15 or 20 photographs of him as he was talking. She finally asked, she said what are you going to do with them.

I said well, if I get anything that'll do what I want it to, I may do a drawing of him. I said, if I do, I'll send them to you. She said, oh, that'd be great. And Kincheloe, was the ideal of the Wild Blue Yonder fighter pilot. He had that look in his eye. Well, fortunately I got it and I did, was going to do a drawing of it when I got back. I saw it. Well, I kept putting it off and putting it off and I was going to Europe in July and finally I decided I'd better have that drawing done before I left. As a matter of fact, I finished a couple of days before I left, wrapped it and my wife sent it after I'd gone, sent it out to her.

When I got back a month later, we were, I got into Washington, and we spent the weekend with friends of ours in Washington, had a party Saturday night and Sunday morning I went out and picked up the Sunday morning paper. On the front page I saw, I realized why I had to get that drawing to Mrs. Kincheloe, cause he'd been killed the day before in a chaseplane.

Godwin: Was that the painting?

No, that's one I did for the Air Force.

Godwin: Oh, oh I see the drawing you gave to his wife.

No, this is the Air Force. I'd forgotten that one. I'll be darn.

Godwin: Looks like one of them, a lot of reaction we've had is you're painting of Here I Am, Send Me. (Photo 36)

Oh, that's the one in the Pentagon. Yeah. That one is the one that General McConnell wanted a picture of that stained glass window that's in the Offutt Chapel. He wanted it in the Pentagon. He wanted a quotation from it. Isaiah 6:8 I think it is. "Whom shall I send, who shall go, Here I am, send me." And Ben Lebailey, who was then his chief of staff, or not his chief of staff, his information officer, told me, he said, the General wants you to do a painting of a stained glass window in Offutt. I don't think it can be done. That's when I told Ben, I said watch me. So we had gone down to Matagorda Island to do a little hunting and fishing and before we went down, he said, bring anything along you're going to need because I'm going to send you to Offutt for a few days after we hunt and fish and let you get your material for that stained glass window. I said alright.

So I went up and I spent, oh hell, at least four or five days, and got an idea of how I could do it. The Chapel itself is used for, it's an interfaith Chapel -- Protestant, Catholic, and Jew. So I had to keep the altar on an

interfaith concept. And then I got a family, actually, the gal was a wife of a base commander, the two kids were Chaplain's kids and the officer was a briefing officer. I finally saw them and decided they were the ones I'd use. And I photographed and made sketches and played around with it for four or five days and got everything I thought I needed and then they flew me back to New York and I did it. I kept track of my time and I spent 72 hours doing this painting.

It was a hell of a job, 6 x 8 feet. It's the biggest one I've ever done. And it looked like a stained glass window with light shining through it.

Godwin: So you did it?

So I did it.

Godwin: Then I have the one about the YF12A I believe, it was a General Agan that wanted that one? (Photo 37)

What's that?

Godwin: Is that the YF12A? Ishmael: Yeah.

I don't know. Let's see if we can get it out. I can't see it. Oh, yeah. That was done as a request for someone, I'd forgotten who. I'd completely forgotten about that one.

Godwin: Was it General Agan?

Yeah, right. I didn't know him. Oh, I know. It was his information officer wanted a painting of it, so I said I'd do it.

Godwin: Can we just talk a little bit about your, some more about your survival training. I believe you went to the Phillipines.

Went to Phillipines in '72 and the Jungle Survival School there. I knew that I had cataracts when I went out there in summer '72 and I was, let's see, I was 58. And Morgan Smith went with me, we were together out there. He wouldn't let me stay in the jungle all night, or do much walking because they had a, you know the Colonel who was a doctor that they had put through the survival school and he had a heart attack while he was out in the jungle and they had a hell of a time getting him out. They didn't want anything like that, the thing they were always worried about was anything happening to a civilian. I was in the jungle. I went out. Saw them and watched them work and did a number of paintings from that. I don't know whether I have any there or not.

Godwin: Oh, yeah. Quite a few.

Yeah, that was the one I was thinking of. These guys have all been out overnight and the chopper was coming in to pick them up and take them back to base. Yeah, I remember that but I didn't realize it was as good as it is!

(Photo 38)

Godwin: That is a good one.

That is a good one. Yeah, here they are coming out of the jungle. Oh, I did this thing from memory, cause I wasn't even there. They just told me about it. I called it a flare for learning. (Photo 39)

Godwin: That's an unusual, some unusual colors in there.

Well, you see, it's just a flare. It was at night. They were demonstrating flares. Oh yeah, this is a, they're vectoring in a helicopter. I'd forgotten that one too. It was a hell of a lot better than I remember.

Godwin: Is this some of the tribe? (Photo 40)

Yeah, this is in Panama. (Godwin: Oh, it is?) Yeah, as we were walking out, we ran into these, there were four sons. He had four sons, Antonio Zarco.

Godwin: Oh yes, that's right.

Now this was in Panama. One of the watercolors when we were going in to the jungle and they could bring a few of us in and then had to go back after others, and we'd have to wait. And I was, I never will forget, standing there waiting, watching this chopper come in. Last time it came, I said well, I don't know. Maybe I should get back on it and go out! I wasn't sure I should be there.

Godwin: Well, essentially this was some more survival training in the jungle that the Air Force wanted you to paint.

Well, you see, they knew then that they were going to phase out, that's all. And practically everybody that went into Southeast Asia, all the fighter pilots had gone through that survival school there. In '72 when we went over there, went in August, and in July. The month of July they had over 100 inches of rain. Boy, just washed mountains out, it just was unbelievable what it had done. Getting into the areas, we had to take a chopper in and out. We were there, maybe Morgan and I were there about ten days.

Godwin: Who is Morgan again?

Morgan Smith. He headed up these survival schools and he, and when he retired from Maxwell, he was a GS-15. He was Civil Service and he went into Panama, oh God, sometime in the '50s and started the tropical survival school there. Then it grew and grew and got, well they had water, artic, and the jungle and Phillipines, let's see water, artic -- there were about five, I guess. There aren't any more at all now. I think it's too bad because a lot of things that he did in those survival schools was teach the troops cross-cultural communication -- how to work with, oh, primitive societies, other ethnic groups. He has a series of lectures. He used to come down here and lecture to my students, my art students on cross-cultural communication and the use of symbols. He'd take a cross and hold it up, then hold up a little piece of statuary and he said do you realize that to the Choco Indians this means the same thing as this does to you? So respect it.

Watching Americans overseas just turns my stomach at times, particularly when we were on the cruise ships. I was on the S.S. United States for three continent cruise in '68. It wouldn't take Gwen and I was gone, oh, about four

weeks. And I worked myself silly. I was the only guy ever went on a cruise ship and lost weight. It paid off but I swore I'd never do it again.

And then in, I think it was the summer of '70, about June, I was working in the studio at home one Sunday and Gwen came up with a Sunday paper and she says, the QE-2 is taking the same cruise you did, yeah, in November. I said, so. She said well, can't we go on it? And I said well, I don't know anybody at Cunard lines. Well she kept harping on it and kept talking about it and finally, I said, well, I could call Bill Martin who was the Vice President of the United States lines and he might tell me who to call which I did. I called Bill, told him who I was. He said, what do you want to do -- take that QE-2 trip? I said I been thinking about it. So he gave me the name of the President of Cunard's New York office and his name was Slim Johnson, told him if he wanted to get any information about me, call Bill which apparently he did. So I called Slim the next day and he said well, it's a little late but send me your material, tell me what you can give us, tell me what you want from us. He said incidentally, you want your wife to go? And I said yeah. O.K., no problem.

So I wrote him a letter, sent him photographs of paintings, etc., and gave him the whole nine yards. And, a couple of days later he called me and he said, I'm sending your material to South Hampton. I'll be in touch with you in two weeks. And by God, two weeks to the day he called me and he says, the QE-2 is gonna be in port Thursday. Can you come down and have a look at her? I said yep, what does that mean? He says you're going with us.

So Gwen and I spent six weeks on the QE-2 that fall on a three continent cruise clear to South Africa. We went to Las Palmas, Dakar, Luanda, Durbin, Cape Town, across to Rio, Bahia, Curacao, St. Thomas and home. I was artist in residence. I had certain chores I had to do which were a pleasure. I had every other day at sea what was known as an Art Class which was actually a lecture demonstration. I was available for conversation. I did demonstrations on the quarter deck or on the promenade deck, oh, portrait sketches which I was paid for.

Every time I left the port, I'd do a scene from the port. They all sold. I got back in New York with \$5,000 more than I left with and did everything that we wanted to do including buying a 12 carot aquamarine ring from Rio. And then the following spring, middle of February to the 1st of April, we had three two-week cruises in the Carribean, so we spent approximately three months on the ship. And you couldn't beat it, except I wouldn't want to do it again. Well, all of that came about cause of my work with the Air Force.

Godwin: Let's talk a little about Medal of Honor Winners?

Oh yeah. Well, again that was General McConnell's idea. They had all these photographs and they were very ridiculous array of photographs of all these guys -- some were official, some were taken in bus stations, you know. And what they had to have was all of them in the same format so they decided to have drawings and we decided that we would get every photograph we could to work from and I don't think we had any of their medals on, any of their ribbons. We just had an insignia at the time. And some of them I had a hell of a time getting good photographs of or good drawings of them because, you don't have that with you, do you? Do you have the medal of honor with you?

Godwin: Right, sure do.

Well, there's no need for it if you got this.

Godwin: I have reproductions of all your drawings.

Yeah. But, we started with World War I and went right up to Viet Nam. I think they're now, oh, close to 70, 69 or 70. And one of the reasons why the Air Force never had too many was because a lot of the guys, nobody was there to observe or substantiate the action that would give him the Medal of Honor. Fighter Pilots could do all sorts of fantastic things and nobody saw it, that was the end of it. But a lot of these guys, I heard that, oh hell, I can't think of his name. Some of them are still living. A third of them got their medal posthumously, some of them I knew.

Oh, Bernie I knew and Leon Johnson. I knew Leon Johnson, General Johnson, he's still living. I think he's 83 or 84. Doolittle's still living. God, he's way up there too. But McConnell thought they should be out in the hallway between the Chief and the Vice Chief's office. That's where they put them. They also have a set of them at the Academy. I think there's a set of them at Maxwell. I saw a set up there one time.

Godwin: I'm not sure.

(End Tape 4, Side 2)

And General Grove I think had some.

Godwin: Woodi, what we'd like to do now is just sort of reminisce, anything you want to talk about, let's just go with it. I think, maybe let's start off with your, why you came to Troy State and what's happened since then.

Alright. And when I was in high school, one night we were all talking about what we wanted to do with our lives and I made the statement that I wanted to get all the experience I possibly could and then pass it on to another generation.

Well, oh, back in the '60s I knew that, sooner or later, I wanted to leave New York. I swore I'd only have 25 years of it, but actually I had 32. And finally we decided we wanted to come south and I wanted to teach. Now I have no degrees so my teaching would be based on somebody's kindness more than anything else! And we were in Alabama in '68 and I had, I'd tried to, well, I put in applications at William and Mary, the University of North Carolina, some friends of mine in Carolina thought that'd be good, and Florida. Well I came down here to see Hy Lumpkin, who was a retired JAG and was a county judge up in Centre, Alabama and I did a portrait of him when he retired and I had to put another medal on it. So we saw him and he knew that I was interested in coming south and teaching. So he said would you be interested in coming to Alabama? I said, I don't know why not. I don't believe everything I read in the paper! He laughed. He said well, maybe we can find you a place down here.

Well in February of '71, Hy was in Maxwell one day, and Ralph Adams was up in Maxwell and Ralph Adams was also an Air Force JAG so he and Hy knew each other and Hy asked him, what are you looking for? Ralph said I'm looking for a working artist to come to Troy State. Hy says there's only one guy you'd have and that's Woodi Ishmael. So Ralph knew who I was and what I had done with the Air Force. He called the Pentagon, wanted to know how to get hold of me and they told him you better get a hold of him cause he's leaving in about three days for six weeks in the Carribbean.

So Ralph called me and told me what he had in mind and I said, alright, I'm interested but I won't be back in the States until April but I will be back every two weeks. He said well, send me a letter and a resume before you leave and when you, first time you come back after the first two weeks, I'll have a letter back there for you. So by golly, when we got back from the first two weeks, there was a letter from him telling me that he wanted me to come down the first of April.

So, I, when we finished the cruise, I called him and he said come on down. And so I came down three or four days. I liked what I saw and he apparently liked what he saw. A little funny incident about it was when I got here, I got off the airplane at Montgomery and here were three guys waiting for me. I knew they were waiting for me because everybody in front of me who had a beard, they stopped. When I got there, I told them, I said I think you fellows are looking for me. Dr. Adams said, where's your beard? I said I never had one.

Well inside of ten minutes, I was in the living room of the Governor's Mansion being gone over with a fine tooth comb. Here was a guy by the name of Ishmael from New York, hell, I could have been a Commie, I could have been all sorts of things, you know. And the Governor was asking me a lot of fool questions like religion and politics and that sort of thing. I got a little teed off and I said, Governor, I had a great grandfather fought with Stonewall Jackson. Does that take care of it? He saw how ludicrous it was and he laughed and he said, yeah, that takes care of it. So I never heard any more about that. Well when I came down to Troy and saw the school, saw the surroundings, I liked it.

And Ralph wanted me to sign the contract then. I said no, I want to go back and talk to my wife about it first. I stopped in North Carolina to see some friends on my way back, and by the time I got back to New York, here was a letter from him with a contract in it. I talked to Gwen and she said, yeah, let's go. And I said alright. So in May we were going to Fort Worth, we stopped off here and looked around. Found this house and bought it. Went back and sold mine and moved in here August 19th, 1971. Haven't regretted a minute of it cause it's been a nice place to live. It's comfortable. Living isn't expensive, as you know.

It's probably one of the very few places in the country today where there hasn't been that much change and with the things that's happened to me since, I've been very lucky to be here. I enjoyed teaching. I still enjoy teaching. And with the eye problems in '73 and '74 and we have a major medical hospitalization at school - took care of all that. If I'd been in New

York I'd have gone broke rather than a pancake. So in a great many ways, it's been very, very good for us. We have enjoyed our life here. My wife enjoys it very much.

Funny thing, when I was in New York and I spent 32 years, I never felt like I had any roots there. I don't think one does cause I was raised in a small town in Ohio and knew Kentucky and Ohio, my stomping ground. And of course, when I came here, there was some cultural shock, naturally cause I felt like I'd moved back to 1930, but outside of food and museums, everything else was fine. So I enjoyed it and Troy State is a good little school. It's one of the best in the country, what we did in our last football season--proves that.

Ralph Adams has been a great President to the university. He's built it and I've seen it grow like crazy since I've been here. Of course, we're now all over the world with Europe and a lot in the United States. But I did what I said I was gonna do back when I was in high school. I passed on to another generation what I've learned. I've often wondered why my life worked out this way but it apparently was supposed to have.

I'm not a great believer in predestination, but it seems I did all the right things at the right time. The Air Force has been very, very good to me and for me. It has helped me develop my skills. It has given me insight into a lot of other things. The travel, meeting of people and that sort of thing. Don't you think it's done a lot for you?

Godwin: Oh, yes.

Because I told Gwen you were from Brundidge, Alabama and she said does he still have the accent? And I said no! No, you were, you know, anybody in the Air Force has a lot of sophistication. And it does a lot for the kids too. I know I've had dependents over here at school, Air Force kids, and, they're head and shoulders over the average kids. Their thinking is broader and they do a heck of a lot more that way.

Want me to reminisce. I don't know what about and how. We've pretty well covered everything. I painted an awful lot in the Carribbean.-- Nassau and Bahamas and that sort of thing. I was asked the other day, or I got a letter from the Society of Illustrators in New York, and they wanted to know what the difference was between so called fine art and illustration. I don't like the term fine art. That term came into existence in the last century when the term commercial art came into existence and the copyists who would take a painting or drawing and convert it to a wood engraving for reproduction were known as commercial artists and they were nothing more or less than copyists.

But the term commercial art came into being. I don't like that either. I had a neighbor in New York who was a lawyer who, at a party one night, kept introducing me as a commercial artist. Finally got to me. Finally I had to introduce him to someone he didn't know. I introduced him as a commercial lawyer. He didn't like that at all, except he worked for Amoco. I said hell, yes, you're a commercial lawyer. I said, you do it for money, don't you? I said every artist does it for money unless he's stupid. I said, does that make me a commercial artist?

So my feeling is that so called art is art. There's no such thing as bad art or if it's bad, it's not art. And there's no such thing as fine art because, again, art is art. There's a museum in Montgomery that's called Museum of Fine Arts and I don't know of any other museum in the country that's known as the Museum of Fine Arts. Cleveland Art Museum, Columbus Art Museum.

Illustration is basically a visual interpretation of a literary product. Now a lot of so called great art, I use the word great art, could be considered illustration. Look at the Sistine Chapel. Most of your early renaissance painters were painters of the Bible and that was basically illustration but they carried it beyond that. An artist, a painter who is not doing illustration is doing one of two things. He is either doing portraits or he is painting pictures for their abstract or aesthetic value rather than for telling a story. So there is a difference. Illustration as we know it today, didn't come in til about the end of the 18th century in England and well, your illuminated manuscripts were actully illustrations.

I would like to go back to the time when an artist was an artist irrespective of what he did. But I'm afraid we aren't going to get that any more.

I see a tremendous amount of change coming about. Even in the last five years, the computer business has made a tremendous change in it. And they've got computers now that can paint pictures as well as I can. They've got, our thinking has changed a lot. They have this thing, you see it on TV every so often, these poor starving artists shows where you can get a painting for \$39.50. Have you seen those? I don't know where in the hell they get them or how they get them. But who's going to paint a picture for \$39.50. I wouldn't

even pick up a pencil for that. Yet, on the other hand, some of the most fantastic prices have been paid for art in the last ten years -- a million dollars, two million dollars. It's nothing to see a painting for 30-40 thousand.

I was out in Oklahoma a little over a year ago, we went to Cowboy Hall of Fame one day, and they had a show there that was on for a month of 66 artists, no, 66 paintings and 33 artists. When the show opened, an hour after it opened, they had sold \$220,000 worth of paintings. The paintings were running anywhere from, oh, I think the cheapest I saw was about \$6,000 up to \$30,000 and these were, I only knew one artist in the whole show. So there's, of all the money being spent, and of course, that's all cattle or oil money out there, and they don't care.

Western Art has become very big in the last ten years. You find very few southern artists. The southerner is more vocal than visual, southern, that's the reason why we have the music and the politicians. I don't know, I see a tremendous amount of change and, unfortunately, I'm not going to be here to see it all, but I think that the artist is needed more today than ever before. The computer is dehumanizing and we need something to keep us fairly humanized. I've had a number of computer majors who have taken drawing just for that reason. And the computer not only is a deterrent, it's also an advantage because it's opened up a whole new field for artists.

Computer graphics. All these things that are computerized have to have some form of graphics with it and the artist has to do it. So there's a whole new

field. As a matter of fact I read an article recently where they expected in ten years there'd be 150,000 jobs open for artists in the computer field. I'm rambling now.

Godwin: Go ahead. Go ahead. You mentioned that computers are dehumanizing. I was reading an article that some big industries now are sending their engineers back to night school for liberal arts. Liberal arts education.

Oh yeah, a liberal arts education is more important today than it's ever been. The, both the music and individual arts. I think it's a crime when you're having lunch with three, or one or two faculty members and one administrator and they don't know who Cezanne is. I don't know whether you do or not.

Godwin: Is he on the faculty at Troy?

No, he's not on the faculty at Troy! But, oh, one of them says well, do you know who Von Bruan is, was and I said sure. He was a nuclear physicist and worked at Redstone Arsenal. And my doctor recently was checking my, I guess he was checking to see how sharp I was or what my memory was like. At 70, he figured I was slowing down a little bit. And he says what's the name of that train that goes from Paris to Africa? I said I don't know of any train that goes from Paris to Africa. He's says oh, you know, it goes across Europe. I said, you're not talking about the Orient Express, are you? He said that's it. It goes to, he said where's it going? I said it goes to Istanbul. He said, didn't they write a book about it? I said yeah, Murder on the Orient Express was written by, I can't think of her name now but I did then. Who wrote that?

Godwin: Was that Agatha?

Agatha Christie. He said God, you got a good memory. I said sure. But you know, the funny thing is these students don't know that. They don't - I worry about them.

Ishmael: Did you see that thing in the TV recently, oh, last year some time, about the students who didn't know any geography? They didn't know where Chicago was and I did a portrait of the retired Band Master, Purdue University. Had to make some changes on it so I had to go up there for a weekend and I told one of my classes I was going to Purdue that weekend. I said do you know where Purdue is? Nobody knew where Purdue was.

Geography is not important today. History's not important. They have very little knowledge of history. I think it's unfortunate. Maybe, I don't know. Maybe it's because I'm getting old that I think that way, but I'm not too sure. I do know this, that my high school education was better for liberal arts than most colleges get today. Latin, French, English literature all the way through.

Yeah, you were talking about, I mentioned, happened to mention a little while ago that Americans overseas and when Gwen and I were on the Queen Elizabeth the 2nd, we got an excellent example of that on a couple of occasions and one in particular. We were on the Island of St. Lucia, and, that's one of the Windward Islands. Gwen was ill that day. She had a stomach virus so she didn't go ashore. I went ashore and when I got to the dock, we had to take a tender in. I got to the dock and there was a big market on the dock. I

walked through. It was fascinating the stuff they had. This one huge black gal was sitting there cross legged on the bench or table and she had a lot of pickles around her so I asked her about her pickles. And we carried on quite a conversation about pickles and how she preserved them, what not, so I bought a jar and, oh, I must have talked to her 15 or 20 minutes and they speak a delightful English accent in St. Lucia, even the blacks.

So when I left, turned around and here standing twenty feet away this couple from the ship and they said have you been here before. And I said no. Well how did you know her. I said I just started talking to her. They said, you bought the pickles and I said yeah. You gonna eat them? I said sure, why not. Aren't you afraid you'll get something? I said yeah, pickles.

And they said, well, where you gonna have lunch? I said oh, I'll find some place in town, some of the local restaurants. Aren't you afraid of their food? I said no, where are you going to have lunch? And they said, we're looking for a Howard Johnsons. I said hell, why didn't you stay at home? Well, they said, where you going? I said well, I understand there's a good Italian restaurant in town. Might try it. They were sure I was going to wind up with Beri Beri or something or other. And they were afraid. Now that's unfortunate because they miss an awful lot. You been overseas, yeah, you been overseas. You know what it's like. If they can eat it, we can. Where have you been, Jay, besides the Far East?

Godwin: Oh, my trips to Europe were just on a TDY basis. So most of my overseas was Far East and tour of Hawaii. I just went temporary to London and Germany.

And of course, the food there, the food in Germany can be awfully good. As a matter of fact, I have always been very interested in food and I've got a theory that the culture of an area is in direct ratio to its food. Think about that. You go in to any little town in Italy or Germany, you'll get some fantastic food. And of course, you also get some fantastic music, architecture and the whole bit.

Godwin: And beer.

And beer, yeah. I don't like German wine, particularly. The best wine I've ever had has been in Spain. But the beer, beer is good anywhere in the world. I think Japanese beer is very good.

Godwin: Well let's do this, let's conclude this, Woodi. I think that it's been a tremendous almost five hours of taping here. I don't know if you realize you've been talking that much!

No, I don't.

Godwin: But it's been very good and the historians, I know, are going to be very excited about it and we will want the finished transcript as soon as possible, but you get first choice of that. And, before we go anywhere with that, so as soon as we transcribe it, it will be sent to you for final editing. So with that, let's conclude this and I would like to get some more photographs.

Alright, sure.

End of Interview

Additional Photos

Photo 41            The Way Out  
Photo 42            Visual Tracking, Edwards AFB  
Photo 43            Vectoring  
Photo 44            Sunday Morning  
Photo 45            White Sands at Holloman  
Photo 46            Last of the B-36's  
Photo 47            Teamwork France Field, C.Z.  
Photo 48            Wet Take Off