

ORAL HISTORY OF UTAH PEACE ACTIVISTS PROJECT  
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY, OREM, UTAH

# INTERVIEW WITH ROSS C. (ROCKY) ANDERSON

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**October 3, 2007  
Salt Lake City, Utah**

**Interview Conducted by  
Kathryn French**

Interviewee: Rocky Anderson  
Interviewer: Kathryn French  
Date: October 3, 2007  
Subject: Utah Peace Activists  
Place: Salt Lake City, Utah

KF: First of all when is your date of birth?

RA: 9/9/51

KF: And what's your real name?

RA: Ross C. You can put it either way. Nobody knows me by those names.

KF: This is Kathy French interviewing Rocky Anderson at the City County Building, October 3, 2007. This is really about the past. It's historical. We're going to go way back and first just describe yourself. Pretend the reader or listener doesn't know who you are.

RA: Well, I'm a long time—life time—resident of Utah, other than three years in Washington, DC where I went to law school. I somehow grew up with a sense of needing to be and having a responsibility to be an activist to help bring change about. Also a sense of obligation in terms of the opportunities that I've had and the absence of opportunities so many people have. And I think with that comes a tremendous, both responsibility and opportunity to help those who haven't had a lot of advantages, to help the disenfranchised. So that's been something, I think, that has really guided my life ever since I was probably at least in college, if not in high school.

KF: How do you think you got to that point? You say you somehow grew up.

RA: Yeah. Well also any description of me would probably have to entail, also, an intensity that sometimes people find off-putting, I think—a sense of real persistence and tenacity in getting the job done. I think it all came about from having really great parents, friends, teachers and then always taking things pretty seriously. If somebody said, "These are values that we should all try to emulate," whether from religious leaders or political leaders or other people in our lives, I really took that to heart as a young child. Although I was kind of a screw-off and had a lot of fun, I think that, as to the fundamentals, I always took it real seriously.

KF: Were you raised LDS?

RA: I was raised LDS. I pretty much bagged it all—well I can't say it all because there were a lot of things left over for me, but in terms of practicing the formalities of the religion, or beliefs and a lot of the doctrine, I bagged it all when I was seventeen or eighteen. But I think a lot of the lessons you learn, just the fundamentals, I remember reading a story about kids and the importance of—even if you're going to be called chicken by all your

friends—standing up for what you think is right and holding your ground. I'll never forget we moved from Logan when I was seven years old to Salt Lake City and I was starting the third grade and we met with the principal of my elementary school. His name was John Fitzgerald. It turned out many years later he was a huge activist on behalf of equality for blacks in the LDS Church. He may have even been excommunicated. I don't know. He was always writing letters to the editor and such. Of course, I didn't know any of this when I started school. But I'll never forget before registering for school and sitting down and talking to me—my mother was with me—and simply talking about the golden rule and what it meant and how it's applied in our lives. Just the real fundamentals. I think it all, with religion and sometimes politics, we sometimes lose sight—a lot of people lose sight—about what it's really fundamentally supposed to be about. They let all those super structures and differences get in the way of ever really achieving what those fundamentals are. And I think it really comes down to trying to reduce suffering for other people and pursuing greater happiness, helping others become more happy, and love and compassion.

KF: It's interesting that so many Utahns have grown up with those values—millions—and have not become activists.

RA: I know. I think they turn their backs on those fundamentals. I think they let the rest of it get in the way. I think they let their differences get in the way. I've read a lot about this actually over the years and I think it's—you see it happen with people, whether it's ethnic differences, racial, religious differences, political party differences, geographical differences. We learn it growing up in high school. We've got one high school and somebody is from another high school, you know, those rivalries and "we're better than them." It's the whole us-and-them phenomenon where social psychologists have done studies, and they divide people up on the most random basis, eye color, even last names alphabetically. They'll divide people up and, within a matter of days, people are defining members of their group with all the positive attributes and those belonging to the other group with all the negative attributes. I see that especially along religious lines in the state of Utah all the time. People see that you're on the other side because you advocate for the rights of gays and lesbians or you advocate for reform of our ridiculous alcohol laws, or, in the old days it would have been standing up for racial equality. Then you define yourself as being part of the "other" group, therefore you're against us and we don't like you. And I think if we could figure that out then we'd have the answer to genocides, we'd have the answer to most wars, we'd have the answer to most oppression along religious and racial lines—and even gender, and certainly sexual orientation.

KF: What was the first act, as an activist, that you remember engaging in?

RA: We had a girl with some really severe mental problems. She did some really, very bizarre things. I'm surprised she was in our classroom, actually, given some of the things she did.

KF: How old?

RA: That was in third grade. But you know looking back on it I think we were, as a class—and it might have been because of our teacher, we were all pretty compassionate toward her. We didn't make fun of her, although sometimes we talked among ourselves. I remember a few of us going up to our teacher and telling her some of the things that she was doing. Most of it was out of concern for the girl. But I've run into people years later who were in that class, and the one thing we remember is this girl was in our class, and it's never been in a derisive fashion really, it's just that it was a real challenge for all of us to get over that inclination young kids have of making fun of somebody that's different and really trying to be compassionate about it. As a group I think it's pretty amazing. But I had really good models in my life. I've had remarkable teachers. I wrote an essay about my sixth grade teacher that's been published in a book called *Teachers with Class*.

KF: What was that teacher's name?

RA: Robert Vogel. Actually after that essay was published a local NPR station found him. I thought he had moved away years earlier, which he had, but I didn't know that he had come back to Ogden. I moved to Ogden three years after I was in Salt Lake. Just before sixth grade, we moved to Ogden. Anyway, so I called him probably over a year ago, and he knew about the essay,

:15 but I called him, and he and his wife came down and I took him to dinner. It was great! I don't think teachers ever have any idea—I don't think great teachers ever have any idea of the impact they have on people. But just his kindness, his...we had a kid in our class who was a kleptomaniac. He came from the wealthiest family in Ogden. He was a sort of a misfit—I shouldn't say this I guess—but everybody was missing stuff out of their desks. Radios were missing and lunch tickets were missing, and it was discovered who it was. I remember Mr. Vogel talking in class about it and how sensitive and compassionate the response was. It was a really good model for all of us. I don't remember anybody ever making fun of this kid, either to his face or behind his back, as a result. So there were those influences. As an activist when I was in high school I mostly worked. I didn't take academics all that seriously in high school. In fact I didn't get very good grades mostly.

KF: You had a high school job?

RA: In fact I had three of them. Yeah. I worked at a cabinet mill. I built roof trusses and helped deliver cabinets, loaded lumber, cleaned up, that sort of thing and then I'd go from there to, after a while, shingling roofs—asphalt shingles—when the weather permitted. Then I played in a rock and roll band. It got to the point where we had three or four gigs a week plus practices so I was getting in pretty late most every night and sleeping through a lot of my classes. But I developed a really good work ethic. I loved working. I thought for a while I'd just always do manual labor. I found it really uplifting. I loved the people that did manual labor. Oh, so I was going to tell you, what I was leading to was Ogden was a tough town. There were a lot of fights. Ogden High was a very, very tough high school. People were fighting all the time, a lot of drugs, a lot of drinking. I drank my share through high school. A friend of mine and I talked about how we needed to find something for people to do and so we rented the Lion's Club building and started hiring

bands and would sell tickets, pretty cheap, but just to provide a place for people to come and it got to be very popular. We started getting good crowds. It was a lot of work but it was a good thing to do.

KF: What did you play?

RA: I played lead guitar.

KF: Do you still play?

RA: No, except for last week I took it up again with some kids from School of Rock, twelve, thirteen, and fourteen year old kids—a keyboardist, drummer, guitar player and bass player—and I rewrote lyrics to a couple of rock and roll songs and somebody else in my office did one to another song. I want to start a youth movement in the state opposing coal fire power plants. Tomorrow we're going to do three high school assemblies, East High, West High and Horizonte, and take these young kids and we're going to play these three rock and roll songs. We've rewritten the lyrics to be about global warming and the danger of coal. Then I do a presentation on climate change and the role of coal.

KF: That's great! Then are you going to Utah Valley?

RA: I haven't been invited yet. There is a national conversation on climate change coming up, and they've asked mayors to do something around that and so this was our project. I thought it would be really great to go to young people because they're the ones who are going to be suffering through this.

KF: And they're the change agents too.

RA: They've got to be. I think this country is sound asleep, and we haven't provided a very good example for going through the sixties and then falling sound asleep. I think they need to understand that they are empowered. They've got tremendous influence to change things for the better. They need courage and they need to put a lot of energy behind it.

KF: Were you ever against the Vietnam War during high school?

RA: I was in college. I graduated from high school in 1969 and it didn't seem to touch us very much. It did in the music when I was playing rock and roll. When I left our band my senior year, of course a lot of the music was around social issues and the war—very much unlike what we've got now. Now we have very pathetic messages like John Mayer's lyrics, "sit back and wait for the world to change." I find that utterly and morally disgusting. I think the arts community as a whole has been extremely derelict. Because it's usually the arts community, both visual and music, that leads out. I think it's been really sad these past four or five years that we've been able to engage in the atrocities we have as a nation and be led down this road, and we all end up being complicit.

[tape interrupted] [:23]

KF: Let's move chronologically. Think from high school on. What kinds of peace activism have you been involved with? Especially here in Utah but you don't need to stick to Utah. Peace and justice not just peace—I know you're quite a justice person.

RA: High school was all probably much more personal. We had real racial strife at Ogden High School, and I thought it was so stupid because there we were in the same school and we really mostly enjoyed each other. But all the black students, during assemblies or whatever, all had their little corner of the auditorium where they all sat. It was very segregated in that regard. We had a fight break out in the lunch room and it resulted in a race riot—after school people were bringing chains and tire irons. It was really—it was just horrible. I remember taking a black friend of mine—the police came, and I grabbed him and I said, “Come on, I'll drive you back to school.” I was a white kid and it was supposed to be whites versus black but it just seemed insane to me that that was happening and the school administration wouldn't deal with it up front, and they never have. But it's a lot like the Mormon Church always tries to sweep under the carpet the religious divide in this state; just don't talk about it—that means it's not happening. So, I don't know, when we'd play in assemblies, instead of just my band playing, we'd get some black musicians or vocalists and they'd perform with us. It was really more of a personal thing that—you know I think to get over bigotry toward other people it's almost got to be, in the beginning, personal. Because bigotry's formed, I think, from a capacity to turn the other person into an abstraction, or a group of other people into an abstraction. If you never had a personal connection with somebody from another race, then it's easy to be afraid of them because you don't know them. You're unfamiliar with them. Same with gays and lesbians, and I think the reason things are changing so much in this country, so dramatically, around not only legal rights of gays and lesbians but greater acceptance, is because people know more and more people and we humanize them and we realize there's nothing to be afraid of. Anyway, that was a valuable thing for me. Ogden was an extremely diverse high school, large Hispanic and African American population and a lot of Asians. Ogden was a hub city, the hub of the railroads, and it brought a lot of people in, who had been there for generations, from different races.

KF: So you had a lot of experience mixing.

RA: Yes, that diversity, again, I think it's crucial. If kids grow up only around people like themselves they're going to think that's the only way or the best way.

KF: Right, the best way.

RA: They're going to be afraid of any other differences.

KF: Right. And so did you go to college at the U?

RA: I did my undergraduate work at the University of Utah.

KF: And then you went to graduate school.

RA: I started graduate school at the University of Utah in philosophy. Then I bailed and went to Europe for a while and then I came back. I worked a lot of odd jobs in between. I think I had twelve or thirteen jobs between college and law school, some of them at the same time. There was one period I was working four jobs at the same time. That also helps a lot—just to get to know the working men and women in all these different situations. I drove Yellow Cab. I bar tended at the old Twilight Lounge. I built a buck fence on a ranch, all those kinds of things. Waiting tables—it gives you a lifetime appreciation for what people go through. I guarantee you're going to be a better tipper if you've had that experience waiting tables.

KF: And wasn't driving the cabs—didn't you meet Ethel Hale and Paul doing that?

RA: Yes. Yes I did. Well, I didn't meet Ethel, I met Paul because he was a dispatcher and he had that rich, unmistakable voice. He wouldn't just give directions, you'd hear him on the radio telling somebody where they were to pick up a passenger. I'll never forget the one time he gave an address to somebody on M Street, and then he said, "That's M as in Mephistopheles."

KF: While you were at the U the Vietnam War was winding down then, wasn't it?

RA: Well I started school in 1969.

KF: So it was still going.

RA: So it was still going. I attended some protests down at the Federal Building and such. I was in college when they had the lottery. That got everybody's attention because then everybody was subject to the draft if they had a bad lottery number. I happened to have a really good lottery number. Mine was 313. The lower your lottery number the more likely you were to be drafted so I was almost certain not to be drafted, but I felt terrible for those who—you know, it's like you're in Las Vegas and they have the Keno games and they're pulling out the balls—that's the way they call it, and that's what their future is hinging on and that was such a—just an incredibly unjust war. I remember I was in college during the bombing of Cambodia and when the truth came out about that—I remember it was around the holidays and I was walking around Cottonwood Mall—I remember this so vividly—I just couldn't understand how people were just going about their daily business like nothing had happened, and I was just very, very distressed and of course I had no idea at that time that that would help lead to, not only a genocide, but a horrific situation. Probably two million people were killed and millions of others were going through the worst hell anybody could imagine in Cambodia after Pol Pot took back over, and we turned just a total blind eye toward what was happening there, with the likes of William Buckley on the right and McGovern on the left, both calling for intervention, the people of this country and Congress and the President completely ignoring what was happening, not unlike what President Clinton did and Congress did during the genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda, and what we're doing now in Darfur.

KF: Yes, and so you were part of protests at that time and went back to grad school and bailed out. It was a good time to bail out actually.

RA: It was a really good time for me to bail out because I was chomping at the bit to go—to change things. I loved the study of philosophy but I really felt like, for some reason, my role was to play more of an active role. And I know, as I said earlier, teachers can have a huge impact and the professors I had in philosophy had a huge impact on my life, but the impact was in convincing me that I needed to live a life of action and promoting change.

KF: And so you came back from Europe, worked. It was before the MX Missile; before Central America fiascoes.

RA: Oh yeah, way! I came back from Europe in 1974 and I started law school in 1975.

KF: And did you know in the beginning going to law school what you wanted to do with that law degree?

RA: I thought I did. Yeah, well, I did. Earlier during the oil embargo I managed a place called Single Stop—up by Trolley Square. It was a gas station and we took in laundry and watch repair, shoe repair and made keys, made copies, and it was a great concept. I think before it's time. But then the oil embargo hit and we couldn't get gas anymore so I left and I hitch hiked to San Francisco. My sister was living there. I went to an event and Joan Baez was there and it was sponsored by Amnesty International. They had the wife of a Chilean folk singer who had been killed during the overthrow of the Allende government by Pinochet's military, and I was so moved by this whole thing. After that evening I started reading more and more about it and decided I wanted to go to law school to do international human rights work. I was told George Washington University had a really good international law program and that would be a good place to go to do that but my experience with the international law program was pretty disappointing.

KF: How so?

RA: There just wasn't much along those lines and a professor who was really touted as being one of the great experts was a terrible teacher and very uninspiring. But most of my professors were great there. I loved the law. I came back and clerked one summer between my second and third year. I had always thought maybe I'd stay back east and see what the opportunities were, but I had rented a cabin up Cottonwood Canyon right on the circle of Brighton and that persuaded me of coming back to Utah. Just quality of life and having that kind of access—I didn't realize, growing up here, how absolutely unique it was to be able to have all the things you have with the city and University and all that, and yet to get away so easily and have that all available. It's like you have the best of all worlds, and a really great climate and seasons and all the rest. But when I came back that summer and worked for this law firm they did a lot of plaintiff's work in the area of trade regulation and anti-trust, that sort of thing, and I really came to understand the evils of concentration of the corporate sector.

KF: The concentration of power and money?

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RA: The concentration of wealth and power, all of it, and the monopolist or duopolist. So I was very attracted to doing that and this firm did all plaintiff's work, and I liked the idea of that, and I liked working on a contingency basis. You know, you get paid when you win rather than these ridiculous hourly rates that lawyers charge. I liked the people. I liked the intensity of the practice. They were all great. So I came back after law school and went to work with this firm.

KF: What firm was it?

RA: It was called Berman and Giauque at the time; wonderful people. Dan Berman and I, later on, left and we had our own little office and then we went of counsel with another firm and set up our own firm.

KF: What kind of law did you focus on?

RA: I did everything. It was all civil litigation, almost all of it, litigation. I didn't do business deals or transactional work. But I handled just about every kind of civil law suit, except for tax cases. I did securities fraud. I did anti-trust work. I did even some custody cases where I felt that children's welfare was really at stake. I ended up doing a lot of professional malpractice work; sued both doctors and lawyers and I did a lot of civil rights work. The media now calls me a civil rights lawyer. That's just one of many examples where they completely get it wrong. They don't do their homework. They label people. You know, if I had some notorious cases that there was press on then they think that's all that there is.

KF: That defined what you did.

RA: Yeah, but my civil rights work was a small fraction of the work that I did as a lawyer.

KF: Well that's all that I had heard about, in fact. And then I heard that you became director of ACLU.

RA: No, I wasn't. I was never on the staff.

KF: Isn't that interesting?

RA: Yeah. Even U.S. News and World Report referred to me as a former ACLU lawyer. I was legal panel director on a voluntary basis. I was on the board. I was president of the board for a couple of years in the early eighties. All volunteer work. I think I did two cases as a cooperating lawyer on a pro bono basis for the ACLU. Never was on staff.

Never received one penny from the ACLU. Yeah, they still refer to me as an ACLU lawyer in the media.

KF: Gosh! So you came back here and during that time, early law years, were you stirring up the community like you're doing now?

RA: Yep, as much as I could!

KF: What were you doing?

RA: Let's see. I was on several boards. I think the first board I served on was Planned Parenthood Association of Utah, and back then it was real controversial that we were even providing family planning services and education.

KF: It's still controversial.

RA: Yeah, not like it was then. We had a clinic out in—oh, where was it?—South Jordan, I think, that we'd leased the place and did all these improvements and were ready to open it up, and we went out to get the certificate of occupancy and they said, "No, we're not going to give it to you. We're not going to have a family planning clinic close to a..." I think it was a, "ward." They came and told me about it and I said, "I'll take care of that!" And I think I stayed up the entire night drafting the complaint, the motion and memorandum, doing research, drafting affidavits and, I think it was the next day, we were in before Judge Winder in federal court and got an injunction issued against them and an order requiring them to grant us the certificate of occupancy. Then they swore that they would picket us until we closed down, and they may have lasted, like, a day picketing then they went away. Although there was a meeting out at one of the schools and this auditorium was packed. It reminded me of—it was frightening! There were people out there with their pickets. They were so violently opposed to a Planned Parenthood in their community. After we opened it was the busiest clinic we had. There was greater demand there for services than any of our other clinics. We had to do battle with the likes of Joy Beech, up in Ogden. She was the mother of an old friend of mine from junior high and high school, Laura Beech. But she had a group called Citizens for True Freedom and they were always hammering on Planned Parenthood as if we were promoting promiscuity rather than, simply, responsibility. Of course I served on the ACLU board. The reason—when they first asked me to come on the ACLU board it was after I had written a letter to the editor blasting a Third District Court judge. I guess I hadn't given a whole lot of thought to the fact that I'd be practicing before this judge for many years to come. He had presided over a rape trial. It was an African American gentleman. The supposed victim was a white woman. The jury convicted the African American of rape. The judge threw out the jury's verdict saying that it was an invited rape because this woman had allowed this black man to buy her drinks in a bar all afternoon, had accepted his offer of a ride home. She had been wearing flimsy clothing, and it was an invited rape. I wrote a letter to the editor. I wish I had a copy of it. I'm sure you can find it somewhere. I wrote a pretty scathing letter to the editor about what the judge had done. I thought, of course, that it would lead to his resignation. I thought

women's groups and the community would rise up and put pressure on him. As it happened, around that same period of time there were two other cases around the country where judges had made similar comments. It's like this community was sound asleep. Nobody said anything. I was sort of out there hanging out on my own, criticizing this judge.

KF: Do you remember what year that was?

RA: That would have been 1978 or 1979. It was right after I started practicing law, and the judge's name was Croft. I guess there was some discussion around the ACLU at that time and they invited me to come on the board and at the same time asked me to head up their legal panel, which was a group of volunteer lawyers that would review complaints that came in and try to sort out, "How should we approach it?" Some of the cases we would accept for litigation and find pro bono workers. We didn't have a staff lawyer at the time. We had one executive director, Shirley Pedler, and everybody else were volunteers. I saw Shirley the other day after all these years. It was pretty amazing. So then I served on the board of Guadalupe Schools, which was really wonderful because it wasn't at all controversial! It was just—we did really good things! And eventually I served, over time I think, I was on that board for 15 years. It was a huge part of my life! I was president of the board for two of those years. And you see the difference that can be made when you provide these kids with great opportunities and especially going back earlier in their lives. When I came on as president I said, "I will do this, but only if we go back earlier in time, in kindergarten, and stop trying to play catch up, and really provide these kids with the opportunities from the beginning." You look at all the research in terms of physiological brain development and all that that takes place in those early years. I said, "If we do this, our kids will be better off than the kids of the wealthiest families on the east side." And it's turned out to be true. Our kids at Guadalupe are scoring better than any school in the school district in certain areas, including language development.

KF: And Guadalupe starts out bilingual doesn't it?

RA: No.

KF: English immersion?

RA: No, a lot of our kids are English speakers. All second generation are English speakers. That's something a lot of these bigots don't understand, that you get an immigrant in this country and even though they may have trouble learning, especially when we don't provide services as we ought to, it's an absolute certainty their kids will be English speakers. At most it lasts for one generation without somebody being able to communicate well in English. So these kids almost all speak English coming in. But we also had the—when I was in college I tutored at Guadalupe in the VIP program, Voluntary Improvement Program, and I tutored a young Hispanic girl. Most of the VIP program, well all of it now, it's all immigrant families working mostly with adults and English as a second language and other life skills. As I tell everybody who complains, "These people need to learn to speak English." I say, "Great! Go down and sign up to

volunteer at Guadalupe because their waiting list is twice as long as the number of students they're able to accommodate."

KF: And does anyone say, "Okay, I'll go down there?"

RA: No, not these bigots. They just want to complain about it and point the finger and make themselves feel better by feeling superior to other people who are struggling in life to make a better life for themselves and their families. 531-6100. Call down and volunteer.

KF: Okay. Guadalupe, ACLU board, Planned Parenthood.

RA: I also served on the Common Cause board. And I lobbied two or three years in a row for political reform at the legislature. You can imagine how I was received when I'd go up and tell them they need to stop accepting gifts. They were the most arrogant, clueless people, really. They would say they just don't understand that there's a problem and why fix something that's not a problem?

KF: The gifts have been limited now hasn't it?

RA: Anytime you have a gift, and nobody can tell me the lobbyist—by buying somebody lunches or giving them Jazz tickets—isn't doing that to influence them. It's a bribe, pure and simple and I said that years ago. I was quoted in the Tribune saying, "These are all bribes. They're not doing it because they are their friends. As soon as these people aren't in the legislature they're not

:30 going to get their Jazz tickets or their golf games or their golf trips or any of the rest of it." We'll look back someday and shake our heads saying, "How did they get away with this year after year with 70-80% of Utahns in the polls year after year saying, 'We want an end to the gifts?'" And they continue to take them. It has an influence and there is no reason. I mean these lobbyists, in large part, the reason they have access to the power they have, and the reason they're able to command the rates that they do from people who want the legislature to do something for them, is because they nurture those corrupt relationships. They hand out those tickets. They hand out the favors, the golf games, the golf trips. I felt sort of bad one time. The sponsor of the bill that I was pushing to ban gifts was Lyle Hilliard (R-Logan) who is still in the Utah State Senate and he was sitting next to me in a hearing. Somebody on the committee said they didn't think there was a problem and I said, "Well, there is a problem! And whether you're willing to accept it or not you need to at least understand how the public perceives it and perception is reality. If the public doesn't trust you all, then you oughta solve this." and I said, "The clearest, recent example that comes to my mind is when Senator Hilliard here was pushing a bill for ski resorts to get favored tax treatment and it went down in flames. Then somehow you all got a free trip up to Deer Valley for the weekend with your spouses. You came back, the bill was revived and you passed it." I felt terrible with the one example I had used was the sponsor of the bill. He took me out in the hall and he said, "You have no better friend up here than me. Could you quit beating up on me?" I said, "I'm so sorry. It was the first example that came to mind."

KF: Truth is truth. That's what it is.

RA: That's the problem people have with me around here is that I don't play it passive-aggressively like so many people do.

KF: Straight forward in the open.

RA: Yeah, and I'm the same way with myself. If I screw up I can face up to it.

KF: And the other sense that I'm getting, many of the people whom I've interviewed talk about being connected with this group or with that group but you make your decisions about what's right regardless of whether there's a group right there or not. Is that true?

RA: Yeah. Oh yeah! A couple of instances—one was Central America in the 1980's.

KF: Yeah. Tell me about that.

RA: I read in a news magazine about what was happening in Nicaragua. I knew nothing about it up to that point in time. I'm reading this and I can't believe that our nation is undermining the effort of people in Nicaragua, after they were able to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship, and the way we had nurtured that dictatorship all those years and the tragedy that had befallen the Nicaraguan people for so many years because of our support of the dictatorship. And now we were fraudulently, as we had in Guatemala, trying to make it appear that this was an internal uprising when, really, it was a CIA run show. My interest was piqued. I kept reading more and more. I just felt like, "This is my nation. As a citizen I can't allow this to go on in our name without doing something about it." So I...it became—it was everything that I did outside of my law practice. I was married at the time and my wife...actually, it was probably the best part of our marriage. It captured her interest and imagination as well. So we were reading a lot of the same books and I mean we knew all the characters, both the good, the bad and the ugly. Elliott Abrams, who is now part of this Bush administration, is just unbelievable. So I became very, very active. I organized two fairly large groups of people from Utah to go to Nicaragua and see for themselves, and both of those groups included people from the media. The editorial editor of the Tribune at the time, his then-wife, Harry and Lyla Fuller came down. He came back and did a really great three part series. The second trip we took a news group from KUTV, Deborah Lindner and some folks that came back and did a, I think it was a five part, series. But also just to get people down there, people like Kermit Johnson, who is a businessman here, and the newspaper did this big spread on this businessman and him going down and seeing for himself and what we saw there, and this wasn't a Potemkin village tour. You know we met with a lot of the opposition people, we toured the whole country, we met with representatives from both sides. It was a very open political dialogue, far more open than in this country. The president, Daniel Ortega at the time, would hold these neighborhood meetings with all of his cabinet and then they would be televised weekly. And it was the people. It wasn't the journalists coming and going to the mike and having their questions edited like our president does. It was just open.

KF: They didn't screen.

RA: They didn't screen and nobody was afraid. People could stand up and say, "My son was abused by the police and this happened." and, "How are you going to account for this? You told us people we'd be respected by the police and military after the revolution." And there Ortega and his police chief had to answer for it, and we hung out after this and actually watched the police chief come down and get information from this woman. But then it would be televised nationwide, so everybody is seeing this dialogue, free and equal time. The first time we were there was just before the election. Seven political parties from the far left to the far right, every one of them had free and equal time on radio and television, the sort of democratic dialogue that we have never seen in this country. And yet we were being told by the Reagan administration it was a Soviet style, one party, sham election. And it was being repeated by our media who—I saw people from the media hanging out at the Hotel Intercontinental at the bars every night drinking and the UPI dispatches would basically be a repeat of what the embassy was handing out to them. They, like the media now, were basically the bulletin board for federal government press releases and it was total propaganda. Then I would debate State Department officials at foreign policy conferences. I debated Adolfo Calero, who was commander in chief of the Contras, a couple of times on television. And I organized a protest—he was doing a rally with all these right wingers showing up in their fatigues at Highland High—saying, "We're not going to let him come to Salt Lake City and let him have a free ride." I worked with people. There was a Central American Solidarity Coalition, CASC and I organized with them a big demonstration up there so they would know, even in Salt Lake City, this is not going to be a safe haven—much like when Bush has come here the last two years. We can't allow any place in this country to be a safe haven, especially for people who are overseeing just such horrid brutalities that Adolfo Calero did in Nicaragua. Yeah. That was an enormous part of my life back then.

KF: And how did Salt Lake respond?

RA: I think really well. I'm not sure most people knew or cared but we did everything we could to get out the word and push, and the newspapers were pretty receptive. The best reporting in town was in the Deseret News. The description of Adolfo Calero when he came to town was really great. It talked about his vacant eyes and just—it's like it looked into his soul and they described it in an article. You never read anything like that anymore.

KF: Do you remember what year that was?

RA: I probably started all that in 1982 or 1983. I think we went the first time to Nicaragua in 1983 and then again in 1987. Then I took my son years later after the Sandinistas were out of power and the United States had interfered in their elections and we forced the government on the Nicaraguan people. They weren't building the schools, the clinics, the roads were in horrible shape, the countryside was totally littered, things had been transformed so sadly in the meantime, and that was all—a really vivid representation of

that was Carlos Fonseca's grave at what used to be called the Plaza de Revolution, and now they've even changed the name of that so it's not the Plaza of the Revolution anymore, but they had his memorial grave site there and there was an eternal flame when we were there in 1983 and 1987. When I took my son back years ago it was this plastic old...

KF: He must have been quite young.

RA: My son was born in 1982. And then the other area you asked about, when there wasn't an organization built around it, was on reform of our criminal justice system and our penal system's approach to those who offend against the law. And I had been sort of interested in that when I was in college and took a course or two but never really did anything in the criminal law area. But I was asked by the ACLU to debate Gary DeLand, who was executive director of Corrections, on KUED. That's my parrot you can hear in the background there.

KF: I wondered if that was your assistant's hint that you have something else going on right now. It's after 11. I just didn't want to—it's okay with me.

RA: I'll try to be faster. I didn't want to do this debate because the issue at the time was double bunking at the prison. I, frankly, didn't have a problem with double bunking and I didn't think that it reached the point of a constitutional violation. I wasn't involved in the case at the time. I don't think I was even on the ACLU board and I said, "If we talk about prison conditions more generally I'm happy to do that, but I'm not really up to speed on it, but if you want me to do it I will." It was on—Ted Capener was the moderator—so I went out and it was the first time I met Gary DeLand and I knew some of his history. I knew the case that went to the Tenth Circuit, involving a mentally ill man, when Gary DeLand was Commander in Chief of the Salt Lake County Jail. *Littlefeld v. DeLand* was the name of the case and I had a sense of how contemptuous he was toward inmates and the whole notion of rehabilitation. So I went up and debated him and was just absolutely appalled at the level of his inhumanity and, it seemed to me, truly ignorance about the field and yet he was head of the Department of Corrections. It turned out he'd had no experience or expertise in corrections and was made commander of the jail. Then they brought him over to head up corrections when all he'd done was oversee the jail and, I think, did a horrendous job there. So one thing led to another, and I was on this program with him. I started getting calls from inmates, members of inmate's families and friends, bringing this or that abuse to my attention. So I started filing law suits, sort of a one man penal reform guy doing law suits and then I decided we needed a sustained effort so I formed *Citizens for Penal Reform* and we had a board. I served on legislative committees. We'd testify at the legislature. I'd testify at the legislature and it's something that I really wanted to see continued but after I left, after I quit doing that, and I think that was when I was first elected as mayor, it just fell apart. It was like my little baby was allowed to die. I think the people on the board, frankly, didn't do a good job of keeping it going.

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KF: Did you have any psychologists on the board?

RA: I can't remember who was on the board but there was a man who was doing sexual abuse therapy at the prison. He was really great, very progressive and was real honest about what works and what doesn't work. And long term imprisonment, in most of the cases, doesn't work. It's the follow up after people are out of prison. We do it just the opposite way around. But we had Ed Firmage who was on the board, we had, I think, a spouse, and an inmate. We had Suzanne Cunningham, who has been pretty active in this area, and then Burt Stringfellow, whose son was in a federal penitentiary on his first drug offense sentenced to fifteen and a half years. And I'll always value that relationship because I'll never forget Burt—when we were doing this work together on CPR, Citizens for Penal Reform, he told me one time, “You know my son's prison sentence is longer than my life expectancy. I'm not likely ever to see my son outside of prison again.” So from that experience I was able to take that, after I became mayor, and I worked really hard for a year and a half with Mickey Ibarra, who is head of governmental affairs for President Clinton—Mickey's office was in the west wing of the White House—and with the pardons attorney.

KF: And he was a Utah boy wasn't he? There was an Ibarra.

RA: Mickey Ibarra is from Utah. I'm an Ibarra brother. I asked them to vote me in one time. David and Mickey are my brothers. David is a very close friend of mine. We're work out buddies and really great friends but I only got to know him after I got to know Mickey through all this other work, through the Olympics and transportation issues while I was mayor. But I was back for U.S. Conference of Mayor's meetings in January and it was very depressing. It was cold, sleet and I'd just heard the worst inauguration address, probably in the history of this country, from President Bush. The only applause line was when he talked about cutting taxes. There were all these fools around with their cowboy hats and cowboy boots in DC...

KF: Was this his first or his second inauguration?

RA: This was his first inauguration and I'm walking over to the Union Station afterwards and I get this cell phone call and it's Mickey saying, “Mayor, we did it! He signed his pardon on the way out of the White House.” And we saved Cory Stringfellow ten years in the federal penitentiary. President Clinton signed the pardon on his way out and Mickey called me from Andrews Air Force Base as he was seeing the president leave after the inauguration. So Cory to this day is out. He's a great young man.

KF: That's great. And you became mayor then. And you haven't slowed down.

RA: No. I don't intend to slow down.

KF: You can look around Salt Lake and see differences here.

RA: I hope so.

KF: But in terms of peace and justice what have you done?

RA: Well, the most obvious, and if you were to ask anybody, it would be speaking out against this insane invasion and occupation of Iraq which is totally illegal and completely unjustified and based on nothing but lies of the most cynical sort. And then, of course, my work on impeachment. This President has completely undermined our constitutional system of government, grossly violated treaties, constitutional provisions, and violated separation of powers. He's turned the executive office into a dictatorship and I don't say that lightly. The definition of a tyranny or a dictatorship is when there aren't controls, when there aren't checks and balances and this president—even worse than Richard Nixon—has assumed unfettered executive power and it's absolutely frightening. A lot of people say, "You know it's only a year and a half away, why don't we just wait it out?" What we're doing in terms of our reputation around the world and the message we send for later on is that we'll condone this and the next president will be handed this completely different concept of executive powers than we've ever known in this country. A president who signs legislation and issues a signing statement dozens and dozens of times saying, "It's I who will decide whether this will limit what I can do for the executive branch." And then he claims these extraordinary powers on the basis of what he calls a war on terror—which isn't a war at all. It's like the war on drugs or the war on poverty. Terror is a concept. We're not at war against a nation. We're not—there is no geographical limit. There is no limit in terms of time. So what he's basically saying is, "The president will have these extraordinary unfettered powers with the president deciding what the limits are, apparently anywhere in the world for as long as there are people that are trying to attack our country." Which will be forever if we continue along this course. We are creating more terrorism, more hatred, more resentment around the world because of what this president and his administration and a compliant, complacent Congress and nation have done and which this administration had planned to do even before 9/11. They were given a very handy excuse for it all with 9/11. So, sorry I don't mean to get off on all my arguments about it, but I think those are probably the most obvious. But the less obvious, in large part because the media here is sound asleep on what I think are really crucial issues and initiatives, things like our restorative justice programs in our prosecutor's office, with our police, with our justice court. Instead of focusing on punishment and retribution, which is sort of our criminal justice model in this country, which is completely at odds with any religious traditions. When people say this comes from any religious tradition they are absolutely nuts! I mean, penitentiaries were places to do penance. It was a Quaker idea and they were totally off base. They didn't know that they were actually going to drive people crazy with their model of a penitentiary. But what it's grown into is so counter to what most people claim is their most fundamental values. But anyway, it's pretty self-destructive the way we approach these things, either from a public safety point of view, the interest of victims, the interest of taxpayers and families involved, or, of course, the offender. And so by addressing root causes, and addressing in terms of problem-solving rather than punishment and retribution, we save millions of dollars and have improved and saved lives along the way.

And if you ask most people on the street they wouldn't even know that we have a restorative justice program. It's an absolute model for the rest of the country.

KF: And I read about it yesterday. Where would I have read about it?

RA: I don't know. I had breakfast two days ago with the editorial editor of the Salt Lake Tribune and he's never heard of our restorative justice programs.

KF: Yes, I read about it—a woman, perhaps a lawyer, who said that she was part of—don't people sit down at a table together?

RA: There are several different facets of it. We have like a DUI program where victims of drunk drivers will meet with people who have been convicted of DUIs and it can be really shocking. It can make a huge difference for people to understand the human impact of that sort of wrong-doing. It can really turn people around. It creates a sense of empathy and accountability that isn't there otherwise. It's like I was talking about earlier. It's bigotry. You have to sometimes have those human experiences and put a face on it rather than talk about it in the abstract. You can talk about numbers all day long, and that's not going to get across to somebody like sitting across the room from somebody whose beautiful eighteen-year-old daughter was killed by a kid who was probably impaired by substances and who was talking on a cell phone, which brings me to tears. So that's been a huge thing. I think also in terms of justice, again it's very personal but, before I was mayor, I helped out family members and friends of some young women who had been murdered in this area. Salt Lake City police, at the time, had totally botched the cases and after a decade or more of not even making an arrest, after all their public bluster about, you know, "they would solve these cases" and then they went to the public with absolutely the wrong theory and committed themselves to these theories much as they did in the Elizabeth Smart case—and I drew this analogy during the Smart case—they started disregarding evidence that may have led them to bring people to justice and bring closure to the family. So in one of those cases, before I was mayor, I took it to the County and asked Sheriff Aaron Kennard—that's when I really came to have a great regard for Sheriff Kennard—I took one of these cases to him. I took a couple over to then County Commissioner and County Attorney David Yocum, and I showed them, not only who the perpetrator was and the evidence that I'd been able to put together against him, but why the Salt Lake City police could not be trusted to put together the case because it would be a total embarrassment for them after all those years of botching the case and publicly coming to the wrong theory. For the first time in over a decade, the County Attorney called together a grand jury and got an indictment against Forrest Whittle for the killing of Lisa Strong. He was eventually convicted and he is now in prison, which is a big deal to Lisa Strong's family and friends, but not a lot of comfort to family members of other women who

1:00 had been killed, one of whom was a police officer on the police force whose sister was found naked, dead in the field and was written off by the police as an "unattended death"—not even as a homicide. But in Tiffany Hamilton's case, she was fourteen years old, stabbed numerous times, I created a cold case team to take a look at these cases. Second, third, fourth look and after pushing these folks and telling them, "Whatever you

have to do,” they took her clothing in for the third time for DNA testing. Twice it had been done. Once at the state lab; nothing found. The third time they found one sperm head in her blouse and it matched up perfectly with the guy she was last seen with and he was just brought to trial a few weeks ago and because there wasn’t other evidence he was acquitted. But I think it helped bring some sense of closure to the family. But they’re really upset that he wasn’t brought to justice. I’m actually working with them now on seeing if there isn’t some other way we can do that because there is little doubt in my mind that this man—first of all he lied to police for twenty-one years and admitted to the police that he’d lied to the police for twenty-one years about whether he’d had sex with this fourteen year old girl—and then at trial he could see there was no way to deny it since they found his sperm on her blouse, so then he comes up with a different story at trial. Anyway, that’s a big part of justice too, I think, letting people know that no matter what their status is in the community, economic status, race, whatever, that they’ve got people who are going to fight for them. And when I was on the outside helping these people, fighting against the Salt Lake City police and the police chief at the time, it was horrible to see how people can turn their backs on these folks. Well, I won’t get into it but I had a similar experience with this woman whose baby had been kidnapped by the biological father and nothing was being done for her. I just happened to meet her in a restaurant one night. She told me the story and I got right on it. Fortunately, since I was mayor, we were able to get people’s attention. They found the baby, I think it was in Rhode Island, with this guy and it turned out he had done the same thing to somebody else years ago, and there had been a warrant out all these years and nobody had done anything about it. These stories are incredible.

- KF: So you are not only doing peace and justice stuff big level, speaking at the county building and your speeches go nationwide, but you’re doing it at a very individual level that, you know, doesn’t get media attention—it’s just individual justice, personal level justice.
- RA: Yeah well, I don’t think there is any justice when you have a government that doesn’t care about the individual. And that’s where the really exhausting work comes into play. It’s easy to talk about the grand things and, you know, the large vision stuff and give speeches, but the hard exhausting work is when it come down to the complexities of individual cases and letting people know that you’re doing everything you can. I mean, our police chief will tell you—‘He’s really great to work with’—but I think sometimes I push a lot more than others might to keep people’s attention on these individual challenges.
- KF: And how is it different here in Utah do you think—both the group and individual peacemaking?
- RA: The worst thing I think about our culture in Utah—and it’s becoming more and more a national culture, is the—what I call many times—culture of obedience, the sense that the way that we meet our own personal, moral responsibility is just to go along with our leaders and then if they’re wrong we can blame them for it. And when I heard that

message, as a young boy, in a sacrament meeting in an LDS Church that's when I decided that I would have nothing further to do with it.

KF: It was actually preached at a talk?

RA: Yeah. It was based on the article of faith that we believe in kings, rulers, etc. and I heard—and I love President Hinckley—but I heard him say the same thing either going into or right after the invasion of Iraq. The LDS Church wasn't taking a stand on these issues. You know, if it's to send a message of intolerance toward gays and lesbians, they'll throw millions of dollars at it and carry on political campaigns, but when it comes to what's resulted in the deaths of probably over a million Iraqi people and thousands of Americans—about twice the numbers of those reported because now we contract out much of what our military does and a lot of Americans who have been hired by contractors like Blackwater, have died and they're never included in the numbers—but then the almost 30,000 wounded, and some of them with lifetime injuries, all of this tremendous tragedy and all the hatred generated in the Muslim world and elsewhere. Where is the moral guidance? Where is anybody speaking out? I loved what Pope John Paul said about it prior to the invasion but I didn't see anything like that coming from the LDS Church. So I think, you know, when I say those things people say, “Oh you're anti-Mormon.” It's the ‘us and them’ thing and it's not like that at all. It's when I grew up as a young Mormon boy I was taught to stand your ground and differentiate between what's right and what's wrong and fight for what's right. And the Jesus I learned about growing up would not sit idly by and let the Roman rulers tell him, “Just fall in line blindly and don't speak out.” Yet that's what I think the culture in Utah is suffering from, in very large part, and why there's such an adamant, hateful response by so many toward those who will speak up. I mean you'll see letters to the editor. There was one in the Tribune the other day and there have been a lot in the Deseret News over the last seven years, blasting me for saying hateful things toward the LDS Church. I would challenge anybody to point to one thing that I've ever said hateful toward the LDS Church. I'll say, “Yes, I'm against sky bridges because they're urban design disasters. They kill the life on the streets. It's not what we should have in our downtown.” People will write in that I'm against sky bridges because I'm anti-Mormon. So again it gets back to that ‘us and them’ kind of thing mixed with this very dangerous culture of obedience.

KF: It's called cognitive dissonance.

RA: Well yeah, I'm afraid there is not a whole lot of dissonance for some people, they never get to that point.

KF: It's a Freudian defense mechanism.

RA: I know what cognitive dissonance is but I think that for those defense mechanisms to have come into play you've got to have the dissonance first and I think a lot of people never reach that point. They don't say, “Okay, I'm supporting something that's wrong so now I've got to resolve it somehow through justification or other defenses to cognitive

dissonance.” I just don’t think sometimes it reaches that level of even conscious consideration.

KF: It’s unconscious. That’s what Freud would say. It’s unconscious and so a person has to try harder than ever to be against it because somewhere in their mind it makes sense. That’s what Freud says. What else would you like to say that you haven’t, would you like to share?

RA: Nothing.

KF: I’ve got a couple of questions for you then. One is, I teach a course called the Psychology of Good and Evil. Do you have any books or readings to suggest?

RA: Yes. I think the best thing I’ve ever read, this is after reading a lot of Nietzsche, is Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*. That, I think, is an analysis of good and evil that goes far beyond Nietzsche, and that is: You may not be able to identify any external source of the concept of good and evil but we know that there are certain things in the human condition that are conducive, or not conducive, to a better life and better society and if you term that good and evil that’s fine. It works. But it’s almost like our physical well being, there are certain things that we can consume that are conducive to good health and certain things that we can consume, or not consume, that are not conducive. I think the same thing is true for our minds, our hearts, our souls, for our society and I think all of us need to think a lot more about that in both our personal lives and our dealings with other people. Another remarkable book I highly recommend is James Waller’s Becoming Evil. It addresses how ordinary people can participate in atrocities. The review of the social-psychological students and the tragic historical examples are enlightening—and very troubling. The book provides so much to contemplate about human nature and about why people can treat others with such [hatred].

KF: Next question. I coordinate Martin Luther King commemoration at UVSC for the next couple of years and have thought it might be delightful for you to come talk on civil rights in war time, or free speech in war time, at our next commemoration. What do you think?

RA: When is it?

KF: Our commemoration is January 15 and 16 and the 15<sup>th</sup> is pretty full, Delores Huerta is coming and Charles Holt has a dramatization, so it would be the 16<sup>th</sup>, which is Wednesday.

RA: I would love to do it sometime. But I think that time would be almost impossible for me. I end my term on January 7 and I think any transition is going to be a really tough time for me and I don’t know where I’m going to be. I might not even be living here at that time. I hope to hit the ground running. People ask me if I’m going to take vacation or anything but that’s not what I intend to do. I’m hoping to have something lined up and just sail right into it after the 7<sup>th</sup>.

KF: Think about it for the next January. I'm hoping to focus entirely on Utah civil rights and we'd have to fly you in from somewhere if you're away.

RA: I might be here. I hope to still be living here.

KF: And that would be a wonderful time for you to come speak also.

RA: Well, please be in touch. You'll know how to reach me by then.

KF: And I have your Yahoo.com email too.

RA: That may change—that's a little odd to have such a long name.

[end of interview] [1:15]