

## RRFA 01: Robert Rauschenberg papers

Interviews: Bound Compilation of Robert Rauschenberg Interviews, 1985-1987 /  
Sparks, Esther / Interview with Robert Rauschenberg, 1985

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### SPARKS,INT

INTERVIEW WITH ESTHER SPARKS  
SHERATON GRAND HOTEL  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
10/25/85

ES: I saved the hardest for last, you are the...almost the end of the book. I got a great big grant from the Luce Foundation, a hundred thousand dollars, to do the research for the book. It's going to be a history and catalog resume of ULAE. So we're going to start with a biography of Tanya which Eli Wallach is writing. Then I'm going to do a 25 or 35 page history and then a section on each artist...

RR: History of what?

ES. Of the press. Then a catalog resume of all the prints, with every single one reproduced and a hundred seventy-eight color plates.

RR: That's fantastic.

I just had a birthday the other day. Day before yesterday actually I believe. I should be able to make it by how I feel today.

ES: What does that mean?

RR: Well, Sid Felsen, Bill Goldston, Jim Rosenquist, Don Saff, and other not exactly lightweight personalities came over on Captiva. Somehow, if you're just sitting around a table in New York, all that goes down a little smoother than it does on an island, particularly when you have to be the host. So I was responsible for the housing for all these people too. And transportation...and I had to keep up with who was leaving when and how they were going to get to the airport...plus I was very depressed about it being my birthday.

ES: Well, you shouldn't be.

RR: I don't know. I'm not usually that way. It was the first time that I realized that I have so many things to do and I think when...I don't know, there's something about being sixty that you can almost count backwards then. If you're sixty, then you can say that...let's see, do I have forty more years or twenty more years? And at this end of the stick twenty more years doesn't seem like nearly enough.

ES: The list is so long.

RR: I was just warming up too. With this ROCI thing. We're probably going to run out of money. Some people like Ted Kheel there and the PR people, Gray and Company, are looking for some support for us. But so far, it's just been out of my pocket and

it's over I think by the time we finish China it will have cost me about two million dollars. I don't have that kind of money and I have had to do all kinds of things. Selling Warhols...and my big Twombly is up for sale now. I was thinking of calling Spear, but Spear is going to say, well Bob, the one I want is Barge. But when I sell Barge, that's one of the ones I want to hang onto til the end...I want a real price for that. So I can build a new studio and...

ES: And a battleship to get from one country to another.

RR: Because...well, I got one million dollars for the Warhol and I never knew what a million dollars was. Just the sense of a million dollars is an abstraction. You think I could live on that for the rest of my life. Two months! Two trips. It was spent for a very good cause, but you just can't come up with a million dollars every other month. I don't know what to do. We're still going on. I think that, the only way we could really fail now is if we didn't make it to China and to Tibet and back. We have a little reprieve in there because Japan isn't ready for us. Now if we could talk some big company that has a warehouse into storing it for us so that we could sort of catch our breath and reorganize...because these big companies work so slowly.

ES: You mean as far as giving money?

RR: Yeah. And so that will give us a little time when I don't

have a cast of thousands charging me three hundred dollars a day for nothing.

ES: Has anybody tried for you in Japan?

RR: Well...for the warehouse?

ES: For the show.

RR: They will pay for the show. There's just a few countries that will make a contribution. They're the ones that can afford it. Like Australia and Japan.

ES: You're going to Australia?

RR: Yeah. To three cities there. It's a very big place as you know. I've never been there but I hear it's enormous. That should be a very great show. Like, what we're celebrating tonight is Venezuela. And Terry and I went down just by ourselves with a guide and picked up local people who knew a specific area and went way back into the bush. Terry and I met at least eight tribes and all of which were very different. It was funny, because when we were in Caracas and a couple of other large cities, they said why do you want to go to the interior. That has nothing to do with Venezuela.

ES: But it has everything to do with Venezuela.

RR: I know it does. I couldn't believe it. Like, all your civilized parts are like one fiftieth of the country. Caracas isn't even big. And all these incredible totally unique cultures and landscapes. That was really the richest one. It was tough in Chile. We went down...

ES: You mean politically or physically?

RR: Both. Because we had to rebuild the museum because there was an earthquake by the time we signed up to do the exhibition. We had to replace all the lightbulbs, replaster the walls...

ES: You had to pay for that?

RR: Yeah. They gave me the museum but we couldn't have the show otherwise. I think it was a very...they don't have any money for things like that. The museum had been closed since the earthquake, so at least we gave the museum back to the people.

ES: That's a great thing to do.

RR: It's not supposed to be cheap, right?

ES: There goes your Twombly, or Warhol.

RR: There's my Warhol, right there. We had to rehire the staff. But they were also having riots and somebody forgot to..

ES: Anti-American riots?

RR: Just anti to be anti. They don't care who they kill. It's just protest. They don't even know who's the other side usually. Unless you're in a Mercedes or something like that. You can pick one of them up for about \$25.

ES: It makes you a moving target...why would you want to ride around in a Mercedes.

RR: I know, but it would be cheap.

ES: The idea of going to the bush in Venezuela is just fabulous.

RR: It was gorgeous. It really was. I mean, you just don't...I hadn't realized except in theory, just how totally foreign foreigners could be. And I didn't know who was the foreigner.

ES: You were the foreigner.

RR: Right. It was just amazing. Some people, if you don't behave right, it can be quite dangerous.

ES: And you don't know how your actions are interpreted.

RR: Right. It could be with the best of intentions. Anyway, it certainly was exciting and I got a lot of information out of it.

You know, I think that the Venezuelan series is so much stronger than...I'm sorry about this, I didn't intend for it to be, but I think I was shy about Mexico because that was the first exhibition and I was inhibited about like the combination of my expressing myself within or for or about their aesthetics and beliefs and social life.

ES: Maybe that's a form of respect.

RR: It is, but respect doesn't necessarily make great dynamic art works.

ES: It makes a lot of academic dribble sometimes.

RR: Right, well, I didn't go that far with it but I felt, I really felt...that was because we had all the problems of organizing because that was our first out of town show and I made a joke. I thought it was a joke, a half-hearted joke, about let's open in Mexico first because then if we run out of something we can just call up from across the Rio Grande. Because I know Texas very well and I didn't feel too far in Mexico. But still, it was...our relationship with them is terrible too. And we had just done these fake drug busts and stopping all the people coming across and ruining southern California's economy. I mean, I don't know what the answers are but like none of those things are very interesting. I think that a totally new approach might work. Like make somebody a seasonal citizen or something like that so that they are legally...then



you would stop all the criminal activity that is so terrible for the...I mean, which are controlled by racketeers.

ES: So if you make the people citizens you at least give them some protection. Whereas otherwise you're just making them underground.

RR: It's a lot different than getting ripped off by somebody who will take a hundred fifty dollars or something and then kill them when they get on the other side. Which is like the way all the movies go.

ES: Germany has that system. The guest workers.

RR: You could have your lettuce work<sup>ers</sup>. Your strawberry pickers. You know, and everybody would profit from it and it would give some dignity to poor people.

ES: And protection.

RR: Yes. Anyway, that's not what you came here to talk about. We can remake the world some other afternoon.

ES: I would like...can I turn on my tape recorder?

RR: Let me tell you this one Venezuela story. We were so delighted when we got into Venezuela. There was a marvelous



woman, Sophia Embert, and her husband Carlos. They were badly in love with each other. They were the Romeo and Juliet of Caracas, or maybe all Venezuela. They have a seven o'clock in the morning show everyday except Saturday and Sunday, where they interview all kinds of people from all kinds of professions. And so they have to get up at five to drive into the studio and then she runs the museum and he writes articles...just a beautiful relationship. Just about as tight as you can get I guess. Anyway, they were...she has been either the model or the girlfriend of most of the certain latitude of very important...like Vasarelli and she knew Picabia, an area there. She's still a beautiful woman. Actually, she reminded me very much of a combination between Dr. Ruth and Tanya. Can you imagine these two personalities successfully merging into just an incredible sensitive dynamic woman. She has the energy of Dr. Ruth and the forwardness and strong. But she has got all of Tanya's, well, not all but a lot, of the sensitive ones. How Tanya would like tend to instead of confronting some problem or something that could be a problem, she would sneak up behind you and come from the other side usually saying, well, I don't know much about that but why don't you try...and of course she would put her finger right on it just intuitively. Everybody else was still behaving like bulldozers around this project and Tanya comes in like a butterfly or something and just solves the whole problem.

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ES: Is that really what you want to do? she would say.

RR: "I don't know. This looks perfectly fine but maybe if it was just a little different right in here..." and everything always looked better. Of course, she drives some of the artists crazy with this technique.

ES: But apparently not you.

RR: We argued all the time. Yeah. I just said whatever...during any day that I was out there I must have thrown her out of the studio at least three times. I'm not a violent person but it would just start driving me crazy. "Tanya, we're not trying to do that. Now go back in the kitchen."

ES: That was not where she belonged.

RR: She'd come back and put on some gypsy music or something and change her scarf. And she'd be back in in fifteen minutes.

ES: Trying to pretend she was somebody else.

RR: That's right. With a brand new personality.

ES: That's really amusing to begin with because my first question to you was that...

RR: Oh wait, I didn't finish that story. We just led into it. We were so relieved. We had such a marvelous time. We were in

the jungles and everybody was so nice to us in Caracas and they had incredible countrysides there. During the interview people were very curious about why we went to Chile. There's not really a good answer to that except that the question is so clear that I think that must be the answer. Everybody has to ask that. There is no excuse. And Mexico was not that eventful. When we got to Venezuela, which was our last South American place, we just had a wonderful time. During the interview, which was also the students and the old writers and people like that... the intellectuals, which was about five hundred of them showed up. Don't think that I don't get nervous with these things because you never know what's going to happen.

ES: You mean what they're going to say...the questions?

KR: So, one of the questions was how do you find working here having traveled all over the world in this particular museum. I said, well after all the things that we had been through, it was a piece of cake. And Sophia is a very good cook. With intellectuals that was fine. The newspapers picked it up and the next day it was Rauschenberg Says Sophia Umbert is a Tart. I would like to think that the man who wrote it had a sense of humor instead of just bad english.

ES: He just has good luck.

KR: Anyway, the reports that came after that were really sensational.

ES: The first question, or the first thing I wanted you to talk about was Tanya. Because it seems to me from talking to Bill and Tony and everybody else, that she had the most extraordinary affection for you, as a person, I mean, more than anybody else. And I wondered what...how did you feel about that? Did your affection for her...was that a thing of friendship, or instinct. Was she...because you felt that she had a great understanding of your art? What was it?

RR: I don't think so. I think what we shared was almost a kind of...I don't know the word...irreverance. I think she could depend on most of the other artists for a certain kind of quality. Meaning a conventional...just plain high quality work. And I think that it was something about the gypsy in her that really, she got turned on by being able to say "why not".

ES: So it was the antic side of you that she responded to.

RR: I think so, plus, of course it was just an immeasurable kind of love that was charging through us. Like my first classic quote there, that's only a classic because it's been overquoted so many times...like when I reprimanded Jasper Johns for...this is the 20th century...and what in the hell are you doing writing **ON ROCKS**. I was just about to get involved in the experiments in art and technology which could have closed down AT&T. My successes could have blown all their fuses too. But I think it

was just that because she trusted me. She knew that I had a great respect for the medium which grew from scratch.

ES: Not in the beginning though.

RR: It grew from that approach. When I went to the Arts Students League I wouldn't study printmaking because it was so hokey. I was...when I was, when I could have learned how in school to do printmaking, hairpins and knives and chicken wire as it was really popular. All you had to do was just scratch your way through it. My feeling about the very first response was that that wasn't just a rock. That was alive. It had the hardness and the weight and the stubbornness and independence of a rock, which you can't argue with. It's going to do what it's going to do. So you have to understand it. But it had, each rock had a certain sensitivity which also was unique. And so to find that in the stone was then something else. I guess that probably appealed to my off balance Libran psychopathic personality.

ES: Also your sense of adventure.

RR: I have to do a lecture next week in Washington again. I mean, I never gave one on this, this is going to be kind of difficult I believe. It's for a very good cause. That is that I am one of the six celebrated handicapped people picked out nationally to give an address and do fundraising for the handicapped school there.

ES: Is that because of your reading?

RR: Yes. The dyslexia. The reason that I thought of that is because dyslexia can also be used positively and negatively. One of the things that I am going to tell these children and these people and parents and family is that having dyslexia probably was responsible for my having made so many new discoveries in printmaking. Because I could completely bypass working in reverse.

ES: Because you saw it that way?

RR: I saw it that way. I could see it both ways at the same time. I'm very fast. You've never seen me work. That's why Gemini is crazy about me and Bill. Because I come in and in two days we've got the whole place just filled with things instead of...because I just move directly as an action rather than interpreting.

ES: Having to make the change. You can see it instantly.

RR: And I see it both ways. I've had so much practice trying to read, which I always. In the beginning, I had...I just couldn't control my attention because I'd get so bored so quickly no matter how interesting what I was reading was...or how important it was to me. But then in some cases a matter of forty-five



seconds I could tell you how many o's were on the page. That's no way to read but the transfer technique is just perfect for that. That's being taught in all the schools now.

ES: What do you see? You see it backwards and forwards, flip-flopped, mirror imaged, positive and negative. Do you see it as a positive or negative of a photograph too?

RR: Yes. I get very confused about which one it is because they both are very real to me. And having a broader aesthetic than just the plain photographer because I very often use the negative image as a positive image also. But I also think it has something to do with that I'm Libra which is a balance and that's already again a conflict where you can be on either side of a question. And if you're intelligent you could probably win on either side, but that's not the point. Because what you do is come to an interesting stalemate. Where you recognize the advantages of both faults.

ES: But one must act.

RR: Sure. Right down the middle. I have no trouble with that. I've practically ruined my market just by being so prolific. I'm so grateful that I have this project of such a scale as ROCI where I have an excuse to make as many paintings as I want to. And somehow the American market really goes against you as far as financial support or even respect. If you make two paintings... I don't understand this and I really can't afford it, I was saying



to you earlier that I feel like already I don't have enough time. And if I can make twelve paintings a week, I certainly am going to do that. I made eight pieces of sculpture in five days this week to go to Tibet. And they weren't simple pieces either. But they had to get off also. I've worked in theater enough to have great respect for deadlines. I've come very close to being nailed into one of the crates nearly every time a ROCI show goes out.

ES: A new crucifixion.

RK: If they'd just install some plumbing and a light in there I guess I could make it. They'd get off my back then anyway, right? But you know that. I don't think that scarcity of work implies quality. I don't think slow painting is any more interesting than fast painting. I think all this came... I think we inherited, I think it's one of the worst things we inherited from the Europeans. We finally have our own style, you know, in America, and do things that make us the envy of the rest of the world, but this is not one to... I mean, I can't imagine why anybody except if they're just bullshitting themselves

ES: It's just dealing and market and money. That's what it's all about. Rarity.

RR: The falsehood of "you're serious because you deliberate". The truth might be that you're lazy.

ES: Or you can't make up your mind.

RR: Right.

ES: But that also is against printmaking in general. Or it was in the '40s and '50s, that printmaking was considered somewhere down there because there were so many of them. But that never bothered you.

RR: I got tired of...I raised a one man battle there, or at least started it. I got tired of the only place you could see prints was on your way to the men's or ladies rooms.

ES: That was true of the Whitney.

RR: What you said...how about your museum?

ES: It was pretty bad.

RR: It was true at the Modern too. And so when additions got so unique, either to scale or technique, because ~~Reba~~<sup>Riva</sup> Castleman, well, she hasn't done it in a couple of years, but every time I used to see her, she would take me to see the new drawers they had to build for my works!

ES: That's right. We had to do the same.

RR: If you have something that's like eight feet tall and four or five feet wide, well, you can't treat it like some little wall filler.

ES: It's not for over the sofa.

RR: It's not. It's instead of the sofa.

ES: When you were with Tanya, did you talk about your other work too, the painting and the sculpture?

RR: Rarely. The reason that I got into Tanya's was because of the Dante illustrations. I mean, that's what she kept insisting that I get...I always thought that the rest of my work she accepted in...through so much love that it was not critical. But in the print shop she could be critical of the work in detail specifically. But otherwise...

ES: What would she say, for example.

RR: I don't know. She might say something like "Rauschenberg, don't you think this paper is too rough for your delicate image?" or maybe Bill didn't etch this wash right. All just trying to smooth it out. With no blame happening, but she wants...the most daring thing that she ever did which didn't work at all. I don't know what they ever did with that paper, but this is something that you were asking what did I bring out and what was it that

was so special she went from the most expensive select hand made papers to, in one case we couldn't get anything that I liked and I liked printing on this paper that had tar inbetween, which is an absolute nightmare for a curator. And she got into it. She said why not? And the next thing I knew she had found out how to get ahold of and had gotten it, some very gross paper that the Tibetans use. Of all people, or the Mongolians, for hatching eggs on. I think we recycled this.

ES: Before it was used.

RR: I think so. My mother liked it better afterwards. Free drawings. Those were very dynamic changes that she was capable of making if she were invited to. A lot of the artists just insisted on her doing the best French papers and you know. She used to drive me crazy because I didn't want watermarks. It was too expensive and it wasn't worth it. And how many people, when they have a print, have it in such a condition...I mean, you're going to take it out of the frame and hold it up to the light to see the watermark? Anyway, it cost too much and I would rather just get more paper. But in a couple of times I had to get into that.

ES: The Metropolitan Centennial print had a special one.

RR: That was a special thing. But also, ###, who was an absolute stickler about...he didn't care about her. I don't mean it to sound quite that honest, where there wasn't room for but

one person in his life and HE had the job. He drove us both crazy. He kept saying that I just didn't understand him and that collaboration went on for four or five years and he was driving me crazy.

ES: It wasn't really a collaboration.

RR: It was supposed to be. It was a beautiful idea. Do you know the original idea? It was going to be a dialogue. He was to initiate it. He would write something and then I would respond to that in images.

ES: He would send you some text and then you would make...

RR: So it would be like a discussion like we're having here now. Where you're listening to what I'm saying and I'm listening to what you're saying and we can have a conversation that isn't necessarily predictable. It appealed to me that a mass work could like grow and change directions and change subjects and that was exciting to me. I didn't know it until about the third installment and I think that's when Tanya got a little pissed too, but he was rewriting one of his old movie scripts.

ES: She must have been very angry because that's not what she...

RR: Tanya always. She's such an idealist. She just believes so strongly. I was jealous because she kept accusing me of not



understanding him and I thought he was really so prissy and it shouldn't have been tolerated that he had to have... he put the project off after we started if for, I don't know what the name of it is, it's a "calamandoo" or something. Some kind of a standup desk from a certain century. He wanted this because he was inspired to do this writing standing up at one of these things. He couldn't find the right one. And he put the project off after we started, for a year. The day that I found out that, I mean, figured out exactly, I just had had enough of it. What he would do was, I feel quite passionately about this. What he would do is I would try to open up the discourse by bringing in new elements. Then he started working backwards and forwards. So he would take that and write that into his script. So he would ruin those. He should have just picked up on the images and trusted everybody else to be able to read them, as hieroglyphics or something, and then pick up from there and then write. But instead, at about the fourth exchange I just did this big bull. I didn't mean anything other than "bull". Guess how he responded? It was a bullfight. All of a sudden he was in Spain or something. It didn't even have...

ES: He didn't get it at all. He wasn't receiving.

RP: And that's when Tanya got a little bit impatient too. But we made a beautiful publication. I think it was very sensitive of him and very sensitive of him and gorgeously printed. But I think, with you knowing my work, you can see how frustrated I would be to see a perfectly good, marvelous, brand new idea, just

go down the drain For a bunch of European sentimental...

ES: It seemed oppressive to me. There was something that was so intractable about that text. The way it was written. It was almost metallic. I can't really justify my use of that word. It was all so square and imposing itself and not leaving room or alternatives. It was unlike anything of yours that I had ever seen.

RR: There was no air. I wasn't going to let Tanya down. Actually I got very put off by Dante when I was working on Dante. I got so sick of all the moralism. He showed more as he continued writing, how two-faced he was.

ES: You mean what a Machiavellian politician he was?

RR: Yes. I mean he didn't have to at the same time praising his old school teacher that he had learned all of his writing from and also put him in Hell.

ES: There is so much vengeance in the Dante.

RR: I know. It was really mean. And yet it was supposed to be such a good book. That's what I mean. This was the conflict that I wasn't able to resolve. I only mention that because I went ahead and finished it anyway. I had to leave New York to do it where I could just...I went down to a place near St. Petersburg by myself. Just to finish and concentrate on it. I



Lived down there for another six months just trying to finish it.  
That was two and a half years

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ES: There is nothing else like that book for a collaboration  
between an artist and a writer. Nothing.

RR: I tried to treat his things with similar respect. And that  
was that I never wanted the imagery to either become illustration  
of the work, a selected illustration, which would make it  
subservient, or did I want it to overshadow his ability with the  
language.

ES: Did you change a lot? Why did you spend so long on it?  
Because you rethought it and reread it? The Dante.

RR: It was just slow. It just took a long time. Materials were  
hard to get because I had to pick them in scale also. That was  
one of the restrictions that I had made. That if something was  
only four beautiful words, which more often they were, then the  
image could not overpower that. That's what I meant by respect  
for the form of illustration. The only Dante illustrations that  
didn't do that, and they had a different arrangement, and that  
was the Bottacellis. And he also wrote the whole page. And  
that's what I was trying to do...page for page. Within the  
scale of the imagery whereas everybody else would pick their  
favorite part and illustrate it. And so then you'd get to that  
line and you'd say, that's very important, there's a whole page

drawing. And that's a common mistake that illustrators do make.

ES: When you made the prints...the ark, car, sink, to go along with them...how does the imagery in those prints relate to the Dante drawings?

RR: Not directly. No, maybe something in energy, but that was one of Tanya and my first big scale productions. She refused to...I thought that it was already a little vulgar that we would have to do all those little handprints but she wouldn't allow...I mean, I like making the different images, but I just thought it wasn't fair to her and her production costs to have to do that.

ES: That never interested her.

RR: I know that but also, some of us tried to protect her a little bit so she didn't get totally outrageous. It was difficult. We probably failed. What was it that Barney Newman? Seven years? Or was it the Motherwell that was seven years? The Newman thing...

ES: Newman's took less than a year. It was the Motherwell that took from '68 to '74. He started in '68 when he first came there. Then there was the Rivers and Southern collaboration. That went on for nine years. The Donkey and the Darling.

RR: We didn't teach that woman nothing!

ES: That was at the end.

RR: That wasn't even an early mistake. She was a pushover for...I think it was true for every artist that worked for her. There was just a different shape to her affection that was sponsored by something completely different. I think with Larry it came from knowing him earlier on Long Island.

ES: He was sort of her "bad boy".

RR: He had gotten into all kinds of trouble. His children were in all kinds of trouble. He was busy getting divorced. Remarrying and all that. I think she related to him because he always acted so Jewish when he came around too. Otherwise he was just real jazzy.

ES: Think about some of the printers that you worked with. One of the words which comes up about your work all the time was collaboration. Other people have played an extraordinarily direct role in your work. In mean extraordinary in comparison to other artists. The printers, for example, can you think of any that were more than usually sympathetic or helpful? What kinds of things?

RR: I think each project had its own cast. And it's always sad to finish a project and you go away and then there's two or three other people but it's always revitalizing to my own sensibility

to have to get to know some new strangers and in the end, of course, because there's no better way of getting to know anybody than working with them. And so you end up not wanting to go home alone. In the beginning it's very scary. It's doubly scary because if you work like I do you don't know what you're going to do.

ES: Ever?

RR: Most often. Nearly never do I have any idea like how big something is going to be or what the subject is even going to be. Sometimes it's I think just maybe once this year, and that was the Bottacellis and somehow EDCI has interfered with that in such a way that it's sort of slowed down the concentration plus Bill's had a lot of problems with the shop. It hasn't been like just going out to work. There's been a lot of other things. I think it's getting back to just going out to work. The whole period right in there.

ES: Your mind was someplace else too.

RR: Right. But usually I don't know what I'm going to do. Then you have to get started and I don't know why...yes I do, it's just human nature that it's harder to make a mistake in front of a stranger than it is in front of a friend. And so I don't...I've never been very heavy on the technical aspects of the printmaking.

ES: But you do all kinds of wild things.

RR: I know. That's why I can't keep up with it. I have a little press down in Florida. Cy Twombly did some stones for me under pressure. Because he doesn't like having his image reversed because it's such a handwriting. He said he would try. I etched his things and I practically made up how to etch. They almost look three dimensional. So there are certainly advantages that come from a little bit of information. A lot of caution and a lot of caring. And a little daring. I was terrified to mess up his stones because I knew he would never do them again. He was just waiting to say "See there?". They came out. I do know some things. I know a lot more probably than I'm willing to admit, put under pressure. But I'd much prefer going under the direction of bringing out things in somebody else that they don't know. That's more fun for both of us. Rather than just dealing with experts.

ES: Who would tell you the right way to do it.

RR: Right. I know some printers like that. I know some photographers like that. It's a very boring existence.

ES: That must have been very exciting.

RR: Bill is very good at that and Keith is too.



ES: That must have been very exciting to you about Gemini. When you went there and they had all kinds of technical excitements.

RR: Well, that's Los Angeles. That's the difference between Los Angeles and Long Island. Just being west coast where so many exotic things and high techs are completely available. All you have to do is jump in the car.

ES: When you went to Gemini, somebody said, I think it was Reba, said that Tanya was hurt and upset.

RR: Jasper had already been out there and maybe anyway, she was getting used to the idea. I wasn't the first one that had gone out. She didn't like it at all. It wasn't until much later that she acknowledged the fact that this was very good for her artists. Because it wasn't...it had nothing to do with competition, it had to do with her artists developing different attitudes and different skills so that their work would always be fresh. And in the beginning her problem was...I don't think she ever got over that, but ..even the girls were her "boys" and so it was like motherly, a parent relationship. She just didn't want you to leave home. You might get into trouble. Whereas if you're there she can take care of it.

ES: But she never loaded that on you.

RR: No. I made a big mistake. I just didn't see why, because I liked the people out at Gemini so much and I certainly loved

Tanya and I just couldn't... I didn't know why it seemed to me a waste of energy that they would have to have any kinds of differences. They liked each other while they were doing it. I arranged a disastrous dinner party. I almost couldn't get in. I was in my Indian period then, and I was wearing a lot of handmade leather stuff, which was not cheap, but still

ES: Fringe! I've seen photographs of you in fringe.

RR: I have one really good one that doesn't have fringe on it, it's all handlaced and stuff. I arranged this what turned out to be a nightmare of a dinner party at this very expensive restaurant. I was doing the whole thing. I couldn't get in. They said they didn't accept leather jackets. So they're upstairs sitting around this table hating each other and the host, who's trying to pull this thing off can't get in. I showed up in some giant monster suit, which would probably be very chic right now, matching the tablecloth, as the master to tame all these wild vindictive looks. It didn't work. I just gave up. I said I'd never try that again. Actually I don't think I have. I think I have great respect for if people just don't want to like each other, just let them do it. It's none of my business. It was naive but I thought it was a nice idea. I thought they had so much to give each other. At that point they were the two most important publishing houses. Gemini certainly did respect her. Ken was still there then.



ES: You said you hardly ever know what you're going to do before you start, but you have brought things to the studio to use many times. In the beginning there were the placemats that you got from Brian O'Dougherty at the Times, he said.

RR: Those paper mats? They didn't work.

ES: You used them.

RR: I know. It was very frustrating. They always looked good. I don't know, even if you're not an artist...are you an artist?

ES: I did it enough times to know that I should stop.

RR: Okay.

ES: But some of them are in here.

RR: A lot of those were metal. They worked better. The ones I loaded my raincoat full of when it wasn't raining.

ES: Was it your idea.

RR: I stole them.

ES: You stole them?

RR: I went up and kept asking for permission. Brian said, sure

*continues*



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Bob just use anything you want. I went downstairs and nobody would let me near it. They had barrels full that they were going to pitch out. For this occasion, because I'm a man of the street too, I just happened to be wearing this raincoat that had pockets this big. You'd be surprised how suspicious you look with a raincoat on like that in bright sunny day with your pockets full of lead. It does change you stride a bit.

ES: And probably your expression too.

RR: Guilt was never one of my subtler moments. I did bring, but then I never knew how to use them. The use of something like that, even though it was a traditional object in printmaking.

ES: What did you do? Dip it in...

RR: I don't remember. I did all kinds of things. We did transfers. I dipped it in touche. We ran it through the press. This didn't work. That was for Dylabby?

ES: That was for the collaboration that didn't come to pass.

RR: Another one of my good matchmakers.

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ES: It was Dine and Tinguely.

RR: Tinguely just hated this piece and wouldn't do anything

about it. I don't like that style of work myself. He's a good guy but I just don't like that. Jim decided not to go because he decided that, well, two Americans were invited. Then there were two Frenchmen...it was supposed to be some international thing for Sandburg, his last show in Amsterdam.

ES: The director.

RR: Yeah. And who then went to Israel there in Jerusalem. But anyway, he's forced to retire and he didn't want to retire. He's still alive, bless his heart. He still wears his one tie, he may have many, but you only find him in a red bowtie. He's a gorgeous little man this big and his hair has been white ever since I knew him. Must have known him for twenty or thirty years. He is just really alive. This was going to be his last show. What he wanted...what he planned, nobody knew all of what he had planned, that the artists were going to come to the one place, at the museum at a certain place on a certain day in the summer in July something and here again, no preconceptions, it was going to be the ultimate collaborative work. All work together on one piece that would be the whole museum. It was going to be an anonymous group work.

ES: Group art.

RR: And, well, Jim decided that he couldn't come because he couldn't take a ship he'd get seasick and he was terrified to fly. I don't know how much of this was really facts from the

psychiatrist or he just didn't want to go.

ES: He has had times.

RR: He was having a bad time then I guess. He was going to the dentist then I think. He was very sensitive. Very delicate.

ES: Very moody. He's the first person to say so

RR: And so I was...we went there and it was a beautiful idea. So we all got there within a half hour from each other even though we were coming from all over the world and the first thing everybody did was pull out their drawings of what they wanted to do. I got up and left. They had...we had two months to finish this project. I didn't come back in until like two weeks before. They were keeping a diary on it and it said like, Bob didn't show up again today. I was furious. I wasn't furious because that's not fair. I was hurt. I think ideas that are good deserve a certain amount of dignity. And everyone just pulled out this same old dumb shit. Just exactly what they were doing at home whereas it would have been the most extraordinary, even if it had failed, it would have been...it would have accomplished even though it was a disaster...because it would have been tried. Just like the Experiments in Art and Technology Nine Evenings which is collaboration.

ES: You don't think they were a failure do you?

RR: No. But most of the audience did for a long time. Now people think they were celebrities because they had the good sense to go. But when they were there they weren't particularly happy.

ES: Did you know that then?

RR: Yeah. It was easy to know. If you were a performer up there on that stage you would certainly have known it out there in the arena.

ES: You felt the hostility, or they talked?

RR: Right.

ES: But you kept on doing it, because you thought that it was...

RR: We couldn't stop because it was an object. It was the whole thing. It was an object. We had to go on because Lucinda Childs had to do her piece and then Deborah Hay had to do hers and Steve Paxton had to theirs and there was nobody that was there even as just a smallest bit part is not a star now. Frank Stella was playing tennis to turn my lights off. It was marvelous stuff going on. That could have been but it just wasn't. I finally just went in and locked myself in to these two rooms. I took the last two rooms that were left and made something that I really liked. I got tired of pouting.

ES: What was it?

RR: It was a walk through with sculpture, but the people were fenced in. So it was like a sculpture jungle. So like the sculptures were wandering free and the people had to stay on the path.

ES: Like the San Diego Zoo.

RR: Yeah. And I had special lighting that was blue and I had flowers growing inside. I had fun. I did have a good time. Ileana was sweet enough to save those parts for me. I have them but I can't make up my mind about whether I want to try to, to attempt to duplicate what I can remember what those things were, which of course would not be terribly clear.

ES: Were there photographs?

RR: Very few. Particularly in my case because I had all these blue lights which are very low intensity. People didn't think about documenting everything then and going back. Art is my obligation to the material, to give them a whole brand new life with my new sensibility. And so far I haven't come to any conclusion. You can see that it's a tough one because I am seriously nostalgic about the other. It goes more than that. You get something more than just sentimental value there.



ES: It's history.

RR: But my sense of disrespect for history, or intolerance, is another conflict.

ES: That's true because you are a creative artist. You can't be wired in the past.

RR: I know. So far I haven't come up with the right solution to that. It's all there though.

ES: One story that I have to get from you is the story of Twombly coming to ULAE. Bill said that you brought him there one day and it surprised Tonya and she didn't know that he was coming. She didn't know what to do with him when he got there and so she gave him, or somebody gave him some plates and he sat outside at the table under the tree and he made them.

RR: And he hated it. Those are the ones he gave the whole edition to...actually they're beautiful.

ES: How could he hate them?

RR: He doesn't like printmaking because he'll do things that get into offset that'll be reversed again. He doesn't mind that, but he doesn't like his lines that are going this way going this way. I can understand that. I like them going both ways myself. But

I don't know how I would feel about something going backwards. Of course, I'd be the last person to ask.

ES: Since they're both ways for you. Both ways is normal.

RR: I wasn't even aware. I wasn't aware that all this was actually even going on. He came out because I love his work. I think he's one of the most important graphic people in the world. And I thought that they should get together. I didn't know about these editions until much later.

ES: It was just, he is a friend of yours?

RR: He has been. We went to the Art Students League together in 1950.

ES: You have always been friends, so ...

RR: He was visiting and I was going out there. We didn't have such enormous obligations then and could just drop in. I talked him in to coming out. A nice day in the country. I'm certainly glad I did it because I don't think anybody's been able to pull much more out of him.

ES: Certainly not in prints. And they're wonderful prints.

RR: He has done these things where he makes collages and then

he'll work with the publishing house and maybe make a few changes or something, but that's not really starting from the bottom up.

ES: What about the Glacial Decey series. Bill said that that was a performance.

RR: That was Trisha Brown's. I got so involved. That was the first time that I had gone back to taking so many photographs as I used to. The performance had 280 photographs blown up through projection...it's a set...I think they're ten feet by five and a half feet...

ES: The screen was ten feet...

RR: There were five of them and they rippled across like that. Each one is that big though. So it fills the whole stage and then there's the dancing. I had all of these images going on plus I got very involved with the dance and I wanted to use that.

ES: In what way?

RR: Just involved.

ES: You didn't perform?

RR: No. I didn't perform, but working with Trisha on this and then the performances and stuff like that. I didn't go anywhere without my camera. I did all the photographs within what, maybe

fifteen miles. It was all around Fort Myers. What happened was. No.

ES: They came down there?

RR: No, no. I just took my camera there and did all the photography work.

ES: I see.

RR: It's cows and trees and pieces of string. A regular palette. And I had to take... probably 5,000 photographs to do this. By the time everything got selected and then reselected for the performance itself. I was really into it. What also happened was that I grew to really love Ft. Myers, which is really one of the ugliest little towns in the world. There is just not much there. But when you're being the artist, you can't afford that idea. Every shadow is extremely important.

ES: The same is true of the photographs that you took for the Razorback Bunch. The images are not images of beautiful places or high class places or intrinsically interesting things, but you made them that way.

RR: I take photographs the way I pick things up off the street. If something is too interesting, well, it doesn't need me.

ES: My I quote that?

RR: Sure.

ES: Maybe that will be my chapter heading. The print called 529 Bay Shore, was that the train that goes out there? Did you take the photographs on the train?

RR: In one day. Bill could tell you. It started when I got out there. I didn't have anything to work with and so I just took my camera and we went through the entire process in a matter of like 12 hours. At the end we had a proof. I went all over. That was one of the last shots that we took and that was about the time that the train came out and then we went back to the darkroom and got busy. The light was going down then too, so I couldn't have taken too many more photographs anyway. It's fun to do that. I don't know. I like for it to have some action. I've never been a studio artist. In the very beginning I described my work and my attitude, in the '50s, that I wanted my work to look more like what was going on outside the window than inside.

ES: General was a word you used. And other people have used the word impersonal but that doesn't fit.

RR: My work is personal. I'm very involved. I just get very passionately carried away at the drop of a spoon or a paint brush or something. It's not impersonal at all. How could it be impersonal when I spent an entire day like that? A print like

this is the culmination of one afternoon in Bayshore. How could that be impersonal? Maybe it doesn't have a bunch of superficial emotional splashes on it, but I do that too. Particularly now with my new acrylics. These are all images that are part of the dance.

ES: When you say they were projected, were they projected so that they were on the dancers too?

RR: No. Behind them. They rippled across. It was eight projectors computer controlled. They were exactly times to 4.5 seconds on and 4.5 seconds moving into this one and that one would be 4.5 seconds moving out of that one. If you get them out of sync it was hell. Trisha did the piece in City Center just a couple of weeks ago and I get so nervous sitting in the audience. I feel much safer when I'm backstage because I feel like I could do something about it if something goes wrong. When I get out in the audience I feel very fake. The third slide fell out of sync and so it was t-dum-t-dum...and the piece started and the dancers were gorgeous and the lights were gorgeous. One of the guys that was working for her somehow miraculously after about the first four minutes was able to give the thing a kick or something and everything fell back into sync.

So I do get involved. I do tend, like I did before, to bring the theater into the graphic work, into the painting, until everything, I hope just before it's all totally exhausted, but it's just a thorough experience. Because things change when they



go through different processes for different uses in different spaces

ES: Not only between the arts but in the visual arts also. Sculpture, paper, moving light, print, intaglio.

RR: I didn't mean just flatly.

ES: Are there any...I brought all the photographs and all the stuff that I've written about them. You can read them or not read it...

RR: I trust you. You have no idea how long it would take me to read this page.

ES: Are there any of the prints that you remember from ULAE that were of a special importance to you? Like Riyal for example. Riyal seemed to me to be very important to me because of the connection to the Jewish Museum show in '63 and also because of the use of the photoengraving. It was the first time that you had used that. But there are certain images that appear and reappear. It may not seem very important.

RR: Accident was one, but that's been written about and written about. What is the name of the one where I have my cane and I come out...

ES: That was when you broke your foot.

RR: Yeah. I broke it on my birthday. That was followed by a lot of my birthday celebration and guilt.

ES: What's this?

RR: That's just a color wheel. It's a grey scale color wheel. From the streets.

ES: Brian O'Doherty says that when you came to get the printers made you didn't want any specific ones. You just wanted things. You just wanted subject matter.

RR: Right. I wanted weather. Animals. Rural. Urban. Objects. I still work that way. When I'm classifying, when I'm doing the silkscreen things now, I have to have... or when I'm doing the photographs In and Out City Limits, you'll find, you won't find an equal number of course because it's not that well organized, but you'll find all these areas covered. I'm having a few problems with ROCI now because of... I'm right on the edge of being a reporter.

ES: With ROCI?

RR: Yeah. Because when I go to a country, I, instead of just being there and just romantically and poetically absorbing all the influence and everything, I feel a responsibility to the

people to show them their country. And so then I'm going back the other way. I want to show them the parts of their country that they have never seen.

ES: It's another conversation.

RR: Yeah.

ES: You show what you see and then they respond. It's illuminating. But it's always illuminating.

RR: That's almost a quote from one of the videos. That was that I'm giving you something very special to me but I'm also taking something from you that's special to me. Sounds one sided, and it should come out the other way, but that's true.

ES: But after you take it, they're not missing it.

RR: I know. I'm taking it to the next place, to show them. Do you know the ROC1 concept? There was one writer that wrote...

ES: I know it in the most general terms.

I wondered if there were any elements in there that are worth analyzing or identifying.

RR: I don't do that and I don't think I'm going to change tonight.

ES: I think the quote is that it takes all the mystery out of it.

RR: It does. We had this writer who ran for President and I think was a Nobel Prize winner, who wrote about my work in Caracas and I just couldn't use it. He said that he psychologically interpreted everything. Now, like this is a magic image. Do you know that is from an acne teenage ad. And Mona Lisa never looked that mysterious. Now, if I say that, then it's just funny or something.

ES: There was one print when Tony Tolle went to... I think it was Landmark but I'm not sure. But he went through and... it was a print that was made from a single issue of Life Magazine. Tony said that the print that I'm talking about was made from a series of images from Life Magazine. And he told me where they came from. One was a Czechoslovakian railroad station and one was an ad for the United Negro College Fund and so on. He took me through this exercise just to show me that you were right. That boiling them down into these little blobs of mud really doesn't help anything.

RR: There were all very exotic images that came from the Carnival Clocks. And this is the original Rocky still.

ES: The turtle that lives in New York. I met him. He didn't

say much.

RR: Right. And when we figured out Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange, we named it after him. ROCI. In mythology they have all these things...it's very hard to have any kind of spiritual group without a turtle being in there. The Hindus have it with the world on the turtle and Shiva. And Indians

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RR: ...students, old intellectuals, the guilds, they say it's about time for a Rauschenberg show. They are also very titillated because the show is going to be in China.

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RR: ...and then she just turned into this little bird that needed to be fed and clothed. It was very sad but we all sort of agreed that she was happy to go. We just felt...that didn't mean that we weren't going to miss her or get terribly upset. The only comfort was that you knew that she was happier. If you are happier after death, I don't know.

ES: At least you're not in pain.

#### PRaise OF HER DIAMONDS

RR: We were in Czechoslovakia and ...when I was traveling around the world with Merce Cunningham. We were being paid in a



currency that we couldn't take out. Even the male dancers gave the women, because the only thing that they wanted, was the garnets. Otherwise there was absolutely nothing to buy there. Just nothing. But you couldn't take the money out. They wouldn't let any art out.

ES: There's a dealer in Chicago that specializes in artist from that part of the world and she literally has to smuggle the prints out and then smuggle the money back in to the artists. I went once to a suburb and got a pile of mats to an artist because he couldn't get any. He was using a rocker that had two-thirds of its teeth out. She smuggles.

RR: Jim Rosenquist was smuggling, well, shipping, art materials to friends in Russia. One friend got brutally murdered so he doesn't feel...well, he feels responsible somehow.

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NOW AT RECEPTION AFTER LAB SCHOOL AWARDS

RR: Actually I didn't become aware of it until very late which is common in the early days.

##: How late?

RR: It was probably after the Navy also. I had never heard of dyslexia just as being from Fort Arthur, Texas. I had never heard



of "art" either. There were a lot of things they didn't tell you in Port Arthur, Texas. And it wasn't because you were too busy either. I always had just an absolutely hellish time in school. It was...each day just added to the horror of getting further and further behind.

RR: You were in your early twenties by this point?

RR: Yeah. I think that one of the things that's more or less newsworthy is that after having decided that I WAS an artist, how my handicap actually played into the creative aspects of being an artist. Because I developed several processes that were more easily done and thought of because they were reverse images. Such as the transfer technique which they now teach right along, academically, like they teach collage and everything. The other thing was that I've always been sort of uncommonly lucky in making sketches, which is also conceived frontwards and backwards. And so I'm...I just whip right along with that. I can see it immediately. I can see it backwards and frontwards at the same time. But I still have a lot of trouble reading. When I was in school, no matter how interested I was in the subject, I would find that after thirty seconds I could tell you how many es or as were on the page but I couldn't tell you what I'd read. I'd make a good bookend...I could hold it. Also, another strange thing, and I don't know if this is common or not, it's very economical. I was going to tell Cher, she seemed so depressed last night that I didn't think a joke would be in good taste, and that was that I can see the same movie over and over and rarely

remember that I've seen it. Cheap date and good for the movie business. Drives Terry crazy. He says that I saw it, that we saw it together!

#: This continues to this day.

RR: Yeah.

#: This is not something treatable then.

RR: My responses could be mistakenly considered lack of interest, or focus, or distraction.

#: Is that what the teacher would say when you were a kid?

RR: Yeah. It was always, why wouldn't I apply myself because I seemed normal in intelligence. But it was the famous days of the flash cards too. And nearly everything on those flash cards...in the first place I think it's probably a really hideous way to learn anything, but if you're having trouble reading it certainly is even worse and then if you sit alphabetically in every class and your name starts with R, well, you're not really in a bad space. We didn't have any of the advantages in those days that one has now where they give the kids tests...I didn't know that I was nearsighted until I went to get my driver's license at 16.

#: To go back to the backwards conception of the printing and

the graphics...is it too farfetched to say that you've turned your disability in that regard to something of an advantage? Would you put it into your words rather than mine?

RR: Didn't I say that already?

#: That you've turned your disadvantage to good use, or something like that?

RR: Yeah. I found creative practical uses for the disability that I have. I actually believe that too. I think I'm a better printmaker because I don't have to strain at a process that's built into the medium itself. I rarely make any changes once I start work with the graphics.

#: The printers that do it every day. I can never figure out how they do it...the logic. They go from left to right and we go from right to left. I've worked with a lot of newspaper printers in my day and it's not the case now with computers.

RR: I wouldn't want to be a typesetter!

#: Happily there's no such thing as a typesetter any more. Out these folks got very good at reading mirror images.

RR: I've seen some of those real old timers. You don't even know they're looking, they're just moving.

\*\*\*: That's something that will never come back because of the computers taking over. Did you get terribly poor grades in school?

RR: Yes. Which was very depressing also.

\*\*\*: How did you get through school?

RR: I just edged through. The only two subjects, the only two times that I really enjoyed school, the ones that I made decent grades in...one of the classes was geometry and the other was chemistry. The rest of my grades were so bad before that that I still got a lousy grade because the teacher thought I must be cheating. How's that for a break! I loved chemistry because you could actually make something. It was just more than rote.

\*\*\*: Given that lack of distinction in high school, how did you get into the Navy?

RR: Just as naively as anybody...I was drafted.

\*\*\*: Oh, you were drafted. I forget that...

RR: They didn't make an exception in my case. Actually, the way that I got into the Navy is kind of interesting. And that is that when we were riding...this was 1945? I don't do dates...I was in the Navy for 2-1/2 years before the War was over...and

what happened was that the whole bus trip from Port Arthur to Houston, which was a couple of hours, all you could hear was that everyone wanted to get into the Navy. So when it came to...I passed my physical and it came time for the interview. There was an Army guy there and a Navy guy and they said "Which do you prefer?" They asked that to everyone. I said that I wanted the Army. And they asked why did I want the Army? I said that I didn't want anything, and everybody else wants the Navy, so if I got the Army, then somebody that wants the Navy can get the Navy. And the Army guy says "Sounds like Navy material to me". So I got into the Navy. Two people out of three busloads got into the Navy and I was one.

#: But they didn't know that you might run a battleship up onto the rocks.

RR: No they didn't. They didn't check me on that one. Actually, at boot camp I straightened out. I don't know. Naive courage I guess, but I said to the officer that was giving us tests to see what department we were qualified for, I said, if you think I'm going to kill anybody, you're crazy. You didn't talk like that in boot camp, you know. It's a wonder that I didn't really get in trouble. I was immediately put into the hospital corps and I was trained as a neuropsychiatric technician and had a very lively life from one official mental hospital after another.

#: Your disability never manifested itself sufficiently that



the officers could spot it and say that this person was doing a good job but he also needs some help?

RR: No. Because there are ways of avoiding those confrontations. By then I was pretty skilled at not depending on what I couldn't do.

\*\*I: Such as...

RR: I gave up reading. Nearly everything you can do one way you can do another. I figured out...I told Jerry my secret yesterday because we were all talking about this at dinner...and like, once you know that you have a reverse sense of direction, then you just turn the other way. And he said that really bothered him because for years he could tell which way to go because if I went one way then he went the other way. So now I get him all mixed up.

\*\*I: Tell me how you discovered this specific disability. You say it's called dyslexia?

RR: Just gradually. Yes. I read about it, actually. And then once I knew about it I found it wasn't such an uncommon predicament. I still don't know what exactly, except a lot of understanding, you know, that they do about it now. Don't they just not torture you? Like, in the school...they just redirect the energy don't they? I mean, there's no cure.



\*\*I I think that if I were you, and I had a tough time in high school and then I had a tough time in the service, and then I later found out that it was not my fault of my own, that I would be resentful that it wasn't discovered. Were you not resentful?

RR: Not really.

\*\*I How were you able to...

RR: Actually, I just felt a little relieved. It seriously bothered me because I just progressively, year after year in school, felt more and more inadequate. And so by the time I graduated, my tail was really dragging. I was just delighted. I had to go to school or be drafted and through weird situation I was expelled from school. It had nothing to do with anything other than I wouldn't cut open a live frog. And so I wasn't in but a couple of months before I was expelled. My father had always thought, because he had only gone to the third grade, that education was the elixir of life...that that would make everything fine. So he blamed everything that happened to him on not being educated. So he was going to be pretty irrational on the subject, particularly when he was a great hunter...and I was thrown out of school for not cutting open a frog...when he used to go jigging. But that wasn't the point. When I was drafted I was just so relieved. That upset my parents enough that they never asked me what exactly happened at school.

#: How in the world did you ever get admitted to the University of Texas?

RR: I had to go to summer school in the first place, to take make-up courses before I could even get in. Besides, it was a state school...it's not exactly Harvard. It's pretty good now, but then it was...you know.

#: Everybody in Texas is very wealthy too. That's true, isn't it?

RR: Not in our house. There are some right over there at that table who are. Is it Dallas that they own, or Houston?

#: I think it's Dallas.

RR: Racehorses in France...

#: But that's what I thought everybody from Texas was like. You disappoint me.

RR: I guess I left home too early. We're working on an interesting project now. I don't know, but you might have heard of it...it's called ROCI, the Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange?

#: In fact, I went to the preview at the National Gallery a

couple of months ago. And then I saw you at Joan Braden's house. You explained it all then. You were either on your way to or the way back from Chile.

RR: We were on our way to again.

FF: You keep coming and going. You keep turning up in different...

RR: Exactly. I'm not going to come to all of these things. The next one we definitely have to come to because it's a double feature...China and Tibet. Next week we go to Beijing for the opening. We have only one week to hang the show and I'm running out of money. We're still waiting for our corporate sponsor to show up. It's being discussed seriously, but nobody but me has reached into their pocket. My pocket's getting empty now.

FF: Too bad Nelson Rockefeller is not alive. He had dyslexia.

RR: Aha.

FF: He was resentful. That's why I asked you. As a boy...

RR: I think if I hadn't been able to use it, I mean, I don't sense the handicap. It does bother me that I have so much trouble reading still, because there are a lot of things that you can only find out about by reading. I spell phonetically, the way things ought to be. With a southern accent.

##: Rockefeller went to a school and he was put down as a dumb kid. Couldn't learn. Inattentive. Years later he found out that it was because of this disorder, whatever it is.

RR: And so was Edison.

##: But Rockefeller had a way of getting back at people.

RR: I don't know why that doesn't surprise me.

##: That was his nature. Obviously it's not yours. He gave a lot of money to every educational institution that he attended, except the one that he felt responsible for not noticing his disorder. They will pay for that forever. If Rockefeller were alive he would find somebody from the Chase Manhattan Bank to finance your trip to Beijing.

RR: I was sort of hoping, because we have two outstanding national businessmen here as guests, I kept wondering how I could just subtly bring up that ROCI needs about ten million dollars.

##: You have a certain commonality here. People should understand.

RR: I didn't know also that these disabilities can be inherited. They have three children from two wives...the Strausses. Did you

know that it could be inherited? From the genes?

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