Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

KATHLEEN E. REILLY

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

[This interview was not edited by Ms. Reilly]

Q: Today is April 14, 2004. This is an interview with Kathleen E. Reilly, and this is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Just to start, tell me when and where you were born, and then we'll talk a little about the family background.

REILLY: I was born in a place called Laurelton, New York, which is right on the Queens/Long Island border in March of 1949.

Q: Can you talk about, first of all, your father's side? Where does your father's family came from, and can you tell us a little about your father?

REILLY: My father was born in the United States, as were both of his parents. His side was all Irish. His father, also Reilly, of course, came from a family of six boys, and they were brought up in the Hell's Kitchen section of New York City. And my grandmother's side, on that side of the family, her last name was Hackett, and they came from Bridgeport, Connecticut. And from the little that I know, and I don't know a lot, she was from a small family; she only had one brother. Her family had been in the U.S. for quite awhile. As a matter of fact, someone in her family served as a mayor in the city of Bridgeport, but I don't have a lot of details about that.

Q: Where did your father go to school? How far did he go?

REILLY: My father was a Depression child. Well, he was not born in the Depression, he was born in 1918, but he was in high school during the Depression. He quit high school in the 12th year - he was going to St. Francis Xavier that is a church and school in New York, a Catholic high school, down in the 14th Street area. I think it's like 16th Street, or something like that. And he did quit, and he didn't go back or continue studies afterwards. He was also drafted into WWII in 1943 and served for two years in Europe. He spent 11 months in Britain, and then he went over with the D-day invasion. He was very lucky. I think went over on the third or fourth day of the invasion when they already had gained the beach and I believe he was handling supplies and working as a truck driver.

Q: When he came back, what did he do?

REILLY: He was a truck driver. My father was a truck driver all of his life. He worked for a company called The Railway Express, which - the best comparison I can make to it would be like the UPS (United Parcel Service) of its day.

Q: Well I'm old enough to know; the Railway Express got me from hither to yon when I was going away to school. It was a very good company.

REILLY: Yes, and he worked for he Railway Express. Before he went into the army, he found a job with the Railway Express, and then when he was drafted. After he came back home, they rehired him. He had done some other jobs during the Depression, some manual labor, different kinds of labor to bring money home to the family. He was forced into an early retirement. I'm not quite sure why; he was in his late 50s. I know he wasn't really planning on retiring then, but he was very happy to retire. Maybe 59 or so, and there was some early pension deal that they made with him so that's when he did that.

Q: And on your mother's side, where did your mother's family come from.

REILLY: My mother's family is all from Poland. Again, both of her parents were born here. Her grandfather came over from, I believe, Warsaw. The last name was Cienski. I've done some searching on it.

Q: How would you spell that?

REILLY: C-i-e-n-s-k-i. They lived in an area called the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn, which is just on the Queens border. It's a big Polish neighborhood and still is to this day as a matter of fact. When she was quite young, though, when she was really young - three or four - they moved to Bayside and that's where she grew up. In Bayside, Queens. That's where she met my father.

Q: Did they go to the same school?

REILLY: No, I think they met socially, where people used to hang out, in some dance place or something like that. I think they were 21 and 22, 21 and 23, something like that.

Q: Do you have brothers or sisters?

REILLY: We were five children in the family. So, two brothers and two sisters, although one of my sisters passed away.

Q: What was family like when you were a young kid?

REILLY: It was crazy. Seriously, pretty chaotic household, not very well organized. My father had an alcohol problem so it was - we kids were not very well directed, let's put it that way. So although we were very close, there was a sense of kind of being on your own. My mother was consumed with making enough money. My father always worked but he also had this problem with alcohol, and so she was consumed by all of that. And so the real sense was of being on your own. There was always food in the house, it was always clean and that sort of thing, but there was not a real concern for what you were going to do. The goal was to get out of high school. So, there was not a lot of planning going on.

Q: Of course you were born after the war, certainly after the Depression, but did the Depression hang heavily on the family?

REILLY: I think it was more - yes, it was definitely - I used to refer to it as poverty mentality. The kind of mentality that definitely was used to lack and limitation. And was more worried about the day-to-day than the kind of long term. So, the goal was to finish high school and get yourself a good job, whatever that might turn out to be.

Q: Did you also feel, early on, that girls went into nursing or teaching or other such professions?

REILLY: You know, it wasn't even that ambitious. I must admit, it was very hard because there was no direction. But, I was always pretty independent, and I had a view of the outside world, and on my own started to explore other possibilities. I made friends with people whose backgrounds had a much broader view of the possibilities of life that sort of thing. Unfortunately (well - I don't know if it was unfortunately, it's just the way it was) my siblings, particularly my sisters, didn't have that at all. Neither one of them finished high school. It was really - I guess the word I'm thinking of is mean, it sounds mean, but it wasn't mean at all. My father was a pretty jovial person and very nice, and very well liked. But he had a lot of emotional problems. There were a lot of emotional problems. That was the best way to describe it. A lot of emotional problems. A lot of emotional immaturity, which carried on down through the children. And, even to this day there is some of that.

Q: Well it sounds like in a way it was almost the classic American Irish immigrant thing. Not aspiring too high. A good number broke out of it but–

REILLY: Yes. Not at all. As a matter of fact, my father had a brother and didn't keep in touch with him. I honestly think that his brother, perhaps through his wife, his brother's wife, had a grander plan or at least aspired to more, perhaps is a better way to say that. There wasn't a lot of planning and it wasn't mean-spirited.

Q: No push?

REILLY: There was no push. There was no push.

Q: What about the Catholic Church? I'm going under the assumption that you were brought up as Catholics.

REILLY: Yes, they were both Catholics. We were brought up [as Catholics], but my father didn't go, and he didn't believe. So from the get-go there was tension about whether we were to go [to church] or not. He was brought up totally Catholic, and he went only to Catholic school. When it came to us, we didn't have enough money to go to Catholic school because we had to pay. Public school was free. My mother always moved into neighborhoods, and we lived in a neighborhood, where the school was good. The

schools were good in the 1950s. I did well.

Q: The New York system was really very good.

REILLY: It was excellent. It was really good, and I didn't have a problem with going to school or studying or getting grades and stuff. Although, by the time I was about to go into high school, she found that she could afford to send me to high school and she wanted me to go to this new Bishop Reilly High School that they built in Queens. But at that time it was a different culture to come from a private school and to go into a Catholic school setting. And, I didn't feel any connection with that culture at all. I felt as if I would have been more of an outsider. Whereas the culture that I was in was quite mixed, religious-wise. In fact, we lived in a very Jewish neighborhood. So there was a big mix, and my friends were both Christians and Jews, and I had no desire to go to Bishop Reilly.

Q: I would have thought that one of the great advantages in New York to being in a place where there were a good number of Jewish kids usually meant good education. There was more competition.

REILLY: I think that as far as public school education I got a good education in those years, from 1954 when I guess I entered the system - I'm not sure if I was five, or six - until I graduated in 67, when I was 18, from high school. It was good.

Q: I've interviewed a good number of Foreign Service people who came through the public school system in New York. They speak very highly of "P.S. 67" or -

REILLY: Yes. I didn't have a hard time with it. I had some teenage problems, but they weren't due to the educational system, they were more due to what was going on at home. The system's good.

Q: Did you read a lot?

REILLY: I did, but not books so much as magazines and some newspapers. I was never a big book reader until I went into my twenties and I started becoming really interested in books. There weren't a lot of books in the house. Television was a very big deal.

Q: I was wondering, television or movies played quite a bit?

REILLY: Movies and television played a huge part. Definitely movies. My father was a huge fan of films, particularly British films. I remember as a young teenager him taking me to see -- having spent a year in England, he became an Anglophile, and I recall going with him at a young age -- to see lots of British films that came out in the early 60s. There was a big swarm of them. Some very funny and - even as a child - Peter Sellers, Terry Tunnel. As a child, I even enjoyed them. Not all of them, but many of them. I would go with him. And that's what I had with him. I had a very close relationship with him in that we shared through an appreciation for movies, films and music. So that was more

cultural. That was, I guess, the cultural tie, part of our home culture or something. Definitely films. Films were a big part of it. The "Million Dollar Movie" was a big deal for us as kids. We would love to watch that stuff. But not books. Definitely not. I don't remember my parents reading to me or any of that, and there were not a lot of books in the house. It was just not part of their history, their mind set.

Q: How about the world of New York as a political world, international. Would that intrude?

REILLY: Yes, my father was very interested. He read the paper every day and had a lot to say about what went on politically. And I think that's where I became interested in politics. And even, of course, in the 60s, I became quite interested in the Vietnam War and politics and what was going on, we were against the war. So, yes, it did play a big part. But I don't recall my siblings ever being at all interested. I was interested. My older brother went into the Air Force in 1960, so we followed him, but he was lucky; he didn't have to go to Vietnam. He spent time in North Africa and mostly in Texas and Florida. We followed that, but I think it was solely my father. I don't remember my mother - my mother was always consumed with problems and things, and I don't remember her playing much of a part in that.

Q: Where did your father fall in the political spectrum?

REILLY: Democrat. He was a left leaning Democrat.

Q: Did the Cold War intrude at all, either there or in school?

REILLY: My father was not a person who was active in anything really. He had alcohol problems and he was isolated a lot, although he was interested in what went on, and a lot of it came from the newspapers and television. I remember at some point in the mid-60s when I started to get into reading books, he and I shared some interest in certain novel that we would read together. And Camus, a little bit of that, and the guy who wrote Planet of the Apes, also wrote some pretty interesting political books, I think his name was Pierre Boulle. And my father was also a big fan of Orwell. A huge fan of Orwell. So he was somewhat learned. He wasn't a stupid person. I think he was very frustrated by his own background and also by his inability to do anything about who he was and his personal problems. So there was some exposure to political thinking and that sort of thing. And of course by the time I was 14 or 15 and there was a lot going on in the world that I was interested in. I think that my father, before I was politically conscious, maybe when I was a young child when all of that with McCarthy, with those hearings and that sort of thing, he was very interested in all of that. I think he probably would have seen himself as being more of a communist sympathizer than any other affiliation that I could think of. He definitely was a socialist. His thinking was definitely in line with Orwell's socialism.

Q: In high school were you involved in any activities other than studies?

REILLY: No. Not at all. The goal of earning money became very important to me, so I always had part time jobs from a very young age. I was a pretty responsible kid. So from about the time I was 12, and I was tall so I looked older, I started baby-sitting and was always interested in making money. And it's funny, because as an adult I am very involved in a lot of things, but I was not at all involved in joining clubs, I was somewhat athletic, but I can't remember any after school stuff. When I was in grade school, yes, but after that, no.

Q: What type of jobs? You said you did babysitting. What other?

REILLY: Babysitting, and I worked in supermarkets and drugstores. As a cashier, that kind of thing. My mother introduced me to that when I was 16. I remember her coming with me to get work, she was urging me to go to work, too, because it would lessen the burden, that I could then take care of my own clothes and some other expenses. So she found me a job, and she herself had worked in supermarkets. Later on she got a job in a bank, but prior to that, she had done that, so she got me a job as a cashier making some money. From the time I was 16 until when I graduated high school at 18, I worked as a cashier.

Q: In school did you have the equivalent of any kind of personal mentor or counselor or someone say, "Oh, Kathleen, you're doing very fine, why don't you go here or there " - anything like that?

REILLY: No, unfortunately. As a matter of fact, I was always very interested in arts, and I remember in junior high school going and auditioning for - although I'd never been in a play, not a real role in a play, a class play, that kind of thing. I auditioned for the School for Performing Arts. But, I did it totally independently and without any - I had to go through the counselor in junior high school, and I was about 13. I got absolutely no assistance I recall from that, and when I went - and on my own, I don't even know, I might have told my parents but I don't remember having any conversation with anyone about it. I went on my own and picked out two very difficult monologues without realizing their difficulty. Probably thinking that I could do a good job. George Bernard Shaw's St. Joan, and I forgot what the other one was. And I must have gotten school approval, because I think I had to take half a day off. And I know where the school is in New York, or used to be, on 46th Street in the theater district. But anyway, I didn't get in and I remember being disappointed about that, not realizing whether or not I had talent or anything. I don't even know if thought about that. I was just wondering what I had done wrong. Whatever. I'm trying to think if there was some other school that I tried to get into. That was the only time, I think.

Q: What high school were you at?

REILLY: I went to the local high school that I was assigned to because of where we lived.

Q: Which was called?

REILLY: Francis Lewis High School. And up until the 10th grade I did fine, I had absolutely no problems with academics or anything. But when I got into 10th grade I started playing hooky and - this is obviously not your average Foreign Service oral.

Q: You'd be surprised

REILLY: Really. Anyway, I started playing hooky and got into a bit of trouble. And when you were talking about did I have a mentor, I think that one thing I would say that I have against the school system. I felt as if I was, what do they call it when you are slotted into a certain path?

Q: Tracked.

REILLY: Tracked. Once I played hooky, I felt as if they weren't going to help me along. I was slotted

Q: A delinquent.

REILLY: I got caught after two days and I had to sign into class every day. My older siblings had gotten into serious trouble. And mine was so minor, but my mother hit the roof because she thought, "Another one. I'm not going to go through this anymore." It was really so incredibly minor, playing hooky for two days, but for some reason, we were by another high school, the cop picked me out, selected me and called about me, and I got into trouble and had to sign into all my classes. And then I had also cut geometry a lot. And they told me that they were going to put me in a commercial program instead of an academic program. And I said, "Well I'm sorry: there's no way, I am never going to be a secretary, so don't waste your time." I had a bit of an attitude, you know. I was 15, 16 years old.

Q: But you needed it, though.

REILLY: I did. I had no idea where I was going, but at the same time I didn't want to go into this commercial program that they put me in. And I remember they did. I was forced into it. And I remember having to take steno and typing (which was wonderful to have learned typing, of course, but I didn't want to). At that time in an academic program you didn't have to take typing. It was an optional thing. So then my goal was to get out. I think I was a junior and my goal was to get out. I never had a problem with any of it. I would do the course work, I would do the homework, and I showed up. I did okay. I don't remember what my grades were. I don't remember getting bad grades. I never failed anything. But I had the attitude, "I just wanted to get out of here. I wanted to get my diploma and get out of here." So I did.

Q: You graduated and got your diploma -

REILLY: In 1967.

Q: Then what?

REILLY: I was 18. I was looking for some work, and I was thinking about going to college. I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do. I hadn't registered or anything. And because I hadn't taken the academic program, I think I needed some extra course work. So for the first year out of high school, I didn't do anything at 18. I mean I did, I worked. My father recommended me for a job at the Railway store but I didn't want to do that. Some friend of mine got a job in a nightclub and she got me a job in this nightclub. And I started to make money as a waitress, and the money was beyond anything that the Railway Express would ever pay me. What they were offering me for a week, I was making in a night and a half, working in this place. And it was glamorous to me.

Q: What type of nightclub was it?

REILLY: One of these places with live music and a lot of young people, very colorful owners who were sort of involved in the arts and they were involved with a lot of people in New York. Jimmy Breslin, a lot of reporters used to come in there, people like that would come in. This place was in Queens, New York, but it was not too far from Manhattan and it was a very popular spot. So I got a job there, and it was very exciting to me to be around all these somewhat glamorous people. To me they appeared to be movers and shakers, whatever. They were involved with the racetrack, I mean they were doing, this was a whole other [way of life].

Q: Well as a young lady did you have problems with the gentlemen? I would think this would be a prime target.

REILLY: Yes, I did become a bit of a target. I learned how to handle it on my own. I was somewhat shy in that area, which I'm kind of glad about, because I could have gotten in trouble had I not been. I was a bit on the reluctant side, to get involved, which was good. So I was sort of not, although targeted perhaps, not a high profile in that area. I mean, I think I was good looking enough, but I just wasn't one of those that were targeted. A lot of people going after me and that sort of thing. I was cautious. I was pretty cautious about who I would get involved with.

Q: As you did this, what were you thinking about doing in the future?

REILLY: I really didn't have a plan, obviously. I had no plan and I really didn't know. As a matter of fact, in my early twenties I went in to see a counselor, and my main focus was "what am I going to do?" By that time, I had started going to a junior college, a community college, at night and taking courses. I didn't have to do make-up work but - I might have had to do a makeup course or two because I hadn't taken some of those math courses because of my last two years being in the commercial program. So I started going

to Queensborough Community College and worked as a waitress.

I also got an office job. I realized I didn't want to be a waitress. I got a job with a rent-a-car company. I was 19 years old, and I looked responsible. People always would think I was the responsible party. It was just by default. When I was a kid, it was because I was the biggest, the tallest. And then, for some reason, I became responsible. And they made me the manager of one of their little offices down in the village and they gave me a car. I was 19 years old. And then I was working all over Manhattan in their different offices, just opening and closing the office, renting cars and making sure that people that worked there cleaned up the cars, got them out, got them ready and all that sort of thing. So I did that for perhaps a little more than a year. I was going to school part time at night. I would even sometimes work part time on the weekend perhaps as a waitress to make some extra cash. In my early twenties, I went to see a counselor because I really didn't know what I wanted to do, and I didn't feel satisfied.

Q: Did you have any women who were role models, anybody to latch on to and say "they did it, I can do it," that sort of thing?

REILLY: I had a lot of friends. I don't remember any older women who played a mentoring role at all. A lot of girlfriends; some were going to school, some weren't. I took a trip to Europe. I was always very interested in travel. That was a great interest of mine from a very young age. I moved out to California - I forgot about this - I was 19 years old. A good friend of mine moved to California. I went out to California. But I learned almost immediately that you had to be 21 for everything in California. They wouldn't even allow me to go to the junior college there. I lied to say I had been a long-term resident, and I got in to one semester of classes. But after that, they didn't want me to go - they call them junior colleges there - because I really hadn't had a full year of residency. I could have continued, but I came back to New York. They just wanted me to pay more, that was the thing.

So I spent about nine months in California, and I had very real difficulty getting a job. I worked in a factory - this was very funny. I had bought a car - some salesman sold me a car - I was a kid, I was 19. Some salesman sold me some lemon that I had problems with from two weeks after the day I bought it. I was short on cash. I was living with my girlfriend and her mother, another friend that I had made out there. My friend got a job in a factory, and I took a job in a factory with her in order to get the money to get my car out of the shop. And I worked for three months in a factory. I was getting a lot of letters from my father and mother, which was very nice, and I remember writing back that I had a job in a factory, and my mother - it's sweet, I'm not making fun of her - but she wrote a letter saying, "My daughter working in a factory?" She was just horrified that I would be working in a factory. Though she herself during WWII worked out at Sperry somewhere on Long Island doing plant manufacturing for munitions, or something like that. Anyway, I was working in an adding machine factory, and she was just horrified that I, who had a high school diploma, was working in a factory.

I didn't stay out there very long. Came back, enrolled in Queensborough Community College, got a job with Kinney Rent-a-car. I was about 20 years old then and was feeling good about the fact that this company had given me this responsibility, plus a brand new car that none of my friends had. But, I was still feeling, "There's something more; I've gotta do something different here. I don't know what I want to do, but..." So I started seeing a counselor about what it was that I could do with my life. Took a trip to Europe when I was 21 with a very good girlfriend of mine and that was fantastic. That was just such an eye-opener.

Q: What was your impression?

REILLY: Oh, I was just so fascinated by it. You know, with my father's interest in England, I had also developed an interest in seeing London, and parts of England, and then we went to Paris. I had studied a lot of Spanish in high school. I actually did pretty well in Spanish. Also in New York - this is all coming back to me now in dribs and drabs - I'd also enrolled in The New School for Social Research, not knowing what I was going to do, and I took sociology. I wasn't matriculating, just taking courses here and there. I remember continuing with Spanish, taking sociology, and this was of course at the time of Kent State and all of the demonstrations and that sort of thing. So feeling very politically involved and being on this incredible campus. This was such a lefty kind of place in New York.

Q: The New School for Social Research, they have an attitude, you might say.

REILLY: And I remember having this sociology professor, a fascinating guy from India. I mean, imagine this guy from India wearing, everyone wearing this hippie stuff. This was 1969. And just being exposed to this kind of stuff, I was so in awe of it and thought it was so wonderful. I myself was not a hippie. I was always too interested in making money, what I was going to do and that sort of thing, but was very sympathetic and interested in the music, and experimented with some drugs and did some things like that.

I started to think about - I'm not going to say I was consumed by it because I was busy with friends and socializing and boyfriends and trying to travel. I took a trip to San Francisco, and down to California and Mexico, again. I would spend time working, going to school, slowly going to school part time at night, getting credits but then saving money to take these long trips in the summer. But, again in the back of my mind: what am I going to do? I also had some other friends who were also absorbed with that kind of "what were they going to do?" This counselor, I really must say I don't think he was any great help, but I went to him for a while. I finally got a job at a real estate office. I left the rent-a-car industry and got a license to sell, but actually only wound up renting, and that's how I made a living. It was kind of risky for me because it was no salary. You only made money based upon what you did. But I thought this was a great venture for me to learn how to make money. I also had this weekend thing at the nightclub to fall back on for cash.

Also at that time, I got my first apartment and continued to slowly pick away at this education that I was getting at Queensborough Community College. I really did not have any insight that I could even be in the Foreign Service until I was in my thirties.

Q: Did the diplomatic service ever cross your radar at all?

REILLY: I'm trying to recall when it did, and I really don't think it did until quite a few years after that. I had spent some time in France. It might have crossed my radar, but I really didn't see myself doing it until I came back from a trip. I became interested in French, by the way, in my later twenties. I left the Spanish behind and started studying French more on my own. I can't recall when I started taking classes. After leaving real estate, I got a job with a cosmetics company. I answered an ad, and having had that background with the rent-a-car and handled a territory, so to speak, Max Factor had jobs in the paper and a friend of mine's aunt had been involved in cosmetics and said, "You might like this because you travel and there are a lot of benefits, they might give you a car." And I did. I applied for this job, and I got it. I got a job when I was about 25 in the cosmetics industry. It was one of those jobs where they gave me a car. And I stayed with that, in that industry, for six years; and I worked my way up again.

Now here I was, 30 years old. I had still not finished my undergraduate work. I was still was doing it part time. By this time, I had moved into Manhattan and I was going to Hunter College part time. I had perhaps half the credits that I needed for a B.A. And I hadn't even thought of a major. I decided that I was going to do the full two years that I needed to do full time and finish it. But before doing that, I saved some money and I went to France for five months. I went to the Alliance in France. Prior to going I had studied some French, so I'd already had some French under my belt from the Alliance. I went to France and had a great experience living in Paris from August until February. Then I had to come back, because I had pre-registered at Hunter College to do the final two years and finally finish this thing. This B.A., this started to become a monster for me to get beyond. So I went to France and had this experience, and I think it was there - because they treat students so well in France - and as a foreign student, I became involved with other foreign students and was exposed to a lot of things I'd never been exposed to in the States.

And also through the Alliance in New York, having been exposed to the foreign culture and people who had careers traveling. It started to occur to me that "Why can't I have a career that has me traveling?" and that sort of thing. When I came back from France, it was then that I took the Foreign Service exam. I hadn't even - it must have been a little bit later, cause I had to have finished my B.A. when I took the test.

Q: You know it's the only government exam that you don't have to be a college graduate to get into the Foreign Service.

REILLY: I'm thinking that it was during my two years of fulltime study. After being in France, I came back to New York three days before I had to be in class. I didn't want to leave France because I'd made wonderful friends from all over the world and I really

loved the experience. My French had gotten - although it was not grammatically good - I was one of those speakers who was free. After about six weeks there I thought, if I don't get out there and do this every day this is not going to happen. So I had my own sort of way of speaking, but it worked.

Came back to New York and sometime during the next two years, and I went fulltime to Hunter College. I was living in Manhattan right near the school, which was very convenient, and I got a job in a very "hot" restaurant across the street from Lincoln Center. When I say "hot," it was busy, a desirable place to have a job. There were a lot of young people going to school studying, a lot of the people were in theater. I worked there while I was doing all this, and it was at that time that I took the Foreign Service exam. I was in my early thirties when that happened. I was 33 when I got my B.A. finally, from Hunter College. I was very interested in art history, so I got it in art history. I had this idea, having spent so much time in France, I was thinking of working in a museum, and with my French language skills. At least two things would work for me somehow. I was very interested in art and culture. When I got out of there, having taken the exam, I took the test on kind of a lark. I really didn't think I had the profile for that, that anyone would even consider me for that job. In fact, a few years later, when I started thinking about graduate school, I went to Columbia International Studies School and put in an application there, and they turned me down. The main reason being, "You don't have the background for this." The woman was really direct with me. I thought a couple of years later, "Gee, if anyone said that to anyone today they could take them to court on what she said to me." And she was kind of snooty. "We're looking for the children of diplomats here in our program; these are the people we want." But it did start to occur to me that I might want to work to do something in international affairs.

Some friends of mine started a new business and with my background - I had done that six years in cosmetics and I had worked with retailers all over the country - they asked me to join them. And I took a job with them getting this business off the ground. Women's clothing, fashion. It was a U.S. company, but they were manufacturing overseas. So I took this while at the same time dreaming about how I was going to turn this into something international. I stayed in that industry for about five years.

Q: What did you think of the cosmetic business? I go into department stores and I look at all these women and people consulting with them and looking at the stuff, and I can't see that there's a hell of a lot of difference between when somebody puts it on and takes it off. I wonder: did you ever have the feeling that it's - it's not a fraud, but a lot more is promised than gets there.

REILLY: After a couple of years, to me it was just so frivolous. I just knew that I didn't want to, that it was not the career for me. That's why I left and I thought, I have to go to college and do something that has more meaning.

Q: It's hard to take it seriously. People do, but -

REILLY: Of course, it's hard to take it seriously. For me, it was a "good job." Just to put things in perspective: although I had dreams of doing something bigger, I was still from the mentality that getting well paid and getting some of these benefits is really the most important thing. So, I always kind of landed on my feet in jobs that paid me a living wage. I'm not saying I made big money - and where other people, people where I came from, or even people that had finished college, would go, "this is a good job." You get a certain level of benefits, you get to travel a little bit. But it was the same thing when I went into the garment business. It was meaningless. It was totally meaningless to me. I didn't feel like I did anything for anyone. I needed to explore, to explore myself. I didn't get any personal satisfaction, although I was somewhat successful and worked with nice people and that kind of thing. Although I worked with some people that weren't so nice, either. But to put all this into perspective, I was floundering around only in the sense that I really didn't know exactly what it was that I wanted. Although I had some idea. It was almost as if I didn't have the proper background as that woman at Columbia had told me. Although I had a great deal of interest and my own knowledge came from my own studies. But I still had a sense of disconnect from where I really wanted to be and where I was, and the things that were coming my way. So instead of saying no I am going for that and I am not going to do any of that other stuff anymore, other things would come my way. My friends offered me this position with a really good income in what people perceived to be in a really glamorous industry. And to me it all was just ho hum. But, I still did not branch out or say that I was going out for that. It was kind of a frightening prospect.

Q: With the people that were around you, did they say, "Kathleen go out and do something else." Or did they feel that you on the right track?

REILLY: You know what I would hear more than anything? Geez, you are doing so well, what are you trying to do. Especially when I left the cosmetic job, my father thought I was crazy. They were giving me a car. I was getting to travel around the U.S. a bit. I always had a lot of independence; I did not have to be in an office every day. People thought why would you leave that job. I remember the woman who replaced me. She was older than I, and it was perceived as a coups. To me, it was not all that interesting. I was a representative for this company. But, other people's perception that this was a particularly good job. I was not exposed to people who were in the Foreign Service and who were in the kinds of career that I would later aspire to. I did not have the exposure to that kind of people, even though I was very interested in politics and international affairs. For me, it was an internal fight. That is the only way I can describe it. I was constantly seeking to take three steps, maybe one in the right direction and two in another direction. So, it took me a little longer time to decide and not having a history for not being a very good planner, I followed a lot of different routes. I must say that even to this day, I found a lot of things interesting and deep in as well.

Q: Now, you were in the dress business until when?

REILLY: Until I was 39 years old. This would be 1983 -1989. I was in that business and

related businesses. I got involved in something related which is not important but I worked for myself briefly thinking that would be a better thing to do until I finally realized that I just had to get out totally out of that and do something more meaningful. I then decided to move to San Francisco; I had a brother out there. I loved New York but I thought I do not want my entire life to be a New York experience. Everyone I knew was so New York focused. I thought, I traveled around Europe a bit. By that time, I had spent time in France and Greece; I also had a boyfriend there and made several trips there for a few summers. And I thought, I need a bigger experience than this. New York is too limited for this, even though New York is a marvelous place. So, I moved out to San Francisco and decided to be a teacher, and this was at the time when the first President Bush became the education president.

Part of what I had done, even in cosmetics and the garment business, was a bit of marketing, training, and sales, etc. I liked training people. When I got to San Francisco, I got a job with Dale Carnegie Institute selling and teaching their programs on human communications and management. In fact, I took the job before I went out to San Francisco because I wanted to go there with a job in hand and I visited my friends for awhile, which I did.

So there I was in San Francisco and I enrolled in school and started my masters in education program plus getting teaching credentials in education. I wanted to teach adults. California had an adult teaching credential plus at the time had a very strong community college system, and I thought I could easily get a job working in the community college system. It was then when I got the call to join the Foreign Service.

I was in a group of women that had taken the Foreign Service test, which became known as the Hartman Case. I had taken the test and I forget the time period, but I think it was a 10 year period where women who had taken the test and came close to passing but never made it in. I think I got 76 on the written exam. I had taken the test at least 10 years before being called, maybe 11 years. So, out of the blue, here I am just finished getting my masters and my teaching credentials, and I was teaching in an adult education school. And I get a card from the Foreign Service saying that they are doing interviews in Washington, D.C. and if I was interested, I could come at my own expense to go through the oral exam, and they explained the case. I had been named in a class action suit. It seemed like a long shot to me; I thought I had to pay to go to Washington for this incredible long shot. It seemed so ridiculous and out of the blue. However, I said that if you ever gave the test in California, I would be interested in taking it. Maybe six months later, I get a card telling me that they were going to be in Los Angles and would I come down to take the test. And that is when I really became interested. I thought, this is amazing. At this point in my life, I was 43 years old and that I could go into the Foreign Service. I went to LA and took the orals and I passed. I was the only one who passed that day.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions that you were asked?

REILLY: Yes. It was a lot of role playing. I did marvelously well at negotiating, and I could see it when I was with this group. I had all that experience in business dealing with people diplomatically on creating a win-win situation with people. Also, I think where I did my best was when I was on the country team and we got a budget and had to put together all these projects. We had half an hour to read a brief. We each had our own specific portfolio. The five of us had to sit together and each had to present their plan in a specific time-period our particular program what we were trying to advance. They gave us a budget, and we had to come up with the best plan for the ambassador.

It became very clear to me that my project of building a road was the most important part to get things moving in this country. Although someone had to build a hospital, it became real clear in the negotiations that this was the way to go. So I presented it. I can present things well, and I did a good job in making this presentation but no one else at the table would take it up. Then I said, "We have one minute left. I have to tell you that for all of you to get your program started, you have to go with my program, get the road and spend the extra 10 percent on a certain number of beds in the hospital and that is the only way we can get this country moving in the right direction." No one voted for it. They all voted it down.

We failed as a group that entire portion of the test. But to my great surprise at the end of the day, they gave me credit because, although I could not sell my plan to my other team mates, I did in fact have the right answer to this. So, I think I did well on this one.

I had to read a demarche to someone about something, and I did not mince words. I was very direct and forthright, which I could be, about what the U.S. wanted. I forget about what the other role-playing roles were. I walked out of the room and I felt that I did well, and I was selected.

Q; You passed the oral in 1993. How old were you when you came in to the Foreign Service?

REILLY: I was 44 years old.

Q: How did that fit in with your A100 course?

REILLY: Just to reiterate, I was part of that class action suit. I came in with a group of women who were middle aged or had had careers elsewhere. We were 19 people; of the 19, I think, 11 or 12 were Hartman women. When the U.S. Government lost the case to the Hartman class action suit, they were required to hire 39 women from this group who had done relatively well on the test but were never called. As I mentioned, I got a 76 on the written, which meant that I was out. You had to get 80. I never thought that I would ever hear from them again. Subsequently, I went in with a class that had 12 Hartman members, three regional librarians, one of them was in his late 40s and another was in his 30s. There was only one woman in the room who had come right out of grad school. Everyone else was at least 35 years old and over. There was a woman who was 55 or 56

years old. So, there were 12 women from 36 -55 years old. It wasn't that uncomfortable. I wasn't in a group of 24 year olds.

Q: How did the woman just out of grad school do? Did she feel a little bit lost?

REILLY: You know that's funny. Because she met her language requirements and she just got out of Georgetown I believe, she was sent within three months to Ghana. But, she had a lot of personal problems and was taken out of country because of some behavioral problems. Then I understand she got a civil service position and left the Foreign Service. I did not keep up with her, but it seems like she had an emotional breakdown in Ghana.

Q: Of course, this is the first tour and it often is the make or break. Almost, it is literally of a person. Some people have never been in an overseas environment and have problems adjusting; she may have had problems before and this may have tipped the scale.

REILLY: Anyway, I passed the test that day and I had to go through all the paperwork and the background check. There was a rush to get my group going and this was in June, and they wanted the group to start by the end of September. I passed everything except on the application I put down, and this is really interesting, at some point in my 20s I had gone to psycho therapy, and they wanted to speak to the psyco therapy, but he was dead. Then they said that we want you to meet with Doctor Sullivan; I was living in San Francisco at the time. I am only telling you this because it was just another example of the kind of people that the State Department hires. So Dr. Sullivan has me come in for a 50 minute session, just like visiting a regular psychiatrist, and he interviews me and says to me well you seem to be ok now but in the process of the interview, he is taking a lot of calls from his patients, sounding like a really neurotic guy the way he is interacting with his patients and then tells me that the State Department wanted him to fax the report right away. "Well," he said. "I don't fax, it's 1993." I had a lot of work to get this thing done and subsequently he sent me a bill for $325 for his service. The State Department paid him $325 for his time, and he wanted me to pay an additional $325. He tracked me down six months later in Lagos and asked me for the money; he was very unhappy that the State Department did not pay more for his fee. It was an early warning sign that everything I was going to come up against administratively was so ineptly done. Anyway, I was exposed to this at a very early stage of my career.

Q: *And coming from your background where you were not a kid. Somebody would have accepted this but you knew how things should be.*

REILLY: Yes. I had worked for large corporations; I had work in a school district; I had worked for small companies, so I had seen a lot of different jobs. However, I had never worked for the government. So of course, subsequently I went out on a very wide learning curve. The first ten weeks in class with my A-100 class was very enjoyable. We were 19, and this was before the United States Information Agency (USIA) merged with the Department of State, and before they put the very big classes together. We had a marvelous time. We had a very good Foreign Service officer who was our trainer. His

name was Don Bishop, who is now PAO Beijing. He is a lovely guy. (NOTE: Don is now retired and you can read his oral history. It is on the Library of Congress' website.) Actually, I ran into Don at one of the open forums about a year ago. Anyway, Don was a terrific mentor, and it was a good experience. A lot of women who joined with me had been working for other government agencies, so they had some government knowledge.

On the list of places to go, there were several places in Africa, Central America, and several European countries. Europe appealed to me the most but I did not have German. I knew since I tested high in French, they would want me to get my French to a 3/3 level and get out. They were also thinking Africa for me because of my French. I didn't test as well in Spanish. I wanted to take Spanish but they said no you have to take French, and you should start thinking about English speaking posts, like India, Nigeria. They were looking for volunteers to go to Nigeria. The position was the assistance information officer. I started doing research over at the training center (FSI Overseas Transition Center) about the different countries.

I had done a lot of reading, political news reading and knew what was going on in the world, and I was apprehensive or nervous about high terrorists' states. I did not want to go to a country where there had been a lot of terrorism or where there was a threat of terrorism. I looked into Lagos and I noticed it was a high crime location but was not a high terrorism threat. I was thinking of a 20-year career. I thought it would be a good move for me to volunteer. Hit the ground running by volunteering for a post that was difficult to fill. I was the only one who did volunteer, no one else volunteered. So, I got it. It was no big surprised. I had to stay and finish language.

My French having spent some time in France was bastardized French. So, it took me a little longer to unlearn some of my bad habits and get my 3/3 and get out to post. But, I did and I showed up in Lagos and I was very lucky to get a boss like her who became my friend. She was the information officer (IO). Her name is Debra Jones. She is now in Skopia and will be coming back in July. She was actually on an excursion. She was a WorldNet officer. The Bureau of Broadcasting hired her, and I guess she was considered a state department employee. This is her first IO experience, first experience overseas.

We had this very busy information officer; I also had a marvelous public affairs officer (PAO) my first year by the name of Tom Ho who is an African specialist. He is a real pro. So I'm watching him in action for that first year. It was a wonderful way for me to see how things should be done. Very, very professional guy. And, it was a big post with lots of Officers. There was a cultural affairs officer(CAO), assistant cultural affairs officer (ACAO), a program officer, a deputy PAO. There were seven or eight Americans when I arrived, and that was right in Lagos plus we still had an American in Kaduna, an American in Abuja, and an American in Ibadan. So there were about 10 American officers just for United States Information Agency (USIA) in Nigeria. It was very hard work because we were so busy and in a place like Nigeria you were totally dependent upon – well, you couldn't depend on the mail, the telephone system and there were no computers in the country. I'm talking about 1994- 1996. You would go to the biggest

university in the country with 25,000 students - not one computer, and 3 or 4 operating telephones.

In the office, I was learning new things all the time. I had worked on computers before but in fact, I had taught computers when I was teaching in the San Francisco school system, but, they were introducing new things. Email was first introduced in the mid-1990s, but you could not use that in town. We had scooter drivers, we were two Americans in the information office and we had 15 Foreign Service nationals (FSN) working for us. It was a big operation. We did a lot of WorldNets; we did more WorldNets than anyone in Africa. We did programs on development, women issues, health issues, and training the media. There were a lot of democratization issues. Nigeria had a dictator at the time.

Q: *I would like to set the stage. What was the situation in Nigeria? What years were you there?*

REILLY: I was in Nigeria from July 1994 until August 1996.

Q: *During that time from 1994 – 1996, what was the situation in Nigeria?*

REILLY: The Nigerians were living under a dictator, Sani Abacha. Nigeria had proclaimed its independence in 1960 but after 34 or 35 years of independence, they had only nine years of democracy. During all of the 30 odd years, they had lived under a dictatorship. Abacha took over in a bloodless coup and was seen as repressive, not the most brutal to the population. He was stealing money and taking it out of the country, all the oil money. This went on for 30 years. All the oil revenues went into the pocket of a specialized class and the government had setup deals with the major oil countries where the government got 55 percent and the oil companies got 45 percent. The only way that the population benefited was if an oil company, like Chevron or Mobil, who setup special housing for their employees, special training for their employees and did things for their employees. But if you were not an employee, then there was no benefit from oil production.

The country could not refine its own gas. The people would riot if the government tried to raise the price of gas. So, gas was incredibly cheap. It cost about 25 - 30 cents a liter, which was phenomenally cheap, and the government kept saying that they were going to raise the oil price and the Nigerians would start rioting. That was the only time they would riot. I wrote a lot on oil issues because I worked in the econ office a lot. In retrospect, it was definitely a hard place to live. But it was very, very interesting and I have a lot of good memories because so much of it was so new to me. I went in as a junior officer (JO); that was a hard thing to be at 44 years old as you can imagine.

Q: *Did they use you as a junior officer?*

REILLY: I was clearly a junior officer. Well, I took over for the IO on many occasions

and I did a lot of different things. But it was my JO tour and I was never able to forget that this was my JO tour. The first six weeks, they had me doing the rounds of two weeks at USAID, two weeks in the Foreign Commercial Service Office, yes, they had me do different things. I also did grunt work like inventorying all the supplies in USIS. You know the USIS space was a very old building. We had our own printing press. But while I was there, we started a newsletter, and we did enormous outreach to the media community. There were 20 daily's in Lagos alone. So they had a very active media. We did broadcast media training. I worked a lot with women organizations. I really liked a lot of the things I did there, particularly working with the Nigerian women; they are very dynamic.

Q: *One thinks that Nigerian women as running the market place, essentially being the same as Vietnamese women being commercial entrepreneurs.*

REILLY: It is totally a cash economy. People do not use credit cards or have other means of payment. The largest bill was a 50 naira, which is worth about 65 cents at the time. This meant that if you had $100 on you, you would have a large stack of cash. I had to go through Kaduna to Abuja sitting in for various people for a 10 day – two week TDY (temporary duty). I had to bring all cash because I was staying in hotels, and I had a bag about 10" X 10" filled with cash, which is an enormous amount of money. It was about 1,200 American dollars and as soon as I got to the hotel in Abuja, I paid for my room in advance and put the rest in a safe deposit box. I did not want to walk around with this amount of money on me. The whole experience was new to me; it was a hard office to work in; it was a very demanding country; there was a lot going on; the U.S. was very unhappy about what was going on, and there was an urge to try to promote democratization.

Our mandate was to promote democratization through the media, through the opposition groups. We were trying to work with opposition groups, trying to work with women's groups in particular because women, as a group are powerful and really run the country, in the background of course. A lot of very privileged Nigerians who had always been connected and have seats in parliament. Nigeria still has a tribal system whereby the chiefs get a piece of the action, a percentage, that's how it functioned and that was very clear to me. Even in government, corruption was unbelievable. They got a little piece of the action; that is the way it worked. So, you had fabulously wealthy Nigerians living next to unbelievable poverty. Poverty we do not see in the U.S. It is not unheard of people making $2 a week and had to live on that.

Q: *How did we operate with, for example --, you were working in public diplomacy – with the politics of this? I imagine that they would be looking for payoffs or things like this. Could one work in that sort of environment and not getting dashed.*

REILLY: Yes, they were always looking for a little dash. Yes, you can. I actually think you can. We did not pay dash. We did know that for instant, some of the political groups would pay -- they called it the envelop system – if you were a journalist and if someone

asked you to come to a meeting and report on it, they would give them a little bit of money for a favorable report. We knew that was going on. I mean corruption was all over the place, and we functioned without it. From what I know of our employees, they were up and up about it. There was a big scandal, while I was there. Someone was stealing money from the visa section because he was the first one in everyday and he would take in twelve people before he opened up the cash register. I don't know how he did it but someone found him out and reported it. There were other scandals there but for the most part, the worst behavior was on the part of the Americans that were there. You know, you learn fast in a situation like that in this unbelievable kind of climate with a lot of people being in a totally new and unusual environment. An environment where everyone was telling us how dangerous it was, but it really didn't feel that dangerous. There was a huge expat community who were treating it like it wasn't a dangerous place. There were some dangers there. For example, several diplomats were killed and some other things happened. You would never go out in the bush at night. There were armed robbers on the road. But within a certain area where we were within Lagos, it was really relatively a safe place.

I got to work on an enormous portfolio of issues and worked with all the different departments at the embassy. So it was really a great learning experience. We had a very demanding office. We decided to put out a 12-page newsletter once a month and that really was demanding, and I was in charge of that. We had a printing press, and we downloaded articles from the wireless file plus we were creating some of our own articles. We were giving them something they didn't have. Nigerians do not have libraries. They don't have places to go so the fact that we had a library drew people in. The library was always packed. We were disseminating 5,000 copies of the newsletter everyday; it was something that people wanted and coveted. It was amazing.

The first year was really the best there. I was under Tom Hulk. He was the deputy director of public affairs and became someone that most of the Americans really disliked. In fact, they had an acronym for him we use to call him Fifo, which has a very negative meaning.

During my first year, they decided to wind down. They decided to eliminate the position of program development officer. They decided to close the Kaduna office. In fact, I was there when they closed it. We got rid of 2 or 3 Americans in that first year. There was talk of us moving to Abuja, but it did not happen while I was there. I went to work in Abuja, Kaduna and Ibadan a few times; that was interesting but lonely because I did not know people there. And to be stuck in Ibadan for 10 days, there really wasn't a lot to do. You were kind of locked in at night.

Q: *Who was the ambassador while you were there?*

REILLY: He was a political appointee. His name is Walter Carrington. He was promoted by the National Black Caucus up to President Clinton, and he was nominated that way. He was their nominee and they took him on. He was a lawyer here in town. I thought he was a nice man, but I did not have a lot of interaction with him. He was perceived as

being somewhat inept, I gathered. There was a very strong political officer there at the time. The DCM was a real old Africa hand who was kind of a wheeler dealer. He was nice to me but I found him suspect in his treatment of welding his power and his treatment of individuals, of certain Americans and not others, and some of the decisions he made. He ultimately went to Liberia. I think he served in Liberia twice, he took on some tough assignments, and people liked him for that. At least the department seems to like him for doing that.

I had a wide learning curve because I never worked for the government. I also had never done the kind of writing that the State Department wanted us to do. So that was a big learning experience for me. I worked hard and I was adjusting, and for the most part, I was doing very, very well. However, the PAO was very critical and tough. There were four Americans who worked under him: the CAO, ACAO, the IO and the AIO. We all hated his guts. When the new PAO came in, he got his ear and the new PAO kind of listened to whatever he had to say, and we felt that the new PAO was operating against the truce for people and working with this guy who was really not nice to us. That is how he was perceived. He was very critical, hard on people. The process of sending up a cable and the rewriting of it, a simple cable would go through so many transitions that it was ridiculous. I was the drafter, and the draft would go to my boss, and then come back to me, and then it would go up to him again and then come back to me for changes. Then it would go to the PAO and maybe finally get signed off and if not it would constantly come back to me because I was the originator. This process was so tedious. I said something to him once in a meeting, which I never should have said. I was with my boss, the IO, and him. And he said something to me that was critical and I asked him why he kept picking on me, and I said this in front of my boss. From that day on, it was not good for me there. First of all, that I should confront him and do it in front of someone else was not perceived to be the appropriate thing to do. I did not use the words "pick on me," but I did not say anything nasty. I just said, "What is this constantly coming after me?"

Personally, I had a great time there. It was a very broad experience; I worked with many different groups. I traveled a lot throughout the country. I made many, many contacts. There was a great expat community and I made wonderful friends there so I had a lot of friends to socialize with. I sailed regularly, which was very enjoyable. I had a group of people that I went to the beach with. There were these wonderful beaches. You had to go by boat but on weekends it was easy to do. However, I put in many 12 – 14 hour days getting the job done.

Q: *Let's talk about your dealing with women's issues. What were we after and how did things work out during your time there?*

REILLY: I think our goal was to empower opposition groups or to strengthen women's movement. I'm wondering if empowering women, changing women's lives, change the lives of children, husbands and consequently improves the life of the nation. Health issues were a huge part of our efforts, i.e., malaria, river blindness. USAID had an enormous presence in country, as they did throughout West Africa, and this was their

headquarters. Lagos was the headquarters for the Agency, which I was exposed to for the first time. DEA was there. It was a big embassy and a lot of different people. Some really nice people, and you learned about things that were going on in different offices. They were huge, huge problems with Americans who were pulled out of country overnight for some misbehavior or something. For example, some guy was stealing money; another guy walking around with a gun, the regional security officer was wacky driving around with guns at night trying to start trouble. Another guy upstairs from me had a prostitute beaten up, who a week later he was dating. She tried to maintain a relationship with him, then he beat her up, and she was screaming at the gate trying to get into our building. There was a guy on my floor who I worked with in the Agency who was soliciting young men. He was taken out of country. The guys there were just amazing. You would say to yourself, where is so-and-so, I haven't seen him in a few days. "Oh," someone would say, "He left, he's gone." What do you mean he's gone. He left and didn't say goodbye to me.

Q: *I spent 30 years in the business and you had in your two years more experience with problems than I think I did*.

REILLY: I think what I learned later about a place like Lagos is that people go there for one reason - and that is, they want to stand out. They volunteer to go because they think it is a good way to enhance their career, to move forward. They want to go to a tough place, and then show that they can do a good job and move on. But, there were other people who were told if you don't go to Lagos, you are out of the service. It turns out that the guy upstairs from me, he was one of the communication technicians had been bounced from his last position and was told you are going to Lagos or you are out. So there were these real high performers, and there were also these people who were on their last legs, so to speak. The Foreign Commercial Service officer had a serious alcohol problem; the regional security officer had some very serious problems. I ran into his deputy a few weeks ago and we just mentioned the guy's name and had a good laugh. That's all we said because he was nuts. That's all there was, and we were living in compounds with these people. It's not like you saw them on occasion at the embassy. I was at the embassy everyday. It was such a dynamic place.

I played a major role in reaching out to women's groups. I worked hand-in-hand with USAID. If they had groups that they were going to visit, I would get their lists and go and meet with the women. I would offer them some kind of assistance, if there were assistance, we could give them or just find out who the major players were. I would report on how they were functioning, particularly out of Lagos. If you went into some of the smaller states, you would visit these state agencies. What you had in a country like this was over employment. For example, if you went to visit someone and when you walked into the office, you would speak to the secretary, someone would give you a number, then another person would record the number, then the third person would take the ticket and then you would wait until you could go in. So, there were people doing very menial tasks, but it kept people employed.

We would find out what these organizations were doing with USAID money. They got a

lot of money for vaccinations and USAID had a lot of contractors in country. They were NGOs working in country on USAID contracts and that was a real eye opener as far as the waste that was going on, a lot of money being misspent or misused, or misappropriated.

Q: Sometimes with the State Department and other agencies, we spend often far to much money on the support of the Americans who were there. *Did you find that with the NGOs also?*

REILLY: Oh yes. Absolutely. I was at country team meeting one day and there was the USAID director, he was not only the director for Nigeria but also all of West Africa. In 1995, The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, or ECOMOG, was a West African multilateral armed force established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). ECOMOG was a formal arrangement for separate armies to work together. Its backbone was Nigerian armed forces and financial resources.

ECOMOG went into Liberia. They had to evacuate the country. Their mission was to get all USAID, all Americans, out, which they did. But they lost everything, and he was reporting what they lost at this meeting, and they lost 80 vehicles. USAID had 80 vehicles in Liberia – gone, and 100 or so computers gone, not to mention the furnishings and houses and all the support material for the NGOs for all the people they had to pull out. I don't think there were any Peace Corp volunteers in country to pull out. That was in Nigeria. I helped with that evacuation from Kaduna. They were in these little villages, and they were not safe.

Q: *What was endangering them?*

REILLY: The local people. The volunteers were young women who were on their own trying to work as educators or in the health field working with small local organizations in these bush towns. The locals would steal their things and guys would threaten them. One volunteer woman was beaten up around Kaduna and after that Peace Corps decided to pull the volunteer out of country. There were only a handful. I remember holding a meeting for them in Kaduna as they were leaving the country. More often than that, we would invite them to our office, and we would host information programs for them with American speakers or because most people did not want to come to Lagos, and we had a small budget for speakers, we did WorldNets. We were the leading WorldNet country.

Q: *Would you explain what WorldNets are?*

REILLY: WorldNet was the broadcasting arm for USIA. They had separate headquarters over on D Street, D and 4th or 5th, something like that. They were satellite broadcasts, which were one-way broadcasts that was a one-way video but two-way audio. So they'd bring in guest speakers, special speakers to the Washington DC - mostly Washington, D.C.- studios who would talk with the host about important issues to the region. We

would set up the programs. We'd say, "Let's get Larry Diamond on democracy." You'd bring in Larry Diamond. Larry Diamond would talk for 20 minutes with the host, and then for the last 40 minutes you'd have people in Nigeria, or sometimes you'd hook up two countries - you'd have people in Nigeria and Ghana - on the airwaves asking questions of the people in the Washington studio. We could see Larry Diamond. He couldn't see us, but he could hear us. That was WorldNet. We did an enormous number of WorldNets - sometimes we'd set them up in two or three days. We had great success with that.

Q: It sounds like they should be very useful and quite good, impressive.

REILLY: They were really informational programs. How do you set up this kind of organization? How do you work within this kind of a system or a ministry? For example, they had a ministry for women's affairs, which I kind of realized - whenever you have a ministry for women's affairs in a country, you're in trouble, because if they have to separate from men then you know that things are really bad. And we did try to work within the Nigerian government, where we could. We did interface with their political leaders, and even sometimes fund some of their things because they were trying to work in their own small way to help their own people. But, it was in a very small way.

These are the type of informational programs we would do. We also would send out VOA tapes to all the media. Working with the media was the main objective of my office. We expanded that and worked a lot with these women's groups. We would go out and meet them. We would attend their events. We would report on it. We would try to introduce them to people. We would try to bring American expert speakers in. We didn't have the highest levels of people, we never dealt with a presidential visit or anything. We had Jesse Jackson come once, and we also had the deputy undersecretary for human rights. That's about as high a level as it got when I was in Nigeria. Because people didn't want to come into the country. And we didn't want them coming in because of Abacha. Those are the groups who worked with me, - journalists and women's groups.

Q: How were the journalists? You mentioned the Deputy Assistance Secretary business.

REILLY: That was mostly lower level. We would also nominate a lot of journalists to come on Humphrey Awards or to come for special training. Of course, we had to be very careful because what happens quite often is that people will stay in the United States. They're here for a month and they don't leave. We had that happen once. One guy we nominated didn't leave. He stayed with the program for the full month, and the day he was supposed to leave he got lost somewhere. Luckily it only happened one time, but we were afraid of that. And that's how we would interview people. We rarely sent single people because if you sent a single person, the likelihood of them coming back was pretty slim. Not my office, but another office, sent a journalist once and we didn't know that she was six months pregnant, and she stayed and had her baby in the U.S. People learn the U.S. system.

We also would work with the visa office when they had to put out their annual thing on the visa lottery stuff. There was not too much interaction with the admin office. We worked with the political office a lot on cables corroborating information. If I had a meeting with a journalist, I would write a paragraph for a cable, i.e., what I learned firsthand from so-and-so about, what was going on within the government. I was there when Ken Saro-Wiwa, artist and opposition leader, was murdered by the government. He was arrested for sedition, put in jail, and they knew that they were going to kill him. No one knew when it was going to happen. It happened one night. We woke up and found out. It was in the papers.

You had predominantly pretty bad papers. For instance, my first six weeks, the first time I got in trouble with this deputy, I was back in the information office after doing my tour as a JO (junior officer) and often hosting a lot of journalists, particularly for WorldNets and informational programs. One of the journalists who visited that day put my name in the paper as chief of consular affairs. So, the deputy PAO (Public Affairs Officer) comes to me and says, "Why did you tell him you were Jerry?" I would never tell anyone I was the chief of consular affairs. That's the most ridiculous thing. And he didn't believe me. I said, "Jerry, why would I say that?" It was unbelievable to me. He listened to me, but you could see that he was suspicious that I was trying to promote myself. It was when I started having problems with this man that I realized, although it was not said, people knew that I was part of the Hartman class and that I was being perceived differently. And I felt that was one of the reasons that he was giving me a hard time.

My first annual review there was excellent. I was reviewed by my boss, and by the PAO. And it was glowing. It was a glowing report for my first year on the job. I'll get to the second year, because he was my reviewer. The PAO decided not to do it; the deputy did it. And he wrote some insulting things, as you can only do in the State Department in that cryptic language of "she's very intelligent but I wonder about her judgment." First of all, if you have to say someone's intelligent, that's not a good thing. I had a real serious problem with him in the second year, and the PAO would not listen to me, would not intervene. My boss tried to intervene, and they threatened her with, they would write her up negatively if she didn't. - Do you want me to get into it? I'll get into it.

Q: Yes.

REILLY: In my second year, I was there a little over a year and a half when my boss decided to take five and a half weeks out of country, which meant I was in charge of the information office for five and a half weeks. I knew I was going to be very busy, and I was. I was putting in fourteen-hour days. During this time, there was a bit of a crisis with the ambassador, which I covered very well. I had to constantly go over to the embassy and work with the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission). There was some issue - I don't even remember what it was - but it had something to do with the VOA (Voice of America) and how they were reporting him. We smoothed that all over. That was fine.

At the same time, I had problems with the local staff. We had 15 FSNs (Foreign Service

National employees) working for us., We had scooter drivers because you couldn't depend upon the mail. We had these scooter drivers who were menial workers in this country who you had to kind of baby-sit. But we had another FSN who was in charge of them. One day, one of the scooter drivers threatened the life of the other one and it was a big fight, and I had to get involved, and I knew the guy. The guy who did it, his name was Willy, he was a nasty little guy. You could see he was one of those, sort of, just an unhappy camper, period. Malcontent. And I took his threat very seriously, as did his immediate FSN supervisor.

So I wrote him up and sent his immediate supervisor, with him, to the embassy administrative office, and suggested that he be suspended. We looked to permanently removing him because if he was going to threaten someone's life this was a very serious thing. I don't know exactly what happened, but this guy Willy, when he got over there, got to talking with the FSN - I don't know if they had a union, but they had their own representative over at the embassy - and then they started attacking me for the way I dealt with the issue. Then the embassy came back and said that I shouldn't have done this and you really can't fire someone, or suspend them like that. They have to be written up in a certain way. And I didn't have the exact rules and regs; I didn't follow the letter for doing this process. What I did was, which was my kind of philosophy about doing things, is solve the problem. The problem was Willy; get Willy out of here. I didn't do it through the system, so I got really heavily criticized by the admin department for how I handled this, which went back to the deputy who was my immediate supervisor at the time.

Also, at this very same time - and I just remember being exhausted this month because I was working so hard and I had all these problems at the same time - before my boss had gone away, I was contacted by a naturalized American who had been a Nigerian citizen. She had a son who was born in Nigeria. She had moved to the U.S.; she had gotten her U.S. citizenship but the father of the boy was still in Nigeria. She didn't quite know where he was, but he was in one of the states near Lagos. She was going to get married to an American and she wanted this man to adopt her eight-year-old boy. In order for her to do this properly, she had to place an ad in a local paper. "Would I help with this process?" And I remember bringing this up to the PAO and the DPAO (Deputy Public Affairs Officer). I made arrangements for the ad to be placed and for her to send the money, it had to come through the embassy, and I would directly pay the paper for the ad. They were charging her an outrageous rate of 400 dollars, which for a Nigerian paper was ridiculous. But she was happy to pay it because if I could send her a copy of the paper and she could prove that this was done, and I think it had to be in the paper three repeated times, if she could prove that it was done with the dates on the paper, she could have the boy adopted.

Now I know this is like American Citizens Services, it's unusual, she could have gone to her representative in New York and had them ask. But she came to me, I was a sympathetic ear. I was told by the DPAO and PAO that they thought it was up to me, but if it was their decision they would not get involved. I said, "Look, I can do this, it's not going to take a tremendous amount of time on my part and I would like to help these

people out. I don't really have a problem doing this."

We did it. Waiting for the money, they sent the check to me in my name. I had to send the check back to the United States. But we were using the APO (Army Post Office) so it didn't take that long. But when they first saw the check come in to my name, the DPAO was waving the check and said, "I'm not keeping the check, I'm not doing anything here." But then, we realized it would have to come in through an employee's name in order to be processed through the embassy. I forget how we subsequently solved it, but the check did come back, and the money had to be processed through the embassy, and I asked the newspaper how they would like to receive this money. The person that I was dealing with at the embassy [sic] said he would like to get 400 U.S. dollars. This is how he wanted the money. I made arrangements to get the 400 U.S. dollars. I sent one of my FSNs over to the cashier at the embassy with a note: Please cash this check for Femi, give him 400 U.S. dollars. He then went downstairs where the journalist was waiting, and he passed the 400 dollars over to the journalist. The journalist then got lost for the rest of the day, and the next morning showed up at his office and said that we had passed him counterfeit money. I was in deep water. I was in deep trouble because they all thought it was my fault. "Why did you get involved with this? Why did you do this? Why did you get involved with U.S. cash - and this sort of thing - for payment. You should have paid him in naira, you never should have gone with what he said."

So this, coupled with my attempt to suspend the employee who had threatened to kill the other employee, those two things were too much. So my boss comes back to town, my immediate boss, and they're just livid with me. No matter what I had done before, how I covered the office and covered the office well for that five and a half weeks, and I had done other solo work up in Abuja and Kaduna; it didn't matter. Everything else did not matter. These two issues became paramount, and they wouldn't leave me alone about it for the rest of my tour. I was there for another three months, and I heard nothing else but these things and how it was going to - at that point, they were starting to draft my review for that year - and my judgment was suspect, and that was it. I was really in trouble for those two things. And it showed up on my review.

So I came up for review and I was also already, I was given my next assignment. But I really felt - and the thing that bothered me the most was, the PAO would not sit and talk to me about this. He would only deal with me through the DPAO. I felt really hurt, I felt I was being treated very shabbily, because all the rest of my work was good, high performance, and these two particular instances. Anyway, the incident with the newspaper was resolved. The journalist was definitely suspect and everyone thought that he traded the money, kept the money for himself. Even his boss kind of felt that he was like that, they just didn't like the way that it was handled, and the PAO was very unhappy about the fact that he had to get involved in that kind of situation.

I realize, afterwards, that it was a real problem, and actually getting cash was a stupid thing. But I had dealt with these people for over a year and a half and never had a problem, and I thought they were on the up and up. But they had an opportunity to make a

little money, and they did. What crooks!

So subsequently I was given a review that was, compared with my first review, which was glowing, this second review - my boss had some very good things to say about me, but she did have to raise this issue, "When I was out of the country, these two instances happened." Her boss, the DPAO, insisted that it be put in my review. Then, of course, I was able to write that I didn't feel I had been treated fairly. And that would have been my first opportunity to be up for any kind of a promotion or advancement. They didn't even look at me. They wouldn't look at me. I did go on to my other assignment, which was Sydney, which I was really thrilled to be going to, although at first I thought I would want to get a difficult language tour and finally get a difficult language under my belt. I put in my ten bids. They gave me Sydney.

I was happy to be going on to Sydney, but I was really unhappy with how I was perceived. I had never had problems in the private sector or even when I was an educator. I always got high marks for the work that I did. I was 45 years old, and the first time in my life people were questioning my capability. I was very conscious of that, and it hit my confidence a little bit.

Q: Of course it does. One can't help but say, "I'm being judged and what have I done wrong?"

REILLY: Well it was also the first time that I really became aware of the system of being evaluated. That you're evaluated by people that don't know you, and they have very little to go on, so they have these two reports to go on. That's how it happens. Then of course the word of mouth stuff. I don't know how that all weighed in. I left Lagos and went on to Sydney with not such a good feeling in my gut about the whole thing. Plus, I had also had a chance to travel over to Kenya and saw a little bit more of the Foreign Service, visiting the PAO that I knew in Kenya, and got to see a little bit more about how these systems function. Getting a birds' eye view of what goes on in an embassy, having seen seven Americans disappear over weekends, gone out of country because of some misbehavior, the secrets, the back channels, seeing how this DCM worked with the personnel officer to promote himself.

There was an enormous amount of unhappiness, a lot of unhappy people. At the embassy in particular, because there was a little group of three people who were in cahoots with each other. One was the DCM, the other was the head of personnel, and the third - I forgot who the third was - but these people in the admin office were very unhappy with the way they were being reviewed. So there was enormous unhappiness. You know what it reminded me of: this place was a big dysfunctional family, operating over there in another country. And here we are, how much of our time is devoted to all this petty little business. And I'm thinking, "This is so poorly managed and poorly run." Forty to fifty percent of people's time is devoted to their next position, getting their reviews done, every little word in your review; how it's written. I had a friend - I made a lot of friends there in the embassy and outside - and I had friends even help me write my response to

my review. Look what he said about me in this, how can I counter that by saying something. The time spent on that.

Q: Oh, yes. And the response, in the trade, there's a box where you can write your comments on something. And it's known as the suicide box. Most people can't write a response without sounding self-serving.

REILLY: So, I learned all this in two years. Here I am, I'm not even in the service three years, and I was exposed to so much.

Q: I've seen a little, but you got it all at once.

REILLY: There was some huge problems with the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) at this point over there, with misappropriation of funds. People were talking. Plus, the CIA chief's wife was having an affair with someone else in the embassy, and they were both pulled out of the country overnight. The guy got rid of his wife after that. There was a murder, too, an Israeli diplomat and Finnish diplomats were attacked, they were together on the road. I mean, I cannot tell you - and then I took trips to Ghana, I went to the Ivory Coast, I went to Togo many times and to Benin quite a few times because it was right over the border. You can drive to Benin and be in a beautiful little town where they had great French restaurants in three hours. That was a treat for us to do that, to get out of Lagos, cause Lagos didn't offer much. So it was just amazing. And then the Lebanese were running things - to see a country where the Lebanese and the Indians were the most powerful people in town because they had moved in. They had all the grocery stores, all the restaurants, all the small businesses. To see what went on in the embassy; this one's trying to curtail. So how much of people's time is actually spent in an embassy working on the problems of that country? Fifty percent, maybe. Amazing.

Q: When did you go to Sydney?

REILLY: I arrive in Sydney in September of 1996.

Q: What was Sydney like when you got there?

REILLY: I guess I went through culture shock first, because I had just spent a little over two years in Nigeria. After my tour, I came back to the States for home leave, and then I arrived in Sydney; I was probably in the States for seven weeks, traveling and on home leave and a little bit of training. I don't know that there was any real training to go to Sydney. I did Area Studies, Asia Pacific Area Studies, Pacific Rim or something like that. The main message I got out of that was that Australia wanted to be considered part of the Pacific Rim. All the economies, all the Asian Tigers, were cooking at that particular point and they wanted to be considered part of that. I arrived in Sydney and in comparison to what Lagos was, it was enormous culture shock. It was so different. Although USIA was in its own building in Lagos, we worked very closely with the embassy and I was probably in the embassy maybe not every day, but four days a week.

Q: Embassy? The embassy is in Canberra.

REILLY: No, I'm talking about in Lagos. The embassy was still in Lagos, and it was across the bridge from us. Although, with the traffic being so bad in Lagos that it took a little bit of time, sometimes, to go to the embassy. So we didn't go every day, but went quite often and there was always work to do over at the embassy with the political section or this or that. So I arrived in Sydney and I'm going to a consulate. It was a totally new experience for me, not to be in an embassy. But, of course Sydney was the leading city. My first initial reaction to arriving in Sydney was, "Oh my goodness, I can't believe how beautiful this city is." No one had told me. People had said nice things about it. I actually had a friend that I knew from New York who was back in Sydney, an Australian friend. But, no one said to me that this is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, which it is.

So I arrive and I'm awestruck at the beauty of this place, because I wasn't prepared for it. I'd heard it was nice, but I didn't think it was so stunningly physically beautiful, geographically. The first evening I remember the BPAO (Branch Public Affairs Officer) hosted a dinner for me, a reception.

Q: That's the deputy political?

REILLY: No. He was the branch public affairs officer who reports to the Consul General, and I was associate branch public affairs, which is a position that they've had there for awhile. They were winding down in Australia. They had a post in Perth which they closed; they had a branch public affairs officer in Melbourne which had closed, and then also in Brisbane. All of these had spots had closed. We were left with, Canberra had a PAO, a CAO (Cultural Affairs Officer) and an IO (Information Officer). And then a branch public affairs officer and assistant, or associate, I forget what it was. So there were five Americans in country in the United States Information Agency, before it was folded into State.

It was just the opposite of Lagos, and that was what was so shocking. Lagos was hard, the work was hard, and we put in long hours. It was not unusual for me to work Saturdays, mostly Saturday mornings like from nine to one or something, and to work 12-hour days at times, 10, 11-hour days. And then, I go to Sydney, that has nine to five jobs. So it was kind of a stunning change. Sydney politically was light. Here you were in Lagos, human rights issues were really serious. They had killed a writer. He was murdered, assassinated. The government had condemned to death and killed Ken Saro-Wiwa who was a famous political rights leader and a leading writer of T.V. sitcoms, books, comedy, political satire. Women journalists that we had worked with - I'm back in Lagos again, I'm just trying to make a comparison - it was like working in a tough African country with serious, serious issues, and then coming to Chicago or something like that. Not even Chicago; Sydney is not that big.

Q: Des Moines, or -

REILLY: Yes, a very nice city where you're working only on cultural kinds of things. Luckily I had an interest in the environment, and that was a really big issue at that time. So I was able to take on certain issues; the environment was one. Civics education. There was a big Civitas project between the U.S. and Asian countries, so I worked on that with Australia and Asia Pacific Rim countries. There were some good issues for me to work on. Lots of very interesting speaker events. A lot of American speakers, target-of-opportunity speakers, very friendly group of contacts, and a very strong Australian-American association. People who wanted to be associated with the U.S. and had good feelings about us. This was when Kyoto was about to happen.---

Q: That's the Kyoto Environmental Treaty, which we never ratified.

REILLY: No, we never did ratify, but we had a seat at the table for the first few years. They were working on a preliminary agreement. There was sort of an agreement to create an agreement until we pulled out. We worked with some people on that. I was sent back here. On one of my trips home for a vacation, I did two weeks of training at the State Department on environmental and sustainability issues. These issues I found absolutely fascinating, cause here we were, talking about the future, the year 2000 is approaching, we're working on Y2K because no one knew what would happen. So much more developed-world, immediate issues. I became very friendly with the guy who was the commercial officer in Sydney, and he is still a good friend. He's here in D.C. now. As a matter of fact, he's getting ready to retire. I told him he should - you're only doing State Department, though.

Q: No, no, we do -

REILLY: Because he's had a 21-year career at a very high level.

Q: No, no, I'd be quite interested.

REILLY: Anyway, I worked on some trade issues. Whatever was important, but it was such a 180 degree change from what I had known in Africa, and the political back-biting. It was a very big embassy; 55 Americans in Lagos alone. Plus a dozen or so people up in Abuja. Whereas Australia was just, I want to say like a romp in the park. It was delightful. I considered it almost a gift to spend three years of my life in this beautiful place.

Q: You were there from 1996 to 1999?

REILLY: To the end of 1999. And that's when I resigned. It was nice, it was a great personal experience. Professionally, this was when I really saw I was going nowhere. I had already started to wonder if this was the right kind of career. Based upon a lot of what I saw internally, between the relationships of people. How people fought their way to the top, or moved, or advanced. These kinds of things. I have many friends who are still in

the service, and I understand that's the way it works. And some of them are quite content with their careers, where they are going, what they're doing. But as I said, I started to feel like it wasn't the right thing for me. And I also wasn't getting any promotions. And I was very concerned about that. Immediately when you get into one job, people start thinking about, "Well, where's the next the place you're going to go after this?" Career counselors were recommending - not immediately upon arriving, but after being there a year or so - and my assignment was supposed to be for four years. But most people agreed with me that if I would have done three, that would have been sufficient because four years as the assistant branch public affairs officer was not a very good thing to be.

The guy that was the branch public affairs officer was a very good analyst, a very, very smart guy, but he wasn't a very personable guy. And also, always kept the best jobs, assignments, for himself. He barely threw a bone at me. Tickets would come in from the opening at the opera or some kind of art kind of thing. He always took them for him and his wife. I never was handed anything that might be interesting and fun. He kept the cultural stuff. He did most of the cultural stuff. He also kept the relationships with the leading journalists. He wanted to have those, as well. He kept the cream for himself, and I did all the rest. I'm not going to complain that I was over-worked. I found some of the work interesting. But I was professionally bored because I didn't feel like I was going anywhere.

Also, that's when they started talking about doing away with USIA. Of course during my time there, the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed. I was also reading lots of reports on terrorists, potential terrorist problems around the world. In fact, I had been reading them in Africa, and I had been thinking, "Why aren't we doing anything about this?" Even when I left Washington to go to Lagos, when we were reading country reports, when we were in the bidding process and reading about terrorist threats in different parts of the world. This was something that people were really aware of, and I was so surprised that we didn't seem to be doing anything about it.

Q: We'll come back to the reason for leaving. But let's talk a bit about Australia. What was your impression of Australian American relations at the time?

REILLY: They were good. Relationships that were created from World War I through Vietnam, mostly military relationships, were extremely strong. Although when you really examined it you would take a look at the generation of people who were World War II generation, and some Vietnam people, these were people who really felt this incredibly strong bond between the U.S. and Australia. The Alliance. It was very important. There was an annual meeting around - ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) - Australia, New Zealand - I forget exactly what it stands for now. But it was very, very important to them, this alliance between the U.S., New Zealand, and Australia, and what it had meant to them in World War II when they felt threatened by the Japanese. The Japanese were in Indonesia, and they felt extremely threatened, so they were very grateful to the "Yanks". They still call us Yanks.

It was amusing, actually, to me, to see this; it was nice to be in a place where we were so liked. I worked on ship visits. The Seventh Fleet would come through there often on the way out of Hawaii, CINCPAC would come down around Sydney. Sometimes they would stop in New Castle, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart and then head out up to the Gulf. So we had lots of ship visits. I actually was on a fly-out and did a tailhook landing on an aircraft carrier and took a group of journalists out for a briefing. That was an amazing experience. Here I was on this little Navy prop. And we were tailhook landed and we did a catapult take-off to come back to Sydney. We spent about two and a half hours on the ship and took a tour. That was just an amazing experience.

There were very, very strong feelings about the U.S.-Australian military relationship. There was a big presence in Canberra of U.S. military people. We were training Australians out in the desert, we were doing training programs with them up in Queensland in a place called Townsville. Someone even made a film about it. The military ties, the cultural ties were very, very strong and powerful. One of the nice things I did was to really strengthen relationships with environmental groups and sustainability organizations. When I had some say as to which speakers to bring into town, I would try to bring in people who could speak to these particular issues because this such a popular topic and we had big audiences that were very, very interested.

In fact I have friends in Australia still who are working on these issues, with a lot of frustration as you can imagine because not much has happened, even within their own country, because of the issue of coal. So we were following this. Trade issues were another thing we followed. The lamb tariffs. They slapped a big tariff on them one year. Clinton even said, when a reporter said to him, "What do you say about it?" He said, "Well if I were you, I'd call the WTO (World Trade Organization)." Because we violated the agreement. But all in all, the Australians seemed to feel really good about America.

I traveled. I'd go up to Brisbane. I didn't go to Melbourne much on business, but I'd go down to Canberra occasionally on business. It was a very easy job. There was no question about it.

Q: Was there a problem, because you were there during the time, I think, when we moved in to Kosovo, bombed Serbia.

REILLY: Yes, we did. You're right.

Q: They have, I'm told, a fairly substantial Serb immigrant population who didn't take kindly to this.

REILLY: We didn't have a problem with that at all. There was a large Bosnian and Croatian community. The woman who used to clean my apartment was from Bosnia. You know, Australia was an all white nation until 1971. They're still dealing with issues - we're still dealing with them, too - with native Americans, issues still left over from slavery and things like that. They are still dealing with their aboriginal problem. They still

perceive it as a problem, because they really robbed these people of their culture and then just left them with absolutely nothing. Now they're getting their culture back, they're being appreciated for who they are. But there is still a lot of racism. I felt, an enormous amount of racism. And all you have to do is leave the big towns, go out to this all white Australia that still exists out there. It's very rural. New South Wales is a big state. Sydney has maybe three million in the area. But, no, I don't remember any backlash about that, locally. There was a big problem when the Greeks turned Abdullah Öcalan over to the Turks. This came in 1999. There were demonstrations. The Australian police and security forces were caught unaware. This was the first time that I recall noting how people used cell phones to create an assembly. All of a sudden Öcalan gets caught.

Q: You better explain who he was.

REILLY: He was considered by the Turks to be Kurdish - was he Kurdish?

Q: Kurdish.

REILLY: Yes, a Kurdish terrorist.

Q: He was the head of their group, which was bombing, assassinating.

REILLY: Yes, they did a lot of internal things. They did a lot of things in Turkey. They caught him in Kenya of all places. The Greeks had him, and they turned him over. And that's a big deal, too, because the Greek-Turkish relationship has always been a difficult one. And the very next day, they catch him, and it wasn't really so much against the U.S., but for some reason there was some protest. I remember walking down the street that I used to come in to work and seeing crowds and crowds and crowds - what was going on? I thought it was all against us. It wasn't. Some people had broken into the Greek consulate in Sydney and did some damage, and they were all protesting. They were a bunch of Kurds. And here we are in Sydney, Australia and the Kurds are creating this huge demonstration and damaging property of Australians about this issue that went on in Kenya. And the Australians are like pulling their hair out and going, "What the hell does this have to do with us? We're a peaceful people. If you want to come here and live here, fine, but don't bring your issues."

And that's how they felt about Bosnia, too. And they took in a lot of Bosnians and Kosovoans at the time. They put them into old barracks in way outer Sydney. There were big, big complaints by these people saying, "I want to go home. I don't want to stay here. I can't stand it here." And the Australians were just outraged . "Here we are, we're giving everything over to you, we're welcoming you to our country, we're going to help you establish a life here, and you're sitting here complaining to us." So they're not stranger friendly. They're not, and this I gathered from being there. But it's quite different. I actually even thought of staying there. But I love living in a place that's multi cultural and has a mix of people from all over the world. I'm from New York City originally, and Washington's even better at mixing people from all over the world. I guess I think the

thing that's so nice about Washington is, the people that you have here from all over the world are for the most part educated. Whereas you'll have them from all over the world in New York, and not necessarily educated.

So, U.S. - Australian relations were very good, very strong. There were some minor problems. And, of course, there was a lot of criticism. We used to monitor the Australian press every day, and their comments about what particular issues were going on. Of course, with Monica Lewinsky -

Q: I was going to ask. They must have had fun with that.

REILLY: Oh, they had a riot with it. Because they are much more relaxed about sex than Americans are. Bill Clinton came there while I was there. They loved him. "Billy!" they would shout - he gave a speech out in a beautiful, beautiful park across from the Opera House. It was a stunning, stunning day. He gave a speech. He rolled up his shirt sleeves and walked into that audience - I'm sure the Secret Service were dying - and was shaking hands with so many people; he couldn't get enough of it. They adored him. So, they were amused; they found the whole thing unbelievably amusing. There was lots written about it.

Q: Did you find a - God knows how you could - but put a twist or a spin on, how do you -

REILLY: I don't remember too much about that, but I do remember one day walking into the office, and something had been exposed the day before. I don't know if it was the dress, or the cigar, or whatever. But, I looked at my colleagues, and we were laughing, "Do we have to be involved in this? Do we have to even comment on this?" We looked for press guidance. I came in every morning. We were actually a day ahead of everyone, but it didn't matter, you read the press guidance for the day. You just grin and bear it.

Compared to what I had seen, and the issues in Nigeria, with enormous environmental degradation, with the human rights issues, with disease; the whole time I was living there they had a dictator. So there I am, living in a country run by this military dictator. It all seemed so much lighter there. Not that I didn't take it seriously. We did. But nothing that happened ever seemed to be that monumental, except for the bombing of the two embassies.

Q: What happened?

REILLY: I'm trying to recall exactly. We were horrified, of course. I remember sitting on the 59th floor of this office tower. This office tower, right in the heart of downtown Sydney, had about 68 floors. We were on the 58th and 59th. We had two entire floors. But you didn't take a special elevator up. Anyone could take any elevator that went to those floor levels. One of them was Merrill Lynch, the company that was above us, and there was a German bank above us. They went to the landlord asked to have us moved out of the building, because they didn't feel safe with us in the building. And I understood why.

I was thinking to myself, "I don't feel safe either." Because the consulate was on the same floor, the visa section was on the same floor, that I was. So you walked out the elevator bank and you went left if you wanted to get visas or travel to the U.S., and you went right to my office. People would come up trying to get a last minute visa with these huge bags, big backpacks. And I'm thinking, "Any looney could walk in - there's no security - anyone could walk into that elevator with a huge bomb and take off the top of this building." So I did feel somewhat unnerved, of course. I'm sure anyone in an embassy or consulate felt the same at that particular time.

Q: What had happened in Canberra? Where was the bombing?

REILLY: No, no, the bombing was in Tanzania and…

Q: Tanzania and Kenya.

REILLY: Because when you were talking about the major issues of that particular period, 96 to 99, which of course was the war in Bosnia. I'm trying to think of other big international issues that we worked on. I think that was probably the biggest. But then of course in '98, one of the women that we had all worked with in Sydney was in the embassy in Kenya ; she was fine, but her boss was killed; I guess we felt this personal connection to it. But I remember, the Australians were being extremely sympathetic. The outpouring of sympathy for the U.S., "Isn't this a horrible thing." I have no idea how they reacted in September of 2001, but I can only imagine that it was like the rest of the world, feeling more or less the same. You felt how incredibly strong and powerful the relationship is between the U.S. and Australia. I think that's still the case because, again, of the WWII experience. Although a lot of people I know are very much against the Bush administration and particularly anything that has to do with the environment and not taking care of the future and that sort of thing. They are much more future-oriented than we are when it come to what's going to happen with subsequent generations.

All in all, it was interesting, it wasn't difficult, but I also, as I mentioned earlier, felt as if, "Where am I going? What's going to happen to me next in this career? I don't feel as if I'm going to go anywhere." I felt as if I'd be at FS-03 forever. In fact, I was an FS-04. I didn't even get advanced to FS-03 although I was three times recommended for promotion. When I was there, everyone kept saying, "It's going to happen next year." I didn't feel as if the work I was doing was particularly substantive. I wasn't doing bad work; it wasn't as if I was doing anything bad. But I didn't feel as if it was important.

And then, I started to feel that this was not the right career choice and that if I wanted to do something where I would have more to say about my own personal life and career, that maybe it was something that I ought to consider leaving, which I ultimately did. It was a very hard decision to make, though, because it's a very attractive career, as I'm sure you know. A lot of people like it. And sometimes when I still meet with my friends - a good friend of mine just got assigned to PAO Pretoria. I'm thrilled for her; it's a fabulous job. What a great, great assignment, particularly in a world that's so very concerned about

terrorism. I'm not saying you're safe down there. But, South Africa is not a terrorist state. So I see the attraction of the whole thing. I think my ultimate decision was more about having more control about my own life, taking charge of my own life.

Q: Were there others such as you in USIS (United States Information Service) who were beginning to feel the same thing too?

REILLY: Yes. Even the guy that I worked for. We were never friends. But we developed a respect for each other. In the beginning, it was very difficult to communicate with him. That was a very big part of my stay there. If you imagine, the only American that I'm working for, my direct boss, and I was in charge of the FSNs, is someone that was very difficult and very stiff. People would say, "God, that guy's got hardly any personality." He was very rigid. He loosened up after a while, but even with that he was pretty stiff. He was also - I've never worked with anyone who would say, "I've got to go home now. Elizabeth is having trouble with the children." And I was like, "What?" He had three kids, and his wife was very, domineering is the only word I can think of. And she would call him and, "I need help here" or something like that. So he would go off. But it was the kind of place where he could do it because there weren't so many demands. There were also some of the problems with, people were having personal problems with alcoholism. I saw some of that again. The first consul general in Sydney was a very lovely, very professional man.

Q: Who was that?

REILLY: Jerry Tolson. Lovely guy who really understood the job better than anyone else. It was not a political job by any means. But the next guy who came in was an appointee, a regular State Department employee who was taken on for one tour, and people in the State Department were outraged. Richard Green. Richard Green was brought, because they wanted him, from what we heard, out of the Finance Office. He had a pretty high level job in the Finance Office and someone who worked for Albright said, "Get him out of here." So they gave him a three year assignment in Sydney as Consul General. So he arrives in Sydney and his mandate, which he gave to himself, was to create policy. All of a sudden the people in Canberra are like, "Who is this guy, and what is he trying to do?" Because he's not political. He was a consul general that was there to go to openings and to official events, attend the boat visits, and that kind of thing. It's a light job. I would go with him on visits to contacts, take him to universities, or meet different people. The good news is that he didn't try to meet the press. I was stunned by some of the things that he would say.

I went with him on a visit once to a university, UTS, University of Technology of Sydney. We were invited to lunch by the chancellor and some other high level administrators within the university. These were very nice people and we worked with them a little bit on some educational exchange programs, and we'd bring speakers there or have some of their faculty meet some of our visiting people. Nice relationship; we might have even funded a couple of research things, small amounts of money. Good relationship. Anyway,

it was just at the time that Tom Friedman had published The Lexus and the Olive Tree. And we had Tom Friedman for a guest.

Q: He's a columnist for the New York Times.

REILLY: Right, right. His book had just come out, and it was a hot book. Basically, he was talking about, "Look at Asia." Basically making a comparison for the highly developed Asian Pacific world - this was before the big bust - making all kinds of electronics, everything on computer, and putting out cars, and comparing it to the Middle East, which wasn't doing anything. Tom Friedman saying this is the future and this is how we should behave. If you have all these great factories and electronics, people behave as consumers and then they're out for their own special interests and they develop democracies.

So we go to this UTS thing and we sit down, and no sooner does the chancellor introduce everyone at the table than Rich Green starts talking for thirty minutes. He didn't say that he just read this in the book, but "this is the way the world is going" without stopping to take a breath, going on and on and on. Maybe I'm making too much of a big deal about this, but everyone sat at the table like, "What is he talking about? We're having a meeting just to meet and greet and have lunch." But, he went on and on and on and on. He was our consul general who was trying to reshape how people did business. I knew a little bit more about this because I was very good friends with the commercial officer who told me a lot that went on in trade meetings with this guy. Plus, we had an ambassador who was a woman and although superficially nice, was a real narcissist, I guess is the best way to say it. She was very much out for her own personal advancement, appearance, and all the rest of that. A very capable person, too, at the same time, but just a lot of difficult relationships between the ambassador and the consulate generals. You know Tex Harris?

Q: Oh yes.

REILLY: Tex was the consul general in Melbourne.

Q: I think Tex was the one who told me about the Serbs attacking his place.

REILLY: That's right. You know what, I forgot all about it. It didn't happen in Sydney, it happened in Melbourne. Yes, yes, he did. They had a problem there. It didn't even happen to us. No, it just happened down there. I guess they have a bigger population. Melbourne has one of the largest Greek populations in the country. I guess they have more Serbs. It didn't happen in Sydney.

So Tex was the consul general. He's a very colorful guy, as you know. He and Genta Hawkins Holmes didn't get on. He told a funny story once about how - in May, they have a huge, like a Kentucky Derby there, called the Melbourne Cup. This is a big day. Offices close half a day. Everyone goes to the bars. If you're in Melbourne, you head to the racetrack and you go to these big lunches and this sort of thing. I think it's in May; maybe

it's not in May. But anyway, he invited Genta to a big lunch at the racetrack - I forget the name of it - in Melbourne and he introduced Genta, the ambassador, to some of his very good contacts. And he said, " This is the American Ambassador to Australia, Genta Hawkins Holmes." And someone said to him, smacked him on the back, "Tex, I thought you were the ambassador." And that sort of told what that relationship was about, because she felt that he was running Victoria, the State of Victoria, which was his territory, and part of Adelaide. He managed South Australia. That he was managing it as though he was the ambassador. Tex had that kind of personality.

Q: Well, of course, Tex is bigger than life, both in personality and in size.

REILLY: I went down, with some friends, one of them being my friend from the Foreign Commercial Service and another friend who was visiting from San Francisco. The three of us took a trip down the coast for New Year's of 98 and met Tex in Melbourne, and we all went to a fabulous dinner, which he arranged, waterside, for New Year's Eve. It was just an amazing, amazing event in a private room. He knew a lot of people, and they really liked him there. He did a very good job as far as relationships go. I believe he even bought a place to live down there half the year, if I'm not mistaken. I mean it's a wonderful country, a very nice place, if you've never been.

The PAO, the second PAO that we had - I had one PAO for a year, she went on to Ottawa - then we got a new PAO who had come out of Korea. When you first met him, seemed like a really nice guy, but he was really ineffectual. He was another poor communicator, who had a very hard time managing my direct boss. He used to call me and say, "Hi, I want you to tell your boss..." and I'm like, "Wait a minute, Don. You should be telling him. You're putting me in a very bad position asking me to communicate something to him that you should be communicating to him." And it turned out that he had a drinking problem and was drinking on the job.

That reminded me a little of Lagos, but it was nothing like Lagos where people were brought up on all kinds of personal charges, were taken out of the country over night because of some misdemeanor. It was pretty smooth functioning. I had a very enjoyable time living there. I made wonderful friends. I went back once since I left. I'm very eager to go back again. I made some delightful friends, I saw beautiful parts of the country. One of the more interesting things I did was to spend ten days in Darwin during the evacuation of East Timor. This was in the summer of 99, when the Indonesians - well, some UN (United Nations) workers were killed, the UN pulled out and then all the aid agencies pulled out. The East Timorese were fighting for their lives. I also worked on a project where we helped expose the Australians' role, or lack of a role, in 1974 when the Indonesians went in and slaughtered the East Timorese.

We worked on a lot of cultural programs, visiting choral groups, opera, art exhibits. Very nice stuff, really nice. I mean, you couldn't complain. They had beautiful galleries; we created relationships with galleries. Book launches, museums, working with the natural history museum there. Doing events in their town hall. It was quite a lovely experience,

being invited to lunches at their beautiful parliament, or even just sitting in parliament, and seeing how the parliamentary system worked, which is so fascinating. It was really a very rich time for me, being exposed to a lot of very nice people, interesting ideas. I felt the Australians were hungry to discuss issues and to be seen as a primary country. Which of course they weren't. They weren't really seen that way by us. No one would not say that our relationship was not an important one. When you think about the fact that there are twenty million people there, it's that southern antipodean society, it was viewed by a lot of people as being a light assignment. If you were in Australia for three years, you were on vacation.

Q: Well, compared to some other places.

REILLY: There's no doubt about it. I wasn't in Kigali, or Rwanda, or some really tough, tough places. As I said, it was an incredible experience. Most people who went there didn't want to leave. You talk to Skip downstairs. Skip only left because they wanted him to go to Jordan. He spoke Arabic. They needed him desperately. So he was there for one year.

Q: Did you have any idea - first place, having come in late into the Foreign Service with other experience, did that spoil you for, I mean you were able to look at the Foreign Service experience, maybe you were a generation behind or ahead? Your cohorts were younger than you, weren't they, with less experience outside.

REILLY: Yes, they were probably coming out of graduate school, and I was 45. Yes, it was a whole other experience. But I didn't feel junior when I was in Lagos. I felt like I was really getting to do some interesting work. To go upcountry or somewhere where there isn't anybody, and you're developing relationships, which is something I always like to do. I did feel that I was going nowhere in Sydney. I took the work seriously, I did a good job, and it wasn't all that difficult. Just being prepared, and knowing what was going on every day. It was only just a matter of did I want to keep traveling. I really felt traveling and making friends and leaving was just not a lifestyle that really seemed to suit me. I love to travel, and I like living in other places, but every two or three years picking up and going somewhere.

I also had another very interesting assignment. The East Timor assignment. I was in Darwin, I wasn't in East Timor, I was really just monitoring what was going on with aid and people. Not USAID (United States Agency for International Development) but any relief agency coming out. Talking to them, going to daily briefings with the Australian military. I got an assignment to do a TDY (temporary duty) in Hanoi. That was fascinating. That was only in 97, so I wasn't even there a year. I did two weeks in Hanoi for a Madeleine Albright visit. I actually thought about bidding on that, because I loved Vietnam. I thought it was so interesting. They were building a new embassy. They were building a consulate. It was always happening from the ground up there. A lot of military presence, a lot of things going on. So, I was attracted to that, and I actually did inquire into bidding on it and I was way off cycle or something. I looked into doing different

things. Before I resigned I looked into coming back to the UN, because some people said to me, "Well why don't you come back and take a job at the UN and then you can think about what you want to do" and that sort of thing.

I think there were a lot of different reasons why. But one of them was definitely, I felt as if I was sort of marked as not to go anywhere. And, that really bothered me. Because, I felt that I was doing the work that the BPAO was doing. Of course, he had 12 years in the service, and I had three or four. That was the difference. Yes, you're right, coming in late probably put me behind, put me way behind. One of my colleagues who came in with similar experience to me in public relations and marketing negotiated for a better position from the get-go. She did a little bit better for herself. I think she's an FS-02 now. Of all the colleagues that I came in with, and they're in now over 11 years, I think most of them are FS-02, one or two might be an FS-03. I guess after 11 years that's pretty normal. I was very unhappy about not getting any promotions. Everyone said, "Get out of Sydney if you want a promotion. Go somewhere else."

Q: You retired in 1999?

REILLY: Yes.

Q: Did you have any thought of what you were going to do after that?

REILLY: I wanted to do public affairs. I must say that being in the service for a little over six years helped me with that because I had been in public relations and marketing before, and education, and never really worked directly in public affairs, and it just felt like a really good fit. International affairs, in particular. I had a real interest in the area, something I could be passionate about. I didn't have a deep background in any of it, but was well apprised of current events and had certain historical information that helped me with it, and would do my homework if I needed to. But, I just felt like a natural for public affairs and for working with groups of people. I do work with some groups here, but my biggest complaint about this particular job is that I don't get out enough and meet and work with people, and liaise with other groups as much as I would like . I had more opportunities to do that when I was with the government, actually. This is a very busy school, and we are very understaffed.

Q: What did you do when you left?

REILLY: I had been living in San Francisco, and I went back to San Francisco. I had family and friends there. And I just decided that I had always liked living there - I had lived there for four years before joining - that that was the right place for me. But when I came back I really had a hard time becoming adjusted and finding the right work in California. My desire to do public affairs didn't seem to fit in with the local economy and community. Although there are a lot of NGOs (Non Government Organizations) and things like that there, most people were more interested in my knowledge of high tech. It was before the big burst of the stock market, just before that. So, I was really having a

hard time meshing. Here I am talking government and international affairs, and Pacific Rim issues. It wasn't happening.

I immediately got lucky and did some freelance work for an environmental organization, which was something I wanted to work on. I would be a natural for international environmental issues, sustainability issues, U.S. Pacific kinds of things. So I did get some freelance work doing that, and spent time looking for a job, and ultimately started looking outside of California because I wasn't getting a job. And I got a job in New York City, where I'm originally from. I took it. And that was in building conferences. I also had some family problems at the time and had to return to New York. Well, I didn't have to, but it seemed to be the wise thing to do.

I got a job building conferences for government employees for a group that called themselves an institute, but they weren't really an institute. They were a private business run out of Britain, putting together conferences for very big fees, huge fees. They put me in their government relations department and I would have to put out a conference a month. That was my job. It was like building a curriculum. Here's the topic. You'd write a brief, whose your target, work with marketing people, work with people to help you build, find your audience, that sort of thing. And, then, really just build this thing: get speakers, get on the phone, get the experts, put a curriculum together, a two-day event together, and mail it out. It was like an assembly line. It wasn't rocket science. If you were very organized and knew what you were doing from the get-go, and got a very good grasp of your topic, it was pretty easy to find speakers. It wasn't so difficult. I don't know how people ever would have done it before the Internet, but with the Internet it was really pretty easy. And you'd get on the phone and talk - it's amazing how much people like to talk about their expertise. So that held me over until I got this job.

Q: And this job is?

REILLY: I'm the director of public affairs for the Elliott School of International Affairs, which is one of the schools within the George Washington University. We are one of the leading schools of international affairs in Washington and probably in the country. Probably in the top six or seven.

Q: What do you do?

REILLY: I put on public events. I work with the media, I work on publications, and I work on the website. That's primarily what I do to create an interest in, and to let people know about, who we are and what we do. We do a very strong speakers event here. I'm doing art exhibits now, too. This is an art exhibit. So we're doing art exhibits here. I was responsible for moving us into this space and helping set up this room where we can do public events. Currently I'm working on revamping the entire website and bringing in some very big speakers such as Kofi Annan, Skip Mead for next semester and other people like that who are people who have a lot of draw. Not only that. We put our own faculty before the public as well so people can see what we have to offer.

Q: Have you noticed any problem since the clamp down on student visas? One of our greatest assets, you know working for the U.S. Information Agency, was our getting foreign students in American schools, because while a few might be turned off, the great majority love it and become real advocates.

REILLY: It's a real problem. Fortunately for me it's not a problem I have to work on. I don't work on international outreach. But actually, I'm preparing a mailing right now for the - we used to have volunteer advisors all over the world in consulates and embassies advising these students who came in about how they can make it happen for themselves, mostly graduate students, some undergraduates, to come to the United States to do their graduate work. And this was where we got some of the best minds in the world. It's not happening like that anymore. It's in all the papers. I heard a report the other day, and I was pretty shocked by the figure, the number of how far we are down, percentage wise, the number of foreign graduates students who are currently here. There was a piece in the paper the other day about how some graduate students are afraid to go home for the holidays, cause they're afraid they're not going to get back into the U.S. So it's a real problem. I have a student who works for me from India. In fact, I've had two different students work as webmasters, three actually, and two of them were from India and one of them was from China. We're really hurting ourselves right now with this policy. There's no question about it. The engineering school is really bleeding from this problem, because forty percent of their students are -

Q: I remember when I used to have an office, doing oral history in George Washington, and looking at who was getting honors in engineering. And they were all Indian or Oriental names.

REILLY: This is only a part-time, but it's a good job because it's a job with benefits. It's twenty hours a week to work as the webmaster here, and it's well paid. When I put this job up on the site, I would say that ninety percent of the applicants, maybe as high as ninety-five percent of the applicants, are from other countries, and most of them are from Asian countries, who come to apply for these jobs and have the skills to do so. The fellow I have now is very good. He's not really a designer, but he's helping me design this new site. Someone else helped. So we had three people working on it, and it's really coming together. And they've been terrific - well, the first one wasn't so terrific, but the second two have been just absolutely terrific to work with; great minds. I don't know what's going to happen if we don't; I mean all the universities in the country are crying the blues up on the hill. I don't know if anyone is listening to them.

Q: No, and of course, it's not just short term. It's very long term.

REILLY: Not only that; what's happening, this is what I read in education chronicles and things like that, is that other universities in the world see this as an opportunity for them to get some of these students. To go to Australia, to go to Canada, European schools, because this is perceived as, "Well, okay, look what we can offer you here." So they're

getting these people who used to want to come here. They're now going to other places and bringing these great minds elsewhere.

Q: Well, this is probably a good place to stop, I think. And, I want to thank you very much.

REILLY: Well, I want to thank you, and if you would just leave it on for a minute. I know that I'm going to be able to review some of this but, in all of my criticisms of the Foreign Service, and I'm sure there were many, there were also some wonderful, wonderful experiences that I had. I'm very grateful to that six and a half years of my life. I'm very grateful for the opportunity and I think that even here, when students know that I did this work, they come to me and they talk about it, and I encourage them to try it. Because I honestly think that, it has some incredible advantages and it offers wonderful opportunities to people. But I think it could be a lot better. And I said that in my resignation letter. I really think it could be a lot better.

End of interview