

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Program

AMBASSADOR KATHERINE CANAVAN

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: OK. Let me make my announcement. Today is the 13th of December, 2013 and I am here with Katherine Canavan. Formerly Kathy Peterson.

CANAVAN: Correct.

Q: All right. This is being done on behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. And we're old pals, we've all been at FSI (Foreign Service Institute) together.

CANAVAN: Absolutely.

Q: All right. Well, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

CANAVAN: I was born January 15th, 1949 in Pasadena, California.

Q: Oh-ho. Where in Pasadena?

CANAVAN: Huntington Memorial Hospital.

Q: Oh yes.

CANAVAN: Are you from there, Stu?

Q: Yeah, both my grandparents died there.

CANAVAN: Oh, my goodness!

Q: And I had a grandchild born there. My son lives on San Gabriel Boulevard.

CANAVAN: Oh, my goodness. Wow.

Q: So we go up there from time to time. So anyway, why were you in Pasadena?

CANAVAN: My father was finishing up his senior year at Caltech (California Institute of Technology) and my parents were living in a very nice garage apartment of a lovely home that was owned by friends of my mother's family. I guess my mother's OBGYN (obstetrics and gynecology) practiced at Huntington Memorial, and that's why I was born there.

Q: All right, well let's talk about your father's side first. What do you know about his family going back as far as you know?

CANAVAN: Well, as far as I know, both of my father's parents emigrated from Austria-Hungary in the 1880s. The town they were from -- and I don't have that right here -- but it's now in Southern Poland. My maiden name, Hubay, H-U-B-A-Y, or *Hubai*, is Hungarian. Both of my grandparents were apparently orphans. They settled in New Britain, Connecticut where there was a Hungarian community. They married and had nine children. My father was the youngest. Unfortunately, my grandfather died before I was born.

Q: What sort of business was he in?

CANAVAN: I really don't know. He apparently did quite well until the Depression. They didn't lose everything in the Depression, but it was tough on everyone.

Q: Well, then where did your father grow up?

CANAVAN: My father grew up in New Britain, went to parochial school until high school, and then graduated from New Britain High School. When it came time to go to university, he was accepted at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Georgia Tech, and Caltech.

Q: Good heavens.

CANAVAN: He chose Caltech for the good weather. He used to contract bronchitis every winter, and he wanted someplace warm and sunny.

Q: What was his major at Caltech?

CANAVAN: It was mechanical engineering.

Q: Mm-hmm.

CANAVAN: He should have graduated with the class of 1943, but in the summer of 1942, he joined the Army Air Corps and became a maintenance officer.

Q: Do you know where he served?

CANAVAN: He spent the war in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at Roswell Air Force Base. His commanding officer would not sign off on his transfer papers for him to go abroad. However, once the war was over he went to the Philippines and then Japan as part of the occupation.

Q: And where did he meet your mother?

CANAVAN: He met my mother on a troop ship going to the Philippines. They met on Thanksgiving Day, 1945, and were married on Christmas Day in Manila.

Q: What was your mother doing on a troop ship?

CANAVAN: She was in the Red Cross.

Q: Let's talk about the background of your mother's family.

CANAVAN: My great-grandfather was a Southern Baptist minister. He and my great-grandmother were originally from Kentucky. At one point he had a church in Pulaski, Virginia, but he also had churches farther north. My grandmother attended Wellesley for one year, but dropped out when her mother died to take care of her father. My grandmother was in the same class at Wellesley as Rose Kennedy.

Q: Oh.

CANAVAN: My mother was born in Forest Hills, New York. She was the oldest of four children. They moved around because my mother's younger brother was not well and my grandmother searched for places to live in the north east where his allergies would not be so severe. My grandfather was a pioneer in aviation insurance, and according to my dad would have done much better in the business had my grandmother not uprooted the family so often.

Q: Well, where'd your mother go to school, I mean her main --

CANAVAN: She graduated from Plainfield High School in New Jersey and then attended Columbia Teachers College for a couple of years. She played the harp adequately, but my grandmother thought she should study in Europe. In 1937 she went to Paris to study the harp. She was on the last civilian troop ship to leave Liverpool before World War II started in 1939.

Q: Yeah, it was time to get the hell out.

CANAVAN: Yes. They were trying to get her home sooner, but she kept conveniently missing the boat.

Q: Oh yes.

CANAVAN: *(laughs)*

Q: All right, she got back. Then what'd she do?

CANAVAN: When she got back, she worked for Pan American Airways and lived in New York City. At the end of the war she joined the Red Cross with the purpose of serving abroad and met my father on the troop ship.

Q: Then what happened? Did they get married right away, or --

CANAVAN: Well, they did. They met on the ship on Thanksgiving Day and were married on Christmas Day in Manila the same year, 1945. My father said that was the only day both of them and the minister had off.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: Only a week later, my mother was sent to Kyoto, Japan with the Red Cross. After five months, Mother was transferred to the Philippines and they spent six months in Manila. Then they were transferred to Tachikawa Air Base near Tokyo. Mother had access to a Jeep because of her job, and they were able to travel in Japan. However, the Japanese didn't really have enough food even for themselves, so the occupation forces were not permitted to eat or stay on the Japanese economy. If my parents wanted to travel someplace they had to get orders to travel to a U.S. military installation so they had some place to stay and some place to eat. My father served six years in the military, and they came home in the early winter of 1948. I was born in January of 1949.

Q: Well, then what were they up to the next few years?

CANAVAN: My father finished his senior year at Caltech and graduated in June of 1949.

Q: And then what?

CANAVAN: After he graduated, my parents bought a small house in Pico Rivera, California, across the river from Whittier, President Nixon's hometown. Although my father had a degree in mechanical engineering, he went to work for a company named U.S. Electrical Motors. He gravitated to marketing and spent the bulk of his career in the aerospace industry.

Q: Oh yeah.

CANAVAN: We lived in Pico Rivera until I was eight, and then we moved to Palos Verdes Estates, located on a peninsula at the south end of Santa Monica Bay. That's where I did most of my growing up, went to elementary school, middle school, and graduated from Palos Verdes High School.

Q: Well, let's talk first about your time -- your first place, where you --

CANAVAN: Oh, Pico Rivera?

Q: Pico Rivera. Do you recall much about it there?

CANAVAN: My parents' home was in a development that was built in what had been an avocado orchard. All of the houses had bearing avocado trees, among other fruit trees, in their backyards. We also had an incinerator in our back yard, although they were outlawed when smog became such a problem in the Los Angeles area. I went to school through third grade there. Other than that, I don't remember very much, except we had Jacaranda trees that dropped purple blossoms that attracted red ants in the summer.

Q: Oh-ho. Well, I notice that your father went to a Catholic school, was your family Catholic, or?

CANAVAN: My father was raised Catholic. However, he did not practice Catholicism. My mother was raised Baptist and she didn't practice either.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: My sister was born in 1954. She's five years younger than I am. When we moved to Palos Verdes Estates we had very nice neighbors who were active in the Episcopal Church. My sister and I started going to church with them. I sang in the junior choir and both my sister and I were baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church. I still attend an Episcopal Church here in South Carolina.

Q: In these early days, did you pick up Spanish?

CANAVAN: I did not, I'm embarrassed to say. Palos Verdes Estates was an interesting community. It was an early planned community, but the property had been part of a Spanish Land Grant. There were a number of the original families who still owned property there, but many of them didn't speak Spanish either (*laughs*). And we also had some Nisei (first generation Japanese-American) farmers. The area was still quite agricultural, primarily garbanzo beans and crops like that. There were a number of fruit and vegetable stands around. But no, I did not pick up Spanish at that point. I chose to take French in high school instead.

Q: Well, now what was it like being a kid in Palos Verdes?

CANAVAN: It was really wonderful. There were still lots of open areas. While the community in general was quite well to do, we were at the bottom of the economic strata there certainly. But the families that had money did not flaunt it. The homes were very nice, but not ostentatious. Most people didn't drive fancy cars. And it was a gorgeous location -- my high school, for instance, was right on the top of a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean and a prime surfing spot. There was an emphasis out-door activities. I started swimming competitively when I was eight. Swimming was something that my

parents felt very strongly that both my sister and I should learn how to do at an early age, which we did. I competed in swimming until I was 12. Then my family joined a small yacht club in Redondo Beach that was just getting started called King Harbor Yacht Club. I started sailing, and sailed competitively through college.

Q: Oh. Well, as a kid what -- was there either organized sports or did you kind of turn loose? Looks like it must have been a beautiful place.

CANAVAN: Yes, it was a beautiful place. My dad had been a tennis player in college, and so he made sure I had tennis lessons, which I enjoyed. I don't think I ever would have become a really competitive tennis player, but I enjoyed playing and continued to play periodically until I had a hip replacement at the age of 61. Of course, it was long before Title Nine legislation that mandated opportunities for girls and young women to participate equally in sports. Except for physical education in school, there were no opportunities for girls and young women to play team sports, so individual sports were the only option. Although my dad played golf, that was one sport he didn't expose me to. Girls and women were not welcome at golf clubs and it was expensive to play. My competitive swimming was done through a private swim club, and then in the summer there was a community pool at the bottom of the cliff that was actually salt water. I became a decent swimmer and competed in some lifesaving relay competitions. Once my family joined the yacht club I started spending more time there. I was a pretty good sailor and when I was about 15 I started teaching as part of the junior sailing program. Sailing was a big part of my life from the time I was 13 through college. In hindsight, sailing actually taught me quite a bit about leadership, skills that were very useful later in life that I didn't even realize I was picking up. When you're skippering a boat and you have to give direction and provide leadership to your crew, you learn a lot about how to communicate with and motivate people.

Q: Well, what kind of sailboats -- what kind -- what were you sailing?

CANAVAN: I sailed different ones. My family owned a 14-foot fiberglass one-design boat called a Lido 14 that my parents sailed. It was a very large class. There were hundreds of them in Southern California. We traveled around almost every weekend to a regatta somewhere. I sailed an eight-foot boat similar to the Optimist Pram, well-known around the world. I was self-taught and made quite a few mistakes until I learned the rules. As I got older, I sailed a number of different boats in competitions. There's a national women's competition called the Adams Cup, in which I competed in and advanced as far as the quarterfinals which were held in San Francisco Bay. Usually those boats -- and there were different ones -- consisted of a skipper and two crew, and you had to be proficient in using multiple sails including flying a spinnaker. I also crewed a little bit on bigger boats, but I preferred being the skipper rather than a member of the crew.

Q: Well, I mean obviously you were sailing in the Pacific in the ocean. I'm so used to people sailing on lakes and all this. Is there -- there has to be a difference, isn't there?

CANAVAN: Well, I think there is. One advantage, at least on the West Coast in the open ocean, is that the winds are less shifty than they are on a lake, although the ocean can frequently be quite rough. We sailed on some lakes and had some great regattas. Huntington Lake in the Sierra Nevada mountains between Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks was one really nice regatta in which we would sail every year as a family.

Q: No.

CANAVAN: It's pretty chilly in the Pacific, even at the end of the summer. In the L.A. area the water almost never got above 70. So safety was very important to all of us. When I sailed in college in Northern California, we wore wet suits both to keep us warm and for buoyancy in case we capsized.

Q: Did you lust as you got older at getting your own sailboat, or?

CANAVAN: I did sail through college, and there was a sailing team my last two years at the University of California, Santa Cruz. After I graduated from college, I started working and traveling, so I pretty much gave up sailing. Once I joined the Peace Corps and then the Foreign Service, having a boat was not practical. My husband and I now have a 22-foot Boston Whaler powerboat here, which we really enjoy.

Q: As a very small kid, my brothers and I—my mother used to take us for the summer down to Balboa Island.

CANAVAN: Oh yes.

Q: And you know, I'd put around there. But that's a nice enclosed area (laughs).

CANAVAN: Right. I sailed in quite a number of regattas there. Because the different yacht clubs would sponsor regattas, we would go to different places on the weekends. Balboa was always one of the nicer places to go.

Q: Yeah. Well, now as a kid were you much of a reader?

CANAVAN: I was. I really enjoyed reading. I was particularly interested in history and historical fiction. I read primarily English history and American. My parents encouraged us to read. I can't say that I'm a really fast reader. I tried taking some speed-reading courses at one point, but I wasn't terribly successful.

Q: Well, can you recall any books that -- fiction or nonfiction -- that made an impression on you when you were young? I mean --

CANAVAN: Among my favorite books as a child were Marguerite Henry's stories of horses such as King of the Wind and Misty of Chincoteague. I have a first edition of Charlotte's Web which is also one of my favorites, along with Stuart Little.

Q: Ah yes.

CANAVAN: When I got older, books about American history and English history, the War of the Roses, various kings and queens, the Horatio Hornblower series were the kind of books to which I gravitated.

Q: Did you get involved in any of the series, such as -- what's the young girl that was a detective?

CANAVAN: Oh, Nancy Drew!

Q: Nancy Drew and that sort of thing?

CANAVAN: Oh yes, I read those. Gosh, I'm trying to think of other ones that I read. Unfortunately, I don't have most of those books anymore. I went through a phase where I *really* liked mountain climbing books.

Q: Ah.

CANAVAN: I read a number of books, including the fictional account of the first climbing of the Matterhorn, which was eventually made into a Disney movie. And a book called The White Spider, which is about the first climbing of the north face of the Eiger. Also, I read in French and then in English, Maurice Herzog's book Annapurna, which chronicles the first climbing of Annapurna in the Himalayas. One section I recall vividly discusses how, after their fingers and toes got frostbitten, they introduced maggots into the open sores to keep from getting gangrene.

Q: Oh boy.

CANAVAN: Gruesome

Q: But a handy bit of knowledge to have, just in case.

CANAVAN: Yeah, you never know when you might need it.

Q: How were you in school?

CANAVAN: I was a decent student. I would say I was probably a B+, A- student. It depended on the courses. I was quite good at math until my sophomore year in high school, when I missed the first week of trigonometry. We had a series of substitute teachers all year and I never quite caught on. I was very keen to be an architect until then. And beginning at the age of 12 I started drawing house plans. I still have a portfolio of some of the houses I designed, including a three-story tree house. The trouble was I couldn't find a tree that was big enough—

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: I was good in math. Algebra, geometry, et cetera. Even having missed the beginning of trig, I thought I was doing well since I got a B at the end of the semester, but it turned out I didn't have a clue what was going on. So I didn't take any math classes after that. In hindsight, I should have gotten a tutor to help me with it. And I'm surprised my dad, being an engineer, didn't insist on it. He at one point had wanted me to be the first woman to attend Caltech. But she got in long before I was anywhere near ready. *(laughs)*.

Q: Were you -- how'd you find school?

CANAVAN: I enjoyed school. I was a bit of a wallflower. I participated in activities, but didn't attend parties. I ran for school office, participated in Girls Scouts and a mother/daughter service organization, and volunteered as a Candy Striper at a local hospital. Again, there really weren't any organized after school sports opportunities for girls at that time. Soccer hadn't taken hold, but I was busy sailing. I participated in those activities outside of school, so I was pretty busy on weekends. My parents insisted that I get decent grades and I didn't get in trouble in school.

Q: Ah. Were you a good speller?

CANAVAN: No *(laughs)*. I'm sorry you asked that question, Stu *(laughs)*. It was one of my father's great disappointments that I wasn't a very good speller. I especially have trouble with double letters.

Q: Yeah. Well, I -- you know, there are all sorts of -- I used to hate little girls, because they could spell and I couldn't.

CANAVAN: Ah! Well, I'm afraid that was not one of my strong points.

Q: Well --

CANAVAN: I had two disappointments in school. One, one happened my junior year. I was in advanced placement English and we had a very young teacher. She was only in her second-year teaching. She liked students who wrote flowery English prose, and I didn't write like that. Consequently, she recommended that I be demoted to regular English for my senior year even though she gave me a B. She basically rewarded the students who already had the skills she valued, but she was unable to teach those skills, at least she was unable to teach them to me. I had an inferiority complex about my writing for years even after I joined the Foreign Service.

Q: Yeah. An awful lot of this is a teacher -- you know, one of the big jobs is confidence.

CANAVAN: Yes. As I mentioned earlier, I was into historic fiction, and we had to give an oral book report. I was particularly interested in the Civil War and Reconstruction, so I picked Gone with the Wind for my book report. From my perspective, the fiction that was

written both at the time and about the time insights into the period that our basic dry history books didn't explain. Well, anyway, it turns out that Gone with the Wind was perhaps her least favorite book ever (*laughs*).

Q: Oh boy.

CANAVAN: Needless to say, I didn't get a good grade on that assignment. And again, she made me feel inadequate in my writing ability.

My grades were decent my senior year and I hoped I was going to get into the National Honors Society. But I ended up getting a C in chemistry because our entire grade was based on the final and several of my classmates who had been getting D's and F's in the course got a copy of the final exam and aced it. The teacher refused to believe that the students had access to the exam. Because of that C I did not qualify for the National Honors Society and that was a huge disappointment. It was certainly a lesson about life not always being fair. At our 20th class reunion, those same students were boasting about having broken into the teacher's office and file cabinet to obtain the exam.

Q: Yeah. And you remember it.

CANAVAN: (*laughs*). My sister keeps telling me to get over it, but obviously I haven't.

Q: Well, what the hell? One's got to keep a grudge for something.

CANAVAN: Yes. Exactly.

Q: And you can always blame -- no matter what happens, you can always say, "If that teacher had only been a little more perceptive I would have been a completely different person."

CANAVAN: Ah yes, I think so. I certainly would have had a lot more confidence in my writing ability. It was probably fortuitous that I was a consular officer and not a political officer. While writing was important in my Foreign Service career, it wasn't the most important thing.

Q: Well, how about -- as you were going through all this did the foreign world intrude at all, or were you?

CANAVAN: Until I was 23, the only foreign country I ever visited was Mexico. Our family would drive down to Ensenada and camp on Estero Beach with a bunch of friends and sail. Of course, my parents had traveled and lived abroad. I had thought about teaching, but the teaching certification program at UC Santa Cruz required that we complete our student teaching in the summer, which I did. But then we had to get a real teaching job for our first year and since I couldn't find one, I had to drop out of that program.

I decided to work for a year to save money and then to travel. I went to see a college friend who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) and fell in love with the Peace Corps and Africa. I ended up going into the Peace Corps in Zaire. During the eight months I spent in Upper Volta, I met Ambassador Don Easum and Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Dick Matheron and his wife Kay. Once I joined the Peace Corps, I got to know a number of the embassy and consulate staff members in Zaire. Several of them encouraged me to take the Foreign Service Exam. I actually took it at our consulate in Bukavu, eastern Zaire, twice. The first time I didn't pass, but I was close. And then the second time I took it I passed the written exam and came back to Washington, D.C. between my second and third years in the Peace Corps to take the oral exam. The Foreign Service had not been on my radar screen as a possible career until I went into the Peace Corps. I knew there were people who worked in embassies overseas, but it was not something that I either thought I could aspire to or, or that I would particularly enjoy doing. As it turned out, I can't think of anything I would have *rather* done for 35 years.

In hindsight, some of my interest in foreign affairs was probably stimulated by an experience I had as a junior in college. One of my professors, Dr. J. Herman Blake, was originally from the Sea Islands here in South Carolina, and he felt that his students needed to be exposed to another part of the country. He started a program which allowed students to spend one quarter living with a family and working in the community. I was a history major in college and was still fascinated with the Civil War and Reconstruction, so this was a great opportunity for me to expand my knowledge. I lived in the town of Beaufort and worked at the Neighborhood Youth Corps, a program to provide part-time jobs for underprivileged youth. The experience was quite a culture shock. It was my first experience in a Black community, my first time in the Deep South, and my first exposure to anyone on active duty in the military. This was the Spring of 1970, and my friends in California were protesting the Vietnam War. Needless to say, the Marines I met in Beaufort had a different perspective. I learned that the United States is not homogeneous and that people have different perspectives. That experience was one of the reasons why I wanted to work, travel and go to Africa.

Q: Well, I want to take you back a bit -- and we'll come back to this. But when you were in high school, what were your favorite subjects?

CANAVAN: My favorite subjects were -- well, at least at the beginning -- math, English, history, government, and French.

Q: Did you get involved in activity -- first place, what high school were you going to?

CANAVAN: I went to Palos Verdes High School.

Q: You were there for how long?

CANAVAN: Four years.

Q: Four years. From when to when?

CANAVAN: 1963 to 1967.

Q: During that particular time did you pick up any feelings about our involvement in Vietnam?

CANAVAN: While I was in high school, no. In fact, one of the interesting things is that none of my high school friends were drafted or enlisted in the military and went into Vietnam. One particular kid that I sailed with did and, and he was killed over there. But for the most part, no. It was quite different when I went to university.

Q: How did your family feel about Vietnam? Your father and mother?

CANAVAN: I don't know. My mother hated to talk about politics. I think my father, who was conservative and a businessman, felt that it was something we needed to do. He was very anti-communist. My mother, who was four years older than my father, said one time "You know, when we were in college we were all Communists." But she went to school four years before he did. Dad started college in 1939 and my mother would have started in 1935.

Q: Oh yeah. Well, it was a very --

CANAVAN: There were very different attitudes at that point. As I said, my father was a businessman, he was fiscally conservative and pro-military, having served himself. I would say that although I don't remember having any discussions with him about it, he would have been in favor of our involvement. I do know that he was against any kind of violent protests.

Q: -- so when you were in high school were you pointed -- did you know where you wanted -- I assume your family was going to send you off to college. But did you know where, or?

CANAVAN: Oh yes. My dad's three oldest sisters were still in New Britain, Connecticut. None of them had children and they wanted my sister or me or both of us to attend school back east. I took a trip to visit a number of colleges on the east coast with a high school friend and her mother. We visited schools like Smith, Mount Holyoke, and Wheaton College and a number of others as far south as Virginia. I was accepted at Wheaton College in Connecticut. Then I found out how much it was going to cost, plus transportation and a new winter wardrobe. I got home from this trip and my parents were kind of excited about Wheaton. So, I asked "How are we going to pay for this?" My father said "we are going to take out a second mortgage on the house." I replied immediately, "oh no you are not!"

I dropped the idea of going to school back east and started looking at University of California schools. Because of my sailing, the University of Southern California (USC)

was interesting. But my father said over his dead body that I would go to USC. Like USC, UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) was too close. He wanted me to go at least 300 miles away to school. My first choice was UC Santa Cruz, possibly because it had a core course curriculum for your first two years that I really liked. And it combined the resources of the University of California system with the attributes of a small school, with only 3,200 students. It opened in 1965 and emphasized teaching over research. In fact, we had no graduate students, so all of the courses were taught by professors regardless of whether it was a lecture class of 150 students or a seminar of 20. I also liked that it had no fraternities or sororities. If I had not gotten into Santa Cruz, my fallback was University of California, Davis. It was a good deal financially as well. There was no tuition in those days; fees per quarter were \$100, room and board \$500 for a grand total of \$1,800 per year. If I had gone to Wheaton, it would have cost four or five times that, and I received a wonderful education at Santa Cruz.

Q: How would you describe Santa Cruz at that time? I mean did it have a certain type of student or, or what?

CANAVAN: Yes, it did. It attracted students, mostly liberal arts, who wanted to go to graduate school. We had a pass/fail system, which was a bit of a problem for those who wanted to study medicine or hard science in graduate school. I didn't end up going to graduate school, but I traveled and went in the Peace Corps and the Foreign Service. However, Santa Cruz students did exceptionally well on exams for graduate school. A number of years later, Santa Cruz developed a strong graduate program in science. Sally Ride, the first female astronaut, was a graduate student at Santa Cruz and received much of her science background from there. But there was also a very strong liberal arts and humanities focus as well, which was what had attracted me, along with the personal attention that is a benefit of being in a small school.

Q: Well, what was your major?

CANAVAN: I was a history major, American history major.

Q: Any particular part of American history sort of particularly interested you, or?

CANAVAN: I was very interested in the Colonial and Revolutionary War periods, as well as the Civil War and Reconstruction. I think it partly had to do with the professors I had. Page Smith was one of my favorite history professors and he focused on Colonial and Revolutionary War history.

Q: Well, was Page Smith the man who did about a seven-volume history of the United States?

CANAVAN: Yes.

Q: I've read all of them. I really enjoyed them.

CANAVAN: Yes. He was very readable and very approachable. I used to ride his horses. It was a very small campus and people were close. And he was also the provost of Cowell College. Santa Cruz was designed on the Yale model of small, residential colleges each with a specific academic focus. He was one of a handful of professors at UCLA who conceived of Santa Cruz as a campus where teaching and learning were the most important elements. Page was from the Baltimore area and his wife was an artist so both art and history were front and center at Cowell. Page also really liked women in history. One of his books is called Daughters of the Promised Land and it's about the influential women in the colonial and revolutionary periods. He also wrote a two-volume biography of John Adams in which Abigail Adams is prominently featured. She was one of his favorites.

Q: Ah yes.

CANAVAN: I am sad to say that I don't have all seven volumes of his History. I think I only have five of them. I'm missing volumes four and six.

Q: I've got all seven in my library. As I say, I read every one.

CANAVAN: Yeah, and he was also a protégé of Samuel Eliot Morison. His son was named Eliot.

Q: Oh yes. I've read all his too, at least his history of -- not the maritime history, but the World War II naval history.

CANAVAN: Yes, and the European discovery of America. That was my focus.

Q: Well, you certainly had some pretty high caliber people to help you with your focus there.

CANAVAN: I was very fortunate. I lived on campus all four years, which made it a lot easier to get to know the professors. Because a lot of kids stay on campus their freshman year and then they move off. But I didn't want to play house any sooner than I had to. And I also learned -- this is something that I didn't realize consciously at the time -- but I needed structure and I needed to be able to go to the library to study. I knew that once I left the campus and went downtown to live in a house with a bunch of other people that I wouldn't study. I have needed this kind of structure all through my professional life as well. I never had any problem not taking classified stuff home, because I tried never to take work home at all. If I had to do something I had to stay in the office and do it.

Q: Well, did -- you were, you were at Santa Cruz from when to when?

CANAVAN: 1967 to 1971. I graduated in '71.

Q: OK, you're in California and you -- this is the campuses of the United States were boiling over vis-à-vis with the Vietnamese War.

CANAVAN: War movement, yeah, absolutely.

Q: How was it playing in Santa Cruz?

CANAVAN: Santa Cruz was almost as active an anti-war campus as Berkeley. Military recruiters were not welcome on campus. The quarter that I spent here in Beaufort was actually quite auspicious because the protests got so bad back at Santa Cruz that they canceled a number of classes. Many students didn't get all of their credits for that quarter, but I received all of mine.

Q: OK, well what were you getting out of this particular quarter?

CANAVAN: Well, first of all it was the experience of living in the South in a place that was, even five years after the Civil Rights Act, still de facto segregated. And I was living in the black community, so I had a unique perspective on this part of the country and the issues down here that I never would have had just reading it from a book. Also, I worked for the Neighborhood Youth Corps, which was one of Johnson's war on poverty programs. That allowed me to travel quite a bit in both Beaufort and Jasper Counties. Beaufort is one of the affluent counties in South Carolina, and Jasper's probably the poorest. Most of the area is quite rural. My job was to drive around and deliver the paychecks to the students that were participating in this program, which allowed them to work part-time for employers who otherwise could have been unable to pay them. It was really interesting. I got to meet all sorts of people. I met a lot of Marines. I worked with a woman whose husband was a drill instructor's drill instructor. He had a very different perspective on the Vietnam War than my fellow students at Santa Cruz. He'd been a Marine for nine years, had been to Vietnam three times and couldn't wait to go back. And of course being in Beaufort during the period when the killing of the student protesters at Kent State University took place exposed me to very different perspectives. It made me realize that there are many different cultures even within our own country, and how important that diversity is.

Q: Yeah. Well, you know, while you were having your -- that Kent State experience from where you were, I had a little different thing. I was consul general in Saigon at the time (laughs).

CANAVAN: Whoa!

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: Whew.

Q: So I had a little different --

CANAVAN: You definitely view it from a different perspective.

Q: Yeah. Did they -- how did you all get along with the black community? Because I would have thought that there might have been a certain amount of, you know, here's Whitey coming down here to condescend to us and all that, or -- how were you received?

CANAVAN: Actually, we were received really well. The black community was quite welcoming to us. There were seven students from Santa Cruz that quarter. I and another woman lived in downtown Beaufort. Two of the students were out on Daufuskie Island with the author Pat Conroy before he became famous. Pat was a 25-year-old school teacher at the time, and commuted from Beaufort every day.

Q: Were the Gullahs there?

CANAVAN: Oh yes, and Pat was the first white schoolteacher they'd had out there. One of the students who worked with Pat was John Rickford, from Guyana. And Frank Smith, the other student, was from Atascadero, California. And then we had two students working at a shrimp co-op on Hilton Head, which was just starting to be developed at that time (1970). The seventh student was working in Hardeeville. I am sure some people who saw us thought, "Who are these folks?" But everybody was really nice. I never encountered any hostility. That was one of the things that struck me in a positive way about the place.

Q: Well then, did you get any feel for the educational system there? I mean --

CANAVAN: Terrible!

Q: Yeah, that's what I would be afraid --

CANAVAN: It was pretty bad. Shortly after the schools were integrated, a private school was created, the Beaufort Academy. The public schools have improved since then, but there are several Christian and Catholic schools as well

Q: Were you -- what sort of -- I mean did you get into discussions with the people there? Maybe sort of sit down and say, "Gee, I want to learn all about you?" and "Tell me what you're up to," or?

CANAVAN: I don't think anybody was quite that blunt. People would ask where we were from and we would tell them. We asked about their work and their families. But no, I don't really recall ever having an unpleasant conversation with anyone here. One time my housemate, Kitty, another Santa Cruz student, and I took a field trip to Columbia, South Carolina, with two Vista Volunteers who were working on Saint Helena Island. Both Don and Jim had already graduated from college, and when we came upon some of the Confederate monuments in the capital, one of them commented that "the South will NOT rise again."

Q: Well, when you went back, were you able to sort of share your experiences?

CANAVAN: Oh yes. And that was part of the program. We shared our experiences. We participated in sociology and history classes where we talked about our experiences and what we had gotten out of it.

Q: All right, today is December 17, 2013 with Kate Canavan.. You mentioned that you worked with Pat Conroy.

CANAVAN: Yes, sort of.

Q: -- and my daughter just got his latest book.

CANAVAN: Yes, his latest book is The Death of Santini.

Q: Yes.

CANAVAN: Pat lived in Beaufort about four blocks from where I was staying. Because he knew Frank Smith and John Rickford, the two Santa Cruz students who were teaching with him out on Daufuskie, he and his wife were kind enough to let us do our laundry at their house.

I don't recall my senior year being terribly significant other than I was hoping to get a teaching job so I could participate in UC Santa Cruz's Teacher Training Program. But wasn't able to do so. So, when that didn't work out I decided I really wanted to travel, but I needed to earn some money to do so.

Q: Before we move on, you said that this is your first sort of real exposure to the American Military.

CANAVAN: Yes. Until I went to Beaufort, I had never met anyone who was on active duty in the military

Q: What were you -- I mean this is a time of, you know, it was sort of -- even the people who were getting drafted hated the military kind of. I mean this is --

CANAVAN: Well, not the Marines down there.

Q: Well --

CANAVAN: Most of them were in the Marine Corps because they wanted to be, and one of the two Marine Corps Recruit Depots was right near Beaufort on Parris Island.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: And the Marines were very gung-ho, both about their military service and their duty to obey the orders of the president as their commander-in-chief. They're very mission-oriented and they felt strongly that they should fulfill that mission to the best of their abilities.

Q: Well, did you find that you looked on the war or our involvement in it differently, or just you understood the military, or?

CANAVAN: Well, I don't think it changed my personal view of whether we should be there. I did learn a great deal about the military's perspective. Most of them were really quite apolitical. Many of them didn't vote on purpose because they felt that in itself was a political act. The president was their commander-in-chief and therefore they followed the president's orders. That was very different from what I was experiencing at Santa Cruz. It opened my eyes to the fact that when people have different roles in events, it gives them a different perspective. I also realized that it was the political leaders who were responsible for the decisions concerning our involvement, not the military.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: I tried to keep an open mind about what they were saying. Again, it wasn't so much whether the war was right or wrong, but it was what they were sent to do. And they wanted to do it to the best of their ability.

Q: What about your view of sort of the black population? Because here was really quite a different view of most, particularly white Americans or even black Americans had had. Because this -- the sea island culture was, you know, completely almost -- it was just really different, wasn't it?

CANAVAN: It was. Although not all the black people in Beaufort County and Jasper County that I came into contact with were from the Gullah culture. But I found a friendliness in the black community where I lived in Beaufort that I did not encounter with the relatively small number of black students that I encountered at the university. And that was my only other contact. As I said, growing up we had a lot of Hispanics and Asians, but in my high school and my community there were no blacks. And when I got to UC Santa Cruz in 1967 there was the Black Power Movement. And the majority of the black students wanted to have nothing to do with the white students. An exception was my friend John Rickford who was from Guyana. Having served in the Caribbean during my Foreign Service career, I learned that the Caribbean countries were much more focused on class than color. And John had friends across the color spectrum. Many of the black students at Santa Cruz resented him for that. Consequently, I found the black community in Beaufort to be quite friendly and not at all hostile. Curious, but not hostile.

Q: Well, was this setting -- you know, looking back on it, was this pushing you toward something, or?

CANAVAN: Well, looking back on it I think it was. It made me much more interested in cultural issues than I had been in the past. My father's family emigrated from Austria-Hungary. His mother in fact didn't speak much English. She mostly spoke Hungarian, which my father never learned. His view was that he was an American, not a hyphenated American. He had a strong sense that immigrants needed to assimilate into American culture. He used to get really annoyed when he would receive literature in the mail from Hungarian-American, particularly if it was written in Hungarian. My mother's family had been in the States for quite a number of years and were English, Scottish, and Welsh. I don't recall ever hearing either one of my parents make a derogatory comment about anybody's racial or ethnic background, ever.

My experience in Beaufort piqued my interest in the Gullah community. Where did they come from, how did they end up on the Sea Islands? I'm not sure I would have been so keen to go to Africa as part of my travels if I hadn't spent those four months in Beaufort.

Q: Yes. How did you sort of take control of your life then? I mean you're graduating from college and what opportunities were there and what were you up to?

CANAVAN: I didn't have a car and I was in a situation where I needed to support myself, but I also wanted to travel. The year after I graduated I had five part-time jobs, including being a substitute teacher. That was a logistical nightmare, because I had to figure out how to get to the school after I was called in the morning. I had a number of friends who were teachers, and so I would call whichever one was already teaching at that school to see if I could bum a ride. My parents never really pushed me out, but in my generation the idea of returning home after university to live with your family was not something any of us contemplated.

Q: No, well, God no.

CANAVAN: I lived in a group house with four people who were in similar circumstances. We pooled our rent and pooled our food money. I think I lived on \$100 a month for a year to save my money.

Q: Oh boy.

CANAVAN: My parents encouraged me to travel, and I never had any hostile or negative feedback from my parents about what I was doing.

Q: Well, this is interesting. Because that period of time, there was quite a gap between the young people and the old ones, the model never trust anyone under 30 -- over 30 -- and that sort of thing.

CANAVAN: Right, exactly. I never felt that way about my parents. Both of my parents, particularly my father, treated me like an adult, and although I knew he was pretty politically conservative, I was not, but they didn't try to impose their attitudes on me at

all. They expected me to go to college, of course, and believed that taking some time to travel before settling down seemed normal to them.

Q: Well, were you in Santa Cruz, or?

CANAVAN: Yes, I stayed in Santa Cruz the year I worked.

Q: What was the spirit at that time? Was it pretty much the young people were in rebellion even if you weren't?

CANAVAN: All of us in my group house were very busy trying to make as much money as we could with low paying jobs. A couple of my housemates were keen to go to graduate school and they needed to make money to do that. We were all dealing with the pretty basic reality of needing to support oneself. None of us had the time to worry very much about the war protests. I never attended a protest, either before or after my experience in Beaufort. I suppose some of the students were protesting, and we would occasionally see them in town. I almost attended by accident the free speech protest at Berkeley that ended in a riot. I had taken the shuttle bus to Berkeley the day before to use the library there. Had I waited one day longer, I would have tear-gassed.

Q: I was going to say, students kind of can make their own time.

CANAVAN: Well, exactly. You know, after graduating and being on our own, none of us had terribly well-paying jobs. I worked in a local department store on Saturdays. I was a part-time program director for the Watsonville YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association). I taught sailing courses for the university, and I substitute taught as often as I could. Without a car I was either on my bicycle or public transportation or looking for friends who could help out with transportation issues.

Q: Did you feel that California was sort of the center of all sorts of turmoil and all, or?

CANAVAN: Parts of it certainly were, but there were other parts that were not. When I'd go home to see my family there was no evidence of that in Palos Verdes, or in the surrounding communities. There were no large universities in the immediate vicinity, so when I went home there was pretty much nothing going in the way of turmoil. I was somewhat insulated from a lot of what was going on.

Q: Well, trying to think a bit about sort of the sociology, or whatever you want to call it, of the period. What about, were there sort of communes or was the hippie business going big there?

CANAVAN: Oh, it was going big-time in Santa Cruz.

Q: Oh, I would think so.

CANAVAN: Yes, the university drew a lot of people, many of whom were not students. Santa Cruz is a lovely town and once the university was built it became a year-round attraction instead of just a beach resort town in the summer. In the areas surrounding Santa Cruz there were lots of communes, and the hippie culture from San Francisco clearly had migrated down to where we were. But my group of friends were just too busy and working too hard to get into that hippie culture as much as a lot of other people did.

Q: Sometime ago I interviewed Joe Wilson.

CANAVAN: Yep.

Q: And he said he went to Santa Cruz I believe because of surfing and skiing. And that was --

CANAVAN: Right. I didn't think he went to Santa Cruz. I thought he went to Santa Barbara.

Q: You're right. It was Santa Barbara, yeah. But it was all that era -- that area of --

CANAVAN: Right. He and I were both from Southern California. He came in the service one class ahead of me.

Q: Well, as you were sort of scraping to make a living, were you thinking about doing something to get yourself ready for a career?

CANAVAN: No (*laughs*). I really wasn't. I just wanted to travel for a year and kind of see the world and then come home and focus on that. After I had to leave the teacher training program, I thought "I'm just going to go off and travel for a year and then come back and worry about it."

Q: Well, how did things work out for you?

CANAVAN: Well, they worked out brilliantly in the long run. I ended up visiting a college friend who was a Peace Corps volunteer in then Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso). I fell in love with Peace Corps and I fell in love with Africa. I met people who worked in our embassy. Don Easum was the ambassador in Ouagadougou at the time. I met him and others and I thought they had interesting jobs. That experience got me into the Peace Corps myself. And again, from there, because of people I met in our embassies and consulates, I took the Foreign Service Exam. And that's what got me into it. Until I went overseas, in fact until I went to Africa I really never considered the Foreign Service at all.

Q: Well, let's talk in some detail about the Peace Corps experience. What was the feeling, you might say, about the Peace Corps as you were -- or did you have any feel for it until you got out of school?

CANAVAN: I hadn't thought about going into the Peace Corps until I visited my college friend in Africa. It was highly regarded and a number of my classmates decided to serve in the Peace Corps before going to graduate school. There was still a huge sense of loss after both Kennedys were shot, and many young people wanted to do something to live up to the challenge to do something for our country. There was also a misperception that if you went in the Peace Corps you wouldn't get drafted. Of course, during the time before I came into the Foreign Service, entering officers were almost all going to Vietnam anyway in the CORDS (Civil Operation and Rural Development Support) program. People didn't see the Peace Corps as a way to dodge the draft, but they did see the Peace Corps as a way to contribute to our country and to other countries and again, live up to Kennedy's challenge. In those early days it was still pretty rigorous and they put you through some pretty rigorous Outward Bound training. By the time I went into the Peace Corps, the training primarily consisted of language/cultural and functional training. My parents encouraged me when I told them that I wanted to go into the Peace Corps. They thought that was a good idea.

Q: Well, OK. At that period you're now a college graduate, but looking for some -- how did you go about getting in the Peace Corps? What happened?

CANAVAN: Well, I went to visit this college friend who was a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in the Upper Volta, now Burkina Faso. At some point we talked about getting married and joining the Peace Corps myself and we would continue as PCVs in Upper Volta. Fortunately, I realized although I thought Africa was wonderful and I thought the Peace Corps was wonderful, I did not think that *he* was so wonderful. I broke off the engagement, but although I had been accepted into the Peace Corps, I did not want to serve in Upper Volta. Peace Corps Washington asked if I would like to go to Zaire and I agreed. I ended up as an individual placement PCV who ran the regional office in Bukavu, in eastern Zaire. I was responsible for doing site checks to place new PCVs in teaching and agriculture programs, and I looked after the volunteers to be sure they received their regular immunizations. If they had a problem at their site I assisted in resolving those problems. The Internet and email did not exist, so most communications were by radio. I also taught English at the local American Cultural Center to local officials in the city of Bukavu.

Q: Well, how did they -- what was training like?

CANAVAN: Training I did was a little bit different because I was an individual placement. They did give me six weeks of French language training at the Virgin Islands training center on St. Thomas. We were the last group to go through training there. I had taken French in high school and in college, so my reading skills were decent, but the Peace Corps training focused on speaking, which was what I needed. Some PCVs going to Zaire received local language training in Swahili or Lingala, but I was given French because I was going to be a volunteer leader. I went through about two weeks of training in Washington where they familiarized me with some of the administrative support work for Peace Corps I would be doing. When I arrived in country I spent three months in the capital Kinshasa working in the Peace Corps office preparing to set up the regional office

in Bukavu. I made the 1,500 mile trip from Kinshasa to Bukavu on a Zairian military transport, a very old DC-4 that was unpressurized with plywood on most of the windows. Once in Bukavu, I set up the regional office with another volunteer leader, Paul Smith, and we also provided some support to the Peace Corps training center there. I was able to get to know volunteers who were going to be in my region and to work with the Peace Corps training staff.

Q: Oh boy.

CANAVAN: And boy, was that a trip. We had to make at least one stop to refuel. We found an apartment that was large enough to have an office and a guest room in case volunteers were coming through who needed a place to stay, not just on vacation but for official business. The guestroom was also available for Peace Corps staff who were visiting volunteers and the training center wanted to visit.

As I mentioned before, I assisted PCVs to settle into their sites and helped out when they ran into difficulties at the school where they were working. It was not unusual for PCVs to run into difficulties with the local officials when they were getting ready to leave. They were regularly shaken down for bribes to take trinkets they had purchased out of the country. Officials would claim they were “antiquities” and try to charge them. Occasionally we had a sick volunteer and I would help arrange the medevac (medical evacuation) to Kinshasa. I also arranged for volunteers to travel to Kinshasa on official business. The work was not unlike the support that administrative and consular sections at an embassy provide.

Q: Well, what do you think got you picked to be a leader?

CANAVAN: Well, I was a little bit older. By the time I went into the Peace Corps I was 24. My French was pretty good, and I had already traveled some in Africa, so they knew that I could deal with the foreign cultural element. Also, they needed somebody and I was not an education volunteer or an ag (agriculture) volunteer. We also had a group of heavy equipment operators who were working on roads. They needed somebody to open the regional office, and I showed up. It was one of those timing things and they said, “Hey, you know, she seems to have her act together so why don’t we have her open the regional office in Bukavu. So that’s what I did.

Q: Well, before you -- or when you were in somewhere when you were getting started, did you get any talk about the culture of Zaire and --

CANAVAN: Yes, that was part of our language training. Just like FSI, our language training was focused towards the culture of where we were going. And particularly Francophone Africa. We received history, geography and sociology along with the language training.

Q: Well --

CANAVAN: I don't think I got into really in-depth stuff about Zaire until I arrived in country. I spent three months in Kinshasa getting organized with everything I needed to move to Bukavu. During that period I worked with our local Zairian FSNs (Foreign Service National) and picked up a lot of the culture from them. It was an interesting time to be in Kinshasa. Among other exciting events, I was there when Muhammad Ali and George Foreman fought the rumble in the jungle.

Q: Oh yeah.

CANAVAN: -- One of the places that PCVs liked to go for dinner as a special treat was the Intercontinental Hotel, especially if we were in Kinshasa on official business and we were getting a little per diem over and above our living allowance. They had a great all-you-can-eat buffet. And PCVs all have huge appetites. As we were dining outside on the patio, Muhammad Ali and his entourage traipsed through followed by George Foreman and his much smaller entourage. Although I didn't actually see the fight, it was quite a treat to see them in person.

Q: Well, did you have a problem working in a country particularly Mobutu's Zaire where there's so much payoff, corruption involved. You know, Americans aren't really used to this. And this can be a tremendous turnoff for people. I mean I'm very unhappy dealing with this.

CANAVAN: Well, we were pretty shocked and appalled with what was happening politically in Zaire. And while I was there the 1973 gas crisis hit and that had a huge negative impact on Zaire. When I first arrived in Bukavu, they had French wines and cheeses, and the grocery stores were full of all sorts of imported stuff, most of which as a PCV I couldn't afford. There were two non-stop flights a week from Bukavu to Brussels, since Zaire had been the personal property of the King until becoming independent in 1960. Once the gas crisis hit, that all dried up and life became much more difficult. Shortly thereafter, Mobutu kicked out all of the Asian merchants, Indians and Pakistanis in particular.

Q: Who really represented the middle class.

CANAVAN: Absolutely. Those were the people who knew how to run a business establishment. Particularly retail, food stores, and things like that. Once they were kicked out, Mobutu gave their businesses to his cronies who didn't have a clue how to source the commodities needed to stock a store. Once everything in the store was sold off, there was no new merchandise. The market ladies became much more important. They would buy a huge stack of rice, for instance, put it in a big bowl and then you would buy it by the cup. Even trying to find the basics was very difficult. We were fortunate to be on the eastern border, much of it came from Rwanda and Burundi.

Q: Mm-hmm.

CANAVAN: It was a hard place to work. One of the things it taught me was that if I could cope with what was going on there and the difficulties that I ran into, I could probably deal with any kind of difficult situation. From that perspective it was a very good experience.

Q: Did you have any dealings with the Mobutu government?

CANAVAN: I had some dealings with local authorities. Particularly when it came to placing volunteers in schools. There were also some government offices that I dealt with from time to time. But I didn't have a huge amount to do with the local authorities unless we ran into, again, a difficulty with the volunteers. I don't recall we ever had any volunteers arrested or anything, but sometimes they would run afoul of some government official who was trying to extort them. And I would have to sometimes intercede on their behalf and try to help sort things out. Because Zaire mined diamonds, when we flew into Kinshasa we had to go through the mine control in addition to passport control. For women you'd be put in this little booth with a large Zairian woman with a bucket and a rubber glove in the corner. She would go through all your hand luggage and ask questions. None of us ever suffered the rubber glove, but I swore that if they ever threatened me with that I was going to be out of the country on the next plane (*laughs*).

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: One of the things we did, because I knew the consul pretty well, was we would become non-pro diplomatic couriers going into Kinshasa. If we were carrying a diplomatic bag as a non-pro courier, we had to have a letter with all sorts of stamps on it. Then we wouldn't have to go through the mine control. Consequently, we always asked the consul if we could carry some official mail to Kinshasa.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: That was one way we tried to get around some of the restrictions. There were always some kind of internal controls and roadblocks when we drove around. None of us believed Mobutu could last more than a few years. Of course, he lasted quite a bit longer than that. On television, for instance, the three hours a day of programming would begin with puffy white clouds and then Mobutu's face would emerge from the clouds. I was really pretty surreal and totally state controlled.

Q: Oh God.

CANAVAN: Nobody, neither Zairians nor foreign missionaries and business people would discuss politics, *ever*. If you ever asked "How do you feel about your government?" or about anything political, they'd look at you with an expression which said, "You can't actually ask me that question because I'm not going to answer you." There were no discussions, no political discussions at all.

Q: Were they doing that because there was real retribution of somebody, or was it just that they just didn't want to talk about it?

CANAVAN: I think retribution. They definitely would not verbalize any criticism of the government

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: It was *incredibly* politically repressive. Nobody wanted to take a chance on being overheard or having something you said repeated in the wrong circles. So, we didn't ask, because we knew people were uncomfortable answering. Peace Corps always had an issue with people accusing volunteers of being spies. The U.S. government goes to great lengths to try to make sure that sort of thing could never actually happen. We emphasized to volunteers that they must *not* get involved in local politics, or political discussions. It will come to no good end. That is not why you're here.

Q: Well, you were looking at the Foreign Service, how did it seem to you?

CANAVAN: Once I learned what people in the Foreign Service did, I thought it would be something I would be interested in. And we give the Foreign Service Exam in most if not all of our posts overseas, so I decided to take it. I think the first time I took it was in 1973. I think I remember that it was given the first Saturday in November, or something like that? Once a year. The first time I took it, I didn't pass, but I was close. Then the consul started passing to me the Sunday New York Times, which arrived three weeks late through the diplomatic pouch. I read the Sunday edition cover-to-cover for a year, took the exam the second time and passed.

Q: Did you feel that the Peace Corps -- the Peace Corps, when you looked at it, it wasn't a career, was it? It was an experience.

CANAVAN: No, it was not a career at all. In general, they don't like volunteers to stay for more than five years. And they also have a five-year rule for their staff. And then you have to be out for as long as you were in before you can come back. It was, it was discouraged as a career even for staff. Because again, they wanted new blood. They didn't want it to become a sinecure. It was designed to be a stepping stone, a short-term opportunity, but a number of my volunteer friends ended up going into international development of one sort or another, because that was the sort of thing they wanted to do. Some of us who went into the Foreign Service were considered to have "sold out" because of the negative view of some in the Peace Corps of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America during that period.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: But certainly, USAID (United States Agency for International Development) is full of RPCVs (returned Peace Corps Volunteers). There are also quite a few in the Foreign Service as well.

Q: Well, first place, you were sort of on the administrative end of the business, but did you get any feel for what the Peace Corps was doing? I think almost everybody who's done it I will say is certainly very effective for the people in it, but, but for what it did for those serving.

CANAVAN: Yeah, Peace Corps mostly tries to promote what Peace Corps is doing in the countries where we have programs. Depending on the programs, they have been more or less successful. We had a Peace Corps program in Botswana for many years that emphasized science and math instruction. Those programs had a huge positive impact in Botswana because it was a relatively small country. Many of the students went on to be influential people in the country. The minister of health when I was there had gotten her science and math training in high school from the Peace Corps volunteers. She eventually came to the U.S. and got a PhD in public health. She went on to be a senior official with the United Nations responsible for HIV/AIDS programs in Southern Africa. When I was in Namibia the speaker of the National Assembly had learned English from Peace Corps volunteers in Tanzania when his family was in exile during the bad old days of South African apartheid. He eventually also went to the U.S. and got a PhD in education. He returned to Namibia following its independence in 1990 to become the speaker of the National Assembly. I have rarely encountered anyone who was a more articulate advocate of democracy than Mose' Tjitendero.

Some of the programs which tried to teach villagers more productive ways of cultivating food, including farming fish, did not survive the departure of the Volunteers because the villagers reverted to their traditional methods of farming. However, many of the educational programs were outstanding as were the health programs. PCVs were on the cutting edge of Lesotho's national strategy for coping with HIV/AIDS, for instance.

Although many PCVs had a positive effect on the local population, it was the PCVs themselves who were most affected. The volunteer is totally immersed in that culture 24/7 for two years, and that intensity of the impact in my view is the reason why the volunteers may have been more affected. That is a good thing, in my view, both for the volunteers and the United States which gains citizens who have a more expansive and informed world view.

Q: Well, you had this experience, did you have your -- you had five years in this.

CANAVAN: Actually, I was a volunteer for three.

Q: For three. And then what, two years of--

CANAVAN: The normal Peace Corps commitment is two years. I extended for a third while I was waiting to hear whether I had gotten an appointment in the Foreign Service.

Q: Ah.

CANAVAN: Sometimes they'll let you extend in the country where you've been serving. Sometimes they want you to go to a different country. However, the total amount of time that you can serve as a PCV at a stretch is five years. With occasional exceptions, the same rules apply to Peace Corps staff. If you were in for five years, you must do something else for five years before you can be considered again to serve as a PCV or staff member. They discourage continuity (*laughs*) in their Peace Corps staff, both overseas in Washington. With very little institutional memory or continuity, the organization is condemned to repeat its mistakes.

Q: I was going to say. Because one can understand the rationale, but at the same time I'm not sure the rationale makes that much sense.

CANAVAN: No, I didn't think it did either. But you know, it's one of those hard-fast Peace Corps tenets that they don't want to give up.

Q: Yeah. So let's follow when you left Zaire. First place, how did you feel about Zaire? Was it going anywhere, or what?

CANAVAN: I felt that it had huge potential because of the natural resources, but that it was not going in the right direction. For instance, they had inherited a very good road infrastructure from the Belgians, but they didn't maintain it. Mobutu nationalized the schools and put political cronies in charge who had no experience running schools, so the education of the population suffered badly. Namibia also inherited a very good road system and realized it was in their best interest to maintain it.

Q: Well, then you came back to the States, is that right?

CANAVAN: I came back to the States four months short of completing my third year because I had been offered an appointment in the Foreign Service. I was traveling upcountry with the associate director for education and I received a message through the missionary radio network at the school in northeastern Zaire where we were visiting PCVs. The message said, "You've been offered an appointment in the Foreign Service. If you want it, you have to be there by the 10th of March. Please answer yes or no." This was the 13th of February, Friday, the 13th of February. The missionaries left out the salary I was offered, because they felt it would be inappropriate to transmit that countrywide over the radio network. On the other hand, it really didn't matter because I was going to take the job anyway. Because of my location, I had no way to try to negotiate a later arrival date. Of course, that's not the way it's done anyway, but at the time I didn't know that. So, I said yes. The Peace Corps staff in Kinshasa was extremely supportive. They were ecstatic. Peace Corps Washington was very unpleasant. Apparently, there's some regulation which states that other U.S. Government agencies are not supposed to recruit volunteers until after their service is complete. But in fact, I'd completed my two years of service and so I thought, "I'm not going to stay in the Peace Corps for four months and risk losing a potential career in the Foreign Service." So, I said yes. At that time, I was living in Kisangani, which is located on the Congo River in the middle of the country (location of Conrad's Heart of Darkness and Naipaul's The Bend in the River). It took us

about three days to get back to Kisangani by vehicle. I had to pack out from there and go to Kinshasa and do all my out-processing. I left Zaire at the end of February, spent about a week and a half with my family in California, and then flew back to Washington D.C. to start A-100.

Q: Well, so you started -- when did you start the A100?

CANAVAN: March of 1976.

Q: While you were gone did you find a different United States?

CANAVAN: Oh, you bet. I went overseas two weeks after the Watergate break-in. And with the exception of one short trip home between my second and third year I hadn't been back to the States at all. The United States had changed quite a bit, which is one of the reasons when I was offered the opportunity to stay in Washington on my first tour instead of going overseas, I said yes, please. I ended up being assigned to the Regional Affairs Office in the Bureau of African Affairs. I replaced Dean Curran who was off to study Portuguese so he could open our Embassy in Guinea Bissau. The United States had changed considerably, but I was unprepared for the culture shock of returning home. Peace Corps is very good at teaching you about cultural differences you will discover when you go overseas. However, since I was not leaving with a group, I did not receive any counseling on how difficult it can be to readjust when you get back to the States.

Q: Oh yes.

CANAVAN: You expect things to be different when you go overseas, but when you come back to the States you expect them to be the same as they were when you left. In fact, you've changed quite a bit, as has your perception of your own country. I remember listening to Nixon's resignation on the radio (the BBC), and received comments from some of my Zairian contacts. It was one of the few times any of them engaged me in a political discussion. "He's your president. How can you force him out?" was their reaction.

I said, "Well, he did some illegal things, and he chose to resign rather than be impeached. That's the way we do it in a democracy."

Q: Well, did you find when you came back that, oh, in dating and just normal, you know, you'd get together with friends and all, that you were a different person and found they weren't really quite as serious as they should be? Or often this is --

CANAVAN: What I found was that we really had different interests. I focused on what was happening in the world, and my high school and college friends were more interested in what was happening locally (California) and in their jobs. "Oh, how was the Peace Corps? Tell me about the Peace Corps" they would say. They would be interested in my answer for about five minutes and then their eyes would glass over.

Q: Yeah, well this is --

CANAVAN: That is something that Foreign Service people and military people experience. When they've been overseas and they've experienced a very different kind of lifestyle than you came from and you go back home and people who haven't had that experience -- you know, I had people say to me, "Why would you want to go away? Why would you want to move someplace else? Why would you want to live overseas?" They're people who've lived in the same town they grew up in.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: They have a different point of reference and a different sort of universe. I spent only about 10 days with my family in California. And then I moved to northern Virginia to start A-100. My new circle of friends were my Foreign Service colleagues. They'd either had or were having the same kind of experience that I had in the Peace Corps. We seemed to have a lot more in common than I had with most of the people with whom I went to high school and college. I am still in touch on a regular basis with four college friends and three high school friends. That's it.

Q: Well --

CANAVAN: Part of it was moving away, not just going in the Peace Corps and coming home to where I'd grown up, but then completely relocating to a different part of the country for the career.

Q: Well, were you at all tempted to follow the route so many of the young people took then -- and now -- and that was to continue graduate school? Which has become sort of an extension of, you know, it's -- quite frankly it's a good way to mark time before getting serious.

CANAVAN: That is an interesting question. I'm probably one of the few people in the Foreign Service that doesn't have at least a master's degree. After university I worked for a year, I traveled for a year, joined the Peace Corps for almost three years and then came into the Foreign Service. The Foreign Service gave me credit for my extra Peace Corps time and brought me in at the same level that they would have if I'd had a master's degree. I was 27 when I entered the Foreign Service and I was not keen to go back to school. I was in the last class at the National War College which did not receive a master's degree (*laughs*). The National Defense University was being reviewed for accreditation while I was there (academic year 1992-1993), and they kept telling us we were going to be grandfathered after the school was accredited. However, that did not happen. Otherwise, I would have a Masters in National Security Studies. So, while I attended graduate school, I did not receive a degree. That brings up one of the things I really appreciate about the Foreign Service. Your education is taken into account when you enter the service and is one factor in determining at what level they bring you in. After that, it is your performance that determines promotions. If your master's degree or your PhD or your law degree helps you do your job better, then it will show up in your

performance and you will be recognized for that, not just for having an MBA (Master of Business Administration) from Harvard, for instance.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: To me, that's always been a very positive thing about the Foreign Service.

Q: Well now, your A-100 course, what did it consist of?

CANAVAN: A-100 was spent learning about the different functions of the State Department as well as the assignment and promotion processes. I think maybe we had a one-hour presentation on the military and then there was a guy who worked for the Department of Labor who insisted on spending some time with us. We did actually visit different departments around Washington which was interesting and useful. I remember going to Treasury and Agriculture, for instance. We were exposed to basic reporting and analysis by excellent instructors. We did lots of paperwork, mostly administrative. I think my A-100 class was five and a half weeks. And of course, it is critical that the entering officers have the opportunity to bid on and receive their assignments during A-100. The difficulty is that there is so much information packed into those five or six weeks, that it is difficult to absorb it all. I have had colleagues say that they wish they had listened more closely to a specific presentation which would have assisted them in dealing with a situation which came up later. I was assigned to the Africa Bureau to replace Dean Curran, who was going to Portuguese language training so he could open our embassy in Guinea Bissau.

Q: Mm-hmm.

CANAVAN: I worked in the Regional Affairs Office in the Africa Bureau for perhaps six months, and then spent six weeks at FSI to get off language probation. Upon entering the Foreign Service, I received a three/two plus in French, and needed to get my reading score up to three. Then I was transferred to the AF (Africa Bureau) front office where I served as a staff assistant for the last 16 months of my two-year tour. However, my first assignment, Regional Affairs, was significant in a number of ways. I started the week that Kissinger went to Africa for the first time. *Nobody* had ever been to Africa (*laughs*), at least no secretary of state had ever been to Africa. Consequently, the Africa Bureau wasn't very familiar with how to support Secretary Kissinger's travel. We received a great deal of guidance from the executive secretariat. My job was to put together the briefing books – literally to make the requisite number of copies, collate the pages, punch holes in the paper and put them in the loose-leaf binders. Back in those days, our copy machines didn't collate. I ran around the building getting clearances for the briefing papers and I learned my way about the building. And then we had a "wheels-up" party when Kissinger was on his way to London, his first stop.

A couple of days later, AF needed to send him a cable, a message while he was in London before he arrived at his second stop, Lusaka, Zambia. I went around the building to get all the clearances. The last clearance that is required to send anything to the

secretary is from the executive secretary or one of the deputy exec secs. I took the cable upstairs to one of the deputies, Frank Ortiz. He was sitting at his desk when I knocked on the open door. He didn't even look up. He said, "What do you want?"

And I said, "AF needs to send this to the secretary, sir. I'd appreciate it if you'd clear off on it."

He held out his hand, but never looked at me as I handed him the cable for him to approve. He read through it and was about to sign off on it when he looked up at me and he said, "Can't you people in the Africa Bureau do anything right?"

And I said, "Excuse me?"

And he said, "The secretary's due to take off from London in an hour. There's no way that we can get this to him in time."

And I said, "Oh, I didn't realize that."

And he just chewed my butt up one side and down the other about how stupid we all were in the Africa Bureau. I walked out of that office and I started a list of people that I never wanted to work for.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: And he was the first one on my list.

Q: Oh boy.

CANAVAN: It was all I could do to get out of his office without bursting into tears.

Q: Yeah.

I know some other people who've had problems with Frank.

CANAVAN: Yeah.

Q: I served with him once on a board.

CANAVAN: It wasn't just me, that was the way he treated people.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Which I thought was not a very nice way to treat people.

Q: You know, before we move on, I want to go back and pick up a little more about your A-100 course.

CANAVAN: Oh, okay.

Q: What was it trying to do at the time, and how well do you think it did it?

CANAVAN: It was obviously trying to expose us to a whole set of skills that we were going to need to have. Some of them bureaucratic, some of them more technical, skills we would need in the foreign service. We did have a lot of fairly senior people come and speak to us, to give us words of wisdom. We did bond with our classmates, which was part of the purpose. Under the circumstances, the course did a decent job of trying to teach us what we needed to know. Probably the most difficult thing about trying to run a course like that is that there's so much information that you need to impart. Also, there are so many people who want to have access to this captive group of junior officers that the coordinators have to make sure that they avoid information overload. It is not easy to manage all the people who want to have access to the group. I thought it did a pretty good job. One thing that caught me off-guard was that as soon as I was assigned to AF, my per diem was cut off. No one explained that to me in advance. I thought it would continue at least until I completed A-100. The other issue with which I had to deal when I was deputy coordinator was that it took four to six weeks for entering employees to receive their first paycheck. If they were hired locally and not on per diem, they had to deal with several weeks with no income. Some were desperate. I was able to house and pet-sit for a foreign service officer who was traveling for three months as an inspector. His wife accompanied him at their expense. They had a lovely old townhouse on Prince Street in Old Town Alexandria. If the weather was good, I rode my bicycle to the State Department. It was wonderful.

Q: I came in earlier. I came in '55. But it was terrible! Because, you know, it seemed as though the place was tailored to people who had maybe clipped a few stocks or something like that, or they had family to back them up before the pay started. I mean it seemed to be almost a rich man's indifference to the money factor.

CANAVAN: Oh yeah. And there was little sympathy on the part of the human resources folks. Their response was "that's the way it is." The motto of one A-100 class was "Semper Per Diem."

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: That was one of the things I tried to fix when I was deputy coordinator, unsuccessfully. There's already a 12 day lag after the end of the two-week pay period. If you missed a certain deadline to get the paperwork in it was six weeks before they got paid

Q: Of your class, what was its composition?

CANAVAN: There were eight women, four of whom were mustangs. They were already in the Foreign Service primarily as secretaries. And then there were four of us who came in from the outside. This is out of a class of 32. I'll go look at my class photo.

Q: OK.

CANAVAN: I've got it hanging outside. It's pretty funny, particularly the hair from that time period.

Q: Oh, oh yeah, the --

CANAVAN: Wide lapels.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Three of the guys had big plaids. It was pretty gross.

Q: -- my group photo, a lot of us had bowties, myself included.

CANAVAN: Oh yeah, we had a couple of those. But let me look at the photo. We had some fast trackers in my class, Marc Grossman and Bob Pearson, to name two.

Q: Uh-huh.

CANAVAN: And some other folks, let me see. Oh, according to the photo, there were almost 40 of us. But again, only eight women. We were not very diverse with only two Asians and two African Americans, one of them a woman. One of the mustangs did not get tenured because she couldn't get off language probation and reverted to being a specialist.

Q: Huh.

CANAVAN: And unfortunately, we've lost a few of our folks. A number of them have passed.

Q: Did you -- trying to capture the spirit of the time -- did you feel that as a woman you were up against a system that was not overly susceptible to women?

CANAVAN: That's really interesting, because of course the women's class action suit was starting right about the time I was coming into the Foreign Service. I entered as a consular officer, which was what I wanted. When I took the exam, you had to indicate in advance for which cone you wanted to compete. I looked at the descriptions of the work and I thought, "Well, you know, I think I'm best suited for consular work." I never changed my view of that. However, with the exception of the office director in AF Regional Affairs, who would occasionally make sexist remarks, I never knowingly suffered any discrimination as a woman. In fact, I opted out of the women's class action

suit for that reason. I think I came in at the right time, I was very fortunate to have a number of colleagues and bosses who were very keen to make sure women had opportunities in the Foreign Service. I was never selected for an assignment over a more qualified male, but I know that on at least one occasion whoever was making the selection must have said, "You know, I think we ought to have a woman in this job." And I was picked. However, I did see a number of my female colleagues face discrimination, particularly the women who wanted to be political and econ (economic) officers and were pushed into consular and admin work. I know there was systemic discrimination although I personally never experienced it.

When I came into the Foreign Service, I never thought that I would have an opportunity to be an ambassador. I didn't aspire to it. As a consular officer, my hope was to be consul general in a large post like Mexico City or London. When I first came in, deputy chiefs of mission (DCMs) were always clones of ambassadors, almost always political officers or occasionally economic officers. Ambassadors tended to select a DCM who seemed to be just like them rather than an officer with complementary skills. I did think that perhaps I could be a DCM at a small to medium sized post in Africa. My ambitions when I came into the Foreign Service were modest. They certainly weren't overblown. It was actually the National War College that gave me the idea that there was a bigger professional world out there, and that turned out to be true. No, when I came in the Foreign Service I did not personally feel the systemic discrimination, but I did see around me.

Q: Yeah, my 30 years were from '55 to '85. And it's definitely there, you know, it was systematic. I was a consular officer.

CANAVAN: Mm-hmm.

Q: And consular officers on the female side frankly did fairly well, compared to the other cones.

CANAVAN: I think we did.

Q: But it, but it was not, it was not sort of the Foreign Service stemming out as a unique example of discrimination. This was, boy, this was the business world, the military world, every, everywhere you look practically.

CANAVAN: Yeah.

Q: I mean we've gone through a real revolution.

CANAVAN: I had an interesting experience. One of my mentors was Arnie Raphael.

Q: Oh yes.

CANAVAN: And at one point he asked me if I would come up and interview for a job as one of Cy Vance's staff assistants.

Q: Who was secretary of state at the time, yeah.

CANAVAN: I'd been in Washington three years and I needed to go overseas to get tenured. I had an assignment to work in the consular section in Kingston, Jamaica. Arnie tried to talk me out of it. He said, "Look, this is working for the secretary."

I said, "Arnie, if I don't go overseas I'm not going to get tenured. It doesn't matter if I'm working for the secretary of state.

So, I didn't take the job. However, Arnie kept track of me and every once in a while he would call me and say "I've got this job that's coming open, why don't you bid on it?" He was the principal deputy assistant secretary (PDAS) in NEA (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs) at the time. One time we bumped into each other in the hall and he said "Why don't you let me give you a real job?" I was a division chief in the Office of Overseas Citizen Services (OCS), and it was a period when there were regular plane hijackings and kidnappings, particularly in the middle east.

I replied, "Arnie, I have a real job." I worked all of the 24 hour task forces which were set up to handle the crises in Washington. As the PDAS, he was the head of the task forces that dealt with the Middle East. One very late night while we were both working on the task force he said "I need to apologize to you. You do have a real job."

I felt more discrimination as a consular officer than I did as a woman. Although it didn't bother me, because I knew consular work was important and I enjoyed doing it. I knew I was making a contribution. As you know, people were always making snide comments about consular work.

I did become a DCM following my year at the National War College. Marshall McCallie was going out to be ambassador to Namibia and he wanted a DCM who had complementary skills. He had been a DCM twice and really didn't enjoy the management aspects of the job, and it really is a job which requires managing the day-to-day running of the embassy. I'd never worked for him, but I'd worked with him when I was deputy coordinator of A-100 and he was the division chief for junior officer assignments. That DCM assignment changed the direction of my career. I did return to Washington after Namibia to be managing director of Overseas Citizen Services which was a great job working for Ambassador Mary Ryan. Again, it was an assignment which gave me visibility with all of the geographic bureaus and exposed me to senior officers in the department.

Q: Yeah, I spent basically my 30 years as a consular officer. And among ourselves, other consular officers, we used to bristle when our work was called non-substantive.

CANAVAN: Oh yeah, exactly.

Q: And economic and political work was substantive, and our work was not “of the substance,” admin and consular were considered -- you know, it was a class system and we were lower class.

CANAVAN: Yeah, exactly. Other diplomatic services had separated diplomats from consular officers, and consular officers had to deal with, horror of horrors, the public!!

Q: Well --

CANAVAN: -- When I was in Tijuana our, the consul general’s secretary made some comment one time about substantive and non-substantive officers. And I said, “Oh. the people who deal with, with money and people and solve problems are non-substantive, and the people who think great policy thoughts and write analysis are substantive? There’s a disconnect there somewhere.” Then I suggested she find other words than substantive and non-substantive.

Q: Getting off to one side, but I remember in Belgrade when I was running the Consular Section there, I hadn’t been there long and so I called the British, wanted to talk to the British consul. And boy, you can really tell the difference, a different accent, you know. I wasn’t that clued in on all the class distinctions, but you could tell, there was a difference.

CANAVAN: Oh yeah. I was *totally* satisfied and in fact quite happy. Because I know that both my consular work and my work in HR *really* helped when I became a DCM.

Q: Well, let’s come back to A-100 to begin.

CANAVAN: Yeah (*laughs*), we’ll go back to earlier in the career.

Q: Did you feel that by the time you’d finished this early training that you were more or less -- and I emphasize less rather than more -- but prepared to deal out in the field with matters, sort of get you started in any way?

CANAVAN: Yes. Other than the language training I had during my first tour to get me off probation, all I had was A-100. I didn’t have any other training right after A-100. I just went right to work. My feeling was that you got the basics and it was up to you to be a sponge and learn as much on the job as you could. Everyone got really tired of being in A-100, especially after they received their assignments. They wanted to move on to language and functional training, and then on to their posts. At one point, A-100 was lengthened to nine weeks to include the history of diplomacy and as well as more functional training. The instructors practically had a rebellion on their hands because the junior officers were tired of sitting in the classroom and wanted to get to work. There’s an optimum length of time for an orientation course, and if you try to drag it out too long it doesn’t work very well.

Q: Yeah, well, I think one of the things in the Foreign Service is that they train people to be quick absorbers. I mean you really have to learn your way every time. I mean you’ve

got to learn a whole new country, a whole almost different set of job skills. It's different in each country. And probably the sooner you get there the better, and one hopes there'll be enough people around you, people who will either mentor you or you can look things up in a hurry.

CANAVAN: I think that's absolutely true. Most of the entering officers had already spent time in grad school and had some work experience, so they were keen to get to work. Again, there seems to be an optimum length of time for A-100, which I would posit is between six and six and a half weeks, and maybe seven weeks. But nine weeks was way too long, especially because once they received their assignments at week five, they were focused on their assignments.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Their feeling was, OK, if I have to take training for my job, political training or learning a language or whatever, I want to get on with it. I don't want to sit here for another four weeks, I want to get ready for my job, my assignment. It's interesting trying to teach adults (*laughs*). People marvel at the fact that we take in new officers up to the age of 59. I remember Mary Ryan thought we shouldn't bring anybody in over the age of 28. Of course, she had come in when she was 22, I think. She didn't like having all these older people coming into the Foreign Service. Historically the average junior officer has been 31 or 32 for the last 50 years. And you know, it's because even though younger people tend to do better on the written exam, older people do better on the oral because it's based more on judgment and life experience. So, we tend to get an older group of people. We do occasionally get 21-years-olds right out of undergraduate school, but, but there aren't very many of them. Looking at an A-100 class, maybe 10% would be 25 or under. The rest of them are all a bit older and have applicable work experience.

Q: OK, I'm just looking at the time. This is probably a good place to stop.

CANAVAN: Oh yeah, it is. I always enjoy talking to you, Stu. Two hours just flies by.

Q: I enjoy this very much. We've talked a little about it, but after you get out, we'll talk about your first job. If you want to expand it a little more, or not.

CANAVAN: Good, I would like to expand on it because it was really interesting.

Q: So we'll pick it up then.

CANAVAN: My first job in the Foreign Service?

Q: Yeah. And I'll just say, today is the 2nd of January, 2014 with Kate Canavan. And let's have it. What was your first job?

CANAVAN: My first job was working in the Regional Affairs Office in the Africa Bureau. When I came into the Foreign Service in 1976 about 20% of every A-100 class stayed in Washington. Because I had just spent three years overseas with the Peace Corps I guess they figured I was a good candidate to stay in Washington. I didn't have to prove that I could cope overseas. And they also had a specific slot they needed me for. Dean Curran had been selected to open our new embassy in Guinea Bissau, but he needed to take Portuguese language training. So when they pulled him out of AF Regional Affairs that was the job they assigned me to.

Q: Well, what -- describe sort of the African Bureau and Regional Affairs' responsibilities.

CANAVAN: The Africa Bureau (AF) is the geographic bureau that covers Sub-Saharan Africa. Henry Kissinger had already put the North African countries in the Near East South Asia Bureau, so AF was strictly Sub-Saharan Africa. The Regional Affairs Office basically covered functional issues for the bureau, political military issues, relations with other U.S. government agencies such as the Peace Corps and USAID, and was kind of the catchall for work that didn't fall to the desk officers. My very first immediate supervisor was Dennis Keogh. I don't know if you remember, but Dennis was killed in 1984 in the bombing of a gas station in Namibia where he was sent on TDY (temporary duty). He had been the political counselor in Pretoria, but had recently been reassigned to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) in Washington. Tragically, just a few days before he was scheduled to return to the States, he and another American officer, Lt.Colonel Crabtree from Pretoria, were going up to talk to SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) officials in northern Namibia and stopped for petrol at a gas station. A bomb went off and killed both of them. It was a huge shock. Dennis was *really* wonderful, a fabulous Foreign Service Officer, and a great first supervisor to have. His widow, Susan, came into the foreign service in the last A-100 class I taught in January 1985.

I already mentioned that I started in AF the week Henry Kissinger first went to Africa. He started in London to talk to the British about Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and continued on to Lusaka, Zambia, and Kinshasa, Zaire. He was supposed to go to Ghana, but the government of Ghana rescinded the invitation while Kissinger was in Kinshasa. That was a big problem because Shirley Temple Black was our ambassador in Ghana and she had urged the Ghanaians to invite him. Needless to say, he was not a happy camper and Ambassador Black was recalled. When she returned to Washington, she became the chief of protocol.

I learned my way around the Africa Bureau and parts of the department quite well as I prepared the briefing books. It was a great assignment for a first tour officer because I got to know everyone within the whole bureau. I was actually only there for five months when they sent me off to FSI for six weeks to get off language probation as I mentioned.

When I returned to the AF, I became one of two staff assistants to Assistant Secretary Bill Schaefe. I had previously filled in for one of the staff assistants, and Ambassador

Schaufele selected me as a permanent replacement when one of them transferred. This was before open assignments bidding, which required that job openings had to be advertised for two weeks. I heard from somebody in HR that I had been selected to go to the front office, but I hadn't heard anything from anybody in AF. I asked around and all the people in AF said they hadn't heard anything. So, I finally went up to see Ambassador Schaufele and I said, "Excuse me, sir." I've been told I'm going to come up here to replace Marilee. Is that correct?"

He looked at me and said, "Do you want the job?"

And I said, "Well, of course, if you think I can do it."

He replied, "Well, you've been doing it, haven't you?"

I said, "Yes sir, I guess I have."

That is how I ended up for the last 16 months of my first tour as one of the two AF staff assistants. It was fabulous because Ambassador Schaufele was an absolute delight to work for. He was a little bit of a curmudgeon, but his bark was definitely much worse than his bite. And he knew so much about Africa. He was just a huge resource. When I had the morning shift, I would go into the office to cull the table traffic, because back in those days the more routine traffic was all hard copies. They were usually at least a couple of days old. I would go through a stack that was sometimes an inch to an inch and a half thick, and I would pull out reports that I thought he needed to read. It was usually at least a couple of dozen cables, if not more. He would always manage to get through it before he went up to Secretary Kissinger's morning staff meeting. He was quite well prepared. When he returned from Kissinger's staff meeting, he would have a quick staff meeting with the bureau office directors in his office. Frequently they had not had a chance to read their cable traffic yet, and he took some delight in one-upping them sometimes. He was a very, very impressive boss and I learned a great deal from him. One of the most important things I learned is that you need to treat your staff well and you have to be cognizant that they will work all out when they need to. But if they don't need to, then you should not require that they stay late just to be at your beck and call. I will contrast him with his successor in a minute.

Ambassador Schaufele would go off to Africa alone carrying his briefcase with his briefing book in it. He never took anybody with him and he would usually take advantage of embassies' resources to support him wherever he went. He tried to be very careful not to be too much of a burden and that impressed me a great deal. As I got more senior and was in positions where I had people preparing travel and briefing materials for me I always tried to follow his example. For instance, sometimes he would want to stay late in the office to do some reading. Whoever had the late shift as staff assistant, instead of keeping us around, he would send us home. He'd say, "You know, as long as you've done all you need to do, don't stay around for me. Go on home, I can lock up." And he did. He was quite an impressive guy to work for. I was very lucky to have been exposed as a first tour officer to someone with his knowledge, leadership and management skills.

Q: Yes. By the way, speaking of the African Bureau, I don't know if you know him, but this last week a note appeared in the obituary column that Bill Edmonson died in Phoenix. Did you know Bill?

CANAVAN: I did know him, yes. I am so sorry to hear that he passed.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Yeah, he was ambassador to South Africa and then he came back to be one of the deputy assistant secretaries when I was up there.

Q: Were there any great, or you know, I mean what you would consider significant developments in Africa?

CANAVAN: Actually, there were. We used to work Saturday mornings. All of the deputy assistant secretaries and the office directors would come in on Saturday mornings, but Ambassador Schaufele always tried to get us out of there by noon. This one Saturday we were getting ready to close up and I received a call from the Operations Center. A critical message had come in from Addis Ababa. The chargé d'affaires there was Dick Matheron, for whom I had house sat before he went out to Ethiopia. I immediately went upstairs to the Op Center and they handed me a really urgent message from Dick. It said he had just returned from the Foreign Ministry and the Ethiopian government was giving us three days, 72 hours, to get out of Asmara, Eritrea. At the time Eritrea was not a separate country and we had a satellite tracking station in Asmara, which was the reason we had a consulate there.

We had planned to close the consulate and hand over the tracking station to the Ethiopians in the not too distant future. Haile Selassie had been overthrown and Mengistu was president. We were not on very good terms with the Ethiopians, which is one of the reasons we only had a chargé instead of an ambassador in Addis Ababa. Anyway, all of a sudden, we get this critic, we have 72 hours, and it's a Saturday. Ambassador Schaufele said, "Get the National Military Command Center on the phone." We passed the information to them and Ambassador Schaufele scheduled a meeting with the appropriate DoD (Department of Defense), State Department, and other agency folks for three o'clock that afternoon.

They made plans through the European Command to send several C141s to Addis Ababa to evacuate the place. Keith Wauchope was the consul general. I didn't know Keith and his wife Linda beforehand, but they were a tandem couple. She was in Nairobi at the time and he was in Asmara. We went full-bore for the next 72 hours. They got the C141s into Asmara and removed everything from the consulate. They also removed all of the equipment from the tracking station, much of which was originally going to be turned over to the Ethiopians. Everything was loaded up within the deadline and there was a ceremony during which the American flag was lowered. Keith made some very moving

remarks. I hope you've interviewed him, because that was a pretty significant event, especially for the Africa Bureau.

The C141s took off with all the people and everybody's household effects. It was a very impressive operation to observe and to be a part of. Because we had such a short time to do this we all ran on adrenaline. I spent two nights at the Department. One night I slept on one of the cots up in the Operations Center for a few hours, another night I just crashed on the floor in my office. We worked 24/7, all the way through until we were wheels up from Asmara. Observing how State and the military were able to coordinate and make this happen in such a short period of time was extremely impressive.

Q: Was AIDS at all a problem while you were that in that particular period?

CANAVAN: No. HIV/AIDS didn't come along until 1983.

Q: What did we do? Did we essentially just say to hell with you as far as the Ethiopians were concerned, or do we -- I mean part of our job there has been pulling them out of one famine after another.

CANAVAN: We of course always continued our humanitarian assistance, I don't think we ever stopped that. In more recent years we've developed a much stronger relationship with the Ethiopians. Partly because they've become more democratic and have taken a much larger leadership role in Africa. We supported Eritrean independence, during the Clinton administration, and then unfortunately the Eritreans chose to pick a fight with the Ethiopians over some border issues. We had been on the Ethiopian side of that particular issue, which has meant that we haven't been on good terms with the Eritreans.

Q: Yeah. How did we feel about, what was the Dirge I guess? Could we do anything with Ethiopia?

CANAVAN: It was still the bad old days of the Cold War. The Ethiopians were pretty clearly in the Soviet camp. So, until the demise of the Soviet Union, our relationship with the Ethiopians was chilly at best.

As you know, Addis Ababa now hosts the headquarters of the African Union. So, we have two ambassadors in Addis. One is our ambassador to the African Union, the other of course is our bilateral ambassador.

Ambassador Schaufele left AF in the summer of 1977 and was replaced by Richard Moose. Dick had been in the foreign service for a couple of tours and then left to work on the Hill, so he came in as a President Carter appointee. He had originally been appointed to be Under Secretary for Management, but when that didn't work out, he came to AF. He had a completely different work ethic and management style from Ambassador Schaufele, and not in a positive way.

After my staff assistant tour was up in April of 1978, I was paneled to go out to Beirut as a consular officer. Unfortunately, the day before I was scheduled to be packed out, Dick Parker, who was the ambassador at that time, sent a cable back to Washington saying, "Don't come. Things are getting dicey here." My position I think was a new position. They really didn't want any new people there just then. The message to me was "Please don't take this personally, but don't come."

At that point I was assigned temporarily to the East African Office, AF/E, to assist with the state visit of Kenneth Kaunda, the president of Zambia. I worked very closely with Peter Smith, the desk officer, and I was actually able to travel around the U.S. with President Kaunda. I attended the White House welcome ceremony and met President and Mrs. Carter. We traveled to Atlanta with then UN Ambassador Andrew Young and continued on to Houston, Los Angeles, and New York. Our ambassador to Zambia at the time was Steve Low, and our paths crossed subsequently when Steve was FSI director and I was deputy coordinator of the junior officer orientation program at FSI. It was a great opportunity to meet a lot of people and see how state visits are handled. It was quite a treat to go with Ambassador Young and President Kaunda to Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Then at the last minute Ambassador Young arranged for us to go to a basketball game. The Secret Service was apoplectic about that, but actually the last minute change was a security benefit. We stopped at a ranch outside of Houston where the family raised cattle. The Zambian delegation was very interested in some breeding issues since cattle raising is very important in southern Africa. Next, we visited Los Angeles and saw Mayor Tom Bradley. My parents were able to come to the airport and say hello, because they lived about 15 miles away. Then we flew to New York where they had some final meetings and events at the UN. The trip was very enjoyable, even as a straphanger, and not something that every second tour officer gets to do.

During the few months I was working in AF/E, I was assigned to our embassy in Sanaa, Yemen, as a consular officer. For personal reasons, I broke that assignment and stayed in AF for another year, this time working as a press officer in AF Public Affairs. I worked for Frances Cook, who is amazing. She has an incredible amount of energy, is smart, and creative. Having the opportunity to be a press officer for a year and working for Frances Cook, was an excellent experience and gave me exposure to another important aspect of diplomacy. I remember one time there was an incident in South Africa where the crew of our defense attaché office's aircraft left the camera on the airplane by mistake. The South Africans were waiting for just such an opportunity, went on the plane and found the camera. They made a huge political issue out of it, declaring the defense attaché and two others persona non grata. Our aircraft was pulled out and we sent three of their people home from Washington. I drafted the press guidance for the Department's spokesperson.

Q: Did you feel like you were by this time a real African hand?

CANAVAN: I did, but my first overseas assignment ended up being in Jamaica. There were relatively few junior consular positions in Africa and the Bureau of Consular Affairs really wanted me to go to Latin America. That was fine with me and so I ended up in Kingston. In the meantime, Arnie Raphel was one of the deputy executive secretaries. He

was looking for staff assistants to work in Secretary Vance's office and asked me to take an assignment there. I told him that I had already been paneled to go to Jamaica.

And he said, "Well, we can get you out of that."

I said, "The problem is I will have been in the department for three and a half years, and if I don't go overseas, I can't get tenured. Even working for the Secretary won't get me tenured if I haven't been overseas." So, I missed out on the chance to work for both Arnie Raphel and Secretary Vance, because I needed to get overseas to make sure that I was eligible for tenure.

Q: Well, did you get any feeling about where Africa stood in the department's totem pole of interest?

CANAVAN: *(laughs)* Pretty low. I think Africa and Latin America always kind of fought for the bottom of the heap. For people who were real Africa hands, it was disappointing that it was hard to get the department's attention focused on African issues. Policy on Africa and African countries was almost always couched in terms of the Cold War. Is this country pro-West, pro-democracy? Or are they in the Soviet camp? I guess we did the same thing in Latin America as well. From a policy standpoint it was frustrating because it was obvious that senior policy makers were not looking at Africa as individual countries that had opportunities for us to develop a relationship with them. It was you're either for us or you're against us. Only with the end of the '80s, the beginning of the '90s were we able to start having the kind of relationships that Africa hands wanted to have with these countries.

USAID worked hard to separate development assistance from foreign policy during the cold war, and that was frustrating for the State Department. I know when I was DCM in Namibia from 1993 to 1996, our USAID mission directors, one in particular, were always trying to distance themselves from the embassy. The ambassador, Marshall McCallie, who had been DCM in South Africa from 1990 to 1993, was always reeling them in. I very much developed that same attitude that our development goals are part and parcel of our overall foreign policy. I feel the same about the military. According to the letter from the president that every ambassador receives, the ambassador is responsible for coordinating the policies of all U.S. government agencies in the country to which he or she is accredited. We still need to do more to create a cohesive foreign policy and not allow different agencies to go their own direction with the idea that the embassy is there just to provide office space and administrative support.

Q: Well then, where do we go from here?

CANAVAN: Well, my first overseas assignment was Kingston, Jamaica.

Q: So. Well, actually Jamaica had very close ties to Africa in a way, so.

CANAVAN: Yes. It did. It was rather interesting to see how some of that played out while I was there. For the first nine months I was on the NIV (non-immigrant visa) line. It was only a two-year assignment. And then for the last part of my tour I was the NIV chief. I was actually a third-tour officer by then. I did get tenured and promoted while I was there, so I did what I needed to do as far as making sure I met all of the requirements for tenure. I really enjoyed Jamaica because I got to know a number of Jamaicans, and I became very close friends with two professional women. They were businesswomen and had friends all over the island. We used to get away from Kingston on weekends whenever we could and go various places.

Because I was NIV chief, one of the groups I had to deal with all the time were the reggae musicians. They all of course had convictions for drugs, possession generally. They didn't qualify for multiple entry visas so each time they wanted to travel to or through the U.S., they had to apply and then we would have to request a waiver from the Immigration Naturalization Service (INS) before they could travel. Consequently, we dealt with many of the musicians and their agents quite a bit. And as it so happened, while I was there as NIV chief, Bob Marley died of cancer in Miami on his way back to Jamaica from Germany. I was asked by the DCM to be one of the three people from the embassy to represent the U.S. at his funeral. We sat two rows behind the prime minister at the funeral. I have photographs where I can pick myself out of the crowd, mostly because I was wearing a big white hat. It was even a bigger deal than the funeral of Norman Manley, who was their very first prime minister after they became independent. It was huge and it went on for quite some time. Marley's son, Ziggy, and the I Threes who were his back-up group performed. It was quite a scene.

There was also a significant election between then prime minister Michael Manley, son of the first prime minister Norman Manley, and Edward Seaga. Manley's party was leaning more and more to the left, encouraged by Cuba and the Soviet Union. Seaga was a moderate businessman. There were about 200 people killed in pre-election violence, primarily fomented by the Cubans. There were roadblocks all over the place. The U.S. obviously was not on very good terms with the Manley government, and embassy staff would be harassed. Several officers were accused of working for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and their photos, home addresses and vehicle license plate numbers were published. One officer's residence was shot up, but fortunately neither he nor his family were home. Seaga won the election, and our relationship with the government improved significantly. Prime Minister Seaga was the first head of government that Ronald Reagan invited to the White House after he was elected. Jamaica's economy was in poor shape. It is not a very big island and it is relatively densely populated. As the chief of the Non-Immigrant Visa section I was not one of the more popular people in the country. Our refusal rate was around 55% due to the high number of Jamaicans who overstayed their visas. The Daily Gleaner newspaper had a weekly column entitled "Visa Agonies." People were always telling their tales of woe after having been refused a visa. Visas were a significant foreign policy issue between our governments, so we tried a lot of things to make sure we ruffled as few feathers as possible.

Q: What would have been the -- was he attracted to -- were the Cubans doing anything for him that we couldn't do, or not, or what?

CANAVAN: This was 1980, and the world was still divided by the cold war into the western leaning nations and those that were supported by the Soviet Union. As Soviet surrogates, the Cubans supported governments sympathetic to their cause. Michael Manley seemed totally focused on just staying in power. His wife was the ideological one in the family and she was really far left.

Q: Were we really afraid of a communist takeover and turning Jamaica into a hostile base?

CANAVAN: We were definitely concerned about Cuba spreading its influence throughout the Caribbean. You recall that we liberated Grenada in 1983 at the urging of a number of leaders in the region who were concerned that the Soviet Union intended to use it as a base. They were building a long runway on Grenada which would have accommodated their largest aircraft. One of those leaders was Edward Seaga who had the ear of President Reagan.

Q: How about -- it's terrible the way names slip by -- but the dentist in Guyana?

CANAVAN: Oh gosh, yes.

Q: Was he a factor at all? Were we worried about those two points, Jamaica and Guyana's sort of spreading cancer spots?

CANAVAN: There was definitely a concern about Cuba and communism spreading throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Drug trafficking and human rights were also important issues for us in the region. Communism was stifling the economies as well, so the cancer analogy is apt.

Q: Was there any thought that you were aware of, of either pulling this out of there -- I mean getting ready to evacuate in a hurry or invade the country?

CANAVAN: No. Neither actually. I mentioned that several officers were targeted as members of the CIA. That was the work of a former CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) employee, Philip Agee. Because of that publicity and the violence against one of the embassy staff, those who were identified by Agee left post. Everyone else stayed. I don't think there was any thought of invading.

Q: Yes. Yes.

CANAVAN: I will admit that the violence against our staff was scary. A group of thugs had driven by the officer's residence, thrown a concussion grenade in the front yard, and had sprayed the house with machine gun fire. Their daughter's room was in the front of

the house and the bullets hit the wall about six inches above her bed. If she'd been in bed she'd have been killed.

Q: Ooh.

CANAVAN: His family left immediately. And we also had to pull two or three others out after their photographs, car license plates, addresses were all published on television. And at least two of those people did not work for the agency at all. One of them was a colleague of mine in the consular section. The embassy pulled those people out right away. We didn't go to authorized departure, and since I worked in the consular section I would have known if there had been any discussion of a draw down or an evacuation. As far as I know that was never discussed.

Q: Can you talk a bit about your impression of -- this is visa work there?

CANAVAN: It's clearly a visa mill. We had anywhere from 500 to 1,500 applicants every day. Back in those days there was no visa application fee and people could apply as often as they wanted. Sometimes we had folks showing up every week, the same people who'd been refused repeatedly and were trying again. Many people had relatives in the United States. The Jamaican currency was blocked and Jamaicans were only allowed to take \$50 with them when they left the country. That meant if you were going to the United States you had to have somebody in the States who was willing to support you while you were there, or you had to have your own resources in the States. One of the things that had happened during the Manley administration was that many of the Jamaican business people left and emigrated to the States. They kept their homes in Kingston, and many of them were very nice homes. We were allowed to rent those homes for quite a reasonable amount, paying the owners in U.S. dollars. For a while it benefited us. Then when Edward Seaga was elected prime minister, many of these people returned to Jamaica. Employment was obviously an issue. For instance, when I first got there the bauxite industry was thriving. Anybody who worked in the bauxite mines was considered to have a good job, one that paid well and one that offered some security. Therefore, visa applicants who worked in the bauxite industry were considered a good risk because they had good jobs to return to. Then the bottom dropped out of the bauxite market and all those people lost their jobs and were no longer considered good visa applicants. That's always a difficult issue with places like Jamaica where you know the people just want to make a better life for themselves and their families, and they would like to do it in the States. And you're pretty sure that's why they're applying for a visa. But under those circumstances you are obligated under our law to refuse the visa because they cannot demonstrate that they are not intending immigrants. It's not easy work. Being in a visa mill anywhere isn't easy work. Eight hours a day interviewing applicants, trying to sort out who's a good applicant and who's not. It can be emotionally draining and the interviewing officers have to work hard to be sure they are giving fair consideration to every applicant. We always tried to make it more interesting by asking different questions, really concentrating on the body language of the applicant and not just looking at the application. Consular training now focuses on interviewing techniques, which help

officers with these tough decisions. Frankly, sometimes it's easier to say no than yes, but that's not always the right answer.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Because people have legitimate reasons for coming to the States, and you certainly don't want to be in the position of refusing visas to legitimate travelers. It's a benefit to the United States to have them come for tourism or business or education or work if they qualify for a temporary work visa. Of course, when you've got very junior inexperienced officers doing the interviews, that makes it hard.

Q: Well, you know, one of the things that I found running consular sections was the normal person who came into the Foreign Service and all had grown up in a law-abiding community and people didn't lie to you officially, you know, look in your face and lie to you. And I found that, you know, so many of our officers got very negative about everything because they were being lied to.

CANAVAN: Yeah.

Q: You know, they weren't used to this.

CANAVAN: Exactly. You're quite right. The reaction from the junior officers was "This guy lied to me!"

And I said, "Well, put yourself in his shoes. And, and if you thought that lying meant the difference between being able to get to the United States and find a job or *not*, what would you do?"

Our job is not to be outraged by the fact that people are lying to us, but to determine if it's a really substantive lie. In many cultures you would never tell an official the truth anyway.

Q: Yeah. Well, did you have—a problem that keeps cropping up—saw it in the paper just the other day, somebody, a consular officer was caught selling visas and all. And I would think that this would be a concern all of you would have in that business, about being corrupted. Either by money or by sex or advantage or whatever have you.

CANAVAN: Actually, yes. That is something that I think is always of concern, and particularly when you're in a country where people are pretty desperate to get out. And while we never had anybody selling visas when I was in Kingston, I know of several instances of officers who sold visas while serving in other countries. These days it's practically impossible not to get caught at some point, and I think even back in the day we had counterfoils and kept track of visa numbers. At some point anyone selling visas is going to get caught. Because somebody is going to say, "I paid that guy \$500 and I never got my visa." These days it's much harder to do than it used to be because the process is more automated, and one person can't easily control the entire process. But we have a

bigger problem in the Foreign Service with cashiers, both local employees and occasionally Americans. But usually at some point they get caught as well.

Q: Well, was corruption a problem when you were there?

CANAVAN: I'm sure it was in the society. I mean sometimes people would think that they had to pay for a visa, I'd say, "No, you don't."

They'd say, "Oh, well that guy over there told me over there if I paid him \$500 and went to a certain window I could get a visa." There was one Jamaican who would hang out in front of the consulate and greet us when we went out to lunch. Then he would tell applicants he knew us and could arrange for them to get a visa for a price. Another guy would stop people who had just received their immigrant visas and sell them envelopes he said the U.S. required. People get very creative when they are trying to make some money.

I do remember one case where one of the police commissioners that I knew pretty well came in with his nephew. The nephew wanted to go visit his aunt up in the States. And my gut feeling told me that he was not a good applicant. But the police commissioner promised me that he would make sure the young man came back. So, I issued the kid a visa. Well, maybe six weeks later we got a blue sheet, one of those documents from INS that says, "So and so is applying for an adjustment of status in the States."

So, I called the police commissioner and I said, "How was your trip?"

He said, "Oh, we had a great time."

I said, "Where's your nephew?"

He said, "Oh, he decided to stay up there."

I said, "Yeah, he's trying to stay there permanently. That's what I told you I was worried about, and not to impugn your integrity, but the only reason I issued him a visa was because you promised me that you would bring him back. You better let your colleagues know that that's not going to happen again in the police force. No more favors. You blew it."

He said, "Oh, I'm sure he's coming back."

I replied "No, he's not. We received notification that he's applying for an adjustment of status to stay in the States permanently. That really makes me angry because I took your word that you would make sure he came back, and you didn't do that." He was very contrite and his buddies on the police force were unhappy with him. It taught me a lesson too, about trusting one's gut feelings.

Our DCM, Roy Haverkamp -- who I really liked -- just couldn't understand why we kept refusing visas to all these really nice Jamaicans who swore they were coming back. Well, Roy sent us a visa referral for his steward who had worked in the DCM's residence for about eight years. The steward wanted to go up to the States for a visit. We issued the visa and off he went. If the guy works in the DCM's residence all these years and we have no indication that there's anything untoward going on, you really have to trust the guy. Needless to say, he didn't come back, and the DCM was *livid*. He said, "I want you to call the Immigration Service! They need to arrest him and send him back."

And I told him that the INS didn't have the resources to do that. We had already checked and the phone number and address where he said he was going to be were nonexistent. And I said, "This is why we refuse visas to all these Jamaicans who swear they're coming back. Because they're not." And he never gave us a hard time again after that.

Q: You almost hope for one of those early on so you can --

CANAVAN: Yes. Every once-in-a-while it's worthwhile to lose one to make a point.

Q: What about crime there? I mean living there, I mean, you know, even today it's a major problem.

CANAVAN: It was then as well. I ended up in a two-bedroom apartment in a building that had I think about five or six floors. And other people asked me why I didn't rent a nice house. The reason was twofold. First, I was single and had just enough furniture for a two-bedroom apartment (Kingston was an unfurnished post with a housing allowance so we had to find our own places to live). Second, those lovely big homes were security risks, even with bars on the windows. Guys would show up with a truck, attach the bumper of the truck to the burglar bars with a chain, pull the burglar bars out and rob the house. This happened to quite a number of people. Cars were stolen and repainted or cannibalized if they were a common model. For that reason, I shipped my TR7 to Kingston. It was the only one on the island, so no one wanted to steal it. Several years after I left Kingston, one of the more well-known reggae musicians, Peter Tosh, was robbed and murdered in his home along with several friends.

Q: Ooh!

CANAVAN: Yes, crime is a serious problem. Mike and I were there a little over a year ago for a friend's sixtieth birthday. We drove over the mountain to Port Antonio, which is on the northeast end of the island. I had forgotten how poor Jamaica is. There are some very nice neighborhoods and areas, but most of the country has grinding poverty. It's really hard to take.

Q: Well, how about Americans getting into trouble?

CANAVAN: When I was there I think we only had one or two people in jail. One guy was in prison for attacking, raping, and murdering an American girl. He was identified by

the other girl who survived the assault. Jamaica had the death penalty and he was going to be hanged. We were directed by the State Department to request clemency, which galled many of us, because this guy had molested and murdered the daughter of one of our USAID colleagues and many people thought hanging was probably too good for the guy. As far as I know, he never was executed. At the time, most of the Americans who got in trouble were tourists off cruise ships or at resorts who were picked up after having bought a little bit of ganja -- marijuana. And normally they were just put back on the cruise ships or deported. A few years ago, Jamaica stopped doing that and they started arresting people and putting them in jail there. From what I gather -- and I can't give you numbers -- but the American Citizen Services section is quite a bit bigger than it was then.

We had a number of retirees, Jamaicans who emigrated to the United States, became American citizens and went back to live in Jamaica on their social security after they retired. We would see them in the embassy about once a month when they came in to pick up their checks. There was one woman who was not quite right, but she would come in every month. She would wear her old clothes to travel to Kingston and once she was in the lobby she would take off all of her clothes and put on nice clothes to come up to collect her check. And this always upset the Marines, but we asked them to leave her alone.

Q: How did you find -- I mean I've heard stories over the years about very difficult political ambassadors who treated the embassy sort of like their servants or -- how did you find relations?

CANAVAN: Well, I had one of the few career officers for an ambassador, Loren Lawrence. I believe he was a consular officer.

Q: Who's this?

CANAVAN: Loren Lawrence?

Q: Oh yeah, Lory Lawrence is a good friend of mine. Didn't know he --

CANAVAN: Yeah. Anyway, so we didn't have those issues. I was about the fifth most senior person in the Consular Section, and we had a pretty good-sized embassy. However, in the two years I was there I was only invited to the ambassador's residence once and to the DCM's house once. I believe the front office should have included more junior staff in representational events. They did have a rotating staff assistant program, which unfortunately, came out of the Consular Section. One officer would rotate to the front office every two months. I was considered a third tour officer, so I did not participate. I did things on my own with my contacts, some of the police, and my friends Gloria and Monica introduced us to a lot of folks. I had my own circle of friends. But we really didn't get much of an introduction to embassy operations outside of the Consular Section.

Q: The Consular Section in Jamaica also had a reputation for being, having quite bad morale many times.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: How was it when you were there?

CANAVAN: I would say it depended on the individual officers. There were some people who really hated it. Actually, they mostly hated Jamaica and were punching their consular ticket; they were not consular officers. They would get together socially and get each other all spun up about how awful the place was, claiming they couldn't go anywhere because people knew they worked in the Consular Section and they would be harassed. I had a very different experience. Even when I was on the visa line, I tried to put some variety in my interviews, and when I wasn't at work I really took advantage of what Jamaica had to offer as far as recreation and traveling around. I also had some local friends to whom I had been introduced by my embassy sponsors, David Sloan and David Dunn. I learned that wherever you are you should focus on what is good and interesting about the place and not dwell on what you don't like about it.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: First of all, you can't do anything about it in many cases, so don't whine. There's no question that visa line work can be really grinding and hard, and you need to try to give people some variety in what they do.

Q: Well, did you have much of a problem there with congressional or even more sort of Washington or well-to-do pressure of people trying to get, basically, get servants in free?

CANAVAN: We did. In fact, I probably had more congressional inquiries that I responded to in those two years in Jamaica than I've had the remainder of my career. Usually, it was family members in the States who contacted their congressmen complaining that we had refused their relative in Jamaica. Then we would get a congressional inquiry wanting to know why we refused a visa to their constituent? Excuse me, this person is not your constituent. And their family members, while they may have green cards, can't vote. We had some standard language we used to respond, and we tried to respond quickly. Occasionally you would get somebody really difficult.

I remember that Jamaica had a couple of nursing schools, which turned out way more nurses than they needed in Jamaica. Many of those nurses are hired on temporary work visas to go to the States. And as you know, the temporary work visa is tied to the specific employer. One time an American woman came in with a Jamaican nurse to apply for a visa for the nurse's son. The nurse had taken care of the American woman's husband in the hospital, and when he was discharged, the American hired the nurse to take care of her husband at home. Of course, the nurse's visa was contingent on her working at the hospital, so when she left that job, her visa was no longer valid. When she had gone to the States to work in the hospital, she left her son with his grandmother. Well, Granny

died and the woman wanted to take her son up to the States with her, because there wasn't anybody in Jamaica to take care of him. Rather than have the American woman stand at the interview window, I invited them into my office. I said to the nurse "First of all, if you're no longer working for the hospital your visa is not valid." Then I told her that I was not going to revoke it because it was going to expire soon and would not be extended since she was no longer working in the hospital. I also told her that I could not issue a visa to her son to join her in the States. The American woman got *very* huffy and said, "*Well*, I'm a good friend of President Carter's. And he's going to hear about this." I handed her my card and said, "I'd be very happy to explain to President Carter why I can't issue a visa to this child." We never received anything from either the Hill or the White House.

In another case, an American woman who came to Jamaica for a vacation at Negril Beach met a young man on the beach. She brought him to the consulate and wanted a visa for him to go back up to New York with her, permanently. It was a pretty easy case to refuse because he had a drug conviction. She said, "Oh, but you know, I want to marry this guy." We had to explain to her that he was ineligible for an immigrant visa because of the drug conviction.

Q: You know, there was a movie that came out not too long ago, I think a Canadian movie called "Going South." And apparently, it's sort of a term that's used about single women who go south and have, you know, have a fling down, down in -- with the beach boys, I guess.

CANAVAN: Right, mm-hmm.

Q: And then they leave. And some of course, you know, get infatuated. And I'm sure it can prove to be a real problem trying to explain.

CANAVAN: Well, actually that reminds me of another case where we had an American woman, a medical doctor who fell in love and married one of the musicians that played in the local band at the resort where she was staying. She came in to apply for a green card for him, but again, he had a drug conviction so there was no way he could be issued a visa. It must have been true love because she moved to Jamaica.

Q: Uh-huh.

CANAVAN: She started doing community work and it ended up working out for everyone. Remember that John Lennon couldn't get a visa for the longest time. And I think he finally went to court and the judge overturned the INS decision not to issue him a visa. In the end, it turned out not to be a very good thing for him.

Q: No.

CANAVAN: There were a lot of interesting characters. But, I have to admit, I much prefer American Citizen Services to visa work.

That was my only tour as a visa officer. It was very useful because as my career progressed, understanding the visa process helped me deal with both embassy staff and visa applicants who would buttonhole me somewhere. I'm glad I did it.

Q: Well, I think one of the things is knowing where the typical Foreign Service Officer comes from. Usually a fairly well-situated family and all, and again, bringing up to -- and people didn't lie to him or her and all that, and then getting into these jobs it's quite a learning experience, which I went through, of being lied to rather regularly. Or if not lied to, being under pressure from Americans who don't give a damn about you and are quite willing to use any bit of pressure in order to get George or Susie into the United States.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: It's a real sort of middle-class learning experience.

CANAVAN: You're absolutely right, and visa work puts you in contact with people who come from a very different strata of society than we are used to. Certainly, American Citizen Services work did as well. However, the lesson that was most important for me from my time in Jamaica was learning how to say no politely and without guilt.

Q: Yes.

CANAVAN: You can't pay enough money to learn that lesson early.

Q: Where'd you go after Jamaica?

CANAVAN: I was on leave without pay for five months following my former husband to Japan. He was the executive officer on a Navy destroyer home ported in Yokosuka, a little south of Tokyo and Yokohama. Then we returned to Washington where Arne was assigned to the Joint Staff. I was supposed to be on leave without pay until the mid level course started in February, 1982, but I went back three months early and worked in Caribbean Affairs. Because since I was only going to be there for a short time I volunteered to shepherd three political appointee ambassadors who needed to be hand held through the confirmation and swearing in process. That relieved the desk officers of some time-consuming duties.

Q: OK. Well, we'll talk about that. And something I'd like you to think about, having these consular stories come back, can you think of any consular officers who've recently retired and maybe available somewhere, either by phone or by person, that I can contact and get more consular stories?

CANAVAN: Oh gosh, yes. I'll come up with a list and give it to you next time we chat.

Q: OK, great. Let's look at the calendar now.

CANAVAN: OK.

Q: Today is the 8th of January, 2014 with Kate Canavan.

CANAVAN: Yes.

Q: Let's start. We have you leaving Jamaica --

CANAVAN: Mm-hmm.

Q: And you said you had to, you went to the Caribbean Desk, but you had to babysit or --

CANAVAN: *(laughs)*

Q: Can you explain what that means?

CANAVAN: I was on leave without pay for about five months and spent about three months of that in Japan with my former husband, who was assigned to a destroyer in Yokosuka. We traveled around a lot in Japan and that was a lot of fun. When we returned to Washington in November of 1981, we wanted to buy a house. I figured it would be a lot easier to get the mortgage if I were working instead of on leave without pay. So, I walked into the then ARA-EX Office and said, "Hi, I've got three months before the midlevel course starts and I'd like to go back to work."

And they said, "Oh, *thank heavens.*"

And I said, "Oh, you have something for me to do?"

And they said, "Well, one of the desk officers in Caribbean Affairs just resigned because he and his wife were indicted for making pornographic movies."

Q: Oh God.

CANAVAN: *(laughs)* He apparently married a Brazilian woman and things were fine when they were in Brazil, but I guess when they got back to the States and were no longer getting free housing and that kind of thing, she was a little unhappy that they weren't able to live the way she had come to expect when they were in Brazil. So, he was moonlighting, so to speak, producing movies that his wife was starring in.

Q: Well, it shows that Foreign Service Officers have, you know, a lot of abilities, I suppose.

CANAVAN: Well, there you go *(laughs)*. Anyway, all a sudden they needed another desk officer in Caribbean Affairs. Well, since I knew I was only going to be there for three

months, rather than take over the countries that he had responsibility for I said, "Look, why don't you divvy up the countries among everybody else in the office and I will take on the responsibility of preparing for the confirmation hearings and organizing the swearings-in for three non-career appointees," who were in the pipeline at that point. And everybody thought that was a wonderful idea, so that's what I did for three months.

Q: Well, could you explain for the layman and all, what does this mean? What were you doing?

CANAVAN: I was preparing briefing memoranda and organizing briefings throughout the department and also with other agencies for these individuals who were preparing for their hearings. In order to become an ambassador you have to be confirmed by the Senate. And there is a fair amount of preparation that goes into that. So, my responsibilities were organizing meetings and briefings with individuals in the State Department who were working on issues that would be of concern to these ambassadors once they got to their posts, helping prepare them for the hearings, helping them draft their remarks for the hearings, and accompanying them to briefings and meetings.

Once they were confirmed, all three of them needed some assistance in organizing their swearings-in at the department. Because they were non-career, most of the folks who came to the swearings-in were not U.S. government employees. And even in those days -- and this would have been early '82 -- there were some security issues for outsiders coming into the State Department who didn't have badges. I had to organize that sort of thing. And some of them decided to serve champagne. I don't think any of them had a full reception, but they wanted to have champagne. You have to work with protocol and sign up to use the eighth floor diplomatic reception rooms. And in this particular case it was the middle of winter, so we needed to make sure that we had somebody to watch the coats in the lobby when guests from the outside came in. There were three new officers who had just finished A-100 and were between training assignments. I needed two of them to escort the guests to the elevators and one to watch the coats. The first two JOs who reported chose to be the escorts, and the individual who showed up later was Larry Palmer, who's a very tall, handsome, imposing African American with a PhD. He was a little distressed that he was left watching the coats. He felt it was beneath him. And I said, "You know, Larry, you've got to learn in this business that you have to do whatever needs to be done and you can't get hung up on some of these things which seem beneath you at the time. Somebody needs to do it, you three are the stuckees and you got the short straw. So, you get to do the coats (*laughs*)." He subsequently became an ambassador at least twice, and we've become friends.

Q: Well now, could you sort of give a thumbnail description, you don't have to give names, but sort of the background of the people who you were particularly shepherding through?

CANAVAN: Yes, one of them was a retired one or two-star admiral. One had been Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and I can't remember what the third one did. They

were appointed to Barbados and several other island countries, Guyana, and the Bahamas.

Q: Well now, was there -- I mean were they -- did you find them sort of interested in figuring out what they were supposed to do and, you know, learning or --

CANAVAN: I would say yes, they were interested in learning. Initially I think their reaction was, "Well, you know, I've already had a distinguished career, I'm the president's choice to go to this place, so what else does anybody need to know about me?"

I explained that they would have a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee which would then recommend to the entire Senate to confirm or not. The Senate would be keenly interested in their qualifications as well as their knowledge of the country to which they aspired to be accredited. They were more receptive to receiving their briefings after that.

The former Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands advised me that the local Democratic Party wanted to present him with a bouquet of flowers at the swearing in, and told me he would like me to do that. And I said, "No, I don't think that's appropriate for me to do, but I will certainly arrange for somebody who's at the swearing in from the Democratic Party to do that." It all worked out pretty well.

Q: Did you get the feeling that these people you were working with were -- often a political appointee may sound sort of, you know, just a political pay-up. But sometimes they bring something to the table, experience and all. Did the ones you were dealing with, were they doing that?

CANAVAN: I agree with you. I am not averse to non-career appointees in principle, because I've seen some who are really outstanding. And I've seen some career officers who weren't very good ambassadors. So, my view is that not all career ambassadors are good, and not all non-career ambassadors are bad, but there needs to be a formal limit on the number of non-career ambassadors. In this case, I think the difficulty with these folks was that they were used to having a certain amount of stature. And frankly, the countries they were going to were not exactly on the front burner of the Latin American Bureau at the time. Consequently, they didn't get the kind of attention from the State Department that they expected. However, they were basically people who cared about representing the country, and the retired admiral had a service background. For the most part, they were conscientious about doing their jobs.

When I was in Europe just before I retired, the U.S. ambassador to Germany had a banking background and had contributed to Obama. However, he had lived and worked in banking in Frankfurt for five years. He and his wife and their four children all spoke German and he was an excellent ambassador. The embassy staff thought the world of him, and he was very effective with the Germans. Even as a very senior officer, on my

salary, I could not have afforded the wardrobe I would have needed to be an ambassador in some of the major western European capitals.

We also had a really outstanding ambassador in Romania, who was very close to Vice President Biden. The Romanians were significant contributors, considering the size of the country, to the ISAF (International Security Assistance Forces) in Afghanistan. But because CENTCOM (Central Command) and not European Command controlled who got what equipment, the Romanians were near the bottom of the list for getting MRAPs (Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected) vehicles to protect their troops. After a number of their troops were killed and wounded by improvised explosive devices, the ambassador called me wanting to know why the Romanians didn't have MRAPs. I advised him that we had asked CENTCOM to provide them to the Romanian forces, but was told none were available. The ambassador then called the White House and the Romanians went right up to the top of the list. Ambassadors don't call the White House directly very often, and that's something that a career officer normally isn't able to do, even though the ambassador is the president's personal representative. I do have serious concerns about the qualifications that the White House appointments office uses to select nominees, but again, I've seen some career officers who didn't make very good ambassadors either. And one wonders how they got through the selection process (*laughs*).

Q: Well, so after doing this for a while what, what did you do?

CANAVAN: I did that for three months. Got them all confirmed and headed off to their posts. Then I started the mid level course. I was in I believe the second iteration of the mid level course. My class started in February of 1982 and it lasted for five months.

Q: Yes.

CANAVAN: The idea was to bring mid level officers, most of us were FS-3s at the time, back to Washington to sort of round out our training and our experience before sending us off again. It was a shorter version of the military's Command and General Staff College. I thought the course was wonderful. Of course, I loved training, but there were some very impressive officers in my class and because it was a five-month course instead of only a six-week course like A-100, I made friends and contacts that were stronger than those I had made in A100. Among the people in my mid level course were Jim and Lauren Moriarty, Jim Jeffrey, Nancy Powell, Chuck English, and a number of other folks who did very well in the Foreign Service. Some of them were ambassadors in Europe when I was at European Command and it was really useful to have those contacts.

Q: Well, what, what was it designed to do?

CANAVAN: Well, it was designed to fill in the professional gaps in our geographic and functional policy expertise. A number of my classmates had spent their first two or three tours overseas and had not been exposed to the Washington policy-making apparatus. They were relatively narrowly focused geographically on a couple of countries. They had not had the exposure of the Washington policy machine, if you will. We had a lot of

impressive speakers, we did a number of exercises and had a lot more exposure to the military and military issues than had been the case in A100. I don't recall we did any travel, other than visiting agencies in Washington, but it was an excellent course. The one real difficulty, and the reason it only lasted about six or seven iterations, was that the class that started in July finished December when there were many fewer onward assignments available. For the class that started in February, most of them had to be curtailed from their current assignments. But those of us who came out in the summer had a much broader choice of assignments. This assignment problem meant that quite a few of the attendees were unhappy and started the course with a negative attitude.

Q: Well, it sounds in a way it sort of replicated the Senior Seminar.

CANAVAN: While there were some similarities, it was designed to give officers training and education much earlier in their careers, and it was mandatory for all mid-level officers rather than only 15 FSOs per year who attended the Senior Seminar. In my view, one of the problems with the Senior Seminar was by the time you got there, you didn't have much of a career left. Officers needed to be exposed to leadership, management, and policy issues much earlier in their careers.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Some participants in the Senior Seminar had no career left and retired at the end of the course which was a total waste of resources. The idea of networking with your colleagues and developing contacts and other agencies at the O3 level was, as I said, much more useful than waiting until you were a senior officer. When the Senior Seminar started it made sense because the officers in the Senior Seminar had generally spent the first 15 to 20 years of their career overseas, without the internet, and without coming back multiple times a year to Washington. Although because of home leave you had to come back for at least 20 work days between overseas assignments. In the '50s and '60s and even '70s the justification for the Senior Seminar was clearly there to expose future policymakers in Washington to domestic issues that affected foreign policy. That was great. But you know, by the 1980s and certainly 1990s with the advent of the Internet and the kind of communications we have now, it was really an anachronism. And in theory it was a great idea, but it was way too expensive for the amount of people in the State Department who were able to benefit. Towards the end, other agencies weren't sending their best people, and in some cases didn't send anyone at all. And when the navy wanted to send us a lieutenant commander, equivalent to an Army Major (*laughs*) we said no, this course is for senior officers, so we need at least a senior Navy Captain who is very likely going to be an Admiral. They said, "Well, either take her or you don't get anybody."

Also, the military was unable to provide the aircraft after 9/11 on which the course depended to be financially feasible. Once the Senior Seminar students and staff had to fly commercially, it became much too expensive to justify the small return for the State Department since only 15 State officers and 15 personnel from other agencies were able to participate per year.

Q: Well, while you were there you feel that you got a full flavor of what it was designed to do?

CANAVAN: The mid level course? Yes, I did.

Q: Well --

CANAVAN: It worked really well for me because I was coming off leave without pay and the short assignment in Caribbean Affairs. So, I wasn't in a position of having to curtail from another assignment to go to the mid level course.

Q: Well, then what -- when you got out of the course where'd you go?

CANAVAN: I was assigned as the deputy coordinator of the junior officer orientation program, A-100. I stayed at FSI for the next two years and eight months teaching along with Jim Morton and Glenn Monroe, and organizing the A-100 course. In those days there were no professional curriculum development staff at FSI. So, we put the course together ourselves. Jim and I, and then Glenn and I, taught a number of segments of the course, which they now outsource to contractors, skills such as how to write a reporting cable, or draft a memorandum of conversation. We had a very small staff; an FS0-1 coordinator, an FS0-2 deputy (me), a secretary and a person who called all the speakers once the coordinator and deputy set up the schedule for each course. We had many speakers from the Department and some from other agencies.

Q: That's pretty remarkable.

CANAVAN: Yeah. I think we did a pretty good job, too. I continued to follow the careers of many of our students and with a few exceptions they have done very well. Several of them were ambassadors in Europe when I served at the European Command which made my job there much easier.

Q: Well, did you have the feeling though, looking upon it, that the State Department really, what they went to do is hire very capable or at least people who were really capable of, of considerable promise, but really we didn't -- it was almost luck of the draw what was done with them. There wasn't much in the way of getting people, you know, to be good Foreign Service Officers.

CANAVAN: Well, when I taught the course it was five and a half weeks long, and we tinkered with it a bit. There was some political pressure from above to make sure there were certain things in the course. Obviously, one of the most important elements of A-100 is to introduce the new officers to the personnel and assignment system. Early in the course they were given a list of assignments, the same number as members of the class, so they knew someone in the class would be going to each one of those jobs. They were given the rules of bidding and were given a few days to submit their bids. Then it took the junior officer assignment division in HR about 3 weeks to make the assignments

and have the officers paneled. In the meantime, we were trying to teach them as much as we possibly could about the State Department, the Foreign Service, other government agencies, and some basics of skills they will need to have.

Depending on their first assignments they then go into more specialized training. As you remember, you went into the consular course, political officers went into political reporting class, econ officers into an econ reporting class, admin officers in the GSO training, et cetera. Also, depending on whether they needed language skills for their assignments and to get off of language probation, language training was of course factored in as well.

All of this bureaucratically took probably a minimum of five weeks. The difficulty is that there's so much information that the JOs need to absorb that at some point it stops sinking in (*laughs*). And you really have to be careful when you're running the course not to overload the talking heads to the extent that the junior officers tune out. At one point the department felt that officers weren't getting enough training in areas like the history of diplomacy, specific writing skills, and such, so, they added three weeks to the course to make it nine weeks. It was too long. The JOs were practically ready to mutiny by the end of the nine weeks. Once they received their assignments around week five, they really wanted to move into whatever training they needed to go to their assignments. They didn't want to continue orientation anymore. The average age of incoming officers has been 31 or 32 for quite some time, and almost all of them have advanced degrees and some work experience. They were anxious to get out there and do their jobs, not sit in a classroom.

Q: Well, what was your impression of the officers, the young officers who were coming down the line? Were they of a particular type, or what?

CANAVAN: They were mixed in some ways. Most coming in wanted to be political or econ officers and there were not enough positions. Some accepted appointments as consular or administrative officers thinking that they could change their specialization (known as cones) later, which was difficult. And some of them were unhappy campers. Also, when I was head of JO assignments, we were bringing people in without cones. Then they all wanted assignments in their potential cone of choice and that was very hard to manage. But I'll talk about that later. 95% of the folks we were getting were very impressive. They were smart, they were talented, they were interesting people. 5% of them had some personality or attitude issues which made me think they might not succeed, and there were 10 out of nearly 700 I would have washed out in A-100 had I had the authority to do that.

Q: Well, what—

CANAVAN: And only one of them got tenured (*laughs*). He turned out to be an outstanding officer. The other nine didn't get tenured.

Q: Well, what did you feel was sort of the overriding characteristic of the ones who weren't going to make it? In your impression?

CANAVAN: First of all, I mean one characteristic, which I really like about the Foreign Service is that we're, we're an eclectic group. But some of them were really on the fringe of that. One guy showed up with a leather-studded dog collar and a sleeveless leather vest (no shirt) for a class social event. I thought to myself, this guy is not going to fit in (*laughs*). And it wasn't a joke. I mean that was his thing when he was not wearing a suit at the office. There were a couple of people who were just difficult to deal with. One woman couldn't get along with any of her colleagues. At one of our off sites at Harpers Ferry, she didn't like the food that was served to her in the cafeteria line. She yelled at the server and actually threw the food back. We had one young man who clearly had falsified his medical clearance report, because he had some mental health issues which were not in the report. If that had been known he would not have gotten into the Foreign Service. He made up bizarre stories all the time. If the stories he told his colleagues were true he never should have passed the security background investigation. Although he had never been outside of a 100-mile radius of his home in Baltimore, he spoke both Greek and Spanish because his mother was Peruvian and his father was Greek. He behaved very strangely sometimes. My parents came to visit and I brought them to the office to see the ceremony when the assignments were given out.

Q: Oh yes.

CANAVAN: And this young man was assigned to Athens, because he spoke Greek. Both Glenn Monroe, the course coordinator, and I felt that he shouldn't go overseas right away, but he was assigned to Athens. My mother, trying to be friendly, went up to him after the ceremony when we were having a little reception. And she said, "Oh, you're so lucky, what a nice assignment you have." She said, "When my husband and I visited our daughter in Istanbul we made a side trip to Greece and we just loved it."

And he looked at my mother and said, "Excuse me Madam, it's not Istanbul. It's *Constantinople*."

Q: Oh God.

CANAVAN: And my, my mother came over to me and she said, "Oh, I'm so embarrassed. I," -- and she told me about the conversation.

And I said, "Mother, you're right. It's Istanbul. Excuse me."

And I walked over to this kid. And I grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and took him into my office. I said, "What are you doing? You really embarrassed my mother and you know what you said to her was totally incorrect. What is your problem?" And he would do things like that.

After that incident, Glenn and I recommended that he not go overseas, because we felt that he was not stable. Med (Medical) decided he could go if he took his medication. Well, once he got over there, he did not take his medication, and was observed twice getting into cars of Russian diplomats. His security clearance was pulled and he was sent home. Needless to say, he did not get tenured. Sometimes, we observed behavior that clearly was inappropriate, but the system was so anxious for a body, especially a body that spoke Greek, in this case, that they ignored our concerns.

Q: Yeah, but I mean you're seeing a person in performance.

CANAVAN: Yes.

Q: And you know, there in performance among their peers. And it's always the difference between a genius and -- but I think most of us are in a position where you can say, "Gee, this guy's awfully smart, but needs some, some training or counseling." And other times, "This guy's really just not suitable." Was anybody asking questions, you know, going to you and saying, "How do you think So and So will do?"

CANAVAN: I think there's resistance on the part of HR to make any snap judgments after having spent thousands of dollars to test and screen people. And in fact, about 95% of the officers we hire get tenured. About half of the 5% who don't get tenured self-select themselves out because it is not for them, and the other half are denied tenure for poor performance. So, for the most part, the system works pretty well, but, my personal view is that there needs to be more consideration of how officers perform while they're in orientation and training before they go overseas. And I'm sure it's harder now with some of the lawsuits that the State Department has lost.

One mistake I never repeated was talking one new officer out of resigning. She was having serious anxiety about going overseas and she called me at home one night and said, "What do you need to do to resign?"

And I said, "Oh, you don't want to resign. Let's talk about this and see what we can do." I was able to have her assigned to Washington for her first tour.

I should have let her resign, because she never went overseas and ended up not being tenured because she didn't go overseas. It is not an easy career and it's not for everybody.

Q: Did the fact -- or maybe it wasn't as apparent then -- but the fact that, you know, this, the Foreign Service is not a quiet profession. I mean people are going to end up shooting at you or death threats, all of us -- or most of us had had you know really very unpleasant experiences. That if you were a Civil Servant you would never have.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: But what this made sort of manifest to the class, or?

CANAVAN: Oh yeah, we talked about that quite a bit. We had a panel of officers who'd been out for their first and/or second tour and were back in Washington. They talked to the new officers about some of their experiences. We told them to tell the A-100 class what happened. Some of them had really bad bosses, some of them had experiences, as you say, where they were in physical danger. And others just had awful things happen to them, like their household effects getting stuck in the Suez Canal when it closed (*laughs*), and they lost everything. We didn't try to sugarcoat it.

The women had some specific concerns, particularly how they would be treated by colleagues, bosses and overseas in the countries to which they would be assigned. They were also interested in family issues. Most of the younger officers were single, and they wanted to know what would happen if they married, etc.

I remember that one man actually resigned less than a week into A-100. The HR folks came in and explained the bidding process and then passed out the list of posts on which the class could bid. One guy said, "But Paris isn't on the list." The assignment officer replied that, no, Paris was not on the list because there are no junior officer vacancies in Paris. Those assignments usually go to second or third tour officers.

And the guy said, "Well, I joined the Foreign Service to go to Paris."

He was told that he may have the opportunity to serve in Paris at some point in his career, but not on his first tour. So, he quit.

Q: Well, just as well.

CANAVAN: One wonders what he was thinking when he was told before he entered that he would have to be worldwide available, and signed a document acknowledging that on the first day of class. Why did this guy somehow think that he was going to be different and spend his entire career in Paris? It was really pretty funny.

Q: Well, tell me. How did you treat a case of a woman -- this is -- when were you doing this now?

CANAVAN: 1982 through '85.

Q: OK. This was -- if I recall correctly this is an era of awareness of sexual harassment.

CANAVAN: Yes, yes, that was part of the Women's Class Action suit, but the issue was much more about discrimination than harassment. I don't know if you remember Allison Palmer who got the ball rolling as far as the women's class action suit. She won her first individual discrimination suit because she wanted to do the labor reporting job in Addis Ababa. The ambassador sent in a message saying, "A woman can't do this job."

Q: Yep.

CANAVAN: Those attitudes were definitely out there. There was legitimate concern on the part of women that they would not have equal opportunities for assignments and promotions. That's one of the reasons Jim Morton selected me to be the deputy coordinator, because previously there had always been two male political officers who ran A-100.

Q: Ah-ha, yes that --

CANAVAN: He said to himself, "We need a woman and we need a consular officer. Every member of the class, regardless of cone, would do at least one year of consular work, and 25 to 30 % of each class were women. He wanted someone who could demonstrate that consular officers could actually walk and chew gum at the same time. So, I was a two-fer. I was the consular officer and I was the woman. That was how I got the job.

Q: OK, well I mean look, a female officer comes up to you at this point and says, "OK, I'm a woman. Am I going to be harassed? Am I going to have this? What's the future hold for me?" What would you tell them?

CANAVAN: I actually talked to the women about this and told them that there are still some folks in the Foreign Service who don't feel that women can be political and econ officers. When I came in women were being pushed into consular and admin cones, whether they wanted it or not. I chose to be a consular officer and I never regretted that. But there were a lot of women who had the credentials and wanted to be political or economic officers. I told the women that there were also some very good officers out there who would help them be successful. I suggested that they find mentors and started looking at assignments by the substance of the job, not the physical location. The class action suit was working its way through the court system, and that would ultimately benefit women. I recommended that they consult an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor if they encountered discrimination, but I did not try to tell them it didn't exist.

We talked about how even though women no longer had to resign if we got married, that it was still more difficult for a woman to juggle a family and a career. Unfortunately, that is still true. I was really lucky because with the exception of Dick Moose, who didn't like me because he thought I was a "goody-goody," I had bosses who were very keen to give me responsibility and to be mentors and help me deal with the system. State did not have a formal mentoring program at the time, so I sought out more senior officers on my own. I didn't realize I was doing this at the time, but I was really recruiting mentors. They included women like Roz Ridgeway, Joan Clark, Mary Ryan and April Glaspie, but also men like George Moose, Dennis Keogh and Arnie Raphael.

Q: Well, was that really --would you say-- because you were involved in the direction of the Foreign Service and all much more than many other people who were worried about Afghanistan. I mean you were thinking about junior officers and what have you. Was

there the equivalent of a woman's mafia or whatever you want to call it, that was-- I mean informally or not that was in operation?

CANAVAN: Well actually, when I was quite junior it was sort of the opposite. Many of the women who were successful were single, and were not necessarily keen to help other women succeed. Their attitude seemed to be "I had to scratch and claw my way to the top. That's how you need to do it."

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: I was fortunate because I had contact with some of the women who were anxious to be helpful. I would say it was not until maybe the mid to late '80s before women started thinking about mentoring and helping other women. But that's all changed now. There's much more interest in the whole concept of mentoring and in fact HR started more formal mentoring programs.

Q: Yeah, I, I sensed something of this when I started this oral history program back in the mid '80s.

CANAVAN: Uh-huh.

Q: That, you know, I was trying to get across the section accounts, so obviously I was going after women who've reached senior ranks, which as you well know is very -- were very few at that time.

CANAVAN: Yes.

Q: They seemed very reluctant. And almost all of them didn't want to share their thoughts or concerns and all. I mean who are you to ask these questions? Now of course it's, you know, it's _____ for everyone. I mean, you know, we can talk about just about everything.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: But it was really -- I found the women quite reserved.

CANAVAN: Yes, I think so. And I think it was also an attitude which still exists to some extent that women feel that they have to be tougher and more masculine than their male counterparts to be competitive. That never worked for me. I really never tried it because I didn't need to. It was not my style and I was successful just being myself and not trying to be something I wasn't in order to be competitive.

Q: Yeah. I came up basically through consular ranks and there, women sort of -- as you well know -- dominated. And so, you know, I had a healthy respect for women's accomplishments because they were often my bosses.

CANAVAN: Yeah.

Q: I mean it was a different world. But did you -- I mean as you say, you were picked because you were both a woman and a consular officer. Did you feel the -- don't know what you'd call it -- but the prejudice against being a consular officer, you know, consular officers were -- that was a non-substantive job.

CANAVAN: Lower than pond scum.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: *(laughs)* I did encounter it from time to time.

Q: Yeah. Today is the 24th of January, 2014. And I think we left off, you were leaving the officer training business and you were off to work in the Consular Affairs Bureau.

CANAVAN: Yeah, teaching -- I was the deputy coordinator of the junior officer course, otherwise known as A-100. And I went to Overseas Citizen Services in the Consular Affairs Bureau where I was the Latin America division chief. We handled all the American Citizen Services issues for Americans living or traveling abroad, including supporting those who were responsible for deaths, arrests, and welfare and whereabouts. We backstopped them and we also handled reports of death, reports of birth, and citizenship adjudications when they were too complicated for the posts overseas.

Q: It sounds like quite a -- particularly Latin America, you really must have had all sorts of problems, didn't you?

CANAVAN: Oh yes, it was really an interesting job. Overseas Citizen Services is staffed with two-thirds Civil Service employees and one-third Foreign Service officers. Many of the Civil Service employees are *extremely* experienced. From my perspective they were a wonderful resource for learning about issues having to do with acquisition and loss of citizenship, foreign adoptions and other important issues. I really enjoyed that tour. I was in that position from March of 1985 through March of 1987. During that period, we had a number of airplane hijackings, hostage takings in Beirut and also you may recall the terrorist hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship. An American in a wheelchair, Mr. Klinghoffer, was murdered and pushed overboard by the hijackers, and the incident caused all sorts of problems, both with the government of Egypt, which told our ambassador that there were no Americans who'd been hurt or injured, and also subsequently with the Italian government who released the terrorists who were most likely responsible for the hijacking and the killing of Mr. Klinghoffer. There was also the hijacking of a Pan Am 747 in Karachi, Pakistan, and the hijacking of the TWA flight that ended up in Beirut after stopping in several places. The TWA hijackers killed a Navy enlisted seaman and threw him off the airplane. These were very high-profile cases and our office staffed the 24-hour task forces in the Operation Center during this period.

Q: You were there from when to when?

CANAVAN: I was there from March of 1985 through March of 1987.

Q: Well, you know, I recall -- particularly when the -- it was quite a bit earlier, but in Khartoum the taking of hostages, Curt Moore and --

CANAVAN: Cleo Noel and --

Q: And we had a very rigid rule about not talking to people, not talking to kidnapers on this, or not paying ransom and all, which turned out to be essentially a mistake. The idea is, you know, you don't deal with desperate people in that matter. But what, sort of, did you have particular guidelines and what did you do when somebody had hostages?

CANAVAN: There was a policy that the U.S. government would not pay ransom, and we discouraged family members from paying ransom but sometimes they do. After what happened in Khartoum we didn't come out so forcefully and say we wouldn't even talk to the terrorists. But we would also not cave into them either. And of course we were primarily dealing with the families of the hostages as opposed to the policy issues surrounding how to deal with the hostage takers. Our job was to focus on the non-official American hostages and their families, to maintain regular contact with them and let them know if there were any changes in the situation.

Q: Well, did you feel under particular pressure, given the sensitivity of all these things and past experiences about how you dealt with the families? Because the families, after the Lockerbie business --

CANAVAN: The crash of Pan Am 103 changed the entire way we dealt with the families. First of all, after Lockerbie we were frankly much more solicitous. We were also very careful whenever remains were returned to the U.S. that they had flags on the coffins. It changed our whole focus of how we considered the hostages, because these Americans were not being held hostage for ransom in most cases. They were being held hostage for political reasons, reasons that had to do with our foreign policy. There was more a sense of direct responsibility for them being taken hostage than I think we had before that.

Q: Well, other than hostage taking, what about prisoners? Did you deal with prisoners?

CANAVAN: We dealt with a lot of prisoner cases, yes. Mostly the families of prisoners. Usually the Consular Sections overseas would visit the prisoners on a regular basis and would be the ones who were contact with the families. But sometimes we would also check in just to make sure that they knew we were keeping track of the cases and we were usually responsible for responding to Congressional inquiries about the status of prisoners. Following the release of the movie "Midnight Express" about an American in a Turkish prison for trafficking drugs, the State Department started negotiating prisoner

exchange treaties with a number of countries which had harsh sentences for drug offenses.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Turkey was the first one actually, and we also had one with Mexico. One element of the Prisoner Transfer Treaty is that there must be no appeals pending and any fines must be paid off before the prisoner can be transferred, either from overseas back to the United States or from the United States back to another country. It's not just Americans coming back to the States. They must serve out their sentences. They can't immediately be paroled by an American court. This came up almost immediately when one prisoner, who was originally from Connecticut I believe, came back. A Connecticut court declared his sentence null and void and was going to release him. The State Department went to court and said, "This is an international treaty. It supersedes anything the States would do. If we don't follow through with the agreement, then no more prisoners are going to get transferred."

Q: Well, how did -- in practice how did that work out?

CANAVAN: It worked out fine. During my next assignment in Tijuana I had a couple of prisoners who had been air traffic controllers who lost their jobs when President Reagan declared their strike illegal and said that if they didn't return to work they'd be fired. These two guys got fired and they decided they would use their expertise as air traffic controllers to smuggle cocaine into the United States from Colombia on a Learjet. The Learjet developed mechanical problems and made an emergency landing in Baja California. They ended up in prison and I or a member of my staff would visit them at least quarterly. The DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) was very keen to get them back to the States so they could question them about their contacts. Part of my job as the ACS chief in Tijuana was to talk them into transferring back to the States. Once the prisoners applied to transfer, it took a few months until the next group of prisoners was being transferred. In Mexico, we usually had one or two transfers a year, and we worked with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons.

You may recall there were some prisoner riots in the U.S. in 1987. They were Cuban prisoners from the Mariel boatlift who were going to be sent back to Cuba and they didn't want to go. They rioted and took over the Atlanta Penitentiary and another one. Because of the damage that had been done, there was less space for new prisoners, so the Department of Justice put a hold on prisoner transfers. When we advised the prisoners in Tijuana that they would have to wait until there was space in a U.S. prison, they went on a hunger strike. I reported that to Consular Affairs in Washington and copied the Department of Justice. Because of our report, the Justice Department reversed itself and decided to continue the transfers. Joan Clark, who was Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, was not very happy to receive my cable, the subject of which was, "Midnight Express Revisited." But it got attention and the situation was rectified.

Q: Well, did you find some prisoners would take a look at the situation and figure out, you know, I'm better off serving out the term than trying to get back to the States?

CANAVAN: Well, some of them did. And I didn't blame them. Some of the prisoners we visited were in La Paz, the Mexican prison in La Paz, Baja California. And the prison down there was open air. The weather was delightful. Family members could come and go. If a prisoner had money, he or she could have food sent in from local restaurants. Although it was about 800 miles from the U.S. Life was not too bad compared to being in a federal penitentiary in the United States. Some of them figured that out and declined to transfer.

Q: What were sort of your greatest problems during that period?

CANAVAN: When I was in Overseas Citizen Services that first time, one of our biggest issues was loss of nationality for American citizens who were born with dual nationality. Some countries do not recognize dual nationality and Mexico was one of them at the time. Mexico has since changed its law, but at the time, Mexico required that its citizens renounce any other nationality at the age of 18 to receive a passport or to study at the national university without paying the high tuition paid by foreign students.

Many Mexican families crossed the border to receive better medical care than they could get at home, including having their children in U.S. hospitals. Those children acquired U.S. citizenship by being born in the U.S., but the parents would also obtain a fraudulent Mexican birth certificate for the child. At the age of 18, they would sign the Certificate of Mexican Nationality renouncing all other nationalities, and the Mexican authorities would then forward that certificate to the State Department. That was sufficient under U.S. citizenship law at the time to take away their citizenship. We handled many of these cases, and one of my responsibilities was signing the Certificates of Loss of U.S. Nationality for these people. That has changed because the Mexican law now allows dual nationality.

We were also beginning to have issues with foreign adoptions and parental child abductions. The Hague Convention on Parental Child Abduction had not been created yet, and these were really difficult cases, particularly if the country where the children were taken did not recognize dual nationality. Subsequently, when Maura Harty was Managing Director of Overseas Services, she started the Office of Children's Issues, which dealt with both adoptions and parental child abduction. And that office has grown logarithmically since that period, which was mid 90's. Of course, deaths and arrests and welfare and whereabouts cases were always out there, so I think it's basically the same kind of work.

Q: Well, did you find that other countries responded well to our laws? Were they in a way sort of glad to get rid of a foreigner, for instance?

CANAVAN: Sometimes yes and sometimes no. And sometimes it was surprising the countries, including some of the Western European countries, that weren't very

sympathetic. Again, the first time I was in Overseas Citizen Services as the Latin America division chief I was fortunately mostly focused on Latin America. Those countries primarily have a civil legal code, Napoleonic code, which basically means you're guilty until you prove yourself innocent. Under Common Law, which we have, an individual is presumed innocent until the state proves him or her guilty. Civil code is a very different kind of mindset that Americans aren't used to. And of course, there's the attitude that, "Well, they can't do that to me. I'm an American." Lots of Americans don't seem to understand that if you are in a different country and you violate their law -- or they're accusing you of having violated their law, your American citizenship is irrelevant. Both prisoners and their families had a hard time dealing with that.

Back in those days we didn't have consular information sheets and we didn't warn people about situations the way we do now. That was partly because ambassadors and DCMs didn't want to ruffle the feathers and annoy the governments to which they were accredited. Their reaction was that we can't put out a travel advisory saying this country is dangerous to come to because that will upset the host government and we won't have good relations with them. Thanks to some very strong assistant secretaries, including Joan Clark and Mary Ryan, Consular Affairs finally convinced the powers that be that American citizens needed this information and that we had an obligation to provide it, regardless of what the host government thought about it. And if the host government didn't like it then they could fix the problem. But we had to sensitize ambassadors and geographic assistant secretaries to the fact that protecting American citizens was one of their most important responsibilities, if not their most important responsibility.

That attitude changed significantly from the time I was first in Overseas Citizen Services during the mid '80s to when I came back in 1996 as managing director. We now had consular information sheets and we put out regular travel advisories and travel warnings. We still got push back from time to time and there were always some ambassadors who were reluctant to request authorized departure from the State Department, because they thought that might destabilize the situation even more. But you can't tell American citizens they need to leave because the place is dangerous, if you're not taking appropriate steps to protect your own staff and dependents by requesting authorized departure or ordered departure. Occasionally, the State Department would declare ordered departure over the ambassador's objections, and that made the ambassador look pretty bad. Actually, one of the things I learned from my two tours in Overseas Citizen Services was that if things start looking bad, you need early on to ask for authorized departure. They may not grant it, or if they do people may not leave, but authorized departure is voluntary so people don't have to. But at least you've demonstrated as an ambassador to the State Department that you have the appropriate level of concern for your non-emergency staff and your family members.

Q: Well, how did you find consular operations? Were they sort of front and center with the State Department, or did you feel off to one side?

CANAVAN: I think when I first started doing consular work, and even to some extent my first tour in OCS (Overseas Citizen Services), I think they were off to the side. I may

have mentioned the conversation I had with the famous Arnie Raphel who was trying to recruit me for a desk job in NEA. I was in OCS at the time and he said, “You need a real job.”

And I said, “Arnie, I’ve got a real job.”

And he sort of pooh-poohed that, until we worked together on a number of these task forces up on the seventh floor when we had all these hostage takings, hijackings and evacuations. At one point when we were working late in the operations center, he said “I have to apologize, you do have a real job.” I think there’s been a shift in the department to recognize how important consular work is to our overall foreign policy goals. Much of what the American public thinks about the State Department comes from their interaction with consular affairs, because the public rarely interacts with anybody in the political section or the ambassador. If they have an issue, such as an emergency overseas, their contact with the State Department is basically through the consular section. The work that we do is very important in engaging the American public.

The other thing that I think has changed is that there’s recognition that the early leadership and management experience that consular, management, and public diplomacy officers have makes them much more competitive for jobs like DCM and office director that require more than just policy expertise. That early experience benefits officers as they become more senior. Senior positions like ambassador and DCM are no longer viewed as solely policy jobs, but as leadership and management jobs. The officers who wish to be competitive for those positions need to have the skills that consular and management and PD (public diplomacy) officers frequently learn much earlier in their careers than political or econ officers do.

Q: How did you find the role of congress in what you were doing?

CANAVAN: We received many congressional inquiries. Probably 99% of the congressional inquiries I’ve ever dealt with during my career came from consular work. And some of them were obviously demonstrating to their constituents that they were doing something. They didn’t really expect us to issue a visa to somebody who was not qualified, but they wanted to show that they were doing something on behalf of their constituents. The first time I was in OCS, we had a congressional inquiry that involved the death of a young woman overseas. She was in her twenties and I don’t even remember what part of the world it was. But when we called her family to let them know, we also had to ask for guidance on the disposition of their daughter’s remains, and advised them that we would need them to send funds to take care of it.

Now, if somebody dies unexpectedly in the States the family probably has to start from scratch in making and paying for funeral arrangements. The family was very upset that their daughter had died, understandably so. However, they contacted their congressman to complain that they should not have to deal with transferring money during their time of grief and that the U.S. government should pay to repatriate their daughter’s remains. Their congressman sent us a letter saying, “This is really terrible. American citizens

should have the right to be buried in the United States and the State Department should pay for it so that families don't have to deal with the anguish of handling all these financial arrangements at the same time they're grieving for their loved one." So, I was tasked to do a study to see how many Americans had died overseas in the last five years and what the average cost for returning their remains to the United States was. Eight thousand Americans had died each year during this period, and the average cost of repatriating the remains was \$5,000 per person. Sometimes it was a lot more, sometimes it was much less depending on where they had died, of course, and what services were required. Shipping home a box of ashes costs a lot less than shipping home an embalmed body in a casket. But the average was \$5,000. This was, again, in the mid '80s, but if you do the math that's 40 million dollars a year.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: I drafted up a response, which I think was signed by the assistant secretary. The letter suggested that if congress were to add \$40 million to the State Department's budget each year earmarked for repatriating remains we'll be happy to take care of it. Well, we never heard anything after that. Most people don't know that we are required by law to charge a fee for service that actually reflects the cost of that service. The exception is for the cost of emergency services. That cost is folded into the cost of a passport. We amortize the cost of emergency services across the total number of passports we issue. While the State Department does not pay for the preparation and shipment of remains, the passport fee does cover the consular officer's time in dealing with the death and organizing the shipment of remains, the preparation of a Consular Report of Death Abroad, and the paperwork necessary to allow the remains to enter the United States. But in the States you have to pay for all those services directly.

When I first went to Overseas Citizen Services I think there were three people who handled all of the death cases. They were the ones who notified the families and did the paperwork. That was all they did, death cases. When Overseas Citizen Services was reorganized, all of the tasks were divided up geographically. These days, with much better telephone and internet connections, a lot more of the work is done from the embassies themselves, rather than having it done from Washington.

Q: Oh, what about visa fees?

CANAVAN: After the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, we realized we needed a much more sophisticated computer system to check names of visa applicants. One that had an algorithm that could deal with different spellings of the same name, depending on what country they were from. In order to pay for this system, we instituted a visa application fee. You recall that we have always had visa fees based on reciprocity and it's usually based on how much the other country charges for visas for Americans, but that was charged only if the visa was issued.

And so, because of the application fee Consular Affairs was frankly bringing in a fair amount of money. And part of what we used the money for was to pay for a number of

positions, consular positions. Not all of them were paid for this way. But a certain number of them were. And because of that, Mary Ryan in particular started insisting that the Bureau of Consular Affairs have final say in the assignment of consular officers in chief of section, deputy chief of section, division chief jobs, that sort of thing. You know, HR could put a candidate forward and even the geographic bureau could put a candidate forward. But if it wasn't the person that CA wanted, chances are the person wouldn't get the job. And this irritated a lot of the geographic bureaus, because they frequently had a favored candidate. However, Mary was very effective at making her case that since CA was paying for these positions, that CA should decide who among the qualified consular officers would get the position. CA also contributed significantly to FSI for consular training, and of course, consular officers were always part of the training staff as they were part of the training staff for almost all of our courses at FSI.

Q: Well, did you see the -- I mean you're really looking at pretty much a revolution in the consular business, which used to be sort of the backyard of the Foreign Service. Did you see a change in personnel in who applied and all?

CANAVAN: I need to phrase this carefully. When Secretary Powell asked to see me before he approved me to be director of the Foreign Service Institute, the first question he asked me was, "What do you think of the Foreign Service Exam?"

And I said, "Well, if you're hiring political and econ officers it's fine. That's where the focus is. And therefore, many of the people who do well on it want to come into the Foreign Service as political and econ officers. When some of them are offered an appointment as a consular, management or public diplomacy officer instead, they're unhappy about it. My view is that we have to come up with a way that we can hire people who want to do this work, and not feel that they've been disadvantaged." And I guess he liked my answer because I got the job.

I wanted to be a consular officer and the consular work I did was so important in my professional development. I strongly believe that it contributed significantly to my success in the other positions. Hiring people who want to be doing that work and who like doing that work is very important. I heard from the Board of Examiners when I took my oral that it was harder to come in as a consular officer because there were a lot of people who were trying to come in that way. They didn't think they could get in as political officers, so they were trying to come in as consular officers and then switch cones later. There are all sorts of people trying to game the system. But I actually wanted to be a consular officer. I like consular work and I had quite a number of colleagues who felt the same way. It's very important to have Foreign Service Officers making the visa decisions as opposed to a green eye shade clerical type just checking off boxes to determine who should be issued visas and who shouldn't. I talked to the more junior officers who worked for me, especially the ones who weren't consular officers, and tried to impress upon them how important the work was to the overall foreign policy goals of the United States. I think there's much more of a recognition that the leadership and management skills that one can develop as a consular officer, even if you're not consular

cone, will really help you later on. Paying attention to what you're doing, not just getting by but really learning as much as you can is extremely important.

To return to your question about the status of consular work in the foreign service, I think it is still not as respected as it should be. But I don't let it bother me anymore. It worked for me and I tried to pass on what I had learned to other people. People would ask me, "How did you get to be an ambassador?" And consular work was a huge part of my experience in a very positive way. When I was division chief of Junior Officer Assignments, I had to explain to many of the entering officers why it was necessary and important for them to serve a year or two as a consular officer. That discussion was easier after 9/11 I guess.

Q: Where were you when 9/11 happened?

CANAVAN: Where was I?

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: I had taken over as Director of the Foreign Service Institute in June of 2001 and I was in the cafeteria interviewing somebody for the job as Dean of the Leadership and Management School when the second plane flew into the World Trade Center. After the first plane hit everybody had thought maybe it was just an accident. And then of course the second plane went in and then shortly after that the plane went into the Pentagon. Main State was evacuated and I couldn't get my car out of the basement, so I started walking out to FSI which is 5 ½ miles west. Nobody had told me that the alternate operations center location was at FSI (*laughs*).

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: Grant Green and a bunch of 7th floor staff headed out there and I was fortunate that Ken Brill, a long-time colleague of mine, had managed to get his car out of the basement and offered me a ride to FSI. Of course, he lived in Maryland, but he was kind enough to take me out there. It took 45 minutes or so to get there when normally it was about a 10-minute drive. We sent all of the students and staff home with the exception of a few who were helping direct traffic, and others like my assistant Mary Ann Fisher, who helped support the op center staff. Mary Ann and a couple of others walked to the nearest fast food restaurant, almost a mile, to buy food for the people who worked over 24 hours straight. In the afternoon of 9/12, the op center moved back to Main State and I was able to retrieve my car from the basement.

Q: Well, I was wondering whether I shouldn't have asked that question then, or whether your timing was such that you're dealing with the consular affairs that you moved directly to the FSI?

CANAVAN: No. I was at FSI July of '82 through, through the end of February, beginning of March '85. And then I was in Overseas Citizen Services from March '85 to March '87.

I took 12 weeks of Spanish in preparation for my assignment as the American Citizen Services (ACS) chief in Tijuana. That was a wonderful assignment. First of all, I had a great boss, Larry Colbert. I was promoted to FS-01 only a few months after I arrived, but even though it was an FS-02 job, I decided to stay for three years. And it didn't hurt my career at all.

We did so much more than ACS work. Thanks to Larry, we made sure that all of the officers had reporting portfolios, because we had no reporting officers at post. And we made sure that everybody was cross-trained throughout the three consular functions, NIV, IV (immigrant visa), and American Citizen services so that they could take time to do their reporting and somebody else could fill in as needed for them. We had very good morale and we did some really interesting reporting. In 1989, the first PAN (Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)) candidate for governor of Baja California not only won the election but was allowed by the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party) government to take office. Other places PAN candidates previously had won their elections, but the PRI ignored the election results and declared themselves the winner. I knew the new governor very well because we had an outreach program with Ensenada, which was a big destination for American tourists who got in trouble (*laughs*). I worked very closely with then Mayor Russo and his staff. So right after he was elected, I called up and asked if I could come over to meet with the new governor. Larry Colbert, the consul general, wasn't in town, so I offered the acting consul general the opportunity to meet with the new governor. He declined, so the public affairs officer, Anne Callaghan (currently consul general in Vancouver) and I went to Mexicali, the state capital. We saw the governor and we drafted a detailed reporting cable. It apparently impressed Washington quite a bit. Fortunately, Ambassador Negroponte and his DCM did not require us to clear our reporting with them before it went to Washington.

At the beginning of the year we submitted a post reporting plan to the embassy in Mexico City which indicated that we intended to write 12 cables, primarily on the election but on other issues as well. We were advised by the counselor for consular affairs that our plan was probably too ambitious. Well, that year, with all the election-related reporting we did, as well as our reporting on other issues, we sent in 172 reporting cables.

Q: You're kidding.

CANAVAN: And apparently, we had fairly wide readership in Washington. We scooped the embassy on Mexico establishing diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Because the Catholic Church and the clergy had sided with the oligarchy during the Mexican Revolution, Mexico had never had diplomatic relations with the Vatican. And in fact, clergy could not wear their habits in public, nor could they participate in politics at all. But one of our officers, Dede Hollowell, and the consul general used to have breakfast once a month with the bishop of Tijuana. Well, this one time he said, "You'd probably be interested to know that the government of Mexico is about to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican." We reported the conversation and the embassy thought it was

amusing, but incorrect. It turned out that our reporting was accurate and we got a big kick out of that.

Our junior officers had a lot of fun and we got a lot of good feedback from end users in Washington for our efforts. The reporting broke up the tedious work on the visa line and the junior officers got some good experience. Because of Larry's efforts with cross-border political, economic and cultural issues, my responsibilities were much greater than just the American Citizen Services work, which was extensive all by itself. Part of our American Citizen Services work involved helping insurance companies recover stolen American vehicles which ended up in Mexico. It was mostly automobiles, but also aircraft and boats which were occasionally stolen, usually in conjunction with drug smuggling. We worked with the California Highway Patrol Mexico liaison group, a bunch of really super young officers, all of whom spoke Spanish. Our responsibility was to verify the ownership documents to recover the vehicles in Mexico. When I left post the California Highway Patrol and the Automobile Insurance Association gave me an award which said I had been instrumental in recovering over 2,000 vehicles that had been stolen in California and taken to Mexico during my tour. It made me feel good, but it unfortunately represented only about 10% of the vehicles that were actually stolen. I loved the variety in ACS work. We worked with a lot of interesting people on both sides of the border on cross-cultural issues and on economic development issues. I worked very closely with some of the honorary consuls representing other countries who worked in San Diego. Although I've loved all my tours, I've never had a bad tour, Stu. People would say, "Oh my God, three years in Tijuana, that must have been awful." And it wasn't. It was fascinating.

Q: Well, let's talk a bit about the government in Tijuana. What was your impression of how the system worked there?

CANAVAN: Well, it was interesting because the druggies had not taken over yet. And actually, the sister of the mayor was our senior FSN at the consulate. Well brought up young women in Latin America normally do not work. That's considered inappropriate. And they live at home until we get married. The exception -- in Tijuana at least -- was working at the American consulate. That was considered to be quite acceptable for young ladies in Tijuana. And the locals were *really* lovely people. We had fabulous FSNs. As I said, we knew the mayor very well because his sister worked for us. And we worked very closely with the police chief and other officials. There was some systemic corruption because, for instance, policemen were only paid about \$100 a month and they were expected to augment their incomes by charging fines for real or imagined traffic violations. The new governor tripled or quadrupled the state judicial police salaries to try to help do something about that. A certain level of corruption was tolerated by the population who paid "fees" to obtain services. 10% was an acceptable fee, but anything over that was considered a bribe. I asked a businessman how they determined that 10% was acceptable. He replied, "Well, that's just the way it's been."

Then the drug people started migrating from Mexico City. Several local journalists began writing about their nefarious activities and a couple of them were murdered. The quality

of life deteriorated and it became more dangerous by the time I left post in July 1990, despite the efforts of the new governor. I'm not sure I'd even go down there myself now.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: It's really too bad because I so enjoyed Baja California. People down there were really nice.

Q: Well, I would think that service in a border place would have a pernicious effect on officers. Because one, you're talking about dealing with drunk Americans -- particularly drunk American males who go to drink and get laid, you know, not the nicest type of person. And on the other hand, you know, Mexicans applying for visas who are essentially lying to the consular officer. This strikes me as a, a very --

CANAVAN: You've got bad guys on both sides. Actually, we did do a lot of visas. But you know, the people who were planning to go across illegally for the most part didn't bother applying for visas. They would just find a coyote to get them across. Our visa cases weren't as bad as you, as you might think. Also, back in those days we had a border crossing card that sometimes people had had since they were kids. There was no expiration date, so you'd look at these border crossing cards and you'd see a photo of a 12-year-old kid and the person standing in front of you is 35 (*laughs*). They were very well worn. The Mexicans who actually lived in Tijuana, the Tijuanses, didn't want to go to the States to work illegally. They wanted to live in Baja California. What they wanted to do was shop in the U.S. I once spoke to an official from the Chamber of Commerce for South San Diego County, and even in the mid to late '80s, Mexicans spent over two billion dollars a year in San Diego. They would come up to shop. One of the fanciest shopping malls with Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom was only a few miles from the San Diego Airport. Women from Mexico City would arrive on a morning flight, spend the whole day shopping and then they'd get on a plane and go back to Mexico City that night. They spent a *huge* amount of money.

Mexicans who lived just across the border would shop at Ralph's supermarket and what is now Costco in Chula Vista, and 95% of the license plates in those parking lots were from Baja California. Tijuana is the second largest city on the West Coast of North America, but has relatively few services itself because traditionally Mexicans who could afford it always came to shop or visit the doctor in San Diego. And as long as they can do that, they have no desire to move to the U.S.

There was no international moving company in Tijuana, so when I packed out, the State Department hired a regular trucking company to come in and pack me out. They did a great job. All of my furniture and boxes made it across the border. I know because I was there and checked them all off. Then United Van Lines lost a number of boxes and a twin mattress before it arrived in Washington.

Q: Well, did you have a fairly good method of sorting out who were the shoppers and who were the illegals?

CANAVAN: I thought we did a pretty good job. I didn't do visas there, but the visa section did a good job. I was fairly impressed until unfortunately one of my FSNs was caught selling counterfeit visas. They weren't real visas, but he had somehow managed to duplicate a visa somewhere else and was selling them for about \$500. And diplomatic security tried to do a sting operation, but it didn't work. While they did not have sufficient evidence to prosecute him in the U.S., they had enough to fire him. So, they came in one day and they said, "Pack up your stuff. You're out of here. We don't ever want to see your face again." Eddie was an interesting guy. He was a Lebanese Mexican (*laughs*) and performed magic with getting Americans out of jail. We were really sorry that he felt compelled to augment his salary by selling fake visas. But you know, that's always a temptation with consular work. The problem is at some point you're going to get caught. There's no way to avoid that.

Q: Yeah, and --

CANAVAN: And it's not worth it.

Q: Yeah. Well, tell me. On arrest cases, how were Americans treated who were arrested? I mean were these real arrests, or, or what.

CANAVAN: For the most part they were. My experience is at least 95% of Americans who are in jail overseas did something to deserve being in jail. They may not deserve the lengthy sentences that they get, but most of them have done something illegal. As you point out, in Tijuana a lot of the arrest cases were just drunk and disorderly kinds of things. And normally a friend or relative would come in in a day or two and pay their fine to get them out. We had almost 20% of the arrest cases worldwide in our consular district. And we checked five jails every day, including weekends. We had an FSN who did it Monday through Friday, and the duty officer did it Saturday and Sunday. I was terribly naive, but what was a bit of a shock to me was how many young people -- I mean middle school kids -- had fake IDs and would come down not just to have a beer or two, but to get smashed. And most of the time their parents had no idea they were in Mexico. And when we would call to tell them that little Johnny was arrested and is in a Mexican jail, the parents of course would be *appalled* that their kids were in Mexico.

I spoke with one father who I think was a chief petty officer in the Navy. I had just visited his daughter in jail on a Saturday morning. She had apparently been at a club and was teasing some guy and grabbed his wallet. He had taken his wallet out of his pocket, and she threw it on the ground. By the time he got his wallet back there was no money in it and he pressed charges. So, she was taken off to jail for theft. The father asked me if she was safe in jail.

And I said, "Do you mean will she be injured or molested while she's in jail?"

And he said, "Yeah."

And I said, "No, she won't be."

And he said, "OK, I'm just going to let her sit there for a day or so."

I was the duty officer that weekend and I checked on her three times a day to make sure she was OK (*laughs*). I didn't want anything to happen to her after I had told him she would be fine. There was actually very little mistreatment unless someone had committed a terrible crime.

We had a horrible case where the 4-year-old American citizen daughter of a Mexican woman with a green card who lived in San Diego was brutally molested by the mother's boyfriend who was in the States illegally. They brought her down to a hospital in Tijuana because they knew if they took her to one in San Diego they would be arrested. They were arrested anyway. We medevaced the child to the States, but tragically her internal injuries were so serious that she died.

Q: Oh.

CANAVAN: The boyfriend and the mother went to jail in Tijuana and the boyfriend didn't last a month in the Mexican prison. As soon as the other prisoners found out what he'd done, that was the end of him.

We had a young man who forgot he had a pistol in his glove compartment, so when he was stopped by the police he was arrested. If a weapon is a nine-millimeter or larger it's considered a military weapon and smuggling military weapons is a mandatory minimum five-year sentence in Mexico. The judge was very sympathetic. He knew the kid was not trying to smuggle a weapon. But he said he couldn't do anything until after the trial. It took eight months for the trial to take place, and all the while this kid's in jail. We used to visit him about once every two weeks. He had a great attitude about making the best of his situation. He set up a chess club and got along with everybody. We used to take him food and vitamins on a regular basis. After every visit, we called his parents in Colorado, who had a recording on their phone complaining that their son was being deprived of his constitutional right to bear arms. After trying to explain to the parents on numerous occasions that the U.S. Constitution has no validity in Mexico, would just report on his welfare and leave it at that. In Mexico they don't let you out on bail until after the trial, so after he was convicted, they said he could get out on \$5,000 bail, but he had to check in with the prison once a week. Well, he obviously wasn't going to do that. His parents paid the \$5,000 and he was released. We picked him up at the jail and brought him to the consulate where we had a little celebration before driving him to the border to meet up with friends.

Q: Oh boy. Well, this is probably a good place to stop. Oh, one other question. What was your impression of --was there much difference in the PRI and the PAN, or the elect -- I mean their goals and all, or?

CANAVAN: Oh yeah, the PAN was much more a free market, capitalistic oriented party. And the PRI was much more socialistic oriented. Yes, there was a big difference in what the parties espoused. And I think the PAN was particularly successful along the border because the maquiladoras, which were factories that were built on the border and used a lot of local labor. There was an emphasis on free enterprise, business and free trade that the PAN supported. The PRI represented a more centralized economy, which ironically made the development of a significant middle class more difficult.

Q: Was there much American interest in this election?

CANAVAN: There was actually. Again, it was the first time a PAN candidate had been elected governor and allowed to take office. This was a huge change for Mexico and certainly the Bureau of Latin American Affairs was very focused on it.

Q: Well, you say, you had alluded to the PAN having stolen the election. How did that come about?

CANAVAN: The PAN didn't steal the election. There were elections when a PAN candidate won in other states, but the PRI wouldn't let them take office. They would claim fraud or would disallow votes, so it was the PRI that stole elections, not the PAN.

Q: How did you find relations with the United States among sort of the ruling bodies there?

CANAVAN: I was dealing at a local level with authorities in San Diego and authorities in Tijuana and in Baja California. The relations were quite good. I think they got along a lot better than Mexico City and Washington. Part of it was that Baja California benefited financially by having a positive relationship with California and vice versa. Washington and Mexico City had some significant policy differences, but we were able to accomplish a great deal locally, and that would not have been possible if we had to get the Mexican Government's approval.

In one case, the U.S. Navy had one of their training torpedoes go aground on a remote beach in Baja California. We received a call from the Navy in San Diego and they asked if we could get permission from the Mexican Navy to retrieve the unarmed torpedo by truck. We knew if we went through embassy channels to ask the Mexican government, they either wouldn't have answered or they would have said no. So, we called the admiral in Ensenada, with whom we had a very good relationship, and we said, "Admiral, would you mind if the U.S. Navy came down and got their torpedo off the beach?" He gave his permission and the retrieval was successful. It was accomplished without fuss or any publicity.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: It is so important to develop relationships with a variety of local contacts, and we definitely had done that in Tijuana.

Q: Yeah. Well, you know, the -- I'm told that the, particularly the Foreign Ministry in Mexico City sort of is, it's, it has a reputation for having sort of where the anti-Americans dwell or something.

CANAVAN: Yeah, I agree. One good thing that happened was that the Mexican consul in San Diego started dating and then married my secretary.

Q: Ah.

CANAVAN: I actually introduced them when he came down one time to see me. He and I worked on issues together. Yvonne, my secretary, and her mother arranged for several of us to meet Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa had five projects in Tijuana, and she was coming to Tijuana to do some fundraising. We were invited to attend a big event at the bullring. Yvonne and her mother supported the work of Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity, and they asked if we could meet Mother Teresa at the convent instead. So, four of us spent about 20 minutes with her.

Q: Oh boy.

CANAVAN: It was very cool. She was quite a character.

Q: Okay. Today is the 31st of January, 2014. It's the lunar new year. What year are you coming into, do you know?

CANAVAN: The year of the horse, I hear.

Q: I think it's the horse, yeah. Well, where -- you're leaving Tijuana, but you said you had a couple of war stories to talk about, so you --

CANAVAN: Yeah. One in particular. We had gotten some reports through third parties that the police in Rosarito Beach, about 20 miles south of Tijuana, had been picking up young American women who'd had too much to drink. The young women had so much to drink they really weren't all that aware of what was going on. But later they realized that they had been sexually molested. Usually it was a friend who called days later and said, "Can't you do something about this?"

We advised the callers that like the United States, the victim has to file a complaint. At that point, we had no idea who the perpetrator was. When someone would call with a similar report, we asked that the victim please call so that we could get more information. I was due to transfer in July 1990, and the last time I had duty, in May, I received a call at two o'clock in the morning from a woman in Los Angeles. She said, "We were in Rosarito Beach this weekend. My friend disappeared, and we didn't know what happened

to her. We just got a call from her and she's in a motel in Tijuana. Some guy took her there."

She gave me the phone number and name of the motel and called the woman. She said yes, she had been picked up by the police and taken to the police station. She had not had all that much to drink and had her wits about her, and even more importantly she spoke some Spanish but didn't let on that she did. She was listening to some of the discussion that was going on. And because she wasn't drunk, she was taken to a couple of places by the police chief. And this went on all afternoon, and then finally at night he said, "where do you want to go?" She told him she wanted to go to the border.

He said, "I'll take you there, but I'm going to drop you at a motel first because I have to take my son home." Apparently his eight-year-old son was in the car with them. He tried to touch her while they were in the car, but she would move away from him. The police chief paid cash for the motel room and left. The woman had no idea where she was other than it was Tijuana somewhere. She called her friend and her friend called me.

She said, "Yeah, the guy's coming back and I'm really concerned about it."

I said, "You should be. Don't open the door for anybody but me, I'll be there in 20 minutes."

I threw on some clothes. She had asked me to bring some clothes since she was dressed only in a bathing suit and T-shirt. I picked her up and we headed for the border. I asked her to call her friend in LA and have them pick her up at U.S. Customs on the border. On the drive to the border, which took about 15 or 20 minutes, I talked to her about the problems we'd been having. And I said, "I really need somebody to come down and identify this guy." She told me he appeared to be the chief of police since all of the patrolmen called him "jefe."

I asked her how he was dressed, and she told me that he was wearing a uniform like the other police, but the most distinctive thing was that he had cowboy boots with very sharp silver toe pieces. I told her how helpful that was since the one identifying piece of information we had from other victims. She talked to me about some other things that had happened, and I asked if she would be willing to come down to identify him. I told her we would pick her up on the U.S. side of the border and would have some guards along so that she would be safe. I said, "You didn't get raped, but a number of other women have been, and we've got to stop this guy."

She said she would think about it and a couple of days later called to tell me she would do it. The motel was owned by the head of tourism for Baja California and he was quite upset that his motel was being used for this. He was anxious to catch whoever it was. And I said, "Well, I think it's the chief of police in Rosarito."

The Tijuana chief of police, to whom the Rosarito chief reported, and the head of Tourism came up with a plan to have the Rosarito chief of police come to the tourism

office. The American woman and I were in another room observing. They started asking him some questions. He said, "Oh, I was helping out this young woman, I was taking her to the border."

And the head of tourism said, "Well, I'm not very happy about this because my desk clerk said you paid in cash and he made no record of it. So, he's getting fired because he stole some money from me." They asked the police chief why he took her to the hotel instead of to the border. He claimed she said she wanted to go to a hotel, but of course that wasn't true. Anyway, she was able to identify him. He was arrested and spent five days in jail. They were unable to prosecute him because she hadn't actually been raped or hurt, but he did lose his job. And she fortunately hadn't been hurt. The police in Rosarito were quite happy because they really didn't like this guy and they thought what he was doing was wrong.

Unfortunately, somebody leaked the letter I had sent to the Tijuana Mayor and chief of police to the newspaper and they wanted to interview me. Our public affairs officer thought this would be a good idea, so she sat in on the interview with me.

And the reporter asked me, "Why are you doing this? You're ruining his life. His wife's really mad at him now."

And, and I said, "I didn't ruin anything." I said, "He did it to himself. My job is to protect American citizens and he was molesting American women. That's totally unacceptable and don't blame me for his personal problems. He brought them on himself."

The Rosarito chief of police was connected with the Federal Judicial Police who don't have a great reputation in Mexico. Consequently, our liaison with the local police, Dr. Fritz de la Orta, went to the fired chief of police and said "If anything happens to Mrs. Peterson we are coming after you, so you better make sure that nothing happens to her." My family was not happy about the situation either, but I was able to leave post in July without having any further problems. That was a situation that we were actually able to do something about, thanks to that woman who was willing to come down and file a complaint.

Q: You mentioned working with the CHP to retrieve stolen vehicles. What was being done on the Mexican and American authorities' part regarding stolen cars?

CANAVAN: We realized working with some agencies in the United States as well as our embassy in Mexico City that there was a stolen car ring that was being run by the Mexican Federal Judicial Police. They were primarily stealing SUVs (Sport Utility Vehicle), and in those days it was mostly Chevrolet Suburbans. We had a great deal of information that we passed on to the embassy in the hopes that they would go to the Ministry of Justice and do something about this problem. Unfortunately, there was a conflict with the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) which didn't want to make the Federal Judicial Police (FJP) unhappy because the DEA was getting information on drug trafficking from them. The DEA convinced the ambassador and the DCM not to do

anything about the stolen car ring. There were other vehicle theft rings, but that one was being perpetrated by the Federal Judicial Police. I'm not convinced that the DEA was getting information on Mexicans. I think they were getting information on the citizens of Central and South American countries who were moving drugs through Mexico, but be that as it may, the DEA pretty much stymied our efforts to do anything against the Federal Judicial Police and their stolen car ring.

Q: Now, the Federal Judicial Police, were they more susceptible to corruption than others, or what?

CANAVAN: I think they were. They were the ones who supposedly went after the drug traffickers. We had a much better relationship with the State Judicial Police. The commandant of the Federal Judicial Police actually had a car stolen for himself in San Diego. It was a \$90,000 Porsche. And he had the cojones (balls) to park it in front of his office with the California plates on it. The California Highway Patrol guys came down to retrieve it. Of course, they had the car keys from the dealer, and with the State Judicial Police officer, they just walked up to the car, unlocked it, got in the car, and drove it to the border. Unfortunately, the time of day meant the border was really busy and they were apprehended by the FJP before they got into the United States. Before they retrieved the vehicle, they came by the office and said, "If you don't hear from us in about two hours, come to the FJP office and see if we're there." And sure enough, they were. They negotiated a deal with the commandant whereby he would take the car on vacation for two weeks and when he got back he would return it.

Q: (laughs) Oh-ho. God.

CANAVAN: It was the only way they could get the car back. And unfortunately, the commandant had done a few thousand dollars-worth of damage during that time. The FJP was bold and unapologetic for their actions because they felt untouchable.

Q: Well, you were there when?

CANAVAN: I was there 1987 to '90.

Q: Was there any sign of the horrible violence that was going to --

CANAVAN: There was some. Particularly against some journalists. And there was one journalist in particular, they called him Gato Felix, Felix the Cat. He was going after the drug traffickers and corrupt officials, and he was murdered while I was there. Pretty shocking. Subsequently there have been a number of journalists who've been murdered as well. And obviously the violence has gotten a lot worse. In fact, as you probably know, one of the presidential candidates was assassinated in Tijuana, not very far from the consulate and where we all lived.

Q: Where did you live?

CANAVAN: I lived behind the Agua Caliente Racetrack.

Q: How did you find -- were there any problems living in Mexico?

CANAVAN: No, mm-hmm. I didn't have any problems at all. We had a wall around the backyard, but the front yard was open, with a garage. We really didn't have any problems living in Mexico, with the exception of trying to get across the border. U.S. Customs and Immigration, who've now been combined into ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) under the Department of Homeland Security, but at the time they were two different agencies. They both manned the gates at the border, and some of them did not understand or chose not to understand who we were. We produced a 15-minute video explaining what the State Department did, who we were at the consulate, and what we were doing. Not infrequently when we were crossing the border we would show our diplomatic passports to prove our U.S. citizenship and they would want to see our A visas which are issued to foreign diplomats accredited to the U.S. We would tell them that this is an *American* diplomatic passport. We don't have visas to enter the United States and we work for the U.S. government. On more than one occasion they gave one of our spouses a really hard time. The director of U.S. Customs in San Diego *very grudgingly* gave us permission to use the bus lanes to go through the border, because sometimes it could be a three-hour wait. If we were on official business we could use the truck lanes as well, which usually was a lot faster. But we didn't get a heck of a lot of cooperation from INS, Customs, or frankly DEA. They were not very friendly and sometimes made life difficult.

Usually they would just talk to you, ask a few questions and you'd answer, and if you sounded like a gringo they'd let you through. One time though a young immigration officer asked me for some ID. I reached into my purse and pulled out my diplomatic ID from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico, which said I was a diplomat accredited to Mexico. And he said, "What's this?" and I told him. He could read Spanish. And he said, "Well, this doesn't prove you're an American citizen."

And I said, "Well, actually it does, because I can't be an American diplomat if I'm not an American citizen." He frowned so I said "You want to see my driver's license, don't you?" And he said yes. So, I pulled out my driver's license and he looked at it and I said, "By the way, I adjudicate U.S. citizenship and issue passports, and a driver's license is not proof of citizenship." He gave me a *really* dirty look and waved me through.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: So anyway, we had to put up with that kind of stuff.

Q: Well, all in all, how would you say you evaluated your tour there from a career point of view?

CANAVAN: Oh, it was fabulous. Absolutely fabulous. It was an O2 position and when I arrived I was an O2. Three months later I got promoted to FS-01. I didn't want to move

to another position because the job was so interesting and so varied. We were doing a lot of things way over and above just American Citizen Services. Larry Colbert was so great to work for. In addition, I was not far from my family who lived in Los Angeles, which was really nice. It was the only time I'd been in the Foreign Service that I'd been able to see my family on a regular basis. So I was perfectly happy to stay put. Well, I'd been there about a year and Betty Swope, special assistant to Assistant Secretary Joan Clark, called and said, "We have an FS-01 vacancy in Ciudad Juarez, and AS Clark would like you to take it."

I declined the opportunity to move to Juarez because the position in Tijuana had a lot of variety, a lot of action, and a lot of opportunities to demonstrate my professional expertise. Not just consular expertise, but political, public diplomacy, et cetera, and it was a great deal of fun. So yes, it was a very good tour for my career.

Q: Well, is there anything else?

CANAVAN: I think that's probably enough on Tijuana. I was offered the opportunity to attend the National War College, but I asked to postpone since the job I really wanted coming out of Tijuana was chief of the junior officer assignment division in HR/CDA, which would build on my experience as a deputy coordinator for the A-100 course. The director was Clyde Taylor, who was wonderful to work for, and I had a really good staff in JO assignments. We interacted frequently with the A-100 classes because one of our primary jobs of course was teaching them about the assignment process and getting them their first assignments. But we were also responsible for second and third tour officers as well, making sure that they had the assignments they needed to meet the requirements to get tenured. We had a particular challenge in that in its infinite wisdom, the State Department had decided to bring folks on board without any conal designation during that period of time. All of the incoming officers wanted assignments in the cone of their preference so that they could demonstrate expertise in that area and be assigned to that cone upon tenure. There were significantly fewer political and economic positions for JOs than officers who wanted to serve in those cones, and sometimes the geographic bureaus wanted those jobs to go to tenured officers. And then of course we went through a phase where we got rid of a lot of junior officer positions too, particularly if they were rotational jobs. For instance, there was a consular/political rotation in Portugal. The first year was a consular position in Oporto, and the second year was at the embassy in Lisbon to do a year of political work. Well, this was a great job, great opportunity.

Unfortunately, the Department decided to close the consulate in Oporto, and we lost that rotational opportunity. Also, when bureaus were trying to cut back on jobs for budgetary reasons, it was almost always the JO positions that got cut, primarily political and econ positions. I'm still in contact with quite a number of my former counselees, a number of whom are now ambassadors, and one of them is even the director of the Foreign Service Institute, Nancy McEldowney. A number of others have done very well and I am very proud of them. And for many of them I still remember where I sent them on their first tours (*laughs*). Mostly they were happy about it. At least later in their careers.

One of the challenges we had was filling all of the new positions created when we opened 16 new embassies and 6 new consulates in the former Soviet Union when it dissolved. For some reason, unknown to me, Secretary James Baker declined the offer by Congress for additional positions and funding. He said “thanks, we can do this using existing resources.” The European bureau refused to sacrifice any of its Russian speaking officers, so HR was forced to poach Russian speaking staff from the other bureaus. It was crazy. At that time, untenured officers were limited to 6 months of language training. I tried to get the system to allow new officers to receive the full 10 months of Russian to fill this urgent need, but to no avail.

Q: I'm just thinking on this thing. How did you feel about the consular business? Was it growing in prestige -- not just prestige, but clout within the Foreign Service?

CANAVAN: Well, I think it's changed quite a bit, Stu, since I first came in. In 1976, consular and management cone officers were definitely at the bottom of the heap. And you know discrimination wasn't very subtle back in those days. Thanks in part to the Women's Class Action Suit, as consular and management officers have been able to be assigned to positions formerly reserved for political and economic officers and have been able to demonstrate their leadership and management expertise, they have succeeded in senior positions such as DCMs and Ambassadors. Consequently, the formerly rigid pecking order has disappeared to some extent. The emphasis on leadership and management as well as policy acumen has definitely blurred the distinctions among the cones.

Q: Yeah. OK, then as you progressed, where did you go after your --

CANAVAN: I had requested that I be able to go to the National War College, or one of the war colleges after my two years in junior officer assignments. And fortunately, the folks who made that decision were colleagues in HR. I was able to have my choice of which of the senior colleges I wanted to attend. I picked National, as many people do. It's desirable because it's in Washington, it has many more civilians from other agencies than do the other war colleges, and it was convenient. I spent the '92-'93 academic year at Fort McNair, and really, really enjoyed it. It was actually a turning point in my career, because up until then I pretty much thought that consular work was going to be a pretty exclusive career track for me, and that my career would peak as consul general in one of our large posts, or perhaps DCM in a small to medium post. There were only 15 State Department officers in my War College class. Of the 13 women in our class of 160, 10 were civilians and four of us were from State: Marsha Barnes, Mary Marshall, Kristie Kenney (who left in February to take a job at the NSC), and me. I was frequently the only State Department person in a seminar arguing for and explaining foreign policy interests during discussions. I did well. I was not a distinguished graduate, but I was respected by my classmates, and they really encouraged me to focus more on policy.

Since the War College was only a one-year assignment, we had to bid on onward assignments at the beginning of the program. I just happened to run into Marshall

McCallie, who had been a predecessor of mine as head of JO assignments. He was back in DC for confirmation hearings to go to Namibia as ambassador. I told him that DCM Namibia was my high bid. He was very enthusiastic about selecting me, so off I went to Windhoek after graduating from the War College.

However, my tour started off a little bit rocky. Marshall was clever to pick someone with complementary skills to his. He was definitely a policy wonk. He'd been a DCM twice and really didn't enjoy the management part of it. Moving paper and supervising and all that sort of thing. He selected me because of my consular experience, my time in HR, and my management experience. It took about six months for us to get comfortable with each other's styles. But once we did it was fantastic. We had an excellent relationship. I remember the first time he went on R&R (rest and relaxation) he was gone for a month. He did not call me once. He called his secretary twice to talk about some admin issues with her. But the whole time I was chargé he never called me. When he got back he said, "Did you have fun?"

I said, "You bet."

And he said, "What did you learn?"

And I said, "It's a lot easier to make decisions when you're not around." Fortunately, he laughed.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: Coming out of that assignment I was asked to be on the short list for two embassies. For personal reasons, I chose not to accept them at that point. I said, "Please don't forget about me, but right now this is not a good time for me to go off to either of those places as an ambassador." And also, Mary Ryan had asked me to come back to Washington to be a managing director of Overseas Citizen Services to replace Maura Harty who had gone up to the seventh floor to be one of the deputy executive secretaries. Maura left on very short notice and there was nobody out there that Mary wanted to put in that job, so the Civil Service deputy had been acting for a year when I came to OCS as managing director.

Q: Yeah, I'd like not to skip over Namibia.

CANAVAN: Oh yeah, I don't want to skip over Namibia.

Q: OK, what -- you were there from when to when?

CANAVAN: I was in Namibia from 1993 to 1996.

Q: All right, what was the situation when you arrived?

CANAVAN: Namibia became independent in 1990, so it hadn't been independent for very long. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Chet Crocker spent eight years in that position, 1981-1989, and was the architect of the U.S. policy of "constructive engagement" with South Africa which set the terms for Namibian independence. With the demise of the Soviet Union, their support for Cuban surrogates in Angola disappeared which eliminated South Africa's excuse for maintaining Namibia as a U.N. protectorate and buffer. South Africa would have been *really* happy to incorporate Namibia into their country, but fortunately, thanks to A.S. Crocker and the U.N., that was not to be.

So, it was still a very new situation. Genta Hawkins Holmes was the first ambassador and Marshall McCallie was the second. Due to support for the non-communist government of South Africa during the cold war, there was still some mistrust in the Namibian government for the United States, even though we had been instrumental in pushing for independence. Namibia had a government that was made up of extremely educated folks, most of whom had been in exile for a long time. They were quite accomplished diplomats because of everything they had done in the UN to work for independence. SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) was the primary political party, and the first president, Sam Nujoma, had been the leader of SWAPO when its headquarters was in Lusaka. That was very advantageous for Ambassador McCallie, because he had been DCM there during the pre-independence period and he knew a lot of those folks. So, we had a lot of good contacts throughout the government. We also had an active Peace Corps program. A number of the senior officials had Peace Corps volunteers as teachers at various times in their lives. The speaker of the National Assembly, Mose' Tjitendero, learned English from Peace Corps Volunteers after his family escaped to Tanzania. Eventually, he got to the United States on scholarships and ended up earning a PhD in education from the University of Massachusetts. He was one of the most articulate defenders of democracy that I have ever heard, a really brilliant man. Many of the Namibians who made up the government were very sharp and very sophisticated with a great deal of international experience. Still, a number of them were in favor of a more socialistic form of government and skeptical of the United States in particular because of their pre-independence experience.

Ambassador McCallie included me in many of the meetings he had with Namibian Government officials, and taught me a great deal about the finer points of diplomatic tradecraft. For the first time I had regular interaction with USAID and USIS (United States Information Service) as well. I got along *extremely* well with the public diplomacy officer and participated regularly in programs and events at the American Cultural Center. The director there was a very seasoned foreign service officer, Helen Picard, and I learned a huge amount from her.

I had the opposite experience with USAID, at least with the director, who was a micromanager of the worst sort and morale among his staff was terrible. The USAID director took the position that he did not answer to the ambassador concerning development policy. But fortunately (*laughs*), Ambassador McCallie was very experienced in dealing with USAID, because that had been his portfolio when he was DCM in South Africa. He wouldn't let them get away with very much as far as trying to

go off on their own. I remember one time when the USAID director announced in a country team meeting that he was going to sign a two million dollar agreement with the government of Namibia the following day. The ambassador said, "You know, that's not convenient for me to attend. Please reschedule it so that I can actually do the signing."

The AID director replied, "Well, you know, this is, this is an AID project. This is AID money."

And the ambassador said, "No, this money comes from the taxpayers of the United States of America and I'm the representative of the president and the American people, and I will sign the agreement."

The AID director didn't get it, so the ambassador told me to go have lunch with him and explain the facts of life. Which I did. He still didn't quite understand why he couldn't act autonomously without bringing the ambassador in on these sorts of things.

Namibia was a wonderful place to live. Windhoek has to be one of the nicest small posts. It looks like a small German city dropped in the middle of New Mexico. It's about a mile high. The weather, while very dry, is also pleasant. It can get hot if you're in the sun, but because of the dryness, if you're not in the sun it can be quite pleasant year round, even in the summer. And it was a geologist's dream post because there was so much interesting geology there. There were wonderful places to visit like the Skeleton Coast, the incredible sand dunes in the Namib Desert, Etosha National Park and the wildlife there. Windhoek had a few good restaurants and it was a great town for walking around. The housing was also very nice and the staff was wonderful.

Q: Yeah, well before we go on. How did you feel about a new country, I mean this really was a new country. And I mean did they have things in place? I mean were they able -- or was there an awful lot of either patchwork or --

CANAVAN: They were really quite sophisticated. One of the things they accomplished while we were there was to get South Africa to relinquish Walvis Bay. While most of Namibia was a German colony until World War I, there was a South African enclave at Walvis Bay, which is one of the few ports along that stretch of coast in Africa. I think from Luanda, Angola, all the way down to Cape Town that's the only real port, and it belonged to the British. When the Union of South Africa was created in 1910, Walvis Bay became part of South Africa. At the end of WWI, German South West Africa became a League of Nations protectorate administered by South Africa, and then a UN protectorate under South Africa. When Namibia became independent, Walvis Bay still belonged to South Africa, and for the first few years of Namibia's independence you had to go through passport control to go to Walvis Bay.

The National Party in South Africa had given up apartheid and they were about to see Nelson Mandela elected in April 1994. Early that year, Namibia was pushing hard for South Africa to transfer Walvis Bay to Namibia. The United States and a number of the European countries cautioned Namibia that the white South African government had

already given up a great deal and that it was not an ideal time to push them on this particular issue. The Namibians ignored us and they negotiated very successfully with the National Party and Walvis Bay became part of Namibia only a month before the South African elections. There was a huge celebration there. The ambassador had to attend all of the ceremonial events, while the rest of the embassy staff were just there having a good time, dancing in the street with the locals.

That demonstrated how really sophisticated and knowledgeable the government was about how to conduct international relations. It was a great example of the government functioning well at the beginning. The Namibian government also did well maintaining the infrastructure that they inherited from South Africa, quite unlike my experience in Zaire where the infrastructure left by the Belgians deteriorated quickly.

One law that was a holdover from the Roman Dutch legal code Namibia inherited from South Africa mandated that a woman returned to the legal status of a minor when she married. All of the assets she brought into the marriage were transferred to her husband and she could do nothing without his permission. She could not open a bank account or apply for a credit card. There were many people in Namibia who felt that this was not right, including President Nujoma. There was a great deal of debate in parliament about changing the law to give women legal equality. One sticking point was the definition of "head of household." The men claimed that according to the Bible, the man was always the head of household. The women found other Biblical references to refute that point. This debate went on for about a year and a half and finally President Nujoma said, "*Enough*. I want that legislation passed," and so it passed. He personally felt that African women contributed more than the men in society in general and specifically during the long struggle for independence.

Once as charge' d'affaires I had to make a demarche to President Nujoma on very short notice. I was able to secure a 15-minute appointment for the next day. After I finished making my demarche, the president didn't feel that the meeting was over yet and I had the opportunity to congratulate him on passing the Married Persons' Equality Act.

In response, President Nujoma went into this *tirade* about what lazy bums African men were and how women do all the work and they were a major factor in the independence struggle and deserved equality. It made a much more interesting reporting cable than the issue on which I had to make the demarche.

Q: OK. Well, just sort of as you left there, where did you see Namibia going?

CANAVAN: Well, we saw Namibia actually really trying to take a prominent role in the region in economic development and political development. Many more Namibians were educated, for instance, than the South Africans proportionally. The Namibians were very good about keeping up the infrastructure that they had inherited from South Africa and were trying to take advantage of their geographic location and their mineral wealth to take a strong role economically. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) headquarters was in Botswana, but Namibia frequently took a lead in regional issues,

sometimes against South Africa which always tried to take advantage of the smaller countries in the 14-nation organization. Namibia recognized that it couldn't go it alone with fewer than two million people. While Namibia recognized that for Southern Africa to be a success, South Africa needed to take a leadership role, but the Namibians wanted to make sure that they had a say in the direction that the region would be going. And as I said, being sophisticated diplomats already, they were pretty good at it. I was constantly impressed.

On some occasions, they wouldn't even take assistance because they felt it would put them in an awkward position. Because they had uranium and diamonds as well as tourism, they were doing pretty well economically. They were not quite a middle-income country, and they have a huge disparity between the income of about 85% of their population which is poor, and the 15% that are doing very well. They have taken a role in international organizations and are definitely punching above their weight. We saw them going in the right direction.

Q: Well, OK, well this is a good place to stop I guess.

Q: Now, let me just make my announcement here. Today is the 6th of February, 2014 with Kate Canavan. And I'm not exactly sure where we left off. We were talking about Namibia. And what were you -- do you remember where we stopped?

CANAVAN: We were talking about how Namibia was doing as a new country.

Q: Yes.

CANAVAN: And I gave you a couple of examples of how sophisticated they were as far as their diplomacy because of all the work they had done at the UN and internationally in their efforts to gain independence from South Africa.

Q: Yes.

CANAVAN: South Africa would have been extremely happy to absorb Namibia into its country, but that was not to be. A combination of the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the fact that the Cuban surrogates of the Soviet Union had to leave Angola allowed the South Africans with some face saving to back off and grant Namibia's independence. South Africa was under a huge amount of international pressure, including from us. We came a little late to the anti-apartheid game, but under Chet Crocker, who spent most of his eight years as assistant secretary working on both Namibian independence and helping to deal with a number of the civil wars that were going on in Southern Africa, Namibia became independent in 1990. I was there from '93 to '96 and was part of the second group of diplomats who had been there since they'd gained independence. We'd actually had some representatives there before including

Roger McGuire, our first liaison officer and then chargé until Genta Hawkins Holmes arrived as the first ambassador. It was a very interesting time. As I said, the Namibians were pretty sophisticated in dealing with international relations. When Namibia first became independent, many countries established embassies there as a show of solidarity and support for their independence. By the time I got there, a number had chosen to pull back, mostly for financial reasons. The Canadians, for instance, closed their embassy and covered Namibia from South Africa, as did a number of other countries. But it was not for any political reason, it was simply a matter of the cost. Of course, we have always felt that it was worth the cost to have representation in as many countries as possible. We've discovered that if we don't have a presence we're not nearly as able to assess what is going on and have much less influence.

Q: Well, did you find that our embassy in Namibia was in some ways filling in for the countries like Canada that weren't here? I mean were you acting for them at all?

CANAVAN: We didn't act for them directly, but there's no question that when, for instance, their ambassador would come into town periodically we would be high on their list of people they needed to see after the government officials. And we always tried to share as much as we could. We had the same relationship actually with the Israelis who covered Namibia out of Zimbabwe. When the Israeli ambassador or chargé would come into town, which was probably a couple times a year, he would always come to see us. When we get to Lesotho I'll tell you about that as well (*laughs*). We did a lot of that.

Q: Well, you were in Namibia, were there any particular problems or incidents that you got involved in?

CANAVAN: One of the big issues had to do with the Southern African Development Community and the Southern African Customs Union. The Customs Union was an organization that was led by South Africa. Regardless of the final destination, the majority of goods coming into Southern Africa went into South Africa. They went to the ports of Durban or Cape Town, or they flew into Johannesburg. South Africa would collect the customs duties and later would distribute the funds they had collected among the four smaller members; Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Even though those countries didn't get to collect customs duties on their own, they received them indirectly through South Africa. This worked for a while, but then those other countries started wanting to import goods directly. Not wanting to lose control over regional trade, South Africa made it very difficult for them in many ways. South Africa didn't import that much from the United States, but it was something that was very important economically to the development of those four countries.

We did have one particular trade issue that was very interesting. When South Africa controlled Namibia, virtually all of the businesses were South African. Even after independence those businesses maintained strong ties with their mother companies in South Africa. One of those businesses was the flour milling and baking business. For a long time, South Africa was able to supply almost all if not all of the wheat for all the

countries in the Customs Union. However, South Africa had several years with poor wheat harvests due to low rainfall.

The U.S. had previously offered to sell wheat to Namibia at lower prices, but South Africa claimed we were “dumping.” The Agricultural Board, which controlled prices in Southern Africa, got very nasty and our economic officer, Phil Drouin, was threatened with bodily harm. However, when South Africa could no longer supply sufficient wheat for the Namibian mills, the Namibians came to us and asked to purchase U.S. wheat. Of course, we were happy to do so.

Q: Oh God.

CANAVAN: Agricultural Boards had just been phased out under World Trade Organization rules, and we advised that the one in Southern Africa was illegal. We had no further trouble with it.

We had another issue within the embassy when the ambassador said he wanted us to buy goods and services from Black owned Namibian companies whenever possible. Our shipping clerk, who was a very sharp young man who we all liked, proceeded to create his own shipping company. His name was not on it of course, and he started funneling business to his own company for shipping and taking delivery of embassy household effects. The only trouble was he was charging us twice as much as the going rate and we didn't realize it for a while since the management section was not getting multiple bids. Once we did realize what he was doing, we of course had to let him go. That caused some bad feelings in the embassy since he was a very charming guy who participated in many embassy activities. But he was stealing from the U.S. government (*laughs*) and that's a no-no.

Our main issues were to convince the Namibians that despite our previous position siding with the South Africans for many years during the Cold War, that we were in fact very supportive of what Namibia was trying to do as a democracy and tried to be of assistance wherever we could. We had a democracy program that was supported partly by the embassy and partly by USIA, before USIA was incorporated into State. The program assisted the parliamentary representatives from the different regions with developing political platforms, developing relationships with their constituents, supporting constituents, that sort of thing. Namibia had proportional representation, which meant that the people voted for a slate of candidates put forward by a party, rather than individual candidates. The loyalty of the candidates was therefore to the party, rather than their constituents. Some in the majority party, the Southwest Africa Peoples' Organization (SWAPO), believed that we were trying to undermine the party. We believed that it was important to a functioning democracy to have an active opposition, but that was perceived on occasion as interfering in their local politics and was not appreciated.

But all in all, we had quite a good relationship with the government. We could get in to see people whenever we needed. I think I previously mentioned an instance when I was

chargé and I needed to see a president to deliver an urgent demarche. I was able to get in to see the president the next day. The Namibians had a good reputation at the UN (United Nations) because they had observer status there for quite some time before independence. We regularly engaged the government on issues that were coming up for votes to convince them to support the U.S. position.

Q: Well, did you feel that the Namibians were thinking that you were more interested in South Africa on these questions that came up than with themselves, or how did you sort of make sure they're loyal, I mean understand that we were an independent power?

CANAVAN: Certainly, Ambassador McCallie made it very clear that Namibia was important to the U.S. as an individual country, but the Namibians, and also the other countries in Southern Africa recognized that South Africa is the 800 pound gorilla in the region. While they sometimes resented South Africa's heavy-handed control, they also recognized that if South Africa was not successful, economically and politically, they were going to be in deep trouble also. So, it was a schizophrenic feeling that they had toward South Africa.

The Namibians were obviously extremely proud and pleased when Mandela won the election in 1994. He made his first state visit to Namibia after he'd been elected. It was in August of 1994, and I happened to be chargé again, so I went out to the airport to greet him, as we did in Africa. When the head of state comes into town the whole diplomatic corps, as well as the government, is out there to greet the person. Because it was Nelson Mandela there were a lot more people there than usually bothered to show up. We always made a point to be there for any kind of event like that. We didn't want the government to think that we disregarded these opportunities. But in this case obviously it was an important occasion. Because I was a chargé and not an ambassador, protocol determined that I was rather farther down the receiving line. Mandela came down the line and spoke -- not just shook everybody's hand -- but spoke to everybody. And when the chief of protocol introduced me as the American chargé, Mandela said, "Oh, please give my regards to President and Mrs. Clinton and please tell Assistant Secretary George Moose how much I appreciate his briefings when he came through last month on what was happening in Angola and other places in Africa." He was charming and delightful. What I remember most about him was that although he looked a bit frail, he had a very warm and firm handshake. And he would hold your hand the whole time he was talking to you. It was the only time I ever had the opportunity to meet Mandela, so it still means a great deal to me, especially since he so recently passed.

From the airport they took him to the South African High Commission, which was in what had been a hotel on the corner of a T intersection. The street which was the stem of the T went down a hill and bumped into a street that was named Robert Mugabe Avenue. The Namibians held a ceremony to name this street that bumped into Robert Mugabe Avenue after Nelson Mandela. Mandela allowed how he appreciated the honor of having a street named after him, especially one by the South African High Commission, however he felt very strongly that things shouldn't be named after people until those people were dead. Because he said, "You never know how they're going to turn out." That seemed

quite prescient considering all the damage that Robert Mugabe has done to his country. I've used that story on a couple of occasions, how you never know how somebody's going to turn out.

Q: Did the South Africans behave pretty well?

CANAVAN: Yes and no. They were obviously in a period of transition. We had some issues with the South African High Commissioner whose residence was actually right next to mine as DCM. They would have a happy hour on Friday afternoons and a number of folks from our embassy used to attend. The South Africans would use those occasions to, not surprisingly, ply our staff with alcohol and then try to extract information from them. It was pretty obvious what was going on and Ambassador McCallie told the staff that we were not to attend anymore (*laughs*). He had been in South Africa as DCM from '90 to '93, so he knew that the South Africans were pretty sophisticated and quite active at trying to collect intelligence from us. The South Africans always expected the countries in the region to support their position on virtually any issues. And when those countries didn't, the South Africans weren't very happy about it.

Q: Well then, did you get any high-level visits from our --

CANAVAN: Well, we had the vice president and his wife. I was the control officer for the visit. Al and Tipper Gore came to Namibia after the inauguration of Mandela. They wanted to see some animals. And unfortunately, all the best game viewing in Namibia is quite a bit outside of the capital. Initially, when the White House advance team came through they said, you know, "They only want to be here for about 15 hours, they just want to go out and see some animals and leave."

And we said, "You can't do that. You can't come into a country and not call on the government. If you just want to see animals you might as well stay in South Africa and do it there."

And they said, "Well, OK."

What started out as a 15-hour visit ended up being a 28-hour visit, and they were able to go out and see some animals, but they also had to call on the president, et cetera. The Namibians were, again, quite sophisticated about dealing with the advanced team. For instance, there was going to be a one-hour meeting in the state house where the president lived. The White House advance team wanted to install three phone lines into the house for this one-hour meeting. And the Namibians said, "No. (*laughs*) Sorry. You can have the guy standing outside the door with his sat (satellite) phone, but you're not going to put any phone lines in here." And there were some other things like that that the White House advance and the Secret Service wanted to do which the Namibians nixed.

We finally figured out that the closest place for them to see animals was a place called the Waterberg Plateau, a three and a half hour drive from Windhoek. The White House initially called and said, "Can't you take them there in your helicopter?"

I said, "Excuse me?"

They said, "Well, don't you have a helicopter?"

I said, "A U.S. government helicopter?"

And they said, "Well, of course," the vice president can't fly in anything but the U.S. government aircraft.

I said, "Have you looked at the map?" I said, "There isn't a U.S. government aircraft within several thousand miles of here." I think the nearest one was in Nairobi, and that was a C-12 (King Air turboprop airplane).

And they said, "Oh."

I said, "If they're going to go someplace, they have to drive."

Of course, they came in with two big cargo planes with armored suburbans. Then Mrs. Gore said, "I can't sit in a car for three and a half hours without making a pit stop." So, the Secret Service set off to find some place for her to make a pit stop. About an hour north of Windhoek en route to Waterburg is a little town called Okahandja. And in Okahandja there was a German riding club. A couple of Secret Service agents went up to the gate and rang the bell. When somebody came out they said, "Hi. We're from the U.S. Secret Service. The vice president and his wife are coming through here and they need a place to make a rest stop and we'd like to use your facilities."

And they said, "No. You're not members. You can't use our facilities."

And the Secret Service said, "But this is the Vice President of the United States."

And they said, "We don't care. If you're not members, you can't come in."

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: Consequently, we made other arrangements. Fortunately, Namibia has probably the cleanest public restrooms of any country I've ever been in, including the United States. There happened to be a Caltex gas station in Okahandja, Caltex being owned by Texaco and Chevron. Mrs. Gore made her rest stop at a very clean restroom with toilet paper. Vice President Gore stood out in front of the Caltex station and chatted up the mayor for about 10 or 15 minutes, and off they went.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: It was an interesting visit. And that's the only presidential or vice presidential visit I've ever had to deal with on the ground. The Gores spent over an hour at the embassy talking with the staff. They were both very nice.

We also had Senator Fritz Hollings and his wife come through between Christmas and New Year's. I was again chargé and with one exception, the entire Namibian government was vacationing in Swakopmund, a beach resort town a four hour drive from Windhoek. The only person from the Namibian government that was in town was Speaker of the National Assembly, who was a brilliant person. And I think I mentioned that he had learned English from a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania and then went on to get a PhD in education from the University of Massachusetts. Married an American woman. He was absolutely delightful. We spent about an hour and a half with Dr. Tjitendero and his wife and Senator and Mrs. Hollings. The Tjitenderos gave us a tour of the historic building in which the Namibian Parliament meets. After the tour we took the senator and his wife to lunch with all of the American staff at one of the local restaurants. He insisted he wanted a low-key visit, so that is what they got.

The management officer and his wife owned a 1953 Studebaker, which they had with them. After lunch we took the senator and his wife out to the airport in the Studebaker. They thought that was wonderful. They were very low maintenance, and so it was a really delightful visit. I heard from colleagues in both South Africa and Botswana, which they visited after Windhoek, that he raved about how well we had taken care of them.

Q: Well, it sounds like you were in at least an area, with the exception of the German riders, a very cooperative government and people there.

CANAVAN: Yes, mm-hmm.

Q: Well, did Namibia -- I mean how did you see Namibia? As for its future, did you see it as one that was going to make it?

CANAVAN: Yes, we certainly did at the time. They seem to have pretty realistic expectations. I think the one disappointment I had after I left was that President Nujoma, having served two terms, was not ready to step down yet. There was a two-term limit according to the constitution, but they fudged it by claiming that he became president before the constitution was passed. Therefore his first election didn't count toward the two-term limit.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: He ended up serving two more terms, instead of only one. We were concerned that this would lead to a president for life situation. But after that term, he did step down. He's still alive. He continued to be politically active for a while, and the SWAPO party has certainly dominated. But, there are active opposition parties in Namibia and I think as both a democracy and a successful country they've done quite well. They've maintained the infrastructure that they've inherited from the South

Africans, which is quite good. Unfortunately, Namibia has I think the greatest gap between the rich people and the poor people of any country. 15% of the population has 95% of the wealth. And the average income, per capita income of the wealthy was about \$60,000 a year, as opposed to the poor people who were significantly below the poverty level. Namibia was trying to redistribute land, but they didn't do it in the heavy-handed way that Mugabe did it. Whenever a farm would come up for sale, a Namibian had first dibs on it. But the land couldn't just be taken away, and it couldn't be sold for less than market value. Also, there were a lot of Germans who owned property in Namibia and there was an effort to get them to live on the land or sell it.

Q: Yes. What about Angola? Was there anything going on? You know, I mean --

CANAVAN: Well, the Civil War was still going on and things were not good there. We provided some support to our embassy in Luanda. For instance, until 1994, I believe, our Regional Security Officer (RSO) covered Luanda. And things were not good there. We hadn't built an embassy yet and everybody was living in trailers. At one point the fighting in Luanda was so fierce that our staff had to take refuge underneath their trailers. We subsequently built a new embassy and found housing for the staff. Crime was a huge problem at the time. Jonas Savimbi was the rebel leader who we initially supported against the Soviet-backed government. However, by the time I arrived in Windhoek, the U.S. Government was not supporting. Much later, he was killed and the next day the civil war stopped. It was a perfect example of the expression that cutting off the head of the snake kills it. Angola was a very weird place because the government was left wing, pro-Soviet, and quite corrupt. Much of their wealth came from oil that was being drilled by American companies. And during the bad ol' days of the cold war, Cuban troops paid for by the Soviet Union guarded the American oil facilities from sabotage by the rebels.

Q: (laughs) Yeah, the --

CANAVAN: It was one of those very peculiar things that happened during the cold war because our relationships with countries in many parts of the world were determined by whether that country was pro west or pro Soviet. And there didn't seem to be anything in between. American companies were still very important and influential in the economy in Angola, however.

Q: Did the Namibian government look towards Angola or anything, or how stood relations between those two --

CANAVAN: Relations were good. They obviously share a northern border and they share some hydroelectric facilities. There are several rivers that start in Angola and come through Namibia, one of them being the Okavango River, which starts in Angola, goes through northern Namibia, and into Botswana to form the Okavango Delta, which is one of the most important ecosystems in the world. It's the largest inland delta, and it has an incredible variety of wildlife. The Delta is very susceptible to variances in the amount of water that comes in. And at one point, Namibia, which was desperate for water, was talking about tapping the Okavango River while it was in Namibia and piping the water

into Windhoek. That didn't affect Angola quite so much, but Botswana and the environmental community got very upset because even taking two percent out of the Okavango River would conceivably upset the ecosystem in the delta. Also, it would have been prohibitively expensive and Namibia wasn't getting a lot of support from international organizations, World Bank, IMF (International Monetary Fund), et cetera, for this project. So, it ended up not happening. But, but Namibia was actively looking for sources of water. They considered desalinization and other options. Subsequently, there's been more rain and their water problems seem to have been ameliorated for the immediate future. However, during my time there, they'd had less rain than they really needed to maintain the population.

Q: Well, did you look into the economics of desalination? You know, you think of these countries, the Middle East is sitting on these huge bodies of water. It seems like the obvious solution, but.

CANAVAN: Yes, they looked into it and there were some studies done and it turned out to be just too expensive.

Q: Well, I know you've got to go. So is there anything else you want to talk about Namibia?

CANAVAN: This was an important tour for my career development. As the DCM it was my first real opportunity to focus on policy, and it was a bigger management job. The ambassador wanted me to be involved in the reporting process. Everybody's reporting had to go through me and I had pretty specific instructions on what the ambassador was looking for. So, before anything got to his desk it had to come through mine, and I, for the most part (*laughs,*) tried to do his bidding.

I do have one more story with Ambassador McCallie. He was gone for over a month, he had to have some surgery, and it was over Christmas. This was also the time that Hollings came. Well, as you know, at the end of the year a lot of embassies do reporting on things that they would not have reported on the rest of the year. And frequently these round-up cables contain humor. Both the political and econ officers have a very good sense of humor, although the ambassador did not allow any humor in any of our reporting cables. He said, "We're a small embassy. If we don't take ourselves seriously, neither will Washington." Well, my econ officer put together a very well-done humorous round-up of things that had happened. When it showed up on my desk, I went to his office and I said, "You know, the ambassador would never let this out."

And he said, "I know."

And I said, "But I'm going to. Number one, I think it's well done. Number two, this is the right time of year to do this kind of thing. And number three, my name is at the bottom of the cable." So off it went.

Well, as we were getting ready for the ambassador to come back, his secretary, Rosmary, was putting together all of the reporting we had done. I went to her and I said, "You might not want to put that one in his folder."

And she said "Yeah, you're right."

Well anyway, somehow it got in there. When he saw it, he screamed, and he was not a screamer. And Rosmary came into my office, she was white. And she said, "I'm so sorry. Somehow that cable got in and the ambassador's really unhappy and he wants to see you now."

So, I went in and he threw the cable across the desk at me and he said, "What is *this*?"

And I said, "That was our end of year round-up cable."

And he said, he said, "You know I never would have signed off on this."

I said, "Yes, I know."

He said, "Why did you sign off on something you know I wouldn't approve?"

And I said, "My name is at the bottom of the cable. I did it because Phil put a lot of work into it, sending it was important for morale, and I take responsibility for it."

He said, "Well, I'm quite unhappy about this."

Anyway, within the next few days we got a number of cables back from Washington and posts in the region saying how much they liked it (*laughs*) and how they really appreciated our perspective. While he never commented on the "kudo cables," he also did not put anything negative about it in my EER (employee evaluation report). But it also helped me with the embassy staff, because they knew I had taken the heat and that I had done something that helped their morale, frankly.

Q: Yes. Well, good. OK.

CANAVAN: I think people need to have fun sometimes in their jobs.

Q: I agree (laughs).

CANAVAN: And that was my manifestation of that for the embassy.

Q: Some of our early ambassadors in the Middle East used to throw in references to the bible, you know, Luke 33 or something like that. And they usually were quite apt. But a new generation came up and was a little more straight laced and really you didn't have that good ol time religion drilled into them.

CANAVAN: Right, right. Although it's interesting, apparently one of the things that showed up in a lot of the Wiki Leaks cables was a fair amount of humor.

Q: Yeah, well I mean I think to be a diplomat you've got to have humor, at least as a consular officer I've certainly kept my sense of humor.

CANAVAN: Oh, you had to. When Nancy Serpa, a friend and colleague from my earliest days in the foreign service, was the head of the Board of Examiners and I was at FSI, we would talk frequently. She'd want feedback on the new junior officers that were coming in -- entry-level officers we're supposed to call them now. And we had problems with a couple of them who didn't see the humor in some of the training. We tried to put humor for instance in the consular course. They showed a movie about how to make a job interesting that's normally boring and routine. It was a story of a fish market in Seattle, where they actually throw the fish around. An entry level officer wrote a letter to me saying that this was stupid and frivolous and showed that the State Department wasn't serious about their work. She said she was embarrassed to be associated with people like that. So I called Nancy and I said, "Isn't there some way you can put something in the foreign service exam to test whether people have a sense of humor? Nancy was one of the funniest people I knew in the Foreign Service, but she seriously said, "I just don't know how we can do that."

Q: Oh, boy.

CANAVAN: It was always important to me to enjoy going to work and even having fun doing it. I wished with the staff in Windhoek that I didn't have to delete all of their clever or humorous comments because the ambassador didn't want them, so this was an opportunity for me to do something about it.

Q: All right, Today is 21st of February, 2014 with Kate Canavan. I think we were -- you were talking about being DCM. Where were you DCM?

CANAVAN: I was DCM in Namibia.

Q: OK, you left there when?

CANAVAN: I left there in August of 1996 to return to Washington as managing director of Overseas Citizens' Services in the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA/OCS) working for Mary Ryan, the assistant secretary. The position had been vacant for a year after Maura Harty was pulled up to the 7th floor as a deputy executive secretary. Maura's deputy was acting managing director for the year until I arrived, then she left to take the Senior Seminar, so I had one of the division chiefs as my deputy for a year. Maura had reorganized OCS brilliantly, creating the office of children's issues to handle overseas adoptions and parental child abductions. Several of the best and most experienced civil service officers were in the new office. Some had been colleagues of mine, and in one case my boss, when I worked in OCS in the mid-1980s.

The position of managing director oversaw three offices, and reported to the principal deputy assistant secretary, who at this time was Ruth Davis. It was a particularly active period for OCS, and during a four-month period, March-June 1997, we were supporting various 24-hour task forces dealing with political crises overseas. In fact, there were six evacuations of non-official Americans during that period. The first was from Albania when the government collapsed due to a ponzi scheme. After the embassy had organized everything, the Marines came in with helicopters and evacuated private Americans and some of the embassy staff.

Then, as Kabila was heading west across the DRC to unseat the Mubutu government, we evacuated Kinshasa to Brazzaville, across the Congo River. That was followed by the evacuation of the Central African Republic, mostly by the French, for the umpteenth time, and the evacuation of Brazzaville to Kinshasa. As the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) departed the waters off the two Congos, they stopped in Sierra Leone to evacuate about 2,400 Americans and other nationalities from Freetown.

The sixth and final evacuation of that period was in Cambodia due to political unrest. We ended up bringing in charter aircraft to evacuate the Americans from Phnom Penh and also wanted to use U.S. military aircraft stationed in nearby Thailand to rescue both official and unofficial Americans stranded in Siem Reap, the location of Angkor Wat. However, the Cambodian government refused to allow our military aircraft into the country and brought the Americans to the capital where they were evacuated.

There were two important interagency policy working groups in which I represented the State Department. The first had to do with funding issues when the Department of Defense (DOD) was involved in a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO). As soon as the State Department makes a formal request for DOD assistance, usually the last resort because it costs the most, State begins paying for the operation. In the case of the evacuation of Kinshasa, the National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, approved a DOD request to send aircraft to the region before State made the request. In fact, the aircraft were already in the air before we knew about it. They sat on the ground in Gabon for several weeks because it took the rebels that long to cross the country. After the evacuation was complete, DOD billed State for the cost of the aircraft. State refused to pay because we had not made a formal request. The working group created a more formal funding matrix so that agencies would all understand who was responsible for paying what and under what circumstances.

The second working group was convened by the secretary of transportation to lay out the responsibilities of the airlines and U.S. Government agencies in the event of an airplane disaster. It was prompted by the concerns of several organizations of families of victims of crashes, among them Pan Am 103 and Korean Airlines 007. For security and liability reasons, airlines did not want to release the passenger manifests to anyone, including the U.S. Government. This resulted in unacceptable delays and confusion in advising the families of the victims. After meeting for a number of weeks, the working group came up with protocols to be followed by the airlines and by the US which allowed us to keep family members much better informed. One suggestion I made was to give travelers the

opportunity to provide next of kin information on the boarding pass. State was given the formal responsibility of being the liaison with foreign governments in the event of a crash in the US with foreign citizens aboard. That was to keep foreign government officials from harassing the personnel of other agencies such as the National Transportation and Safety Board investigators and Health and Human Services disaster mortuary services who are trying to do their jobs. Shortly after the report was approved, a Korean Airlines flight crashed in the jungle in Guam with both Korean and American passengers aboard. The Korean government sent a senior official to oversee the recovery of the Korean citizens and he was extremely unpleasant to deal with. I asked our Consul General in Tokyo, Wayne Griffiths, to represent us there to deal with the Koreans who were harassing our officials investigating the crash and processing the remains.

Q: Where did you go after that?

CANAVAN: During my tour in OCS, Mary Ryan recommended me for an ambassadorial appointment. Another of my mentors, Skip Gnehm, happened to be the Director General, and after going through the process, my name went over to the White House to be Ambassador to Lesotho. I was ecstatic. It was a small mission, only me, a DCM/Pol/Econ officer, a management/consular officer and an office manager as direct hire American staff. I also had a locally hired American GSO, and another American as my HIV/AIDS coordinator.

Q: What was Lesotho like?

CANAVAN: Lesotho is an interesting country. Along with Botswana and Swaziland, it was a protectorate of the United Kingdom, and so did not become part of the Union of South Africa in 1910. All three countries became independent in 1966 and were considered “front line states” during the apartheid era in South Africa. As the most “front line” of the three, Lesotho benefitted from perhaps the highest per-capita international foreign assistance to any country. The Soviets had an embassy of 60 staff, and we had a large USAID mission. By the time I got there, many countries had closed their embassies, including the Russians and many others, and the assistance money had largely dried up.

Q: So how were they doing economically?

CANAVAN: Lesotho is not terribly economically viable. Besides labor, one thing that Lesotho can sell -- and they do -- is water. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project, financed by the international community and the South Africans to redirect the water from the Senqu River in the mountains of Lesotho, which becomes the Orange River as it flows south into South Africa, and redirect it using a series of dams and tunnels north to the part of South Africa that really needs water, and that's Gauteng, which is where Pretoria and Johannesburg are. As part of the deal Lesotho got a small hydroelectric plant, not big enough for them to sell electricity outside of Lesotho, but big enough to supply most of the country with electricity.

The Basotho also worked in the South African goldmines. They were much better educated than most of the black population in South Africa, and so they were sought after as leadership within the miners' groups. They became quite proficient at building scaffolding within the mines. The mines of course were very deep. The miners got half of their pay themselves, and the other half went into the Bank of Lesotho where their families had accounts and could be supported. That really helped the miners and their families to build pretty decent houses for themselves. Education was important to them and a much higher proportion of Basotho were able to attend school than in South Africa. In fact, in Lesotho girls usually went to school earlier than boys did, because the boys were sent up into the mountains to herd the goats, sheep and cattle for the families. The boys were usually not able to start school until they were in their early teens. Only about 10 per cent of the land was suitable for agriculture, so, between providing labor for the mines in South Africa, and then later on providing water, Lesotho really didn't have much of an economic base.

The country was able to benefit from the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, which went into effect while I was there. I specifically picked my second DCM, who was an economic officer, to make sure that Lesotho was one of the first countries to become accredited for the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, known as AGOA.

Q: Could you explain the sort of the genesis of this act?

CANAVAN: The act actually came to fruition under the Clinton administration, although it was a Republican congress that passed it, because most of the US labor unions were against it. It allowed African countries to export to the United States, duty free, any of 6,500 different products that were made or grown in that country. In Lesotho's case, a number of clothing manufacturers and textile factories were set up that did very well. Within the first four months that AGOA was in effect, 12,000 jobs were created. These weren't great jobs, not terribly well-paying jobs, but they were jobs that had not existed before. Lesotho has continued to benefit from AGOA. I was in Costco the other day and they had --

Q: Costco being --

CANAVAN: Costco is one of the large warehouse stores. I happened to be looking at some of their exercise clothing and it turned out to have been "Made in Lesotho." I was so excited!

Q: Ah.

CANAVAN: And I've also found jeans at Old Navy which have been made in Lesotho. I always get kind of a kick out of that. Every time I see something made in Lesotho, I buy it. I now have quite a collection.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: I really enjoyed that tour. We were able to do a great deal with relatively few resources. We had no public diplomacy resources. The United States Information Agency (USIA) was absorbed into the State Department in 1999, but in the few years prior to that, it significantly reduced its footprint, closing offices in eight African countries. Lesotho was one of those and we were left with literally nothing with which to conduct public diplomacy.

Q: I mean --

CANAVAN: They didn't even leave a slide projector. So, I went hat in hand to the embassy in Pretoria, and we developed a really good working relationship. For instance, when they had speakers coming to South Africa, if those speakers seemed relevant to what we might do in Lesotho, they would give me the opportunity to pay their way to Lesotho. And normally I would put them up in the residence to save money and we would program them. Again, this was out of regular embassy funds.

On one occasion, Pretoria paid the travel expenses because they had a group of attorneys and judges who were supposed to go to Zimbabwe for a couple of days and at the last minute our embassy in Harare canceled the visit. I said we would be happy to take the group and it so happened that they arrived on International Women's Day. I invited many of the professional women I knew in Lesotho, and as well as lawyers and judges to a reception at my residence. It was hugely successful. There were three women and one man (he was married to one of the women) in the group. Two of the two women stayed at the residence and the couple went to the hotel. The next day they gave a presentation at the judicial palace on court administration and case management, something with which the high court was struggling. Again, it was hugely successful.

Our budget was meager, so we had to be very creative and resourceful. Fortunately, I had a great DCM, Ray Brown, and fabulous consular/management officer, Teresa Stewart. Our International Military Education and Training (IMET) budget was only \$75,000, but we made the best of it. Rather than sending individual members of the Lesotho Defense Force to training in the US, I would invite American military personnel to Lesotho to provide training. That enabled us to get -- pardon the pun -- a lot more bang for the buck.

One particular case, the government of Lesotho asked us for written material on how to run a proper court martial. Three weeks after I arrived, there was a mutiny, an attempted coup during which much of the downtown area of the capital was burned, and the intervention of South African and Botswanan troops. 50 enlisted members of the Lesotho Defense Force were arrested and needed to be tried. The government had not conducted a court martial in Lesotho in 12 years, and that one was thrown out on appeal because it was so badly done. Ray called our defense attaché, Col. Michael Mensch, who was resident in Pretoria, and was connected with the Defense Institute for International Legal Studies (DIILS) in Newport, Rhode Island.

DIILS offered to send a team to conduct a training course. We accepted the offer and despite the short deadline, the team of one Army Colonel and two Marine Majors arrived

the second week in January. They put on a fabulous four-day course and opened it to anybody in the legal profession in Lesotho, especially the defense teams for the mutineers. Even the high court judges attended. The following Monday the court martial started. They tried each one individually. Out of 50, 33 were convicted, 17 were acquitted. Those convicted received sentences of five to 13 years, which was politically acceptable because the mutineers were all connected with the opposition party. The results were excellent and there was not one appeal. This took the entire issue of the mutiny and the mutineers off the table politically in the aftermath of the attempted coup and it was significant.

Q: Yeah. One of the things, you know, we're talking about this USIA lack where you were --

CANAVAN: Yes.

Q: Why would that happen? I mean it sounds like something should have been behind that, I mean --

CANAVAN: It happened because USIA's budget was cut so severely and they were about to be absorbed into the State Department. However, it was virtually impossible to run an embassy without public diplomacy resources of any kind. And I don't know what I would have done if it hadn't been for embassy Pretoria being so supportive of what we were trying to do. I think one of the other posts that was closed was Burundi. Mary Carlin Yates, a USIA officer, was the ambassador. She and I and several other ambassadors at the smaller posts, which had been left without USIA resources, went on a campaign to get at least minimal resources once the consolidation took place. We didn't get as much support from Washington as I would have liked. Washington's reaction was, "Well, if we give you money we have to take it away from some other post." And I said, "That's not right. Once the State Department takes over USIA, the resources need to be redistributed and we need to have some."

What Washington finally came up with was something called "PD Light," which paired a large post that had a lot of resources, like Pretoria, with a smaller post that had no resources, like ours. We were able to get a little bit of funding, but were not allowed to nominate participants for the International Visitor Program, in my view one of the most significant educational and cultural exchange programs we have. We would receive the cables asking for nominations, but would be told no when we tried to nominate someone. I finally was able to nominate the prime minister's wife who had quit her job in the Ministry of Education to focus on HIV and AIDS prevention. Washington was not very happy about her participation because they felt she was going to need all sorts of special care and feeding, which was absolutely not the case. She shared a room just like everybody else and didn't ask for anything special. I went up the ladder and wouldn't let the bureaucracy say no. So, I will take some credit for helping the embassies that had lost their USIA resources to at least get some back.

When I first arrived in Lesotho, the only countries that had HIV/AIDS programs were those with bilateral USAID programs, which Lesotho also did not have. I tried to make the point that HIV/AIDS doesn't respect borders and you can't do any kind of really serious HIV/AIDS programs piecemeal. You have to include an entire region in a program. So fortunately, the USAID director in South Africa, who had a huge amount of clout, was very supportive of what we were trying to do and was able to convince USAID Washington to come up with some regional funds to be used for countries like Lesotho. Initially, the funds were pretty slim. We only received \$100,000, whereas the countries with bilateral programs had millions. This was before PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief, which President Bush started. PEPFAR was hugely successful, and I'll talk more about that when I get to Botswana. But it wasn't in existence yet when I was Lesotho, and consequently we were bereft of any kind of resources to address HIV/AIDS issues.

Q: You know, not knowing -- not having been involved in any of that -- it sounds to me like there was a certain amount of almost dog in the major attitude of well, they don't give us anything, we're going to really make somebody suffer. And there doesn't seem to be much can do attitude in Washington about how we're going to work this out.

CANAVAN: That was how I felt about it (*laughs*). I realized there was a lot going on, but if you're going to maintain an embassy in a country, there's a minimum amount of resources that you have to provide. Otherwise you might as well not be there. Access to public diplomacy programs and specialized resources are really key to engagement in countries for which, for instance, HIV/AIDS is one of the most serious problems.

Q: Yes.

CANAVAN: If we can't help them deal with really serious issues like HIV/AIDS, what were we doing there?

Q: Was there any talk of maybe we shouldn't be there, or?

CANAVAN: It never got that far. The embassy had shrunk considerably. Lesotho was probably the most frontline of the frontline states during the bad old days of apartheid. And we had a relatively big embassy with a big bilateral AID program. The Russians had an embassy with 60 people in it. And Lesotho was a pawn of the Cold War. Once apartheid ended, then almost all of the other countries closed their embassies. We closed our AID program, but we did keep the embassy there along with Peace Corps. It was very useful, during that period of political unrest. I was getting two or three calls a day from the Canadians, the Germans, and other nationalities who had closed their embassies in Lesotho. They asked us to assist their citizens, because they couldn't do anything for them. Those countries had no input or influence on what was happening then and what ended up happening later. In my view it confirmed our philosophy of universality; that we need to have posts in as many places as possible, because without a physical presence, we don't have a good idea what is really happening, we can't influence what's going on, we can't assist American citizens, and it diminishes our role in the world if we pull back

in a lot of these places. There's a price to be paid, literally, and it's not cheap to keep all these places open.

Q: Well, did this lack of support from Washington show itself in almost, practically cutting you off from informing Washington of what was going on, or?

CANAVAN: Well, it was sort of interesting. Because Washington seemed to have no interest in what was happening there, I never received any guidance and I never asked for any. We basically did everything on our own. It was our initiative to partner with our mission in South Africa to get things done. We enjoyed not being on Washington's radar screen.

Q: Yeah. Well, in a way -- I'm just thinking of human nature -- I would think this would develop sort of -- I'm putting this probably wrong, but a sort of a contempt for those folks in Washington.

CANAVAN: To a certain extent. You know, in some ways I sort of understood what was going on. On the other hand, it was really interesting because the one time Washington did get kind of interested in what was going on was when South Africa complained to our embassy in Pretoria that we needed to help Lesotho resolve some of its issues because it was things like cattle rustling and stuff like that was causing major problems for the South Africans, and they wanted our help in resolving. So, when the South Africans asked for help (*laughs*) that got some attention from Washington. Lesotho was rarely on the itinerary of senior USG officials. I had a California assemblyman come for a visit. I had a one-star Air Force general from European Command come for a visit. I had a deputy assistant secretary come for the king's wedding, and Skip Gnehm visited when he was Director General. The three-star general, who was the head of the Army Corps of Engineers, was supposed to come for a visit but somebody told him about the mutiny and the coup and he said it was too dangerous for him to go (*laughs*)! And I'm thinking, "Hey, you know, it's too dangerous for him. But what about us?"

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Otherwise we got virtually no attention. Subsequently, I think Bob Zoellick visited as the US Trade Representative. Bill Clinton went after he was no longer president because the Clinton Foundation was doing some work there and established an office. And there were a number of other high-level visitors going to Lesotho. But when I was there it was, it was really off everybody's radar screen. I'm quite proud of what we were able to accomplish with what we had.

Q: Well, I think in -- say, in, in many ways you were fortunate. I've talked to people, particularly in the early days, but when Henry Kissinger was secretary of state --

CANAVAN: Oh yes.

Q: They were delighted in the fact that they were African hands and that Africa was not on Kissinger's radar.

CANAVAN: Mm-hmm.

Q: And you know, out of sight, out of mind and you kind of do what you really think you should be doing.

CANAVAN: Exactly. So, we did. And, and as I said, I think we accomplished a huge amount considering the limited resources we had. Plus, we had a good time. We enjoyed ourselves, we all got along. There were interesting people. I'm still in correspondence with the former Chief Justice of the High Court in Lesotho. And he's taken on the job of Chairman of the Election Commission. They've got elections coming up and that always causes problems in Lesotho.

The wife of the Foreign Minister when I was in Botswana was from Lesotho. They had met at the university shared by Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. When there was some political violence in Lesotho while I was in Botswana, I asked her why she thought there was so much more violence in Lesotho.

She said "Oh, it's the Zulu influence," *(laughs)*.

Because the Basotho people are actually a conglomeration of a number of ethnic groups that were brought together by the first King of Lesotho, King Moshoeshoe. And he was quite a visionary actually. There is a story that one tribal group practiced cannibalism. And Moshoeshoe sent a message to them and said, "Hey, you know, if you'll stop eating my relatives maybe we can work together and be stronger together." And he actually brought a number of groups together, including some Zulus, and formed the Basotho people. The Basotho successfully held off both the Boors and the English from taking over what is now Lesotho. The Basotho once controlled what is now The Free State in South Africa before the Boors seized it for the farm land.

Q: Well, tell me. We may have covered this before, but I would like to make sure that we don't skip this. What did you think of the governmental system there and the king and all? How important was he and how did this work?

CANAVAN: Now, the King of Lesotho is a constitutional monarch. The King of Swaziland is not. He's omnipotent in Swaziland. The king in Lesotho is an important cultural figure, but he is not supposed to be involved in politics, very much like Queen Elizabeth. However, some of the political problems that existed in Lesotho were exacerbated by the king's support for the political party that was in the opposition when I was there. The opposition party had a strong connection with the ANC (African National Congress) in South Africa, and so when they fomented the mutiny and the coup, they thought that Nelson Mandela would support what they had done. In fact, Nelson Mandela said, "Hey fellas, this is not the way we do things here anymore. You need to stand down

and defer to the democratically elected government.” South Africa and Botswana sent troops to Lesotho to support the elected government per a 1994 agreement.

Q: Well, it sounds like, you know, kind of working the way things should.

CANAVAN: Exactly. And the fact that it was two African countries, democratic African countries in the region that stepped in to fix it was very important. Unfortunately, the political conflicts continue, because whoever is in power politically controls the majority of the good jobs in the country.

Q: Sort of on a personal note, how many wives did the king have, or was this one of the --

CANAVAN: No, the King of Lesotho is Roman Catholic and has one wife, period. It's the King of Swaziland that has all the wives, and I think he's up to 13 or something. I could be wrong, don't quote me on that.

Q: Well --

CANAVAN: They're really quite different. The King of Lesotho is a Roman Catholic, he has one wife. I haven't heard of any hints of scandal or anything. He waited a long time to marry. He was in his mid-thirties when he married, and I happened to be there for the wedding. Because a deputy assistant secretary of state came all the way from Washington for the wedding, he and I were invited to be part of the post-wedding lunch with the wedding party and visiting heads of state.

Q: Well, was there any relation with the British royal family there at all, or?

CANAVAN: No one from the British royal family attended the wedding, although Prince Charles had visited Lesotho in the mid-1990s.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: But it's interesting because the British actually closed their high commission (the equivalent of an embassy in a commonwealth country) in Lesotho. And it was quite a shock because it's the first high commission they've ever closed anywhere.

Q: I think that would be a tremendous blow.

CANAVAN: It was. The Basotho were pretty unhappy and my good friend who had been the British High Commissioner when I was there, Kaye Oliver, was quite unhappy as well. As I said, the British High Commissioner, the EU (European Union) representative and I were really instrumental in helping the government and the opposition come to a political resolution to their disagreements over the elections. I was a little more willing than my other two colleagues to stick my neck out. So sometimes I ended up being the spokesman for the three of us.

Q: Well, was there a movement within the country to abolish the king and set up a different kind of government?

CANAVAN: No. The king came out of the tradition of a paramount chief. And those are still very much part of the Basotho culture, both in and out of Lesotho. He is not only the King of Lesotho, but he's the paramount chief of the Basotho people of which there are about three million in South Africa. I don't see that changing. While there was an issue with his taking political sides, there was never an issue about whether the crown should exist or not.

Q: What about the spillover from the Zulu areas in South Africa?

CANAVAN: Mm-hmm?

Q: Did they -- was tribalism -- did that overlap with governmental rule, or?

CANAVAN: The Zulus that were incorporated into what became the Basotho are not a separate group politically, unlike in South Africa.

Q: Well, looking at it from a practical point of view, as the American ambassador there, did you see American interest in the area?

CANAVAN: I think our interests certainly have a great deal to do with stability in the region. It is an incredibly rich region from the perspective of natural resources and people who are well-educated and can be very influential. It is in our interest that the region be stable so that there can be economic development.

Q: Well, did you see AIDS as being an issue? In other words, were you looking towards -- you know, if we can eradicate AIDS all over we'll all be better off?

CANAVAN: Well, that's part of it. The other thing is HIV/AIDS has a huge economic impact on countries. Because if you see your workforce, and especially your educated workforce being killed off by this disease, it's a real problem. The PEPFAR program, in my view, is one of the most successful assistance programs we've ever implemented. We were able to quickly identify and fund specific programs with a high level of accountability. The way it was set up and the way it worked required coordination and cooperation among U.S. agencies, the host government, and NGOs.

Q: Well, did you find the -- was Mbeki the President of South Africa while you were there?

CANAVAN: Mandela was the president -- let me see, he was elected in '94 and Mbeki was elected in '99. So, when I first got to Lesotho Mandela was still president. But the following year Mbeki was elected.

Q: Well, did you find sort of the -- as I understand it, Mbeki's attitude was there's not really an AIDS problem or something.

CANAVAN: Considering that he was incredibly well educated in British schools, he had a very peculiar perspective on HIV and AIDS. He apparently liked to read contrarian views on the Internet about whether HIV caused AIDS. And he seemed to think it didn't. One of his closest friends and advisors died from AIDS related cancer. Mbeki never acknowledged that he had AIDS and when he died Mbeki said, "Well, he died from anemia." Yes, his friend died from a blood disease that he got because he had AIDS.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: And you know, you don't die of AIDS. You die because of diseases that you get because AIDS has wiped out your immune system. Mbeki really had his head in a dark hole when it came to this. I'm sure hundreds of thousands of people died unnecessarily who could have benefited from both early testing and counseling even before they had good antiretroviral drugs. He did a huge disservice to South Africans by refusing to accept assistance.

Q: Oh boy.

CANAVAN: At an international conference, Mbeki's Minister of Health actually recommended drinking beet juice to prevent HIV/AIDS.

Q: Well, now did this have any impact on Lesotho?

CANAVAN: Well, it did, because a lot of people in Lesotho looked to South Africa to take the lead on this sort of thing. And as long as Mbeki was claiming that HIV doesn't cause AIDS and being in denial himself, it made it harder for countries like Lesotho to recognize that they had a serious problem. Botswana was the exception and recognized the problem early on, but Botswana's always been more independent and forward thinking.

Q: Well then, just looking at the time. It's probably a good place to stop, Kate. But is there anything else we should cover? Or when you're thinking about it the next time around you can --

CANAVAN: Right now that's all I can think of. Of course, I went from Lesotho to be Director of the Foreign Service Institute. And how that happened is a good story in itself, but we'll leave that for next time.

Q: Today is February 25, 2014 with Kate Canavan. Let's see, you were in Lesotho.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: And then I think we were—I can't remember, what was the problem that caused the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) general not to come?

CANAVAN: Oh, it was actually the three-star who was the Head of the Army Corps of Engineers. He thought it wasn't safe enough.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: Yeah.

Q: OK, so you held the fort down.

CANAVAN: *(laughs)* Absolutely. And it was actually quite safe by then, but he had heard that there was some political unrest and he thought it wasn't sufficiently safe for him to visit.

Q: You should have sent back saying, "Well, we women in the Foreign Service will hold the fort down and let you know when we can let you come in."

CANAVAN: Yes. Right.

Q: So anyway, what happened to -- we're talking about your next one, which is the Director of the Foreign Service Institute, is that right?

CANAVAN: Yes. Marc Grossman, then the Director General of the Foreign Service, had asked me to be one of his deputies. I was paneled to that position and I thought everything was all set for my next assignment. And then, through a friend of mine who was working at FSI at the time (she'd been my management officer in Lesotho a year before), I learned that Marc had been chosen by Secretary Powell to be undersecretary for political affairs. I was waiting to see who would be selected to replace him, and it was Ambassador Ruth Davis, then FSI director. I had worked for Ruth when I was managing director of overseas citizen services and she was the PDAS (principal deputy assistant secretary) in the bureau of consular affairs. We had worked well together so I thought, "Well, that's great. I can certainly be her deputy." And then I heard from Theresa that Ruth was bringing two people from FSI with her to the director general's office, Ruth Whiteside and John Campbell. I said to myself, "that means I don't have a job."

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: And in fact, that was exactly what it meant. About four days later I received a call from Grant Green who was the new undersecretary for management. We chatted for about 15 minutes and he said, "Well, you probably know that we're playing musical chairs here in Washington."

And I said, "Yes sir, and I was kind of wondering what that meant for me."

And he said, “Well, how would you like to be Director of the Foreign Service Institute?”

I said immediately, “You bet I would.” I knew Ruth was moving over, but I had never thought that they would consider me for that position. So, I was surprised, but obviously very pleased and said, “Yes, I would, I would love to have that job.”

And he said, “Well, I’ve got to do some due diligence and interview a couple other people, but you’re my first choice and I’ll get back to you.” About a week later he called and said, “You’re my choice to be director of FSI, but before it’s set in concrete the secretary wants to meet you.”

My first reaction was “Well, I’m in Lesotho, 8,000 miles away.” My second reaction was, “Wow, I don’t know that there has been a secretary of state in memory who has ever really cared who the director of the Foreign Service Institute was.” I was very impressed with the fact that secretary Powell wanted to meet me before it was a done deal.

Q: Yes.

CANAVAN: He said, “When would it be convenient for you to travel to Washington?”

And I said, “Whenever the secretary wants to see me.”

I arranged for my travel. I believe it was early April 2001. The meeting was scheduled for 15 minutes, but it lasted for half an hour. The secretary kept Walter Fauntroy waiting for an extra 15 minutes so he could talk to me. He made me feel very comfortable. The first question he asked me was what I thought of the Foreign Service Exam. And I said, “Well, it’s a great vehicle for recruiting political and economic officers, but it doesn’t work very well when you’re trying to hire consular and management officers, because of the way the exam is focused. I mentioned that there is still a prejudice in the Foreign Service in favor of political officers and econ officers and then the rest of us are kind of an afterthought.” And I guess he liked that answer, because I got the job. So then after I met with him I went downstairs and met with Rich Armitage, the new deputy secretary, and Grant Green again.

I left Lesotho at the beginning of June, and had to negotiate for two weeks of leave to see my aging mother in California. The reason they wanted me there sooner rather than later turned out to be legitimate, since the secretary had decided to double the intake of junior officers in order to fill all of the vacant positions we had at the time. Remember, this is before 9/11. The increase was also to build up a training float that he had hoped to create.

Q: Could you explain for somebody who might not understand what a training float means.

CANAVAN: Okay. It is a concept that is codified in the department of defense to ensure that there are approximate 15% more personnel than positions to take into account leave

and training requirements for the military. The state department has no such regulation, leaving gaps and sometimes unfilled positions when there are insufficient personnel, which is just about always. And it also means that there's a lot of pressure on the officers, the employees, to leave their posts as late as possible and arrive at their new posts as soon as possible. The result is that employees are frequently giving up leave and they may have to pass up important opportunities for training.

Secretary Powell figured out pretty quickly when he got to the state department that this was a highly undesirable situation. Long term training, usually at least 10 months, was counted as an assignment, but shorter courses had to be squeezed in, usually between assignments. So, the secretary said, "We need to have enough people in the Foreign Service to fill all of our existing positions, plus a training float of 15%." And that was his goal. And frankly, if it hadn't been for 9/11 and the need for us to staff Afghanistan and Iraq, he would have succeeded in doing that.

Doubling the intake of Foreign Service employees meant that FSI had to double the size and or the number of courses it offered, particularly for the entry level employees. In some cases, it required physically enlarging or altering classrooms to accommodate more students, or running double sessions of some language courses.

Q: Really big ones, yeah.

CANAVAN: I got there in mid-June, and in mid-January the first large orientation classes were going to show up. In hindsight, while I was initially a bit disappointed with the fact that I wasn't going to get my entire leave and I'd had to depart post sooner than I'd intended, I understood when I got there what the imperative was. Initially there was some pushback from the staff who had gotten used to smaller classes. I told them that the additional employees were a boon to the department and that we don't have a choice. These new employees were going to show up on our doorstep, we had to figure out how to accommodate them. I let each of the different schools (the language school, the leadership and management school, the school of professional and area studies, etc.) figure out what they needed in terms of classroom and office space, and what they needed in terms of staff. The secretary basically said, "Tell me what you need and as far as resources go you can have it." The executive director at FSI, Kathy Russell was fabulous. She was incredibly organized. She had actually organized the move from the old FSI facility in Rosslyn to the new campus. And she oversaw the actual construction of the new campus. And she was brilliant when it came to figuring out how we could increase our space.

But it all came together. The first class showed up the second week of January, and it was cozy in the classroom. But we were able to accommodate everyone, we were able to accommodate all the new staff and get them up to speed by the time they needed to start teaching. And it worked, it actually worked quite well. But it was a huge challenge. I think the staff appreciated the fact that I didn't micromanage the process. I told them what had to be done and when it had to be done with the assurances that if they presented a good plan, we would have funding to accomplish everything they wanted to do. Both

the leadership at FSI as well as the Undersecretary for Management supported their efforts. The language school, the leadership and management school, the school of professional and area studies had different requirements and accomplished their goals in different ways. But it all worked out.

That was our first big challenge. My next challenge had to do with the secretary's directive that we needed to significantly increase leadership and management training, and not just for the Foreign Service but for Civil Service employees as well. I was very fortunate to be able to hire Ambassador Pru Bushnell, who after having that horrible experience with the bombing in Nairobi, had gone on to Honduras as the ambassador for three years. Coming out of Honduras she didn't have an assignment. Someone had leaked an exchange of letters between Pru and Secretary Albright concerning pre-bombing security in Nairobi. The exchange put the secretary in a bad light. And the assumption on the part of a lot of people in the department was that Pru had leaked it, and she had not. Pru had a very strong background in both training and management. She had shown commendable leadership as deputy assistant secretary for Africa, both during and after the Rwandan genocide, and again in Nairobi in the aftermath of the bombing. She was the perfect person to take over the leadership and management school and develop the kinds of programs that the secretary was looking for. Anyway, Pru was brilliant. She would occasionally get frustrated because we didn't have a lot of staff to support all of the course development that she really wanted to do. But she really did a brilliant job pulling together her own team to come up with programs that are still in effect to make sure that both Foreign Service Officers and Civil Service employees from about the FS-3 level up must have a mandatory leadership course at every level before they can get promoted to the next level. And leadership training is also included in all the orientation courses for both Foreign Service and for Civil Service.

I think Secretary Powell left two really important legacies for the State Department. One is he significantly changed the culture in favor of training. I believe it has made a marked difference in the ability of our folks who are coming up through the service to have the skills that were sorely lacking. Stu, when you went through your career and I went through a good part of my career, leadership and management were considered pretty much irrelevant by many senior officers. Consequently, we had a lot of overworked people and poor morale. It's not completely fixed, but it's a heck of a lot better than it used to be.

His other legacy was bringing the department into the 21st century with regard to technology. Prior to his arrival in January 2001, we had been using a 10-year old computer operating system from Wang, which went out of business after they sold us the system. We had no updates for that entire period, and we were unable to communicate with other U.S Government agencies by computer. Secretary Powell immediately got funding from congress, and in about 2 ½ years had completely upgraded our systems.

Pru accomplished two other important training initiatives as well. The secretary asked me to take a really close look at the senior seminar. She and I decided that it was a really

expensive anachronism that needed significant modification or to go away completely. We wanted to create a course that would benefit all senior officers, not just 15 a year. The senior seminar was created in the early '50s to give officers who had spent their first 20 years in the service overseas an understanding of the domestic issues which shape foreign policy. We didn't have the Internet or cell phones or cable television, and foreign service employees spent most of their careers overseas, with the exception of their mandatory five weeks of home leave in the States between assignments. So, when these officers were assigned to important policy positions in the department, they were given the opportunity to attend the 10-month senior seminar. It was very prestigious to be able to participate in the Senior Seminar, and it served an important purpose. As time went on communications got better, and officers no longer spent their entire early and mid-careers overseas. A more common and career-enhancing pattern was to serve one, two or three tours abroad, and then return to the department for one or two tours before going overseas again for one or more tours. As this change happened, the usefulness of the senior seminar became less important. It became a reward, it became a year off, it became a junket. Not all the people who were selected for the program were clearly on their way up in the service. A number of them, in fact, retired right out of the Senior Seminar, and the other agencies began sending less qualified employees.

We started having a harder time getting qualified people from the military services. While we rarely got senior military officers in the course, they were usually colonels and navy captains who were clearly on track to become generals and admirals. However, at one point the navy wanted to send a lieutenant commander, an FS-3 equivalent, to the course. And we said, "No, this is a senior course." And they said, "Well, she's definitely going to make captain." We said, "No, we want a navy captain who we know is going to make admiral, lieutenant commander doesn't cut it."

The events of September 11, 2001, really sealed the fate of the senior seminar. As part of their contribution, the military would provide the air travel for the 30 course participants and staff. And there was a great deal of travel – approximately one week a month. After 9/11, military aircraft were no longer available. In fact, one class was stranded in Alaska on that date and after the order grounding all aircraft was lifted, they needed to continue their travel by commercial aircraft, something that made the course prohibitively expensive.

Another issue was that one of the goals of the course was to provide networking opportunities for all of the agencies participating. Since many of the participants were near the end of their careers, the networking was not as useful as it should have been. In fact, several of the important agencies stopped sending anyone to the seminar.

We didn't want to cancel the seminar until we had something to replace it since we didn't want to lose the resources. This was the perfect opportunity to develop a course for all foreign service employees recently promoted to the senior foreign service. We had hoped to design a course similar to the six-week military capstone course, but push back from human resources and the geographic bureaus forced us to limit the course to two weeks. Not ideal, but better than nothing. We named the course SETS (Senior Executive

Training Seminar), and all foreign service officers were required to attend it within a year of their promotion to the senior service.

The senior seminar alumni association did not appreciate having the course canceled. Their purpose in life seemed to be to give a reception for the new seminar participants every year. It was a chance to schmooze with the other lucky people who had had the opportunity to take the course and pat each other on the back for having been selected. A delegation from the senior seminar alumni came to see me, obviously very unhappy, but their biggest concern seemed to be that if there was no senior seminar, what was their purpose?

I suggested that with their keen interest in training for senior officers, they create an advisory group to provide ideas to the FSI leadership. I heard nothing from them, not a peep, other than having my ear chewed on a number of occasions by alumni at various events, including a party given for a foreign service friend who had just gotten married. I finally had to tell one fellow that I didn't want to discuss it any more.

I think we made some really significant changes in FSI. I was extremely fortunate to have Barry Walls as my deputy. Barry had of course the training background. He'd initially been hired to be a trainer. And then had moved into the front office initially as a temporary deputy until I could get my feet on the ground and select someone. After looking around at potential candidates and having worked with Barry for a month, it was clear that he was the best candidate. He provided credibility with the training staff that I as a career foreign service officer didn't have even though I worked at FSI doing training myself for two years and eight months. It was an important partnership that he and I had at FSI that really helped us get through some of these rough times.

For instance, I was not aware until the events of 9/11 that the alternate operations center for the State Department was in the basement of FSI. While all of the students and most of the staff were sent home, a core group stayed to support the executive secretariat and operations center staff. Once we resumed classes, I met with the entire faculty and students to be sure that there would be no criticism of any of our Muslim staff or students. I also met on several occasions with the Muslim members of the staff and tried to support them the best I could.

We discovered some things about the facility that surprised us. For instance, the public address system was inadequate to communicate with people on campus who were not in a classroom or the cafeteria. When the plane hit the pentagon most of the students were on a break and outside of the buildings. Fortunately, it turned out to be a problem for which there was a remedy. Evacuating the campus was a bit chaotic since there are only two ways in and out, and with the heavy traffic on George Mason and Route 50, it took a while to get everybody out. There were a number of people who wanted to volunteer to help, and we really didn't have any kind of organization to figure out where we needed volunteers and how to get them up to speed on what needed to be done, but everything got sorted out.

Q: I'm listening with great interest.

CANAVAN: Anyway, it was, it was a fantastic opportunity to work with Secretary Powell who really cared about training. We felt like we were an integral part of his senior staff. I went to all of his 8:30 staff meetings every morning and would come back and impart what I had learned at least twice a week to the FSI staff. One of the things that was noticeable throughout the Department was upgrading our technology and computer systems. You may recall that around 1990, the last major contract that the computer company Wang had before it went bankrupt was with the State Department. A decade later we are still working with the same Wang computers with no upgrades. The company had gone out of business. We were hopelessly behind most of the rest of the government, and especially DOD in our ability to communicate, even with other agencies.

Secretary Powell had been on the board of AOL and is actually quite a geek himself. He was completely appalled at the state of our systems that one of his first projects was to get funding from Congress to upgrade our computers. It actually took him only two and a half years to get rid of all the Wang computers, get us on the internet, and get us connected not only within the Department, but with other agencies as well. Prior to that, individual geographic bureaus out of necessity had developed their own internal communications systems which meant that they couldn't talk to posts outside of their geographic area. The Africa Bureau was a perfect case in point. Not only could we not talk to people in the State Department via internet outside of our bureau, we couldn't talk to other agencies with offices in our embassies. It was just a complete disaster. I remember the staff meeting where our chief information officer handed the secretary a plaque, which certified that the last Wang computer had been destroyed. It was very funny. It was a computer that was running legacy programs down at the Financial Management Office in Charleston. It was discovered in some dusty corner and they got rid of it.

Q: Well, how did you feel that the FSI ranked with sort of the general run of academic institutions?

CANAVAN: Well, I didn't compare FSI to academic institutions because I kept making the point that FSI is not an academic institution. It is a diplomatic trade school. The only courses that we taught which academia would find comparable were the one-year econ course and our language courses. If our students were enrolled with any of the local universities, they could receive academic credit for those courses. The rest of our courses were not academic, period. They were to teach our employees how to do their jobs such as how to issue visas, how to be a GSO, how to do political reporting and analysis. The courses for the most part were short compared to an academic quarter or semester and they were not academically focused.

So, when people would come to me and say, "Why don't you get FSI accredited and then we can get college credit for these courses?" my response would be negative. In order for an institution to give credits and confer degrees, the entire institution has to be accredited.

The vast majority of our faculty did not have the requisite academic credentials to qualify, and again, our courses were primarily teaching diplomatic tradecraft.

Q: Well, one of the things—I don't think we're getting too far off base here— but part of what we're doing right here, as of this minute, is building up a reservoir of experiences of people in the Foreign Service and diplomacy in general. Because so many people in the, in the Foreign Service, or in diplomacy, have little idea of what their predecessors had done.

CANAVAN: Right. Oh, absolutely.

Q: And so it's not just -- part of it is of course just plain diplomatic history. And I understand that a significant number have never had any courses in diplomatic history. How did you treat that, or what did you think of that?

CANAVAN: That was a constant issue. We tried to squeeze as much as we could into the orientation courses. It's important for new people coming in to understand where the organization came from, how it developed. And as you say, diplomatic history was an important part of that. We ran into the problem of needing to get people through training as quickly as possible since so many posts were short-staffed. At one point -- I don't know if you remember, they extended the A100 course to nine weeks. It had traditionally been five to seven weeks. And with the extra two or three weeks, they were trying to add diplomatic history among other important subjects. The difficulty was the students themselves, since once they had received their onward assignments at about week five, they wanted to get out of A100 as quickly as possible and get into language training and other courses that they were going to need for their assignments.

Some other countries take their aspiring diplomat right out of undergraduate and enroll them in the equivalent of a masters' program where they develop the academic and tradecraft skills they need. In our system, most entry level foreign service officers already have advanced degrees, up to and including law degrees and doctorates. They are older and have applicable work experience. They don't want to spend any more time in a classroom; they want to get to work. I completely agree with you, Stu. And I think the fact that you all are trying to provide history and context to diplomacy is so important.

Q: Well, what about these, sort of on the job training and all, how stood things at that time? I know when I was in Yugoslavia I took a law course by -- a navy law course by correspondence.

CANAVAN: Actually, thank you for bringing that up. We made great strides in the area of what we now call distance education, and providing opportunities for employees in the field -- and Washington of course -- to take a wide variety of courses. Our language department came up with some really good distance education language materials. I have a funny story about the first one that we created. It was an interactive course in German. It was on a CD to use on your computer. As you repeated phrases, it would correct your

pronunciation and grammar. It was extremely innovative and I was so proud of the fantastic work our language school was doing in this area.

I knew Secretary Powell would love this, so I took one of the first CDs and proudly presented it to him at the morning staff meeting, and explained to him what it was. Immediately after the staff meeting he went back to his office and stuck it in his laptop, and nothing happened. The next morning at staff meeting he says, “Kathy, that CD didn’t work on my computer.”

And I said, “Excuse me?”

He said, “Didn’t work on my computer.”

I said, “OK, let me see what happened.” So, I called the head of his personal systems staff and asked him what the problem was. He told me that in order to avoid spam and pop-ups they disabled Java Writer which is the software program on which the language CD runs. That’s why it wouldn’t work on his computer.

And I said, “Okay, can you get a computer he can run it on?”

And Danny said, “Sure.”

The next morning during the staff meeting the secretary says, “So did you figure out the problem?”

I said, “Yes sir, it has to do with the fact that your staff disabled Java on your computer to avoid being inundated with spam and pop-ups, and our language programs run on Java.”

And he looked at me and then he looked at the other 50 people in the room and he said, “Do you think she really knows what she’s talking about?”

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: *(laughs)* He was just teasing me. And I said, “Sir, I’m not brilliant with computers, but this time I’m pretty sure I know what I’m talking about.”

One of the things I was able to do with the Army War College was to arrange for Foreign Service Officers to take their non-resident academic program which lasts two years with three two-week sessions held at the War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The resident programs last 10 months. Both programs confer a Masters’ in National Security Policy. This was only one of many online courses offered to Department employees and I know the opportunities continue to expand.

Q: How did you find the computer literacy of students coming in? There must have been a tremendous divide between the people who really would prefer the quill pen and the new group that’s coming up that are digitally inclined.

CANAVAN: Well, there seemed to be. Because the application process now is largely online, anyone who successfully applies has to have a basic knowledge of how to work with computers. Entry level employees all receive laptops for the duration of their orientation course and they use them for all of their written work and assignments.

Q: Well, did you see something -- you know, when I came in to the Foreign Service in 1955 and I actually was one of the last groups that took the three and a half-day, and I say three and a half-day written day, and it really was a written exam.

CANAVAN: Oh, my God, three and a half days?

Q: Three and a half days.

CANAVAN: Oh, Stu!

Q: Oh yeah, I took --

CANAVAN: Sounds painful.

Q: It was very painful, and I was in Germany in the Air Force as an enlisted man, and I had to go back to my commanding officer and get my leave extended for another half day because of the three-day leave. And he was very suspicious about this Foreign Service thing.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: But my point is that something that almost gets a lot, but it was really a written exam. I took it. We all wrote, we were given essay questions.

CANAVAN: Mm-hmm.

Q: Now, with all -- there are all sorts of things with that, but I was wondering where we talk now about computer literacy, what about writing literacy? Did you find that we were having a problem getting people who could sort of write English?

CANAVAN: Actually not. I left FSI in 2005, nine years ago, but we were still getting incoming officers with excellent writing skills. Some thought their writing skills were so good, they didn't like anyone editing their work. As you know, almost every supervisor has to add at least a little red ink to reporting as it moves through the clearance process and some folks can't stand that. Familiarizing new employees with the foreign service writing requirements sometimes steps on peoples' toes. One of the few positive things to come out of the Wiki Leaks scandal was the fact that a lot more people realized how well folks in the Foreign Service write and how accurately we assess situations.

Q: As a matter of fact—

CANAVAN: Sometimes grammatical rules that I consider important were not followed such as not splitting infinitives and using the right pronouns. However, the readers don't seem to notice those errors as much either, more's the pity

Q: Yeah. I—if it wasn't so in a way unfortunate, but one -- we're just going through a period for the historian reading this that's known as the "Wiki Leaks Period," and this is when so many of our sort of cables had been leaked to the press and displayed that commentators were saying, "You know, these people were really damn good."

CANAVAN: Yeah, exactly (*laughs*). College professors were using our cables as examples of good writing. I have to admit, I never went to the Wiki Leaks website (we were told not to by the Department) and so I never read anything, although I was tempted to see if any of my cables were among those leaked.

Q: I haven't either really.

CANAVAN: I'm wondering what the government of Botswana thought about some of the things I wrote. I know one that they would have really liked, but there were some they probably wouldn't have enjoyed so much. My predecessor wrote a couple of cables that showed up on Wiki Leaks and the government was not happy about them.

Q: This is one of our problems with having our type of government, in which these things can happen.

CANAVAN: Yes.

Q: Well, what about, as you were -- did you find yourself under pressure from security and all as you opened up courses and all this? Was this a problem for you, or did security get to you at all?

CANAVAN: No, not really. Our courses were basically all unclassified. On rare occasions there would be classified presentations and those were always held in an area at Main State where classified issues could be discussed.

Q: What about supervising a large, particularly the language side, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic faculty? Did you run across problems dealing with -- I mean the Voice of America I know certainly has this problem, but did you have problems with --

CANAVAN: That was our biggest management problem (*laughs*).

Q: OK.

CANAVAN: Mike Lemmon, dean of the school of language studies, who had been ambassador to Armenia, was really excellent at managing this incredibly diverse faculty. Of course, we hired native speakers and we wanted people who were familiar with the

cultures of the countries where these languages were spoken so they could impart this information to the students. Internal squabbling was constant. For instance, the Russian language department was a nightmare. The Russian emigres had little cliques and they'd fight with each other. We had a real problem with the Hebrew department too. One of the instructors was quite a male chauvinist and he would routinely publicly insult the female instructors. With Secretary Powell's directive to double the foreign service intake, we had to hire a number of new language instructors. Mike Lemmon spoke to them and he told them that there would be zero tolerance for sexual harassment. Zero.

Well, this one new instructor lasted about three days. We already had four complaints that he was patting his female students on the bottom. When confronted, he claimed that this was part of the culture in his country so therefore he should be allowed to do it.

Q: Well, my --

CANAVAN: Yeah, he was gone.

Q: -- I say, my daughter who was a young blonde teenager when I was consul general in Naples could testify --

CANAVAN: I don't know that this was an Italian. I didn't inquire, and they didn't tell me his nationality. But he didn't last.

Half the staff of FSI are in the language school. So right there, just from the management perspective, you have numbers. But then you do have all of these different folks from different countries, from different parts of countries. For a while in the French department there was this split between the French instructors from France and the instructors from African countries who were teaching French. That got quite messy for a while. I remember when I first entered the foreign service, I took my French exam from the head of the department, Madam Cossart. She was Parisian and kept cringing as I was speaking to her. She gave me a three in speaking, but only a two plus in reading. So, I had to go back to FSI for five weeks to get my reading score up. I had just come from nearly three years in Zaire as a peace corps volunteer and she said, "*Ugh*, not only do you speak African French, but you speak *Belgian* African French."

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: She said, "It's like *scraping* your fingernails down the chalkboard."

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: Trying to manage the relationships and keep the instructors focused on teaching the languages and not fighting among themselves was a real challenge. And Mike did a really excellent job, because the biggest issue that we had was trying to keep World War III from breaking out.

Q: You know, I can remember, I spent a full, a year's course taking at that time it was called Serbo-Croatian.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: And one of our teachers, Mr. Jukov, was a violent Serb. And I have to say at the time, we got pretty annoyed with him. In fact, a spokesman from my little class of six, one Lawrence Eagleburger, went up to complain to the linguist.

CANAVAN: Ah!

Q: Because of just, you know, I mean he, he wouldn't accept words that weren't as in pure Serb words and all.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: But I -- later, I was brought in after I retired as an observer for an election in Bosnia. And, and my Serbian had just gone, but I, I had a little of it.

CANAVAN: Right. It tends to come back, but you know, language is really one of those things, you use it or lose it.

Q: Yeah, but at one point a woman came up to me and said, "Ah! You speak Bosnian!"

CANAVAN: Oh, my God.

Q: And here I spoke a language I never knew existed!

CANAVAN: Right, exactly.

Q: But no, I mean it's -- were you there having to deal with the changing world in that all of a sudden you've got Bosnian, you've got Macedonian, you've got, you know, all these languages that are offshoots of one sort of basic language?

CANAVAN: I was. And of course we had to have different instructors to teach the different languages. Back when you went through everybody learned one language and used it in different places. All a sudden we had to have an Albanian instructor and we had to have different instructors for Croatian and Serbian. While they may be nearly identical languages from the spoken perspective, they use different writing systems. We were constantly having to make adjustments as the world changed and it was actually quite interesting and challenging.

Q: Oh, it --

CANAVAN: I found the whole experience wonderful. It was intellectually stimulating, it was a great management job, it was part of training the next generation of the Foreign

Service and helping people with their career development skills. I have to say that being an ambassador is fabulous and I would never have passed up the opportunity to do it at least once, being able to do it twice was even better. But my two tours at FSI gave me the most long-term satisfaction, both professionally and personally.

Q: Well, I mean obviously all one has to do is think back on the importance of a teacher.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: Or somebody involved in -- has far greater effects often than just being a hotshot lawyer or something like that. But it often gets overlooked. Kathy, I would think there would be days that you would come to the FSI, brimming full of joie de vivre (joy of life) and stuff like that, and somebody would say, "You've got to settle this dispute between the French speakers and the Walloon speakers or something."

CANAVAN: Yeah (*laughs*). Usually those got dealt with at the dean level, or Barry would take them on. So only rarely did they get to my level. We had one case of an instructor who taught Middle East area studies and after 25 years, he was quite an institution there. He had arranged for former assistant secretary Ned Walker to speak to his class. And he'd arranged for a specific classroom with a microphone set up. He went to the classroom ahead of time to check on it and found an A-100 class in there taking the MLAT (Modern Language Aptitude Test). He goes charging up to the front of the room and says in a loud voice to the woman who is monitoring the test, "This is my classroom, you have to get out. I've got a former assistant secretary coming to speak and I must have this classroom."

The woman was quite intimidated and apologized profusely. He continued making a fuss and eventually the class left. Unfortunately, we had to disallow the test and the class had to wait a couple of weeks before they could retake it, disrupting their already tight schedule.

Q: You might explain what MLAT is.

CANAVAN: Oh, I'm sorry, Modern Language Aptitude Test.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: It was the test that we gave to everybody during the orientation period in order to see whether or not they had an aptitude for learning languages, particularly hard languages like Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Korean. A high MLAT score was an indication -- it was not always 100% accurate -- of whether an individual would be able to learn a hard language. So, this disruption caused a huge kerfuffle. The dean of the school of professional and area studies tried to explain to him why his behavior was not acceptable. He said he always considered that his courses were the most important courses at FSI, and besides, he had a former assistant secretary coming in to speak so of course they would have to leave his classroom. I finally had to call him into the office

and I said, “You’ve been here 25 years. When you walked into that room and saw these people taking tests and were advised that they were taking the MLAT, didn’t it occur to you that this might be a higher priority and that you should try to find another classroom for your class?”

He replied “Absolutely not.” Besides, what’s the MLAT? What’s the Modern Language Aptitude Test?”

I said, “You’ve worked here for 25 years. How can you not know what the MLAT is?” *(laughs)*.

And he just didn’t get the fact that there might be another course that actually was more important at a given period of time than a course he was giving.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: And I said, “I’m sorry, but you made a very bad decision. These folks now have to take the test again. They have to wait two weeks to take it. You just used poor judgment. You should have walked in, seen they were taking a test, and realized that even though they were in the classroom that you had reserved, you needed to take remedial action. And it wasn’t to kick them out of the classroom.”

His response was, “But the military loves me.”

I said, “There are a lot of people who love you. Your course is very interesting and provocative. But that does not mean that your course is more important than every other course that we give at FSI.”

Q: Well, did you find that the FSI, irrespective of other subjects, I mean the place where people think of the State Department teaching languages to people, were you a show place or an example or --

CANAVAN: We were definitely a show place, but one difficulty I had in encouraging other agency personnel, particularly military attaches, to attend FSI language training was that our courses began only once or twice a year. Those start dates frequently did not coincide with the training schedules of other agency personnel.

Q: Yes.

CANAVAN: Another advantage of including other agencies is that they would have the opportunity to get to know the State Department personnel with whom they would be working overseas. We did work closely with the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, particularly on training techniques. I loved my FSI campus, but I would have traded it for DLI’s campus in Monterey, California. *(laughs)*.

Q: Yeah, I spent a year taking Russian --

CANAVAN: Ah.

Q: -- back in the '50s.

CANAVAN: Uh-huh.

Q: And you know, the transition to Serbo-Croatian, here was the same damn thing practically. Little different language. And I did poorly in both (laughs).

CANAVAN: Yeah. Language proficiency is not one of my strengths either, I have to admit. It was interesting, when I was interviewing folks to replace Mike Lemmon with whom I had worked for four years, a number of strong linguists were interested in the position. They felt that was the most important criteria for being dean of the language school. And I said, "Well, actually, it's much more of a management job." And I said, "Number two, the associate dean is a PhD linguist, so that skill is not as critical as being able to manage the diverse teaching force, and number three, teaching languages to adults is a very specialized skill. And people who were really good linguists, brilliant linguists, don't appreciate how hard it is for most adults to learn a language. I am looking for a dean who has understanding and empathy for those for whom learning a foreign language is not easy."

Q: Well, it's extremely difficult. I've been through this a number of, God awful number of times, of all of a sudden being full of all of these ideas and everything else and being reduced to, you know, pre-kindergarten level of vocabulary.

CANAVAN: Yeah.

Q: I mean that is the most frustrating thing I can think of.

CANAVAN: Yes, it was not easy.

Q: So, you know, at some point you'll see the transcript of this. And if you have any more issues or something you'd like to talk about, or we can set up another go 'round on that.

CANAVAN: OK.

Q: But did you -- so what happened with your -- after FSI?

CANAVAN: Well, that's an interesting story. I arrived at FSI in June 2001. In the summer of 2003, the department was starting to identify officers to recommend to the White House for ambassadorships for 2004. I would have completed three years at FSI and I thought that if there was a really desirable ambassadorship available in the summer of 2004 I should go after it and not just try to stay on at FSI indefinitely.

I was in the pipeline for one of the nice Eastern European posts, but then I discovered that the White House had not indicated that they wanted to fill South Africa with a non-career appointee. So, I told Grant Green that I'd be very keen to be considered for South Africa. Secretary Powell supported my candidacy as well as the D Committee, so my name went over to the White House to fill that position. However, State did not hear back from the White House and I continued to wait. Grant Green did tell me that someone on the National Security Council (NSC) staff was interested, but that I shouldn't worry about it.

Finally, in late December, Secretary Powell told me that there was a problem with my "next assignment", and a few days later the president announced that one of National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice's staff had been nominated. Secretary Powell said that I had been doing a great job at FSI and that he would like me to stay.

Grant Green said, "I want you to go down to see Sharon Hardy," who was the head of Presidential Appointments at State. He said, "I want you to look at embassies that are available in the summer of 2005 and tell me which one you want." So, I looked at the list and Botswana was available. That's where I ended up.

Q: OK. Well, we'll pick this up when you're off to Botswana.

CANAVAN: I'm off to Botswana, yes.

Q: And I hope you'll talk about the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency.

CANAVAN: You bet I will. I know the author. I don't know if you've seen any of the HBO series?

Q: Actually, I did! They were really quite well done I thought.

CANAVAN: I thought it was very well done, and I met the cast, the director of the pilot, Anthony Minghella, and to this day I am very good friends with the woman who produced the series, Amy Moore.

Q: All right.

Today is March 17, 2014. This is a continuation of my interview with Kate Canavan. We're up to 2005.

CANAVAN: Yes.

Q: And you have picked Botswana. Why Botswana?

CANAVAN: Well, the two other large embassies in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, were already filled and I knew Southern Africa having served in Namibia and

Lesotho. Also, Botswana is the headquarters of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and one of my responsibilities was as the secretary's special representative to SADC. There were a couple of francophone African posts open as well, but I hadn't used my French in 30+ years, and my Spanish certainly wasn't good enough to go to Latin America. So that kind of narrowed it down to Botswana.

Q: Yeah. Well, you said SADC, was that Southern African something?

CANAVAN: Development Community.

Q: Yeah. What is that?

CANAVAN: Africa divides itself up into regional economic zones. SADC consists of 14 countries in Southern Africa who seek to work together to improve their economies. When I was in Lesotho, the U.S. government was working with SADC member countries on a number of development projects. But when Robert Mugabe began behaving really badly in Zimbabwe, congress passed legislation which precluded the U.S. Government from cooperating with Zimbabwe. That put us in a very awkward position vis-à-vis development projects with SADC, and several countries in SADC refused to cooperate with us on regional projects unless we included Zimbabwe. When I called on the assistant secretary for African affairs before I left for Botswana, she said, "I'd like you to focus on reengaging with SADC."

Our bilateral relationship was quite good with one notable exception, and that had to do with the fact that Botswana was not keen to participate with boots on the ground in Darfur in the Sudan. Botswana had participated in the mid '90s in Somalia, quite professionally and successfully, but they didn't like the way the peacekeeping mission in Darfur was being run. Specifically, they did not want to put the Botswana Defense Force under the command of a Nigerian commander, so they declined to participate. The Africa bureau and the United States European Command, which oversaw our military engagement with Africa, were unhappy about that, but it was a political decision, not a military one on the part of Botswana.

Although the U.S. did not have a bilateral USAID mission in Botswana, the regional USAID office was in Botswana because the SADC headquarters was there. The USAID regional staff were incredibly creative and helpful in coming up with projects where we could work around our limitations on dealing with Zimbabwe. USAID had a trade hub in Botswana as well to promote the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, to help countries in the region take advantage of this trade opportunity for indigenous products to be exported to the United States without having to pay U.S. duty.

We signed several agreements with both the government of Botswana and SADC. One of the agreements with SADC provided U.S. support, along with a lot of other countries including Sweden, to create an organization to regulate the water in the Okavango River Basin, which included Angola, Namibia, and Botswana. And was a very sensitive issue, as water of course always is. Namibia, which is largely desert, had some ideas to exploit

the Okavango River as it flowed through the northeastern corner of that country. Namibia wanted to pipe water hundreds of miles to the capital, Windhoek. Even taking a small percentage of the Okavango River water would have had a significant negative effect on the Okavango Delta, which of course is a very important ecological, environmental, and economic resource in Botswana. Creating a mechanism for monitoring and controlling the flow and use of the river was a real success story for SADC and greatly reduced the possibility of conflict among the countries. USAID was very pleased because they were again engaged with SADC.

I was also able to improve our relationship with the Botswana Defense Force which had deteriorated. My predecessor had focused on business development, and for some reason was hostile to the military, both ours and theirs. I used my husband, a retired lieutenant general, shamelessly to give me access to the Vice President of Botswana, Ian Khama, who had been the commander of the Botswana Defense Force (BDF) during the time they were in Somalia in '93 to '95. He was reclusive and didn't see very many diplomats, did not come to diplomatic functions. So, one needed to have something specific to talk to him about. In 2007, the newly created Africa Command was looking for a headquarters on the continent, and Botswana was one of the possibilities, at least to be one of the regional centers. That issue provided an additional opportunity to engage with Vice President Khama and the BDF.

Although Botswana did not want to participate in Darfur in a significant way, they did send 10 observers, one of whom was killed in a raid, unfortunately. My security cooperation officer came up with a brilliant idea to use Botswana's airlift capability to assist with moving peacekeeping troops from other countries into and out of Darfur. Botswana is one of the few countries in Africa that has any kind of airlift capability. Some years earlier they had acquired three C130s from the North Carolina National Guard and had maintained them really well, even upgrading their avionics. With specialized training provided by the US Air Force in Europe, the Botswanan crews successfully provided airlift for the peacekeepers.

The US European Command also provided \$1.2 million to build 12 HIV/AIDS testing and counseling centers around Botswana. That was in addition to the significant PEPFAR (President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief) funding we received under President Bush, which was really instrumental in allowing Botswana to be on the cutting edge of providing antiretroviral and voluntary counseling and testing and education to the citizens of Botswana. Botswana's program became a model for other countries in how to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly in Southern Africa.

Q: Well, how do you fight it? At that time how would you fight it?

CANAVAN: First of all, people have to understand how AIDS is transmitted, so getting education into the schools at an age when the students were able to understand that AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease was very important. Another element was to get as many people as possible tested for AIDS so that they knew whether or not they were HIV positive or had full-blown AIDS. If they were positive for HIV/AIDS, they were given

counseling on how to avoid transmitting the disease as well as anti-retroviral drugs to keep them alive. If they were negative, they were given counseling on how to avoid contracting it.

In Southern Africa, AIDS is almost 95% transmitted heterosexually and there were some norms of behavior which contributed to the fact that AIDS got transmitted so quickly throughout a large part of the population. Among those norms was the fact that frequently men would leave their villages and their families behind to find work in other parts of the country, returning home infrequently. Because their wives weren't around, they would seek out other women. This was also true for the militaries in all those countries since moving families to where the soldiers were stationed was not a common practice. In addition, it was not uncommon for men to have sexual relationships outside of marriage.

Botswana, because of its diamond wealth is a middle-income country and could afford a much higher level of healthcare than other countries. But they couldn't do it all alone, which is why we and a number of NGOs and other countries were providing assistance to Botswana on HIV/AIDS. Botswana was much farther ahead of other countries in both recognizing the problem and going about ways to combat it. Any citizen of Botswana has access to free antiretroviral drugs, which means that people can live once they're diagnosed as having HIV and AIDS. The idea that because people live in remote villages they can't be responsible to take medicine on a regular basis has been proven to be absurd. Part of the challenge was to destigmatize the disease and refute many of the myths about how it was transmitted.

There were actually five U.S. Government agencies that received PEPFAR funding and Peace Corps was one of them. Because Botswana was a middle-income country, Peace Corps left Botswana in 2003. Botswanan President Mogae was visiting Washington a year later and of course met with President Bush who asked him "Festus, what can we do to help you with your HIV/AIDS epidemic?" And President Mogae said, "Please send Peace Corps back."

So, Peace Corps went back into Botswana shortly before I arrived in the summer of 2005, but only to do HIV/AIDS related programs. Now there are nurses, social workers, folks who help with counseling, and teachers who go into the schools to talk about HIV/AIDS. By the time I left post in 2008, the Peace Corps program had grown back to more than a hundred volunteers. Botswana is very high on the Peace Corps. Volunteers arrived shortly after independence and not only helped them set up parts of their government, but they also provided math and science teachers. Many, if not most, of the senior officials in the government of Botswana have benefited from being taught by Peace Corps teachers. President Mogae or another senior official would attend the close of service ceremonies. It was a huge show of support from the government and it made the Peace Corps program there particularly effective.

Because the Peace Corps received PEPFAR funds, they participated in the interagency coordinating committee, along with USAID, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Defense and the State Department. CDC also

received funding for a number of research projects. The DCM chaired the interagency committee which in turn worked with the government of Botswana's HIV/AIDS committee and NGOs. It was an extremely effective organization, recognized by Washington on more than one occasion. PEPFAR has been one of the most effective assistance programs we've had anywhere. A great deal of money was made available very quickly, but the way it was administered, with a high level of accountability, there was very little misuse, even with a program as large as the one we had in Botswana, which was over \$100 million.

Q: Where are we now?

CANAVAN: I was going to talk about some of the difficulties I had with USAID Washington. The staff of the regional USAID office was fantastic. I was very supportive of them, they were supportive of what I was trying to do to engage with SADC, or reengage with SADC. On very short notice, we got a visit from the deputy director of the Africa region from USAID in Washington who arrived to tell us that they were going to move the regional office of USAID to Pretoria, where there was some empty U.S. government owned office space. They also said it would be easier for them to coordinate their regional travel from Pretoria because the airport in Johannesburg is a hub for Southern Africa.

I made a concerted effort to keep the regional USAID mission in Botswana since in other places in Africa the regional USAID office was always located where the regional economic organizations headquarters was, which in the case of SADC was in Botswana. Also, the government of Botswana charged a minimal rent on the facility USAID was using, and from my perspective, it was very important to keep the USAID regional office there so that we could closely coordinate our programs with SADC.

Without being required to, USAID and the embassy had consolidated our administrative services, which initially saved USAID over \$200,000 and would continue to save them about \$80,000 a year while allowing us to provide better maintenance for their housing. And the housing in Botswana was quite nice and quite a bit cheaper than housing around Pretoria would have been. So, the savings that USAID Washington claimed they would gain from moving the office to Pretoria was in my view greatly overstated. Security was another issue. Although the facility in Gaborone required a security waiver, the overall security situation was much better than in Pretoria which had a high crime rate.

Worse, we had to let go all of the FSNs who worked for USAID, many of whom had worked there for 15 or 20 years. They were at a professional level that would make it difficult if not impossible for them to find similar employment. I received no support from USAID Washington for what I was trying to do to maximize their severance packages. State was helpful in providing the most generous severance packages we could get for them, but there was still a lot of resentment on the part of some of the FSNs that we allowed this to happen. Unfortunately, there was one fellow who was already in trouble. He had been told that his job was in jeopardy and he was on probation – if his performance did not improve, he would be fired.

I had informed the government of Botswana that after all they had done to keep the USAID regional office in Gaborone, it was going to be leaving. That didn't make them very happy. I assured them that I would do my best to ensure that the severance packages were generous, and in fact the packages not only met, but greatly exceeded, the requirements of Botswanan labor law for this kind of situation. But the disgruntled employee got some of the other FSNs motivated to write a letter to the Foreign Ministry which called me a liar and a cheat (*laughs*), and they released it to the press. I was not a happy camper.

Q: Yeah.

So that ended badly, unfortunately, and there was still a lawsuit pending by this group of FSNs, even after I left. I still to this day feel that it was probably my biggest career failure and disappointment. I was disappointed that I was unable to make a good enough case to the powers that be in Washington that the USAID mission should remain in Botswana. I was also disappointed that despite my considerable efforts to keep the USAID office in Botswana and get them a really good severance package, the FSNs chose to take it out on me personally. Also, USAID Washington seemed quite happy to let me take heat for their decision.

Q: Well, was this sort of going around behind people's backs? Was this sort of typical of how, of the, of the area, or?

CANAVAN: I think it was this one individual whose job was already, as I said, in jeopardy. There was no basis for the lawsuit since we had done everything by the book and the severance packages greatly exceeded anything required by Botswana labor law.

Q: How did you find the basic staff in Botswana?

CANAVAN: I had a very good staff. Botswana has a very good educational system. We had excellent FSNs. The week I left we had a bizarre situation with our cashier who it turned out had been embezzling money. Nobody discovered it until she just didn't show up for work one day and it turned out she'd absconded with about \$57,000 in reimbursement checks. But for the most part our FSNs were excellent. Many of them had been with us for a while. We were able to attract good people. One of the FSNs who worked in public affairs was actually a very well-known television personality and we were able to hire him away. He did a lot of very good work for us. For the most part we also had very good Foreign Service staff. There were a couple of exceptions, but I tried to give them all a lot of responsibility and tried not to micromanage. And they seemed to appreciate that a great deal. I am still in contact with quite a number of them. You know how the Foreign Service is. We develop a lot of close friendships when we're working with people that continue on long after we're no longer serving together. And that's certainly the case with Botswana. And again, having a chance to have such an outstanding Peace Corps program just added to my feeling that we were doing the right things in Botswana. The government occasionally would whine about being a

middle-income country and therefore not eligible for concessional loans from the IMF and World Bank. And they very much wanted to participate in the Millennium Challenge -- it would have been a great opportunity for the Millennium Challenge to demonstrate what it could really do if they had picked up Botswana. But because Botswana was considered a middle-income country they didn't qualify for it. Occasionally I would have to remind the host government what an advantage it had as a middle-income country.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: And I didn't say that in public, but I would say that in private.

Q: Well, what, you know, again I've talked about these books about -- mystery stories that are extremely popular in the United States and I guess in England too, about Botswana.

CANAVAN: Yes, The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: I read the first book when I was in Lesotho in 1999, and I was totally charmed. My friend Kaye Oliver, the British High Commissioner, lent me the galley proof a friend had sent her. When I returned to the States in 2001, I discovered that the author, Alexander McCall Smith, had written a couple more. He was born and raised in what was then Southern Rhodesia and went to law school in Edinburgh. He taught law in Botswana for a short time, and then decided he didn't want to do that anymore; he wanted to be a writer. And to this day he still travels to Botswana at least once a year. He has many friends there and continues to add to the series. The pilot for the HBO series was filmed in Botswana while I was there.

I became close friends with Amy Moore, the American woman who produced the series. She convinced the director, Anthony Minghella, who won Oscars for *The English Patient* and *Cold Mountain*, and the Botswanan Minister of Tourism, that the series should be filmed there. The government of Botswana needed to come up with about five million dollars to offset the cost of filming there because Botswana did not have a film industry, so the equipment and people who were technically knowledgeable about filmmaking needed to be hired from abroad.

Minghella initially auditioned a number of women to play Precious Ramotswe, the main character, in Botswana and South Africa, but there were no women who met his requirements. The one person that we all thought might get the part was in fact the minister of health, Dr. Sheila Tlou, who had actually played the role as a narrator in one of the local theater productions of The Pirates of Penzance. They didn't do the entire musical; they did parts of it and she sat on the stage drinking rooibos tea filling in the story in between scenes. Many in Botswana (including Sheila) thought she was the perfect person to play the character. The only trouble was she was older than the director thought the character should be. He did not pick her for the role, but she's actually in a number of the episodes playing herself. Minghella finally ended up selecting Jill Scott, an

American R&B (rhythm and blues) singer to play the role. Amy Moore took me to several of the scenes that were being filmed. Minghella was always very nice. He would always come over and say hello, referring to me in jest as “your majesty.” I would remind him that an ambassador is referred to as “your excellency.” One time he said to me, “I would love to put you in this scene, but there are no white people in the movie,” (*laughs*). And there weren’t. Even though there are white characters in the books who are real people. Besides Sheila Tlou, the bishop of Botswana, Trevor Mwambe, played himself. But I thought it was extremely well cast. I’m sorry that they didn’t make more than one season.

When Mike and I were getting ready to go to Botswana right after we were married, I told him that he should read at least the first book just because it gives you a lot of good background on Botswana and its culture, so he did. He read the first one, and the second one, and the third one, and kept reading them. It was very helpful to him when I presented my credentials to President Mogae and Mike was escorted off to have tea with Mrs. Mogae. I know many people who have told me subsequently that they would love to go to Botswana because of those books. And I don’t think the government appreciated the positive impact the books and the film have had. One of the reasons wasn’t continued was that the government did not want to continue to pay the extra money.

Q: Smith really goes out of his way to talk about the beautiful country and how things are done in Botswana, a very favorable picture of Botswana. How did you find the government?

CANAVAN: The government is democratically elected. The country was very fortunate to have an outstanding founding father, Sir Seretse Khama. He set the tone for democracy and the strong feeling of ethics and using government resources to support the people, not to line the pockets of the politicians. Two years after independence diamonds were discovered, providing significant revenue for the country. And Sir Seretse Khama used the money to support education, infrastructure and health. According to Transparency International, Botswana is the least corrupt country in Africa and less corrupt than some western European countries. I hope that trend continues. They have had elections on a regular basis that have been judged to be free and fair and without incident over the course of their history. There is one issue, and that is that the same party keeps winning the elections.

I could always get in to see whoever I needed to on short notice. Some of our programs occasionally irritated the government. For instance, the sale of beef, particularly to the European Union, is important to the economy of Botswana. It must be processed in a government owned slaughterhouse, and the government sets the price per kilo that they pay the cattle farmers. The cattle farmers always feel they are not being paid enough by the government. Several of the major cattle growers asked the USAID trade hub in Botswana for advice on how to negotiate with the government. So, we helped them set up an association so that they could more effectively negotiate better prices for their cattle, which as I said, the minister of agriculture wasn’t ecstatic about (*laughs*). I told the

minister these kinds of associations are common and that groups of people with similar interests and concerns get together to become more effective advocates for their industry.

We didn't have a lot of money for cultural exchanges, but we tried to do what we could with the ambassador's self-help fund. One of the projects of which I was most proud was a \$5,000 grant we provided to a couple of villages up in northwestern Botswana where they make the Botswana baskets, which are really gorgeous and very artistic. The women who made the baskets were having trouble because the domestic animals were eating all the plant material for both the baskets and the dyes. They put in a grant proposal to fence off two areas where much of the palms and other plants they used to make the baskets grew. I attended the event to celebrate the completion of the fences and it was widely attended by the important people in the village as well as the minister of culture. We received some really great publicity and I thought it was a great project because the baskets these women make are fantastic. I have a fair collection of them myself. I justified buying them because they were lightweight and easy to ship.

Q: (laughs)

CANAVAN: There was one area where the government was very prickly and that had to do with the San people, S-A-N, otherwise known as the Bushmen. Most of Botswana is part of the Kalahari Desert, with the exception of the very eastern edge of the country which is where most of the agriculture takes place. Cattle graze in the Kalahari, but you can't have a huge number of cattle per hectare because of the sparseness of the grazing material. The San of course are the indigenous people of Southern Africa. They were there long before anyone else showed up, including the other African ethnic groups. The Kalahari game reserve is right smack in the middle of Botswana and it is where a number of San lived. They were permitted to continue to live there as long as they practiced their traditional hunting methods. Well, some of them started bringing in motorized vehicles to use for agriculture. Then they started using firearms and vehicles to hunt, instead of the traditional method on foot. The other problem was that the government of Botswana, according to their constitution, is committed to providing education, healthcare to all its citizens. And because areas of the reserve were so remote, it was really impossible for the government to set up schools and health clinics inside the reserve for the San. So, they proposed to relocate the San outside the reserve. And they actually built some villages which included housing, schools and health clinics.

There are NGOs around the world that are keen to help protect indigenous peoples and allow them to live their traditional lifestyles. One of them took on the government of Botswana and accused the government of all sorts of atrocities, primarily forced relocations. There were a relatively small number of the San who really wanted to continue to live their traditional lifestyle on a reserve and offered to forego government healthcare and schools. But this one organization in the UK was very critical of the government, and the government took the criticism very personally because they felt it was their responsibility to look after the San people, and that the governments' efforts to provide housing and schools and healthcare for them were being twisted to make the government look like the bad guys. We always tried to be objective about the issue, and

frankly, the few individuals who were going after the government were not really telling the true story about it. Botswana put one individual on a list of people who were not welcome in Botswana and could not obtain a visa. The individual made a big fuss in the press and said the fact that he could not get a visa proved that the government was mistreating the San. The government was its own worst enemy when it came to dealing with this, because they were so insistent that what they were doing was the right thing and would become incensed if they were questioned at all. We generally stayed out of the middle of this, except when it came to publishing our annual human rights report, which as you know is congressionally mandated. In 2008, I was called on the carpet by the foreign minister for that year's human rights report which was more favorable to the government than previous ones. It turns out that the incoming president had not seen previous human rights reports and was incensed by some of the comments on subjects such as the conditions in their prisons and of course the issue of the San. I calmly said that if there were any factual errors, please let me know and we will make sure they were corrected. They were unable to come up with any. We learned later that the chewing out was in fact an audition, and the foreign minister must have passed, since he became the vice president once the new president was sworn in.

The government was in general pretty reasonable to deal with. And they were very pro U.S. We were the second country to recognize their independence, after Great Britain, which meant a lot to them, and we were always very good about participating in ceremonies and events to which the diplomatic corps was invited.

Q: Well now, how about the neighbors? Were any of them messing around or did they -- was this a relatively tranquil country?

CANAVAN: Botswana would get annoyed with South Africa sometimes, especially when South Africa would take actions that were unfavorable to their smaller neighbors. For instance, there is an organization called the Southern African Customs Union, which consists of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Namibia. The idea was that all imported goods, or almost all of them, would come into South Africa, which would collect the customs duties before the goods would be shipped to the smaller countries. Then South Africa would divvy up the money from the duties collected. South Africa always kept a share of the duties as administrative costs, claiming that the other countries were saving money by not having to handle the duty themselves. It was a way for South Africa to control all the goods that were coming into the Southern African region. And occasionally this would become a problem for the other countries and they felt that South Africa was taking advantage of them.

Botswana was irritated that Thabo Mbeki, the president of South Africa, was so irresponsible about how that country was handling HIV/AIDS, when Botswana was working so hard to combat it. The disease does not respect borders, and South Africa's negligence affected Botswana.

Botswana was not happy that other countries in Southern Africa were not standing up to President Mugabe's bad behavior in Zimbabwe. There were many Zimbabwean refugees

in Botswana, South Africa, and Zambia, and there was a great deal of resentment by the citizens of those countries about refugees taking jobs. Frankly, Botswana was one of the few countries that was prepared to stand up to comrade Bob. Mugabe would criticize Botswana saying that “You’re not worth anything because you didn’t have to fight for your independence.” However, Botswana also supported the ANC and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, as well as the independence movement in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. At one point, Sir Seretse Khama interceded to get Mugabe released from jail. Botswana did not have a defense force until 1977 after they were attacked several times by South Africa. There’d been some unpleasantness between Botswana and Namibia (when it was still German Southwest Africa before World War I) when the Germans set out to annihilate the Herero people. Many Herero escaped in the early 1900s to Bechuanaland (now Botswana) and they still live there. When Namibia, after independence, offered to take them back, few Herero took the opportunity. Botswana and Namibia had a longstanding dispute over an island in the Chobe River, which both countries claimed. It was finally decided by an international tribunal that the original channel of the river went north of the island and therefore the island belonged to Botswana. When the river is up the island is under water. The two countries almost came to blows over this silly island.

Q: Oh boy.

CANAVAN: And Botswana was very unhappy about the way Zimbabwe was not controlling its poaching which has taken a huge toll on all the game in Zimbabwe, including elephants. A number of those elephants have come into Botswana to get away from the poaching. Botswana has an excellent anti-poaching program run by their defense force, which is partly why Botswana has too many elephants.

One of the busiest trucking corridors in Southern Africa is up the eastern edge of Botswana to Zambia. However, the only way to cross the Zambezi River at Kazungula was by ferry which was slow and dangerous. SADC was getting ready to build a bridge to replace the ferry. It would be at the very tip of the Caprivi Strip which belongs to Namibia. At some point in the planning for where the bridge was going to be built, Mugabe claimed it would be crossing Zimbabwean territory, and therefore he wanted to be part of the deal. However, because of sanctions against Zimbabwe, SADC would be unable to secure any international funding for it, either through the IMF or the World Bank. They are working to resolve the issue, probably moving the location of the bridge so that Mugabe can’t claim that it falls within Zimbabwean territory.

Q: Well --

CANAVAN: Botswana wants to have good relations with its neighbors. The Botswana are not bellicose people at all. Even when they have elections and there are issues there’s virtually no violence. Unlike Lesotho where they’ve had a lot of violence around elections, Botswana has not. They just want to live a peaceful life in the middle of a not-so-peaceful area sometimes.

Q: Back, going back in history, were the Batswana a particular tribe? And was it called -- I mean was this a tribe that got pushed around by the Zulus? Or that whole area, what was going on?

CANAVAN: The Zulus were farther east. Botswana used to be known as Bechuanaland and their people are known as the Batswana. The first president of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama, was formerly the king of Bechuanaland. And his son, who is now President of Botswana, has inherited the paramount chief moniker since Sir Seretse got rid of the term king. The people that most pushed them around were originally the Boers, who wanted the fertile land along the Limpopo River. There's an area called the Tuli Block, which was set up by the British when Bechuanaland became a British protectorate as a buffer. The Tuli Block is the pointy part of eastern Botswana where Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana all come together. Part of Bechuanaland was in what is now South Africa. From 1885, when it became a protectorate of the UK, the capital of Bechuanaland was Mafikeng in what is now South Africa. Seretse Khama had studied in the UK and married an Englishwoman, which really upset the apartheid government in South Africa. They refused to let Seretse Khama and his wife into what was then the Republic of South Africa, even to visit the capital of Bechuanaland. So, the capital was moved from Mafikeng to Gaborone. At the time, Gaborone was a little teeny village, and became a manufactured capital, much like Ottawa or Brasilia. Gaborone itself was actually laid out by a Swedish city planner. It's not an organic city, like Windhoek and some of the other capitals in Southern Africa. Consequently, it's new. There are very few buildings that are older than the late '60s. And it is not terribly interesting. For some reason they didn't want to use Francistown, which was an organic city and is actually the second largest city in Botswana.

Q: Well, did tourism play much of a role there, or did it just sort of happen?

CANAVAN: Well, it was rather interesting. Botswana made a decision shortly after independence that they were going to focus on high-end tourism, which has done a couple of things that I'm sure they wanted it to do. Number one is that there are many fewer tourists because it's pretty expensive to go into the parks and to stay at the lodges. And that's a good thing because the Okavango Delta and the Chobe national park are sensitive environmental areas and would not be able to support huge amounts of tourism. The South Africans are very big on camping and taking everything with them, contributing nothing to the local economy. So that kind of tourism was definitely not what Botswana wanted. And it's actually difficult to backpack (*laughs*) through Botswana, because transportation through the parks is pretty much by private vehicle. You either have to have your own vehicle, or you have to be on some kind of a safari. So, they have all but eliminated the low-end tourism, although some of the local villages have now made an effort to develop some lodges of their own that are a bit more modest than the very fancy ones that you fly into.

But tourism is quite significant and it has had an interesting impact on their decisions. For instance, Botswana has possibly as many as 180,000 elephants, too many for the available habitat. Elephants do not mingle with people well. They are extraordinarily

destructive when they come through. They break everything in sight and then move on, so a village can lose all of its crops in one night to a herd of elephants. It's very hard to build fences to keep elephants out, so the villagers use red peppers which they grind up and sprinkle on the crops to keep the elephants away. And it's very difficult to cull elephants. You basically -- I mean this sounds terrible -- but you have to take out a whole family. Moving them is prohibitively expensive. And where would you move them? So, Botswana has been faced with a situation where they can't cull their elephants because it would cause a *huge* outcry among the very people that they hope to attract to their game lodges. You recall that the Copenhagen Zoo recently killed a two-year-old giraffe because it didn't fit in with the gene pool they were trying to develop. And then they had a public autopsy and fed it to the lions. And people were just appalled. But in many cases game management requires that you have to keep a herd in check so that it doesn't get larger than the habitat can support.

Also, because of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) restrictions on the sale of ivory, the government picks up all of the ivory from elephants that have died natural deaths and keeps it in climate-controlled warehouses. They can't get any financial benefit even from the legally acquired ivory because there are so many countries, particularly China, that have such a demand for it that it encourages poaching. Botswana's been one of the few countries, along with Namibia and South Africa, that actually has their poaching under control. But a lot of other countries don't.

Q: How did Botswana rate in our American interest? You know, from the State Department point of view? Was it just sort of an example of strategy? Were we glad? Or did we have any strategic interests in the country?

CANAVAN: Oh, that's an interesting question. At one point when the U.S. Africa Command was being created, they were keen to have their headquarters on the continent. Botswana was one of the places that they looked at as a possibility. There was never a formal request by the U.S. government to the government of Botswana, nor was there a formal offer to host it. But I think the government of Botswana would have been very open to hosting the Africa Command. Its interest to us strategically has to do with the fact that it is a very stable country in the middle of a region that is not always stable. Right now, except for Zimbabwe, the region has been pretty stable. That's important to us because we think Botswana can be a role model for other countries. If we ever did need someplace to use as a platform for whatever reason, Botswana would obviously be more willing than other countries to share some of their facilities. They have a beautiful air base about 45 minutes outside of Gaborone. There were rumors out there, which Botswana did not dispel, that the U.S. had built the airbase there to counter Russian and Cuban influence during the Cold War. We hope other countries will see Botswana's success in the region and emulate what Botswana has done.

During the Cold War and the height of apartheid, when a number of the countries in southern Africa were in turmoil, official visitors almost always would go to South Africa, and then they would go to Botswana. By the time I got to Botswana, the region was quite

stable with the exception of Zimbabwe, and we did not receive nearly as many official visitors.

Q: Yeah. Well, you left there when?

CANAVAN: I left there on the last day of May in 2008. I had to start European Area Studies at FSI the following Monday to get ready to go to Stuttgart as the foreign policy advisor to the United States European Command.

Q: Ok. Well, by the way, how did your husband find Botswana?

CANAVAN: Oh, he loved it. The first year I was there he was still working full time in the private sector, and came down for a couple visits. I went back to the States in June 2006 to serve on a promotion board for about six weeks. And toward the end of the summer after I had gone back to Botswana, he decided to leave his company and join me. He was doing some consulting work and senior mentoring for military exercises, so he would be gone about one week a month. We were able to do quite a bit together and he loved being there. It was wonderful to have a husband who supported my career!

Q: OK. Well, we'll pick this up the next time when you're off to Stuttgart.

CANAVAN: ok.

Q: As basically a political advisor, wasn't it?

CANAVAN: My first year in Stuttgart I served as the POLAD. I prefer the title of Foreign Policy Advisor, but the acronym is unfortunately FOPA (Faux Pas). During the summer of 2009, we got a new commander at the European Command, Admiral James Stavridis, who wanted to create a civilian deputy position as he had at SOUTHCOM (Southern Command). So, he asked me to be the first civilian deputy at the European Command (EUCOM). Instead of being an advisor, as the civilian deputy, I was actually in the chain of command as the number three. I had been promoted in Botswana to the rank of career minister, so my personal rank matched my equivalent military rank of three stars.

Q: Oh yes.

CANAVAN: Oh, by the way, that was a *really* nice article in the Foreign Service Journal.

Q: Yeah, wasn't that nice?

CANAVAN: Yeah, I thought that was very well done, and I thought they picked some good stories. Mike was reading them the other night and he said, "Hey, those are really interesting stories."

Q: I mean we're loaded with them, this is the thing.

CANAVAN: Yeah, I'm sure you are. It probably was hard to figure out which ones to pick.

Q: Well, we didn't do it. They did it. But we have our interns plowing through these all the time.

CANAVAN: Oh, very good.

Q: OK, let me -- today is the 24th of March, 2014 with Kate Canavan. And Kate, we're leaving -- you've left Botswana and you're off to NATO, is that right?

CANAVAN: No, I'm off to the European Command.

Q: I mean the European Command.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: OK. And this is, what, 2008?

CANAVAN: Yes, August 2008.

Q: OK. You mind, sort of explain what this -- you know, I say NATO and you say European Command and they obviously mean something different but I'm not sure what. So you better explain.

CANAVAN: OK, the military's divided up into geographic and functional combatant commands. Europe and Eurasia fall under the United States European Command (EUCOM) headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. The commander of the European Command wears two hats. His other hat is Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), which means he's the senior military person at NATO. He actually lives in Belgium and probably spends at least 95% of his time on NATO issues. The European Command is responsible for all the facilities and troops in Europe that support the U.S.-NATO obligations. And During my time at EUCOM, many of the troops stationed in Europe rotated through Iraq and Afghanistan as part of our combat operations there. As SACEUR, the commander represents all of the NATO members, but as commander of EUCOM, he represents the United States. So it can be a little bit confusing.

Let me go back. When I took the POLAD position, I had no experience in Europe. My husband and I took the European Area Studies program at Foreign Service Institute, which was extremely helpful and highlighted a number of countries and issues that were front and center for EUCOM. One of the countries that was discussed in depth was Georgia. And it turned out between the time that I took the course and I actually got to Stuttgart, the Russians invaded Georgia. It happened about two weeks before I got to Stuttgart. We also spent about half a day in Ukraine, which of course is quite timely considering the situation now. Much of what we did at the European Command was to interact with our embassies and offices of military cooperation as well as interacting with

the militaries of the European countries. Most of our activity was with the Eastern European and former Soviet Bloc countries. They were very keen to acquire American equipment and to work with the U.S. military to upgrade and improve their own militaries. Our ambassadors, the U.S. ambassadors to these countries, were voracious in their desire to have as much interaction as possible with the U.S. military. And consequently, we were quite busy with what we called key leader engagement, senior officials from the European Command visiting these countries, having exercises with them, working with them on training and preparation for their participation in ISAF, the International Security Forces in Afghanistan, which was the NATO Article 5 response to the attack on the U.S. on September 11, 2001. Iraq was drawing down, but ISAF was actually a NATO coalition and so our boss, the EUCOM commander, was paying close attention to what the European Command was doing to assist these coalition partners in preparing for their service in Afghanistan.

One of the things that European Command was very concerned about was the drawdown of American forces in Europe. Primarily the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Army, which had the most forces in Europe, were keen to draw down for budgetary reasons. Well, they claimed they were budgetary reasons. But we already had bases and training facilities in Europe, some of which were being supported by the host governments. And moving these troops back to the U.S. was going to cost several billion dollars in military construction. The troops could be deployed anywhere in the world from Europe as easily as from the U.S. and when they weren't deployed, the U.S. troops could engage in training with the European countries' militaries. The army wanted to pull back two of the four brigade combat teams (BCTs) and the air force had already removed one wing of fighters and was keen to remove another one. Both moves would significantly reduce our persistent and regular engagement with these foreign militaries. Our NATO ambassador, Ivo Daalder, was appalled when he realized that it would cut back significantly on the forces in Europe that were immediately available to respond to any NATO contingencies. His forces, if you will, were going to be significantly reduced. The air force wanted, as I said, to remove another wing.

When this all came to our attention through the U.S. Army-Europe Commander, General Carter Ham and the Air Force Commander in Europe, I immediately started contacting our embassies that had regular engagement with these troops to explain how this reduction would affect our military assistance programs to these countries. And to a person, the ambassadors came back and said this is terrible, we can't do this. And the same with Ambassador Daalder at NATO. He was really quite distressed. Consequently, they all sent in cables to Washington to the State Department complaining about this. With this pressure coming from our ambassadors, Secretary of Defense Bob Gates agreed that the decision on the reduction of forces should go to the interagency and not just be decided by the individual services and the Department of Defense. It was a big success for my office as the foreign policy advisor and civilian deputy, and also for the interagency process. Both Secretary Clinton and Secretary Gates were very conscious of the fact that State and DoD needed to work very closely together because our national interests were not being met when either agency was operating alone.

Unfortunately, the success was short-lived. Initially, we were able to keep one of the two BCTs that the army wanted to move back to the U.S., but then of course the sequestration and the recent budget cuts kicked in. So, the army decided to get rid of those two BCTs altogether. Now there are only two brigade combat teams in Europe. One is in Italy and the other one's in Germany. Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula demonstrates that threats from the east are not a thing of the past, and our reduced numbers are not nearly as intimidating as our former numbers used to be. We're now down to about, oh, probably 20,000 soldiers in Europe, down from 380,000 during the height of the Cold War, so it's really a significant reduction.

Also, the European Command had the responsibility for doing non-combatant evacuation operations in Lebanon even though Lebanon and the Levant countries of Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria fall under the Central Command. In 2006, there was a need to evacuate American citizens from Lebanon and the Central Command was unable to do it because all of their assets were in the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan. After Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld initially refused an official request for assistance, the White House ordered DOD to provide resources and that mission was given to the European Command permanently. We worked very closely with our embassy in Lebanon. I took a team of senior officers to talk to the ambassador and her country team, and we also worked with our embassy in Cyprus, which would be the country to which the evacuees would be taken initially and then State Department would be responsible for moving them on.

Israel also fell into EUCOM's area of responsibility (AOR) for political reasons. It did not want to be lumped in with the middle eastern and south Asian countries for which the Central Command (CENTCOM) was responsible. I made three trips to Israel while I was at EUCOM.

When I first took on the job at European Command I was the foreign policy advisor, a two-star equivalent and had an office in the main headquarters in Stuttgart. I attended most of the general meetings. I was not privy to a number of the special programs there because as the foreign policy advisor I had no need to know. I worked at that time for General John Craddock, who was both SACEUR and EUCOM (European Command) commander. He and I got along very well -- which is critical. Foreign policy advisors are only as successful as their relationship with the commander allows them to be. I also got along with the deputy EUCOM commander who was a three-star admiral, Vice Admiral Richard Gallagher, a Navy fighter pilot whose call sign was Weasel, as well as the chief of staff, a two-star general named Ken Keen who had worked for my husband Mike. After the relationship with the commander, the relationship with the chief of staff is key for the foreign policy advisor to get anything done.

General Craddock retired in June of 2009 and his successor was Admiral James Stavridis who had just come from the Southern Command (Central and South America). He was quite an innovative guy and was very much in favor of using technology, the internet, and social media. He encouraged us all to have Facebook accounts. In addition, he created a civilian deputy position as he had at SOUTHCOM to reinforce his commitment to have the command work effectively with the interagency. Because it wasn't just the military

that was involved in these programs, it was the State Department, USAID, Treasury, Justice, Homeland Security, etc. All of the agencies that had anything to do with national security were all very much involved in activities of the commands. At EUCOM, the civilian deputy wore two hats as foreign policy advisor and civilian deputy to the commander.

When the Africa Command was created in 2007, they separated those two positions. And there are various opinions on whether it's more useful to have the civilian deputy also be the foreign policy advisor or not. I think a lot of it depends on how much the foreign policy advisor has to travel with the commander. In the case of the European Command, I didn't travel with the commander most of the time because he was representing NATO. But when he did travel wearing his EUCOM hat, I went with him. And I think I traveled with him on four trips; one to the Caucuses, one to Turkey and Israel, another to the Baltics, and also to Iceland. I did travel back to Washington fairly frequently to consult with the European and Political Military Bureaus at the State Department, which was a big part of my job, not just interacting with our embassies in Europe and Eurasia, but also coordinating what the European Command was trying to do with the European Bureau in Washington. I had a very sharp staff, an Air Force colonel as my executive officer, an absolutely first-rate GS-12 personal assistant, a deputy foreign policy advisor, and an FS-3 who was extremely helpful in doing some of the nitty-gritty foreign policy work that I didn't have time for anymore since I was doing my civilian deputy duties. There were lots of meetings. I became involved in virtually everything that the command was doing, including sitting in on monthly video teleconferences among all of the deputy commanders for all of the combatant commands, and on at least two occasions when the military deputy wasn't available for that video teleconference I represented the European Command.

European missile defense was a huge issue for us as well as regular deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan by U.S. and coalition partner forces who needed training before they headed out. And just sometimes little, quirky things came up. I ended up kind of being the point person in the European Command for Iceland, which is a bit of an anomaly because although it's a NATO member, it has no military, no minister of defense and not even anybody in the foreign ministry who had the responsibility for defense policy. But Iceland wanted to be taken seriously and was frequently very active through our embassy in making sure that the U.S. didn't forget who it was. We also have a bilateral defense agreement with Iceland, about which the Icelanders reminded us about on a regular basis. I interacted with our ambassador there on a regular basis and took a little bit of the burden off European Command's desk officer who covered not only Iceland but all the Scandinavian countries as well.

Q: These commands all seem kind of over detailed and all that, but when it comes right down to doing tasks become extremely important.

CANAVAN: Oh yeah, extremely important. And I also worked with our embassy in Berlin extensively because of course Germany hosts so many U.S. military installations. And we have a lot of pretty sensitive stuff going on with them. You're probably aware

that combatant commands do not come under chief of mission authority. So even though we had all these military installations in Europe, we didn't report to the ambassador. We worked very closely with the embassy, but I was there under the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) because I was working for the military and traveled on an official, not diplomatic, passport. And in fact, in order for me to be covered by the NATO SOFA, I had to be employed by both the State Department and the Department of Defense. So, while the State Department paid my salary, health and retirement benefits, the Department of Defense paid for everything else, including my travel, housing and anything related to my job. I had to do two financial disclosure statements every year -- well, I did one and sent it to both organizations.

Q: Well, did you feel you're a club in both camps? I mean what happens if the balloon goes up in Europe and we've got trouble with the Stans?

CANAVAN: Well, I actually worked for the military. I mean my boss, the person I worked for, was the commander of EUCOM. He wrote my evaluation and I did not officially report to the State Department. While I coordinated with the Bureau of European Affairs, I was not accountable to them. The person I most closely coordinated with in the Bureau of European Affairs happened to be the military advisor to the assistant secretary, who was an Air Force colonel. We had the same interests -- to get our respective organization to coordinate on issues of mutual interest.

Q: Yeah. Well, you must have kept a close eye on your African representatives there. How did they fit in? Did they talk the language, I mean, or were they pretty --

CANAVAN: The AFRICOM folks?

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Until 2007, the European Command had responsibility for not only Europe and Eurasia, but Africa as well. As part of an effort to show that Africa was as important as any other region of the world to the United States and to the military, Africa Command was created. Unfortunately, the rollout was not done as well as it should have been. And there were a lot of folks, including people at the State Department, who felt it was an effort to militarize foreign policy in Africa. There were some African countries that were extremely hostile to it for that reason. Africa Command wanted to have their headquarters in Africa. The problem was there was no good place for it, especially one that could safely accommodate families. They were talking about a headquarters staff of maybe 1,100 people, plus families. They needed a place with infrastructure and schools, some of which they could build themselves, but not an entire country. The Africa Bureau at State said, "Well, if you want to be in Africa, go to Liberia," because the President of Liberia had said she would be very happy to host them.

Africa Command said, "But there's no infrastructure in Liberia." And State said, "Well, build it. If you want to be in Africa, that's your option." Of course they decided against

that option and are continuing to keep the headquarters for the Africa Command in Europe.

Ambassador Mary Yates was the first civilian deputy commander of the Africa Command. Unless I was invited for some reason to an event over there, I did not get involved in what they were doing. My husband had been commander of special operations in Europe from '94 to '96. He helped with a number of exercises at the Africa Command when they needed a senior mentor, and especially one who was familiar with counterterrorism and special operations. At the beginning, some of their programs were still being run by personnel who were out of the European Command, so there was some overlap there. And the foreign policy advisor at Africa Command at the time, Jerry Lanier, would usually try to tell me that any issues were my problem because the personnel came from the European Command, instead of his problem because they were working under Africa Command.

Q: Well, what were you looking at there? I mean were you looking at something happening in Europe and something happening in Africa at the same time?

CANAVAN: Actually, that was a concern. We were not so concerned about Western Europe or countries such as the Czech Republic and Poland, although the whole missile defense issue certainly affected those countries as well. What we were concerned about was hostilities in Africa that the Africa Command did not have the resources to address. They didn't have any troops except a few in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. And they didn't have the airlift resources to move a lot of troops. So, if anything did happen in Africa, as was the case in Libya, the European Command was responsible for backing up the Africa Command. There's still a symbiotic relationship between the two commands because again, Africa Command was basically designed to do security assistance, not to fight wars.

It's pretty much impossible for the U.S. military to have resources spread out around the African continent in such a way that they could have been effective in responding to what happened in Benghazi. I certainly never expected to be rescued in a real emergency by the U.S. military while I was serving in Southern Africa. It was too far away, even for the small number of forces in Djibouti.

Q: Yeah. Of course these things get far too political, particularly when it's an embassy problem.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: As opposed to a military problem. Refuse to see these things in the same light as they see something where you know, it's just things happen.

CANAVAN: Yes.

Q: By the way, for the transcriber and myself, what's the name of your cat who keeps trying to --

CANAVAN: Oh, that's Olivia. Sorry.

Q: Well, that's all right.

CANAVAN: She wants some Greenies.

Q: For the transcriber --

CANAVAN: Yeah.

Q: -- please acknowledge --

CANAVAN: Oh, we have two of them. They're older cats and were originally rescued from the animal shelter in Singapore by a friend of mine. The male cat's name is Raffles and the female cat is Olivia. And we got them in 2006 because my friend had remarried and her new husband didn't like cats. So, my husband told them that we would take the cats to Botswana with us. They have lived in Singapore, Texas, Virginia, Botswana, Germany, and now they're back here.

Q: OK, I'm a cat man.

CANAVAN: Oh, good. Good.

Q: But I wanted to be sure we acknowledged them (laughs).

CANAVAN: Yeah (laughs). Oh good, so I'll tell her. She'll like that.

Q: OK.

Q: OK, so how -- tell me, how did you find -- because I'm -- I've been, I've been doing this now for about 28 years. And one thing that struck me down today, I was wondering around thinking about it, I'm really documenting the rise of women. You know, it's not -- Gloria Steinem was a classmate of my wife's at Smith.

CANAVAN: Oh, wow!

Q: In the same dorm, as a matter of fact. They're -- so it hasn't been that long. How did you find -- how had things matured, you might say, by the time you got there in a military thing in a significant rank?

CANAVAN: Well, actually I didn't have any problems. They were very deferential. Having been an ambassador twice obviously was helpful -- even though officially I never referred to myself as an ambassador. Rank is clearly significant in the military, and

because they needed to know where I fit in the hierarchy, it was important for them to be able to use the title. So, they referred to me as Ambassador Canavan. I did not refer to myself as ambassador because according to the protocol book, unless you're at the rank of career ambassador, like Ryan Crocker and Ruth Davis and a few others, once you are no longer in the position of being an ambassador you're not supposed to put it in front of your name. It's a diplomatic title, it's not a personal rank unless you're a rank of career ambassador. There weren't a lot of senior women around (*laughs*), so people got to know me pretty quickly. And I also made sure that I got out and about within the command and spoke to as many groups as I could about the State Department and diplomacy. A foreign policy advisor and civilian deputy should be adding value to the military. I don't know if I've told you this, but you probably recall when the women's class action suit was filed.

Q: Yes.

CANAVAN: And I actually opted out because I had never been discriminated against, as a woman anyway, in the State Department. And I didn't feel that I should benefit from the women's class action suit personally because I had never been really subjected to any of that kind of discrimination. But I do remember when I went to Namibia and one of the male staff asked me rather snidely if I'd gotten my DCM job through the women's class action suit. And I said, "No, I got it the old-fashioned way. The ambassador picked me." Certainly, in the early '90s there was still a lot of resentment, especially by white male political officers. Representing the United States abroad is a real advantage if you're a woman because the foreign officials tend to take you seriously because you represent the United States. So that's very helpful. In some countries they try to forget that you are a woman. They see you as a person, but not necessarily a woman. In some cases, being a woman can be an advantage.

Q: Did you find that being with the military -- obviously the military was getting more and more, having more and more officers. They came and asked you questions, I mean not necessarily being a mentor but somewhat in that role. You had to be in the forefront of people's minds.

CANAVAN: I was asked to participate in an informal group of women professionals. And they were both military officers and fairly senior civilians. We usually met at lunch and talked about various issues we were facing. There were also three or four enlisted women who specifically asked if they could come and see me to get some career advice. One woman was getting out of the military, was in the process of getting an advanced degree and was going to take the Foreign Service Exam.

Q: Oh boy, well let's hope she gets something.

CANAVAN: Yeah. I was always happy to mentor anyone. I'm in favor of informal mentoring as opposed to formal programs because I think if the mentor and the protégé choose each other, rather than having a system formally put them together, the chemistry tends to be better.

Q: I would imagine it would be, yes.

CANAVAN: I have participated in both the Foreign Service and Civil Service mentoring programs at State, which were more formal mentoring programs. And while they were successful in some cases, the chemistry wasn't always there to make them work on a long term basis. As a junior officer, I would seek out mid-level officers with whom I worked and talk to them. April Glaspie was one of my early mentors. She was a special assistant as an FS-3 in the Middle East Bureau and I was staff assistant in AF as a first-tour officer. We would see each other in the hallway or I'd need to take something over to get clearance or we'd bump into each other in the Operations Center and chat. Much later, she was the Director of Southern Africa Affairs when I was in Lesotho during our little dust-up. And she was hugely supportive and very easy to approach, as was Mary Ryan. Of course, Mary mentored so many of us, both consular and management cone officers. Probably my first mentor was Dennis Keogh who was the deputy director in Africa Regional Affairs when I came in the Foreign Service, and really was my first boss. Dennis was instrumental in teaching me how to get things done in the Department. After he was killed in Namibia in 1984, his wife Sue came into the Foreign Service. I was teaching the A-100 course at the time and she and I became close friends. I count Arnie Raphel as one of my mentors. One of my few disappointments in the foreign service is that although I was nominated, I never won the Arnie Raphel Award (*laughs*).

Q: No --

CANAVAN: Again, there was not a formal mentoring relationship with any of these officers, but if I had a question or an issue I would seek out folks. George Moose and Skip Gnehm were also active mentors.

Q: Well, is this -- you know, I'm looking at -- there wasn't -- you know, mentoring I'm not even sure was a word (laughs), you know --

CANAVAN: Well, *mentor* is a word, but *mentee* is not (*laughs*). And the recipient of mentoring is a protegee.

Q: Oh no, no. But I'm saying it wasn't sort of an active duty word within the Foreign Service.

CANAVAN: No, no, uh-uh. No. Actually, did you ever know Dick Matheron?

Q: Who, Dick?

CANAVAN: Matheron, M-A-T-H-E-R-O-N?

Q: The name is familiar.

CANAVAN: He was ambassador to Swaziland before he retired, but I house sat for them when I first came to the Foreign Service and he was an inspector. Dick and his wife Kay

were building a house in Escondido when I was assigned to Tijuana. I used to visit regularly on weekends. I was actually the first houseguest at their new house. And they are a combination of mentors and surrogate parents. Kay is about 5 years older than I am, and Dick's 20 years older than I am. They are just lovely people. When the open assignments process came into being so that employees knew what assignments were coming open and you bid on them in a very transparent process, he said, "Gee, I guess that means that we can't do things for people the way we used to." No longer could more senior officers influence assignments for their proteges the way they had in the past. Open assignments was a major step in diminishing the "old boy network" that had perpetuated the "Yale, pale and male" stereotype of the successful political officers who advanced to the senior Foreign Service and ambassadorships.

Q: Well, you came in later. I came in in the mid 1950s as a consular officer. And you know, we were a lower class breed in the Foreign Service pecking order and nobody was particularly disputing this. And we could have used some mentoring in that time. I mean that's going way back, but we were considered non-substantive.

CANAVAN: Oh yes, I know (*laughs*). Well, that was even true when I came in. There was still a lot of holdover. I came in in '76. So, I'm about 20 years behind you. But there certainly was a vestige of that when I came in. And that was what the whole women's class action suit was about. Even though they were bringing more women in, those women were being pushed toward admin and consular cones, rather than political and econ. And they were even told in some cases that "A woman cannot do this job." (*laughs*).

Q: Oh yes. Well --

CANAVAN: That is what Allison Palmer was told by our ambassador in Ethiopia when she wrote him that she was keen to be assigned to Addis Ababa as the labor reporting officer. She filed a discrimination suit and won. I think she got a promotion and \$25,000 as an award. And she used that money to file the class action suit along with a number of her female colleagues. I know that there was systemic discrimination against women as well as consular and management officers. For instance, when I first came in the Foreign Service it was almost impossible for a consular or management cone officer to get a desk officer job in the department. Those assignments all went to political officers.

Q: Oh yes.

Q: Well, I want to go back to your European job.

CANAVAN: OK.

Q: Was there any would you say crises or something that was stirring -- was happening in Europe that you could see calling your, your organization into full sort of action mobilization?

CANAVAN: Two weeks before I arrived in Stuttgart, Russia invaded Georgia. Although it was a “wannabe”, Georgia was not a member of NATO and had been warned several times by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice not to poke the bear. It did so anyway and assumed the US and NATO would come to its rescue. While we provided humanitarian assistance and some bilateral training, we did not send troops. After President Obama took office, his administration tried to improve relations with Russia, but to no avail, unfortunately.

There were some issues our NATO allies had with Russia such as a very nasty cyber-attack on Estonia that basically shut down everything in the country, including the banking sector. Russia denied involvement in the attack, but we knew they were behind it. NATO had not addressed cyber warfare in terms of its charter and whether the requirement to defend such an attack met the Article 5 threshold.

The decision to establish a no-fly zone over Libya, first by the US and then by NATO required the deployment of combat forces. Since AFRICOM did not have those resources, EUCOM provided the aircraft the US contributed to the operation.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: That was a significant mobilization. We had to worry about moving air assets and supplies into Italy and Cyprus and Greece. I’m not sure we used all of the facilities, but whatever was closest. We had an issue with Malta, because they wanted to remain neutral. They were afraid if Gaddafi wasn’t overthrown that he would see any assistance by them to the coalition powers as a hostile act and take revenge. It wasn’t only Europe of course, it was the Gulf states that initially said, “Hey, we’ve got to do something about this guy. Let’s establish a no-fly zone.” To establish a no-fly zone we had to bomb anti-aircraft installations and anything that could conceivably attack us, or our airplanes, we had to eliminate. Then, some of the Gulf states said, “Wait a minute, we didn’t want you to bomb anything.”

We said, “Well, that’s what you do when you establish a no-fly zone. You eliminate the ability of the country you’re establishing the no-fly zone over from being able to retaliate against your aircraft. That’s how you do it.”

EUCOM was also quite involved with the northern distribution network which helped supply NATO forces in Afghanistan. Because it was so difficult to go through Pakistan and the Khyber Pass, we established a number of other routes, including through the Caucasus as well as through the Baltics and Russia. It took a great deal of diplomacy to establish those routes. We are using them now to exfiltrate equipment from Afghanistan as we draw down there. We are using facilities called Task Force East, a Donald Rumsfeld brainstorm, to establish some intermediate stopping points in Bulgaria and Romania to bring troops home from Afghanistan.

EUCOM supported NATO air policing missions for the Baltic countries and Iceland, especially when they got nervous about Russia doing something even mildly threatening.

In addition, EUCOM supported Israel's development of defensive weapons to repel an attack from Iran

Q: Well Kate, you know, I realize this is always difficult, but if you're asked to come up and say well, you know, what countries, particularly in the military forces, do you feel were really the most responsive and which ones were not really carrying their weight? What is your impression?

CANAVAN: You mean as far as the --

Q: I mean the response to military matters.

CANAVAN: You mean the European countries, as far as Afghanistan and that kind of thing?

Q: Well, in response to whatever they were called to do in the European --

CANAVAN: Well, if you promise not to let this out on WikiLeaks, I would say Germany (*laughs*) was not pulling its weight. It used post-WWII restrictions on its military as an excuse for providing minimal support for ISAF, and resisted calls by our last few presidents to meet the requirement of NATO members to spend at least 2% of their GDP on the military.

Q: Yeah.

CANAVAN: Actually, there were a number of countries that were really trying to participate. Some of them were limited by their own governance as to what kinds of things they could do. Some were not allowed to go out on patrols. And they hunkered down at whatever base they were assigned to. But most of the Baltic countries had small forces that they were able to contribute which were very effective. A number of the European countries, particularly with the economic turndown, found themselves in fairly dire straits economically and are having a difficult time meeting the 2% GDP (gross domestic product) spending on their military. However, having the political buy-in from these countries is really important.

Q: Yeah. Well, when you left there did you feel that this was a viable organization that was an important one for maintaining authority in the area?

CANAVAN: What the European Command does is to support our commitment to NATO. Now, if you think NATO's a waste of time, then European Command is probably a waste of time. I personally think NATO is exceptionally important to our national security, and not just for Europe. Some Americans may feel that it doesn't matter whether or not the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO is an American. I personally think it is important for that position to be filled by an American. But if our troop levels in Europe and our perceived commitment to Europe drop below a certain level, then I can certainly see the French or the Germans wanting to take that position. And frankly, they don't have the

wherewithal or the resources to respond the way we can. Many Americans understand NATO to be a military alliance, but it is really a political alliance with significant military involvement and support.

Q: Well --

CANAVAN: And I don't consider myself a Europhile.

Q: (laughs) I know.

CANAVAN: But maybe I drank too much of the Kool-Aid when I was there, I don't know.

Q: No, no, no. I think NATO is an important ingredient, and it's still proving itself. You know, for example, Bosnia, nothing would have happened and they'd still be killing each other if we hadn't been able to come in massively.

CANAVAN: Right. Exactly.

Q: Which brings me up to point. Was there sort of a feeling of, you know, satisfaction with the Bosnian exercise?

CANAVAN: Absolutely. There's an organization of countries in the Balkans and we have bilateral meetings twice a year, senior military get-togethers which are very useful. None of that would have happened without success in Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia. I was able to attend three of those meetings; two in Croatia and one in Bosnia.

Q: Uh-huh. Well, well then, you left when, left that post?

CANAVAN: I left the very last day of May in 2011 to come back to Washington to chair the Senior Threshold Promotion Board, which started on the 2nd of June.

Q: All right.

CANAVAN: My boss was a little unhappy that I had to leave so early because my successor was not going to be able to get there until September. Mike was having some health issues and we needed to get back to the States sooner rather than later. And chairing the board offered an opportunity to spend 10 weeks in Washington transitioning. It's very hard to retire from overseas. I don't know where you were when you retired, but --

Q: I was in Washington.

CANAVAN: Yeah. It's much easier to retire from Washington than it is overseas, so serving on the promotion board helped a lot. I'd served on several promotion boards and various reconstituted boards in the past. And I've always felt that it was a really

important part of the Foreign Service and an opportunity to give back to the organization. It worked out really well for us. That board started on the 2nd of June and ended on the 12th of August. I took a couple of weeks of leave to move to South Carolina, and went back to Washington to take the job search program, October and November of 2011 and retired on the 30th of November, 2011.

Q: Well then, so -- well I suppose we might as well finish this up. What have you been doing with yourself?

CANAVAN: Well, because of my military connections I have been doing what they call senior mentoring and, and functioning as a State Department SME (subject matter expert) for military exercises and courses. I've probably done eight or nine of them in the last two years. Some of them have been with the U.S. Army's Asymmetric Operations Working Group, which looks at different ways to approach military problems.

One of the courses was at the NATO Defense College in Rome, which was great. Most of the exercises and courses emphasize what the Europeans call the comprehensive approach and we call the whole of government or interagency approach, i.e. the military doesn't operate in a vacuum. Not every situation calls for combat activity or kinetic operations, as the military calls them. And, therefore the military folks need to understand what other organizations are out there which could help in a positive way to resolve the situation without having to go to war. That includes quite a number of U.S. government agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It was really a lot of fun and very interesting, as you can imagine, especially with students who were all lieutenant colonels from North African and Middle Eastern countries who spoke Arabic or French, but not much English. I've also done exercises with the Army's Asymmetric Operations Working Group along with the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. I probably did eight or nine of those in the last couple of years.

I was just recently elected to the American Academy of Diplomacy, which was an honor. I actually thought that would never happen because I killed the Senior Seminar at FSI, but apparently, they either forgot about it, or they decided I actually did the right thing after all.

My husband and I are very active in the power squadron down here, which primarily focuses on boating safety and education, which are really important. We're on the water quite a bit and there are sandbars, tides and current that you need to be aware of. And so safe boating is a really important thing. We are also active with the Friends of Hunting Island State Park, which is an organization that supports our local beach. The organization protects sea turtle nests and sea bird nests. Mike and I volunteer at events and one day a month we pick up trash in a specific area of the park.

What else do we do? Oh, I'm a member of a local garden club and a docent at the Beaufort History Museum.

Q: Well, it sounds like you've got a pretty active life.

CANAVAN: Yeah, we do.

(As a footnote, since it has taken me so long to edit this, I want to add that I have served six years on the board of the American Academy of Diplomacy, and five years on the board of trustees of the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, a fantastic organization which supports the Foreign Service, particularly in the areas of recruitment and professional development. I am now on the board of the National War College Alumni Association.)

Q: Have you gotten involved, you know, you are on these various panels and all, there's been quite a bit of attention paid to essential assaults on women in the military. And has that been part of your agenda as far as being on your --

CANAVAN: I have not been involved in any issues regarding sexual assaults in the military or the Foreign Service. I did have to deal with a DOD civilian (senior executive service) employee at EUCOM who, as part of a command climate survey, was accused of harassing a woman fulfilling her reserve duty. The woman did not want to pursue the issue, but several of her colleagues felt their boss' behavior was unacceptable. The harassment was only one of a number of issues which led to exceptionally poor morale in his directorate and poor relationships with his peers. My boss would not let me fire the guy, but he left for a position with a different command, where he lasted only a year before was fired.

Over my career, I did observe a significant increase in the number of women in senior positions, both in the military and Foreign Service. I believe that the women's class action suit opened many opportunities for advancement, not just for women, but also for all consular and management officers. Before the suit, few if any consular or management officers became DCMs, an important stepping stone to becoming an ambassador. Once female consular and management officers were assigned as DCMs due to the suit, the Department realized that those officers had important management and supervisory skills and experience, frequently lacking in political officers, which made them excellent deputies.

Q: Well, it certainly sounds like you've had an active life. Now, what would happen -- I think you kind of know the drill -- we will, we've been transcribing this and we will get it to you.

CANAVAN: Oh, OK.

Q: And then we'll ask you to edit it.

CANAVAN: All right.

Q: And you can edit it, not only what you said but gee, what you'd like to have said.

CANAVAN: OK, so -- oh, that's nice.

Q: In other words, we're not trying to -- this isn't ambush journalism.

CANAVAN: Great, I appreciate that.

Q: And we want -- this is sort of -- it's your nickel.

CANAVAN: Right.

Q: And --

CANAVAN: OK, well that sounds great. This has really been fun, I want to tell you how much I appreciate it. And I understand your wife isn't well and I want to tell you how sorry I am that she's not.

Q: Well, it's, it's been difficult. It's getting -- I have to say it's getting more difficult, you know, because apparently part of -- it's pancreatic cancer and she takes these various pain drugs and she's -- but I, I'm not sure whether it's Alzheimer's that also came on top of it, or something to do with the disease plus the drugs she's taking. But anyway, it's a challenge.

CANAVAN: Yes. Well, I'm very sympathetic. My mother passed, oh, actually, it'll be three years tomorrow. And she was almost 95. I don't think she had Alzheimer's, but she definitely had senile dementia for a number of years, and it just got worse and worse. Although she did not have cancer, just dealing with the inability to process information and that sort of thing does make it really hard.

Q: Yes, it is. It's, you know, to see a very rational person all of a sudden just able to cope, I mean it makes -- it's bad enough when I can't remember who was secretary of state at a particular time.

CANAVAN: Yeah (*laughs*), I've been there. Well this really has been fun. How much longer are you going to do this? You're such an institution there, I don't know what they would do without you.

Q: Well, I'm just hanging in there.

CANAVAN: Well, good for you.

Q: I sort of figure that this is part of my lifetime therapy.

CANAVAN: Yeah, what a great thing to do. And you get to talk to all these really interesting people.

Q: You know, I think one could put on a very good campaign of saying the Foreign Service is an adventure.

CANAVAN: Oh, absolutely.

Q: Because you know, I've done probably over a thousand of these --

CANAVAN: Wow.

Q: -- in depth interviews, and I haven't gotten bored yet.

CANAVAN: Yeah. Well, that's wonderful. Take care of yourself.

Q: OK, and --

CANAVAN: Keep in touch and I'll look forward to editing this.

Q: And obviously when you're up here come on by.

CANAVAN: I will, I'll try next time I'm up there.

Q: And I hope when you're talking, when you get to high school and other places, I hope you'll direct people to our website because I don't know if you've noticed, but it's really getting much more interesting.

CANAVAN: I'm going to do that in all of my presentations.

Q: I would, it's very good. And also, if you run across anybody whom you would think would make a good person to interview, let me know and I can do it obviously by phone or not. But let me know.

CANAVAN: OK. I will do that.

Q: OK, well take care, Katie.

CANAVAN: You too. Bye Stu.

Q: Bye. Bye.

End of interview