M1: [00:45] And, action.

MORAND: Hello. I’m Linda Morand, and I have the honor today to be interviewing Chris Royer, a famous model who has gone on to have a very interesting career. [01:00] Hello, Chris.

ROYER: Hi, Linda.

MORAND: So, what was your modeling name?

ROYER: Chris Royer.

MORAND: Chris Royer. And, how did you come to work for Eileen and Jerry Ford?

ROYER: I originally was discovered by Mademoiselle Magazine, and I had done a layout while I was in school. [Gustav Petersen?] was the photographer, and Debbie Turbeville was the editor at that time. And they were doing several young women who had their own sense of style. So I was chosen as one of them, and I did four pages in the layout words like “She’s got style.” And that’s how I was sort of introduced to the fashion world.

MORAND: So, did you go to Eileen Ford right after that, or what happened?

ROYER: Yes, I originally was sort of, like -- I originally started off with [Willie?]. [02:00] One of the people at
Mademoiselle suggested I speak to her. And it was really, sort of, OK. I went to Willie, and Willie was wonderful. She was a wonderful, wonderful person. And I worked with them for a short time, and then, I met Jerry and Eileen, and I felt that was a much better match for me.

MORAND: So what years were that, then, that you were with Ford?

ROYER: With Ford, it was, sort of, more ’74 to the ’80s.

MORAND: And who were some of your favorite photographers?

ROYER: Well, alphabetically, or...? (laughter) It varies. I did an awful lot of Vogue, and I worked with Arthur Elgort. I worked with Debbie Turbeville. Ah, Debbie -- we did the iconic bathhouse scenes, which were shown at the -- the Metropolitan Costume Institute’s Model As Muses. I worked with Bert Stern, Mr. Penn, [03:00] and I also worked with Hiro. I did a lot of work with Hiro for Halston as well as Hanae Mori. I worked with Norman Parkinson in Europe, Terence Donovan in London, and David Bailey. I did a lot with Women’s Wear Daily, Dustin Pittman, who was the main photographer there. And there was numerous more.

MORAND: Wow, that’s quite a provenance. And what were some of your favorite campaigns?

ROYER: I think the campaign -- one of them, which I think was really very successful and really glamorous was the beauty
campaign for Halston -- red, white, and blue collection that was shot by Hiro. It was the makeup line that was done under Halston Enterprises, and one of the top-top colors was [04:00] rocking red. And we had a very specific look for the Halston model at that point, which was a very smoky, dark eye and a very well-pronounced red lip, and it was tremendously -- received tremendously well.

MORAND: Yeah, it was beautiful.

ROYER: Thank you.

MORAND: Now, what were your favorite editorial of all of them?

ROYER: I think, you know, I was fortunate to do so much, that it was -- and each photographer had their own interpretations and their own, sort of, viewpoint, that it’s sort of, like, it’s hard to sort of identify it as one specific editorial. One of the most famous is, obviously, the bathhouse scenes with Debbie Turbeville. I had worked with Debbie on numerous ad campaigns as well for Cabriole, which was Elizabeth Arden, and numerous editorials, [05:00] with Vogue, with Debbie. Arthur -- I love Arthur -- Arthur -- whenever you worked with Arthur Elgort, it was always lots of fun, and it was always great pictures, you know. And some of the -- some of the, sort of, ones that are the beauty pictures are always very, sort of, were well-received, but it was always, sort of, spur of the moment.
It was never -- it was never predetermined. Now, working with Mr. Penn, everything was on a completely different level, very quiet, very, very respectful. He was an amazing artist.

MORAND: And then you did the famous Scavullo shots at --

ROYER: Oh, right. Scavullo, I’m sorry, I forgot, yes, Scavullo. Scavullo was amazing in the fact that he was fascinated with how I looked before I came in and then how, with makeup, [06:00] I would change. And I was one of the first in Scavullo’s book on beauty. And he had this idea that it’s the understanding of how the makeup, in relation to myself, could change the whole, sort of, aura of the person. And from simple, sort of, more of a casual country look to very glam and sexy.

MORAND: And you did that campaign, A Change For Your Hair As An Instant Reviver?

ROYER: Yes, that was --

MORAND: That was very famous.

ROYER: That was very famous. Rochelle Udell, who was the art director at that point, felt that a lifestyle editorial was appropriate for Vogue at that point. And they had seen, over the year, from all the numerous photographers I worked with, how many times my hair changed, with one haircut. So we did -- we started off with the visuals on the haircut,
[07:00] and then we moved into the makeup, and then also, how I worked and lived in New York City. And that was very well received.

MORAND: That was like a 12-page editorial, and 22 looks came —

ROYER: Yeah.

MORAND: — if I remember.

ROYER: Yes, yes. Women identified with it. And they felt that Grace Mirabella, who was the editor at that point — felt that it was important to have the — their — their, you know, customer — their — the person who was the reader of the magazine, really understand what goes into these things, and how they can associate with the actual models — and naming the models in the magazine as well.

MORAND: Yeah, that was — that was just a bit new.

ROYER: Yeah.

MORAND: Before that, you didn’t know the models’ names as much.

ROYER: No. No, very rarely did they — one of them — actually, when I did the haircut story with Scavullo, that was one of the first times that they actually [08:00] mentioned the girl’s name in the editorial.

MORAND: And what about — can you tell us any stories about working with Arthur Elgort, for Vogue?
ROYER: Yeah, there was one -- we -- when we were doing collections, the collections would be very long. And we would work at night, and we’d start early in the morning, and then proceed with each designer’s group, come in, and then shoot them. It would be usually about two or three girls. It could be Patti Hansen, Roseanne Vela, myself, Lisa Taylor. And they would style us and put everything together, and then we would shoot with Arthur, and then come back. And Arthur would be always, sort of, looking for the best shot, the best place, and everything else. And one of the shots which became a very important beauty layout, was one that was about, at least two or three [09:00] in the morning. And I was on very high heels and exhausted, and we were, like, coming -- we were actually shooting near the Met. So there -- it was all quiet at that point. And we’re coming back, and our little home was really -- what was called mobile home, because everybody had to dress in there. And, what had happened was, at a certain point, my heel broke, so they had to carry me into the mobile home, sat down, and Arthur said, “Sit there,” and click! And he did this beauty shot that was amazing. And it’s, like, if anyone would see the shot, they would be going, “That can’t be a mobile home!” And it’s right in
front of the kitchen table. But you never saw it, because of Arthur.

MORAND: And they used that?

ROYER: Yeah, oh yeah. Yeah, it was very famous.

MORAND: He was great at the candid shots --

ROYER: Yes.

MORAND: -- I know. [10:00] So, what were some of your favorite modeling memories?

ROYER: I think -- I tend to be a little more diverse than some of the other girls, in regards to my working relationship with Halston, and also Calvin Klein. I came from a fashion background at school, and I loved fashion. And everything was fashion, fashion, fashion. And then beauty, and then fashion again. So being discovered by Halston when I first started, and also working with him for numerous years, as well as Calvin, in -- I was their muse for certain collections and things. So I was very actively involved in participating with the design staff, in incorporating and putting the collections together with the staff and their -- and develop their own creed of look, and their image. And the ability to work with [11:00] such a genius as Halston and Calvin Klein, I couldn’t pass it up. So a lot of my work, would sta-- would be divided up into working with them in the creative side, then developing
into the shows, and then doing what is called the print work. And a lot of the photographs and things I did really -- especially with Vogue -- were -- were very, very well publicized and well received. But I did have more of a diversity in my career.

MORAND: That’s interesting. And there’s a funny story about how you first met Halston. Can you tell us that?

ROYER: Yes, when I first met Halston, during that time, it was just in the beginning of when designers were getting recognition. Prior to that, it was really the owners of the company, and the designers, as Bill Blass would say, would be sitting in the back room. Halston was very unique in his own [12:00] way, because he made sure that he was not going to be on Seventh Avenue. He would have his place on 68th Street, and the showroom would be on Seventh Avenue. So when I first started, he had seen my layout in Mademoiselle, and he said, “I like that girl. I want to -- that’s who I want to meet.” And so I went up to the 68th Street salon, and I walk in there, and the doors were -- nowadays, it’s like, they would open automatically. And supermarkets have that now. But at that point, it was very avant-garde for the time. So I walked in and I said, “Hi. I’m Chris Royer.” And they’re going, “Oh, yes, you have to go upstairs to the third floor.” So I went into this
elevator, and we went up to the third floor, and entered the salon area, which was the made-to-order area. And there was [13:00] a very tall, very good looking guy sitting on the couch, and I said, “Hi. I’m Chris Royer.” And he proceeded to say, “We know.” I’m going, we do? Yeah, so, “Please sit down.” You know, so I started talking to him, and I assumed that he was the assistant because normally you don’t meet the designer, you know, in the first go-around. So I start speaking to him, and he says, “Oh, I heard that you did some work in London and that you just got back here,” and I was talking and I go, “Yes, you know, a really good time.” And he said, “Well, where do you want to go?” I said, “Well, I like fashion and I like modeling, and it’s something where I’d like to do a combination of things.” And he says, “OK.” And so, we’re just talking away about, you know, the career, and I’m, like, going, [14:00] I wonder where Halston is, you know. And I said, “Well, you know, this is a very deluxe salon here.” And he goes, “Yup.” And I said, “Well, how old is Halston?” And he goes, “Old enough.” And I’m, like, going, “OK. Does he have a sense of humor?” And he goes, “Yeah, yeah, he definitely has a sense of humor.” And I’m, like, going, huh. He says, “Well, why?” I said, “Well, suppose this week, you know, I get the modeling job,
and then next week, I really want to be more into the

design of it? Will he get mad or can I do both? And will he be flexible on that?” And he goes, “Yeah, yup, yes, yes.” And so he -- he continued on this, and then his assistant walks in and says, [15:00] “Halston, Mrs. Kennedy -- Jackie Kennedy is here.” So, I’m looking around, like, going, what? I’m like, you! He proceeded to laugh so much that tears were coming down, and I was, like, going, oh my gosh, you know. I said, “You lied to me!” And he goes, “No, I interviewed you.” And he says, “I’ve been looking for someone like you.” I said, “Well, that’s good!” And that’s how we started working together.

MORAND: Oh, that’s a great story. So, can you tell us some of your more interesting modeling experiences, like when you went to China and all these places?

ROYER: Oh, the China trip with Halston was amazing. It was very, very unique. It was something that -- at that point, we had developed a very wonderful plan [16:00] of licenses in Japan. And we were, at that point, going to launch the Halston fragrance in Japan, and then we were invited to go to China as well. So Halston -- his own way, having to do a trip -- it has to be a Halston trip. And so what we did was, we did a tour for over a month, and we -- we introduced and did the fashion shows in Japan, and then we
traveled all the way to China and did the show there as well. And there was nine models, and they were the Halstonettes. And the girls, each had a specific sort of look and identity, and then there was three male models as well, who were all very specific to it. And we were sort of like the modern rock and roll group of fashion, at that point.

MORAND: This was in 1980?

ROYER: [17:00] Yeah, yeah.

MORAND: So, it must have been really amazing in China in those days.

ROYER: Yes. Yeah, it was -- it was pretty much wild west in one sense, because it wasn’t really established as people know it now. We actually had to stay in a compound that was built in 1940. So it was very interesting to be in this, sort of, Gotham styled, huge compound with the Chinese guards outside, and being, sort of, driven everywhere to the shows and everything, and then having to come back.

MORAND: Well, who were the clients? Were there clients and customers?

ROYER: It was really a goodwill tour. Bill Blass had done it several years beforehand, in smaller way. And I think it was something where they wanted to develop more, you know,
commerce and activity. We went to [Suchao?] to see the Silk City [18:00] to see whether or not Americans could do other -- other products with him in those, you know, areas. But it was amazing. China is a very unusual, very fabulous place, but it definitely was not the Peninsular Marriott Hotel there.

MORAND: And then you partied a lot with Halston in Paris?

ROYER: Actually, in China, we were covered with a lot of press, Paris Match and a whole bunch of newspeople. And they would photograph us walking on the Chinese wall, which was great, and it would be the whole crew of Halston and the entire crew, which was really about 30 people. And then the activities, and the parties, and festivities moved into Paris. And that was fun, too -- different, because Paris society was very, very, sort of [19:00] removed from Halston, sort of clean, you know, less-is-more looks. They were more into the embellishments, you know. They had huts all around there, that was all into the peasant looks, and the very flamboyant colors, and everything else. And Halston was with his jewel-like colors, but much more cleaner, simplistic ways.

MORAND: Wow. Now, what is your advice to an aspiring model now?
ROYER: Well, I think once -- since I think nowadays, the trend is, you definitely don’t have to know how to wear high heels to begin with. I think that girls today are -- they have to know that they can do fashion shows as well as print. We were actually some of the first -- Halston was one of the first to get models that were like -- you would see Marisa Berenson, Elsa Peretti, [20:00] and Anjelica Huston -- in his shows, as well as in print for Vogue. So it was a very different sort of turnaround evolving in the modeling industry. Even with Eileen, we wouldn’t do that many shows. You would be booked for the shows, but there were several other agencies like Ellen Harth and Gillis -- who -- they would handle the fashion shows, because it was separate from photographic work.

MORAND: Right.

ROYER: As it evolved, then the girls actually started to become more flexible with doing both. So it was a very different time.

MORAND: OK, now we would love to know some of your beauty secrets -- how you stayed so beautiful all the -- all this time.

ROYER: A lot of it is, less-is-more. A lot of it is, I think, you know, no -- in regards [21:00] to keeping your skin clean, it’s very important -- I think that facial
exercises and stuff are important thing to keep the circulation going, and to keep up y-- the glow in the face. The other side of it is, I think that when you’re -- when you’re making up for day, that’s something that you have to be realistic about, versus if you’re on camera, because the makeup on camera really has to be a little more intensified, stronger, to be able to bring out the certain features and things like that. And you know, learning to apply the application is invaluable. During my time, we were required to do our own makeup. It was not something that it was an option. Gradually, makeup artists like the wonderful Way Bandy, Sandy Linter, would come in and do the makeup. [22:00] But for a lot of the shows, for a lot of what is called catalogue and print, you know, there would be -- there would be that -- that mixture of the girls being able to be their own artist for their face.

MORAND: And you like -- what kind of makeup do you like to use?

ROYER: I do like, because I have a tendency to be sensitive to certain things, a lot of things that -- if you try more of the Estee Lauder -- a lot of -- my favorite is MAC Spice lipstick. It’s -- you can’t beat it. There is a lot of other -- other products that you can get under l’Oréal that are very, very good, and they’re -- they’re -- they don’t -
- they can produce what you want, but you can -- you can get it for a good price as well.

MORAND: And you say you like the Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream?

ROYER: That’s the magic cream. [23:00] The Eight Hour Cream was discovered by Elizabeth Arden. She created it, actually, for her horses. And it was a salve, and she realized that the salve penetrated and saved the horse’s hoof, which is very fragile to the horse. And she noticed on her -- the people that -- the groomers -- so she redeveloped it. She made it her famous Eight Hour Cream, and that’s been, sort of, like the lip gloss for a lot of people for years. Way Bandy was one who thought -- one of the great makeup artists who introduced me to it. So it was very, very interesting.

MORAND: Well, it certainly seems to be working for you.

ROYER: Thank you.

MORAND: OK, well, I guess that’s all. Thank you so much --

ROYER: Thank you.

MORAND: -- for sharing.

ROYER: Thank you.

MORAND: OK.

F1: Any last thoughts?
ROYER: It’s -- I’m trying to think of the -- it -- [24:00] as far as the progression of some of those things with the models and things, I think it’s -- if you want to get into, sort of, like, the looks -- the, sort of, staple of girls that -- who I worked with, had -- were -- were considered more -- it -- glamorous and exotic and more, because we were taller. This sounds strange now, but five nine was, like, ugh, you know, you’re too tall, you know. And you’re too -- you’re not -- if you don’t have a turned-up nose, it was something where it was, like, you’re reserved to certain things. As things started to develop, with these girls in there -- and the designers -- because it was Halston, it was Calvin, it was Bill, it was Oscar de la Renta, that really could perceive that, and bring people in there that had a much more exotic beauty about them, but would allow it, [25:00] you know, for the glamour. And also bring in girls that were taller, you know. The general stand was really about five seven, five eight, so to increase the girl’s height to two inches was a big deal at that point. But you know, it did go. Nowadays, it’s like, you know, five ten and up. So, it -- you can see the progression on that. And I think also, those girls had to be a little more independent. You had to be on top of things. You had to -- you had to bring things. You had to
bring your own body suit. You had to bring stockings, and shoes, and things like that. So I think the girls, in general, I would say, who I used to be with -- you look at Jerry Hall, you look at -- even Janice -- you look at Dickinson, you look at [26:00] Pat Cleveland. These girls had a very distinctive style on their own, and I think this is what attracted and created that sort of synergy between the designers as well as, you know, the model. And that’s where it became so distinctive at that time period. Nowadays, you look at things and it’s different. It’s not -- during that time, there was more -- very rare that the girls and the actual designers really had a close relationship and they were very, sort of, the family, you know. And you could see that very -- very much so in Halston’s things, because the Halstonettes, he kept forever, you know. And a lot of what Calvin would do, as well -- there would be -- what there would be, very, sort of, like, they would evolve with the designer. So I think that’s a very, sort of, like important point. But you also had to change your look with them. A lot of that was [27:00] the haircut and everything else. I think for my background, I had my hair cut, permed, curled, waved, everything, including wigs. And actually, in Europe, I did a big campaign for Christian Dior, where I had a black
Chinese wig on, and it was called Shanghai Express, and it’s --

MORAND: Oh, yeah, I remember that.

ROYER: Right. So that -- that was, you know, all they could tell was the blue eyes, you know, and then the dark hair, but it was great fun, you know. But the fantasy of it was really -- really a lot of fun, dressing up and being able to, sort of, work on these things in a way that really conveyed a sense of glamour, because you had to work to be able to understand what the designer was looking for. And I think, also, working with Vogue, working the very different photographers, between Duane Michals, Mr. Penn, [28:00] Debbie Turbeville, Arthur, you know, these -- Scavullo, Hiro -- each one had their own, very specific style, and you worked with them to make sure that the actual, you know, photo was amazing.

MORAND: Well, can I just ask, what -- who were some of the models that you worked with? Could you tell us --

ROYER: Sure!

MORAND: -- a little about them?

ROYER: Well, a lot of the models were also friends. And it was, like, actually, when I moved into the position of VP for Revlon, I would have Jerry Hall and Janice come up for lunch, and they would -- they would dress up in their
Chanel suitings because I was -- I was the only one that was the executive, you know, that I evolved into an executive. But I think, you know, you have -- you had Suzy Gilder in there, you had -- you had Patti Hansen, you had [29:00] Shaun -- Shaun Casey, you had Karen Bjornson, you had Pat Cleveland, you had Alva Chinn, you had Carla [Rocky?] at that point. I think a lot of the -- would vary according to which country you were in, because a lot of them -- if you were in England, obviously, they lived there, then you would be, you know, your friends, but they would be only in England. Jerry would come back and forth a lot, so, she was -- she was more crossing over. Marie [Helden?], but she was basically in -- in Europe -- in London and stuff. It really was sort of, like, an interesting, sort of, like, diversity of girls as well. It wasn’t just more -- Anna Bailey, beautiful, beautiful. Anna was extraordinary. And I think that with that mixture in there, you had [30:00] a tremendous amount of very famous -- Iman. Iman, I remember, when Iman first came up to Halston -- because Peter Beard discovered her. And Iman was -- you could tell how unique she was. You had Beverly Johnson, you know, great beauty, great beauty. And you have the others, like, Cheryl Tiegs, you know, and Dayle Haddon, you know. But each one came in at a different
time, and you’d work with them on specific, sort of, jobs, so it would vary a great deal. But, we’re all friends, so it’s like, you know, you never really lose that much contact with everybody.

MORAND: Oh, that’s good. (whispering) Anything else?

F1: Thank you.

ROYER: OK.

MORAND: Thank you, again. I guess we’ll have to splice the -- cut it a little bit.

ROYER: Yeah, because I don’t -- I’m trying to think of --

MORAND: Right. We covered everything that’s in here. It’s fascinating.

F1: OK.

ROYER: I think it’s also that --

F1: [31:00] If we wanted to add, in the future, could we?

M1: Huh?

F1: If we wanted to add, in the future, could we? Like, in two weeks or a month, could we add more to it?

M1: Yeah, there’s, like, almost a half hour left.

MORAND: So we can -- (audio cut off) [31:11]

END OF AUDIO FILE