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Interview with  
W. T. Kniffin  
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Interviewer: Mr. G. L. Seligmann, Jr.  
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Oral History Collection

Willard T. Kniffin

Interviewer: Dr. G. L. Seligmann

Place of Interview: Lighthouse Point, Florida      Date: March 20, 1974

Dr. Seligmann: This is an oral history interview with Mr. Willard Kniffin at his home in Lighthouse Point, Florida, on March 20, 1974. G. L. Seligmann is the interviewer. The general topic of the interview will be the Cutting family: Bronson Cutting, Senator from New Mexico, 1928-35, and his parents, uncles, aunts, and sisters.

Mr. Kniffin, one of the things that I'm . . . just start bluntly. How long did you work for the Cutting family?

Mr. Kniffin: Fifty-one years.

Dr. Seligmann: And in what capacity?

Mr. Kniffin: I ran their portfolios, financial.

Dr. Seligmann: Financial.

Mr. Kniffin: Of course, I also steered their business deals to our attorneys: Davis, Polk, Wardlow and so forth--John W. Davis.

Seligmann: One of the questions that's bothered me as I'd run through the Cutting papers here, there, and elsewhere is . . . and dug up all sorts of strange information . . . in broad, general terms what is the source of the Cutting wealth?

Kniffin: R. Fulton Cutting and W. Bayard Cutting were brothers. They looked like twins. I don't think they were, but they sure looked like twins. They started in real estate. Then they moved from that into private banking down on Wall Street. Those were in the days when there was no income tax, so they accumulated quite a bit of wealth.

Seligmann: Did they start with something, or were they . . .

Kniffin: Not much. They were supposed to be orphans in France at the time. They must have had a little capital because they were bankers in a sense.

Seligmann: How did Robert Fulton Cutting get the nickname around the turn of the century, "The First Citizen of New York?" Are you familiar with that?

Kniffin: Well, I can guess on that. Robert Fulton and W. Bayard were interested in low-cost housing for the needy, and they organized the city and suburban homes in New York City. I think that made them a little bit more than ordinary citizens (chuckle).

Seligmann: Yes, I would . . .

Kniffin: Yes. Now the family itself got to the point where they didn't want this money. They took it when they inherited it, but they really didn't want it. They had this fixed idea that wealth was like the measles or something like that. It was not good, but I noticed that when Bronson ran for re-election, money came in awfully handy (laughter).

Seligmann: Yes, it did.

Kniffin: Because he and Roosevelt got crosswise as you know and was fighting over veterans' legislation, I guess it was. When he flew back, he was pushing real hard to get back in time to vote on this bill.

Seligmann: Let me stay in on the family before we get in on Cutting generally. I've got some specific questions on Bronson Cutting.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: You say they viewed wealth like the measles. Were they reasonably philanthropic in this sense? In the sense of, for example, when I was in the Metropolitan Museum, I saw a plaque citing Mrs. W. B. Cutting, the mother.

Kniffin: Yes, Mrs. Olivia M. Cutting was. That I know. Now Justine was a convert to Catholicism, and she organized this school of music for the Catholic Church. So in that sense she put a lot of money in that.

Seligmann: What was Justine like? But first, let's start with the mother. You referred to her as the matriarch of the family.

Kniffin: And she was a wonderful woman!

Seligmann: The impression I have gotten from reading her letters to her son is that she stayed on top of things.

Kniffin: Wonderful woman, yes. I was very fortunate to tie in with them. You see, I went there as a secretary to my predecessor, Francis H. Bergen. He died after I'd been there sixteen years, and Mrs. Cutting on the way home from the funeral in her car took my hand. She says, "Mr. Kniffin, you and I will have to carry on." Here I was, a young married man with a kid and no job actually, but she assured me. I thought it was wonderful. I never asked for a raise all the time I worked for that family. They'd question me on the matter of a raise, and I'd say, "No, I'm quite happy." So then they'd give me a nice raise (chuckle).

Seligmann: That's nice.

Kniffin: So that was nice, and Mrs. Cutting was wonderful to me. When we lost our son after she had lost her's, she had me up for tea one day, and she took hold of my hand and patted it and says, "Mr. Kniffin, you and I are in the same fix."

Seligmann: Did she run the family affairs in the sense of operating on advice from you and the attorneys?

Kniffin: Yes, coming through the office and our attorneys. Yes, I would say so, that she was the boss of the family.

Seligmann: She made the kind of decisions that her husband would have made had he been alive.

Kniffin: I think so because he was also a refined gentleman, I'm told. He died in 1912, so I couldn't ever meet him. He had a very good reputation. They did things for Columbia, of which one of them was a graduate, I think.

Seligmann: Yes, I think William B. was.

Kniffin: Yes, W. Bayard.

Seligmann: Was it W. Bayard?

Kniffin: Yes, yes.

Seligmann: You automatically say William B. if you don't know better.

Kniffin: They never called him William. Even his wife called him Bayard, and, of course, the kids called him Papa.

Seligmann: One of the shadowy figures in the Cutting papers is Mrs. Ward. What was she like? What is she like to put it in the proper tense?

Kniffin: Well, you could never depend on Mrs. Ward for loyalty. Now she was good to me, but she frequently would cut off

people that she'd had association with just like a snapping of your fingers--not a good reason, but just cut them off.

Seligmann: Is this present in other members of the family? The reason I ask this specifically . . .

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: . . . is that this same pattern occurs in New Mexico politics with Bronson Cutting.

Kniffin: Yes. He was not loquacious.

Seligmann: No, they'd be closely allied, and then suddenly there was just a split, and the split never seems to make sense in terms of the reasons that are given for it.

Kniffin: That's right. That's right. Of course, his main objective was to improve the lot of the New Mexican Spaniard. That was his main objective, and that's how he got his support finally in New Mexico--was because of that. The election, as you know, was under contest when he died.

Seligmann: Yes, that's the next article I'm doing. It's going to be on this specific . . . I've done one. If I'd been thinking, I would have brought you a copy. I'll mail it when I get back. The next one on the election . . .



the next one will be on the contest itself--just the legal ramifications of that.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: Let me stay with Mrs. Ward.

Kniffin: Incidentally, she's the wealthiest one in the family because what I did for her turned to gold (chuckle). IBM with 14,000 shares. Cost her about \$5.00 a share.

Seligmann: Yes, I'd say that . . .

Kniffin: Yes, half of the stock portfolio was with IBM.

Seligmann: You done well, as we say in West Texas.

Kniffin: (chuckle) I got started with 200 shares.

Seligmann: Is there a Mr. Ward? This is a question that . . .

Kniffin: George Cabot Ward became a park commissioner in New York City, and he was quite fond of his political wallop. One day he was going downtown, and he took to the sidewalk with his car and killed a kid. He never came back. He got right on a boat and went to France and stayed there forever. Of course, she divorced him shortly after that.

Seligmann: I see. How about Robert Fulton Cutting in terms of his political activities in the period?

Kniffin: Well . . .

Seligmann: What I'm trying to do is to get kind of a feel for the family which I don't have now at all.

Kniffin: Extremely conservative and reserved, all of them. Robert Fulton must have been in politics in New York City. I think he ran for alderman or something and was defeated. You didn't get much from either one of them. W. Bayard was a little more open than R. Fulton, but they were very fine gentlemen.

Seligmann: When you say conservative, do you mean in dress, habit, politics?

Kniffin: Everything.

Seligmann: Everything?

Kniffin: Everything. Yes, sir.

Seligmann: To coin a phrase, they would "wear both belts and suspenders."

Kniffin: Stripped pants in the morning.

Seligmann: How did Robert Fulton react to Bronson's politics? Was he alive when Bronson was in the Senate?

Kniffin: He was dead. I think he was dead before Bronson was appointed to the Senate. Robert Fulton . . . I'm not sure, but I think he was a conservative Republican. I'm just not sure on that. I know W. Bayard was.

Seligmann: Would they have belonged to what--I started to say historians--in a sense, historians have called the "googoes"--the good government people?

Kniffin: Blue-bloods.

Seligmann: The same sort of people that Theodore Roosevelt represented in a sense when he goes into politics in New York? The "better" element? Is this how they viewed themselves?

Kniffin: I think so. Yes, and friends of Theodore Roosevelt-- the whole family.

Seligmann: Do you have any knowledge of how Theodore Roosevelt viewed Bronson Cutting or the Cutting family generally? I have some telegrams from 1912.

Kniffin: That I don't know anything of. That I don't know anything about. Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt was a close friend of Mrs. Cutting. Of course, that's a cousin away, isn't it?

Seligmann: Yes. There is some relation.

Kniffin: Cousins.

Seligmann: There's a series of telegrams which I have copies of from T. R. to Bronson in 1912 that indicates that they're at least on speaking terms and that there are family ties there.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: How about Mrs. James--Olivia James?

Kniffin: (cough) Mrs. James was probably the most thoughtful person I've ever met. She saw to it that the help got certain raises to care for the inflation. She always took good care of me. She was very happy over the appointment of her brother to the Senate. I don't know whether she tried to run the family as her mother got older, but she was in pretty good command (chuckle).

Seligmann: What are the relationships like between Bronson and his two sisters in terms of . . . who would you say was closest to and intellectually?

Kniffin: It was a very intellectual family. W. Bayard, Jr., of course, died many years before that. He was a Harvard graduate and appointed as chargé d'affaires, I think, in Rome or Italy.

Seligmann: I know he was in the State Department somewhere.

Kniffin: Yes, the State Department and no slouch. I mean he was a pretty able boy, but he had TB. Bronson got it afterwards.

Seligmann: Yes. Somewhere in the Cutting papers there is a note from the registrar at Harvard to the effect that they kept both W. Bayard, Jr., and Bronson's entrance exams at Harvard as examples to show potential freshmen.

Kniffin: I wouldn't be surprised because W. Bayard wrote a book on his work. I never saw it, but . . .

Seligmann: Let me make a note . . . I didn't know that.

Kniffin: I don't think Bronson graduated from Harvard.

Seligmann: No, he didn't.

Kniffin: They took him out on a stretcher, you know.

Seligmann: Yes.

Kniffin: But they gave him his graduation afterwards. They gave him his certificate.

Seligmann: In going through the papers, I get the idea that Justine and Bronson were closer than were Olivia and Bronson. There's just more correspondence involving politics and the like from Justine.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: Do you think this is because of what could be termed \_\_\_\_\_?

Kniffin: Justine is older.

Seligmann: Would you say it was because of an unhappy marital situation in a sense that she is not living with her husband, whereas Olivia is, or do you know anything about that?

Kniffin: No. No, they both broke up. Olivia did, too. She was married to Henry James--not the historian, but the nephew of. It's kind of hard to go back beyond my 1919 on family relationships except by hearsay.

Seligmann: Yes. Hearsay at this point has a certain amount of value in what I'm doing. I welcome hearsay, frankly. It's something I've got to live with.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: I have to realize how to treat it and accept it as that, but don't say something because it is hearsay, but it would be helpful if you would identify it.

Kniffin: Well, as I say, I would get it both from my predecessor on the job, from Mrs. Cutting, and from the girls. Now Bronson never spoke to me too much. If I had a business deal with him, I went to the Senate to his office and told him what to do, and he'd say "Yes." That was it. We didn't have any political discussions, really no business discussions (chuckle).

Seligmann: In your opinion was Bronson reasonably . . . had he chosen to go into business rather than politics, would he have been a reasonably successful businessman?

Kniffin: I'm afraid not. I don't think he concerned himself about money. It was there, but I mean I don't think he tried to increase it or anything like that. He gave me that job.

Seligmann: Did he spend it particularly well in the sense of living high?

Kniffin: He didn't live high.

Seligmann: Just well.

Kniffin: No. His house was very modest out in Santa Fe. Have you ever been there?

Seligmann: I can't find it now. I've tried . . .

Kniffin: Los Ciete Burros.

Seligmann: I've got the name, but I can't find the street address (chuckle). The old Santa Fe Commission is supposedly looking for me, but they . . .

Kniffin: It may be torn down. I don't know.

Seligmann: That seems to be what's shaping up. We have found . . .

Kniffin: It's a beautiful location on the hill.

Seligmann: We've found several houses that he owned. One is now the office of the Santa Fe Preservation Society . . . Santa Fe Historical Society, something like that, but we can't find his house.

Kniffin: Well, now these houses that he owned were political set-ups. In other words, a man would come to him and say, "Look, I'm about to lose my house." Bronson would take a mortgage on it, you see. In that sense he might have been considered to be a big real estate holder in Santa Fe. I don't think he was of his own volition.

Seligmann: In the sense of being a speculator in real estate?

Kniffin: Oh, no, no, no. As I say, I don't think he had any interest in increasing his fortune.

Seligmann: Was it large enough that there was no real reason why he should?

Kniffin: Well, it ran when he died at about \$6,000,000.

Seligmann: That's an interesting figure because the figure in New Mexico is \$40,000,000.

Kniffin: Oh, no, no, no.

Seligmann: There's a sizable difference.

Kniffin: Oh, yes, there is a helluva difference! Put that hell in there, too, will you? No, he had his own fortune and his trust which would ultimately come to him at a certain age. So I would say altogether . . . when I certified on the stand out there after he was killed, I said I thought he was worth between \$5,000,000 and \$6,000,000, but I couldn't tell what the trust amounted to. I didn't know.

Seligmann: I wonder . . .

Kniffin: We didn't operate the trust. Banks had those.

Seligmann: Did he come into the trust? Did he come in at age twenty-one or was it set for some later date?



Kniffin: No, no, no. It was beyond that, way beyond that. Some of them Mr. Cutting set up and some Mrs. Cutting set up. There were three or four trusts. They called them life trusts. You know what those are?

Seligmann: Yes. Did you have any part in drawing up his will?

Kniffin: Not a bit. He drew it himself with a pen right out there in Los Siete Burros one night. You should see it. All these political payoffs.

Seligmann: There's a copy in his papers. It's a rare document.

Kniffin: \_\_\_\_\_ . He didn't leave me anything, which is all right. I mean, the rest of the family took care of me, but he didn't.

Seligmann: There were an awful lot of people in New Mexico, I think, that were surprised at being left something.

Kniffin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Jesus Baca got a half of a million plus half of the executor's fee and drank himself to death. He had stomach ulcers.

Seligmann: Did you know him at all--Jesus?

Kniffin: Very well.

Seligmann: What was he like? He . . . let me try to phrase . . . the phrase that comes up in New Mexico is that he was Cutting's "Nightrider."

Kniffin: That's right. He was his lieutenant, his political lieutenant, and would do anything Bronson asked him to do. He was an uneducated boy and very loyal to Bronson, naturally, because Bronson took pretty good care of him most of the time. So it was a very close relationship. As I say, he left a chunk in the will.

Seligmann: How about Herman Baca, Jesus's brother?

Kniffin: Herman was a cousin.

Seligmann: Cousin?

Kniffin: I think of Jesus, but there was an intense rivalry all the time.

Seligmann: And they . . . the two of them were competing . . .

Kniffin: All the time.

Seligmann: . . . for Cutting's favor, as it were.

Kniffin: That's right. And money (chuckle).

Seligmann: Is there more involved, do you think, than money? Is there power, for example, involved in this sort of thing?

Kniffin: That would be a natural thing. Yes, and nobody spoke to Bronson. They spoke to Herman, or they spoke to Jesus. They lined up these Mexicans. They lined them up.

Seligmann: Yes, they did. They did it very well.

Kniffin: (chuckle) Yes. It was a close election. I don't know whether he was cheated or not, but it was contested as you know.

Seligmann: I have a article which contends that there was bipartisan corruption.

Kniffin: Yes (chuckle).

Seligmann: It depended on who was running the show as to whether there . . . as to who was corrupt.

Kniffin: Yes, that's right. That's right.

Seligmann: \_\_\_\_\_.

Kniffin: Did you know the history of the election to the effect that Roosevelt was giving a goat to the families, and Bronson was giving a buck? That was the set-up. Roosevelt was mad at Bronson, so he come into the natives there, and he'd say, "Now look, you probably need a goat in your herd." He gave them a goat. There were plenty of goats around, so he'd see that he got a goat. But Bronson had to rely on the old, good American buck.

Seligmann: It's a fascinating election. What's even funnier is that in 1952 Chavez is contested by Patrick Hurley, and the same attorney that had represented Chavez in '34 represents him in '52. And Hurley's attorneys in '52 are . . . A. T. Hannett, the attorney . . . are throwing Hannett's arguments

in '34 at Hannett in '52. It's really kind of fun to watch a first-rate attorney avoid and evade his own arguments, like saying . . .

Kniffin: Yes. I didn't know him.

Seligmann: It's just different.

Kniffin: Yes. I didn't know him.

Seligmann: How did the family view Bronson's political efforts in the sense . . . well, go ahead and answer.

Kniffin: They thought it was wonderful--all of them from the niece up. They just thought this was wonderful. Of course, they were great admirers--all of them--of Bronson. Even Justine admired him. She thought he was a brave, brilliant man. I think he was.

Seligmann: Everything I come across indicates that he was one of the most brilliant figures in the Senate.

Kniffin: Yes. Great friend of Hiram Johnson, you know.

Seligmann: And strangely, of the poet Ezra Pound.

Kniffin: Oh?

Seligmann: There's correspondence from Ezra Pound in his papers, and I had copies made of those letters which are fascinating, and someday they'll be published, hopefully.

Kniffin: Bronson was a good musician, incidentally.

Seligmann: That's . . . now that's something . . . let's talk about that. Was he piano or a variety?

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: A variety.

Kniffin: And the organ. See, in the estate on Long Island they had a beautiful pipe organ built right there in the building. He often went and played that.

Seligmann: Was he the only one that played it? Was it built for him?

Kniffin: Yes. That's right. Yes, it was built for him. We couldn't even sell it afterwards. It was something.

Seligmann: (chuckle) I understand--and I just picked this up somewhere as I've wandered around asking strange questions about Cutting--that the Cure collection of records at Vassar College is called the Cutting Collection.

Kniffin: That's right. He had a tremendous collection, and he turned them over as a gift.

Seligmann: Was that in his will or was this prior?

Kniffin: No, I think that was done before. I think so, yes.

Seligmann: Back on his will, when Cutting died it was generally assumed--and I'd like to know if the assumption is right--that large numbers of people owed him money on what were essentially unsecured notes.

Kniffin: Either that or mortgages.

Seligmann: Or mortgages?

Kniffin: They had to have some face to the thing, you know, so he'd take a mortgage and then sweep it under the rug or something (chuckle).

Seligmann: Were these loans wiped out by his estate?

Kniffin: In the settlement.

Seligmann: In the settlement?

Kniffin: That's right. The sisters elected to do that--Mrs. Ward and Mrs. James, both. They said that there was no use of trying to collect these because this was probably not what he had in mind, and I think that's true.

Seligmann: Did they have any idea what he had in mind?

Kniffin: They knew him better than I did. I can't answer that fruitfully (chuckle).

Seligmann: Do you want to guess?

Kniffin: Or even guess, no. But they were great admirers of their brother. They thought he was great stuff.

Seligmann: Because again . . . and this is . . . I don't mean this in a derogatory sense of Bronson, who has over the years become one of my heroes, but for someone like Bronson Cutting even . . . let's accept the \$6,000,000 instead of the \$40,000,000.

Kniffin: That's right.

Seligmann: In New Mexico in 1935, that was a tremendous amount of money.

Kniffin: Oh, sure.

Seligmann: You'd get all sorts of underground charges that by these loans, etc., he was simply buying elections.

Kniffin: Of course, I think that he kept them in line that way. Now whether they turned on them, we don't know, but generally speaking, I think the Spanish-Americans supported him 100 per cent--pretty much. Yes.

Seligmann: I've got figures to the extent that in specific precincts, which I can identify as heavily Spanish-American, that they supported him as opposed to Chavez.

Kniffin: Yes. That's right.

Seligmann: Logically speaking, they would have supported Chavez in terms of race, religion.

Kniffin: He spoke Spanish as well as Chavez or anybody else.

Seligmann: But you would still assume . . . but most New Mexico politicians of that period spoke Spanish fluently. You would assume--the assumption I would have drawn anyway--was that ideally Mexican-Americans would vote for Chavez all things being equal. In the case when he ran against Cutting, it's very clear that all things were not equal.

Kniffin: No, no. Bronson pioneered the movement to relieve the lot of the Mexican, I would say, to my knowledge.

Seligmann: Did the family understand this was what he was doing?

Kniffin: Oh, yes! And were for it.

Seligmann: And were for it. Do you have any idea what lay behind his support in 1932 of FDR as opposed to Hoover? Do you have any idea of how he felt about Hoover personally or how the family felt?

Kniffin: No, I would not have any idea on that, no. I know they were reasonably good friends at the time of the first election until this schism came up, you see, over the veterans' bill. Then they became enemies (chuckle).

Seligmann: Did this affect the friendship between Mrs. Cutting and Mrs. Roosevelt as well?

Kniffin: Senior?

Seligmann: Yes, the senior Mrs. Cutting.

Kniffin: Yes. Yes, it did, unfortunately.

Seligmann: If memory serves me correctly, Mrs. Roosevelt did in fact attend the funeral, I think. I'm not sure of that.

Kniffin: Franklin's wife?

Seligmann: Yes.



Kniffin: Yes, that's possible, but the senior . . . I don't think she was alive at that time. I'm not sure.

Seligmann: Mrs. . . .

Kniffin: Franklin's mother.

Seligmann: Oh! Oh! I see. I see. We're talking about different seniors. I'm talking about the senior Mrs. Cutting, and you're talking about the senior Mrs. Roosevelt.

Kniffin: That's right. The two of them were friends, they being about the same age, I think.

Seligmann: I see. I see. It was at that level, not Eleanor Roosevelt and Mrs. Cutting, that were friends.

Kniffin: No, no. I don't know how Mrs. Cutting felt about Eleanor. I can't tell you because I don't know.

Seligmann: Okay. I'm glad we got that one cleared up. A couple of times you've mentioned the veterans as the source of the . . .

Kniffin: . . . first disagreement, yes.

Seligmann: . . . disagreement. Is there anything else that you know? Let me re-phrase this and give you my logic on it. There is in the Roosevelt papers in early 1934, a letter from FDR to Colonel Edward House, the advisor of Wilson . . .

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: . . . to the effect that one of the proposals . . . one of the plans that the left wing in the Senate has in 1934 is to run a candidate against him, against FDR, and that this candidate running as a third party candidate could not possibly win, but he can pull enough liberal votes so that the conservative . . . so that the Republicans will elect a president, and the country will be in such bad shape in 1940 that they will then turn to the third party. Among the people he mentions are people like Huey Long, the president of the University of Wisconsin, and specifically Bronson Cutting as one of these people mentioned as a potential presidential candidate. Did you ever hear anything to this effect?

Kniffin: No. No, the only disagreement that I came up with was over the veterans' legislation. That's the only one I know about.

Seligmann: Do you know why Bronson felt so strongly about the veterans?

Kniffin: He was one of the organizers of the American Legion and a captain in the service in the First World War. That's all I know.

Seligmann: It's fairly clear again that in New Mexico this . . . founding of the American Legion is a very potent political weapon for him . . .

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: . . . that he depends to a large degree on the support of these veterans. What I'm really curious about and where I got into this question the first time is that it had seemed to me consistently that as shrewd a politician as FDR was that he must have known that Cutting could not desert the veterans and hope to remain in office in New Mexico. The veterans and the Mexican-Americans were just the two . . . his two pillars of support. That's why I really question the veterans--is because I cannot see FDR alienating a man for this reason when he was in a sense supporting those people he had to support. You haven't heard anything about the presidency?

Kniffin: No, I didn't get into that. That was family secrets, I guess. I didn't hear about it. I did know there was a break. It came down from Mrs. Cutting.

Seligmann: The other temptation is to ask, "Are there any other family secrets that you didn't know about (chuckle)?"

Kniffin: Well, there's one I can't mention. I really can't mention that, but I think that's the only one. Yes.

I can only say that I don't think that he was mixed up with any of the dames out there that I know of. He could have been, but . . . now as far as the men are concerned, he had a man living with him who was a writer for his paper. That was it, but I know that he was not a homosexual. That I do know (chuckle).

Seligmann: B. B. Dunne was.

Kniffin: Yes, Brian Boru, yes.

Seligmann: What do you know about him? He's fascinating.

Kniffin: Eccentric as hell! Apparently a writer in the style where you take off, you know, like this. Not too practical. Always behind the eight ball financially. I knew him quite well. Great drinker. In fact, he was plastered so much that it was hard to find him sober (chuckle). But we had to go after Brian Boru when he got his bequest in the will to be sure and put most of it away for his family in trust, which he did. He kept \$4,000 or \$5,000 and bought a little booze and had fun.

Seligmann: Do you know what's . . . one of the things I'm trying to run down is his family. Do you know anything?

Kniffin: Brian Boru?

Seligmann: Yes.

Kniffin: He was divorced. I think he had one or two kids, and they lived . . . his wife lived in Baltimore. It was the care of that family that our family was most concerned about, to the result that we got him to put, oh, say, \$95,000 in trust for the family.

Seligmann: But you have no idea of the whereabouts of his children?

Kniffin: No, no. They were in Baltimore. That's all I know.

Seligmann: Okay, I can run them . . . the reason I'm running him down is to see if the family has any papers to any extent relating to his living with Cutting, if he has any correspondence, this sort of thing. One of the strange things about the Cutting papers is that there is not a single letter in the papers from Cutting to Dunne. There are innumerable letters from Dunne to Cutting . . .

Kniffin: That's right.

Seligmann: . . . but nothing in the other direction.

Kniffin: And Dunne to Mrs. Cutting, Sr.

Seligmann: Yes.

Kniffin: That's right. They thought he was a good influence for Bronson, and, of course, also wrote on the paper a great deal. He had a column. But I think he was eccentric as hell.

Seligmann: Did they know about his drinking?

Kniffin: Oh, sure! Oh, sure!

Seligmann: And still a good influence?

Kniffin: (chuckle) Oh, sure. Yes.

Seligmann: Is it safe to say . . . I know Bronson was opposed to Prohibition. Was the entire family opposed? Do you know?

Kniffin: Well, opposed to strong drink. Wines, they always had. Bronson had quite a cellar. One of my jobs when I first went out there was to destroy all this illicit liquor. Our attorney says, "My God, you'll have all the people in town at the end of the sewer, lapping it up!"

Seligmann: (chuckle).

Kniffin: So we just sold the house to Jesus as is.

Seligmann: The cellar?

Kniffin: Cellar and all.

Seligmann: Intact.

Kniffin: And he went to work on it!

Seligmann: And he did his best.

Kniffin: Oh, he didn't last long. I think two or three years afterwards.

Seligmann: One other associate that I note on this stream-of-consciousness sort of thing . . . have I missed? How about . . . you mentioned J. D. Atwood.

Kniffin: J. D. was the attorney for the estate, and I think he was Bronson's attorney. I'm not sure about that, but I think he was because he regarded J. D. pretty good for a long time. Then I think they got crosswise over something. Of course, J. D., being a Texan, had no regard for the Mexican as you know. He did know a lot of them and handled them pretty good during the settlement of the estate. That's about all I know with respect to J. D. and the family. I think Mrs. Cutting was a little bit uncertain about employing him as an attorney on the estate. I took our attorney from one of the big New York firms out with me to get the will. Then I typed the will and sent a copy of it airmail to Mrs. Cutting and brought the original back. All handwritten.

Seligmann: Then it's your copy because the copy I've seen is a typed copy. I don't believe the handwritten will is in the papers.

Kniffin: Oh, no, this was handwritten. This was handwritten. The original will was handwritten, and I had typed it, you see, because I used to be a secretary. So I could type it. Some of the names and some of the locations threw me, but Atwood knew them. So that helped out.

Seligmann: Yes. His will has a good deal of insight into the political structure of New Mexico at the time as to who he left his \$250.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: I think the smallest bequest was \$250.

Kniffin: Some of them were to cancel debts.

Seligmann: Then some of those specific bequests were to cancel debts.

Kniffin: They got them anyhow, and they tore up the mortgages and the notes.

Seligmann: They got the money?

Kniffin: They got the money anyhow.

Seligmann: I see.

Kniffin: (chuckle) That was the decision of the family to treat it that way, you see. I don't know whether Bronson felt strongly that they should pay it back. I don't know anything about that.

Seligmann: Was this a sizable proportion of the estate that was written off like this?

Kniffin: Oh, no.

Seligmann: It was . . .



Kniffin: I would just hazard to guess that the total obligations owed to him were not over a half-million, if that. I saw all the notes and mortgages.

Seligmann: Do you know what became of them? Were they destroyed?

Kniffin: That I don't know. Our attorney simply took the advice of the family and went on and paid the bequests. I think they sent the obligations back to the person who made the note or the mortgage. I think they mailed it back to them or handed it back.

Seligmann: Yes. Yes, because if those . . . that list of loans would say a good deal about the sort of thing I'm trying to find out . . .

Kniffin: I don't think there was a list as such.

Seligmann: Not the list necessarily. I mean the original, if the attorneys or someone kept the original.

Kniffin: Oh, I imagine Davis, Polk would have that. Davis, Polk, \_\_\_\_\_, Sunderland, and Kiemdl.

Seligmann: Gracious. Let me write this down, too. Davis, Polk . . .

Kniffin: \_\_\_\_\_, Sunderland, and Kiemdl.

Seligmann: Kiemdl?

Kniffin: It's supposed to be Jewish. I don't know whether he is or not.

Seligmann: New York?

Kniffin: They're at 1 Manhattan Plaza.

Seligmann: That sounds like a prestigious address.

Kniffin: That's the Chase Bank building.

Seligmann: Ah-ha! I may write them and see what ensues.

Kniffin: Yes. Yes. I don't know whether . . .

Seligmann: I started to say it only cost eight cents, but that's wrong.

Kniffin: No, it's ten cents, but I was just wondering if by any chance they would be willing to . . .

Seligmann: If they're not . . .

Kniffin: . . . send it to you without the permission of some member of the family, and who is left? Iris Origo. That's it.

Seligmann: She's on my list . . .

Kniffin: She's a niece . . .

Seligmann: . . . to interview . . .

Kniffin: . . . and a very capable woman.

Seligmann: . . . when she comes. I understand she spends a good deal of her time in Italy.

Kniffin: That's her home.

Seligmann: I'm going to write her, and I hope to set up an interview when she comes to . . .

Kniffin: She comes over every year to keep her American citizenship alive, I guess. She's really a very brilliant gal. There's no question about it.

Seligmann: And she is the daughter of . . .

Kniffin: W. Bayard, Jr.

Seligmann: W. Bayard, Jr.

Kniffin: Junior.

Seligmann: Junior, oh.

Kniffin: They only had the one child.

Seligmann: Do you know the Wilmerdings?

Kniffin: Quite well.

Seligmann: Are they . . . what is their relationship? I keep coming across that name in his . . .

Kniffin: Mrs. Lucius Wilmerding, Sr., I think, was a cousin or a sister of Mrs. Cutting. I'm not sure about that, but there was a close relationship, and a very fine regard on the part of Mrs. Cutting for that family. I knew Lucious quite well.

Seligmann: Her husband.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: Yes.

Kniffin: Yes. Lucius Wilmerding, Sr. There's two of them, you know.

Seligmann: Yes. Now the son is . . .

Kniffin: He's in the bank.

Seligmann: Now there is a political scientist named Lucius Wilmerding, who has written a fairly important book on the electoral college, and I'm sure that he's related. You don't often find names like Lucius and Wilmerding coming together by accident.

Kniffin: No. No. The last I heard he was in a brokerage house in New York, but I'm . . . or in a bank, but I'm not sure about that. He could still write it even if he was.

Seligmann: You don't have to take an oath of poverty to be a historian and political scientist (chuckle).

Kniffin: (chuckle).

Seligmann: Well, where should we go from here? What have I missed?

Kniffin: You knew about, of course, Bronson going to New Mexico for his health. His father sent him out there and bought him a home. His father was a director in three railroads and had his private car in Santa Fe at the time that he

died of a heart attack in the middle of the night. He was on the board of Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, and Santa Fe.

Seligmann: Which would help Bronson in entrée into Santa Fe society somewhat.

Kniffin: Well, he set him up. There's no question about it.

Seligmann: One of the questions . . . one of the bits of information I've come across, and I've never known how to verify it outside of doing some hard work which I've never wanted to do . . . does the Cutting family own the property around Times Square?

Kniffin: No.

Seligmann: Okay. I had heard at one time that essentially Times Square was theirs.

Kniffin: Now you can go way back to the 1880's or 1890's at which time they may have had an interest in landholdings in the area, but not to my knowledge, and certainly not subsequently.

Seligmann: Yes, and it'd be reasonably . . . that your knowledge is 1919 to the present . . . that they would not . . . this is something that \_\_\_\_\_.

Kniffin: Well, of course, not the other side. The R. Fulton Cutting, I don't know about, but the W. Bayard, I do.

Seligmann: Okay.

Kniffin: Yes. There was no such thing in the W. Bayard Cutting portfolio. They did own a ferry. It ran from Brooklyn across to New York--the 39th Street Ferry--but they didn't make money on that. They lost.

Seligmann: Did they lose because they in a sense chose to lose, or was it just . . .

Kniffin: Never! Never did W. Bayard Cutting step in there to lose money.

Seligmann: It was not a humanitarian effort.

Kniffin: Oh, certainly not. He just made a mistake. He bought a ferry company, and it didn't pay.

Seligmann: And he couldn't get rid of it.

Kniffin: Well, they finally turned it over to the city. My predecessor was treasurer of that ferry company. That's how he got to be in with W. Bayard.

Seligmann: What else in terms of this sort of just, you know, property holdings can you think of offhand? Again, this is just kind of a general information that I can't locate through the papers, and I'm not sure that it'll ever be used even, but it helps me to get some kind of a feel for Bronson.

Kniffin: The family itself, that is, my side of the family were never real estate speculators or to any extent holders, although they had this big estate on Long Island which they turned over to the state as a park.

Seligmann: Is it still a state . . . is it a state park now? Do you know?

Kniffin: That's right, and Mrs. Cutting set up two trusts so that the income from them would come to her for life, but once she died it would go to maintain this state park. It's a very exceptional park because it's only evergreens. No flowers.

Seligmann: What's the name? I'd like to go there sometime.

Kniffin: The W. Bayard Cutting Arboretum at Oakdale.

Seligmann: That's the same Oakdale that is the family home?

Kniffin: That's right. It hurt the local taxpayers when they did that because it was a tremendous loss of taxes (chuckle).

Seligmann: And then the general source of their wealth is railroad bond investments, stocks?

Kniffin: I would say private banking was where they piled it up because, as I say, there was no tax in those days. He died in 1912, you see, and 1913 was the beginning of the

income tax. I do know that many of the bonds had on them a \$5.00 tax-exempt stamp which we never honored. Paid \$5.00 for each bond, put them on the bonds, and then when the income tax came in they still taxed them.

Seligmann: What kind of bonds did they have--the city municipal?

Kniffin: Oh, no. The municipal bond was out in those . . . in that era. I would say railroad and general big American corporations--American Telephone. You know, any of those big corporations. He was a pretty good investor--W. Bayard was.

Seligmann: The only reason I brought up municipal is that in a New Mexico election in 1911, there is a telegram from one of the leading figures in New Mexico politics, Thomas Benton Catron, to R. F. Cutting to the effect that if R. F. Cutting does not pull his nephew out of New Mexico politics, some bonds on the Santa Fe courthouse may not be honored when the territory becomes a state. That is followed up by another telegram from W. B. Cutting to his son, saying that he now owns his brother's bonds on the Santa Fe courthouse and that Bronson is free to do whatever he wishes in New Mexico politics (chuckle).

Kniffin: That would be possible, but not to my knowledge.



Seligmann: But that, again, that . . . see, that was 1912 \_\_\_\_\_.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: Those bonds may have come to maturity or . . .

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: . . . or vanished before you came on the scene.

Kniffin: I do know this: that Bronson Cutting had \$30,000 in bonds of the City of Patterson, New Jersey, which came due during the depression, and I told Bronson they were coming due, but there'd be some question about them being paid off. So the treasurer and mayor of Patterson came over to my office in 1935, I think it was, or 1936--1935, I think it was. He says, "You have thirty bonds in Bronson Cutting's name that will come due, and we haven't got the money to pay for them. We ourselves are taking script, not cash, but the first arrears taxes that come in, we will pay off those bonds if you will not put us in default." You know a city in default is something that's hard to live down. The South had a lot of them. So I said, "Yes, we'll go along." And I think five, six months later, we got our money. So that's the only municipal bonds that have a story behind them (chuckle). All during the depression we had no defaults.

Seligmann: Are there any other Cutting properties like Oakdale that are still . . .

Kniffin: Extant?

Seligmann: Yes, extant. Is the house at Oakdale standing?

Kniffin: Oh, yes. That's the one that's now a park. Yes. Then there was one on 72nd Street and Madison Avenue which was the city home, and that was subsequently sold and torn down and now has a flower shop or an apartment or something like that (chuckle). That was quite a house.

Seligmann: Was it a brownstone?

Kniffin: Sandstone, yes. It had about probably twenty, twenty-five rooms. Three, four stories high. Always fifteen or sixteen servants. The estate out there had about another twenty, so we had quite a payroll.

Seligmann: They lived well.

Kniffin: Well, we had cottages on the place out there for most of the servants, so they had their cash plus living quarters.

Seligmann: How did you get involved with the Cutting family? You said you were a secretary, but . . .

Kniffin: In 1919, I came out of the service. I was one of the first men out of the service because my job was over the minute that the armistice was signed. We were supplying

materials to the hospital manufacturers. So that was over. We had enough stuff over there to take care of another million and a half men.

So I was working for customhouse for about three weeks. I just couldn't take that kind of a job, so during the lunch hour I went out to this national employment exchange and asked them to give me another job. The man who interviewed me, his sister tried to teach me Latin in school up in New York State. When he found I was from Liberty, New York, he put me into this job. But when I went down there, he had told me that he thought it might be a church organization, and the first time I took the job and took dictation from Bergen, I was green in the city.

I knew nothing about Wall Street, and he let out a stream of oaths that convinced me it was not a church organization. So that's when I found out what it was. I was with him sixteen years. Then he died suddenly and, as I say, Mrs. Cutting took me on. It's frequently the case that a secretary knows about as much about a job or a situation as the principal.

Seligman: If not more now.

Kniffin: Well, probably a little more facile, probably a little more innovative in your operation and so forth. That's possible when you're younger (chuckle).

Seligmann: Or moreover, secretaries have that great bit of knowledge: they know where things are.

Kniffin: Oh, they do, including \_\_\_\_\_ (chuckle).

Seligmann: Then how would you describe your job in later years after you ceased to be a secretary?

Kniffin: Well, that was right after Bergen's death in '32, which was the depth of the depression, but we were so well-invested that we had no problem, and to give you an example of what a fine woman Mrs. Cutting, Sr., was, she would have people come for tea that she knew had been in good circumstances, of good blood, but were now destitute. Then Mrs. Cutting would say, "Well, are you trying to raise money through the sale of anything?" And one of them would say, "Well, I've got this beautiful set of Spode that I thought I might sell." Mrs. Cutting says, "That's just what I've been looking for." She would buy the china and put it in a barrel out in the barn, and we had more damned china out there in that barn! Just to help these people, that's all. She had it and they didn't.

Seligmann: Do you know what became of this china? Did these people . . .

Kniffin: We sold it. We sold it to one of the big Plummer or somebody in New York--the big china specialist? We just sold it to him en masse because when Mrs. Cutting died, Mrs. James didn't want to be bothered with anything like that. That's true of the furnishings and the town-house. Beautiful library, beautiful leather books. I know who got them. But she was a great gal.

Seligmann: Do you have any idea who of the Cuttings is left outside of Iris Origo?

Kniffin: Ward and Origo.

Seligmann: Who was the first one?

Kniffin: Mrs. Ward.

Seligmann: Oh, yes.

Kniffin: The sister.

Seligmann: Yes, the very old sister.

Kniffin: As I say, ninety-four or something like that. Mrs. Cutting was ninety-four when she died. Mrs. Ward is very much like Mrs. Cutting, except that I don't think she's as charitable.

Seligmann: Do you have any idea what became of the estate?

Kniffin: Which one?

Seligmann: The W. B. as it . . .

Kniffin: It was split up amongst the family.

Seligmann: What happens . . . what I'm really after . . . what happens to an estate when the family runs out?

Kniffin: That's up to their will. Now Mrs. James, when she died, had a great number of charities in her will because she knew the rest of the family surviving certainly didn't need any more, but they always had a penchant for leaving a residue to the family. That was a W.B.C. rule, I guess. But that wouldn't be big after the charities were taken care of--nominal.

Seligmann: Then in a sense there is no . . . you don't think there is a Cutting estate personally . . .

Kniffin: Oh, no, no, no. That's all been settled. Mrs. Cutting, being the lone Cutting survivor with her will, that was the end. But they have . . . what do they call it? I can't think of the name of what they call it. Keeping a title. They call it the estate of W. Bayard Cutting. For years we operated under that name after he was gone, and then the Cutting estate, which was Mrs. Cutting. So that was how it got that way. It doesn't exist legally.

Seligmann: Who is . . . the people I got in touch with . . . who is the Robert Fulton Cutting estate? Is that . . . you say it's a brokerage?

Kniffin: No, no. They have a city office, and there's a very large family on his side: daughters, sons, grandchildren, nephews, nieces. So that's all being operated by this man that you wrote to.

Seligmann: I see.

Kniffin: Bronson's home was bought by the mother, and she was going to be the hostess--the Pearl Mesta. She really loved that job of entertaining for Bronson, but when Bronson died there was a problem. Mrs. Cutting didn't want it anymore. So she sold it to Justine, and that's where Justine is now, we think.

Seligmann: To the best of my knowledge, that is where she was in 1963 when I looked her up to try to talk to her then.

Kniffin: Yes, yes. Northwest 25th Street.

Seligmann: Yes. You say it's a very modest house.

Kniffin: No, not that one.

Seligmann: Oh, okay. I didn't think it was a very modest house (chuckle).

Kniffin: Oh, no, not that one.

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, no. It was a very interesting house.

Kniffin: You see, that is in the midst of Embassy Row . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: Right next to it.

Kniffin: . . . and I have an idea--now I may be wrong about this--that that will soon become an embassy when Mrs. Ward goes.

Seligmann: It seems to me that it was right across the street from the Soviet Embassy or fairly close to it, as I recall.

Mrs. Kniffin: It was near the English Embassy.

Kniffin: The British Embassy.

Mrs. Kniffin: The British Embassy.

Kniffin: That's right.

Mrs. Kniffin: Of course, the Russians might have bought nearby, but I don't think we've been around that way for a long time.

Kniffin: Of course, Mrs. Ward, being such a solid Catholic, could very well leave that as a retreat. That's what the lawyer told me. He says that 99 per cent of her estate will go to the Catholic Church.

Mrs. Kniffin: There seems to be so little that you know about . . . well, we were in his home in New Mexico.

Kniffin: Oh, yes, yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: That Baca was . . .

Kniffin: Yes, after he'd bought it.

Mrs. Kniffin: . . . bought it. Jesus Baca. That was a . . .

Kniffin: That was a modest home.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, it was modest, but it was a very attractive home-- Spanish-type.



Kniffin: Huge living room.

Mrs. Kniffin: Spanish-type home, you know.

Seligmann: I wonder why when I dream, when I construct heaven in my dreams, it comes out looking like Santa Fe somehow all the time?

Mrs. Kniffin: Yes, yes.

Kniffin: It's a great spot. It's a great playground, you know.

Mrs. Kniffin: It's very nice.

Kniffin: All the lawyers and senators and everybody flocked there, and they think they won't be recognized.

Seligmann: Yes, I know. Two or three weeks of summer, for the last couple of years, we've been there.

Kniffin: Have you? It's quite a spot. It's 7,900 feet, though. It bothers some people.

Seligmann: What would you say about the relationships between the sisters in the sense that you knew them?

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, I really didn't know too much about them. I think they were very proud of him, as Willard said.

Kniffin: Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: But they weren't people that talked about one another very much--the sisters didn't.

Kniffin: They were not entertaining one another very much either, that is, they didn't have them back and forth to their apartments or houses.

Mrs. Kniffin: No, no, they . . .

Kniffin: . . . so there must have been a certain distance involved there (chuckle).

Seligmann: And this was when they lived in New York City?

Kniffin: Yes, yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well . . .

Kniffin: Mrs. Ward wouldn't stay in Mrs. Cutting's house. She's afraid the ceilings were going to fall, which they did. It was built in 1896 (chuckle).

Mrs. Kniffin: I don't know whether this means anything, but we . . . Bronson did get us . . . of course, I was born in Washington, D. C., and grew up with the 4th of March. You know the . . .

Kniffin: The inauguration.

Mrs. Kniffin: . . . inauguration. So when our son was about . . .

Kniffin: Five or six.

Mrs. Kniffin: No, what day was it . . . what year was it when Roosevelt went in? What year?

Seligmann: '32.

Mrs. Kniffin: '32. Well, Bill was . . .

Seligmann: Historians know some things.

Kniffin: He was about seven or eight.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, he was born in '24.

Kniffin: Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: I thought it would be very nice for Willard and our son to have the opportunity to see an inauguration, I had never been down to the Capitol for one, but I had sat on the sidewalks and . . .

Kniffin: Watched the parade.

Mrs. Kniffin: . . . (chuckle) and watched the parade, and then one of my grandmothers was a buyer for one of the shops in Washington, and we went to their store. We could see . . . we had a front . . . a big front window, and we could always see the parade coming along. So when we asked Bronson to get us tickets, he very graciously did.

Kniffin: I was at Roosevelt's inauguration through Bronson. Sat right next to Henry Morgenthau, who immediately put his feet right on my lap practically. I never had any high regard for that guy after that.

Seligmann: (laughter).

Kniffin: He was terrible.

Seligmann: Is this the one . . . the Secretary of the Treasury?

Kniffin: Yes! Yes, and he didn't know anything about finance. His father did, but he didn't.

Seligmann: Why do you think he got the job? Did Roosevelt know his father or . . .

Kniffin: Oh, sure. They were old chums. Yes.

Seligmann: Did the family talk about Bronson being offered a job of Secretary of the Interior by FDR? There's reasonable good evidence that he was. It was a firm offer.

Kniffin: Oh, yes. Yes, I'm sure that took place. Now whether that was subsequent to their first quarrel, I don't know. It could have been, and may have been patched up, see.

Seligmann: No, this was in 1932, so it was right after Cutting had broken with the Republicans and supported Roosevelt.

Kniffin: Yes, yes. Yes, I knew that offer had been made, but I don't know why he turned it down.

Seligmann: That's the next question I was going to ask (chuckle).

Kniffin: I don't know (chuckle) except, as I say, they had this little spat over the veteran thing.

Seligmann: Well, the offer had been turned down two years before the veterans . . .

Kniffin: Oh?

Seligmann: . . . the veterans' argument comes up at all. You said that Mrs. Cutting--the senior Mrs. Cutting--was interested in being a kind of Pearl Mesta.

Kniffin: A hostess?

Seligmann: Yes, the hostess with . . . I would hope she wouldn't say, "the mostest."

Kniffin: No.

Mrs. Kniffin: No. Oh, no. She was very, a very beautiful woman.

Kniffin: Fine woman.

Mrs. Kniffin: Fine woman. She was a very kind woman.

Kniffin: Yes, I told him that.

Seligmann: Do you know how she felt about specific political figures? Are there any ideas you might have on . . . rather than me mention a figure, did you say she liked or disliked . . . do you just have any kind of a general feeling about that?

Kniffin: I have a feeling that she had turned Democratic right after Roosevelt came in. In her sympathies, if not her voting. I'm not sure that she voted.

Seligmann: One of the strange things I've picked up in a research . . . there's a book entitled America's Forty Families, written by . . . who was it? Lundberg? I'm reasonably sure he was a Norman Thomas socialist anyway, in which he is

discussing the effect of these forty families on American politics, and it's generally a malignant effect.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: And the Cuttings are one of these families. One of the problems he has with the Cuttings is that in 1936, the Cutting family gave \$5,000 to Norman Thomas' campaign.

Kniffin: That I can't believe was possible.

Mrs. Kniffin: You were there. You were there working then.

Kniffin: I was there \_\_\_\_\_.

Seligmann: He cites that and, believe me, he has real trouble explaining why the enemy is contributing (chuckle).

Kniffin: I doubt it, but it's possible.

Seligmann: If it were done, would you say it was because of distaste for FDR or because of the death . . . because of the whole activities in the New Mexico election in 1934? Would it be this sort of motivation that would account for it?

Kniffin: I don't think she would do it. That would be my own personal opinion.

Seligmann: Well, . . . the only . . . frankly, the only reason I can see is that she would not have given the money to the Republican Party because it's reasonably obvious

that Bronson Cutting is alienated from the Old Guard  
Republicans . . .

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: . . . certainly in . . .

Kniffin: I didn't consider him a Republican after that.

Seligmann: After '32?

Kniffin: After '32.

Mrs. Kniffin: Was Mrs. James liable to do such a thing, Willard?

Kniffin: She was a Democrat, the sister. Mrs. Ward, I think,  
was still Republican.

Mrs. Kniffin: Mrs. Ward . . .

Seligmann: It makes a fancy footnote. It's really fun to play with  
this donation!

Mrs. Kniffin: Mrs. Ward . . .

Seligmann: I will admit to not having checked it to see if it was  
true. I just assumed that he had checked . . . that there  
were some sort of records kept of major donations.

Kniffin: I don't know.

Mrs. Kniffin: I don't know about 1936. You were there. I was there.

Kniffin: I had been a dyed-in-the-wool Republican all my life,  
and, of course, I saw this swing taking place. Now Bergen,

my predecessor, was a dyed-in-the-wool Republican. He had no use for Roosevelt or anybody in the party.

Seligmann: He would have gotten along well with my grandfather. They would have fought each other constantly.

Kniffin: (chuckle) Yes. Yes. I mean once they're Democrat, always a Democrat, I guess. I don't know.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well . . .

Kniffin: My attorney is that way, anyhow.

Seligmann: That was my family.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, of course, you were born down here in the South.

Kniffin: But I voted for a Democrat down here, Paul Rogers.

Mrs. Kniffin: It's all we ever voted for.

Seligmann: I don't know him. Florida politics is not my strongest suit.

Kniffin: Well, he is one of the best men in the Senate. There's no question about it. He's a real, solid guy! His brother is my attorney. That's how I got to know him.

Mrs. Kniffin: I don't feel that we've really had too much to offer this man (chuckle) for . . .

Kniffin: Only, as I say, by hearsay prior to 1919, but from that time on I was intimately associated.



Seligmann: I'm reasonable . . . I'm not . . . I'm not dissatisfied.

Kniffin: (laughter).

Mrs. Kniffin: (laughter) No, what I mean when you . . .

Kniffin: If you find some missing links when you get back, write me a letter, and perhaps I can help.

Seligmann: Let me . . . I'm going to cut it off, and if I think of anything . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: Yes, but I mean quite an insight of them because of Justine Cutting, Fulton Cutting, Bronson Cutting . . .

Kniffin: Yes. He's got that.

Seligmann: I've got the . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: But I don't know who this Leonard Cutting was.

Kniffin: Who?

Mrs. Kniffin: Leonard Cutting.

Kniffin: No, I don't know.

Mrs. Kniffin: I don't remember.

Kniffin: That was old man Cutting's boy.

Mrs. Kniffin: Olivia James . . . James . . .

Seligmann: I'll have to remember to work that wink into the typescript (chuckle).

Kniffin: (chuckle) Bob LaFollette and Hiram Johnson of California were strong friends and defenders of Bronson in this contest.

Seligmann: This is Bob, Jr., not Bob LaFollette, Sr.

Kniffin: The one that was a senator.

Seligmann: Yes, well, his father was a senator . . .

Kniffin: That's right. He was before him.

Seligmann: Yes, it's the junior . . .

Kniffin: But it's the junior that was a great friend of Bronson's and fought very hard to have his seat confirmed. So Bronson left him \$50,000, and the other brother was apparently governor out there, and he left him \$25,000. That's how they got their money.

Seligmann: Now do you want the sequel? Do you know the last name of the last person who was the last Democrat to run for governor of Wisconsin? Bronson Cutting LaFollette.

Kniffin: Oh, that's the son! Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, yes! Yes, I did see that one time.

Kniffin: Yes, I did see that.

Mrs. Kniffin: I had forgotten about it. Yes.

Kniffin: Yes, I know he named a son after Bronson, yes.

Seligmann: Do you know how old the son is? That's the question. Was he born before Bronson's death or afterwards?

Kniffin: Yes, yes.

Seligmann: Do you know anything . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: Are you sure about that?

Kniffin: Yes, I'm pretty sure.

Seligmann: That's one of those things I'm just too lazy to check up. That's a matter of public record.

Mrs. Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: I can find that (chuckle).

Kniffin: (chuckle) Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: It seems to me that it'd be later, but maybe not.

Kniffin: Well, possibly.

Seligmann: Following Cutting's death, there was a lecture series set up--the Bronson M. Cutting Memorial Lecture Series. Do you know anything about that at all?

Kniffin: Never heard of them.

Seligmann: That it was set up in Washington. Charles Austin Beard spoke, and Edwin Borchard, who was an international lawyer of considerable repute, spoke. What it really is is kind of . . . for want of a better term, the responsible left wing of American politics. You know, somewhere . . .

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: Somewhere to the right of the socialists, but really to the left of most major political figures.

Kniffin: Yes. Yes.

Seligmann: I was curious about the financing of that lecture series and wondered if you knew anything.

Kniffin: I don't think it came . . . of course, you never know because he had a checking account in Washington. All that I did was feed it. So I really don't know what he did with his money.

Seligmann: Do you know anything . . . how did the family feel-- Mrs. Cutting, the senior Mrs. Cutting, Mrs. Ward, Mrs. Oliva?

Kniffin: Olivia.

Mrs. Kniffin: Olivia.

Seligmann: Olivia.

Mrs. Kniffin: Olivia James.

Seligmann: James, yes. How did they feel about people . . . did they have anything to do with people like Senator George Norris, for example, who was a good friend?

Kniffin: I don't think they did. Oh, Mrs. James would be the type that would support Norris and his public electric set-up.

Seligmann: Again, the reason I pick on Norris specifically is apparently--I've forgotten where I've picked this up--the senior Mrs. Cutting gave Norris Cutting's pocket watch which had been her husband's pocket watch . . .

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: . . . as a gesture.

Kniffin: That could be. That could be.

Seligmann: But you don't know?

Kniffin: No. I'm sorry. Certain little personal items and things took place without my knowledge.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, you've got a gold cigarette case that somebody told you wasn't worth anything, but I'm sure it must be because . . .

Kniffin: It's gold-filled. You can't sell it for gold.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well . . .

Kniffin: That was W. Bayard, Sr.'s.

Mrs. Kniffin: Senior's.

Kniffin: That's what killed him, of course. He smoked cigarettes worse than I did.

Mrs. Kniffin: These people were not social climbers.

Kniffin: Who?

Mrs. Kniffin: The Cuttings, or social partiers.

Kniffin: Oh, they were tremendous blue bloods!

Mrs. Kniffin: Yes, they were blue bloods, but they . . . you never saw their name in the paper!

Seligmann: You don't climb when you're there.

Mrs. Kniffin: No, but you don't . . . that's true, but you never saw their name in any affair.

Kniffin: Not in our era, but prior to that, Mrs. Cutting was quite an entertainer.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, but afterall, you went there in 1919.

Kniffin: 1919, yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: And we were there a long time.

Seligmann: This pretty much backs up the sort of information I have gotten which, again, is information by in-direction as much as anything.

Kniffin: Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: They never . . . you never saw . . .

Seligmann: I checked the social pages in New York.

Kniffin: They were in the Social Register, all right (chuckle).

Mrs. Kniffin: . . . you never saw their name in any big affair. They never sponsored . . . now Mrs. James was interested in the settlement--Henry Street Settlement--but you never saw her name going to a ball or any of those . . . like the doodads.

Kniffin: She didn't go in for that.

Mrs. Kniffin: I used to look in the paper just for curiosity, and I'd say, "Well, Cutting's name is not there. There's nothing there."

Kniffin: Mrs. James was one of the founders of the Foreign Policy Association way back.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, the Roosevelts, they always got their name in the papers, and a lot of the others, but although the Cuttings had it, you just never did see them. They never splurged that much to let the name get in the paper.

Kniffin: But she had a gold service.

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, she had everything!

Kniffin: Hiding it in the safe, you know (chuckle).

Mrs. Kniffin: She had everything she wanted.

Seligmann: But you don't . . . society just wasn't what they were interested in.

Mrs. Kniffin: No, Willard has told the tale that he helped someone during the depression.

Kniffin: I told him that. Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: Things like that, but you never saw anything in the paper about what she did or what she could do.

Kniffin: Oh, she was one of the largest contributors to both the New York and Washington Cathedrals--Mrs. Cutting was.

Seligmann: To the Episcopal Cathedrals?

Mrs. Kniffin: Yes. Yes.

Kniffin: Yes, both of those cathedrals. I mean pretty good-sized contributions.

Mrs. Kniffin: St. John's.

Seligmann: Yes. Now I knew that W. B., Sr., was buried in a chapel. His services were held in the chapel which he and J. P. Morgan had jointly donated . . .

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: . . . to . . . I've forgotten which church it is now. I think Riverside, some . . . I gathered it was . . . knowing . . .

Kniffin: Going back beyond that, I think.

Seligmann: . . . knowing absolutely nothing about the Episcopal Church in New York, I was impressed.

Mrs. Kniffin: St. John's Cathedral is there in New York, isn't it?

Kniffin: Yes, that's a complete loss, that St. John's. It's right in the heart of a colored district, and the kids break the windows as fast as they put them back.

Seligmann: A friend of mine in Phoenix at the First Baptist Church in downtown Phoenix, which is Northern as opposed to Southern Baptist, said that when he was minister there, the downtown church needs two things to survive, and it must have them in this order: adequate parking space and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Kniffin: (chuckle).



Seligmann: That one didn't get him. What really got him was when he stated publicly that in his church it didn't matter what you thought about the Trinity, you just had to be orthodox on Goldwater.

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, no.

Seligmann: I don't know where he is now, but he's not there. Well, let's see.

Kniffin: I had a pretty rough time with Mrs. Ward. You see, I was on her foundation. I was the only Protestant on a Catholic foundation. I asked Mrs. Ward, "Why have you got me here?" She said, "I want you to watch them." (chuckle).

Seligmann: What sort of . . . again, this is general . . . what sort of . . . what was her foundation into in a sense? Was it . . .

Kniffin: It was the teaching of the Gregorian chant, which was never written. It had to be handed down from priest to priest, and she tried to revive it in the Catholic Church, but it didn't go over. Then she had a special method of teaching music which was visual as against tonal, I guess you'd say. Had these charts, you know, (chuckle) with all these funny-looking words on them. I don't think

that has gone over too big, but she does think she is quite an authoress and quite a musician and quite an innovator and everything else.

Seligmann: Does she play?

Kniffin: She did, but not now.

Seligmann: Yes, I mean . . . yes, I have to keep remembering that we have to deal with her in two tenses as it were.

Kniffin: Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: Yes.

Kniffin: I told him she was ninety-four, on cloud nine.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, at that age most everybody is (chuckle). Not everybody, but most everybody.

Kniffin: She keeps asking for me. I don't know whether she means she wants to see me or not, but I doubt it.

Mrs. Kniffin: You can't . . . nobody's been able to get anywhere . . .

Kniffin: No, you can't get in . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: . . . get into her. She won't . . .

Kniffin: Here I'd been signing checks for the help for years. I call up on the telephone. I have her number, you see. Its unlisted. "Who are you, and why do you want to see her?" and so forth. I said, "Look, I'm the same man that signed your checks for your wages." But that didn't register.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, they . . .

Kniffin: Of course, they're all French, you know. Mrs. Ward speaks French like a native.

Mrs. Kniffin: And she always has French help if she can possibly get them.

Kniffin: Oh, of course! She lived in France for about sixteen years.

Seligmann: Was this before or after her husband?

Kniffin: After.

Seligmann: She lived . . . she was divorced, but \_\_\_\_\_.

Kniffin: Oh, yes. Divorced way ahead of that.

Seligmann: Oh, I see. Divorced before the accident.

Kniffin: Oh, yes.

Seligmann: Okay. Make sure I've got that in my working notes.

Kniffin: I'm pretty sure she was divorced in the very early '20's.

Mrs. Kniffin: You see, these things don't come out too much in our knowledge of the family.

Kniffin: I was familiar with that because we had to make a settlement for George Cabot (chuckle).

Seligmann: You sent him off as the remittance man?

Kniffin: Yes, definitely. Lived . . . who did he live with?

Mrs. Kniffin: I don't know.

Kniffin: Gould, in Paris! Frank Gould.

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, yes. And Frank Gould finally bought her house.

Kniffin: And I think the two of those were a little queer.

Mrs. Kniffin: Willard, Frank Gould finally bought her house over in Dobbs Ferry.

Kniffin: Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: But they never lived in it after they bought it.

Kniffin: No.

Seligmann: But she was not living with her husband?

Mrs. Kniffin: No.

Kniffin: Oh, no. I'm sure that was the early '20's that she got the divorce.

Seligmann: Do you know anything about the circumstances of Mrs. James' divorce? I know a little bit about her husband. He was an author and a Pulitzer Prize winner, did one book and quit while he was ahead.

Kniffin: Now it isn't the Henry James.

Seligmann: No, I know. It's the Pulitzer . . .

Kniffin: He was a nephew, I think.

Mrs. Kniffin: Nephew.

Seligmann: Yes, the Henry James she married was the son of William James, the philosopher, who was the brother of Henry James, the author.

Kniffin: Oh.

Seligmann: And the Henry James that she married got a Pulitzer Prize in biography for a biography of Charles W. Eliot, the president of . . .

Kniffin: Harvard?

Mrs. Kniffin: Harvard?

Seligmann: I was going to say Harvard or Yale or one of those.

Kniffin: Harvard, yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: Harvard, I think it is.

Seligmann: Yes. That one. It's a two-volume biography which I bought at a used bookstore about two years ago (chuckle).

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, he remarried . . .

Kniffin: He married Mrs. James' good lifetime friend. Now you can figure what happened. I don't know what did, but she just out and the other girl in.

Mrs. Kniffin: Was her name Dreyfus? \_\_\_\_\_?

Kniffin: Can't tell you. I don't know.

Mrs. Kniffin: Wasn't she Dorothy Dreyfus' sister? Yes, she was . . .

Kniffin: Could have been.

Mrs. Kniffin: . . . she was a Mrs. Waldridge, I think. Her husband was dead, I think.

Kniffin: Yes. But that was a queer relationship. Mrs. James was just as friendly with her past husband and her new rival.

Seligman: Wife-in-law?

Kniffin: Yes, wife-in-law. Just as friendly. It was amazing!

Mrs. Kniffin: Now I don't think so after the marriage.

Seligmann: How did the senior Mrs. Cutting look on her two daughters' essentially unhappy marriages? Did she ever comment on them?

Kniffin: I don't think that she ever took a position as far as I'm concerned on that. She didn't say, "You must do this for Mrs. Ward or that for Mrs. James because of their bad experience." She never mentioned anything like that, but she did set up trusts so that they had no problems.

Seligmann: What I'm really trying to find out was . . . was she reconciled or accepted to the divorces in an age in which divorces were not terribly common?

Kniffin: They were taboo, really.

Seligmann: Yes.

Kniffin: Yes. I don't think she ever mentioned it.

Mrs. Kniffin: No. No, she and Mrs. James were up there at Newport at Seal Harbor together. Mrs. James always was around with Mrs. Cutting.

Kniffin: Oh, yes. Mrs. James was the . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: Mrs. Ward was away a lot.

Kniffin: Mrs. James was the favorite daughter. There's no question about that.

Seligmann: But it's safe to say that the senior Mrs. Cutting, for want of a better term, accepted reality.

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, no. She must have.

Kniffin: Probably not willingly, but on the surface. She was a good family woman, and she, I don't think, liked this. I don't think she did. She had four kids.

Mrs. Kniffin: The two boys died first.

Kniffin: W. Bayard, Jr., Mrs. Ward, and then Bronson, then Mrs. James. There was four of them. And she was very fond of her niece. That's the daughter of W. Bayard, Jr.

Mrs. Kniffin: Iris.

Kniffin: Iris. Very fond of her and her family, which now, I understand, is something like six or seven grandchildren (chuckle).

Mrs. Kniffin: Who knows? We haven't heard from them in a long time.

Kniffin: Yes. One of her daughters married a violinist. She once told me that she hoped that her daughters would not be taken in by some soldier of fortune, and, boy, she certainly was!

Seligmann: The violinist?

Mrs. Kniffin: Yes.

Kniffin: The violinist. I don't think he's earned a nickel. We heard him in town hall one time at five o'clock in the afternoon. You hire town hall from five to seven. And he gave a violin concert there . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: Mrs. James hired it.

Kniffin: . . . with about sixty people in the whole building, and I heard what he played, but it didn't make any connected melody for me. I was just a nut of a musician when I was a young man. I played trumpet or something, and we always liked melody.

Mrs. Kniffin: Not that time.

Kniffin: (chuckle) I thought he broke a string every other stroke.

Seligmann: (chuckle) He's into modern music. It's all right in modern music.

Kniffin: Oh, I'll tell who he . . .



Seligmann: There are no rules.

Kniffin: His teacher was this Yehudi Menuhin.

Mrs. Kniffin: Yehudi was down here last week.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: He can play the violin.

Kniffin: He was a violinist, and he was the teacher and the guy that tried to put him over, but no soap . . . well, as I say, when you get back and you can think of anything else, don't hesitate to write me. I can still type, you know.

Seligmann: I noticed. You type better than I do.

Kniffin: Well, that was my business.

Seligmann: You'll notice all mine has secretaries' signatures by then (chuckle).

Kniffin: (chuckle) I noticed that.

Mrs. Kniffin: There's so many years that we were with them, and still so little that they actually said about their own family.

Kniffin: No, you would have to take it the way they acted it out. In other words, when I was present with the family, they were all very congenial, and, as I say, Mrs. Ward would not stay overnight in the townhouse because she was afraid the ceilings were going to fall, and it did.

Seligmann: Where would she stay when in New York?

Kniffin: Oh, she got a hotel!

Seligmann: Which hotel?

Kniffin: I mean the one on Madison Avenue. What's the name of it?

Mrs. Kniffin: I don't remember, Willard.

Kniffin: English hotel on Madison Avenue at about 80th Street.

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, that hotel that all the people . . .

Kniffin: Bronson's house . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: Mayfair? No?

Kniffin: No.

Mrs. Kniffin: Something like that.

Seligmann: The Plaza?

Kniffin: No.

Mrs. Kniffin: No, it was \_\_\_\_\_ . . .

Kniffin: It was an English-type hotel.

Mrs. Kniffin: A small hotel. I mean small, but . . .

Kniffin: Relatively small.

Mrs. Kniffin: . . . fancy, I guess.

Seligmann: Small but not cheap.

Mrs. Kniffin: Yes.

Kniffin: That's right. Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: That's the type. Of course, Jesus Baca and all of them stayed there.

Kniffin: Well, they all come on after Bronson's death loaded--  
all of them. I had to gather them up and . . .

Seligmann: Let me ask one other question. This one may be a  
sensitive one. In the papers of Miguel Otero . . .  
did you know Miguel Otero?

Kniffin: Very well.

Seligmann: In Miguel Otero's papers, he says, and . . .

Kniffin: Is he dead now?

Seligmann: Well, there are . . . Miguel, Sr., is. Miguel, Jr.,  
was not dead last summer.

Kniffin: He was the judge?

Seligmann: Yes, he was the judge.

Kniffin: That's the one I know.

Seligmann: His father who was territorial governor.

Kniffin: I didn't know his father.

Seligmann: Okay. Well, his father . . . now this is in his father's  
papers, not his son's.

Kniffin: Oh, I see.

Seligmann: In the senior Miguel Otero . . .

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: . . . he says that the night that Cutting was killed they  
put him on a plane in Albuquerque so drunk they had to

carry him in, and they could not strap him in his seat because he was drunk.

Kniffin: Well, that's possible. I don't know.

Seligmann: Okay, what I really want to find out is would you say that this was impossible instantly or . . .

Kniffin: No, no, I wouldn't. I know he damned near got killed going to the plane with Jesus Baca or Herman Baca driving the car. They damned near turned over, trying to make the plane, you know. That I know.

Seligmann: Incidentally, there's a study done by the Department of Commerce or somebody like that in the last year on the plane crash as a study in public administration on the reaction to this plane crash, which I have not read yet.

Kniffin: Yes. The way it happened, apparently, was that it was overcast and foggy, and the plane came down and caught its right wing in an excavated ditch. Otherwise, it would have landed.

Mrs. Kniffin: It ran into a mountain, didn't it?

Kniffin: No, no.

Mrs. Kniffin: Or a hill? A hill?

Kniffin: No, no.

Seligmann: It was fairly flat.

Kniffin: It's \_\_\_\_\_ flat.

Seligmann: That's one of the places I have not been--to see where it crashed.

Kniffin: Yes, yes. It was a ditch. An embankment.

Seligmann: Yes. The impression I got was that he was trying to land in a field and had problems.

Kniffin: Yes. About half of the people survived including a baby which wasn't even hurt.

Seligmann: And one of the things that the senior Otero was talking about was the fact that Cutting was in the front of the plane, and the casualties were in the front as opposed to the tail.

Kniffin: I heard he was in the back seat not strapped in. That's what I heard. And he went down the aisle--boom! He wasn't messed up. I saw him the day after the funeral.

Seligmann: That's the first time I've heard that (chuckle).

Kniffin: Yes, he wasn't messed up, I mean his face or anything, but he was certainly killed outright. Now as I say, he could have been loaded. I don't know.

Seligmann: What do you know about Mike Otero?

Kniffin: Mike was put through school by Bronson. When he became judge, he immediately took the attitude that he didn't

want anymore help from Cutting. He was the judge that took part in the estate settlement in the State of New Mexico, and when I tried to do something for him because he was left out of the will, he told me there was no way.

Seligmann: Was his . . .

Kniffin: His wife was Catherine Otero, you know, the aviatrix. She went out there for her health.

Seligmann: I had a good question in mind. He was not an ingrate, would you say, in the sense of his attitude of not wanting . . .

Kniffin: To a degree, I would say.

Seligmann: Did you have any difficulty with him over the estate?

Kniffin: Other than that trying to do something for him financially out of the regard the family had for him . . . and he was not left in the will, you see. There must have been a little separation there.

Seligmann: I think there may have been, yes.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: It's not something I can put my finger on. Do you know anything about . . . I've kind of got the impression from reading the papers--and this is something that is not firmly stated anywhere--that Bronson Cutting was--oh, I can't think of the word--supporting Mike's father while

his father wrote his autobiography, the multi-volume one.

Kniffin: That I don't know. That was ahead of me. I never met the old man.

Seligmann: Well, no. It wasn't because this was going on in the '20's and the '30's. The books were published in the '20's and the '30's. This could have been something which was handled out of the checking account.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: That may have been where the money you were feeding was going.

Kniffin: Yes. But he did put them through school, I know. I think Mike went to a military school first, then to a college.

Seligmann: Yes, there's a good deal of correspondence from Mike Otero and a Luna.

Kniffin: Who?

Seligmann: A Luna. I don't know whether it's a Solomon Luna. The last name is Luna.

Kniffin: Yes, I remember the name.

Seligmann: Bronson put both of them through school, and then Luna was called up when the National Guard, New Mexico

Guard, was called up after the Villa's raid at  
Columbus.

Kniffin: Yes.

Seligmann: And Luna died of influenza. The swimming pool at  
New Mexico Military was given by the Cutting family, and  
it's named after Luna. It's the Luna Natartorium.

Kniffin: Yes. Yes. Yes, I remember something about that.

Mrs. Kniffin: Who was . . . you say . . . now that you say the  
military school, who was the man that ran that place?

Kniffin: Well, I've met him and . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: No, we met with . . . I met him at the hotel . . .

Kniffin: But I can't . . . I can't . . . at the Santa Fe, yes.

Seligmann: Was it Colonel Ward?

Mrs. Kniffin: No, no.

Kniffin: No, no, no. He was Colonel Somebody, but I can't tell  
you now.

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, gee.

Seligmann: You'd think I could remember. I'm a graduate of it.

Mrs. Kniffin: (chuckle) Oh, are you?

Kniffin: (chuckle) Yes?

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, what was his name? Because I danced . . .

Kniffin: He was a lot of fun.



Mrs. Kniffin: I danced with him in the hotel at Santa Fe that night when you were there.

Seligmann: Was this La Fonda?

Kniffin: Yes, at the La Fonda.

Mrs. Kniffin: At the La Fonda, yes.

Kniffin: I'll tell you one thing. Your memory's slipping just like mine.

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, listen, I haven't thought of this man for years! My gosh!

Kniffin: You remember that you're married?

Mrs. Kniffin: Yes, I remember that.

Seligmann: Well, look at it this way. What kind of impression did he make that you remember her dancing with him after all these years (chuckle)?

Mrs. Kniffin: I did. I danced . . .

Seligmann: (chuckle) He must have been a fine dancer, either very good or very bad.

Mrs. Kniffin: He was good. He was really good.

Kniffin: He was on his feet most of the time.

Mrs. Kniffin: We were there with Colonel Atwood. We stayed overnight there or a couple of nights there at the La Fonda.

Kniffin: Yes.

Mrs. Kniffin: And Colonel . . . and he was the military . . .

Kniffin: He was the chief of the school.

Mrs. Kniffin: At the school at the time. That was in what--1936?

Kniffin: I would guess '36 or '37.

Mrs. Kniffin: You see, our . . . Colonel Atwood invited our son out to New Mexico for a month--the month of July. Willard took six weeks off. We took Bill out . . .

Kniffin: And then we went on the loop.

Mrs. Kniffin: Then we went on back . . . went on up to Santa Fe and then on out to California and up to the Grand Canyon and the places and came back again. But it was on our way out that this . . .

Kniffin: That's right.

Mrs. Kniffin: Oh, what was his name?

Kniffin: I don't think it's that important. It has nothing to do with . . .

Mrs. Kniffin: Well, if he went to school there and doesn't remember who ran the place . . .

Seligmann: He wasn't there when I went to school (chuckle).

Mrs. Kniffin: No, he wasn't there, but . . .

Kniffin: That's right. Don't forget this is a young man here. He's a softball pitcher.

Mrs. Kniffin: Listen . . .

Seligmann: (chuckle) Colonel Ward was there when I was there.  
I thought he'd been there forever.

Mrs. Kniffin: No.

Seligmann: I'll find out. I'll ask Daddy because Daddy went  
there, too.

Mrs. Kniffin: (chuckle) No . . .

Kniffin: We've seen the institute. We've been there.

Mrs. Kniffin: It seemed like \_\_\_\_\_. As you remember Guido  
. . . I can't even say his name.

Kniffin: Burbank.

Mrs. Kniffin: Burbank.

Kniffin: Our boy went to Manlieus. It's up here in New York  
State.

Seligmann: I'm trying to think of some other questions. Cut it  
off for awhile.