3-13-1977

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Jeff Welch
Gary Foote

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Digest of Topics from interview with

**MR. JOHN AMAYA**  
980 Kenwood Drive  
Holland, Michigan  
Phone: 396-3171  
March 13, 1977  
Interviewers: Jeff Welch and Gary Poote

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Transcript of interview with

MR. JOHN AMAYA
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Holland, Michigan
Phone: 396-3171
March 13, 1977
Interviewers: Jeff Welch and Gary Foote

SIDE ONE
A=John Amaya J=Jeff Welch G=Gary Foote

J: Um, I'm Jeff Welch and this is Gary Foote, and we're here in Holland to interview Mr. John Amaya and the date is March 13, 1977. And um, first of all, ah, let's see, where are you originally from, Mr. Amaya?

A: I'm originally from Colorado, a town called Pueblo about 100 miles south of Denver. And, ah, I went to the University of Colorado. I played basketball there, but um, I didn't start playing tennis until I was about 32 years old.

G: You didn't start until you were 32?

A: No. (G: That's interesting.) I got interested in it down there because there wasn't really a whole lot to do. That is, there's a lot to do, but I didn't--I'm not much of a swimmer so I didn't particularly care to swim so I got interested in tennis. The kids were very much interested in swimming. They were on swimming teams and stuff, you know. They were very good swimmers as a matter of fact, but their, ah, Victor had a chance to go out to be a--to represent Puerto Rico in Cali, Columbia and got the flu just before, and he was really upset about it because he had worked so hard to get to that point. And then he decided to start playing tennis and that's really about the way it started.

J: Well, how old was he when---.
A: He started playing when he was, ah, just twelve. He just, ah, just turned twelve.

J: When he first started playing, did he look like he was a real natural?

A: No, I wouldn't say that he looked like a real natural. He always did have a pretty good forehand, but the rest of his game was so-so.

G: When did he start going into tournaments?

A: Well, he started really when, ah, I would say probably about when he was 13 years old.

G: After about a year?

A: Yeah, this was--these were tournaments that were held down on the island of Puerto Rico. Just about every weekend they'd have some kind of a tournament. And, ah, so we started, you know, to play in these tournaments.

G: So you were staying in Puerto Rico at the time?

A: Yes, (we were staying in San Salvadore.)

G: Oh, I see. So when did you move to Holland?

A: Out in, ah, January of '69. (G: How come you--.) Oh, excuse me, alright, it wasn't January, it was June of '69.

G: How did you decide to come here?

A: Well, I--with Parke Davis. And I started out working in Detroit and was transferred to Puerto Rico, and then I got transferred here.

J: What do you do with Parke Davis?

A: Oh, I'm the general manager of--of the plant here in Holland.

(J: I see. G: Oh, I see.) It's the chemical division of-
of Parke Davis. (G: Uh-huh.) So, that’s really how I ended up in Holland. (G: I see.)

J: Did, ah, Vic play high school around here then?

A: Yeah, he played high school, ah, tennis here, and won the state two years. And, ah, during the―it was really during his junior year―ah, no, that was his senior year that he was asked to go to, ah, Australia to represent the United States (in was... UNCLEAR) So he made the flight—American Airlines sponsored it. He went over to Australia and played there, and then they came on their way back they stopped at Hawaii, so then they, ah, after that why then he was to, ah, be on the Junior Davis Cup Team. So he was on that for two years. And then got, then after he got into college he, ah, his first year in college when he was a freshman, he was still eligible to go down in the 18 and unders in Texas, so he went down there. That was the big tray that I showed you that he won. He beat Billy Martin in the finals to win that. And, ah, after that, ah, he got back to—he was at Michigan then so he played at the, ah—he was asked to represent United States over in, ah, England in the under 21—21 and under group. So he went over. He got beat in the finals. And then in the following year he was asked to go again, but that year he won. It involves Italy, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, England, must be about 15, 16 countries that are represented there. So he went over twice to England. (J: Uh-huh.)

G: Now, he went to Holland High?

A: Yeah, Holland High.

G: Where’d he go to college?
A: University of Michigan. So he's really travelled all over the world, really. Ah, he was--still even when he was in high school in the summers he would start out--start out in California and they'd work back, their way back and go as far as New York and then they'd come back and they played in Illinois--no, they played down South, and then the far East,--I mean the Eastern coastlines, coast, and they played on Ohio and then finally at Kalamazoo.

J: Do you think that all that travelling helped him as far as maturing?

A: Oh sure, oh yeah. He's --well he--he doesn't have any problem getting along anywhere. He's been to--the only place he hasn't been is, for example, he was in, ah, Argentina. He's been to Argentina. He's been to Australia twice. He's been to Hawaii a couple times, England, Spain, Sweden, Italy, Paris, ah, Iran, you know, just oh, just everywhere, you know. He was going to go down to Johannesburg, ah, Africa, but he got along further in the last tournament he played at. So, he'd travelled quite a bit so he decided not to go. There's a tournament in Washington D. C. this week.

G: Where is he staying now?

A: Ah, he's staying, where is he staying? (G: Yeah:) Well, he--he has his residence here, really. But you know, ah, you know, he's--he's just on the road all the time, just all the time.

J: Where is he at now?

A: He's in Washington D. C. Just got into a tournament yesterday. Matter of fact, he called yesterday about this time as a matter of fact, and told us that he'd just gotten in. He had to play
a qualifier. See in a tournament like in the professionals they don't, ah, you don't automatically get in. You have to have, ah, so many ATP points, and these are points that you get by getting into tournaments. Then when you, ah, get so far in a tournament, you get so many ATP points. And depending—and they keep track of these for all the players, and, ah, if you want to get into a tournament and there are so many openings, and you are high enough in your computer points, your ATP points, then you get in. If you don't, then you have to play qualifying rounds, just like golfers. That's the way you get in.

J: What's ATP?

A: Well, it's the, ah, American Tennis Professionals—or Association of Tennis Professionals; it's, ah, Association of Tennis Professionals. So, he's really had a chance to travel, and we hope Greg does too, does the same thing. He's been playing a lot of tournaments, he's in Grand Rapids today playing one of the pros there. That's one of the problems Greg has, they both have had—have had really, ah, they've not been able to get a hold—get, you know, real tough competition on a regular basis, and that's a real disadvantage. (J: Um-hum.) with being in this area really.

J: Now, Greg, um, is still in high school, right?

A: Yeah. He's a s-junior.

J: I understand last year as a sophomore he—he won the state tournament?

A: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, he had—he played, ah—he played, ah, down in Kalamazoo. He had never beaten with this one fella, Mike [Balken], he had to play in the finals and he beat him. He
played very, very well, really. The best I've seen him play for a long, long time.

J: He's not playing high school this year, right?

A: I don't think so. Ah, because, ah, the rule and it's really too bad because they really have a silly rule here—that's one of the very, very few states in the country. That is that after a certain date, I believe it's something like April—the first of April. When you can't play in any tournaments other than those that are associated with the high school team. And, ah, really that, for an individual sport like, ah, tennis, you know, you—you can't get into any other tournaments. Ah, and there are a lot of men's tournaments that we're, you know, that I'd like to have him get in and he wants to—to play, too. So if—but if he were to play those, they automatically disqualify him from—so it's kind of silly really. (G: Yes.) It really is. He's been invited to a couple men's tournaments down in, around in, ah, Detroit. And, ah, there are a bunch of other tournaments in—in this next week. He's going to go down to Indiana to play in a men's tournament. And that's the only way he can improve, you know, otherwise, ah, ah, who can he play around here, really? You know, I play with him a lot, but, ah, I'm not any competition for him. (J: Uh-huh.) He's down in-in Grand Rapids with a couple guys that—that are good competition for him. They're, they're nice players. But other than that why it's pretty tough. And, you know, you keep playing the same guys all the time but it's, ah—. (J: Have to play someone better.) Yeah. You really gotta—well and not only, not only necessarily better but you just got to play somebody different. (G: Yeah. J: Oh, okay.) You know, otherwise, you know
how they play (G: Right, learn their style.) and they know how you play and it's really little--doesn't really challenge you.

J: You play tennis a lot yourself then?


G: Have you played in any tournaments?

A: Oh, yeah, I've played, but I don't play that many. I-I was playing with the, ah, the pro over at, ah, Holland club today, this morning. Played a couple hours with him this morning. So, but, ah, I can't play against Greg anymore. He's too tough for me. He's just too tough. Plays pretty good out there.

J: I was wondering, like when, ah, Greg first started, ah, did you coach him a lot? Or--

A: Well, he took, ah, he took eight--eight half hour lessons or four hours of total lessons form a guy by the name of Welby Van Horn. And that's, ah, we decided to send him for that because, ah, you know, Van Horn is really a good, good instructor. And then after that, yeah, I spent a tremendous amount of time with him, just a fantastic amount of time. In fact, we used to play probably, ah, three, four times a week, you know, for a couple hours a day--maybe even longer on weekends, maybe four hours on weekends. And, ah, we'd just go out and spend a lot--a lot of time. And here in Holland we used to go over there too. Cause that was the same problem with him, too. He--he didn't have a whole lot of people to play with, and there was a pro in a-in a Grand Rapids we used to play a lot, but there wasn't a whole lot of people, so we'd go out.

G: Where's he play here in Holland?
A: Where does he play? Played over there right by the Hope, 
(G: Oh, yeah?) by Hope College or we'd go up on over by Twenty-second. And those were the only two courts. Now, you know, they've got the high school courts which really have helped the area a lot, and they've built some more around Hope College. So there's a lot more courts. In fact, when we used to—when we first got here, nobody would ever play on Sundays. I mean we would walk on over and there wasn't a soul around. And now you—you can't get the courts. You know, everybody's playing—it's amazing. We used to go over there and, and we'd play and we'd be—maybe somebody from Hope College would come over. But we'd have the whole courts all to ourselves really, nobody would play.

J: Well, was there an ordinance against it? Or---

A: No—I don't—no there wasn't an ordinance, but it was—I guess it was kind of—at one time—I wasn't here, but I understand there was an ordinance at one time—couldn't play on Sundays. But, ah, no there wasn't, but, ah, I guess a number of people just didn't appreciate very much if you played—but, ah— which is fine, you know. Everybody do his own thing, you know.

J: I was at Holland Christian and they still—they have signs:
NO BASEBALL PLAYING ON SUNDAYS.

A: Is that right?

J: Yeah, cause I'm on the baseball team and we practice over there. We practice on Sundays too.

A: But ah, well, yeah, well, yeah. That's fine, you know.

J: It's kind of funny cause I—I'm like—I'm from near Detroit---

G: That's all you do on Sundays.

J: We always used to practice on Sunday, you know.
A: Well, that's what I say. We used to go down there and, ah, ah, we'd be about the only people. I know some people would say, "Hey, ah, what are you doing playing on a Sunday?"--they'd ask, you know.

G: They'd ask you?

A: Yeah. A few people would, quite a few people--but now all those people are playing on Sunday. And, ah, they're, you know, they're more avid and [unclear] people than we are.

G: What do you think about tennis becoming a more popular sport?

A: Oh, I think it's a great sport, really, I ---. Because, um, kids like, you know, ah, when I was in school, I used to play football, basketball and track and, ah, what can you do with football, basketball and track, you know? (J: When you get older.) Yeah, and, ah, like you're baseball, sure, you can go out and throw a ball around. You can't really go out and enjoy a game and really, you know, have a lot of fun and, ah, get a good work out, and, ah, have a good sociable time. I really think it's really--I think tennis is a great sport. Cause you can play it--you can play it for the rest of your life and-and have a good time at it. Cause you just play at certain levels. My wife just took it up. Through all the years we've been trying to get her to play--but she's finally this year, just finally started playing a little bit. And she's starting to enjoy it. Because she'll go over there, over to the, ah, tennis club. And, ah, some gal would bring over, ah, some cheese and the other one would bring over a little bit of salad and then buy some drinks and they'll play and they'll
have something to eat afterwards. And they've had a great time.

J: Yeah, my-aunt plays in a club and they have a New Year's Eve party and stuff like that.

A: Yeah, yeah I think, I think re-really tennis is a, is a great sport for, ah, for anybody really cause you can, you, ah, can go out and, ah, now with the indoor courts you can play anytime-anytime of the year and afterwards you can take a sauna, you can take a nice shower and get out of there and you feel pretty darn good. It's great. I think, it's super, a super sport, really. And you can't, it's, ah, it's reasonably, ah, inexpensive. You know, if you're a skiier, you have to plan on a whole weekend, you know, plus your equipment is fairly expensive and, ah, travel. And you're never sure whether you're going to have good snow or not, you know. So it's a--there are a lot of advantages to tennis playing or squash or anything--or anything--or any other indoor sport.

J: I was wondering, like, some people, they watch sports on T. V. and they don't really know what it's about and they think it's kind of easy. Now, I know it's not that easy. I was wondering like, what are some of the drills that Vic had to do and some of the conditioning drills that he had to do? Cause I know it's a lot of hard work.

A: Well, I used to--I used to have when they'd be younger just, ah, really concentrate on proper strokes. We'd hit--ah, forehand cross-court, ah, backhand cross-court, ah, down-the-line with forehand, cross-court, and down-the-line backhand. Spent hours on teaching them the proper way of serving and, ah trying to hit certain spots on the court with the serve. Am, also spent hours trying to teach them the right way to volley. And, ah, I don't know if you know what a volley is, but a volley
is a ball before it hits the ground. You catch it in the air. That's a volley. And then we spent hours of, of, ah, hitting overhead. I'd go out there with a whole bag of balls, you know. Took a grocery bag full of balls and just hit them balls at certain spots and hit them overheads and have them come up and, and---. Well, ah, I could--I-I'm teaching now over at the tennis club a little bit on Saturday afternoons and I drilled on some of the kids over there. And (clears throat) I have them come up and hit the net--the top of the net and (UNCLEAR) I give them lobs, and you go back, and hit that and they gotta run back up, touch the net again and by the time they touch the net, there's another ball going over their head and they--I give them about ten or twelve of those and if you do ten or twelve of those, you're kind of tired afterwards. (G & J laugh. G: You sure would be.) And another one I do is, am, I just stand there with a whole pile of balls and, and hit them to one side and they either hit down-the-line. That's what I usually do if I'm up close to the net. They have to hit them down-the-line. And then I hit it on the other side just keep them running back and forth like that for a dozen balls or so. And then I do the same thing with the with the forehand. I just keep making them hit those balls. And then I used to make them, ah, give them short balls, hit them a long ball, then hit them a short ball so they'd have to--ah, underspin a ball and try to come in and take the net (UNCLEAR) the other player. There's a whole pile of drills that we used to do and all of them were just trying to get them into--force them into certain situations so they would be able to, ah, feel comfortable. Because it is
difficult. Like yesterday, there was a kid there that (clears throat) --not a bad little player but he can not hit a backhand cross-court. And, ah, I never realized it, but, ah, that's some of the things that you learn. It's just like a baseball player, you know a guy that--that can not hit a curveball or something, inside a curveball, you know, and the only thing you can do, he's just got to keep prac-practicing that until he feels comfortable hitting the ball like that. It's the same thing with--with tennis anyway. And we used to spend a lot of time trying how to learn to hit an underspin ball, how to hit an topspin ball. Greg really hits a super topspin ball. He can really hit a topspin ball very well. That's a very effective shot, especially on clay because it has this topspin on it. It hits the clay and, and then it just kicks up--jumps so a guy trying to hit it is--is never sure how that ball is going to kick up, you know. So it's kind of hard to---.

J: You mentioned clay. The different surfaces, like clay is a slower game, right?

A: Oh yeah, much slower.

J: And, ah, they're starting to use artificial surfaces now?

A: Sure.

J: Do you think that's better?

A: Well, I think a real fast surface or a real slow surface--I don't think is either of the two stand up very good. But I think you want a little slow surface because it makes the, ah, points last longer, and the guy with a terrific serve doesn't have a overpowering advantage over the other guy. And it makes the points last longer.
J: So natural grass you think?
A: Well, grass actually is very fast, see. Ah, if you hit a ball
ah, like Victor, he hits a serve that is really a hard, hard
serve. He probably has one of the best serves in tennis today.
In fact, they just beat Tanner and Riesen the other day, he and
his doubles partner.
J: Who is his doubles partner?
A: Am, well, in this one it was Terry Moore. But, ah, on grass
the ball just skids, see? (J: Uh-huh.) Just like playing out
on the lawn. The ball, if you hit a soft shot, it'll die; but
if you hit a real hard one, the ball just skids. So for his
type of play—when he played over in Australia and won that
tournament over there, he—they were playing on grass. That's
a real advantage to him. Because the ball just sh--if he's
serving well, ah, I just don't know a guy can return that-
that serve really. It's—it's—it just skids, it just flies, it--
you can't get your racket on it; even if you get your racket
on it, you're not going to do an awful lot with it. So, it's
a—it's a—it's a big advantage for a big server, tall
I mean, on grass. (J: Uh-huh)
J: You were a referee before? Ah, you were a linesman you say?
A: Oh yeah. Well, I've been a linesman down in Puerto Rico. They
used to have a tournament down there all the time where all the
better players would go down and, oh they'd always get a lot of
fellas around to play, or be the linesman, or be the referee
during the match.
J: You still do that?
A: No, I haven't done that for a long time. I haven't done that ever since I came back from Puerto Rico. Because there aren't any big tournaments around here. So that's, ah, that's really interesting to do, I'll tell you, you really got to be alert to do that. So many times you have the tendency to start watching the game, and you just got to keep your eye right on that line at all times; otherwise, during the game you-you to to sleep, and you're--then you're not sure the ball was good or---. (G: And they're counting on you to call it.) Yeah, that's right. So really it demands a lot of attention, it really does.

J: Do you think that, am, linesmen get unfairly abused today?

A: Yeah, I think they probably do. Yeah, I think so, but you know it, ah, the players are--you know they, they're just, ah, I don't think they're really taking it out on the linesman. But, but they get pretty frustrated, you know. They play--you know you're out there for two, two and a half hours per match and if some character on a very important pa-point, ah, calls a ball, ah, good when it should have been out or-or the reverse, you know, ah. You're on the other side it-it's pretty upsetting.

J: How about somebody like Ilie Nastase who really is kind of screwy?

A: Well that's, I don't know, you know he's, that's just his nature, you know. He, he, uh, he just gets upset, you know. Where some other people are just able to control themselves, other people--I don't think that's--ah, he's just a tough competitor and some people are able just to, ah, bite their tounge or just walk away and say nothing and others just can't. And he's--he just can't! (Laughs) I feel sorry for him because he--I think
he's probably a pretty nice fellow off the courts, yeah. Everybody would say he's a pretty pleasant fellow afterwards. He just gets out there and he gets involved in the tournament and, ah, and the play and he gets so, ah, riled up that he, ah, he just blows a fuse. I guess all of us react different under stress.

G: Do you remember when Vic won his first tournament?

A: Oh, yeah. He won a--he won a-a tournament, ah---. Let's see, when was that? (Eight second pause) I guess when he was about--the following year. I guess when he was about thirteen years old he won his first tournament. It was a small tournament, you know but that's how he got started. (To cat entering the living room) Shammi. (Snaps fingers) No. No. (Claps hands) No.

J: I see the tapes getting a little low so I have to switch it.

SIDE 2

A: --That's involved in getting a boy ready to play tournament tennis because, ah, there are not only the-the rackets and the balls the shoes that you go through. For example, a pair of shoes for Greg today probably won't last two weeks at the most. And that's the very most. But maybe in the summer, maybe only last him a couple weeks. (Clears throat) And, ah, then of course the racket strings, you know, they cost about twenty-five bucks a set and we, ah, are non--Victor of course gets, ah, gets most of that equipment, ah, now, himself because he's-he's reached that level. But, ah, with Greg, you know, ah, ah, strings are pretty expensive and they don't last for him but probably three weeks or so. He went to one tournament and broke three rackets--down in Florida.
Yeah. That almost sounds incredible. How can he break three rackets? But when you hit the ball hard---. And of course there's the expenses of sending him down there. (J: Yeah.) You know. He goes down to Florida that means he's got to fly him down there plus, ah, stay somewhere, so. Plus their food and, ah that such, ah. A number of our weekends are spent taking him to tournaments and staying somewhere and, ah, going through that expense. But most people don't really appreciate it. They figure now, tennis is not much of a, you know, you buy a can of balls and, ah, a shirt and-and a pair of shorts and that's about it. But, ah, they don't realize that, ah, (J: UNCLEAR) Yeah well, a racket for, probably for, ah, Greg will now, probably last maybe, oh, maybe six weeks. That's about it. But, ah, then you get another one.

J: Does he use aluminum or wood?

A: No, he's using wood right now. And Victor has just changed to Yamaha.

J: What is that?

A: Well, it's a different composition. It's really synthetic material, but they're pretty strong. Ah, even then, though, he broke one of those, he cracked one of those in Australia so really it's amazing what, ah, what those rackets go through. You don't think that they break them, but they do. Ah, wood rackets get very loose heads. And for an ordinary player, you know, you know for somebody who plays once in a while, you wouldn't be able to tell the difference, but for a good player, you know, they can really tell the difference. I mean you can
feel it. After a while you've been associated with tennis you can—you can tell the difference when the racket is starting to go.

J: I was wondering, like, about the money in professional tennis. I mean there's really, you know, all sports they're really starting to earn a lot of money? Do you think, like, there's too much money?

A: No, I don't think so. I don't think there's any really because the ones that make a lot of money are the—only the very top, you know, and that's only about the top five. And it's like, um, any other profession, you know, like, a musician. A lot of the musicians, ah, make very little money—money. But the very top in anything—it's like a coach also. The very best coaches, they make a lot of money, or the best professional, ah, or the best engineers, the best architects. This guy that designed, um, the Renaissance Area, for example, down in Detroit; I'm sure he makes a lot of money. You might say, ah, do you think architects make too much money? No. There aren't too many that—like that that make that kind of money. Where, you know, Victor is making his way this year; but, ah, many times if you would have asked him last year if he thought there was a lot of money he'd say, "Where's the—what money are you talking about? (J&A laugh) Tell me about it." You know, so there isn't—you know, I—I think there's—there's a lot of money in it, but he enjoys it. He likes that.

J: How long has he been playing pro?

A: Well, this is his second year now. This is his second year so it's not very long.
G: And Greg plans to do the same thing?

A: Well, you know, I don't know, you know, it—it depends on how he develops; but, ah, I certainly think he's got the ability. That's my own personal opinion, but he's—I think he's got a lot of ability.

G: Do either one have any other outside interests?

A: Well, ah, not really, I wouldn't say that, ah, Victor always been a—he's a very—he's an outstanding student, he really is. He's a very—mentally very sharp. He's always, even in spite of going to the University of Michigan where, you know it's—you have to work pretty hard. He still did reasonably well when you consider that he would miss several weeks during the semester. (J: That must have been tough for him.) It was—it was, you know, and you come back and he still did pretty well. H—he's—I think he could've done anything he wanted, to/honest with you. He could've, he was a good student, he has a good mind for reading, absorbs things very well.

J: What did he get his degree in?

A: Well, he's got one semester to go, and he's majoring in political science. And really about the reason, he was thinking about going into law if he didn't make it in tennis. I'm sure that if he wants to be a lawyer, he—he could be a lawyer. It just depends—(G: Whether he really wants to.) Really, I think he's got a lot of ability. Greg has not always been the best of students—he has to work for it. But I definitely—they both have very much on the ball with tennis, and I'm sure they'll end up somewhere—somewhere down the line making quite
a bit of--spending a lot of time in tennis. Whether they ever
do anything really outstanding, of course, that's definitely
time will tell.

J: Um, is Greg going to go to college somewhere?

A: Yeah, I think he's probably going to go to college. He's been--
he's received a lot of letters already from different universi-
ties. So he's got a lot of, ah, opportunities if he can con-
tinue to develop, but, ah, it's too early really to tell.

There's -- there's a real difference between professional
player and a good, good player. (J: A lot of things can
happen.) Yeah. He just has to mature, and if he's able to
handle it--fine, but I think right now I would say he sure has
the potential for it.

J: I was wondering another thing, um, about following his brother's
footsteps. Like, does that put any pressure on him do you think?

A: No. No, as a matter of fact, I know that you hear about talk
people
like that; but, ah, and I know that a lot of say well, you know,
the father playing with their son, that kind of thing is--
sometimes doesn't work out. But I've never had any trouble
with the kids, you know, they're both good kids. They're
basically very, very sound kids. So I've, you know--. Sure,
you get upset, you get mad; but, you know, who doesn't? (G:
Right.) That--that doesn't mean anything really, but I've nev-
er had any trouble with them at all. They've always listened--
even Victor will listen even now is--he knows more about tennis
than I'll ever hope to know, but yet if I talk to him about
something, he still listens. And he'll--he really will try to
do something different about it. And, ah, he was having trouble
with his serve not so long ago, and, ah, I was talking to him
about what he was doing wrong, and, ah, so I've never had any problems with the kids.

G: Still listen to Dad, huh?

A: Well, I think they do, they really do, and I—so, ah,—but sometimes I know that, you know, ah parents and kids, ah, they just don't mesh too well and, ah, that's unfortunate. But I've never really had a problem.

J: Well, I was going to ask you about like, um, you hear now the women in tennis—they want as much money as the men when they play in a tournament or something like that. And I was wondering, you know, from your viewpoint, do you think that's right that the women should get as much money as the men?

A: Well, I don't really think so, personally, because they're not as good. They're not anywhere near as good. And there's only one real tennis tour—ah, tennis—good tennis player and that's Chris Evert. All the rest are—if she gets in, you know, she's going to win the tournament. And she—even though she's a very good player, I think she—if she played any of the men now in professional tennis—ah, I would say if she played anybody in the top hundred in men, I don't think she'd stand a chance. If she played probably it would be the top hundred and fifty, I don't think she'd still have a chance, even the best woman. And the other gals—forget it. I don't think they could beat anybody out of the top two hundred and fifty, not even come close. They can't. They're physically just not able to—to play that kind of hard tennis. They really can't. I don't think, really, that the best—. The best eighteen-year-old boy, in my opinion, would beat the best woman,
who would be Chris Evert. That's my own personal opinion. You know, I don't think they'd even play it, but I would put my money on the best--. If they played somebody like this, ah, Larry Gottfried or ah, Van Minishe or ah, Macken Rowe it wouldn't even be a contest.

G: I imagine what happened with Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs wasn't exactly (A: Well, Bobby Riggs--) a justified battle of the sexes.

A: Bobby Riggs is, you know, he's older than I am, you know. And ah, he's a heck of a player, you know. I'm not saying that; but, you know, he just can't run like he--he just can't maneuver. Even then, he beat Margaret Court, which is--which is pretty darn good, you know. You can imagine, ah, what, ah what one of the--one of the professionals would do to a gal. It just--it's a different league. That's all there is to it.

J: Do you think all that, um, publicity--like with Bobby Riggs and the thing where Jimmy Connors played in Las Vegas, and World Team Tennis--do you think that's good for tennis, or do you think it's starting, you know, to get oversaturated?

A: Well, I-I hate to see this thing with, ah, Bobby Riggs, ah, that much because he's really not--he's a --he's a good player and he's a good showman, but I don't really think, you know--he's-he's past, well past his prime. And let's face it--he's darn good and he was good, but I don't really think that helps tennis, really. That's my own personal opinion. I like they--they run, ah, the Grand Prix Tournament, personally. The WCT you have to be invited so it's—it's not really, ah, you have to
get invited to that so it's not open to everybody so I think that's a little bit of a disadvantage. And these supposedly, ah, top notch battle between Nastase and Connors, I think, you know, there no question that they're--they are the top players, but I don't know if that proves that much, I--I think these regular tournaments probably are more of a test than anything else.

J: It's more of a test of their ability?

A: Yeah, because you--you know, you can--you not only have to play one match good, you have to play five, six matches in order to get into the final round. He has to play several rounds and be good in them all. I think--I think, really, I think that's the best way to do it. I-I wish they would cut out the Bobby Riggs kind of thing. But as far as the women competing against the men, I wish--. I, you know--since the women do want that, I-I don't why they just don't--just put them all together. If they--they feel they can play that well, just put them in there. (J: Uh-huh.) I don't think they'll get past the first round with them. They have a lot of talented kids out there playing in tennis.

J: Obviously, you must go to a lot of tennis tournaments when Vic is playing. (A: Some of them, right.) Do you go to some of his professional tournaments?

A: Well, I can't, not very many. We, ah, down to, ah, Indianapolis last year, and we watched him play Connors. And, ah, quite frankly, he was very nervous the very first set, and he didn't--he didn't play that--really that well. He had played the day before, and he played very well. The second set he
had Connors a set point, which is really too bad he didn't get that because it would have been an interesting third. Oh, I think Connors is better, but, ah, you know, at least it'd be--been a nice, ah, nice way to get--play three sets against Connors. And he's played Borg, and he took a set off of Borg at the national--Forest Hills. So, you know, I don't get a chance to, you know, he's constantly traveling one place to the other.

G: You've got a job here, as wife?...

A: That's right. So you just can't do it. (G: That's right) But--...

J: What's it like when you watch them play? Do you really really get into the game? Do you get nervous when there's like a set point?

A: Ah, when play--he played Connors, ah, I wasn't really nervous. I was thrilled, that, you know, to say you know, "My God, here's here's my son playing with the best player in the world," you know, "he can actually get on the same court with him." You know, so, ah, I-I wasn't a bit nervous in that, not a bit. I thought I was going to be very nervous, but I wasn't. Now, I ha've been very nervous, like the day before he played, ah, this John [whittinger]. And, ah, I was more nervous then. But I really don't really get quite as nervous watching Victor play as I used to. But, ah, watching Greg play I still get very nervous. Yeah, I get a kick out of one woman, she said--came up 'one time. She said, well, oh, she said, ah, "You're probably so used to this," her son was going to to on; but she said, "You're probably so used to this you don't even mind it." (laugh)
We still get very nervous though. I think with Victor you-you pretty well know, at least I feel I know how much he can do, and, ah, I know do—he'll do pretty well; but, ah, but when he was in college, that was—we went up to watch him in Madison when he played a guy by the name of Jeff [Austin] from UCLA. He's a heck of a nice player, and I had seen the guy play the day before. And I thought, "Good Lord, he's going to get—he's going to get annihilated by this guy." But Victor beat him. And I was really nervous then, very nervous. You just, you know, you sit there with, ah, white knuckles and sweaty palms. And—-

G: How does your wife feel about the tennis? You said that she didn't get into it until—-

A: Oh wow. No. She's—she gets more nervous than I do, if possible, so. Yeah, she—she transports the kids, ah! She was always the chauffeur, you know. And taking them all over everywhere. But, uh, no but, uh. You get very nervous. I think you get more nervous when they're younger than when they're older because you know, you know what their level of capability is. And when they're younger, you know that they've got to, uh, you're wanting them to develop more and so you get pretty nervous about it, I think. I don't get quite as nervous anymore, as I used to. But it's still nerve-racking. (G: Yeah.)

J: Does, uh, Vic have any fun stories or anything that ever happened to him or the—in any tournaments he played in? Do you know of anything?

A: Let's just see if there were—-.
G: Or maybe you recall something when he was growing up and learning to play tennis.

A: I really can't, ah, remember anything right offhand that, ah. (10 second pause) Well, I don't know if it's very funny, but I know he went over to--last year I guess he got over to, ah, yeah, he got over to Spain and he found out that he was supposed to be playing. And, ah, he didn't have any clothes. (G: Oh no!) They lost his--here you know, they lost his bag and, uh he wears a size fifteen shoe---. Oh yeah! Ah-a-wa- we yeah. That—that was one thing that happened, ah, down in Puerto Rico. Ah, we went into--we were trying to buy him a pair of shoes and this is when he was just, you know, when he was ten years old he would wear size ten and then when he--when he was eleven, he would wear size eleven and kept doing that until now he wears size fifteen. He's six seven. You know, a huge man, a big man. And when he went down there, we went into a store and trying to find some shoes(clears throat) and Puerto Rican people, you know, are pretty small people, really, and, ah, very slightly built and, uh, here's Victor with that big clunky shoe, -er foot out there and all these people were around there looking, you know. They'd come—they came over and called him and said (J & G Laugh) "Look at that foot." Of course, he—he was kind of on exhibition there, you know with that big foot. And another time, he had to have a cartilage removed from his—his, ah, knee. And this was down in Puerto Rico just before we came to Holland. And, ah, we had just taken him to the hospital and, ah they were going to—-they were just going to take him to the examination room and they---. First of all th
they wanted him to put on a, you know, one of these gowns that they put you—whatever you put on. And his mother had taken him there, and ah, she said, "Well, come on out," ah, you know, "I want to see how you look in your fancy, ah, gown, ah, your hospital gown." And he said, "I can't." Say, "Why not." So he said, "Well wait a minute, I'll put on my pants and show you why." The thing came up to about here (Indicates his waist) you know, and normally it was supposed to be down to around around his waist. And then they—they started to put him on these, ah, on this cart to take him over to the uh, other, uh, examination room. And they, and the cart wasn't big enough, you know. His legs were hanging over and they had to go out and get some boards in order to-to (Laugh) his legs to have his legs stand out there, so.

G: How much does he weigh?
A: Uh, he weighs about two hundred and—in fact, he told me yesterday he weighs two hundred and twenty-eight.
J: Does—does the height, then give him an advantage?
A: Oh, b-big advantage as far as serve. But it's a big disadvantage as far as mobility. (G: Right, agility.) And, ah, getting down to low balls. Oh, yes. So that's why, another reason why I think tennis is good because, ah. It's not like basketball. If you're, you know, if you're seven foot, there's no question. You have a fantastic advantage, but, ah...
G: So there's advantages not matter how big you are.
A: Yeah and there, so it's, you know, there's, there are, in fact most of the good players are not real big guys. They really
aren't, you know. Unusual to see somebody like Stan Smith, who--and he's not on the top nut anymore, either. But he's, which that was unusual. Take guys anywhere from six feet to six two. But it's unusual to have somebody playing who-who's six seven.

J: Well, sounds like you've, am, well put a lot of interest in your kids and, you know, put a lot of expense in. Must be really rewarding, a big part of your life.

A: Well it is and I think the most rewarding part was, ah, a few weeks ago, couple months. I don't remember when it was. A couple months ago. Victor would come home and uh, he and Greg went down to-to play at the, ah, the Holland Racket Club. And ah, just to watch them go out there and hit, you know, was a real thrill. They put in the paper that they were going to have a, you know, they were-they were going to be practicing a couple days and, ah. You could--There wasn't any parking space ah, you know. There were just so many people that showed up. It was incredible. You know it was, it was just, ah a lot of fun for me because, ah, Greg has now gotten to the point where he can hit so well, now that, he--of course, he's a long ways from being as good as Victor, but at least he can go out there and, and play and make it an interesting, ah, game anyway. That's up, I think that's probably the most, ah, most rewarding part of the whole thing. Quite a thrill really. Yeah it really is.

J: Anything else, Gary?

G: No I--.