The Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

BRUCE KINSEY

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is April 22, 2015, interview with Bruce Kinsey. And I am Charles Stuart Kennedy and doing this for the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training. And Bruce, we'll start, first place, when and where were you born?

KINSEY: I was born in the flatlands in 1940 in Peoria, Illinois. About 100 and some miles south of Chicago in the central part of Illinois.

Q: What year was this?

KINSEY: 1940.

Q: 1940. Well, let's start on the Kinsey side and then we'll go to your mother's side, but what do you know about the family, where they come from and how they get there.

KINSEY: OK. The Kinseys are a mixture of Germans, Irish, and English. The name is English, and stems from an old English word, which means "king's victory," and makes me think probably some king who fought a battle that he won and --

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: -- and somebody fought in it and took that name. I think it's possibly also McKinsey, but maybe somewhere south of the, of the Scottish border. Anyway, we're English for a long time. The first Kinseys seem to have come over in the 18th century, and some landed in Virginia, others further north. A bunch of them went to Pennsylvania, and from Pennsylvania to Ohio and then from Ohio to Illinois in the middle of the 19th century. They were farmers and tradesmen. And then settling in Peoria was one Samuel Kinsey, my great-great grandfather, who became the mayor of that city, which was at that time the second largest city in the state. Samuel Kinsey became the mayor in 1875 or so of this tough river town. And he was an alderman for seven terms and then became mayor for one or two. My grandfather ran an automobile dealership for many years and also before that had run a company that sold ice in the summer and coal in the winter. My mother was very poor, from German Irish ancestry, born in Saint Louis. My dad was born in Peoria and, and, and I was there until I pretty much through the eighth grade.

Q: Well, let's talk -- your father, you said, was a --

KINSEY: He ran a Caterpillar Tractor Co, plant in Decatur, Illinois. He opened the new plant. Caterpillar even then was a great big operation. And they wanted a company to produce motor graders and diesel engines. And he was chosen because he had, he knew the town, he'd been sent down there during the Second World War and worked as an assistant to the general manager at this place that made wartime marine engines.

Q: Had he gone to engineering school or what was --

KINSEY: No, he was a business major. He was the first, the first Kinsey to go to college. Went to the University of Illinois, and he was quite successful in his career. He was, I guess kind of typically of that age, the 1940s and '50s and until the middle of the 1960s, a company man. And almost his entire working life was spent with the Caterpillar Tractor Company. And I grew up learning about tractors and labor disputes and employee benefit plans and things like that.

Q: Did you read <u>The Saturday Evening Post</u>, Alexander Botts' story.

KINSEY: I -- those proceeded me. That was the Earthworm Tractor Company.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: I -- when I was I guess in high school --

Q: It was my era.

KINSEY: People were telling me about the Earthworm Tractor Company, and some day I should --

SPEAKER SYSTEM: Your attention, may I have your attention please? The all-clear has been given, you may reenter the building. I repeat, you may reenter the building.

KINSEY: Stu, we dodged a bullet *(laughs).*

Q: I know, I know.

KINSEY: I don't know what happened, but --

Q: I don't know either, but anyway.

KINSEY: This seems to be a very safe facility. Dad lived for the Caterpillar Tractor Company, and that's what he did and what he was. He was home at, at five, 5:15 every day. Family life was extremely quiet. We all had dinner together, but there was very little conversation at the time.

Q: What's the background of it? Did your mother go to school?

KINSEY: She went to secretarial school, became a secretary at the Caterpillar Plant in Peoria in the late 1930s, and met my dad there. She was a very beautiful woman. And they got married on April 30th, I believe, 1939. And I was born 14 months later.

Q: Well, let's talk -- did you have brothers, sisters?

KINSEY: I have a sister whom I recently lost, younger sister, my kid sister, Betsy was two years younger. And in brother-sister terms when you're the only two siblings, that was like light years difference. She was cheerleader type, I was -- I was kind of cerebral kid and off on a different track from the time I was in the eighth or ninth grade.

Q: Well, let's talk about the kind of thing -- you say it was quiet meals, I mean you didn't discuss the issues of the day or anything like that?

KINSEY: No. No. But I did start reading. And I felt when I got to high school I had a -- and even before -- that I had a facility for foreign language. Not exceptional like some guys you've interviewed, but it was pretty good, and deep. And I began to -- in high school I, I latched onto foreign students. The school had a couple of American Field Service exchange students whom I got to know pretty well. They were older than I was, but we talked. I learned -- that's where I learned my German accent, and taking, German and then practicing on a couple of Swiss and German foreign students. And I really got hooked.

Q: I'd like to go back to -- first place a little more about the family.

KINSEY: OK.

Q: Where stood they politically?

KINSEY: Politically, my father was a rock-ribbed Republican.

Q: As a manager in a major industry I would imagine he would be.

KINSEY: I, I guess so. My mother was -- whatever my dad's political convictions were, those were hers. She, she would espouse them quite vocally, but frankly she didn't know what she was talking about *(laughs)*. Dad was a kind of reticent, very if I were Jewish I would say "verklempt" [inhibited]. He was a very halting public speaker, but he was very good with people one-on-one. And in that industry where the slightest misstep could cause a labor stoppage, he was very good.

Q: What about religion? Was religion important and where did your family fit?

KINSEY: Well, like in many American families it was really more a social question. And when I was a little kid, my parents church shopped and I remember going to a Presbyterian Church and going to a Methodist Church, going to an Episcopal Church in Peoria, and finally that's where we landed. But we were not a deeply religious family. We went to church maybe once or twice a month.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: I was confirmed in the Episcopal Church.

Q: Well, I would have guessed your father -- unless he had a strong commitment -- if he was a manager, which is a obviously very important job of a major industry, Episcopal Church is the place to go.

KINSEY: Yeah, it was. It was. But I had some happy times there, meeting kids and so on. My, my family life was, was not brilliantly happy. My mother, having come up from the very bottom rungs of society, was very insecure about her new social status. She was the manager's wife and so on.

Q: Oh yeah.

KINSEY: My dad, for reasons I have never understood, was not a, he certainly was not a deep thinker. And he didn't know what to do with me, I can tell you. I was different from the time I was in the eighth grade. I was beginning to develop an interest in foreign countries and political things and so on to a much greater extent than he had. And it, it really confounded him. He found it unsettling. And I just kept going with it. And there was a real confrontation at one point when I was about 15-years-old in which my mother -- should I talk about this stuff?

Q: Sure. No, no, I'm trying as in these interviews --

KINSEY: You're trying to figure out how I ended up in the Foreign Service *(laughs)*.

Q: But also I feel that there aren't many oral histories that really go back into what life was like and what the kids and families and all. There's a social element to these histories of foreign affairs, so please, please --

KINSEY: Well, I was, you know, Peoria, Illinois, in a Protestant upstanding family was the quintessence of, quote, normalcy, unquote. And Foreign Service life is certainly not, as anybody in the Foreign Service knows.

Q: There's been a joke particularly in the newspaper world about the politics of how well, how will it play in Peoria?

KINSEY: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Q: I mean Peoria is the quintessential America --

KINSEY: Yeah, you go in any store and there were three products you'd never seen before being tested on the, on the shelves.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: Anyway, I confounded my parents. And home life was very tense. It'd kind of hard to explain. There were all these unwritten rules, all kinds of things that were not to be said and not to be done and certainly not to be talked about. And they were, there were things like, quote, "colored people," unquote, and Catholics, and Democrats, and loose women and, and such. And, and there were just, there was just an awful lot of sidelong glances and "we don't talk about that". So as a result there was not a lot of interesting stuff to talk about *(laughs).*

Q: No.

KINSEY: And I found, I found interests, I read other things and, and expanded my knowledge on my own.

Q: Well, was there a drinking problem or not, or --

KINSEY: No, no, no. Not me or anybody else.

Q: No, I mean, no I --

KINSEY: No, they drank, they were social drinkers.

Q: But it's not, you know, sounds very Germanic.

KINSEY: Well, yes.

Q: It --

KINSEY: I started to say -- and I hesitate to -- this is a family secret, but my mother and father are now long dead. At 15, my parents called me into the living room at about 8:00 one night. My sister was upstairs, gone to bed or something. And they said -- my mother led the conversation. My mother ran the house, my mother ran the family, my mother set the tone. And she said -- there's only one other person, by the way, I ever told this story to. It's my cousin Jim. That was just a few months ago. My mother said, "You don't talk to us. We don't know what you're doing. And we're worried about you. And you've got some things on your mind and you better tell us, you better tell us what they are." Well, I was a 15-year-old boy, for heaven's sake. I got a lot of things on my mind that I didn't want to talk to them about!

Q: Sure (laughs).

KINSEY: But not only that, but they had never evinced any real interest in anything that I was doing. I did photography and I did, taking stuff apart and putting it back together and I taught myself a little bit to play the piano. And I was experimenting in a whole bunch of different directions. And my mother -- and I said, you know, "I don't know what you mean," and, and I gave them the standard adolescent shrugs I guess.

And my mother said to me -- almost yelling -- "If you don't tell us, Bruce, we're going to take you to a psychiatrist and he's going to worm it out of you!"

Q: Oh, my God.

KINSEY: And my father -- by the way -- during this thing, said almost nothing. Almost nothing! So -- well anyway, that kind of went nowhere until a couple of weeks later my dad said, "I think you need a physical, you should get a physical."

And I went down to old Dr. Bell in town. And he talked to me, and he had a teenage son who was a very good tennis player. And I liked tennis too. That was another thing. My dad had played all these sports that I had no interest in. So anyway, Dr. Bell started asking me a bunch of semi-psychological questions. And at the end of the thing he said, "You're really overprotected," *(laughs)*. And I thought -- and I didn't know quite what that meant then, but I do now. And thank God, God bless that man. He had, he had some common sense.

I studied German avidly. I went to France as an American Field Service exchange student for the summer of 1957 and lived with a wonderful family that spoke zero English on the Riviera *(laughs)*.

Q: You roughed it.

KINSEY: I roughed it! But not only that, the family was all girls except for, for one fellow who was a couple years younger than I was. And two of those girls were just knockouts, absolute knockouts, and running around in bikinis. And this was an

absolutely new experience for me that I had no idea how to internalize. It took me some years before I realized how damned lucky I had been to be placed in that *totally* different environment, a villa 200 steps down to the seashore, and at the dinner table at night there was good natured fun, there were conversations about all kinds of things in this language that I was trying really hard to absorb and, and I did OK at it after a period of close to two months. And I was -- and I realized then.… Before that I had planned to go to engineering school. Any kid with any mechanical ability in the late 1950s was told, "You're an engineer. You should go to engineering school." And the engineering schools were chock full of kids who shouldn't have been there. And I was accepted to the Northwestern University of Engineering. After I had gone over to France I came back and realized that, "I'm not sure I really want to be an engineer. I think I want to do something foreign," and switched to a thing that let me keep one foot in the engineering school and take a bunch of liberal arts courses. And one quarter of calculus and analytic geometry did -- made me decide that I was a liberal arts major *(laughs)*.

Q: I want to talk you back.

KINSEY: OK.

Q: First, let's talk about very early years. What sort of books did you find yourself reading? Do you recall any particular authors or books or anything?

KINSEY: I read them alone. My mother didn't read to us. My grandfather gave me a gift subscription to Popular Mechanics and when it arrived each month I stopped everything and read it cover-to-cover. Even the classified ads, I remember. But there were some books around and I remember -- remember Howard Pyle's paintings?

Q: Oh yes.

KINSEY: And paintings in Treasure Island? And I read that kind of stuff. I read -- the, the greatest thing was for us to go across town to my grandmother and grandfather's house and who were -- my grandfather is the center point of my life. And they had this big old house in Peoria and down these wooden steps that went down to the basement and there was a landing halfway down. And on that landing they had all the back copies that they subscribed to Life, The Saturday Evening Post, National Geographic, and something else. And I sat there, and I would sit there for hours and hours and hours. And that's how I learned about things like the Depression and the Second World War. And I read stories in The Saturday Evening Post. And I was all alone. And that was absolute heaven for me.

Q: The Saturday Evening Post – I was a young kid when it was at its prime. And the fishing stories, the crunch and deaths, and the Glenn Cannon stories.

KINSEY: *(laughs)*

Q: And --

KINSEY: I remember they had some good science fiction in there.

Q: Oh yes.

KINSEY: "So you think you know baseball." Remember that column that was in there?

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: Anyhow.

Q: Well, did you -- what got you to go to France?

KINSEY: I knew these foreign students and the American Field Service was administered -- they had a local sort of chapter run by nice ladies. And, I think my mother said to one of them, you know, "Bruce might be a good candidate for going overseas." And, and so I had to sit and answer questions, as did several other kids in high school - sophomores. No, juniors. Juniors - about what we would do in various situations and so on. We also had -- when I was a sophomore we had an exchange student ourselves. This kid shows up, Jose Abella Alonso from Madrid. He was about a year-and-a-half older than I, and about 20 years wiser. And cosmopolitan and funny, he sounded like Desi Arnaz, and was game for everything. I was inhibited, my father was terribly inhibited. Jose was open to anything that was going on. He had more girlfriends and tinkered with cars and, and asked a million questions. He was just the perfect foreign student. And he and I shared a room and I got to know him very well, and he was the closest thing I ever had to an older brother, and boy did he come along at the right time. Boy, did he come along. I learned only in March [2015] that he had died in Madrid. We saw them in 2010. And I cried and cried when I found that out. He'd been sick for some time but I always hoped I'd go back and see him. But he and the summer in France came back-to-back and changed my life forever.

Q: How about in high school? What sort of things -- this could have been a place that sort of really opened up for you, wasn't it, or?

KINSEY: Yeah, oh yeah. I took German, I took every math course they had, I took every science course they had except biology, which I wish now I had taken. I was very good in English and I wrote stories. Sometimes the teacher would come to me after I turned the thing and, "Did you really write this?" Yeah, I really wrote it. Oh, I also -- I also remember reading -- it's still around, I can't remember the name of it. It was a hard-bound magazine on U.S. history. Do you remember that thing?

Q: Ah yes, <u>American Heritage</u>.

KINSEY: <u>American Heritage</u>! I read that just cover to cover every, every issue.

Q: I did too. I read it for about 20 years.

KINSEY: Did you? That was good reading, that was a wonderful thing. I don't -- is it still going, do you know?

Q: I don't think so, but no, I've moved around the Foreign Service all over the place --

KINSEY: Well, that thing was one of the heavy periodicals.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: I was doing all of that stuff and my parents didn't even know I was doing a lot of this.

Q: What about -- did you -- were you popular in school?

KINSEY: No, I -- well, you know, I was scared of girls and, and --

Q: What were the dating habits?

KINSEY: Oh, it was, you know, it was casual. There was no sex to speak of. There was necking after you'd been out with a girl for several times. There were a lot of dances, sock hops, football games, basketball games. We used to -- it was wonderful. The word would go around, "Well, we're going to go out and we're going to have an outdoor dance." And it'd be, you know, 15, 20 cars and they'd all head in a park in a circle with the headlights pointed into the center, and everybody'd open the windows and turn the AM radio up to a local station that had dance music and, and then you'd get out in the middle of the headlights and dance around. I was a lousy dancer, but --

Q: (laughs)

KINSEY: -- I liked the social part of it.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: Well, did you follow the things like Soviet Union and --

Q: Oh yeah.

KINSEY: -- the Cold War and all this.

Q: Oh sure.

KINSEY: I and my friends - when Sputnik went up -- I'll never forget, and I told this story at his funeral -- my best friend was a, was a guy named Gary Castor who was in my class in high school. And in October of -- when was that, '57?

Q: Sounds about right.

KINSEY: Sputnik. I went over to Gary's house and, and -- because he was sort of an amateur astronomer. And he said, "We're going to be able to see Sputnik up in the sky tonight, come on over." So I went over and his mom and dad were there and we looked up. Here goes, "Beep, beep, beep," you know, across the sky. And we just looked, we'd never seen anything like that before. Here -- I mean this thing was really disturbing to us to see. We had been brought up to believe in America, the invincible, America, the first in everything good, but especially technology. And here was this thing there. And Gary and I looked at it for about a minute and he turned to me and he said, "We have got to do something about this." And I thought, "You are right."

And believe it or not we started making little solid-fuel rockets in my basement and his garage. Most failed, but finally one went way up with a big whoosh. And Gary became a missile scientist for the navy at China Lake in California and was instrumental in developing the first cruise missiles. And I went into the Foreign Service and worked, you know, in areas that were -- in one area anyway -- that was pretty vital to the national security. And there were a lot of us like that. Sputnik really energized my high school class. We wanted to do something, but nobody knew quite what to do.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: And a lot of kids went off to engineering school and built who knows what.

Q: Well, did you take part in any sports and all?

KINSEY: Tennis. When I was younger I played baseball, I loved Little League Baseball. I wasn't really good at it, but I kept trying. My father wanted me to be a basketball player, but I moved with the speed and grace of a glacier. I could not do basketball and he was incredibly disappointed in that. He just -- and sports was part of his whole life. And, and I couldn't talk basketball with him, for certain. He and I saw a million games together, but -- and he was a Cubs fan, a horrible way to go through life. And we didn't -- we never shared sports the way a lot of fathers and sons do.

Q: Well then, you graduated from high school what year?

KINSEY: Let's see. '58, 1958.

Q: And where'd you go?

KINSEY: Went to Northwestern. My father wanted me to go to a Big Ten school. And we had gone around and looked at a few schools. I looked at the University of Illinois, and we looked at Purdue. And we were thinking engineering at that time. But I'm glad I went to Northwestern. It was, as a liberal arts school it was, the best of those three. And they had an excellent German program. So I ended up taking both second year German and a conversation course for a year. Took world history, European history. What else

did I take? English -- I did very well in English. Got moved into some advanced English courses. Didn't take any science. If you took one quarter of calculus and analytic geometry you got credit for a whole year of lab science. So I did that *(laughs)*. Got a C, got out, you know, checked that box. But I knew when I was halfway through Northwestern that I wanted to go to Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and become a Foreign Service officer.

Q: Well, had you -- did you know anything about the Foreign Service, or?

KINSEY: A little bit. A little bit. One of those foreign students that I met when I was in high school said, "Georgetown University trains most of the American diplomats" *(laughs)*. And he said it with such certitude that I figured it must be true. And of course it wasn't. But then a fellow who was a dorm counselor, graduate student at Northwestern, learned that I was interested in the Foreign Service and had written a paper in the personnel system in the State Department and gave it to me, and that was worthwhile. I was excelling in German but had trouble in history because of some problems in high school with the curriculum. They sent me to the wrong class and I missed a bunch of history and I had to make up during -- make up for during, during college. By the time I was out of college I was even. So anyway, Northwestern was very good. It was a good school. It was better in foreign languages, believe it or not, than the Georgetown' Institute of Languages and Linguistics. Their German teachers were absolutely tops and they were, they were native speakers. The classes were *totally* in German. And I, I sailed through that stuff. History was a problem. I found out -- partly because I was reading a fair amount of German when I was still in high school, reading it at home, and reading, trying to read stuff in French, and reading stuff that was fairly advanced. And I read slowly. And I found out that I also had an eye problem. And I was reading in my freshman year at Northwestern 200 words a minute when most college freshmen are reading 500 at least, and some of them a lot more than that. And I was then, and I still am, a very slow reader. But I have learned to compensate for it by skimming and looking through an entire article or book kind of all at once. And I almost always start with the index to a book and go through -- then I'd go to the table of contents and then start thumbing through, looking for certain things that I'm expecting and, and so on. And I'd bounce around with almost anything I read, from newspaper to magazine to a, a, everything except fiction and I'd read very little fiction. Still read a lot of nonfiction. So anyway, I had a hard time getting through history class because of all the reading. And one of the English classes assigned a Russian novel, you know.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: That thick. And I could not keep up! I could not keep up! Plus, these were new worlds for me. I never read anything about, about Russia. Here were all these people and these motivations that were totally unknown to me. And it was a, it was confusing. It was very confusing. I could write, I could really write, and gradually I became a better reader of things.

Q: Did you ever do any checking on the medical side to see what the problem was?

KINSEY: Oh my -- yeah, I had weak eyes. And we didn't pick it up until I was a senior in high school. I had -- I needed reading glasses. And these things are real, you know, hefty that I'm wearing. Once I got reading glasses, that helped. But I still had developed a lot of bad reading habits and still have -- I read things -- I read a lot of poetry, and poetry you read almost with a magnifying glass. There are a lot of very strange words in there or familiar words used in a very strange way, and characters you've never heard of, and so on. So I was kind of used to kind of reading with a book in one hand and a, maybe a dictionary in the other.

Georgetown was a different kind of a university situation. The School of Foreign Service was quite small. I think there were maybe 400 students in one building essentially that was not a part of the rest of the main campus, as it is now. But there were a lot of kids like me who were sort of very conscious of foreign things, some of them had foreign experience. One of my classmates, Ron Himes, was a guy whom I'd gone to France with as an AFS student. Another one was Dennis Harter. Denny and I -- Denny -- you interviewed him some years back. And Denny went from Georgetown to do graduate work at Seton Hall, eventually got a doctorate at Hopkins in international affairs, became the DCM at the new embassy in Hanoi. We had the beautiful daughter of a French prime minister. We had guys from Persia and a lot of Latin Americans. And you would hear foreign languages in the halls. And so this was there I belonged, and I did very well there.

Q: Did you find -- it was a Jesuit school, originally anyway.

KINSEY: Yeah.

Q: Did you find, was religion very much a part of the curriculum, or not, or?

KINSEY: No. The Foreign Service School, one reason that it got moved over to the main campus after I graduated was that the Jesuits who run Georgetown felt that the Foreign Service School had become too secular. There is now a required course at Georgetown in the first year called "The Problem of God" taught of course by a Jesuit. We had no such thing at the Foreign Service School when I was there. I had two, only two, Jesuits who taught me. One taught logic, and he taught it very badly. I had a phenomenal teacher of geometry in high school who taught me more logic than that man did. But the second one was perhaps the best instructor I ever had, and he was a Jesuit. His name was Frank Fadner. Father Frank was six-foot-four. He wore a black cape, he taught Russian history, and he would sweep into the classroom before his lecture with his cape in tow, throw it on the chair, and begin writing on the blackboard in the Cyrillic alphabet. Major names and events that were going to be part of today's lecture. And he was *superb*. He was so well organized and had such a command of his topic and a way of getting it across that was just unequaled -- with the exception of one man I ran into at grad school. His Russian history class, believe it or not, helped me counter the insurgency in Vietnam. I learned things about how communists --

Q: (sneezes)

KINSEY: *(laughs)* Pollen season is here. How, how communists think about things and, and how they react to things and how process-oriented they are. And I was able after some months in Vietnam in a very highly contested district to figure out what they were going to do next and get ready for it and sometimes try to spoil it. And they really were a different breed of human being, the, ones who were leading that whole thing. They manipulated that situation brilliantly. But, I understood 'em. And very few other people did. One was Bill Stearman, whom you've interviewed and who covered North Vietnam. He was at the embassy in Saigon. Anyhow, Georgetown was a rich experience. The curriculum was almost entirely prescribed. If you were majoring in diplomatic affairs you took a lot of history, you took a year of U.S. constitutional law, you took a year of international law, you took at least two years of foreign language, had to pass an oral proficiency test in a foreign language. I did all that, I got all the credit for my German at Northwestern and passed their, their test, and then took more German. They -- I passed out of the English. You had to take geography, which was new for me. And I wish they'd had a better instructor in that. And then -- let's see -- political science, what else did we have? We had con law, and then we had -- oh, and we had, we had U.S. history and Russian history, European history, medieval, famous Professor Quigley.

Q: Oh yes.

KINSEY: And his eight levels and seven stages, or seven stages and eight levels that civilization has progressed through, and Walter Giles taught me constitutional law. His most famous, his most popular lecture was one late in the year on how to make a good martini. Both Quigley and Giles were mentioned by President Clinton early in his presidency when somebody asked him who were the most influential people and they were two of the three people he mentioned. So what's now? What do you want to do now?

Q: Well, I'd like to ask why you were -- you were at Georgetown for what years?

KINSEY: Essentially sophomore and junior and senior year. I graduated in '62, June of 1962. The commencement speaker was a very distinguished American named Bob Hope and who gave us -- he stood up and said to us, one beautiful June morning, "It is traditional for people in this position to give you some words of advice before you go out in the world. And here are mine: don't go." He said, "Stay here. Have fun," *(laughs)*. His -- they got him because his son was graduating the same year. He was across the campus at the, the, the College of Liberal Arts. But I -- I never quite fit in a Northwestern, and I never quite fit in at Georgetown.

Q: Well, what were -- well, this was -- Kennedy was --

KINSEY: Yes.

Q: How did that --

KINSEY: Oh God, oh.

Q: Did you get caught up in --

KINSEY: Yes.

Q: -- you might say the Kennedy mania?

KINSEY: Absolutely, *absolutely*. And it was a kind of euphoria, which I caught during that campaign. I wished -- I wish I could take you back there. Senator Kennedy and Mrs. Kennedy lived only about three or four blocks from the Foreign Service School in Georgetown. And one evening my friend Dean Barthold and I, we were just beginning to start our junior years I guess. He was a transfer student too. So we walked by the Kennedy House. We knew where it was and we -- and here was this big CBS van in front with great big cables and stuff, and lights being hauled in. And it was I think Edward R. Murrow, or, or one of those interview shows. And we walked by -- and we're on the same side as the house and we're walking and -- and this is of course before Secret Service was even protecting candidates. And I looked through the window -- or through the door, I guess, through the doorway, and gliding down the stairway was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen in my life. Jacqueline Kennedy dressed simply but radiantly. And, and walking with the elegance of a princess. I will never forget it. Dean and I went down to Wisconsin Avenue, grabbed a bite to eat. They dropped his dinner coming out of the, coming out of the kitchen, which meant we had to spend another 45 minutes or so there that we wouldn't have. So we came back and by the time we came back there was a light rain, it was dark, the truck was gone, the show was over, and we walked by the same way. And the door was not open, but the window was, the front window. And we walked by and peered through the front window, and sitting in a chair reading Time magazine, smoking a cigar, was John Fitzgerald Kennedy. I was so close to that man that I could read the story that he was reading. He didn't know we were there, and Dean and I were quiet as mice and we just stood there for a minute, and then very quietly walked back up toward the campus. And Dean turned to me, he said, "Bruce, do you realize, we may just have been four feet away from the next President of the United States."

And old politically-sensitive me said, "He doesn't stand a chance."

Q: (laughs)

KINSEY: But of course he did. And later on during the debates my college roommate and I -- by that time I'd moved off campus -- and my college roommate and I, John Kemple, went over to AU where one of the debates was held at American University, and he came out afterward, still had his, his makeup on, so he looked like he was sun tanned. And he came out and he hopped up on the back of a truck and addressed a throng of students at what -- what's that circle up there?

Q: Washington --

KINSEY: I can't remember, it's --

Q: I can't --

KINSEY: It's not Washington -- anyway, Tenley?

Q: On Mass.

KINSEY: Yeah, it's up on Mass Ave. Anyway, there were hundreds and hundreds of students, just came around. He had done a great job in the debate. And here's this man running for president. The median age of the people around him was maybe17 and a half, which meant in those days we could not vote. He hopped up on a truck, the back of the bed of a truck, and looked at us with all seriousness and said, "a great American president, Grover Cleveland, once said…" .

And I thought, "Good God, Grover Cleveland, you know, I better read up on him." And I was hooked. I was with Kennedy from then on. I handed out leaflets and stuff for him over in Arlington, because in those days D.C., you know, couldn't vote. And I was elated when he was, when he was elected. I did not -- I never saw him again. But those two times were enough. The, the feeling in the country at the time, the -- somebody coined a term that did not apply to that, but it was a revolution of rising expectations. He called America back to do great things once more. And, and people responded. And so we have things like the Peace Corps and the Special Forces now, which were great ideas. That was the intensity of people when I went into the Foreign Service in the A100 course, and the fascination with Kennedy, the determination to go out there and do some good, was inspirational. Nowadays I think among the same age group where people were perhaps coming into the service, people in graduate school and so on, even college, it is fashionable to be cynical. It is fashionable to say, "That'll never work," or "That isn't working," or "That can't work." We can't think about new things, we can't offer new ideas to the world and try to make them happen. In 1962, that is exactly what we were doing. It scared the hell out of the Russians, I know that. And it was, I think, it was a glorious time to be a young person in government.

Q: While you were at Georgetown, did you have a chance to partake of the active life of Washington?

KINSEY: Oh yeah.

Q: Go to -- what were you --

KINSEY: Well, the cultural scene here was not very vibrant back then.

Q: No.

KINSEY: There was the National Symphony Orchestra playing down on the Watergate steps under a conductor who was not renowned, the National Theater was the only thing around. There was a lot of folk music stuff and, and, and music that appealed to, to, you know, to kids like me. One thing that I did that other students had not done made me a little more worldly. I got burned out in college. I studied very, very hard. And in the middle of my senior year -- or no -- after my junior year, I decided to slow down. And I, I cut my course load, moved to night school, and I took a full-time job at The Washington Star newspaper as a copyboy. And I would go down there and shuffle stories around the newsroom, and I met some -- I was exposed to some different thinking and I of course had plenty of time to read the newspaper and ask people questions, and so on. One of my fellow copyboys was a young guy who was the sloppiest dresser I ever, ever met in my life: sixteen-year-old Carl Bernstein was there *(laughs)*. And he and I were -- he had forgotten all about me, and then I sent him some -- and he's writing another book. He's writing about The Star and he called me up and asked me to, to remember things with him. So we spent about an hour on the phone recalling events in the newsroom, one of which was planning a phony obituary in The Washington Post in the middle of the night about a man who -- a famous developer from Baltimore who had passed away. And his major project was a proposed underwater shopping center in Baltimore Harbor *(laughs)*. And The Post actually ran this thing. We gave him some long name like Kassengruper or something that sounded sort of Baltimorean. People were doing things like that down there. I worked all night long down there sometimes, and sometimes during the day. But it let me take a bit of a break from a very rigorous curriculum at Georgetown.

Q: Did you run into any real live Foreign Service officers and, and get a feel for what this was?

KINSEY: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. There was a mandatory course in international organizations in the senior year, and there was an FSO came in to teach it -- a black man, I think, his name was Means. I believe that's right. And, and he used to tell -- he'd served at the UN, some other international organizations, and had some great stories. He was on the promotion board the year I, was in his class. And he was talking about promotion criteria and so on and the kinds of things they were looking for. So I had that. I had a great course in U.S. diplomatic history. I had read Dean Acheson's book, Present at the Creation. So I knew a little ~~l~~ about the Department. Jules David, who taught diplomatic history, used to talk about particular people in the Department of State and its culture and, and decisionmaking processes and so on. So when I came in I was probably 75 years out of date on those things, but, but at least I'd have some exposure to them.

Q: Well, so what -- you graduated in '62?

KINSEY: June of '62. I started the A100 course --

Q: Well, you took the exam, didn't you?

KINSEY: I took the exam, yeah.

Q: How'd you do on the written exam?

KINSEY: The written exam, I got 79 points, plus five for German, so 84. I remember coming out of there with a splitting headache because I took take the optional language exam at that time. I don't know whether they give written foreign language exams anymore for prospective officers, it maybe only oral, I don't know. Anyway, the exam was, it was tough. But I had crammed for it, believe it or not. I -- on areas that I knew I was weak in I got some kind of a compendium of profiles of the world's famous authors. And I got a couple of questions I wouldn't have got otherwise because I did that. But the Georgetown preparation was good, it was quite good. And there were -- and I had a science bent and they asked, you know, enough science questions. A lot of FSO types are just kind of blind to science. But I did OK. The five points, or extra five points for the German, which was easy.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: Were, were a gift. The one thing I remember was there was a great, it was a great test question. It was a draft report, supposedly written by somebody in the field. And it was a mess and you were supposed to straighten it out, rearrange it, correct the grammar and so on, and I had been doing that kind of stuff at The Star and that's just, that's just how I thought. And I knew all the editing symbols and everything. And I finished it, and that was the end of the exam. And, and I looked around and everybody else was still looking at that thing. They were still doing theirs. And I, that's when I realized I got this report stuff, you know, down pretty well. I'll do OK on that.

Q: How about the oral exam?

KINSEY: The oral exam was two Foreign Service guys and somebody from the Commerce Department. And I didn't do as well on that but I passed. Now, keep in mind, I was only 21-years-old. I had no grad school experience. And if admitted, I would be the youngest Foreign Service officer ever accepted. And that's in fact what happened. And I held that record for two weeks. They asked me a lot of questions, history and lot of stuff about the Vienna Convention. And what would I do in a certain situation. I -- it was a tough question. I didn't realize how tough it was. I should have anticipated -- I should have responded differently. "You are serving in South Africa," which was under apartheid at that time, "and it's the Fourth of July reception. And you plan to invite people from the foreign ministry and, and other prominent politicians, and a number of leading black leaders and mixed race leaders from South African society. And, and you learn when word of that gets out, that the foreign minister says that if that happens, if you invite those people to your party then he will not come. What should you do?" As if I was in charge with a relationship with South Africa.

And I answered in my most confident and thoughtless response that I've ever given. "Well, it's not the place of the United States to condone racial discrimination, and I think we should go on with the party and don't worry about him," *(laughs)*. No nuance there *(laughs)*. And that -- OK, that sort of ended that. I made my position clear. And I

thought, "Hm, you know, the New Frontier would be proud of me." I realize now that I was supposed to have said something much more measured and perhaps involving alternating the times when certain people would be there and certain people would not, or limiting the minister's time at the party. But no, I went whole hog *(laughs)*. The oral exam I passed within the low seventies and they commented that I had the, the look of a naïve young college student *(laughs)*. They were right. But as somebody who went over it with me from the personnel department said, "Well, at least you didn't get a split board." So I was in and started the A100 course in September.

Q: September 1962?

KINSEY: Yes. I wish I could tell you who some other luminaries were in that class, but I cannot. There was one fellow -- well, a few. There was one guy named Robert Cohn who, I believe, he stayed in and made a name for himself. There was another guy who was a Philadelphia lawyer, another young man and his wife -- and he was fascinated with Japan. He was from Hawaii I think. And Japan was where he wanted to go and he was going to go native, he said, and sleep on tatami mats and so on. I don't remember anyone else other than the instructors.

Q: How did you find the instructions?

KINSEY: Very useful, extremely useful. It was very practical. You know what the A100 course is like, and you get briefings all day long from guys in the Department. And CIA comes in and the Congress comes in and the Agriculture Department sends its FAS people in, and somebody from the Personnel Department shows up and lectures you on a system. And that part was good. But then Chester Beaman and Thomas -- what was his last name? Sutlif or Dunlif or something like that. Were two pretty senior officers, I think they were probably 03s maybe. And they, they told it like it was. I, I found nothing they said to be untrue in my first post. They, they cautioned us against certain things and they said, you know, there are certain policies we have about things and stuff you don't do and stuff you must do, and you've got to know the protocol and diplomatic usage and so on, keep your mouth shut, what to do if you encounter someone from the Soviet Bloc. How the promotion system works -- they spent a lot of time on that. They were both looking for promotions, I remember. They were good, good men. They were both good men. They talked about Foreign Service Inspection Corps. I remember the CIA guy came in, and we had an afternoon with, with two or three of them. But one of them said he thought it was perfectly acceptable to assassinate Fidel Castro. That's the way it was in 1962. And his feelings were very strong. But he sort of, he sort of missed the fact that, you know, there'd be a lot of other people making a decision like that and it was a pretty drastic decision to be making. What I did not realize was that we were being evaluated informally by the two instructors. Oh, we took a trip up to New York, I remember. Per diem at that time was like nine dollars a day or something *(laughs)* and we stayed at the Seamen's Rest Home.

Q: Oh yes, I stayed there too.

KINSEY: Remember that place? But it was fine.

Q: Yeah, what the hell?

KINSEY: But it was a little bit of an embarrassment. We went to some industrial plant, and we went to a bank in Philadelphia, the Girard Trust and Corn Exchange Bank. They gave us steak for lunch.

Q: I went on board -- letting passengers off -- I went on board the Andrea Doria.

KINSEY: Oh really? Did you?

Q: Very good lunch.

KINSEY: I had a fraternity brother at Northwestern who had crossed the ocean on the Andrea Doria the year before it sank. Anyway, that course was, was good. It's --

Q: Were there any women in your course?

KINSEY: If there were, I do not remember them but I think there must have been some.

Q: Mine there weren't, but this is 15 years before, so.

KINSEY: Anyway, at the end we were presented with our assignments and our evaluations, and I thought, "Evaluation? You know, all I've been doing is looking at buildings and things."

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: But no, you were evaluated. And I realized, hey, you're under scrutiny all the time. And, and you better be careful of what you say and what you do. I was given a decent evaluation but below the median of the class. And then I went into Harvey (Norman??) Cash's consular course for a month, learning visas, passports, and immigration law, and a little bit about handling, you know, distressed Americans. And off I went to Colombo.

Q: Did you have any idea where you wanted to go?

KINSEY: Yeah. I told them that with my knowledge of German and -- I had decent French at that time, maybe 2-2. Did I take the test then? I can't remember. Anyway, I said, "Germany, Austria, Switzerland," *(laughs)*. Why not aim high? And fortunately somebody knew better. That would, I think, not have been a great place to send a junior officer.

By the way, the best answer I ever heard to the question, "Where would you like to go?" is, "I'd like to go someplace where there's a really strong ambassador." And I think

that's a good idea. And I did. I was lucky. I had been in the Far East Club when I was at Georgetown, and maybe that hit somebody, and they sent me to Colombo.

Q: Well, you were there from when to when?

KINSEY: From January of 1963 until December of 1964. Is that right? Yeah, two years.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

KINSEY: Almost the whole time of my service there it was the wonderful, illustrious, charming Francis Elizabeth Willis, the first and maybe only Career Ambassador who was a woman. She had come there I think from Norway and --

Q: Denmark, I think, but maybe I'm wrong.

KINSEY: What was that?

Q: I was going to say Denmark.

KINSEY: You may very well be right. I think she'd been in Norway, but --

Q: She may have been in both.

KINSEY: She was in Spain, she was in South America, she was I think at one point in Switzerland, I'm not sure. But she was a remarkable woman whom I admired immensely and still do to this day.

Q: It was, it was -- was it -- was Colombo -- was that Sri Lanka, or was that -- I mean it wasn't called Sri Lanka.

KINSEY: Yeah, it was not called Sri Lanka then. It was Ceylon still. It didn't become Sri Lanka until later.

Q: How -- well, let's talk a bit. During that period you were there in early '60s, what was the situation in Colombo?

KINSEY: Oh, Sri Lanka was a basket case. Colombo, Ceylon, was a basket case. That hapless country had been subjected to government by three different colonial countries, each for 150 years. The first were the Portuguese, and there were still people running around named Mendez and Espinoza and whatnot. The second were the Dutch. And there were a like number of people running around named Van Husen and whatnot. And there were Ceylonese citizens and they were, you know, that had never left the island. And the third, of course, was the British Empire. Ceylon had been administered separately from India, and it had, had different religion. Ceylon was mostly Buddhist where India was Hindu and Muslim. The language was totally different. Hindi and Sinhalese have almost nothing in common. But the British imprint was very, very strong

in the legal system, the judicial system, the political system. They had a parliament, they had a prime minister. Legal cases got appealed to the House of Lords in London, law committee. There were newspapers in English, plenty of them. If you were ambitious you went off to Britain and, and studied at one of the universities, preferably Oxford or Cambridge. And you studied PPE - Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. Some went to the London School of Economics where they were quickly radicalized by British and European leftists and came back with some harebrained ideas.

Q: I always thought that --

KINSEY: Pardon?

Q: -- the London School of Economics was more of a disaster for the colonial, ex-colonial world than Moscow U.

KINSEY: *(laughs)* I think you're right. I ran into too many of those guys, and my God, the jargon that they spewed. Colombo, Ceylon was and still is -- I'm sure, I've talked to a few people who've been back there -- a country in search of itself. It really does not know who it is, and doesn't know who it should be. All those years of kowtowing to colonialists and adopting their way of doing things kind of left a lot of Ceylonese wondering "who the heck are we?" And it became independent in 1948, even though there was no independence movement in the country, but there was in India. And I have this picture in my mind of somebody standing before a map of the subcontinent in the British Colonial Office saying, "Well, we let India go, I guess that's it." And somebody saying, "What about that little island down there? I guess we could have let them go too." I had any number of Ceylonese come up to me at parties and so on say, "We're hoping the British will come back soon. This government doesn't know what it's doing."

Q: Were the Bandaranaike family, were they --

KINSEY: Yeah, yeah. Mr. Bandaranaike had been at Oxford, and the thing he was proudest of in his life was being the president of the Oxford Debating Society and leading a debate, a prewar debate on -- resolved, "I will not fight for the king of our country."

Q: Oh yes, that very famous --

KINSEY: Yeah. Anyway, he came back to Ceylon and -- which was being run in the British manner, got independence, the same colonial-era guys who'd been senior under the British were now the politicians. And everything was pretty much the same. The economy was booming, you had the commonwealth tariff preference, and so on. Everybody was running off to London and coming back. And this guy Bandaranaike didn't want to be part of that scene and decided that he was going to start a national movement, and he literally invented something called the "national dress," which was kind of a bed sheet and hat, and began addressing crowds not in English but in Sinhalese, which is language no one else in the world speaks. And he got elected and, and was not ready for it, didn't have a team to go in, and, and politics became all blather and

posturing. And the economy began to deteriorate, until when I arrived the country only had enough foreign exchange to last for a month. Earlier there was a big communal riot in I think ’57 or ’58, in which the Tamils, who were a very talented minority of a different religion and a different race and a different language originating in South India, were chased and beaten. Those communal riots were the first in the history of that country. And Mr. Bandaranaike began to play the card and spoke against the Tamils, not in favor of reconciliation or fairness or anything. A crazed Buddhist monk then shot him dead. I met the doctor who presided over him when he died, and he was very proud of saying, “I’m Dr. So and So, I operated on the late prime minister when he died,” *(laughs)*.

So anyhow, there was the shambles of a party that Bandaranaike had been holding together by sheer will. There was no political philosophy to speak of here, no economic philosophy. There was simply the will to run things and gain respect thereby. Bandaranaike had no roots at all, he’d gone to Oxford for heaven’s sakes, worn wool suits. And here he was dead and here’s his party. What are they going to do? Well, they made the worst decision possible. They named his wife to --

Q: Madame Bandaranaike.

KINSEY: Madame Bandaranaike. And she had a junior-high-school education. She was this dumpy looking woman who had I don't think ever been off the island. She had a very simplistic view of things. And she quickly was commandeered by opportunists. The economic situation -- I mean there was no foreign investment in Ceylon. Nobody who was serious was ever going to put any money at all into the country. The currency was worthless everywhere except India. When I was doing consular work there tourists would come in and say, “My plane leaves in two hours and I’ve got all this currency. Where can I get it changed back into dollars?” I said, “Good luck. Nobody wants that.” And I was not, you know, I couldn't do that. Anyway, Mrs. Bandarnaike was in and out for another, I don't know, 10 years or so. She hung on a long time, during which the country kind of yo-yoed between the old post-colonial party and her Sri Lanka Freedom Party. It had -- politics in that country were wonderful to watch. They were crazy. There are only two Trotskyite parties in the whole world. They aren’t even in, in Russia anymore. One is in Bolivia *(laughs)* and the other one is in Ceylon *(laughs)*. March around with pictures of Karl Marx and Leon Trotsky and his glasses *(laughs)*. And the most absurd economic theories. Well, this country nationalized everything that could be nationalizable. And as a result, things just kind of came to a slow crawl. The first thing they nationalized was the docks, the port, and they gave very liberal work rules to the dock workers so that the first sign of rain, that’s it, we’re going home today. Freight moved very slowly. Ceylon had been a major trans-shipment port. It stopped being that. They had a bunch of schemes for investing in, things in rural areas that -- I went out to look at some of this stuff. None of it worked. After I left, they kicked all the Tamils off the tea plantations. The richest industry in the country was growing tea and preparing it for shipment. And Ceylon tea was justly famous. But the tea industry was in the hands of Brits and Tamils. Tamils worked, the Brits owned and ran the plantations. The Brits were fleeing in droves when I was there, but there were still some tea planters hanging

on, several hundred of them. One of the happiest days of my life was touring a tea plantation. The scent was just wonderful. These lovely hills with tea bushes and ladies with bags on their back picking tealeaves, two leaves in a bud, into the big bag. The -- Mrs. Bandaranaike eventually managed to kick all the Tamils out the tea plantations. Before that, the government had begun putting quotas for Sinhalese versus Tamils in the civil service and university admissions, and then knocking those numbers down almost every year. The legal profession likewise. It was not unlike what Nazi Germany did with Jews before the Second World War. And the problem was that the Brits and Tamils were very talented people; they'd been running those tea plantations for 150 years at a great profit to the country. The Tamils were incredibly smart, inventive, highly literate. They are the poets of India. Very imaginative and incredibly industrious. The Sinhalese are none of those things. So things just kind of went to hell in a hand basket. The Tamils had had enough of this kind of a regime and withdrew to the jungle and started an insurrection which lasted until a few years ago.

Q: Was the insurrection going on when you were there?

KINSEY: No. No. But they were getting mad, and rightly so in my view.

Q: Yeah, I'm interviewing Pat Butenis who until a few years ago was our ambassador in Sri Lanka.

KINSEY: Ah.

Q: And talking about the problem of not their trying to reconcile the aftermath of their victory over the Tamils, just not doing a great job.

KINSEY: They won't. They won't. They don't think like that.

Q: Let's talk about what were you doing.

KINSEY: I had, I had a wonderful first tour. I had a wonderful first tour. My -- the first thing they put me in was of all things the Political Section. And I remember -- and I wrote, I wrote little squibs in, you know, from the newspapers and I grabbed Hansard, the official publication of parliamentary debate most of which in those days was still in English. And so I would pore over those things. Interview carefully some low-level political sources, journalists, and cultural types, and, and write political assessments, sometimes generating stuff myself, sometimes as assigned by the chief of the Political Section, Dave Gammon, or in the DCM Larry Lutkins, or the ambassador herself. Ambassador Willis took a liking to me, for which I will be forever grateful. She was a great lady. And she paid special attention to me and what I did. And I wrote stuff that was a little bit out of the mainstream. My real coup was a report on the importance of astrology in the political decisionmaking process. And I had the zodiac signs and fairly detailed horoscopes for a number of key people, including the prime minister. We'd never done anything like that before. It was not my doing. I was noseying around it and I found that a visiting American graduate student American graduate student who

introduced me to a Sinhalese who know about this stuff. And I sat there and it was so valuable I did something I never had done with other political interviews. I said: "Do you mind if I take some notes on this?" Because he was giving me this *incredible* detail about stuff. So I did that. Most of it was pretty routine, parliamentary kind of stuff, political party. I went to rallies, but couldn't understand anything that was being said. I tried to learn a little Sinhalese and I learned a few words and I would quote some banners, and that was about all. And then Ambassador Willis said, "I have an assignment for you. It's very delicate." Bobby Kennedy had been at the UN and had been assailed by third-world people about how terribly we treated minority citizens of our own country. And he really was incensed by it. And being, being combative, what he did was order the Foreign Service to gather information about how every other country in the world mistreated minorities *(laughs)*. And he wanted if this ever happened again to be able to go through his little file and say, "Well, you do thus and so. Who are you to cast aspersions on us Americans?" So I took an interpreter, one of the few people in the country who spoke both Tamil and Sinhalese. He was the ambassador's driver. And he and I went around the country and I interviewed dozens and dozens of people about communal friction and, and -- this is a country that had a very strict caste system. They said, "Well, our caste system is very democratic. Sixty percent of the people were in the upper caste, the Goyagama caste." OK. But it's still a caste system. And they had untouchables there who were untouchable. And there were these other things that I found, I dug into and found out, and, and wrote a big report about this. It's long since disappeared I'm sure. But I learned a lot about the country. I didn't even have a car of my own to go upcountry, so that was, that was one of the few times that I got out of Colombo and really went around.

So I did political stuff for like close to seven months and then they said OK, you're supposed to be on rotation, but now it's time for you to do some consular work. So I went down and did consular work. And I liked that because I was my own boss and because the stuff that came wandering through the doorway was some of the most bizarre stuff in the world. I had a woman who claimed she had been -- an American citizen -- claimed she'd been raped electrically long-distance by Governor Rockefeller. I had another guy who was from Madison Avenue and he'd gone berserk and he felt that people were chasing him around the world, and we got him in a rest home, and he, he was there for a month or so and calmed down. And I said, "Are you OK?" And he said, "Yeah, I feel it, I know," said, "My problems are over." And as I took him to the airport and I said, "Well, you think this is all behind you now?" And he said, "Yes. They'll never find me now," *(laughs)*.

Q: Oh God.

KINSEY: Consular guys in the Foreign Service have the best stories, they all have stories like that. Crazy stuff. I had to preside over the sealing of two or three caskets, administer tests to people, tell them you can't go to the United States because you can't read even your own language. Consular work was fun. I liked it.

Q: Were there many applicants --

KINSEY: Yes.

Q: -- going to the States?

KINSEY: Oh God. There was a very small quota. In those days we had, we had quotas for each country. Ceylon had a quota that was already filled and it, it moved slowly. And people could come in and apply but they'd just be, you know, the umpteenth in line. There were a lot of technical people, especially well-educated people, just wanted to get out of there. They knew that, that Ceylon was on the ropes, they didn't want to put up with this nonsense. Currency regulations, restrictions on what you could import and export. You needed anything imported it meant that you had to apply for a license and you probably had to grease some guy's hand, and, it would take months and months and months to get an answer on things. The bureaucracy just moved at a snail's pace, and a lot of people didn't want to put up with it. They saw, you know, my kid can't go to college, why should I do this anymore? So they came in. I heard a lot of -- I picked up a lot of gripes that way, and then I passed some of that stuff along to the political guys. Settling small disputes of various of types. So that was, that was good. I did that for several months and then Ambassador Willis said, "Why don't you come back to the Political Section, do some more work? We're shorthanded." So I went back there for a few more months and then my last few months were in a position that was about to be abolished, commercial officer. There was virtually no trade between the United States and -- well, there was some, but it was, it was CARE stuff, things like that. Earlier we'd had an AID (Agency for International Development) mission there that was quite busy and was doing a lot of things when I arrived. They were building a big road across the country and doing some irrigation stuff and -- but Ceylon in its political quandary had nationalized what passed for the oil industry, and that was just a bunch of distribution operations, gas stations and, and holding tanks and, and loading facilities at the, at the docks. And so there was no oil that I know of in Ceylon. But Royal Dutch Shell and British Petroleum had ESSO, the American oil company, had their assets nationalized and they were put out of business. *Boom*. Just like that. Well, we of course demanded compensation. There was the Hickenlooper amendment to the AID bill said, "Any country which nationalizes American assets and does not offer prompt, adequate, and effective compensation loses U.S. assistance."

Ambassador Willis was trying like the devil to get the Ceylonese to come across with something so that AID could get continued. It was our major source of political leverage. And she even took it upon herself to come back here and go to the White House and sit down with President Kennedy and beg him to allow American AID to continue. And he said, "Frances, my hands are tied. I cannot do it."

And so we actually went and presided over the deconstruction of the AID mission. And all these AID people, maybe -- I think they were 40 or so of them in the country -- were gone. The Peace Corps stayed and they were doing some good stuff, very low level stuff. But the AID was gone. And as a result there was no trade between the United States, nothing moving, so.

Q: Well, was -- I can't remember, was Ceylon in the non-aligned movement?

KINSEY: Oh yeah, remember the Colombo Conference of, like, '54?

Q: Yeah, yeah.

KINSEY: Yes, they were. And they were very vocal. Ceylonese were vocal on all kinds of international issues in which they had no stake in whatsoever and which they frankly knew very little about. But boy did they like to talk. I've never run into people who like to gab more -- and tell you what to do -- more than the Ceylonese. They were just so righteous in making these silly pronouncements. The prime minister herself once referred to, quote, "The rapacious designs of the west on Ceylon", as if we were going to swallow the country up. It had nothing we wanted *(laughs)*. Yeah, anyway, so my last stretch I was doing WTDRs [World Trade Directory Reports]and reporting on the price of rubber and stuff like that.

Q: You know, I don't know what it could be used for, but it's got beautiful ports, doesn't it? I mean --

KINSEY: It has Trincomalee, which served as a key port during the Second World War for the British Navy. It's a deep-water port on the eastern side of the, of the island. And the Port of Colombo had been busy, but Singapore was growing, and Hong Kong as well were growing at the time. And a lot of ships that had previously called at Colombo, passenger ships and cargo ships just sailed past by now. My household effects went by three times before they found a reason to pull into the Port of Colombo *(laughs)*. I was living off borrowed furniture. So that was, that was Colombo.

The other thing that I did there that was crucial, pivotal to my career, was the country was Buddhist. In 1963 in Vietnam, in the spring of that year the Buddhists began marching. And I didn't know much about it. And we began to have deputations of Buddhist monks come to the embassy. And I was always the guy they -- I was the lowest guy in the Political Section and I ended up talking with these fellows and, and they were, you know, they wanted answers, why are we doing this and so on. I didn't know. So I started reading about Vietnam and, and about Buddhism and, and I got fascinated, particularly with -- not with Buddhism - but with what was going on in Vietnam and what seemed to be at stake there. And that is the -- that's what, what led me eventually to that beautiful country. It's 1:00, I don't know what your schedule is.

Q: Well, this is what I was planning to --

KINSEY: This is a natural place.

Q: -- this is a good place to stop.

KINSEY: Yeah.

Q: And just put at the end here, where did you go next?

KINSEY: Stuttgart.

Q: Stuttgart, OK. Good. Now -- got you on speaker phone and my tape recorders are here.

KINSEY: All right.

Q: Today is May the 4th, 2015 with Bruce Kinsey. And Bruce, we're up to you're going to Stuttgart. What year did you go to Stuttgart?

KINSEY: Let's see, that would have been January of '65.

Q: You came back to Washington, did you?

KINSEY: Yeah, I did.

Q: Did you get any feel about Vietnam at that time?

KINSEY: Nothing that I remember. I just wanted to get to Stuttgart as quickly as I could.

Q: OK, so you were in Stuttgart from when to when?

KINSEY: Stuttgart from January of '65 to December of '66.

Q: OK, what were you up to?

KINSEY: I was an FSO-7.

Q: And were you -- what were you going to be doing?

KINSEY: Vice consul. Stuttgart was really not a very consequential post. I was three-three in German and I guess they needed German speakers. And Colombo had been a tough post. It was odd. Jumping back just a second. A number of more experienced officers than I -- and guys who'd had experience in Asia and other places said that Colombo while we were there said it was an easy 25 percent differential post, hardship post. You know, the interruptions in electricity and, and malaria-bearing mosquitoes all over the place, so on. And a number of, of people -- not me -- urged Ambassador Willis to have it raised from a 15 percent differential to a 25. She would not allow it. She didn't want, she did not want the department to think that we were whiners *(laughs)* and, and so we never got that. She did ask that we be given a, an R&R (rest and relaxation). It would have been either -- where? Beirut or some place else. Hong Kong. And the Department turned us down. Well, they turned us down because the post was only a 15 percent post. So we, we suffered in silence. Anyway, where were we? I've

forgotten what the question was now.

Q: You were saying Stuttgart wasn't very consequential.

KINSEY: You know, the department tried to give new officers a good post if they'd been in, a tough place for their first -- they didn't want to lose people after the first, after their first assignment. And so Stuttgart was, you know, quite sophisticated and so forth and so forth. All I did officially for two years was issue visas and passports, get people out of jail, handle crazies, and, and so on. I did a little bit of political work. But it was not a post that was in the mainstream of much of anything.

Q: Well, I'm an old consular officer, so I'd like to ask you, can you talk about some of your most difficult or interesting consular cases?

KINSEY: There were a number. It was -- in Colombo I had done consular work and I liked it, and I liked the variety. In Stuttgart, frankly it was a, it was a visa mill and for mostly tourists. The most interesting one I think I ever had was a, a guy came in who spoke -- a German -- who spoke very, very good colloquial English. And he was a, he was a salesman for an engineering firm in Chicago. And normally a case like that was pretty routine, but because of his age I knew that he had been a young adult during the war and so we ran him through the, the U.S. Army counterintelligence Corps (CIC) card file.

Q: Berlin -- yeah, we had a pretty good --

KINSEY: Yeah, and there were a number of things. Depending on the, on the degree of suspicion the counterintelligence files were routine. We did police checks on some people and then we checked the Bundesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz - the equivalent of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation). Well, this guy came back with all kinds of red flags. And it turns out that he had joined the Nazi Party in late 1944. And done some, some jail time after the war and so on. Well, I held the visa and, and because I wanted to do some more checking. And I got a zinger of a telephone call from his employer in Chicago, this engineering firm. And I said well, this and that, and I kind of denied anything. And this guy says, "I'm coming over."

I said, "OK, come on over." So he came over and, and, I said, "I'll meet you, but I don't want to meet you at the consulate." And we went to a bar. And I took along the file. And I said, "This is a delicate situation."

And he said, "Well, we are very interested. This man is very, very important to us. We are the largest Jewish-owned engineering firm in Chicago and this guy is the liaison with, with our European market."

And, and I said, "Hm, that's very interesting. I think there are some things you should know." And I sat there and I said, "I'm not -- this" -- I said, "This meeting never took place." And then in proceeded to summarize for him each one of the, the files. And, and

his jaw dropped. I said finally, you know, "This man was about 19 or 20-years-old in 1944 and he joined the Nazi Party." And I said, "Nobody in his right mind joined the Nazi Party in 1944, particularly in this part of Germany, which was subjected to very heavy bombings and the allies were on the continent." And I said, "This guy had to be, you know, a firm believer."

And this man said, "I really can't believe this." I didn't show him the files, but I read several relevant parts to him. Well, he thanked me, he went back to Chicago.

And the, the visa applicant showed up a couple of times and said, "Have you heard anything form my employer?" They were supposed to write a letter.

And I said, "Gee, you know, I haven't received a thing."

He came back three or four weeks later, "Anything from Chicago?"

"No, nothing at all." And that was the end of it.

But he had been running a scam. They thought he was Jewish because he knew all the Jewish holidays and he used to remind people in the office when he was there of their, the Jewish holidays, and remind them that, you know, you're, you're, your grandmother died three years ago tomorrow. You should say a prayer to her" *(laughs)*. So it amazed them that he was what he was. But there were such people in the system in Germany who had after the Second World War assumed all kinds of spurious credentials, phony nobility and, you know, Germans who had supposedly remnants of their unit stranded in the Soviet Union but they were ready to take up arms, and made $200,000 and so on. And he was one. That was, that was one of the most bizarre consular cases I had.

We had, every few weeks we, we'd have somebody wander in who was either penniless or, or delusional. And we got used to taking care of them. I learned to have a lot of respect for the Salvation Army - the Helisarmee. They would take anybody, Norm Cash, who ran the consular course, told us this was one group you could always count on. And boy did I. They would take people who didn't have any money, and so on.

So anyway, I, did that by day. By night, I did something totally different, on nights and weekends. It was not part of my duties, official or otherwise, but I did it. By this time Vietnam was heating up as an issue. Now, here was Germany, one of our closest allies. And there was a lot of unrest particularly among -- on, on campuses. And the southwest part of Germany where I was has lots of universities, including Heidelberg University and three or four others. And each one of them had a fraternity, you know, the, the German fraternities. And we began getting requests for somebody to come out and talk. And Fleming Nyrop, who was the, the PAO (public affairs officer) came and said, "Listen, your German's good and I don't know anything much about this and I know you're interested, can you go do this?" And I did one and enjoyed it, and then really began boning up. And by the time I left, two years later, I had done something like 45 of presentations with fraternities and civic groups. Usually young people but not always.

Some of my talks were covered in the press, but not many. I even drew a map on my own of Vietnam with the key places and so on, and gave people a bit of the history. And in about an hour I could, I was told by any number of younger people that they didn't know what to think about Vietnam until they heard my talk. And they said, "You were *pretty* convincing." I was supporting our position and explaining to them, or trying to explain to them, what happened. It obliged me to read some books and also dig as deeply as I could into what the department was sending out, what USIS (United States Information Service) had in the way of stuff.

And I ran into some interesting characters. It turns out there were two people in particular who began following me around *(laughs)*. One of them was a student. They both purported to be students. But one was a student at Stuttgart who was obviously pretty well trained and he would stand up and, and yell objections during my, during my talks. And he came so often that I'd, I had a ready response for him every time. This was all done in German, by the way. The other one was more interesting. This kid -- young man and his wife -- showed up at one of my things. And he said, "I think you've got some interesting things here and I'd really like to help you and I wonder if I could join you in speaking. And he said, "I've had a lot of experience in this kind of thing and maybe I could give you some tips," *(laughs)*. I should have been suspicious, but I wasn't! And I invited him to show up a couple of times. And, and then some bells began ringing? and I checked him out. And it turned out that he was -- his file came up, the security guy told me, he said, "You know that guy whose name you gave me?"

And I said, "Yeah."

He said, "He was terminated with extreme prejudice by the CIA," *(laughs)*. I always thought that meant you'd been rubbed out. But it doesn't! This guy was involved in, that tunnel of West Berlin to East Berlin. And, and evidently he had, he had blown the show or something. And then he shows up in Stuttgart and, and so finally I stopped alerting him and he stopped showing up.

And then one day he wanders into the consulate and he says, "Well, I want to go to the United States. I want to become a citizen."

And I said, "You *what?"*

And he said, "Yeah, I want to, I want to go and I want to join the American army."

And I said, "Well, you know, there's a war on and if you go as an immigrant you could easily be drafted."

He said, "That's all right, I'll start at the bottom and work my way up."

And I said, I said, "Hm, you know," I said, "before you came here, have you ever been in trouble with the American government before?"

And his jaw dropped. And he sort of dissembled and left and I never saw him again. I think that he was a Stasi (East German Secret Police) agent – an Agitprop kind of guy who was sent in to stir up trouble. And I should have caught him earlier. Other than that, that was by far the most productive and interesting part of my, of my tour in Stuttgart.

Q: Well, did you have much of a problem with GIs getting married to women who let's say had a past?

KINSEY: Oh, only once a week *(laughs)*. Sure. And that happened a lot. And, and after a few months of that I could spot 'em when they walked in. And they wanted to go over as -- they wanted to go over and visit, they wanted a visitor visa. And I, I would kind of rake 'em over the coals with questions and, and ask them -- I remember one woman who was from Meinheim, which was a very popular -- girls from Meinheim would come in and ask for visitor visas and then go over, try to change them out, and get in and marry their boyfriends, whatever. Anyway, I said, I said, "Well, who will take care of the child while you were in the United States?"

And, and her jaw dropped. She said, involuntarily she said, "How did you know?" *(laughs)*. And, and that was all I needed to deny the visa.

We used to get prostitutes coming in from -- Stuttgart had a famous house of prostitution called the Dreifarbigehaus (the three-colored house) which was a commercial prostitution operation. And women used to come in and give that as their home address *(laughs)*. They'd come in wearing short leather skirts and, and the -- and tear off blouses and of course they were all denied. But the, the more interesting cases involved security stuff and, and other people trying to run a scam. The consular part I could do standing on my head to me the more important part was what I was doing with Vietnam.

It did not help my career. The consul general was an academic. He was not a career guy. He had -- his name was Paul Sweet and he had combed through the Nazi foreign ministry archives and catalogued and found the most important documents. I guess that assignment was sort of a reward for him or something. I don't know. I ran into another guy like that who had been a judge somewhere in New England, Leo Goodman. And he had been a judge in Nuremberg in the later trials. And they made him consul general in Hamburg. Why those posts were not regular Foreign Service posts I have no idea. Anyway, Consul General Sweet did not like me doing what I was doing, and it was my first inkling that there were people around who really didn't want us in Vietnam and they were in, some of them were in the department, and he was one. And it didn't help me. I wish I'd never been there. I was happy to get out of there. Which I did in December of '66.

I was assigned as a junior officer to the Operations Center. And I told the, the guy who showed me around the Operations Center that I was going to request a transfer because I wanted to learn Vietnamese and I wanted to go to Vietnam. And they made that happen real quickly. So I was at home in Illinois in January of 1967 and the phone rang. And this, this voice I'd never heard before said, "Bruce, I understand you want to go to

Vietnam."

And I said, "Yes, I do." Well, it was a wonderful man by the name of Everet Bumgardner. Did you ever run across him?

Q: No, I didn't.

KINSEY: OK. Ev Bumgardner was an old Indochina hand from way back, from about 1950. He was a USIA photographer in Hanoi and had married a Vietnamese woman. And he was in Laos and Vietnam pretty much for the duration, learned Vietnamese, and spoke it as well as any American ever did. Was very committed to the, maintaining the independence and security of South Vietnam, and was very quiet about what he did. He was, he was by the mid-'60s what was called chief of field operations for USIS in Vietnam. And he did some amazing work. Found some amazing people and trained them.

Ev set up what was badly needed. By this time our policy in Vietnam was looking pretty scatterbrained. And somebody got Ev Bumgardner into the White House and had him talking to some people very high up. He was a very plain guy. He came from where I am living right now, out here in the Shenandoah Valley, and his grammar was a little fractured but his heart was in the right place. Very capable and very astute at reading people and ingratiating himself -- he did it by being very polite and very quiet and he listened a lot.

Anyway, Ev said, "Look, we have got to have more people in the countryside, more Americans who know about the pacification program, who are not afraid, who can take care of themselves, and above all who can speak the language well enough to function in that environment. Because the reason we are losing is because we haven't got enough people who know what the hell is going on and who know what to do about it." And he was absolutely right. He set up the Vietnam Training Center in Arlington in what had been old FSI, the Foreign Service Institute. They had to evacuate it before he could turn it over and turn it into what was essentially a lecture and intensive language learning institution. You know where that was.

Q: Was that in a garage?

KINSEY: Yeah, Arlington Towers garage.

Q: Arlington Towers garage, oh yes.

KINSEY: By the way it has reverted since then to a garage again. A bunch of us went over there. I organized a reunion back in 2007 and in Arlington and we went over to look at the old place and it had been turned back into a garage again. So these great huge pillars flared out at the top all over the place.

Anyway, Ev said, "Would you like to go? Do you want to be the first guy in this training

program?"

I said, "Yes, I do. Sign me up."

And he said, "The only problem is that I've got a list here of guys who I to go after and, and the thing is not going to be ready until the 1st of April. What do I do with you fellows in the meantime?" And he said, "I'm at my wit's end, I don't know what to do. I can't -- I don't have the staff ready yet, don't have a facility, and I don't want to leave the people who are interested in this program hanging. So what do I do?"

And I said, "Put us in French training."

So all of a sudden a bunch of FSO-8s and sevens, and by this time they were USIA (United States Information Agency) and AID guys, and we essentially took over the, the French language department in Rosslyn and we were there for, I don't know, five or six weeks or something like that. It was great for me, I got my French up to three-three and it had been about 2-2 before then. So anyway then we -- on the 1st of April we started training over at Vietnam Training Center. At that time there was an interlude where Lyndon Johnson, and Robert Komer who was the head honcho on, on pacification, said the civilians have got to get their act together. It was a mess. I've since dug into how bad it was, but things in Saigon were a shambles. AID would not cooperate with the embassy, the embassy was too trustful of MACV (U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam). USIA was doing its own thing. The CIA station was not trusting anybody. And there, out in the field in certain key provinces, the province chief would open his door in the morning and there might be five Americans there from different groups, each one with a different first priority, you've got to do this today. One of 'em might be a MACV lieutenant colonel. Someone else would be either a civilian or a mid-level field officer from JUSPAO, the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office, the propaganda stuff. And somebody else might be doing public health things. Another guy might be from the Army Engineer Corps, wanting to build a highway somewhere. And there would be an AID guy saying, "Look, we need to drill some wells someplace or improve the hospital," or something. It was a nightmare. It got so bad that the Vietnamese in Saigon were saying that they were expecting a coup among the Americans over who was predominate in Vietnam. This is during the Henry Cabot Lodge days.

Q: Ah.

KINSEY: And anyway, what Robert Komer, the president's special assistant for pacification, did was, first, he had a secret agenda, which I found out later. His agenda was to take all pacification activities and form them into pretty much independent distinct organization within the military assistance command of Vietnam MACV), reporting directly to General Westmoreland. But there was an interim period where all the civilian agencies were supposed to band together into something called the Office of Civil Operations. And Lyndon Johnson essentially gave them about five months to do something good with that. It failed because nobody would cooperate. And finally, Komer came over and just ordered it and the whole thing – CORDS (Civil Operations

and Rural Development Support) – was started. Suddenly, pacification was under one person. It was a joint civilian -MACV operation with colonels reporting to ambassadors reporting to the head of pacification, who would be who would be either Robert Komer or later Bill Colby, who in later years became later the chief of CIA. But all through the organization clear down to the district level you had this civilian, then military, then civilian, then military, then civilian, then military kind of layering that had never been done before. The closest we ever came was, as far as I know, was the joint U.S. and British military staffs that planned the European war. We had never done anything like this. And by God, it worked. Finally we had some coherence and, and authority, and above all we had the resources of the U.S. military at our disposal. So the integration was very choppy, especially at first. But it worked. And the Vietnam Training Center is one reason that it worked. It taught people to get along together, and they had a common knowledge base. Everybody knew what, say, what the Chieu Hoi program was. That was where we were trying to --

Q: Where we induced Vietcong to surrender.

KINSEY: That's right, that's right. And so on. So I went through six weeks of area training where we, we learned Vietnamese history and in the various pacification programs and we also learned from a wonderful man by the name of Tony Cistaro who had first been in the United States Marine Corps and then joined AID and had been a provincial representative down in the deep delta and got blown out of a Jeep around Christmastime in 1965 and nearly killed, recuperated, and then came on staff. He walked around on crutches and later a cane. And he taught us about things like military rank and procedure and military courtesy, how to tell a sergeant from an admiral, and taught us about various weapons. We trainees went and said to this guy who had by this time taken over VTC… I led a bunch of people in *(laughs)* and said one evening, you know, "You're sending us to contested areas of Vietnam and you're not telling us anything about weapons and we want weapons."

And he said, "Oh, you don't need weapons. You're going over there, there are plenty of weapons everywhere." Now that was not really true, especially if you were civilian." The Army was very leery of giving weapons to anybody else. They all had to be accounted for. So, so anyway, we really raised a ruckus.

"Well, we'll give you weapons training," he said. OK, so they, they took us off to a car barn across Key Bridge. We walked across Key Bridge to a car barn, trolleys, the old trolley system that was being used by AID as a target range for guys that were going to South America. And we learned to shoot there. And then we had to buy our own weapons, we had to buy our own gear, you know, khaki shirts and boots with heavy treads and, and jungle hats and mosquito repellent and, and even malaria pills! They had nothing for us over there *(laughs)!* We were all going out in the boonies and to be a part of district advisory teams. And, and we paid our, you know, we essentially went out of pocket for a few hundred bucks to do it. It was the funniest thing. I'll never forget. As our airplane was coming into Saigon, about an hour out, we were all carrying our weapons with us and our handguns with us. And I went into the, to the lavatory and took

off my shirt and put my pistol on my belt and came out. And there were four or five other guys on the same plane, they did the exact same thing. We had carried those things all the way halfway around the world. You couldn't do that today, you'd end up in jail in some third world country. But, we did it. I took a shotgun in my hand luggage and a Walther PPK strapped to my hip. And I, I was assigned to a province about 40 miles, 45 miles south of Saigon that was a very highly contested, a strategic province called Long An. And I stayed there for the better part of two years.

Q: What was the province?

KINSEY: L-O-N-G A-N. It was the northernmost province on the Mekong Delta. It grew lots and lots of rice. It stretched almost from the South China Sea and clear over to Cambodia. And it was -- because it was so close to Saigon the Vietcong wanted it. The major road from Saigon clear down to the Delta, the one that carried all the troops out and rice north went on route four, which went right through our province over a great big and very vulnerable bridge. So Long An had pretty much been lost to the Vietcong by 1964. I got there in early April of 1968 a few weeks, after the Tet Offensive. Let me go back to the training center. We learned a lot of stuff. There's never been anything like this, and there should be. If your history is good for anything it should be used for pointers on how to set up counterinsurgency training. And these guys, Ev Bumgardner, did it right. The, the foundation was the language training. Intensive, six hours a day, no more than five guys in one room with a rotating stream of tutors. Very carefully programmed lessons. Emphasis on speaking and understanding conversation. We learned vocabulary like "decapitate" and "pressure mine" and "corruption," and the names of the Vietnamese household gods and the, the, the names for the houses of the zodiac. We learned all the military ranks and the names of cities and all the history stuff. We learned self-defense techniques and we learned all the pacification programs one by one. We were all tested periodically and at the end I was three-three in Vietnamese. A few guys who went through that program tested three plus. They were, they were the kinds you run into occasionally in the Foreign Service, the guys who were linguistic sponges and just, you know, they're genius in languages. Nobody in my group tested three plus. We all -- many of us tested three-three, the others were in the two plus range. But we hit the ground running, man! We landed and we knew what we were supposed to do, how we were going to do it, and we could explain it to anybody who asked in either English or Vietnamese. It was marvelous. The first group -- mine – was CORDS One. By this time OCO was gone and this integrated organization, CORDS, was a growing entity. It had been for close to a year. Although in the field it was still -- at the district level it was still far more military guys than civilian. So anyway, I lived with a, the team of about 10 army guys, about four officers and the rest enlisted, in this woebegone district of the, of the province, one of the least secure districts in one of the least secure provinces in the country. There was a rating system on security and Long An when I arrived was number 42 out of 44 provinces. I got there, my boss was a, a major, an artillery branch major in the United States Army. The district chief was a man who had come to his position by virtue of two things. The first one was being a bagman for a big Vietnamese general, and the other one was murdering the rival for his job by poisoning him. His deputy, the deputy for security, was an alcoholic who could be counted on to start

staggering around at Friday afternoon and not sober up until Monday morning with a terrible hangover. He was a coward, only left the compound once a month with a big bucket of money to go out and pay the hamlet and village militia guys.

We got mortared. We got rocketed. My, my trailer that USAID had put there-- was rocketed twice, once before I arrived and once when I was away *(laughs)*. Came back, it was a shambles of a place. Blew up my generator, blew the roof off the thing. We had, we had ambushes, we had mines, we had kidnappings, we had all kinds of things.

My, my major almost immediately felt threatened by my presence. He was the most incompetent officer I ran into the entire time I was there, but he sure put up a good front, played the game. And he wrote everything up as if everything was glorious. People would come and he'd brief them and his briefing always ended up by, "Sir, we have no problems here that we are not able to solve at our level." Well, our district was -- two-thirds of it was held and controlled by the Vietcong day and night, and this yahoo was saying, "We don't have any problems here we can't solve." That's the crazy kind of thing that was going on in a lot more than my district. Guys wanted -- the military sent a lot of mid-ranking officers over there who wanted nothing more than to get promoted, and the way to get promoted was to lie about the conditions in your district and say that everything was under control or that it used to be bad but I've made it a lot better now, and a lot of that was bullshit. This man and I didn't hit it off. I didn't butt heads with him or anything, I just avoided him. And so here I was; the district government was run by these two thieves, one a coward, the other a cowardly drunk. And, you know, I realized it'd be a waste of my time to try to work with these guys. So I, I worked with hamlet and village chiefs and police and, and pacification teams of guys who wore black pajamas and worked on the countryside called the Rural Development Cadre. They were paramilitary teams, and they were terrific. And we did great work. We did, we did a lot of good. I also built bridges and dug wells and schools, all the standard AID stuff. But that wasn't really going to affect the situation in that district. We needed to protect people from the incursions of Vietcong, and occasionally the North Vietnamese Army. And so that's what I would do. I did that for about 10 months, during which, by the way, I killed two Vietcong one night. And also, the deputy for security –the drunk - pulled a .45 on me, late at night. It was dark Saturday night, he was drunk out of his mind. And he came over to my trailer as I was walking in, and I could barely see him and he pulls a gun and he said, "I'm going to shoot you. I'm going to kill you."

I had had run-ins with him because I'd cut off supplies from the Catholic Relief Service to our district because he'd stolen them and sold them on the black market. He was also very unpopular with the village and hamlet chiefs I worked with. One of them told me, "If that guy ever comes out here I'm going to kill him." Anyway, he pulls a .45. And I had bought at, I think, Sunny's Surplus *(laughs)* a can of -- a tube of chemical mace, something that was used by police. It's like pepper spray, only a lot more powerful. And he's standing there about 10 -- eight feet away from me with his gun.

His wife is standing over next to him saying, "Come home! Don't do this, don't do this!" And I took my mace, sprayed it in the air and it hit him square in the face. Went down

like a rock. And you know he and I were on very cautious terms after that.

After 10 months out there, during which we took back some VC hamlets from the Vietcong --

Q: Were you involved in troop movements?

KINSEY: No. But if the American military did something bad in my district I was the first guy that got called and I had to go out and pour oil on troubled waters. It was one hell of a gut-wrenching experience. We had -- the Ninth Division of the United States Army was run by a general named Julian J. Ewell who has since been called the "Butcher of the Delta." And his men were judged on the base of body count. All he wanted to know was, you know, at the end of that operation how many bodies were there. Predictably, an awful lot of innocent civilians were killed, ruthlessly and intentionally by men under his command. It sickened a number of us -- but this guy was making a lot of headlines and getting a lot of credit for cleaning things up. It was, it was awful. It was a horrible thing to, to witness, let alone be a part of. And bad things would happen. Helicopters would come over some hamlet and would with no permission at all open fire.

Larry Crandall and I walked into one hamlet one morning. He had called me and said, "You've got to come over here, we've got a bad situation." And we walked in and this hamlet was a shambles. Two helicopters had come over it and just greased it from the air with .50 caliber machine guns. There were 17 straw mats with bodies sort of stacked up like cordwood in the center of this place. Most of 'em were small. And that was happening with far too much frequency. It was My Lai on a small scale. But it happened, it happened way too often, and the consequences of its happening -- I don't have time to tell you the story of what happened afterward, but it was a disgrace to the United States Army. And when they finally found out what had happened they sent a bunch of -- the last thing that the hamlet needed-- wool clothing from the Midwest, and that's what they brought in, in the tropics, to make compensation for what they had done. Crandell was so mad he finally had the guy ordered out. He was doing more harm than good. But that happened, that happened, Stu, more times than ever was reported. And it was, it was a horrible thing. It was what happens when an institution goes berserk. And the United States Army in South Vietnam, too many elements of it went berserk. They just forgot who they were, why they were there, and what worked and what didn't. And, and it was awful. There were other tactics that would have worked that were not tried often enough. Everything was tried at one point.

Q: What about the press ? Were they --

KINSEY: There were some good ones and some, a lot of guys who were on the make. The press reminded me a lot of the U.S. military. There were a lot of very ambitious people in the press trying to make a name for themselves. And I tried to keep them away from them, unless I knew who they were. And I, I was friends with about three of them. One of them was a Frenchman who was the Newsweek correspondent in Vietnam. And I wish I could remember his name.

Q: Bouchier or something? I can't think of it.

KINSEY: He was killed over there later on after I left.

Q: I think I know the man you mean. He wrote a --

KINSEY: He'd been there a long time. He had some great ideas. He wrote a book even.

Q: He wrote about The Street Without Joy I believe.

KINSEY: No, no, that was Bernard Fall.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: This guy was, was French and *ugh*, what was his name. I can't remember.

Q: Anyway, you can fill this in later.

KINSEY: I will. We'll see. Anyway, the other two were from The London Times. And they knew what they were doing. They were two women, by the way. And they came down a couple times. Francois Sully. Francois Sully! S-U-L-L-Y.

Q: Well, how did -- I mean how about your relations with the embassy?

KINSEY: They were virtually nonexistent. The embassy was a totally different entity. They had provincial reporting guys who by that time were Vietnamese speakers. They were in a few of the biggest cities. And they were covering the usual thing, ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) politics and political party stuff and elections and so on. But they, by and large they didn't know much about the war. The embassy was, well, they just weren't in touch with things the way they should have been, I didn't think. I mean the main political force in that country was the Vietcong. And they didn't have anybody covering the Vietcong. They should have. They let the CIA do it. CIA was doing a fairly good job of it. But that, that was -- anyway. The embassy pretty much was out of the loop in terms of the pacification program after CORDS was established. One of the big problems was Lodge when he was ambassador, and he was there twice. Henry Cabot Lodge just didn't trust anybody but himself. He was very imperious. And he insisted on approving everything that had to do with pacification. And the problem was that he didn't know anything about it, and he wouldn't let anybody else coordinate things. His deputy set up this coordinating committee once with the MACV and JUSPAO and AID and, and CIA, and they met a few times and he disbanded it. He didn't want it. He felt it was taking away from his authority. But he never made any decisions! He was impossible.

Q: He had the reputation of, of -- in fact politically and all -- of being very lazy.

KINSEY: Well -- amazing?

Q: No, lazy.

KINSEY: Oh, lazy. I don't know. I wasn't there, I learned all this later and heard it occasionally. There were Americans who were doing amazing things in, in counterinsurgency. And you can -- if you can ever get Frank Scotton on the line -- and I gave you his name --

Q: What is his name again?

KINSEY: Frank Scotton, S-C-O-T-T-O-N.

Q: S-T-O --

KINSEY: Sierra, Charlie, O, T, T, Tango, Tango, O, N.

Q: Do you know where he is, or?

KINSEY: Yeah, he's out in San Diego. I gave you his email address, but I'll give it to you again.

Q: OK.

KINSEY: Hold on. Frank was a USIA career officer who went after the Vietcong, and, and was by and large successful. He was very novel in what he did. His email address is -- OK.

Q: Well, could you just -- if you --

KINSEY: I'll email it to you.

Q: Email, it's better to have it --

KINSEY: OK, I'll do that. OK, I want to tell you one thing about, about --

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: I mean I've been describing things that were wildly wrong. And an awful lot of things that we were doing in Vietnam were wildly, wildly wrong. I had been there two weeks and I went out to one of our outlying villages that had a, a functioning village government and also, and was a -- didn't matter where it was. And I met the village chief and introduced myself. And, and we ended up -- I visited many times and we always ended up drinking this coffee that he liked, very black iced coffee with a lot of sugar. I detested it, but I loved the guy. Anyway, after we'd met a couple of times I said, "Does anybody from the district -- the district chief or the deputy -- ever come up here and talk

to you?"

And he said, "If they ever came up here they would be shot. And so they don't come *(laughs)."* And at that point I laughed heartily and shook his hand, and we became fast friends. This man was the senior government of Vietnam representative in his village, which -- the village was maybe 2,000 people. It had a little market in the center of the place. And, and I said, "How have you -- how long you been there?"

He said, "I was -- I've been a village chief here since 1962," or something.

And I said, "How have you survived?"

And he said, "The Vietcong want me and so I sleep -- every night or two I move from the house to one villager to another." So he ended up knowing his people very well, and they had a lot of respect for him. He maintained an office for the day and then he would go disappear for the night. There was a little militia outpost there and we started getting some things done. He took me to the edge of a creek and we looked north and he said, "You see that big rice field there? There's rice all the way to the horizon."

And I said, "Yeah."

And he said, "All that rice belongs to the Vietcong."

And I said, "How can that be? It's so close."

And he said, "This creek right here, we used to have a bridge across it. And the VC took it away. And they did it so that they could control the rice. And so now my, my village is, is less prosperous and the VC have all the rice."

And I said, "Should we build a bridge here?"

And he said, "Yeah!"

So, so we built a little footbridge there, enough to be able to carry sacks of rice on his back across it. Well, the VC came in and dismantled it one night. And so, we built it stronger and put it together, et cetera. Then they came in and they poured gasoline over it and they burned it up. And so finally I got a big piece of steel culvert about 20 feet long and we buried it in the creek and the villagers took shovels and, and shoveled dirt over it. And that did the trick, and it also made the VC realize there's something going on here. So there was another bridge on the other end of the place, great big old French bridge. And they came in one night and they blew that up. They were trying to cut village off from any economic ties that it had. And we got – my RD cadre guys organized the, a boat brigade hauling people across, and we got U.S. engineers to rebuild the bridge. And we did other stuff. I gave 'em a bunch of paint and people in the market all painted their, their houses and stalls. Earlier I had, I had said to him, "You know, do you have a weapon?"

And he said, “No, I don't.”

Now, now this is 1968. He’s been village chief for like six years. His life is in danger to a much greater extent than anybody in the district. The man has no weapon. What’s wrong with this picture? So I asked the guys on my team, the army team that I was with, “Can somebody get me a .45?”

“Oh no, we can’t do that. That’s against regulations.”

So I went to the CIA and the guy reaches in his drawer, he says, “Here.” And he gave me a Belgian 9 millimeter pistol and a box of ammunition. When I presented it to the village chief next day, he cried.

I asked: “Why are you crying?”

And he said” “Because you’re the first person from the government who ever trusted me enough to give me a weapon.”

And my village chief the next Saturday strapped it to his hip, went out into the marketplace, and promptly arrested two Vietcong agents and put them in jail. And a couple of weeks later some ragtag Vietcong came in carrying AK-47 rifles, walked into his office, laid him down and said, “We’re tired of living out there with the snakes and the mosquitoes and everything. We heard things have changed in here, and we’re turning ourselves in.”

That’s how you take back rural Vietnam. You do it that way. One pistol and 100 gallons of paint and some board and some sympathy did more than anything else could do. Toward the end of my stay, there was the squad of, of the North Vietnamese Army that came just north of that village and they encountered a farmer going back home or something. And the North Vietnamese, who were kind of lost said, “Is there a safe place for us to camp tonight?”

And he points down the trail and he says, “Yeah, set up about 200 yards there.” And he sent them straight into a government ambush, and they were all killed. When you supported people who didn't want to have anything to do with the VC and you did it in an effective way with the right people, that’s what happened. And no civilians ever got killed in that place!

Meanwhile, General Ewell is running around. He had one operation where he claimed something like 11,000 enemy killed in action. It was called Speedy Express and it was a multi-province operation. He claimed that in something like two and a half months he had killed 11,000 Viet Cong. And when they checked the records, he had captured only 700 weapons. That’s *preposterous*, that ratio. It should be, you know, it should be pretty close to one-to- one. He had obviously gone around and shot everybody in sight. It was, it was awful.

After 10 or 11 months in the district I moved up to the province capital and nominally I was the chief development advisor in the province. And I had a whole bunch of, of units that reported to me, the combat engineers, and the Seabee team and a team of USAID nurses and a bunch of Filipino action guys. Great guys. Some Korean automobile mechanics. A six or seven-man detachment from the U.S. Army Civil Affairs units who did not know what to do, a, a deputy who was FSO-7 on his first tour who was totally lost. And who else? Oh, and a wonderful U.S. Army captain -- a guy named Larry Reeves, captain in the United States Army who they gave to me because they didn't know what to do with him. He spoke some Vietnamese. And so I said, you know, "Go take care of the RD cadre, the guys in black pajamas who handle hamlet pacification." And he did a wonderful job. Oh, an ag guy! Cal Kellerman was from the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) and he was advising farmers on agricultural productivity projects, new breeds of pigs, chickens, miracle rice.

The guy who'd been my boss, a civilian AID man named Bob Craig left and was not replaced for a while. And I ended up being the, the senior civilian in the province. And meanwhile, the province senior advisor, who was the best man I ever met, hands down, Colonel Asa Parker Gray, Jr., Army bird colonel, was killed. And so I ended up -- he and I worked very, very closely together and set up teams that were running around the province doing night offensive ambushes, something nobody had ever done before, and we'd scared the hell out of the VC. And then all of a sudden he's gone. Then we get a new province chief, Vietnamese province chief who came in at the same time. The whole scene changed. And I had a new province senior advisor, who was a pretty good guy, but he was not the equal of Colonel Gray. But we still had a lot of momentum. Things had basically changed in Long An province. And the communist military activity was mostly squad-sized security, although we had incursions from NVA jumping the border and coming over from Cambodia for a while. As Colby wrote in his book, called Lost Victory, when he first got to Vietnam he couldn't drive much of anywhere in Long An, day or night, when he -- by 1971 or '72 he said you could drive all the way across the province without fear. And it became the number four in security in the country. It took a lot of hard work and, and a lot of good guys who did that. Long An was one of the first provinces early on to be pretty much run by the communists. It was one of the last to go in April of 1975. The ARVN, the main force of GVN (Government of Vietnam) army units, dissolved. The regional forces units, who had been coached by CORDS officers, military officers, stuck it out and fought the North Vietnamese Army. They were woefully, you know, outgunned. But they tried to defend that place.

Before I left Vietnam I went up for a month or two to something called the Pacification Studies Group up in Saigon. And they did evaluations of special things that Ambassador Colby wanted an independent view on. So I got to travel around a little bit more. But most of the time I was in Long An, which I still dream about at least once a week.

When I came back to State, I was assigned to INR.

Q: You came back when?

KINSEY: Came back to D.C.

Q: What year?

KINSEY: 1970. In, I don't know, May I think. And thanks to Stuttgart and a pretty weak report from that major who saw me as a threat, (he was overruled by a couple of other people above him. But it still hurt.) And I didn't get promoted when I should have, when I thought I would be. Anyway, I came back and found that I -- I was in INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) and they put me in the slot where I would evaluate, analyze what was going on in rural Vietnam in the pacification program. It was the perfect assignment for me. And that's what I did. Not long after I got back I was told that I had been nominated by two different parts of the CORDS for an award. Did you know Charlie Whitehouse?

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: OK. Charlie Whitehouse was my, my -- I was his protégé I guess. He liked me very much and I liked him. He did a great job. And he asked me to work for him, but I said, "Frankly, you know, I'd love to, but look. Things here in Long An are at a crucial point right now. And I think you need me here more than they need me in Bien Hoa reporting on political things."

He said, "You're right," and so I stayed there. Anyway, both my province guys and, and Charlie Whitehouse, plus the Pacification Studies Group people nominated me for -- you know the Harriman Award?

Q: Yes, I've heard of it.

KINSEY: For junior officers, and I was, I was selected for that. Had a lovely banquet with the acting secretary and got $2,000, which was badly needed. And, and so anyway. The INR assignment was frustrating but fascinating. It --

Q: Well, what were you seeing and what were you -- I mean did you feel you were able to get around to people to say what was happening, or not?

KINSEY: I sure tried. The problem, Stu, was that there was the distinct feeling in many parts of the Department of State that Vietnam was a big mistake and we were never going to be able to pull that chestnut out of the fire, that the United States could not be on the winning side of that war. That was a view that I distinctly did not share. I had seen and figured out how that war could be won, and it had to be done in detail and very carefully and with a lot of forethought. And I thought we could win, and we were winning when I left. That message had not come to Washington at all. It especially had not come to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and we had a very frustrated bunch of younger officers under the care and supervision of a man who had spent one week in Vietnam in his entire career, and did not know the language. Most of us in that office were language

officers. And what he had seen was late '63, I think, which was a horrible time, It was one of the worst times in South Vietnam, it convinced him that the war was never going to be won. So it was now seven years later and, and, and things had turned around in the pacification program. There were still plenty of problems with fighting North Vietnamese army units, particularly along the Cambodian border and the far northern part of the country, but, but we knew how to take villages and hamlets back from the Vietcong, and to do it with a minimum of muss, fuss, and bother. Well, this man didn't understand any of that and he was very negative. His name was Lou Sarris.

Q: Bruce what?

KINSEY: S-A-R-R-I-S.

Q: Uh-huh.

KINSEY: Lou C. Sarris, he was a GS (General Service) employee. Lou Sarris thought he was riding herd on a bunch of young Turks. What he was doing was, was keeping the more promising news from the field from getting into higher channels. And we would submit draft after draft of this upbeat view and he had this technique. "Oh, I'm not disputing this, I'm just playing devil's advocate," he would say. And by the time our reports were finally released they were so mushy and so full of qualifying adjectives and adverbs that, that people didn't 'em the credit that they were due. It was very, very, very disheartening for me and for a number of other people. And one guy was like an FSO three or four. Bill Stearman was no kid then and had done a lot of time in SOV, and also was the embassy's North Vietnam watcher, and came back and he was looking at North Vietnam through sensitive sources and FIBIS (the Foreign Broadcast Information Service) and the open press, and field debriefs. And, and he figured out that the Tet Offensive in 1968, late January of 1968 by the Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army, after about six weeks he, said, "This has been a major defeat for them." Well, that is now the accepted position. There is abundant evidence that the communists lost a lot more than they gained through that adventure. And Bill Stearman, with that and other things he was seeing concluded that North Vietnamese regime was under more pressure than we think. And he was right right, there's plenty of academic evidence now to that effect. But Lou Sarris would have nothing of it, and nor would some other people in INR. And Stearman went on vacation and came back and found that his job had been abolished.

I thought that was a pretty sleazy way of handling a difference of opinion. Rather than argue with Bill, let him present his case, for heaven's sake, instead of suppressing his reports. Instead, they go through this underhanded malarkey of abolishing his job. And I thought, "What the hell's going on in this place anyway?" I joined the Foreign Service because my president said we will go anywhere, pay any price, bear any burden to expand the frontiers of freedom. That sounds like a lot, you know, a pretty ambitious agenda. But that's what I signed on for and that's what a lot of other younger officers at the time signed on for.

And I had done that and, and I was being treated to this travesty within the Department.

There were some reports circulating in that place, reportedly by field inspection teams, one of which had gone to Long An and I read it and I found all kinds of factual errors in it, and I wrote back, I said, "Did you guys even know this was going on, this report was being prepared?" Nobody had ever heard of it before, and it was by some people I'd never heard of who didn't speak Vietnamese. And they had an interpreter with them who was I thought questionable in terms of his politics. Anyway, I was, I was not happy.

At this time there was a bunch of other stuff. I was over at the Pentagon an awful lot working on a ceasefire analysis. Kissinger and his guys had proposed a ceasefire in Vietnam without really thinking it through and they, they wanted to know, you know, if, if the other side accepts, what should we propose? What would be the terms of the ceasefire exactly? So there was a guy from CIA. And Bing West, did you ever run into him?

Q: No.

KINSEY: Bing later became assistant secretary for international affairs at DoD. He was a former Marine who had written a number of books about Vietnam and the Middle East, a really interesting bombastic and, and brave man and -- who had a some kind of an advanced degree, I think an MBA from the University of Chicago. There was another guy who was in IT there, and me. Oh, and a guy named Robert Sansom from the NSC (National Security Council).

I had held forth once at an NSC meting and I, and the place became a shambles *(laughs)*. It was right after I came back and Lou Sarris said, "OK, now they're having this meeting about something I don't know quite what it is over at NSC and they need a, they need a State Department rep over there." And I had never been in that building before. And he said, anyway, my marching orders were, "I want you to go and listen intently, but don't say anything."

Well, I'd go over and I found out they had prepared a report, and the report was on the status of things in, in rural areas of, of South Vietnam and their prospect for improvement. And by implication, prospect for the, the continuation of the South Vietnamese government. Well, I looked at this thing. I was looking at it. And it was the most pessimistic thing I ever saw. And I finally, after I went through it page by page, and they're discussing this and that, and I finally raised my hand and said, "I think you guys have missed an awful lot." And nobody knew -- nobody in that room knew who I was *(laughs)*. And I said, "Two weeks ago I was in Long An province and things have changed, and none of it is reflected in here. There are other places in the country that are much, much better of than you're portraying in this report. You, you've only done two provinces and they are two of the worst ones perennially in the country, and we've made great strides in other places. Plus, you didn't do anything here about the cities, which is where the government is strongest. And I think you ought to recast this report."

And I'll never forget it. Some guy -- and I don't know where he was from, he was a civilian, and he sits on the other table, other side of this, this big confluence of tables that

they had in there, big, one of those great big rooms with a lot of gold gilt and everything. And this guy looks up at the ceiling and he throws his pencil straight up in the air and slams his hand down on the table *(laughs)*. I had obviously screwed up something that was pretty important, and by committing truth. I didn't know that, you know. Hell, I was, by this time I was a O-6. So anyway, they said -- then they agreed, "Well, we need, we need to do some more work here."

And they -- and Robert Samson was in there from NSC, he was one of Kissinger's PhD Harvard kind of guys, and assigned to ride herd on pacification and things. And he came to me afterward and said -- I'm quoting. "You are the only analytical person I ever met in the State Department," *(laughs)*. I found out later that, that was a great compliment. And so anyway, he asked me to be on this team of people over at the Pentagon who were assessing ceasefire options. And I did that for, oh, I don't know, four or five months. And we were trying to figure out, you know, if we do this and they do that, then what? What should we ask for? What should we not ask for? What must we insist on? And so on. And we had a whole bunch of assumptions that we were supposed to be -- none of the included allowing 150,000 North Vietnamese armed troops to remain in South Vietnam and be resupplied directly from the north without interference. None of them included that.

One critical thing was that these guys I'd worked with at the Pentagon, a bunch of 'em had MBAs. They were used to thinking about things in a different way from what I had been taught. I knew history and I knew political science, but I didn't know about how organizations worked and about how people within them were motivated. And I didn't know about the management, the structure and control of big programs and big organizations. And that's what business school teaches you.

By this time I was getting worried about my family. I had a wife and a newborn son and I was looking at what was going on in the department, and I didn't like it. I saw too many officers at the four level and the three level become very, very cautious about, about their judgment and, and, and about criticizing things that I thought needed criticizing.

I came back from South Vietnam angry. And all I saw in INR made me angrier. And, and I realized, you know, I'm kind of a rebel and I'm getting the idea the State Department does not like rebels. And meanwhile, William Macomber , a former ambassador, very high ranking Foreign Service Officer, was ordered to see what he could do about reforming the Department of State, making it more responsive, making it quicker to report, making its reports more meaningful, helping officers, defending officers who were making unpopular decisions, being more aggressive especially with the Department of, Department of Defense, and lest we forget, CIA. Those were all things I wanted to be done. I also did my own sort of shirtsleeve analysis of what was going on in the department. And I, I drew a chart of how many officers there were of various ranks, and I found out that there were more FSO-1s than there were FSO-8s and sevens. And it was kind of like having more admirals than ensigns in the Navy. And I saw that a lot of younger people increasingly were being given more menial tasks to execute. As the, the more senior officers got, you know -- there was a sort of dumbing down of, not of

the people, but of the tasks that they were assigned. And I thought, you know, "I'm feeling pretty vulnerable here. I've got a child, I'm going to have a mortgage pretty soon, and I'm not sure if this is where I'm going to be." Meanwhile all I've got is a bachelor's degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown University and that's not going to get me very far. So I hedged my bets and I applied to University of Virginia Graduate Business School. And I was accepted and I surprised Lou Sarris. I hadn't told him or anyone else about my plan, I think until maybe a year and a few months into a two-year tour in INR. And I said, "I want to take an unpaid leave of absence to go study."

And Sarris said, "Are you sure you want to do this?" "Yeah, this is what I want to do." Sarris was, I'd guess, all too happy to get me out of his hair.

I had been briefing on the, the Secretary of State every day on a huge South Vietnamese operation called Lam Son 719, in which ARVN invaded the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They went into Laos in February of 1971. And INR ended up needing a briefer who knew military terminology and tactics and such, and I did. And, and I drew a new map every morning for Secretary Rogers and Marshall Green, who was the secretary for East Asia I think, and Bill Sullivan who was his deputy and a couple other people. And every afternoon I'd go up with my map and tell them who was where and what was going on from what we knew. And I did that for about a month and I got rave reviews from that, and then I said, "I want to leave." And they said OK.

So I was accepted at the UVA grad business school. And so I did that for two years, moved to Charlottesville, had another little boy, and did well in the program. And when I -- when I graduated, I was close to the top of my class and I kind of had to make a decision. Am I going to go back to the State Department or am I going to go into the business world? And I went back to State for about a week and I bummed around with guys I knew and asked questions. Well, I found William Macomber had been packed off to be ambassador to Turkey, and that he so-called reform consisted -- a lot of it was just adding several more grades to the FSO one through eight level, and now there were 13 of 'em or so -- and, and I talked to guys and asked, "What's it like around here?"

And they said, "Oh, nothing's changed very much." Especially the guys from Vietnam were sort of disheartened at what was going on. But not so much that they were going to follow me out the door.

Anyway, I went to personnel and said, "What would you do with me?" And I wanted to continue doing counterinsurgency and program evaluation, and, and they wanted to either send me off to Madrid as a commercial officer, train me in yet another language, or give me to somebody who was doing an inventory of all Department's buildings overseas. I didn't want to do either one of those. So I, with great reluctance -- more sadness than reluctance -- I put in my resignation. I was FSO-6 and I was 31 years. And took a job at a management consulting firm in DC. That was the end of my Department of State career.

Q: Well, what -- you left when?

KINSEY: I left in I think it was June of '73, at the top of my game, after 11 years in the Foreign Service.

Q: Were you developing a cadre of people who served in Vietnam that you'd talk to? I mean coming back from there?

KINSEY: Well, yeah, I did. I kept in touch with people, guys I had trained with. And many of them were pretty positive. By this time we were beginning to pull out pretty large units. Vietnamization was well underway. So was the Watergate investigation. So were the Paris peace negotiations, which had resulted in a cease-fire. But it was hard for me to judge by that time. I had been immersed in business school. I'd seen a few guys come back. They even came down to Charlottesville and a couple of them had stayed with me. But I thought South Vietnam could hold. I didn't realize how bad the terms of the ceasefire were. I didn't realize how much congressional opposition there was, and above all that Nixon was a mortally wounded president and was not going to be able to fulfill any obligations he thought he had made to the Vietnamese about reentering the war in case the North Vietnamese invaded. It was all very sad. I was in Springfield, Illinois on April the 30th, 1975. And when I heard the news and saw the TV I broke down and cried. I knew what was going to happen to the poor people whom I had been working so hard to protect.

I put Vietnam and the State Department behind me for 30 years. Then I retired from the stuff I'd been doing, mostly in the publishing industry. And we moved out here to the Shenandoah Valley. And one morning my wife opened the paper, she's a former journalist and an inveterate reader of obituaries. And she opened the local newspaper and she said, "Didn't you know someone named Bumgardner?"

And I said, "Yeah."

And she read me Ev's obituary and I found he'd died in Arlington. And so I went to his funeral, which was in Arlington Cemetery, and called a few guys from my old CORDS class and we met, paid our respects to him, and I gave a little speech. And we decided to that we ought to have a reunion of pacification guys. And so we began to organize it. Three -- four of us combined efforts. And we finally had it in 2007 in Arlington. And we had about 60 guys there. And it was some time, we had one hell of a time reminiscing. And people brought their efficiency reports and Vietcong flags, captured weapons and a whole bunch of other stuff *(laughs)*. Mostly civilians. And then this professor from the University of Arkansas, a history of professor called and said, "I'm going to write a book about the pacification program. And I noticed that you had organized this reunion and I wondered if I could talk to you." I said sure, and so he interviewed me a couple times on the phone and I told him some of the stuff I told you.

And then he was coming up this way and I had a -- I said, "Come out to the farm." And we had another kind of mini-reunion out here where he described the progress of his research, which at that point was about zero, and I introduced him to a whole bunch of

guys. Said, you know, "This guy'd be great interview about such and such." And I renewed some acquaintances with guys I hadn't seen for a long time. And kept in touch with him and kept asking him about how the book was going. Well, kept in touch with him and kept asking him about how the book was going. Well, it got pretty obvious the book wasn't going anywhere.

And then a guy called me and said, "How's that guy's book coming?"

I said, "Hey, you know, he ended up writing a book about Colby and his CIA years." Hoping I guess *(laughs)* -- that would sell better.

And he said, "Why don't you write a book?"

And I -- I had kind of thought of that, but my idea was to go around the country with a tape recorder interviewing people and have people type of transcripts and I would turn it all into a book. Well that was, that was a ridiculous thought. But I said OK, I'll do it. And what I did was I sent letters out to everybody whose name I had collected and said, "Send me your thoughts on Vietnam. I'd like to know your thoughts and what you think of what we did, describe what you did and highlights and lowlights of your career and training and all that stuff." And I got tons of stuff coming back. I had a hundred guys send me things. Most of them personal, but they also had documents and photographs and so on. And I've been for the past close to six years now I've been putting a book together called Good Guys: The Quiet Americans Who Worked to Pacify Vietnam. And I fully expect it to be published before the end of this century.

Q: Well, I look forward to it. I mean this'll --

KINSEY: So do I.

Q: (laughs) I've written several books and boy oh boy, it's more trouble than it's worth.

KINSEY: Well, somebody has to write --

Q: But you kind of want to get it out there.

KINSEY: This was to my mind, AID and the Foreign Service and USIA at their very, very best, their most idealistic, their bravest, and their most effective. And so much of what America has come to think about Vietnam is entirely negative and much of it is terribly skewed and biased, and untrue, or at best exaggerated. We did things that we should be proud of in South Vietnam. And let's not let the My Lai and Julian Ewell, Butcher of the Delta, crowd that story out. And there is nothing like this anywhere else. I've got photos that nobody else has, I've got documents that nobody else has, I've got war stories that will only be told once from guys who were in the thick of it, and that show great pluck, and energy, and bravery, and incredible ingenuity, and tenacity. Well, let's tell those stories. Let's tell those stories. So that the next generations maybe come to realize that that situation was a lot more complicated than people thought, there is no

single sentence that can describe it accurately, and, that it is not the unalloyed disaster of American morality that it has been far too often portrayed to be. That's, that's what I'm trying to do. I only hope I can live long enough to finish this sucker.

Q: Well, I hope you can. But look, if you've got all these letters and all, at some point -- I mean obviously wait until you exhaust them and all -- but you know, I think we don't nec -- have a particular program right now of keeping these papers, but we plan to. I mean I, I'm with you, I don't want to see all this just die on, on --

KINSEY: I have some things that will never otherwise see the light of day, from guys who are now dead.

Q: Yeah. And you know, obviously you use these for your book and all, but keep us in mind as far as --

KINSEY: Why don't you put a fly in the ear of whoever on the staff is running point on that program and have 'em keep in touch with me. Because the other candidate for this stuff is Texas Tech University, which has a big digitized online accessible collection. It's been invaluable for my purpose. But the problem with it is that it's horribly organized and grossly understaffed. It takes a lot of people who know what they're doing to organize papers that are coming, you know, from vastly different people in vastly different situations. Even if they're on the same topic. I go into that thing and I'm searching for something on, let's say, the revolutionary -- or the rural development cadre in, in a particular area, and I'll get something about a police job action in Cincinnati, Ohio. Obviously this thing is not, is not well organized. I know there's material in there on certain things and I'll find it once and then never be able to find it again. So some money has to be put -- I know guys who've sent their personal papers down there. I'm not one of them, but a couple of guys have told me yeah, I sent my stuff down there and they said, "We can't guarantee you anything because we're just swamped right now." There are a lot of guys from the Vietnam era who are going through their basement or attic in anticipation of moving on to retirement or some place, trying to clean it out, who want to send things down there. And they aren't taken. Well, they'll see -- we'll put it in a box, maybe we'll get to it some day. I'd rather have it accessible.

Q: Yeah. Well, I've got no guarantee, but we are getting some papers and things like this. We're not soliciting them.

KINSEY: Yeah.

Q: But we're not letting them go.

KINSEY: OK. Anything somebody else gave me would have to -- if I were to pass it along anywhere else it would have to be with their permission, but I'm almost certain I would get the --

Q: Oh, absolutely. Well, what is going to happen is I'm going to have this transcribed,

sent to you. We'll ask you both to read it -- you do the normal editing -- but also, add.

KINSEY: OK.

Q: You can add as much as you want.

KINSEY: All right *(laughs)*. I'll do that.

Q: But you know, type it in and all that. Then send it back to us.

KINSEY: You want it electronically, or --

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: OK.

Q: And we'll put it in final form and give a copy to you, a copy to the Library of Congress, and one will go to our website.

KINSEY: OK.

Q: Have you been looking at our website at all?

KINSEY: A little bit. I want to -- I've got more to do, I've got more to do right now than I can handle. I don't know if you've ever lived in the country or had a farm, which is what I've got, but --

Q: Where --

KINSEY: April and May are the cruelest months *(laughs)*.

Q: Where are you located?

KINSEY: I'm 90 miles due west of you in the northern part of the Shenandoah Valley and, and I had help here for about three weeks and then the guy disappeared, which happens a lot out here. And I just finally found somebody new and I'm still way behind on getting this place in shape for --

Q: What are you raising?

KINSEY: Not anything, I rent most of the place out to a guy who raises cattle. I'm raising his grandchildren to come and have fun here.

Q: Well, my daughter and her husband have a house in -- just, I don't know if you know where Delaplane is.

KINSEY: Yeah, oh that's pretty out there, yeah.

Q: Yeah, got about 26 acres and he raises cattle there, you know, somebody uses it. And they've got a swimming pool and beautiful views. I was out there yesterday, just sitting out in the sun basking and watching the horses at a polo pony rest home or something.

KINSEY: Yeah *(laughs)*. Gold Cup is out there.

Q: Yeah.

KINSEY: Well, they live in a beautiful area and right now is the best time of year to do it.

Q: OK.

KINSEY: Stu, thank you.

Q: Thank you.

End of interview