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

DOUGLAS ROSE

Interviewed by: Dan Whitman
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INTERVIEW

Q: So, this is Dan Whitman talking to Doug Rose. Dan is in Washington, DC and Doug is in Idaho, and we're really delighted to get your story Doug. I know you have two or three regions that we'll be talking about. We always like to start at the beginning, childhood, family background, any particular things that identify you. It could be religious background or education or anything that you think might be relevant in your childhood development.

ROSE: Well, I was born on November 8, 1940, in Salt Lake City, Utah, which is fifteen miles south of my childhood home in Farmington, Utah, a town at that time of fifteen hundred people.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: It was a county seat, but it was typical small-town America for that era.

Q: And many people think back nostalgically about the America of that period. Should we be nostalgic? Are you nostalgic about your childhood and what America was at that time?

ROSE: It had a lot going for it. Part of my very early childhood was a bit traumatic because my father was drafted into the Army and went off to fight in Europe in World War Two. So there were a couple of years of my life when I was in the sole care of my mother, and we were constantly concerned about his welfare and safety and so forth.

Q: So, we entered in '43, so do you remember being only three years old what it was like?

ROSE: He wasn't drafted until a little later, and so he actually left in early 1944, I believe, and then returned after the war.

Q: Alright. I mean, for a person who's four years old, the brain is working, learning is happening, any recollections of how this affected you? Did you have a sense of what World War Two really was?

ROSE: Not in a way that I would understand it until afterward. But at the time that I was born my parents were living with my grandmother. She was a widow and still had her youngest daughter living with her in the home as well, so it was a multi-generational family living in that home, and my dad's brother and his family lived next door. So, we lived there, but my mother didn't have a car or drive at that time, and so it was difficult for her to get around because it was a little bit south of town. So, she, with the income from dad's service, moved to an apartment right in the very heart of the city.

Q: In Farmington or Salt Lake?

ROSE: In Farmington.

Q: Farmington, okay.

ROSE: We were right on the corner of the main crossroads of Farmington, Utah, and that gave us access to the grocery store next door, the bank across the street.

Q: Sounds like "Our Town" by Thornton Wilder.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Sounds very idyllic, do you remember it that way?

ROSE: Yeah, that part of it. And then toward the end we actually—of the war, before my dad got back—we moved to a rented house in preparation for his return. It was a few blocks away from the apartment. The things that I remember from the very earliest stages of my life are a little bit of the home—I had kind of a little cubby that I slept in in my grandmother's home—and then once we moved to the apartment I remember being afraid and having nightmares and everything and my mother had to comfort me, and so I don't know how much of that might have been related to the anxiety that was in the home or how much they might have shared with me about where my dad was or anything like that.

Q: Do you think the fear was your father's situation or other factors?

ROSE: I think that was primarily what it was all about. Of course, it was the move away from the first place where my grandmother lived and she was very loving towards me as well, so it may have just been that displacement and then what was going on. And the first recollection I have of my father was after we had moved to this home in a different part of town and he came home and I remember looking out through the screen door at a man in uniform that I didn't know and seeing him embrace my mother, and that's my first recollection of my father.

Q: That's a vivid image. He was in Europe, I take it?

ROSE: Yes, he fought in three of the four major battles in Europe. The only one he was not involved in was D-Day, but he was at the Hurtgen Forest, he was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge, came home with a Purple Heart and pieces of shrapnel still in him.

Q: So, at that time you were five, I guess. By that time, five is a lot more than three.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Did you understand what shrapnel was and that he was wounded? Did you understand the importance of this person in your life as soon as you saw him?

ROSE: Not really because right after that he took his brother's advice and decided to use the GI Bill to try to get some additional education. He was not a strong student. He played the French horn, and he said that was what kept him in high school because he could play in the band.

Q: The GI Bill was for college, right? Did he go?

ROSE: Right. So, what he did is he took a year of remedial work at a small two-year college in Salt Lake City and then went to the University of Utah and got his bachelor's degree and teaching credentials in elementary education.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, he was also working. When he returned from the war, they actually had made a place for him in his old company. He had been a truck driver for a wholesale grocery business operating from one of the major stores in Salt Lake, and so he made runs up as far as Idaho and northern Utah and so forth, and he fully expected to be driving a semi when he got back, but he found that the shrapnel had damaged the musculature in his legs enough that he had trouble lifting to unload his groceries, and so that was the point at which he had to face the decision of finding another career, which turned out to be a very good one. It was in a way a blessing for us as a family because then he went on and got his education and that led to a change of careers.

Q: I've spoken, and I'm sure you have also, to some of the American soldiers who were at the Battle of the Bulge, and they describe total confusion, nobody knew what was happening. Did your father have tales about the Battle of the Bulge, because that's part of our history?

ROSE: You know, interestingly enough, like many of the veterans of that era, he did not talk much about it.

Q: Very understandable.

ROSE: We found out most of what we know when the Library of Congress came after him and did exactly what you're doing with me right now.

Q: Wow, the American Memory Program. You'd be interested to know, what we are doing now is a part of that collection. How about that?

ROSE: Isn't that wonderful. So, I'll be alongside my dad in the oral history of World War Two, and for me it's the ADST (Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training).

Q: Yeah, ADST—I think we still have the same arrangement, I was executive director there at one point, and all of our interviews were going also to the American Memory collection. I hope that's still the case, I think it might be. So, that's great.

ROSE: So, that was where I learned the details and just briefly what happened is that he had been in two major battles before, as I mentioned—I forget what the other one was besides the Hurtgen Forest, but his troop was in an advanced position near Liège in Belgium, and when the Germans were advancing in the Battle of the Bulge his unit was trying to hold an old stone barn that they were using for some protection, and the night that he was wounded what happened was they had taken heavy casualties, there were new recruits coming in, and he was a radio man but they sent one of the young new recruits up to the loft of the barn to be a lookout and man the machine gun up there. And he kind of went to pieces when the artillery started coming in at them. So, my dad said, well, I know how to operate a machine gun, let me go take his place. So, he went up and was there, and shortly after an artillery shell burst too close to him and put five pieces of shrapnel into him. He was evacuated to a field hospital and before they could operate on him the Germans were advancing, they had to break down the hospital, load him into a box car and send him on into France.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: So, he almost lost his leg. There was infection set in by the time they could get to him, but they were able to save it. He went off to Cambridge, England for recovery, and that was his story of how he finished out the war.

Q: None of this was any fun for anybody, and not that I sympathize with the other side, but we know that it was equally agony for them.

ROSE: Oh, absolutely. So, anyway, that's kind of the background of that era of what really was a major factor in my life and then influenced his career and where we lived subsequently and so forth.

Q: So, he finished his bachelor's, he became an elementary school teacher, did he stay in Farmington?

ROSE: No, what happened is at that time beginning teacher salaries in California were $1,000 more. Which doesn't sound like a big spread, but—

Q: No, at that time.

ROSE: —at that time it was the difference between $4,000 a year and $5,000 a year. So, he went for an interview in La Mesa, California. His primary interview was in Stockton, California, but a heavy snowfall closed the pass, and he was diverted to La Mesa, which was a real blessing because it was a nicer place in all of our opinions.

Q: Oh my god. So, your childhood was at least partly in La Mesa, California.

ROSE: Correct. It adjoins San Diego on the east.

Q: Oh, it's that far down. Okay.

ROSE: Yeah. So, he went there, got an interview, and they hired him on the spot, and we moved the next summer in 1953 to La Mesa, California. But in the meantime, I had all of my elementary school in Farmington and still my family relationships there—relatives—and my first jobs and some of those things that I can talk about.

Q: Yeah. So, you were thirteen. I was seven, I remember I was in a car with my parents the day the ceasefire happened in Korea, and I remembered my parent's excitement. I was seven, I didn't quite understand, but 1953 was also the year that I was an only child. The three of us took a car trip to the West Coast and that was the beginning of my understanding that there was a bigger world than Ohio. So, I guess your anxiety from previous moves, you had gotten over that by the age of thirteen, I suppose.

ROSE: Yeah, I had a good life as a young elementary school student in Farmington, Utah. I had good friends, my cousin was about my age, and we did a lot of things together and started Boy Scouts and that kind of thing. We hiked a lot on the foothills there on the Wasatch Front of the mountains because we lived very close to them. I could walk to them from my house and learn to fish the streams coming down out of the mountain and all those kinds of fun things.

Q: It sounds idyllic. It sounds like "Our Town."

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: We can do this later, but I would be interested, looking back and seeing the contrast between those days and today. It's quite a different America, maybe better, maybe worse, but certainly different. And we can talk about this later, but any comments about the contrast between the America of the 1950s and the one we have now.

ROSE: Yeah. Obviously, it was much more insular in terms of where you lived and what your scope of understanding and cares and concerns and preoccupations were. For us the war was still very much a part of our childhood. It's kind of crazy, but my cousin and I would always play either cowboys and Indians or soldiers.

Q: Yes, so did we.

ROSE: Did you?

Q: Yes.

ROSE: Yeah. Because he was six months older than I was, he had the primary say and so I was always the enemy. To the point that I began to think that it would have been nice if the Japanese had won the war.

Q: Well, did that leave deep psychological scars, Doug? No, I remember elementary school exercises hiding under the desk because of fear of a Japanese attack. I mean crazy, really crazy. But yes, it remained part of—we didn't know what Japan was, but we knew at that time these were the bad guys because we saw bad and good. We didn't see much in between.

ROSE: That's right.

Q: Anything else about American society? At that time, we had a thing called the majority and the minority, now it's many minorities, is that…

ROSE: In Utah and most of the Rocky Mountain communities it was rare to see that diversity. One place that I encountered a little diversity is that my first job was working—back before the child labor laws would have prevented me from doing it—I was picking fruit in the orchards around Farmington. We'd start with the cherries in July and move to the apricots and then the peaches and finish up with picking grapes in September just as school was starting. And so, I was working alongside migrant workers.

Q: I was going to say, I think the increase in Mexican workers came later, didn't it? In the 60s.

ROSE: It did. Not all of the migrant workers were Mexican. There were a few, but a lot of them were—

Q: Were they all from Latin America?

ROSE: No. They were people who had just decided to make a living with that. A lot of them were still products of the Dust Bowl, it was that far back. So, they were out of Oklahoma.

Q: Ah, migrants from other states. I see.

ROSE: Yeah. And they'd come into Utah during the fruit picking period.

Q: Again, American literature. "Grapes of Wrath" from Oklahoma.

ROSE: Right.

Q: Do you remember these people? They were much older than you and you were with them?

ROSE: Yeah. I remember how much they could earn in a day compared to what I could because they were professional pickers. And I still have recollections of some guy, who I think was of Italian extraction, being up in the top of the cherry trees singing, "give me a little grass shack in Hawaii."

Q: Oh my god. And we must remind the reader, who may not understand, Oklahoma was like an undeveloped country and _____ exiled people who—it was a very poor state at that time. Now, not so much, but there were pejorative words for them, and they moved West because they couldn't find…This is the story of "Grapes of Wrath." Fascinating.

ROSE: Exactly. I got to see it right on the scene in front of me.

Q: So, you were fifteen years younger than they were, how did they treat you? Were you invisible to them?

ROSE: They knew I was a local boy and probably knew the owners, and so actually we were probably treated very kindly by them. In fact, I remember them as being people that thought we were pretty cool little kids working out alongside them.

Q: Okay. So, they didn't resent that you were there because of some privilege of knowing the owners, they thought of you as fellow workers.

ROSE: Yeah. There was enough work for all of us and of course they would get the—the owners were sensitive to that and would sort of give them the best trees and that to pick.

Q: So, there was a whole dynamic of workers and social. In days when owners actually thought of workers. I don't want to stereotype, but it seems as though there's less of that these days.

ROSE: Yeah, you know it wasn't the cutthroat thing described in the "Grapes of Wrath." In our little town they were fairly well treated. Interestingly the one other group that sometimes became a part of that was Gypsies.

Q: Really?

ROSE: We had some Gypsies that would come through and earn a little money that way in the orchards.

Q: Where in the world did they come from? Other states?

ROSE: Yeah, I have no idea, but they still had their culture and dress and that was different. And there was prejudice. People worried when they came to town because they worried that they were going to steal.

Q: Yeah. The narrative was they steal, and they rob children. I don't know if any of them ever did that but that was the perception. Well, that's actually fascinating. So, you violated laws that were never yet in existence—well, somebody did, not you. Okay, so we're now in La Mesa, California east of San Diego, and it's time to go to what? Middle school? High School?

ROSE: I entered junior high there in '53.

Q: In La Mesa. So, was it a large school, a small school?

ROSE: It was a fairly large school. It took in kids who funneled into it from several different elementary schools in La Mesa. It was the only junior high school in a town of maybe 28,000 people.

Q: Okay. And of course, nowadays it would be fifty-fifty Latinos and others, but it must have been mostly Anglo-Saxons, I suppose at that time.

ROSE: You would think that and yes, it predominantly was. But a curious aspect of all of that is that this new kid started looking and trying to decide who he was at junior high, and—

Q: That would be you, the enemy. Yes.

ROSE: —and La Mesa was an interesting town because it was kind of a wealthier suburb of San Diego for the most part. There's a hill there that had some very expensive homes on it, and so there was a group of kids that came out of La Mesa and into the junior high that we looked at as privileged, and they held the student body offices and got most of the positions on the sports teams and things like that. But there was a small segment of Latinos in the school. And strangely enough, I was becoming interested in girls at that time, and it seemed like they had attractive girlfriends.

Q: And I bet they did.

ROSE: So, I started hanging with them. And they invited me to join a gang.

Q: A gang. Now we're moving from "Grapes of Wrath" to "West Side Story."

ROSE: We are. Because the head of the gang, who was Hispanic, kind of called the shots and told us when we were going to show up and try to make trouble at football games under the bleachers and these kinds of things. And we all thought we were tough and carried lead-filled pipes around in our pockets and switchblades sewn into the inside of our leather jackets.

Q: I won't even ask if you ever used that stuff.

ROSE: Never.

Q: When we say gang these days we think drugs, illegal this, illegal that, and drugs and violence and people getting killed. I guess that was not the case back then.

ROSE: Thank goodness this was a junior high gang. And I even managed to pick up my dad's old motorcycle jacket—a leather jacket—and put a pachuco gang mark on the back of it.

Q: Now, you mentioned there were so-called privileged suburban kids, did you feel like an outsider and that's one reason…

ROSE: Yeah. These were kids who accepted me.

Q: So, it was the girls, and it was the alienation from the others.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: We all know, anybody who's been through American junior high school, it was always the others, not ourselves who were the cool ones. It was amazing.

ROSE: Right.

Q: Well, we won't put on the record any property damage you caused or…

ROSE: There wasn't a whole lot, but I got suspended from the bus for a while because I lit a pipe bomb at the bus stop.

Q: You could edit this out later if you want to, but I've got to hear more about this. Why did you do this? How did you do this?

ROSE: Well, I figured it would be safe; it wouldn't hurt anybody if it dropped down the storm drain that was next to me, so I kicked it.

Q: Yeah, but why in the world would you do such a thing?

ROSE: To impress the kids around me.

Q: Were they impressed?

ROSE: Oh yeah. Unfortunately, one of the pieces of the pipe came out of the drain, and it didn't hurt anybody but when it came down eventually out of the sky it struck the pant

leg of one of the kids and he reported me. Thank goodness I was spared having caused bodily harm to anybody.

Q: At that time, you knew how to make a pipe bomb, do you still have this knowledge?

ROSE: Yes. I won't share it with you.

Q: No, please.

ROSE: I learned how because one of my friends had a father who knew chemistry and he was able to raid his stock.

Q: Lots of jokes about teenage Americans in the 50s doing funny things with their chemistry sets, but you actually did at that time. You were the real item. Okay, suspended from the bus but not from school?

ROSE: Yeah, they let me stay in school and I actually was still trying to play a couple of different roles and that, so I was a fairly good student, and I joined the glee club and sang in that. But we'd go to the youth center and hang out and look tough and try to pick fights, never very successfully, and try to harass the girls and things like that. So, my younger brothers were more adaptable to the scene and fit in better with the other kids and so they became star little league players and things like that and were in athletics in the school, but I had trouble finding myself. Until the middle of ninth grade at high school. And at that time, I was still attending church. My parents were embarrassed to take me because I had a ducktail haircut and would slouch down in the pews and all of that.

Q: You were a bad boy, if I may say so.

ROSE: Yeah. And I was out sick the day that they took the aptitude test for what math to put you in in high school and so they went to my math teacher, and he thought I didn't show much promise, and so he said, you'd better put him in math one and not algebra.

Q: Did that matter?

ROSE: Not a whole lot, except that then I had to double up and take algebra two and geometry at the same time so I could get four years of math. So I took math one, I went into the class on the first day and a retired admiral was my teacher, and he didn't take guff from people, and he called my name on the roll, and I said yeah instead of here and he said, oh, tough guy. And I said yeah.

Q: And that was the end of being a tough guy, I'm guessing.

ROSE: And he said, we know how to take care of them.

Q: I mean, corporal punishment was not an issue back then.

ROSE: No, it wasn't, I felt the paddle once or twice in elementary school. But anyway, he was kind and by the end of high school I had the second highest score on the SAT in math in my graduating class of 435 students. And he was very proud of me.

Q: Wow.

ROSE: So, the girls who were from the elite when I started showing up by my sophomore year in college prep classes were asking me, what are you doing in here? Because they knew me as that gang kid.

Q: The gangster. But part of your motivation was the girls, so that didn't work out.

ROSE: No, the girls thing still continued to influence me. Because a very cute little girl moved into La Mesa during my sophomore year of high school—maybe it was the end of my freshman year—and she was very proper and everything and I met her at church. And she wasn't going to have anyone who ran around in a black leather jacket and a duck tail haircut and thought he was a tough guy, so I changed my stripes completely and decided that I would move to the other side and ended up taking the school valedictorian to the prom and became a class officer by my senior year.

Q: Wow. So, there's hope for people like you.

ROSE: Yeah, you just have to find yourself.

Q: Wow, high school… I mean… anybody reading this is thinking of their own junior high school years just as pure anxiety, pure alienation, pure inadequacy. I mean, it's no mystery that this is the age group now in 2023 involved in terrible things in some cases. And it's alienation, isn't it, that causes these actions?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: You were a little alienated, but you figured it out with the help of a cute girl. Maybe every gang member should be provided with a cute girl.

ROSE: I guess maybe that's the solution. Who won't tolerate their mayhem and chaos.

Q: Yeah, the welfare state might take care of that.

ROSE: So, during that time I developed other interests, of course. One of the things that I loved about living in the San Diego area was access to the beaches, so I spent a lot of time at La Jolla, and I took up freediving—not with scuba gear—but I became an abalone diver. And at that time before the scuba divers took all of them away, you could dive down into thirteen-foot-deep water and pry an abalone off of the rocks along the coast.

Q: Wow.

ROSE: And bring home a good meal for your family.

Q: Again, when many readers are reading this, they'll think of La Jolla as a very ritzy, swanky, expensive place, which it was not always. It had a simple kind of feeling to it, didn't it, in the 50s.

ROSE: Well, it was always the high-end place and that, but the public beaches were accessible to the public and so that was our favorite place to go both as a family and that. My parents had some good friends—wealthy friends. We had a dentist who had a boat and so he would—I learned to water ski in the bays and go out fishing with him and that, so that was fun. And so, yeah, I had a very enjoyable youth in many respects—after I got through that period in junior high when I was kind of unhappy with who I was and trying to figure it out—

Q: Like almost all of us.

ROSE: Yeah. So, yeah, the rest of it turned out to be a pretty happy experience, and as I say, my grades were good and everything. So, by the time I graduated from high school I was headed to a leading university and so forth.

Q: Yeah. So, while you were in school, what did your father and your mother—you said your mother was embarrassed because you went to church looking like a gangster. Your father continued teaching at that time. What are your recollections of the family influence on your development?

ROSE: My father was a very mild-mannered man and he left most of the discipline to my mother and her eighteen-inch ruler, which carried quite a wallop for your rear end. Because she had handled all the discipline during his time away during the war and after he came back when he was at school or at work, she was the one so much of the time. But at some point, he decided that I needed a haircut, so he said, Friday afternoon when you get out of school we're going to go to the barber. So, Friday afternoon after school instead of taking the bus home I hitchhiked home and unfortunately the car that stopped for me was my dad out looking for me.

Q: That's a good one.

ROSE: He knew the route.

Q: This is beginning to sound like a French comedy. So, you tried to escape and the person who picked you up was your father?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Oh my gosh. Okay, well one point for him.

ROSE: I thought I had succeeded because it was too late in the day to go to the barber shop, so he said we're going tomorrow morning on Saturday. And I said, no, and so he said, yes, we are, and I could tell he meant it, so I let myself get in the car. And we got to the barber shop, and he said you go first, and he was still sitting there in the chair but then there were multiple barbers in the shop, so he got the next seat, and he was seated in the chair beside me while I was getting my haircut. And when the barber got to the point where I thought he'd taken off enough I told him to stop, and my dad said keep going. And he said, son, we'd better obey your dad, and I said no we won't, and I got up and handed him the sheet and embarrassed my father in front of all the people in the barber shop. So, once we got to the car, he didn't say anything and as soon as we got home, I ran in the house and quickly locked myself in the bathroom.

Q: From the eighteen-inch ruler?

ROSE: Yeah, or worse. And I forgot about the little lock release hole that you could stick a coat hanger through. Now, when he came in, he had a pair of scissors, and by the time he finished with me—and he was pretty strong—by the time he finished with my hair there wasn't enough of it to be proud of at all, and we went back to the barber shop to let them even it up. And that along with the new girlfriend took away my gang persona.

Q: But it also straightened you out.

ROSE: It did indeed.

Q: The man that you are.

ROSE: Yes, because I no longer had the credentials to be a tough guy.

Q: It's funny how hair is part of identity. I mean, now I have very little of it. I used to think about this a lot, I don't anymore. And in the military in concentration camps, the removal of hair is intended to destroy a person's identity. It doesn't make sense, does it?

ROSE: You can go all the way back to biblical times when they shaved David's messengers.

Q: Samson and Delilah.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Okay. There's something about that, I don't quite get it.

ROSE: Good observation.

Q: Yeah, well it's funny you remember these particular moments. You would have been sixteen, I guess, sitting next to your father in a barber's shop and embarrassing him, so he kept silent during that ordeal but gave you hell after you got home.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And then by then you were maybe a junior or something like that?

ROSE: That would have been during my sophomore year still.

Q: Second year. So, any other milestones within the next two years? Sorry, you said you were in, was it the marching band?

ROSE: No, I did not pursue music after that. The next really big story for me came with Sputnik.

Q: Ah, 1957.

ROSE: So, I'll give you some historical context. I don't know whether you were old enough to—

Q: I did. I was eleven years old.

ROSE: Okay. Well, the country panicked, as you may very well remember. And one of the results of that panic was they decided in our high school that they needed to select the students that were going to restore our country's honor. And so, they came through and tested the kids who were in college prep classes, and they selected twenty-seven of us out of my junior class by 1957 who would be privileged to go into a special program in their senior year which would integrate trigonometry, physics, all the things that you would need. It even included, if you could believe this, a before school place in the metal shop where we would build little ramjet engines and steam turbines and other kinds of things.

Q: So, your bomb building exercise was useful.

ROSE: Oh yeah.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: So, by that time I had a part-time job and had been able to buy a car so I was able to drive to school early and spend forty-five minutes in the metal shop before regular school began and then I was one of the privileged twenty-seven who was in this special class with advanced—at that time, I mean kids go beyond what we did now—but I was in advanced math and that was one of the reasons that I did so well on the SAT. But anyway, that was really instrumental in a lot of what happened after that because that prepared me to earn a California state scholarship that I could use at the University of California Berkeley my freshman year.

Q: Oh my gosh. Wow. That's quite an arc from gangster to Berkeley. Berkeley now, as then, was way up in the national consciousness. And of course, it was the center of a lot of commotion years later in the 60s—

ROSE: It was just getting started then, but yeah, I was there just before Mario Savio and the Free Speech Movement, but not much before. And it was more the beatniks that were around San Francisco at the time.

Q: Yes, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and those people.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: I think of beatniks as harmless, creative poets who were eccentric and dissatisfied with the system in the U.S., but not at all aggressive.

ROSE: Right. And that's I think an accurate portrayal. So, you know, as a—we haven't talked about religion, but I was a practicing member of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, so I didn't drink coffee, but you could get hot cider in coffee houses, and I used to love to hang out there in my spare time and listen to jazz ensembles.

Q: Okay, cider, not coffee. Okay. I mean, we think of Utah as the center, but we know that it was also very strong in California. So, were you a part of a larger community or were you basically solo in that regard in your community?

ROSE: For whatever reason I happened to be on the side of La Mesa that went to a high school where there were only three of us in my senior class who were members of my church—boys—there were a couple of girls as well, including the one that attracted me. But most of my friends from church went to the other high school that took another part of the community. So, my school friends were mostly what you would call I guess the high achievers in classes and that and in student government and all that, which is why I took the valedictorian to the senior prom. But I would spend a lot of time with my church friends as well, and we had kind of a close-knit group, and we would go places together and take in entertainment and then go to the beach together and things like that. So, the church was very much a part of my life, and I was, as all young men who are practicing members of the church, I was ordained a deacon at age twelve—

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: —and a priest at age sixteen—

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: —and was preparing to serve a mission.

Q: Oh my gosh. This is dramatic, wow. A deacon at the age of twelve. When we think of the Church of Latter Day Saints, we think of a very disciplined community where I'm not

at all surprised that academic performance was very much a part of that program, and we also think of it as a church that would render advantages to its members in return for their willingness to be disciplined and high achievers. Is that an accurate view, and if so, was your own view really theological, was it the lifestyle? What part of it?

ROSE: A lot of it was my heritage. My ancestors joined the church during the time of the founder, Joseph Smith.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah. They crossed the plains in covered wagons and settled in Utah. So, I had that legacy, and my parents were very active. My dad gave a lot of church service as a bishop and other important positions. They're all volunteers because it's a lay clergy.

Q: A bishop? I mean, we're an hour into this conversation and I didn't know about this. He was an elementary school teacher, but also a volunteer and bishop. I mean, a bishop is pretty important.

ROSE: Yeah. A bishop in our church is in charge of one congregation rather than a diocese, so it's not quite the equivalent of a bishop in a Catholic church or Episcopal or something.

Q: Were you familiar with the headquarters, the big church in Salt Lake City? Have you been there?

ROSE: Yes, if you were a practicing member of the church you probably tried to once in a while make it to the semi-annual general conference in Salt Lake City and get to sit in and listen to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Q: Yes, which sang at presidential inaugurations.

ROSE: Right, so I had some of those experiences.

Q: So, you can trace your ancestors back to those who came from East to West out to Utah?

ROSE: Oh yes, very much so. My mother's side of the family as well. Interestingly, her first ancestor of note was the Reverend Solomon Stoddard, who was a Puritan preacher who inherited part of Cotton Mather's congregation.

Q: Oh my gosh. Stoddard?

ROSE: Yes, Solomon Stoddard. So, Mayflower ancestry and all of that as well.

Q: This was the Great Awakening, Cotton Mather. At an early age did you read about the Great Awakening? It was a major part of what made—

ROSE: Yeah, we were taught about that in history classes and one of the things that I did during my high school years, like most of our young people in our church who were practicing members of it is we would attend early morning seminary and spend an hour before school until I had to take part of that time away to go learn how to build ramjet engines and steam engines.

Q: You were a busy young fellow.

ROSE: Yeah. And I had a job selling shoes in a Karl's Shoes store.

Q: Wow.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: You certainly fulfilled the image of the ideal American teenager. Good for you. This is fascinating. Yes, this is a whole—I mean, if you have to get that text, go ahead.

ROSE: No, we're fine.

Q: I would love to get—

ROSE: This is fun.

Q: It is for me too. I've been to Salt Lake City a couple times, and I can't say I really knew it very well. I knew—this is a long story—but a friend of mine who was a Latter Day Saint was running an orphanage in Cameroon, which was one of my Foreign Service assignments and asked me to be present for a fundraiser, and I did. I went to Salt Lake City. I had miles to spare. And it was—I mean, my main memory is the gift shop in the hotel, and it was selling something called Mormon beer six packs, and it said, why have just one? So, I was struck that the community definitely had a sense of humor about itself. So, this was really part of your life. And then as you went to Berkeley was this a big change from a very small town to a bigger town to Berkeley. I mean, this was a great widening of your perspectives, I think.

ROSE: It was. And as I mentioned, I was able to get a full-tuition California state scholarship based on my scores on the national merit exam and that saved me—everybody's going to laugh at this when they see it—but it saved me $125 a semester, which was the pre-Reagan cost.

Q: Got it. For the reader's benefit, it's Reagan who did away with free education in California. And actually, was there a consistent reaction in the community of Latter Day Saints towards Ronald Reagan? I mean, he did appeal to Evangelists.

ROSE: Oh, absolutely. Remember Ezra Taft Benson, one of our apostles was secretary of agriculture during a Republican administration and curiously—I won't go into a lot of

detail on this—but Idaho has a very interesting history with the Mormon community because the first ones were established in what they thought was northern Utah, and it turned out to be Idaho. And they turned out to be a large enough voting block as Democrats that the Republicans used the polygamy issue to disenfranchise them.

Q: Woah. Voters from the Church of Latter Day Saints tended to vote Democratic?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Oh. Because we think of the senator, Romney, who was a staunch Republican in the tradition.

ROSE: And virtually all of the politicians have been. Although, there was one name, Gunn McKay, who was a friend of mine and lived in McLean, Virginia, and somehow, he got elected. Probably on the strength of his name because his father or his grandfather was a prophet of our church. But anyway, that aside, Mormons in Idaho were disenfranchised and then the Republicans were able to come to power in the state.

Q: Wow. Did the church have a position on political participation? Did they stand aside?

ROSE: No, they were very active. Utah was one of the first states—and Idaho and Wyoming, places that had significant populations—were the first ones to grant women's suffrage because they wanted all those women voting.

Q: That's very interesting. I guess what I meant was, did they have a preference for one party or the other. It sounds like—

ROSE: The shift came with welfare issues, really. Our church has a very strong ethic of self-reliance. And the welfare society of the Kennedy and Johnson era was what really significantly turned the population of the church toward Republican.

Q: Interesting. Very interesting. And did the church explicitly have opinions about this?

ROSE: No, they have made every effort to maintain neutrality, but they will come out on social issues that they have a strong doctrinal basis for taking a position on. But they're as anxious to receive presidential candidates from either party in the headquarters of the church as they can be. And during much of the last few years, at least one member of the three member presidency of the church was a Democrat and so forth. So yeah, that's really where that big shift took place.

Q: Yeah. Where do you feel, within the Protestant movement if we can put the Mormon movement within it, where do you feel that—because there are so many—where would you put it on a graph, either ideologically or in terms of social values and such?

ROSE: Yeah. I think it's been a long history of evolution of—because of the fact that there was extreme persecution that drove the early members of the church out of

Missouri, Illinois, even New York to some extent, that the position of the church doctrinally or theologically, if you will, is that there was a long period after the death of the apostles of Jesus Christ when the full church that Christ had established was not upon the earth. It had disappeared. And that—

Q: You mean the church of Rome had violated Jesus' principles.

ROSE: Yes. They refer to it as the Great Apostasy.

Q: A view shared by many.

ROSE: So, the Protestant Reformation has generally been viewed as a preparatory movement to the restoration of the original church with its twelve apostles and all the practices of New Testament Christianity. And so, we don't view ourselves as part of the Protestants because they're break-offs in some respects from the Catholic Church. But now, today we have common cause in many respects with both Catholics and Protestants, and others as well in our humanitarian work. I can get to this later, but we work with Muslim organizations and the Catholic Church and many others.

Q: Your description does remind us of Shiites and Sunnis, who differ greatly on who really should have succeeded the prophet in the seventh century. The debate you're mentioning goes back seven centuries before that.

ROSE: Yeah, it goes back to the post-apostolic period.

Q: Do you see benefits to the different opinions tolerating and even coinciding a bit more? What is the feeling of the church, I should put it that way?

ROSE: Well, during my childhood we always thought of ourselves as really outliers who did not hold common cause with much of Christianity. We felt at least as much identification with the Jewish religion as we did with the other Christians.

Q: So, I say this in jest, is this what drove you to be a juvenile delinquent?

ROSE: Perhaps.

Q: That's really fascinating.

ROSE: Yeah. But in recent years, as I said, there has been enough of a change where not too many of the Evangelical or Baptist churches still condemn us from the pulpit and the pope approved the building of a temple in Rome.

Q: Oh. That was the current pope, but he is an outlier. He's very much unlike his predecessors.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Do you think that Shiites and Sunnis could ever possibly follow the same path and stop killing each other?

ROSE: Wouldn't that be wonderful.

Q: Yeah. I don't see it.

ROSE: It really is a question of what you emphasize. Do you emphasize the commonalities or the differences? We still see ourselves as being different, but we see a lot of commonalities, so we have common cause with all of our brothers and sisters, including Muslims.

Q: Yeah. Now, a hypothetical—and hypotheticals are always unfair—if you had been born in a different part of the country with a different background, do you think you would have found yourself in this religion or do you think, as you said, that it was your biological heritage? What degree of this did you come to this as a previous practice of your ancestors as opposed to your own reasoning, your own sense of spirituality? Was it both?

ROSE: I suppose one indicator is that at the time that I graduated from high school, I gave about equal weight in my philosophy of life to Emerson and Thoreau, the transcendentalists, as I did to my church.

Q: I love them.

ROSE: I do too. I still do. And so, I really said, okay, if my church beliefs cannot hold up in an environment like Berkeley, then so be it. And so, even if I had not wanted to study architecture, which was not available at BYU (Brigham Young University), I would have chosen not to go to BYU.

Q: Oh well wait, this comes later, right? Brigham Young…it was Berkeley.

ROSE: No, I chose to go to UC (University of California) Berkeley, as much because they had a school of architecture and BYU didn't, as because I wanted to be in an environment where I could test my beliefs. And certainly, they were because I was in a very small group at Berkeley as well. There were significant numbers, enough there to have a student branch of our church and all of that, and we had a nice building to meet in and all of that. In fact, it was William Randolph Hearst's Mother's home that the church bought to use as our chapel.

Q: Wow. No, so when you mentioned BYU, that is the one you did not go to, you chose Berkeley instead?

ROSE: Right.

Q: William Randolph Hearst. Not every church can afford property owned by William Randolph Hearst, so good on you.

ROSE: So, anyway, it was tested, and I felt it met the test. I could find things in the doctrines, teachings, and my personal experiences that confirmed to me that this was worth holding onto, my ancestral religion. And that it was not just family tradition that I felt obligated to continue.

Q: How many of your fellow Mormons went through that same period of questioning, do you think? Many or a few?

ROSE: I think most of us do it at some point in our lives, and some decide that it's not for them. Others, a large number—there are approximately 50,000 young men and women out there telling people that this church has much to offer and are willing to dedicate two years of their lives to a mission.

Q: Did you do a mission? That comes later, I suppose.

ROSE: Well, that will pick up from where we are at Berkeley. Because despite the fact that I got some place in the 600s in my SAT scores in math and quantitative and 585 in English in the verbal skills—

Q: Not bad, 585.

ROSE: Yeah, but I flunked calculus and analytical geometry two semesters in a row at Berkeley.

Q: At Berkeley? Now, that's an achievement.

ROSE: I did very well in my design courses.

Q: Really? So, you really were into architecture rather than math.

ROSE: Yeah. So, I looked at my grades when I came out of Berkeley after the first year and I had a B in English, and I thought, maybe I can build on that.

Q: So much for the SATs. I'm delighted that they're beginning to disappear; they're really a terrible indicator. So, wow.

ROSE: So, anyway, so what I did is when I left Berkeley after the end of my freshman year—

Q: Oh, you spent only one year there.

ROSE: Yes. I agreed to make myself available for a church mission.

Q: And there you discovered the world, perhaps.

ROSE: In November of 1960 on my birthday, I was in Salt Lake preparing to leave for Peru.

Q: Wow.

ROSE: With only my high school Spanish to help me.

Q: But we know the best language education in the world is Mormons preparing for their mission. We know it's the best. BYU is the place to be to learn. There's strict discipline and not a single word of your native language. This is really fascinating. And that may be a natural point for us to think of the next session.

ROSE: Yes. I think this is a good point, so this gets us through my year up to my freshman year of college where there was a major change in my life.

Q: So, like the Chekhov pistol on the mantelpiece we'll leave your bachelor's degree as a mystery, something that will happen later, which will keep the reader riveted for next time.

ROSE: Very good.

Q: Doug, thank you very much. This is truly fascinating, and I can't wait to get through to Peru. We're supposed to mark this. Once again, it is April 6, 2023, and this is Doug Rose talking to Dan Whitman and my condolences Doug, it's been a rough day for you.

ROSE: Thank you very much. It's nice to be able to take my mind off of it a little bit and reflect on some good times in my youth with you and enjoy your company for this afternoon.

Q: Thank you very much. We'll do it again as soon and as often as you'd like, okay?

ROSE: Well, next Thursday should be fine.

Q: Good. Thanks Doug. All the best.

ROSE: Thank you.

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Q: So, this is Dan Whitman talking to Doug Rose and it's April 13, 2023. This is our second conversation. Doug, in our last episode you were about to leave Berkeley after one year, I think as a leave of absence kind of thing, and you decided to do a religious mission in Peru, and I bet you learned perfect Spanish for that. Let's get you from San Francisco to wherever it was in Peru. Probably not Lima, right?

ROSE: Actually, part of it was. That's where we landed. Within my first two weeks there I got typhoid.

Q: Actually, there's a missing thing here, which is actually your decision to leave Berkeley. I don't know at what point you knew you were going to leave after one year. And also, what the recruitment and training process was that got you to Peru.

ROSE: Those are good questions. When I came out of Berkeley, I had made the decision that I probably would not go back the next year because it would have required me to continue to beat my head against calculus and analytic geometry if I wanted to continue.

Q: You had excelled in that, you said.

ROSE: Well, I failed it two semesters in a row at Berkeley

Q: Wait a minute.

ROSE: After getting a 600 plus SAT score.

Q: This is crazy. How does this make sense?

ROSE: I think it was just the level of abstraction in calculus that just did not penetrate my mind. And there were other factors. I was with a famous mathematician professor who I could see if I had binoculars in the lecture room who was putting things on the board—my teaching assistant who had the sectionals was an Indian with an accent strong enough that I had a little trouble understanding him, and I found the design courses in my architecture studies much more interesting than the math class. So, it was a standard washout class for aspiring architects. And I went that route.

Q: Very interesting.

ROSE: I was too naïve to know that you could withdraw in the first six weeks when I already knew that it wasn't going to be successful.

Q: Let's hit the pause button for just a moment and discuss academic standards because these days there's no such thing as flunking. I flunked French and I had to learn it so quickly that I majored in it, and it became my—because there was no way out, just like you just said. The choice was to flunk out of school or to learn French real quick. That's a short story, but in the days you and I are talking about, there was such a thing as an F. There's no such thing anymore. What does this tell us about tertiary education in the U.S.?

ROSE: One of the things that it was indicative of is that the University of California Berkeley counted on the sophomore classing being twenty to thirty percent smaller than the freshman class.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: So, you know, a student who works his way to be able to aspire to attend one of the top universities in the country has only a seventy percent chance of remaining there for the rest of his education or he has to find something else.

Q: That's brutal. You mean because of dorm capacity?

ROSE: It was just space and all of that, and I think they used it as a further part of the selection process for students who would earn a degree at that university.

Q: Wow. Unimaginable now. There would be lawsuits and there would be misery and press reports.

ROSE: Anyway, I loved the design courses, and I got a B in English. So, that's what I decided to major in when I eventually did get back to school at San Diego State. But we can get to that when that time comes three years later.

Q: Right. And thinking back myself, what we used to call English really was a general world education because it was the default major for people who were interested in everything. It wasn't just Shakespeare and Coleridge and…right?

ROSE: No, I loved the coursework and the classics.

Q: Right.

ROSE: Greek and…

Q: English nowadays would mean English, but at that time it was really world literature.

ROSE: Yeah, it was.

Q: Yup. And that's another reason for nostalgia for that period. Those were great—that was a great major. Now it's almost disappeared because people misunderstand. Also, the nature of the courses I think have become much more specialized. So, we're talking about the glory days of what we used to call education, which kind of doesn't exist anymore. Okay, so partly because of the misfortune with calculus you said you'd take a break, and you approached the Church of Latter Day Saints, and you had a conversation.

ROSE: It was a standard expectation that at some time you would interrupt your collegiate education if you were a participating member of the church and serve a two to two and a half year mission. So, I wanted to do that and let our bishop, which is the head of our congregation, know that I was willing to serve and so he interviewed me and made sure that he was satisfied with my ability to serve, and he recommended me. But it's like

the Foreign Service with a world-wide availability contract. And I wanted to go to Norway, and I got my paper and it said you've been assigned to Peru, the Andes mission.

Q: Well, let's see. Wow. Okay, so this conversation with the bishop was essential. In other words, they didn't just send anybody, they wanted people—

ROSE: There was a little screening there.

Q: They wanted to know there was motivation and ability.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: So, there was a selection process. And what was your intention with Norway?

ROSE: I grew up with a fascination for all things Norwegian, I have no idea why. Grieg was my favorite composer; I read all of Ibsen's plays.

Q: Agreed. I share that. Holberg was Danish, Norwegian, whatever. He was a wonderful playwright. Ibsen, fantastic. Yeah. And you know, an absolutely spectacular country.

ROSE: No, it was simply a far-off dream. I didn't think I'd be able to go there.

Q: So, what happened in your gut when they said, you want Norway? Okay, you're going to Peru.

ROSE: Well, keep in mind that I grew up in the San Diego area in San Diego County with all the prejudices of an Anglo kid.

Q: Ah, they were going to break you of your prejudices.

ROSE: And the Lord knew what I needed to overcome.

Q: Now, do you think this was a coincidence or did the bishop actually think through what you just did.

ROSE: No, he didn't make that assignment. That decision goes right to the top of the church.

Q: Did somebody say we're going to break him of his prejudices?

ROSE: I have no idea, but that decision was actually made by an apostle of the church, one of the top twelve leaders of the church.

Q: So, we don't know if this was random.

ROSE: No, they look at needs where they are trying to staff missions and where they need people at the time.

Q: Any idea how many other missionaries were in Peru at that time?

ROSE: Yeah. When I arrived, there were right around a hundred.

Q: Wow. That's pretty robust, isn't it.

ROSE: The work there with the church had just begun a few years earlier. Five years earlier they had started missionary work there and the earliest missionaries, they had moved over to Peru from Uruguay where there was a much longer period of missions work. So, some of the Uruguayan missionaries were still around when I arrived and were our trainers.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: But I was called directly to Peru when the mission was one year old.

Q: Okay. Let me ask a stupid question. When you say mission, if I say proselytizing, what's your reaction to that? Because Catholic Christians—

ROSE: That's what we were there for.

Q: Okay. Because Catholic Christians had a variety of endeavors.

ROSE: Yeah. And there are other kinds of missions in our church as well, but that was the kind I was called to, it's the wording that they used.

Q: So, what was the preparation? When you're proselytizing you have to have the skill to persuade somebody of something. You have to—it's kind of a salesman kind of thing, isn't it. What sort of training did they provide?

ROSE: Well, much less than they do now. At that time there was no language training—

Q: Really?

ROSE: —before you went. And so, we had one week in Salt Lake City to meet with church leaders and hear them review with us some of the doctrines and practices of the church that we would be talking about to people and motivational things, and then it was off to Huston for a visa and on to Lima.

Q: Fascinating. So, they did not—did they discuss how you comport yourself, how do you—

ROSE: Oh yeah, there were mission rules and things. I mean, even the dress. We were—

Q: The narrow tie and the white shirt.

ROSE: Yeah. White shirts and ties and suits and so forth. And so, all of that was there. No dating and no…

Q: No dating?

ROSE: Oh no. It's two years of celibacy.

Q: Oh my.

ROSE: And if you were called to a foreign language mission they tacked on an extra six months because they thought you would not be worth a whole lot during the first part of your mission. And so, they would put us with a companion who had been in the mission a long time and he was armed with a Spanish study course and so we would spend a couple of hours in the morning studying Spanish and the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

Q: So, this was after you arrived in Peru?

ROSE: After arrival, yes.

Q: Oh, so the mission went six months extra.

ROSE: Yeah. Those who were called to an English speaking mission from the United States were two year missions and mine was two and a half, thirty months.

Q: Very interesting. Today my understanding is they have intense training at Brigham Young or elsewhere.

ROSE: Yeah, they have training centers, and they teach the language.

Q: With state of the art, top flight language training. We know that. Like no use of the English language from day one.

ROSE: Yes, it's immersion.

Q: Very interesting. Okay. So, you went. Did you go straight from Huston to Lima?

ROSE: Yeah. I remember my first experience with a tropical climate was when the plane stopped at midnight in Panama, and I could not believe it when I walked into that soup of hot, humid air.

Q: What month was that? Do you know?

ROSE: Let's see, I went in November, I think, because I remember turning twenty in Salt Lake the week before I departed. So, that was November 8.

Q: I mean, it is the northern hemisphere sort of, and it should be a little bit cooler in November, but yeah, I was briefly there and yes, it's hot. Okay. But Peru is not tropical, right?

ROSE: It's a very interesting climate in Lima. My theory is that when the Spaniards arrived, they decided that the best way to convert the Incas to Christianity was to deny them their sun god for seven months of the year.

Q: I know, it's always cloudy in Lima.

ROSE: And that marine climate layer comes into Lima and knocks it out.

Q: Note to reader: this might be a whimsical observation, but that's funny. I've never been, but I understand that it's usually cloudy for many months, but not cold, not hot. Right? It's something in between.

ROSE: Yeah. The Humboldt Current hangs offshore and causes that marine layer of just kind of fog, low-level clouds during most of the year there. And it gets chilly. It doesn't really freeze. And then during the summer you'll get maybe four months of sun.

Q: Was this a downer? If you went in November, then that is kind of summer in Lima.

ROSE: Yeah, it was transitioning into summer.

Q: So, your first experience was oh, look at the sunshine, and then the clouds came later.

ROSE: Yeah, that was a little later. And I only spent six weeks in Lima getting through typhoid and that.

Q: Okay, yes, now let's go back to the typhoid. That's no fun.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: How and how long and oh my gosh. This happened right as you landed?

ROSE: It was within two weeks and several others in the home where I was living got it. It was determined that it was from the water tanks that were on the roof that gravity fed down into the house that had somehow become contaminated, and we ended up all of us who lived there—I spent about three days, maybe four in the Adventist hospital in Lima. I was very grateful for their care. And you know, I had an intense fever and lost some of my hairline, but recovered and then was assigned to Trujillo in the north of Peru.

Q: Now, you said it was a group home. Were these missionaries?

ROSE: Yeah, the mission president and his wife actually lived there, and because I was one of the new arrivals who was awaiting my assignment, we stayed in kind of a dormitory that was attached to their residence.

Q: Ah, so you didn't know what village or city you would be sent to until–

ROSE: No, not until a little bit later.

Q: Okay. And Trujillo is what size town or city?

ROSE: Well, it was the third largest city in Peru at the time, I believe. So, it probably had—that was a long time ago, so in 1960 I suppose—only 120,000 – 150,000 people or something like that.

Q: So, did you talk to 150,000 people individually?

ROSE: We walked the streets and talked to whoever would talk to us.

Q: Oh, you said we.

ROSE: My companion and I. We were assigned to—

Q: Is it standard to have two people working together?

ROSE: Yes. That's scriptural. The pattern that Christ set in the Bible was to send his disciples out two by two.

Q: Oh, okay. Well, this is a learning thing for me because—and I haven't seen the musical—we've all met Mormon missionaries I think in airports, used to be, and for those of us not in the church we see people always in two, narrow tie—never a broad tie—and a great discipline. That's pretty clear. Okay, so you would walk on the street and talk to anybody who would talk to you?

ROSE: Yeah, or we would knock on doors and see if they were interested in letting us talk to them.

Q: Out of ten doors, how many were opened to you?

ROSE: Well, surprisingly in Trujillo at that time a couple of gringos was a rarity, especially in the middle class to lower class neighborhoods, and so people were curious enough that we found quite a reception from people who were willing to listen to us, not always interested in our religion, but curious about who we were and what brought us to Peru and all of that.

Q: That's a very good thing, I think. I mean, human connection, it may not hit the bullseye, but it creates a human connection, doesn't it?

ROSE: Absolutely. And later, after about four months with a companion from the U.S., I was put with a Peruvian missionary who spoke no English, and so my Spanish took a big jump at that point.

Q: Excellent. Was that done by design or was it coincidence?

ROSE: That just happened to be where they needed him, and I was still learning the language and that turned out to be really quite an effective combination. Because by the time I left Trujillo where there was not a single member of our church in the city when I arrived, there were twenty-three when I left.

Q: Really? Thanks to you?

ROSE: There were two pairs there, so it was the other companionship and Elder Romero and I.

Q: Romero. So, this is to say that between two groups of two you were able to recruit twenty-three people.

ROSE: Yeah, we baptized twenty-three new members into our church.

Q: I don't suppose they said, hello, how are you, please baptize me. There's a process.

ROSE: We would teach them for several weeks and teach them the practices and doctrines of the church, and if they said that they wanted to join and become members of the church and would be faithful in keeping the standards of the church and so forth, then we would take them out to an irrigation canal and—

Q: Water, yes.

ROSE: Or out to the beach and baptize them.

Q: Fantastic. No, this is fascinating. So, at what point in talking to someone—do you have five meetings or fifteen meetings—at what point do you realize, this is really a possibility for this individual. When do you realize that?

ROSE: Usually there is an invitation to join the church around—in our time—around five or six lessons, and so it would be a period of a few weeks. Because we would usually try to meet with them maybe once a week, and sometimes more often if they had more time and were available, but that was it.

Q: From your memory, of the attempts where people were willing to talk to you, what's the percentage of those who actually went all the way through? Would that be 10% or 40%?

ROSE: Probably 5%.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah, it was fairly low. Most people were just curious, and they were very attached to their traditional religion and had family reasons not to pursue it and so forth. So, we talked to a lot of people to gather that group number.

Q: So, I guess the church was not obsessed with numbers, they really just wanted expansion in whatever way it would come.

ROSE: That's a very good observation, because in fact, our mission president told us that at the time that we were there he preferred that we not teach the less educated people who were not literate or were too poor because he said we need to build a leadership base in Peru because we want them to be able to take over since it's a lay leadership church. We want them to be able to take over and run the congregations. And so, we were only really allowed to work with people who had at least some education and ability to understand. Had we been able to go into the really poor neighborhoods and that, we probably would have had more.

Q: Let's see, okay. This is really interesting. So, the idea was—and did this actually happen?—twenty-three people came forward, they were baptized. Were they actually able to maintain leadership status even after your departure?

ROSE: One indicator and really a key to the establishment of our church in Trujillo, was that during my first assignment, near the beginning, there was a doctor and his wife who were members of the country club and fairly prominent and well-known citizens in their neighborhood and around the city. So, when he and his family joined, several of those who were kind of wondering whether or not this was something that would disappear within a short period of time, they said, well if Doctor Peñarrieta thinks that this is worth joining maybe we should too. And so, several of the people we were teaching joined. I learned years later that one of the people that I baptized had become the president of a group of congregations in northern Peru.

Q: Wow. So, was this a strategy or did it just sort of happen that way?

ROSE: Well, as soon as they were baptized, we began to teach them leadership principles and what would be expected of a member, because all members of the church are expected to take some kind of role.

Q: So, I mean two and a half years may seem a lot when you're in a foreign country, but it's only two and a half years. Was that adequate time to really pass the baton and to give…

ROSE: Yes, usually within a year they would be either at least teaching Sunday school or in charge of a youth program or a counselor in the presidency of the congregation.

Q: So, in your conversations, what do you think it was in what you said to people that was convincing to them?

ROSE: Well, the primary appeal, if you will, I think to most converts to our church, is the position that it's the restoration of the New Testament church. And some of them come to feel that their church had departed from those practices.

Q: Okay, so the fact is that you were peeling them away from the Catholic church.

ROSE: Yes. They were not happy about it, and they sent loudspeaker trucks out in the neighborhoods to tell people, don't open your doors.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: That's astonishing. Were they afraid of you? What's that all about?

ROSE: Yeah. If we walked down a street and a priest saw us, he would yell across the street, sons of the devil.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: So, I mean all of that has changed, but it was definitely a major concern.

Q: You kind of restaged the Lutheran reformation four centuries later. And without a thirty year war, bravo. Luther made a terrible mess and was a pretty vile character. Well, that's really interesting. Okay, so in Trujillo there were two pairs of two. Were you constantly in touch or occasionally in touch?

ROSE: We lived in the same…the church rented a large house there where we could hold our meetings and we lived in the bedrooms there.

Q: And did you do daily religious practice or weekly?

ROSE: We had our Sunday services and then usually a weeknight activity especially for youth and things like that. Some social activities and so forth. The kinds of things that churches do.

Q: Now, in the Catholic Church there must be a priest, I think not in the Latter Day Saints.

ROSE: Well, all men are invited to become priesthood holders.

Q: Well, in your Sunday services was it—you know, there's this great importance if there's some guy in front with his back to you, that's Catholicism. If there's some guy in front facing you, that's different types of Protestantism.

ROSE: I'm familiar with the differences. I've attended several masses.

Q: Yeah. And the priest is facing the altar with his back to the congregation.

ROSE: He's taking care of communion.

Q: But with the four of you there was no protocol of that sort?

ROSE: Well, yes, one of them was designated the president of the branch, what we call a small congregation. So, he was in charge, and I was one of the junior ones. But I would give some of the sermons and do some of the preaching in church on Sundays when my Spanish got to the point where I could do it.

Q: Now, there are four of you. Your partner was Spanish speaking only, the other two were gringos?

ROSE: Yes. One of them, however, was born in Colonia Juárez in Mexico, and so he was bilingual.

Q: Okay. So, talk for a moment about the notion of hierarchy. How does that fit into the beliefs of the church of Latter Day Saints?

ROSE: It is a very structured church. Again, going back to the New Testament pattern, Christ ordained twelve apostles and they were the ones who did the primary work of establishing branches of the church and carrying the ministry to other people and so forth. So, in our church the top leadership is that group of twelve apostles, of which three of them corresponding to Peter, James and John of the New Testament form kind of a presidency. And then below them we know that when the work got large enough there were seventy others who were called to spread Christianity to the Gentiles and others outside the Jewish faith, and so we have a quorum of seventy who are the next level of leadership in the church. And then in New Testament times there were bishops who were in charge of Corinth and so forth.

Q: So, Peter, James, and John. What happened to Matthew and Luke?

ROSE: Well, they were apostles, members of the quorum of the twelve—or at least Matthew was—

Q: And Mark.

ROSE: Yeah. When Christ went to the Mount of Transfiguration, you'll remember possibly that they were the three that he selected to go with him and they were the three that were present when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane and so forth. They had a different special status within the twelve.

Q: James in Spanish is Santiago, right?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: No, that somehow slipped past me that he selected three. That's really interesting. So, what was your degree of frustration and satisfaction during a two and a half year period? Were there phases, was there a so-called U curve that they teach at FSI (Foreign Service Institute)? Euphoria, disillusionment and then contentment. They call it the U curve.

ROSE: Yeah, I think that goes with any new experience, and so there were probably times. But I was pretty excited about being there, especially because we were seeing results from our work, and these were people we grew to love. We were in their homes, and they often invited us to dinner. I ate some great Peruvian food and things like that as we got to know them, so these were people we learned to love and really enjoyed their company. So, I would say throughout the mission, even as I moved on to more supervisory positions in Lima and over some of the branches in a region of Peru that I always felt like my service was worthwhile and that I kind of enjoyed being there.

Q: This is an ideal preparation for the Foreign Service, isn't it?

ROSE: Well, yeah, it really is and that's where I first learned about the Foreign Service as an option. There was a member of our church who came through Lima on his way to Cochabamba, Bolivia as a Bi-national Center grantee. And it seemed fascinating to me that he was going to be going on to a bi-national center and what his work would be there and so forth when he described it to me. And so, I asked him about it, and he said, Well, if you think you might be interested in a Foreign Service career you don't want to come in the way I did, because my contract is going to be up as a grantee in two years. He said, you should prepare to take the Foreign Service exam.

Q: Yes.

ROSE: And so, coming out of Peru I was interested enough in that that I began to think of that as a career option when I graduated from college.

Q: So, you did go back to Berkeley.

ROSE: I didn't go back to Berkeley, I actually—

Q: Oh, you went to San Diego State. Okay, so to me it's always important to focus on the final phase of a stay. You were there two and a half years, what were your emotions when you realized you were getting short, as we say in the Foreign Service? You were approaching the end of your mission.

ROSE: Well, there were a couple of very important developments there. The first visit by one of the members of the presidency of the church—one of the three—took place during the time that I was there.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: And the mission president for some reason decided that I would be a good one to kind of take on the role of organizing the whole program, including press conferences and all of those things for his visit.

Q: Again, this was perfect for the Foreign Service.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: You were the control officer.

ROSE: Yeah. Exactly, control officer. I was the control officer for someone named Hugh B. Brown.

Q: And did he go to various countries?

ROSE: Yes, he visited—I don't remember what his itinerary was—but within Peru he went to Lima, Arequipa the second city, and Cuzco because of course he had to take in Machu Picchu.

Q: Of course.

ROSE: So, anyway, I translated for his press conference and some other things. And at the conclusion of his visit the mission president said you know, it's been kind of good to have someone that can handle public affairs for our mission. So, I'm going to keep you on as a special assistant in my office. And so, for the last six months of my mission I was sending out magazine releases from our church to be published and magazines and answering questions from newspapers and trying to get attention for us on radio and TV and so forth.

Q: That's not fair. You got a jump start on the skills that we needed in public diplomacy. That's fascinating.

ROSE: And there was a huge reward associated with that, which I will talk about next if you'd like.

Q: Sure.

ROSE: So, earlier in the mission I had walked into one of the places where I was working in Lima, and seated at the piano was a young lady who had just arrived in the mission, and she was accompanying a Peruvian missionary in Oh Holy Night. And it was astounding music.

Q: Okay. I think this is leading somewhere.

ROSE: The Peruvian missionary who was singing with her went on to become a member of the Chicago Opera and the Tabernacle Choir. The young lady seated on the piano, whose back was to me at the time that I walked in, became my wife.

Q: Okay. I was going to ask, but I could have gotten it wrong.

ROSE: And the way that I got to know her was that she was directing—she earlier in her mission was asked to accompany first and then direct a mission choir that we had formed with a combination of missionaries and local Peruvian members that became quite well-known in Peru. We sang for an audience of 8,000 people with the Peruvian Army Band. We sang with the Lima Philharmonic Orchestra.

Q: My gosh.

ROSE: And toward the end of my mission I was the public affairs guy for the mission, so I was the one that was arranging these concerts and appearances on TV and radio and all of that, and of course, in doing so I had to work with the director. So, I got to know her pretty well.

Q: So, this young lady with her back turned to you, did she have a name?

ROSE: Her name was Sister Ruth Jordan. All the lady missionaries were known as sister. Sister Jordan.

Q: This is a significant reference. Again, wonderful story. So, she was a missionary but in a different part of the country from you, is that it?

ROSE: Well, no, we were both working in Lima during one phase of our mission because we moved around to different positions and so forth, and I was president of the Callao branch for a while and then I became what's known as a supervising elder, and I would oversee the work of a group of missionaries throughout the northern half of Peru before I became the public affairs assistant to the president.

Q: So, you were twenty-three or twenty-four and you were an elder? That's interesting.

ROSE: Yeah. That's a curious–

Q: It's an honorific. So, are we still in 1960 or '61?

ROSE: Yes. I began in 1960 and served until 1963.

Q: Which happens to be when the Peace Corps was created.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Were you watching that?

ROSE: Yes. We began to see Peace Corps coming up in Latin America; it was a big area for Peace Corps.

Q: Did you meet with them? Did you compare notes?

ROSE: Not much, but later of course, once I joined the Foreign Service, I had a lot of interaction with Peace Corps. But at that time most of them were out in—at that time—out in rural areas and that and we only had branches in the major cities at that point, so there wasn't a lot of interaction.

Q: If you put it all together it puts a very positive face on the American people, very humanizing to urban and rural people. We know that this type of activity almost universally created good feelings.

ROSE: Absolutely.

Q: Yeah. Did you see the Peace Corps as competitors?

ROSE: No, we were delighted that our country was being represented that way. I mean sure, we were church representatives, but we were also representatives of our country.

Q: Okay. Well, we know Peace Corps tended to be in small villages because that was what the Peace Corps was about, to get beyond the urban centers. And in those early years the Peace Corps did very general—they didn't have agronomists and journalists, they just had people who would go and would kind of create their own program, I think. Individually they would just get to know—

ROSE: Kind of.

Q: In your case it was a much more disciplined thing with a specific objective.

ROSE: Yes, definitely.

Q: Okay. Well, what about Sister Ruth Jordan at the time when it was time to leave the country?

ROSE: Well, as I mentioned, we could not—

Q: Date, we call it.

ROSE: —date or do anything, so I only had a working relationship with her at that time. But I was interested enough that when I got home it was permissible for me to write to her and I did, but I started dating other girls as well. I took a couple of summer school courses after arriving back in San Diego and then became an English major, as I mentioned, with a Spanish minor at San Diego State.

Q: This was UC San Diego?

ROSE: No, it's San Diego State.

Q: Oh, San Diego State.

ROSE: San Diego State University now.

Q: It's a public school, right?

ROSE: Yes. Whose team just made it to the quarterfinals in March Madness. My alma mater.

Q: And then now you had lived in San Diego, so that was the natural…

ROSE: Yeah. So, I went home and was back living with my parents for my first year back in the country, and my funds were limited at that point too, so it was a good arrangement.

Q: Did your parents have any opinion about what you had just done for two and a half years?

ROSE: My parents?

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: Well, they were the ones who had funded most of my mission. I had worked before to make enough money to pay for maybe four months of it, but they paid for all the rest of it.

Q: So, there was harmony in your nuclear family.

ROSE: Oh, absolutely. They were very happy that I was the first missionary from my grandfather's family to serve. So, they were very proud of my service.

Q: So, they were quite happy, I guess, when you went back and moved in with them.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Had you gone back at all? Travel was not as commonplace as it is now. People would go for two years and not even come and visit.

ROSE: That's right. I was gone for two and a half years with no contact with my family except letters, which took two weeks in the postal system to arrive. Now missionaries are allowed to call parents once a week or use email or whatever.

Q: Yeah. No email. Yeah, I remember not that much later in the Congo sending letters to my parents.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: And of course, no telephone worked there, so when one was away…I think young people cannot even imagine actually being away, really away. It's gone as a lifestyle. There are advantages and disadvantages. Okay, so you're back in San Diego, you've given up calculus, I guess. Thank you very much.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: And did you know from the start that it was going to be English?

ROSE: No. I had done some little courses with the natural history museum in San Diego on marine biology, and that was of real interest until I got into my biology for majors, a five unit course, and DNA had been discovered while I was gone.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: Or somewhere roughly around that time. And I had never heard of that in biology in high school and had not taken a biology course in Berkeley. So, they just assumed that everybody knew what they were talking about with that double helix, and I didn't. And my microscope wouldn't seem to focus the way it was supposed to. But by then I was smart enough to know that you could drop a class within the deadline and not take a penalty.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, I decided no, okay, now what do I do? So, I looked back at my record, and I said okay, most of my courses at Berkeley were in architecture, design, graphics, and

various kinds of things, but I did get that B in English and I enjoyed the course. So, let me see if I can succeed in this. And then I'll take a Spanish minor for good measure.

Q: Oh, sure.

ROSE: So, I tested out of the first few levels of Spanish.

Q: This is a marvelous American university system, especially when they were cheap, that you could just explore and see what happens. I mean, it's a great luxury and in some ways it's the best time of a person's life just to discover. You hadn't gone in even thinking of an English major, but that must have encouraged you to shop for different things and you did so. So, okay, we've got you to your sophomore year, I guess. You went in as a sophomore?

ROSE: Yes. So, by this time three or four months after I finished my time in Peru, Sister Jordan finished her assignment there and returned to her work as a nurse at LDS (Latter Day Saints) Hospital in Salt Lake City.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: She had graduated from the University of Utah before she left for Peru and was an RN (registered nurse). But I had been writing to her a little bit over the few months since her mission and she had responded, so I asked if I could come up for a weekend and see her in October of that year. And so, I went up with a friend and spent a little bit of time visiting with her and then went back home and during Christmas break I went with some students who were from Utah and were going home for Christmas and spent the better part of two weeks during our Christmas break from San Diego State visiting with her, and she invited me to go meet her family in Idaho.

Q: Oh, that's a big step.

ROSE: So, we took the Greyhound bus up to Idaho Falls and I went out to the farm where her parents lived and where she grew up and on Christmas Eve during a walk back from her uncle's, I said, I know you haven't had much time to consider this because we've only been together since the mission about five days, but I said, I'd like you to be my wife. And she said, sounds like a pretty good idea.

Q: Amazing. These stories are usually much more agonized and complex and back and forth. This is quite wonderful.

ROSE: So, the following August we were married in Idaho Falls.

Q: And for the record, you're in Idaho today.

ROSE: Yes, we chose to retire in her home state. But she said if we're going back to my home state I want to live on the warm side of the mountains, not the cold side where I grew up.

Q: That would be on the western side?

ROSE: Right. So, we're on the western side at 2,500 feet instead of the 4,500 feet in Idaho Falls. And winters are much milder here.

Q: So, you are now in her hometown?

ROSE: No, so she grew up in Idaho Falls in the eastern part of the state and we chose to retire in Boise on the western side.

Q: Okay. And Boise is part of your email address.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Well.

ROSE: So, just to complete that, she applied to work as a public health nurse for San Diego County and I was at this point entering my junior year at San Diego State, so she helped put me through school.

Q: Excellent.

ROSE: A very good income for, you know… and so, until we had our first child she worked in that job and that was enough to—with what I had and some part-time work—to get us through my bachelor's degree and then we moved to Oregon.

Q: Yeah. This is the way life should be and almost never is. This is great. So, you were married before your junior year, I guess.

ROSE: Yes, between my sophomore and junior year.

Q: So, everything worked fine, two years to go. She got a job as an RN and helped you to get through, then you graduated. This might be a bookend moment, but you graduate from San Diego State in '64, '65, something like that.

ROSE: Yeah. I actually graduated from San Diego State in 1965. No, wait a minute. It was 1966, because I joined the Foreign Service in January of '68, and so I got my master's degree at the University of Oregon in late '67.

Q: Okay. This is lots of material. Let's find a point where the chapters, where one of them ends and the next one begins. You graduate in '66, you decided then to go and do a master's at that point?

ROSE: Yes, because even though I passed the Foreign Service exam right after I graduated, I told them I wanted to put it off for a year and a half in case it turned out not to be a good career, and a bachelor's degree in English wouldn't do much for me.

Q: And they were kind enough to say—

ROSE: So, they said well, we'll keep you on the list for thirty months, or whatever it was.

Q: Fantastic.

ROSE: So, I was getting close to the end of my eligibility without repeating the exam by the time I got my master's degree and was selected for the eleventh junior class of USIA (United States Information Agency).

Q: Again, it's not supposed to be so perfect. So linear. These days you can't be on the list for thirty months. So, did you feel as if you were in limbo during that period? Like maybe I'm doing the Foreign Service, maybe I'm not? And the master's in what field?

ROSE: It was in English as well. Specialization in American Literature.

Q: Okay. Again, perfect for the Foreign Service. Did you think at the time a master's would really position you for something that a bachelor's would not?

ROSE: At that time, yes it would have. I could have nailed down a teaching position at a junior college with a master's degree in English.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: I'm trying to remember. I think I actually had the orals—yeah, I had the orals not long after I got the written.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, let me just share one thing about that.

Q: Yes, please.

ROSE: You're going to love this.

Q: I'm sure I will.

ROSE: So, I had to go up to the federal building in Los Angeles for my orals and it was—I remember this very spare room with nothing. It was just used for interviews and things like that in the building. So, we went through the—

Q: No pictures of Che Guevara?

ROSE: No. in fact, I'll talk about pictures because that's why I'm telling this story. So, they gave me a number of questions that were all relevant and so forth and the next one of them was, okay, you're the cultural affairs officer in Guatemala and this your office. Which American painters would you choose to represent your country with their pictures on your wall? And I just drew a blank. I mumbled something about Eastman Johnson's "A Shack in the Woods" and that was about as far as I could get.

Q: That's good enough.

ROSE: But they liked everything else in my interview. So, at the conclusion of it when they called me back in, they said, it is absolutely shameful that somebody who aspires to represent his country abroad could hardly name a single American painter and you probably wouldn't have done any better if we had asked you about American composers. Well, they would have been wrong, but I didn't try to argue with them. Because I knew Copland and Grofé and a number of others by that time because I loved music. But I just drew the blank on art.

Q: I mean, this kind of conversation could never take place now with the new rules.

ROSE: Alright, well let me just tell you the conclusions of it. Of course, at that time the Foreign Service was primarily an Ivy League institution, so their final remark was, we've decided we'll take a chance on you anyway because it's not your fault, it's because you're the product of a western education.

Q: So—

ROSE: And we've been teaching these things after you join.

Q: You were the diversity candidate, that's very funny. Oh my gosh, that's hilarious. Take a chance. Incredible. After thousands of lawsuits and PhD in psychology making sure that the experience is exactly identical for every candidate. Because I was at _____ in later years and it's absolutely different from what you had. Yours was a more personal connection, and of course more enjoyable to be talking to people rather than robots.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: So, were you immediately thrilled, or did it come to you later?

ROSE: I was really excited that they had accepted me and were willing to put me on the list of candidates and they agreed that they would not consider me until a year and a half later, by which time I expected to have my master's degree.

Q: Incredible. It's that great? What we've lost by not having USIA. This was USIA, right?

ROSE: Yes. Well, of course the interviewers were board of examiners, so there may have been one USIA officer on it, but I think the other two were State Department and a public member.

Q: So, you had four people.

ROSE: I don't remember. I think there were only three. So, it was USIA, State, and a public member.

Q: Okay. That does make sense. Boy, this is a great story. Have you ever had any adversity, Doug? Maybe not.

ROSE: Well, I lost my wife last week.

Q: I know, I'm sorry.

ROSE: No, obviously there were challenges along the way and everything.

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: But yes, I really feel very blessed to have had things turn out the way they did. I have a wonderful wife and a great family and loved my job and my time in the Foreign Service and so forth. So anyway, I'll just mention one more thing. One of the reasons that I joined the University of Oregon is that I was able to get a teaching assistantship job there, and so that waived my tuition and gave me enough money to barely subsist on with my wife working during the summers while I tended the kids.

Q: Ah, so you had children pretty quickly.

ROSE: We had our first one before I went to Oregon for my master's degree and the second one was born there.

Q: Okay. Let's just get the dates. The master's was '66 – '68, something like that?

ROSE: Yeah. I graduated in '67 and so I joined the Foreign Service in January of '68.

Q: Okay. I see. '68 joined the Foreign Service.

ROSE: So, I reported for duty in Washington the first week of January right after New Year's in 1968.

Q: That tumultuous year. And maybe we'll get into that. So many things happened in America, mostly bad things which I remember very vividly myself. This is really marvelous. I think this will be a place to take a break and then pick it up at that point. Let's just put a marker in here. This is still April 13; this is Doug Rose talking to Dan Whitman.

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Okay, we're talking to Doug Rose today. It is April 21, 2023, and this is Dan Whitman. This is our third conversation. So, Doug, you came in to USIA, some of us remember it very fondly. There are fewer and fewer people in the world who even remember what it was.

ROSE: Right.

Q: You came in 1968. A tumultuous year. Assassinations, the country was coming apart at the seams. So, you actually did move to Washington at that time?

ROSE: Yes, we found an apartment in Arlington, Virginia, and I started my basic training.

Q: And Arlington was a perfect place to be. I think FSI or FSI for USIA used to be in Rosslyn?

ROSE: Right.

Q: So, you were right there. Well, good for you.

ROSE: Yeah. In decent weather, I could bike to classes.

Q: Fantastic. Sounds so European. Let's see. So, you had the normal—we didn't have A-100, we had USIA training, which tended to be like three or four months, I think, general training.

ROSE: I did get A-100. Essentially it was all an integrated program because I recall that we had forty some in my class, and eleven of us were from USIA and the remainder from the State Department. But it was interesting times.

Q: Yeah, lots of things happening in the U.S.

ROSE: And one of the things that was so remarkable about it is that at the conclusion of our training when it came time to announce assignments, the eleven people from USIA all got their first or second choice, worldwide. The State Department officers, because they were going through a reduction in force at the time, either got assigned to domestic agencies or CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary/Rural Development Support) Vietnam, and half of them resigned on the spot.

Q: Wow. That's stunning. I'm speechless. Half of them resigned?

ROSE: Yup, that's my recollection. I don't know if that was the exact number, but it was massive.

Q: So, I mean you think they resigned because of those who were being sent to Vietnam and they said no I won't, or were the domestic assignments equally a turnoff for them?

ROSE: Yes, both.

Q: They went into the Foreign Service.

ROSE: Exactly. And it would have been just temporary, and so those who endured either went to Vietnam. The way they decided who went where was that all the single people went to Vietnam and all the married ones got domestic assignments.

Q: That's probably illegal, but anyway. So, there was a riff in 1968. I didn't know that.

ROSE: Well, everything was in turmoil. I don't know specifically, but that was what the history of our class was. It was just devastating.

Q: When you mention USIA people getting their first choice, it was that way for me also in 1985, and I think USIA had a practice—or they tried to—get everybody their wish the first time around, so as to keep them. So, it was a tactic to keep them, and it worked.

ROSE: It did.

Q: Nowadays as you probably know, everybody goes out and does a consular tour and many of them resign because they get two years of consular, then they may get two more years, and they say excuse me, I'm an econ officer, this is not what I signed up for. And so, there's a lot of people resigning.

ROSE: Interesting.

Q: So, you were with A-100. A-100 must have been, as it later was for USIA, a general training area studies.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Just here's what's expected of you as an FSO and such. At what point—we call it flag day, I think, when you receive your assignment, and at that point usually either there's language training or more area studies. What was it in your case?

ROSE: Well, that had kind of an interesting play-out as well. I already tested 3+/4 in Spanish from my time in Peru, and so when I was supposed to go into language training, they had to find something to do with me because my assignment was La Paz, Bolivia.

Q: Oh, La Paz, okay.

ROSE: They said, well, let's put you in Portuguese language training with the idea that you may become a Latin America specialist and someday will serve in Brazil. So, that's what I did; I went into four months of Portuguese language training.

Q: I guess the idea was let's keep Brazil in mind for you.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: So, at the time was that a plus or a minus, going to take Portuguese? It kind of stuck for a while, didn't it?

ROSE: It turned out to be a fortuitous arrangement.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: Because about six weeks before I was ready to finish my language training and be ready to depart for La Paz, they notified me that the person I would replace after my training assignment had asked for an extension because he wanted to marry someone he had met there, and they would have to find a new place for me. I wouldn't be going to La Paz after my wife had bought her fur collared coat.

Q: And so—

ROSE: About an 11,000 foot altitude post. So, I said if it helps any, remember that you've given me four months of Portuguese language training. They said, oh, that's right.

Q: So, you went to Brazil, I guess?

ROSE: So, they said, we might be able to sneak you into one of the consular posts in Brazil over-complement as a trainee and get around some of the reduction pressures that are going on at this point.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: And so, I said, okay. So, within a few days my assignment was no longer La Paz, Bolivia, it was Recife, Brazil.

Q: Recife. Okay. That's the fun place from what I've heard. That's the one north.

ROSE: Yeah, it was up in the northeast. A good assignment, a good place. Good place to do training. I got to rotate through all the functions because it was a consulate general at the time because we had an AID (Agency for International Development) mission up there and everything, so yeah.

Q: And we should explain to readers about rotations because they don't exist anymore. USIA had this fantastic thing which usually was a whole year where you would be loaned

out to different sections of a consulate or embassy, and you would get to know the whole embassy. It was a fantastic setup, and I don't know why they—well, of course when they got rid of USIA they got rid of rotations, which was the best training anybody ever had.

ROSE: It was.

Q: So, did you spend a year migrating?

ROSE: Not quite a year because at that point there were some personnel changes within the consular district and they needed a new IO (Information Officer), branch information officer, and with eight months they were a little concerned, probably that I wasn't fully qualified to take on that responsibility. This was a period when there were serious concerns. One of the reasons we had a big AID mission in the northeast of Brazil was that there was worry about Che Guevara and Castro and all those folks and liberation theology. There was a famous Brazilian priest who was leading his followers far to the left and so forth, and so there were a lot of sensitive issues going on at the time.

Q: There was an Austrian in Mexico, Ivan Illich, was that his name?

ROSE: Yeah, something like that.

Q: And I always thought of him as a very benign fellow, but I can see how the U.S. government might have seen that. So, it's funny you say not enough after eight months. Nowadays you go into these assignments with zero months and it's just amazing how they can expect anybody to function.

ROSE: Well, so what they did is they pulled the bi-national center director out of Natal and put him in the branch information officer position and assigned me as bi-national center director in Natal.

Q: Fantastic. That makes perfect sense.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: And the bi-national centers were so much fun, weren't they?

ROSE: Absolutely. I learned later in life that in USIA the best jobs were at the bottom.

Q: Well, or shall we say, at the margins. Not in Brasilia, but rather—there's nothing bottom about…

ROSE: To be just a few months into a job and end up directing—a brand new officer—directing an institution with thirty or forty employees and a large plant.

Q: That big?

ROSE: Yeah. I mean, we had twenty-seven teachers or something in the bi-national center.

Q: Oh my gosh. Nowadays bi-national centers have two or three American officers.

ROSE: No, I mean this was—I'm counting the local staff.

Q: Local employees. Yeah, no. I'm thinking of the one in Madrid which must have been one of the bigger ones.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: It had six or seven at most employees. So, you talk about reduction of force, but the real rifts came much later, I think.

ROSE: Oh, yeah. In fact, I was the last USIA director of the Natal bi-national center. After that they turned it over to a local.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: And that happened to me twice. I'll get to that when we get to it.

Q: But that's a great opportunity to be in the center of all that. So, the BNCs (B-inational Centers) had fantastic activities, give some examples, if you would. Did you have weekly or twice a week events? When you say teaching, it was English teaching, is that right?

ROSE: Yes, so we had most of the revenue or the operating expenses come from students who were trying to learn English and would pay us to do so. There were challenges in keeping them operating because, you know, you had to be able to manage a budget, and I inherited the bi-national center when it was several thousand dollars in debt, and so I had to try to find a way to rescue it before it went under economically.

Q: That sounds like a formula for promotion. And I'm guessing that it did help your career.

ROSE: I think it did. We were able to reorganize some things and do some cost cutting and some increased advertising for our courses and so forth, and in the end, it was financially viable by the time I finished my assignment a year and a half later or so.

Q: You generously say we, it was you, I guess.

ROSE: The board was supportive. Actually, we got a grant from USIA to eliminate part of the debt. They were willing to do that. So, I think we got a couple of thousand of dollars to see if I could make it work, and then we were able to pull it out. But I had some very well-qualified people there. They were all local. A director of courses that was a very qualified and good teaching staff so, yeah.

Q: And did you report to the PAO (Public Affairs Officer) in Brasilia? Who did you report to?

ROSE: It was kind of mixed. It seemed like I had multiple people.

Q: I guess the ConGen maybe.

ROSE: Yeah. It was primarily to the CAO and branch PAO in Recife, but you also had a lot of the connections with the head of the bi-national center program in Washington, DC, who stipulated a lot of the—kind of guided on the curriculum and that. We had some flexibility in choosing the program that we would use for the English teaching. The CAO (Cultural Affairs Officer) also had a definite role to play because we would want to be on the circuit for any visiting programs that would be coming through that they could afford to send on to Natal and that sort of thing.

Q: So, what was the weekly schedule or yearly schedule? You had visiting speakers, you had performances, I guess, artistic performances. Did you engage local performing groups?

ROSE: Yes, sometimes. Especially if there was any local or visiting North American talent that we could tap into. But we would get pianists and we would get an art exhibit occasionally. The film program was very big then. And so, we actually had as part of the bi-national center program a guy who used a donated vehicle—a Jeep Wagoneer that USAID had supplied, and he would go around to plazas in the northeast and show movies.

Q: Fantastic. Those were in the old days of actual film when you would thread the…

ROSE: Oh yeah. Sixteen millimeter projectors.

Q: Sixteen millimeter, wow.

ROSE: He'd find a big wall in some place in the plaza that he could project it on, and hundreds of people would show up.

Q: Fantastic. Yeah, those were the glory days really of USIA. What you described was very much what happened in Africa. They would find a wall, and then it didn't matter what the film was, people would just love to see any film, and of course if it had American content. Wow. So, you went to Recife. You weren't actually trained specifically in cultural exchange, were you? This came as part of your rotational training?

ROSE: Right. So, I did spend a few months working with the branch cultural affairs officer, a few months for the branch information officer, and a few months in the consular section. Yeah, that was basically my training in Recife.

Q: In those days things were much more centralized, I think. You had a PAO in Brasilia who kind of oversaw all the branches, right? Which is no longer the case. Did you go to Brasilia? Were there yearly meetings for all the staff?

ROSE: No, the way we got around was mostly—well, to begin with, I never went to Brasilia because the embassy was still in Rio de Janeiro at that time.

Q: Oh.

ROSE: Brasilia was under construction.

Q: Pardon me, I had my chronology off there.

ROSE: Yeah, you've got to go way back to get to my time.

Q: Yeah. Okay. So, the embassy was in Rio.

ROSE: Yes. And I did get—it's interesting, when I arrived in Brazil for the first time, I arrived in Rio. And so, I had a few days of consultations there before going on up to Recife. I didn't even meet the country PAO. I was too small potatoes for him to bother with.

Q: Incredible.

ROSE: In fact, I think I saw him once during my entire tour.

Q: Incredible. Now, the CAO who was your boss, I guess, reported to the country PAO, I think. That would normally be–I mean, money was coming to you from Rio, I guess.

ROSE: Yes. From the executive officer there. But it would've been things that were proposed by—I mean, we didn't get much money. USIA's contribution to the bi-national center was my salary.

Q: Oh. Well, that's pretty good.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: So, the rest of it was self-sustaining.

ROSE: Yeah, it came out of the English teaching program primarily.

Q: Okay. So, it broke even.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Now, you have this huge city, São Paulo, bigger than Rio. Was that part of your existence?

ROSE: A huge bi-national center there, of course, and a branch post. I never visited there.

Q: No? Okay.

ROSE: I think the only time I went back to Rio after my initial consultation there was when I took R&R (Rest and Recuperation) in Rio. I let them know that's where I was coming and wanted to know if I could come by and meet the folks at the embassy.

Q: It sounds— I've never been to Rio. I know there's some crime there these days, but it's the place to go on some R&R.

ROSE: There wasn't any crime at that time, and it was just an amazing place to go. And we had a week because we didn't dare leave our children longer than that. But we went to the big place where the samba schools trained and the botanical garden, went up the Corcovado to the statue of Christ.

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: Did all the fun things. But I also took a little bit of time at the embassy to meet some of the people that were there.

Q: Which was very generous of you. R&R entitles you to be completely away from all of it. Could you have gone to the U.S. with their funding?

ROSE: From Natal I probably could have. In fact, I mentioned that I saw the PAO once, and I won't identify him because the reason I saw him was that he could spend Christmas in Miami by going on consultations as far as Belém.

Q: Oh my gosh. Okay. Alright.

ROSE: And then catch a flight to Miami.

Q: Got the whole picture, that's all we need to know. Let him go nameless. So, you had four months of Portuguese, but you had solid Spanish. How quickly did you feel comfortable with Portuguese language?

ROSE: Well, obviously those are close enough that the transition is easy. I got my knuckles wrapped a couple of times because the instructor at FSI was—she was a piece of work herself.

Q: Let me guess, you used the conditional incorrectly?

ROSE: So, basically it was conversational Portuguese and if I interjected any Spanish words in the process of trying to make myself understood the ruler would come out.

Q: Although we certainly know Brazilians—I know Brazilians will always tell you, I don't speak Spanish, but of course they do. They certainly understand Spanish. So, I had a similar situation to yours, some last minute change and I ended up being in Madrid, no complaints. My secretary, the contract said you must speak fluent English, but she didn't, which was the best thing for my Spanish learning. But did you have such a person in Recife? Somebody you were with daily—did you have like an OMS (Office Management Specialist) or a secretary working with you?

ROSE: Well, because I was there on a training assignment and was rotating, I didn't have an office of my own. I mean, I had a place in an office, I had a desk. But I relied on the local staff and probably the most helpful one that I recall was indeed the secretary to the—I don't know, she was probably the PAO's and everybody else's secretary as well. And she was an interesting person in her own right because she was Lebanese in origin but spoke perfectly good Portuguese. And so, then she was my mentor for some of the things I needed to know.

Q: There's a parallel there. These people you run into can be enormously helpful if they want to be. That's great. So, the consular district in Recife is not just Recife, it's the surrounding area. Were you able to get to some of the—there must have been villages and other places within the consular district?

ROSE: Yeah, well even Natal was within the consular district, of course. It was a hundred and some odd miles north of Recife, but yeah. We traveled around a bit and got to see some of the countryside, and we lived three blocks from the beach, a beautiful beach in Recife and within very close access to a whole strand of beautiful beaches in Natal, so that was one of the great attractions to being posted there.

Q: Now, you had been away from home when you were in Peru. What was the level of your contact with friends and family back in the U.S.? Back then there were aerogrammes, letters, and the occasional very expensive phone call. How did that work?

ROSE: We did have the armed forces postal system in Brazil, so we could order things from Sears, or the catalog orders houses and they would come into Recife, and then if they were sending up a batch of books or something for our library at the bi-national center, they could also put my order in. so, it took a long time for my order to get there. We used the international mail for letters, and it was about two weeks each way, so you might ask a question of your family and a month later get a reply back.

Q: Sounds right. So, I think you said a year and a half? Is that what you said?

ROSE: Well, the total initial assignment was really only two years. And that had to be split between Recife and Natal, so it was really only eight or nine months in Recife and then the remaining sixteen months or something in Natal.

Q: Okay, so did Natal have a BNC (Bi-national Commission)?

ROSE: Well, that was where I was assigned as the BNC in Natal.

Q: I see. So, Recife was where the office was, but the BNC was in Natal.

ROSE: Well, there was a bigger bi-national center in Recife as well.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: In fact, they were spread around. There were several smaller ones in cities that had no USIA personnel assigned to them. They just operated independently, and we gave them support to their libraries and sometimes went there and conducted seminars and did a little program support for them and things like that.

Q: Fantastic. So, you actually moved from Recife to Natal?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: And you had more selection of beaches in Natal than you did in Recife?

ROSE: Yes. One really interesting aspect of Natal is that it had a special connection with the United States and the bi-national center that I inherited there, that I went to direct, was the old U.S. consulate.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: And it was on three acres of ground. I mean, it looked like an estate.

Q: Fantastic.

ROSE: And the reason for that is that Natal, Brazil happens to be the closest point to Dakar in the Senegal, 1,600 miles across the Atlantic Ocean.

Q: Ah, okay.

ROSE: So, during World War Two they began to launch the African campaign against Rommel. They would bring all the supplies and logistical support down to Natal and then have a 1,600 mile flight across the Atlantic to Dakar. And so, the infrastructure of that city was basically built and run by the American military.

Q: Wow. I mean, and yet it had a local character, I'm sure.

ROSE: Yeah. And then they all went away, but everybody remembered them fondly and was grateful that they ran an efficient post office and built good roads and left all that

legacy for the city, which was in an impoverished area. So, yeah. I was very favorably received there as the only official American left in town.

Q: Fantastic.

ROSE: So, just as an example of what that meant, when Apollo 11 landed on the moon and we got the films from NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), the mayor, the governor, the head of the university, the generals, anyone who mattered in Natal showed up at my house for a film showing and cocktails.

Q: Oh my. And of course, we all know that the whole thing was staged in a Hollywood movie set. That was July of '69, I think. Gosh. So, imagine being positively received as an American.

ROSE: Well, I mean during Carnaval when the parades took place, I had a seat on the honor row with the dignitaries of town and everything to review, stand and so forth.

Q: Yeah. There are still countries where the U.S. is popular, but it seems to be a shrinking number.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Well, that sounds like an absolutely delightful assignment. What did you learn about—you had a run a budget, you had a keep a schedule going, did you have a schedule that went out two months or something like that? How did you organize the activities? Because there's a lot going on in a bi-national center.

ROSE: Yes. And we had good people who knew their jobs and everything. I kind of just learned from them what their responsibilities were and then I would try to support them and consult with them and lend advice where I felt it was needed. I would try to pay some attention to what our policy needs were and so forth, and of course we were responsible, even though it was primarily a cultural assignment, for getting tapes around to radio stations and feeding the news media and all of that, so it was a good full-scope training.

Q: So, you were doing IO type things?

ROSE: Yeah, on a minor scale.

Q: Yeah. Now, this was the time of Pinochet in Chile, Latin America was generally very skeptical of U.S. policy, but I guess Brazil less so, it seems.

ROSE: Well, that was during a time when Brazil was being led by a military—one of their periods of military intervention—and so the generals were in charge of the country. They were, as I mentioned, we had a big AID mission there and there was a lot of support to rural development and other kinds of things going on, so a lot of what I did was to try

to publicize how much we were trying to help the country economically and all of that. You probably experienced some of the same kinds of work in Africa.

Q: Yes. And there was an AID mission in Natal?

ROSE: We had one USAID (United States Agency for International Development) officer there who oversaw the support to that state.

Q: Okay. And did the AID officer look to you for local publicity? Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't.

ROSE: We were good friends and we consulted fairly often with him and the Peace Corps director.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: The one other little interesting operation there was that the Brazilian Cape Kennedy, if you will, was about twenty-five miles south of Natal. So, there was a facility out there that would launch sounding rockets and things like that. And periodically people would come from NASA and there was a permanently assigned small contingent from the Smithsonian institution that operated a satellite tracking station and some things there. So, that was… Yeah, Peace Corps, one AID officer, and this little Smithsonian operation out at the… Interestingly enough the name of the facility out there translated—I mean, it was near a beautiful beach and all that—but for some reason the name of it translates as edge of hell.

Q: Oh, okay. I'm sure there's a good story behind that. Probably from the seventeenth century when they didn't even know what malaria was, maybe?

ROSE: Something like that. I don't know what it was. So, that was why the Americans were there.

Q: So, Recife and Natal are tropical or subtropical, right?

ROSE: Yes, tropical.

Q: So, was that ever an issue, malaria?

ROSE: Oh, I was very grateful to have a nurse as a wife because we went through all the standard giardia, amoebic dysentery, etc. We didn't have respiratory problems; it was a nice humid, hot climate, so I don't remember ever having a cold in Natal, but we certainly spent a lot of time with lab tests and getting rid of parasites.

Q: Oh my gosh. And you had one child or two at that time?

ROSE: By this time, we had three because we had one while we were in Arlington.

Q: Well, children are vulnerable to these things.

ROSE: Oh yeah.

Q: But they came out okay?

ROSE: Yeah. I mean, they had to be treated for parasites regularly and everything. It just went with the territory.

Q: So, this was the world that they knew. They knew the world of tropical and subtropical challenges.

ROSE: Right.

Q: Which is not the case in Peru. So, this was actually your first experience in a very warm climate. Okay. Well, you said it's always best to be at the bottom, I don't see it as the bottom, I see it as the side. The side is always the best place to be, I think.

ROSE: I guess the beginning is a better word than the bottom.

Q: Okay, yeah. And you know, as many of us in USIA, we were molded by our local employees who knew what to do.

ROSE: Oh yeah.

Q: Yes. We called them FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals) back then. We're now supposed to call them LES (Locally Employed Staff), whatever. They keep thinking up new euphemisms.

ROSE: Mine, of course, because we were an independent operation were not true FSNs, they weren't employed by the U.S. Government, so, I only acquired FSNs when they moved me out of the bi-national center realm.

Q: Okay, are we ready to move you to whatever that was?

ROSE: Let me see if there is anything else I should say about the assignment in Brazil. Just on a personal level, one of the challenges was that at that time there was no branch of our church there. And so, everything that we did for our children's religious instruction, and everything had to be at our initiative. There was one other member of our church, an Air Force cadet, assigned out at Barreira do Inferno, the edge of hell, who could make it in every other week for Sunday school with us. He was from Rio Grande do Sul, the southern state of Brazil. And then occasionally a Peace Corps couple that came from nine hours away by bus into the interior.

Q: Wow.

ROSE: They were believers. So, that kind of played into where things would go next.

Q: Yeah. Meaning you wanted a place where there would be a branch of Latter Day Saints?

ROSE: Yeah. Just as a matter of curiosity, a few weeks ago the president of our church announced that a new temple would be built in Natal.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah. So, you can see how it's grown, because that requires at least—

Q: You might have had something to do with that.

ROSE: Not really because I had no way to do anything. There were no missionaries in the area or anything around. We were really isolated.

Q: That must be very pleasing.

ROSE: Well, yes. To know that a temple district requires several thousand members and so…

Q: How did this happen? There were other missionaries, I guess?

ROSE: Later, after we left there were missionaries who were assigned from the church to go in and begin work there and so today it has dozens of chapels around the state and so forth where then there was nothing.

Q: Okay, so you said mysteriously that this figured into your next move.

ROSE: Yes, because when Washington personnel started contacting me about my next assignment, they were suggesting that there was a position in Santo Domingo, which was a combined CAO, cultural affairs officer, bi-national center director. And they said this would be a nice next step for you because it carries the CAO title, not just a bi-national center director. So, I kind of looked into it and I had had some trouble even back when I was in northern Peru with heat. And actually, I had an incident of heatstroke.

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: And you become sensitized to that, so I said, you know, you just had me spend the last two years in a hot, tropical climate, and I had to be really careful and keep myself hydrated and everything to avoid the headaches that come with that. And I didn't mention it at the time, but in the back of my mind as well, was sure it would be nice if we could get somewhere where there was a branch of our church so our kids would have a place.

Q: I would guess that there would be one in Santo Domingo, no?

ROSE: There was not.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, my question to the personnel officer was, isn't there any place else you could send me? He started looking down his list and he said well, with your timing only kind of remote places like Arequipa, Peru.

Q: Oh.

ROSE: You would be a bi-national center director. It's a little bigger than Natal, but it would essentially be a lateral assignment, not a growth assignment. Well, my wife had spent eight months of her mission in Peru in Arequipa and knew that it was an absolutely delightful place at 7,000 feet in the Andes ringed by beautiful mountains and all the rest, and I said I'll take it.

Q: Great decision. Yeah, I mean, and you knew—we have no way of knowing if we're going to get altitude sickness until we live in an altitude area. But you had done that. I mean, Arequipa is way up there, you said.

ROSE: Well, it's 7,500 feet and the only issue was that at some point we had another child, and so they wanted my wife to go to Lima for the delivery because of the altitude issue, but with the three children at home she was not having that.

Q: We need to pause for a moment to remember how human USIA used to be. You could talk to your personnel counselor, come up with an idea, and you could say, give me an alternative. I mean, it's amazing. Now that's unimaginable. I mean, we who were in USIA, we dearly miss it, I know I do. And you could talk to people, and it seemed like a big bureaucracy at that time but looking back at it at that time from Department of State, it was like a family.

ROSE: Yeah, it really was.

Q: So, that's quite something that the HR person suggested something, offered an alternative, and acted according to your wishes. Wow. That's terrific. That didn't happen all the time, but they did try to match people with their wishes pretty much.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: So, Arequipa, okay. And was that a three year assignment?

ROSE: Two.

Q: Two years, okay. Now, so this must be like 1970? Something like that?

ROSE: I'm trying to remember exactly how all this played out.

Q: Yeah, but it would be around there. If you went into the Foreign Service in '68 it would be '70, '71, I guess.

ROSE: Right. Exactly. You know, now that I think about it, maybe I didn't get that quite right. Because now that I think about it, I think what they said initially was that they were going to assign me to Tegucigalpa.

Q: Ah, okay.

ROSE: And actually, my air freight ended up in that country.

Q: Air freight.

ROSE: I'm trying to remember between which two assignments this happened, but yeah. So, it was at that point that they said that Peru was available.

Q: Well, okay, sounds like—they called it ARA (Inter-American Affairs) back then, right?—it sounds like you were clearly an ARA person.

ROSE: Yeah, at that point until it came time for an out of area assignment. Yes. But in any case, the way that that played out is that I went on consolations in Washington while they worked out a new assignment and then someone in Tegucigalpa wanted to extend, kind of what happened in Bolivia, and so they needed to find a new place for me, and they said Santo Domingo. That's how. And then it became either Santo Domingo or Arequipa, and so I took it.

Q: No-brainer, I would have done the same. That's beautiful. Plus, you had not lived there but your wife had?

ROSE: Right. I had visited the city once.

Q: So, for her it was a homecoming.

ROSE: Oh, absolutely. I mean, she knew people there, she knew that there were three congregations of our church in the city, so they had already built a chapel there. Our children, who at this point were speaking Portuguese could quickly learn Spanish and be integrated into the units there and so forth.

Q: Okay, so you were CAO/BNC director?

ROSE: No, except in Arequipa it was like Natal. I was the only official American there.

Q: BNC, right.

ROSE: But in a very different climate, but not such a friendly one politically.

Q: Oh. Well let's hear a little about that. Does this have to do with…

ROSE: Well, once again, it's a military government in Peru. You know, it was Pinochet time and then Allende next door in Chile and so, a lot of hostility toward U.S. exploitation of Peruvian mineral resources and all of that sort of thing. The Shining Path guerrilla movement was active up in the mountains. The universities were hotbeds of protest and so forth, and so I got a Molotov cocktail thrown through the window in my office. You know, there were some kind of dicey situations there.

Q: Okay, so how do you explain? You had a military regime in Brazil, a military regime in Peru, what made the difference? Very friendly in Brazil, very unfriendly in Peru.

ROSE: Officially in Brazil the military government was I would say viewed by many Brazilians at that time as fairly benign. Bringing some order to the chaos that often besets Brazil.

Q: The country that is and always will be the future.

ROSE: Yes, the future. Yeah. Peru was more—it was one of the sort of leftist military regimes and you know, they would play on antipathy toward the United States to gain popular support and so forth. And so, it wasn't particularly friendly, but they would work with us. I mean, the general assigned to the southern region was one of my contacts, and so there wasn't any official hostility. It was the students and the labor unions that really were the ones that had to find somebody that they could blame their poverty on and the lack of opportunities.

Q: So, by the same token, the military regime in Peru was very friendly or kind of friendly with the U.S.?

ROSE: They were a bit standoffish. This is when Che Guevara was running around in Bolivia next door and they were kind of worried about where things were going with that.

Q: I mean, but in that sense, I guess they had common cause with the U.S. government, right?

ROSE: Yeah, to some extent, but they knew there was enough antipathy towards the United States that they didn't want to get too close to us.

Q: Okay. But luckily it was not your job to maintain relations with the cabinet or any of that.

ROSE: Right. So, I didn't have to deal with most of that stuff.

Q: You were divinely remote from the capital and from politics, I guess. The advantage of BNC is they're not political.

ROSE: Exactly.

Q: Yeah. Great. Now, Arequipa sounds more remote than Natal.

ROSE: Well, but it was the second largest city in Peru, and it was important enough that at one time there had been a consulate there, and so people remembered that the American representative in the city was important enough. So, again, I had the kind of cache that I had had in Natal with the local citizenry and the leadership and the mayor and the military governor and so forth.

Q: These days we would say, who did your evaluation? Meaning, did you report to the PAO in Lima?

ROSE: I reported to the CAO in Lima.

Q: Okay. And did you have frequent visits?

ROSE: Yes. And there it was a much closer relationship than it had been in Natal. I was on consultations a few times in Lima, he visited me at the bi-national center. We had more of a role in Fulbright and exchange programs. I even had a grantee as my director of courses as opposed to having to hire a local one. And so, Natal was just sort of out there. Very independent. The great thing about it was I didn't answer to anybody.

Q: Well, I mean somebody wrote evaluations.

ROSE: Yeah, they did. Whoever it was.

Q: Okay. So, did it seem like going home to go to Lima or was it just that place where the official things took place? You really felt anchored in Arequipa, I guess?

ROSE: Well, you know, I didn't spend that much time in Lima. I mean, certainly if the ambassador came to town, I helped host him and arrange his schedule because I was the official American there. I dealt with some consular issues if an American got injured some place in the hinterlands and needed help or got thrown in jail for getting in trouble or something like that. Got some of that in Natal as well. So, it was again, an assignment with some scope, but I had more media and other contacts there, I think, than even in Brazil.

Q: So, what were your favorite local people? By category, I mean. Journalists? Is there a university in Arequipa?

ROSE: Yes. There was an important university there. It was a hotbed of agitation and that. The Shining Path contingent at that university was very strong, and that was how I got my Molotov cocktail, which fortunately did not ignite the building.

Q: I should show you my memento. Of the three Molotov's that came into my house in Haiti, this was the one where the wick did not ignite, so I framed it. Two of them did and that's of course a totally different thing. But when you say Shining Path, I thought that Peruvians were afraid of them because they were killing indiscriminately.

ROSE: Yes, it was very brutal. Their real center of power was in Ayacucho up in the mountains, but the leftist students at the university there were sympathetic to them, and so there was a lot of Maoist feeling there, and the Little Red Book was very popular there.

Q: Sounds a bit stupid. I mean, their own interests did not lie with the Sendero Luminoso *(Shining Path), they were being indiscriminately targeted, I think.*

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: So, they were misled. It was not your task to reorient their thinking, but it was your task to humanize the American presence, and I'm guessing you did that.

ROSE: Well, that was what we tried to do, and of course there was a significant portion of the population, the better educated ones who were not part of that group, who aspired to the opportunity to study in the United States or whatever and would come to the bi-national center for English instruction and programs and so forth. And whenever we would do cultural programs we would invite the city luminaries, the musicians and the political leadership.

Q: Was there some success on the part of university students in actually getting to go to the U.S. for training?

ROSE: A few. My recollection is that we did not have any Fulbright connection with the university there, it was just too leftist; they were not receptive at that time.

Q: But did you do academic advising?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: So, did you have much more demand than supply in that regard? Did you have weekly briefings?

ROSE: No, it wasn't that much. We would administer the tests, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) test and those kinds of things. And the SAT and GRE (Graduate Record Examination) if it got to that. So, we were an authorized test center for all of those things.

Q: What was the likelihood of getting a visa for students who were accepted in U.S. universities?

ROSE: If they came from a family that had enough money to send them there it wasn't too difficult.

Q: Okay. You weren't doing consular. So, for consular things they went to Lima, right?

ROSE: Yes, that's right. I'm trying to remember, I think there may have been an incident or two where a passport replacement was processed through me or something, but it was very rare. I mean I couldn't issue it myself, but I would put it in our pouch to Lima and get the consulate there to deal with it.

Q: Very nice of you. Thank you on behalf of the Peruvian people. So, Peru must have been delightful.

ROSE: It was. We traveled all over the country. We of course went to Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca. I'll just share one crazy little incident that actually has been published in a bilingual magazine in California. Ruth and I, toward the end of our time there, decided that we would like to take advantage of a little vacation time that we had coming and go visit La Paz, since we had been assigned there but never been there.

Q: Understood.

ROSE: And there was this wonderful opportunity that was available at that time to take the train from Arequipa to Puno on the shore of Lake Titicaca and get a steamer that went across the lake to the Bolivian port on the other side and then you could get a bus or a taxi to La Paz. And so, we signed up for that tour. And we found a couple that was willing to look after our children while we went off for a week in La Paz. We got as far as Juliaca, which is the city closest to Puno near Lake Titicaca, and a railroad official came on the train and said everyone will have to get off here because there's been a problem between here and Puno and the train will not be going on. So, we got off the train and went into the government tourist hotel there, which was the nicest hotel in the city, and we're sitting there trying to figure out, well do we turn around and go back to Arequipa and forget the trip? How do we deal with this? When two men, one Spanish speaking, the other a Brazilian, came through and said, is there anyone in here trying to get to—the Spanish speaking one—is there anyone here who's trying to get to La Paz. We said, well we are. And they came over and they said look, we're UN (United Nations) officers, we have an important conference with the ministry of finance there tomorrow that we need to be there for. The ministry of finance is willing to send a car to the Peruvian border on the north side of the lake if we can get ourselves there. We're looking for someone to share car expenses.

Q: Fantastic.

ROSE: So, we said, okay, well we're interested. So, we started asking around and someone told us, there's a guy that drives out to a little town that's near the border there periodically, so he knows his way, he can be found down there. And they gave us an address and we went and talked to him, and he said yeah, I'll be available at five o'clock this afternoon if you'd like to go. So, we said okay, we'll be back at five. So, we went back at five, and he put us in his car. It was a three hour trip around the north end of Lake Titicaca to get to this little town. And when we got there, he unloaded our bags, took his pay, and got off before we could ask him where is the border crossing? By now it's eight o'clock at night and it's cold at 12,000 feet. And there's no one in the streets. And so, I wandered around the central plaza, which is where we were put off, and finally found a door that was a little bit ajar and saw that it was a convent. So, I knocked on the door and a little nun came to the door and said, how may I help you? And I explained to her that we needed to know what direction to go with our suitcases to find the border crossing. And she said, it's twelve kilometers from here. So, I said, are there any taxis in town that could take us there? Well, no, there are hardly any cars in this town. Then she thought for a minute, and she said, well, there might be somebody who could help you. And she said, he lives right down that street that goes off the plaza over there. She said, look for a blue truck.

Q: I love this.

ROSE: So, we went down that street carrying our bags and there were a couple of guys that were just getting ready to climb into an empty truck, so we went up and just then the owner, the driver came out. And we said, we were told by the nun at the convent that maybe you could help us get to the border. And he kind of reluctantly looked at us and said, well, I am headed that way. Maybe I could if you help me pay for the gas. And he gave us a very modest amount to help him with and we said, great. Well, there was only room for my wife and the two UN guys and the driver together in the cab.

Q: But not you.

ROSE: I ended up in the back with the *cargadores* (loaders), the guys who were going to load his load when he got to his destination. And off we went across the Altiplano, and I had only a sweater and it was the coldest night of my entire life. The stars were beautiful at 12,000 feet as I went across the altiplano.

Q: But you're across the border you're still nowhere, correct?

ROSE: Well, the border crossing was a remote place, a little road connection at the north end of the lake. So, we get within about a few hundred yards, maybe two hundred yards of where we see a little outpost up there with lights on it. He said, this is where you'll have to get off. And he said, that's it, right up there where those lights are.

Q: Yeah, but that's not a place to stay.

ROSE: Yeah. But we knew that supposedly there's a car just across the border from the ministry of finance of Bolivia, waiting for us.

Q: I see.

ROSE: So, we just need to get through the border. By this time we had figured out that our ability to reach Bolivia was in the hands of a smuggler. He was going out there to pick up a load of contraband goods, and that's why he didn't want to get anywhere near the border post.

Q: This is great material. I love this Doug, this is great. This is true Foreign Service. I love this.

ROSE: So, we got out and got our bags and headed toward the border and of course, the office was closed by this time. There was a light on in the little residential quarters that the guards had, and we went over and banged on the door until finally a sleepy guard came and told us, no, this is only a daytime crossing, I'm not authorized to stamp any passports at this time of night or anything. And we explained to him who we were and that it was very important for these two UN officials to be there. He saw that we all had black passports and he said, well, okay, I hope I don't get in trouble for this. And he gave us an exit visa. And we walked across the border and didn't see a car. We went up the road a little way and there was kind of a bend in the road around a little outcropping, and sure enough there was a driver there asleep in his car waiting for us.

Q: Fantastic. I think the title of this chapter will be your brief temptation overcome to temporarily convert to Catholicism. You were tempted for a few minutes.

ROSE: Well, the title of my story when it was published was "High Times on the Altiplano."

Q: That's a good one. I can't imagine a better story than that.

ROSE: We finally found out why the train did not go through. General Alvarado, President Alvarado's wife had been at the university in Puno giving a lecture and the students started heckling her, and she called them a bunch of uncivilized Indians, and so to prove her right, they pelted her train as she left town.

Q: Damaging the train.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: And so, that's why they weren't going to run the train through until the situation settled down and it wouldn't endanger their train anymore.

Q: There is so much going on.

ROSE: So, we ended up having to come back through Arica, Chile because we could get a flight to there and then cross the border into Peru and fly back to Arequipa.

Q: So, you really wanted to see La Paz. We haven't discussed whether you did?

ROSE: Oh, we did. It was delightful. And we were even hosted by the PAO there for dinner and had a good visit.

Q: So, I'm imagining you in this remote area, it's night, the stars are out, thousands of feet, it's cold, you don't know where you are, you don't know where you're going, and we call it resourcefulness. You kept your cool. Clearly. That's a great story. So, you saw La Paz. You saw the forbidden fruit, so to speak. And then you were away from Arequipa for just less than a week?

ROSE: Yeah, it was a week. We did take our originally planned time and when it was time to come home the trains were still not running and so we had to go to a travel agent and get a flight to Arica, Chile, at the never northern border of Chile and cross into Peru that way in order to get home. And so, we got home I think maybe a day late.

Q: A+ for resourcefulness. Excellent. Well, this is great. Just give us a hint of what happens next. We've got to talk more about Arequipa or talk more about your next transfer next time?

ROSE: The assignment to Arequipa, again, as I say, Ruth my wife remembered it as one of her two favorite assignments, the other was Chiang Mai, Thailand, but we had a very good experience there in all respects. We were well received by the people of the city who mattered to us and had some good friends. There was a Carnation Milk plant there and we made good friends with the Americans and Germans who were assigned to operate that plant. The Southern Peru Copper Corporation had a mine south of Arequipa. We met some good friends there and I had responsibility for keeping contacts with the media in all of southern Peru, and so we did visit radio stations and other places that were carrying VOA (Voice of America) feeds or using their tapes when I was in Tacna and Puno and places around that part. Our children thrived there. We had good health there. It was a nice house that we lived in, beautiful scenery. I even got to do a little trout fishing.

Q: Great. When it came time to leave, was it painful to leave?

ROSE: A little. It was two years, and we weren't really anxious to leave the city, but we knew it was time to move on. I had a career to think about, I couldn't just enjoy that lateral assignment for too long.

Q: Yes, nothing good lasts forever, nothing bad also lasts forever.

ROSE: So, I guess we could just cover the onward assignment issue and figure it out, and then we'll pick it up from there. So, the personnel at that point, HR, decided that it was really time for an out of area assignment now, and they proposed education office in Bangkok. And that sounded very good. It was an interesting place and definitely a new experience and so forth. So, I accepted that readily, and they said, now we assume you're going to be taking home leave first, you'll need some language training.

Q: Portuguese does not help in Bangkok.

ROSE: It's not a language designated position, but to be able to function in the country you will need six months of language training at FSI. So, I said, okay, that sounds alright. So, they said yeah, go ahead and head out on your home leave and then be in Washington on such and such a date when the Thai course will start. And I said okay, and they said, we'll cut your transfer orders for Bangkok and so forth. So, all that came up and was fine until the issue came up, what do we do with your family while you're in language training because you will be on TDY (Temporary Duty).

Q: Oh, of course. Had they never dealt with something like this?

ROSE: So, we went back and forth, and they said, well we can't transfer you to Washington for that. Your transfer is to Bangkok. Can't they stay with parents or something for six months?

Q: They've been through this before. Oh my god. That's crazy. So, they did it for you but not your family.

ROSE: So, I said no, and they said, we can't legally transfer you. I said, I can't legally dispose of my family. So, I said, you ought to figure out some way to make this work.

Q: Let's do something illegal, you said.

ROSE: So, finally they decided to do something illegal rather than making me do something illegal. And they gave me a transfer to Washington.

Q: Oh, so it wasn't a TDY, it was a six month thing.

ROSE: They turned it into a six month assignment. So, that allowed us to buy our first home in McLean, Virginia, even though we were only going to be there six months. A realtor friend persuaded us that that was a good investment and was absolutely right.

Q: It was. Yeah.

ROSE: So, yeah. So, it was off to FSI again for language training.

Q: Excellent. We'll pick it up at that point. End of number three. What day is it today?

ROSE: It's the 21.

Q: It is still the 21, this is Doug Rose talking to Dan Whitman, this was our third conversation.

***

This is Doug Rose talking to Dan Whitman, it's our fourth conversation, and it's April 27, 2023. So, Doug, we got you out of Peru. Mixed feelings, I'm sure. A previous part of your life had been spent there, some emotional attachment. Certainly Ruth, who had been in Arequipa previously. And in its wisdom, the HR people in USIA said, time to go out of area. Which was a sincere way of helping you build a successful career.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Good on them for doing that. Let's take it from the six months of language training. You can't learn Thai in six months, so do they call it courtesy level?

ROSE: The typical Thai course was one-year if you were going to a language designated position. The intention of the six-month course was to give you at least enough to be able to ask directions, order a meal perhaps, a few things like that. I think the expectation was a little bit more than just courtesy level, but I definitely would acknowledge that it was much more difficult than learning a romance language or anything even remotely related.

Q: I'm sure. No cognates, right? Almost none.

ROSE: No. One fortunate thing though, about the Thai language, is that when they decided—one of the kings—decided to have it transcribed, he brought in Sanskrit and Pali scholars to do it. So, they developed a phonetic alphabet, and so Thai is phonetic. It has forty-some letters, but fortunately, even though it's related to Chinese as a tonal language, it did not adopt their pictographic characters.

Q: Oh, so Thai is tonal, I didn't know that. Which of course complicates things. I'm sure you said things you didn't mean to say.

ROSE: Well, there are two elements of the Thai language that I think most of us find really challenging, and that is the tones, and the other one is a phonemic distinction based on vowel length. So, just as an example, the English word cow.

Q: Yeah. Right.

ROSE: Depending on the tone and the vowel length it could be one of nine fairly common words. I mean, it was the word for rice, the word for step, the word for enter, and so on. All of those, to an untrained ear, would sound like the English word cow. But to a Thai speaker, emphasizing here, it would be kaw, khaaw, kaw (falling tone) and so forth.

Q: Wow. And you're remembering this. That's impressive. Did they reveal this early enough in the course to dispirit the student or did they bring it on later on?

ROSE: Well, they did—unless people were going just for courtesy level—they did look at language aptitude and then decide whether or not to let you give it a try.

Q: Yes. There was that test that they—I think it was a phony thing, but they had a test—

ROSE: Yeah, it was the Modern Language Aptitude Test.

Q: Modern Language Aptitude Test. And I do remember when I took that test. I don't think I have exceptional aptitude, but I understood when taking the test, the trick, which was the association of this and that. I remember thinking well, I'm lucky, I've figured this out, I'll probably get a high score, that does not mean I have aptitude. It just means I figured out what they're driving at. I don't know if you remember that from the test?

ROSE: I think there was some of that involved because I did score quite high on it. So, it was not an issue.

Q: And I'm guessing Thais are very tolerant about people who say cow instead of khaaw. Are they tolerant?

ROSE: They are. And you know, they're delighted when you try to learn their language. I was in a class with two other people who were headed for Bangkok in my office, The CAO and the deputy PAO. Unfortunately, or fortunately—fortunately for me—it made me look good because they were both more senior than I was and had advanced enough in years that language learning did not come as easily for them.

Q: Okay, got it.

ROSE: The unfortunate part about it was, of course, that they probably retarded the progress of the class a little bit to try to accommodate them.

Q: Well, Thais I believe are extremely gracious people, very hospitable, and I'm guessing that even from the moment of language instruction you must have had a sense of the Thai culture, which is a distinct and separate thing, but I also think it's a very kind culture.

ROSE: Absolutely. I just really enjoyed my four Thai instructors at FSI, the Foreign Service Institute. One little amusing story. Khun Chotchoi, one of the little ladies who taught us, was a little elderly, but just delightful, very sweet. And she lived on the Georgetown side of the river. And so, she would cross the river every morning to come to FSI.

Q: Key Bridge, right?

ROSE: Yes, exactly. And so, one morning she arrived, and she said, did you feel that wind out there? She said, it was really blowing hard, I was afraid it was going to blow me off the bridge, so I stopped and put some rocks in my pocket before I crossed.

Q: That's funny. And you probably didn't even notice that there was a wind. That is funny. Yeah, I used to cross that bridge for Haitian Creole training. Same thing, I was temporarily in the lower part of Georgetown. It sounds very pleasant, but in the very hot summer months it's not so pleasant.

ROSE: Right.

Q: But you were living in Arlington, I guess.

ROSE: Yes, in Virginia. Well, actually, for my Thai language training we had a friend who talked us into buying a house even though we were only going to be there for six months, and so we got a little starter home when it was possible to do that.

Q: Okay, yeah.

ROSE: So, I was commuting from McLean.

Q: Good move.

ROSE: Certainly was. That had many benefits later.

Q: Yes. And we know what Foreign Service officers really are, they're property owners who finance their purchases with salary from the Foreign Service. If they're smart. I wasn't so smart. So, you have pretty nice memories of your six months of language training. Your family, meanwhile, children in school?

ROSE: Yes, we had children in a very good school, of course. It was a short time there because we were only there for the six months for Thai language training, but our children that were old enough were in school at that point.

Q: And so, the school accommodated them coming in the middle of a semester and leaving in the middle of a semester?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: So, you came maybe at sort of late spring and left in the winter? Something like that.

ROSE: I think we actually came in the winter and left in the summer, if I'm not mistaken.

Q: Yeah. Well, that's a semester.

ROSE: Yeah, so they finished a semester essentially.

Q: Do you remember, were they all in elementary school at that time?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Yeah, okay. Alright, so what went through your mind thinking of a part of the world you had never thought about before? You had never been. You had invested yourself intellectually and culturally in Latin America. What was Asia to you before you even set foot there? What were you expecting?

ROSE: Really very little understanding of—I mean, I had studied enough geography and history to know that it was southeast Asia, not north Asia or south Asia and that it was part of—with my area studies—I learned that it was part of ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and so forth. So, it was an interesting part of the world. Unfortunately for the period, it was when the Vietnam War was still very much in progress, and of course Thailand was important to us because we had a number of bases there that were being used as platforms for bombing runs.

Q: So, this would be early, mid-70s?

ROSE: Right.

Q: Yeah, okay.

ROSE: So, we arrived in 1973.

Q: Okay. Now, ASEAN is sometimes seen as a military alliance, an economic union. Do you want to get into that at this point or later?

ROSE: Well, it provided an interesting background because it did mean that the Thais felt some common cause with Indonesia and Singapore and some of the others, and that probably influenced their willingness to let us be a part of the—to use their territory the way we did. And there was even a token Thai contribution to the forces in Vietnam. They did send a few troops. But it was also a period when there was a lot of concern because the Thais had played their buffer state role effectively through the colonial period and kept themselves from being taken over by the British or the French by carefully manipulating the relationships between those two countries. But now they found themselves very decidedly in a situation where they could not maintain neutrality or a buffer state role between China and North Vietnam and the forces of the people who were fighting in Vietnam on our side. So, they chose to open up their territory to us, but with some trepidation, especially after the way they saw how it was playing out because they had to deal with an insurgency in the northeast, which was a spillover from all of that. From Laos and Cambodia.

Q: Okay. And I know there's a lot of antipathy. Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, countries we think of as being part of the same geographic unit, but they have very unpleasant histories from what I understand.

ROSE: Yeah, the Thais, as I said, were fortunate enough to never have been colonized. All the surrounding countries, Burma on the English side and Cambodia and Laos on the east side by the French. And so, they managed to maintain their…and that had a lot of interesting influences in a respect that I became aware of, which is that it was a non-disrupted culture. It meant that the Thais were able to maintain so much of their traditional music, art, architecture, and all of that, without the French or British influences coming in and kind of modifying it in a large way. Their cuisine was a combination of Indian and Chinese, and again, that blend between two ancient cultures of Asia was much more in the forefront there than it would have been in the adjoining countries where the colonial influence had really become a large part of their cultures.

Q: Maybe an unfair question, but your sense of the neighboring countries, did they see Thailand as jealous of their independence?

ROSE: Probably somewhat. Yeah, I think there was probably a sense in some of those countries that Thailand had a privileged status. Because even on the south—I mean they were surrounded—on the south it was Malaysia, which again, was British. So, it really was remarkable that that one country managed to hold out.

Q: Sometimes in language training you acquire—I don't want to say prejudice—you acquire the point of view of the teacher. I remember, when I learned Danish, I learned to dislike Sweden, for example. That was part of the training. Was there any element of that in Thai language training of attitudes about the history of Thailand or its relations with its neighbors?

ROSE: I would say that one of the things that probably stood out was it was easy for the Thais to have a bit of a superiority complex because they were bordered by Burma and Cambodia. And while the ancient cultures of those countries were very noteworthy—you know, Angkor Wat and on the Burmese side there were important sites as well.

Q: But going back centuries and millennia.

ROSE: Yes. But their level of development in Laos, Cambodia, Burma, now Myanmar, was very clearly far behind where the Thais were. They had modernized their agriculture to the point that they were a food exporting country, which was a rarity in that part of the world. They had the beginnings of—certainly not at the level of Singapore or Taiwan—but the beginnings of a tech industry and a large enough country—there were about forty million people there at the time—a large enough country to have universities that provided a reasonable education. And so, it was easy to feel that they were a special country.

Q: I saw in the paper today, yesterday in Singapore they executed a person in possession of two pounds of cannabis.

ROSE: Isn't that something?

Q: That's pretty extreme. So, they were different. You said superior. It would have been natural to have a superiority complex given their state of development. So, moving from the six months of training to Bangkok, do you remember—sometimes we have very vivid memories of the day we arrived—do you have memories of that?

ROSE: The most vivid memory I have of a date of arrival in a country is a later assignment to India, so we can get to that when we get there. But in Thailand it was—I recall the day of arrival. I recall very well that we were well taken care of. We had the help of the housing office at the embassy in locating a nice home to rent. A two-story home with a little yard and oddly enough the only chapel of our church was just around the corner.

Q: That's a great plus.

ROSE: In a huge city.

Q: So, was this one of the posts where with their help you had to go find your own place to live?

ROSE: Yes. But with help from the housing office. They would give us a model contract for the rent and all of that, and they had a group of people who had made their homes available to the embassy. I don't think ours had been lived in by an embassy family before. In fact, I do recall a little bit more. We were given temporary housing for about six weeks in the VOA house. They had a correspondent in Bangkok. He was of course covering the war and so forth, but the last person had departed, and I think there was some question as to whether or not there was going to be a replacement. But they still had a lease on the house. And so, we stayed in a very nice house and inherited a Siamese cat.

Q: So, did VOA have a correspondent accredited in Vietnam? It was very dangerous; it was a warzone. Is it possible that Bangkok was the main center for VOA reporting?

ROSE: Could have been. I wasn't focused enough to know where else they might have had someone, but yes, I wouldn't be surprised if their main source was in Bangkok.

Q: Okay. Six weeks settled. This was a two, three year assignment?

ROSE: Actually, it was a four. It was a two plus two. And it played out in a way that we were very happy about as we went through it. But in the beginning, as I said, I went in as the education officer in the embassy, responsible for overseeing Fulbright and we did have a Fulbright board there, so they operated somewhat independently, but still we provided the support for them. And then it was very important for us to maintain contact

with the universities there, which were almost uniformly welcoming, unlike Peru. So, that was a big change from Peru.

Q: And let's see, you mentioned the universities. What was the level of English comprehension and usage among, say, university students?

ROSE: A lot of the instruction in the universities in Thailand was in English.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah. Not in the smaller teacher's colleges and places like that, but in the large universities it was the language of instruction. And that was why my position was not a language designated position because even in the teacher's colleges and technical training places the faculty who I was dealing with primarily were all well enough along in English that we conducted all of our conversations with them in English rather than in Thai.

Q: So, there was a Fulbright board, meaning with these bilateral agreements the local government had to give something, either money or office space, was the Thai government putting money into this?

ROSE: I don't recall exactly how the funding structure was, but I know that there was bi-national representation. They had a separate office; they were not housed anywhere with us. We had a separate office for USIS (United States Information Service).

Q: So, were you back and forth between USIS and the Fulbright board or mainly in USIS?

ROSE: I didn't spend a whole lot of time with the Fulbright board. I mean, I knew the director well and we consulted a lot, but they did operate pretty independently. And basically, we provided a lot of logistical support for the visiting Fulbright professors and facilitated all the travel arrangements for the scholars who would be going to the United States to study and things like that. And then we did have a separate student information operation counseling and that at the bi-national center as well. Because there was a large bi-national center in Bangkok.

Q: But that was not your main work? You had a colleague?

ROSE: We had a USIS officer there and a director of courses who were with our–

Q: Again, I'm smiling because today you would have maybe 20% of that number of personnel. What was I going to ask? So, Fulbright; number one, how robust was it? Number two, did you have Humphreys and other government funded exchanges?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Do you remember roughly the numbers cut back and forth? More Thais going to the U.S. than the reverse?

ROSE: Yes. Quite so, going for graduate studies. I did sit on the board, and I was one of the board members.

Q: Did Thais see this as a tremendous incentive or pride?

ROSE: Yes, this was something they definitely aspired to, the opportunity to go and get a graduate degree in the United States. The number of U.S. professors and Fulbright scholars who were in Thailand was relatively small. I would say, probably at any given time fewer than ten. But we would be sending off thirty-five to forty to the United States for study.

Q: Okay. That's robust. Yeah. Was there any other country in the region that had that active a program? I'm guessing maybe not.

ROSE: Probably not because places like Malaysia and Singapore, maybe Indonesia because such a large country would have had numbers like that. The Philippines probably.

Q: Yeah. And this was EAP (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs), right? Yeah. So, in the organization under USIA in Washington, what we now call EAP—which included PRC (People's Republic of China), Japan, Philippines, Indonesia—where did Thailand fit in? Did they have regional conferences? Did they group countries, say from the southeast area, because they were geographically together? Did PAOs go out to meet one another?

ROSE: Not a whole lot I don't think. I would say that the place that I saw how things were grouped was more in the AmPart Program, as we called it. The American Participant Program, where Washington people in the program office of USIA would generally send an expert speaker to a group of southeast Asian countries. One of the reasons that I remember that so well is that when we had—we were doing a fair number of programs on environment and urban development and things like that. And so, I remember that if an AmPart, as we called them, an American Participant, started in Hong Kong and came to Bangkok, the judgment was that this place may already be lost. There's probably not much hope for this place. If they went to Singapore or Hong Kong first. If they went to Jakarta first, they would come to Bangkok and say, yeah, I think there's hope here. I think they can rescue it.

Q: Very interesting. So, even in the 70s Singapore was really one of the Asian tigers?

ROSE: Oh yes.

Q: Going back even that far. Was there an unwritten rule, if you go to one of these countries you have to go to one or two others?

ROSE: I worked in the program office in Washington, and so we would try to recruit people to make the best use of resources for four to six weeks.

Q: Oh, again, nowadays that would be two or three weeks. Four to six weeks?

ROSE: Some of them might have been as short as three weeks, but we tried to get up to six weeks.

Q: So, that was a future assignment in PD/EAP (Public Diplomacy/East Asian and Pacific Affairs)? Okay, we'll get to that later.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: So, were you actively involved in the AmPart programming or was that just…

ROSE: Yes, to some extent. Especially after the public affairs officer at that time was—well, when I first arrived, I'm trying to remember which one preceded which—it was Jack Hedges and Jim McGinley. But I think it was Jack Hedges when I arrived and Jim McGinley. Could have been the other way around. I don't know. But they determined that the program needs were such that they did involve me. If the speakers were going to educational institutions, very often I would be the program officer.

Q: Yeah. Well, again, we must think back fondly to those times when we had personnel coverage adequate to do that thing. We don't anymore.

ROSE: Yes, we had four of us initially under the cultural affairs officer and then later it was reorganized and our program office, and so three of the four ended up—and eventually four of the four—ended up working for the program office, including myself.

Q: Yeah. So, your relations with the front office, so to speak, the PAO, that was daily?

ROSE: Yes, there would be daily staff meetings and that.

Q: So, we called it the IO side. The CAO and, did they create a program development office? Did they have such a thing?

ROSE: Yes. In fact, strangely enough, they had the IO who became the head of the program office.

Q: Well, that makes sense. I mean, it sounds different, but this used to be done as kind of a family press culture, university exchanges. It was all USIS. Anything about the USIS setup in the 70s that we should remember, especially in light of USIS going into its last fifteen years? I mean, it was finished in 1999. That would be more than fifteen years. But what should we remember from the USIA/USIS of that time?

ROSE: Well, one thing is that we were a pretty independent operation. I mean, I think that the ambassador, the country team, regarded us as not quite as independent as AID maybe, but certainly sort of just being out there doing our thing without a lot of oversight or coordination with the other members of the country team. We just figured they had their approaches and that we had ours. We had branch posts that were independent of the consulates in the places that they functioned.

Q: Later it became very formalized, everybody had to be working from—they used to call it the Country Plan, it's changed its name many times—the Country Resource… that there would be certain objectives that the ambassador oversees, and all sections have to be part of a strategy. Was there anything? There was nothing formal of the sort in the 70s.

ROSE: Well, we had our own country plan which went through USIA for approval and the area office. But no, I don't even know if the ambassador ever saw those. We were certainly trying to align ourselves with what the embassy was doing there, but yeah.

Q: Going by memory, what would have been the logical goals, like five or six goals, that the U.S. policy in Thailand…

ROSE: The big focus was maintaining Thai support for what was going on and what we were doing in Vietnam. Especially when things began to go the wrong way to not prematurely tell us that they wanted their bases back and all of that. And the Thais were smart enough to negotiate some pretty sweet deals with us. Of course, they were getting a lot of money and military support from us, so we had a big joint U.S. military support group in Thailand that worked with the Thai military and all of that because they were hosting us on what were nominally their bases. So, that was a big one.

Q: This would be done at the government level. Any sense of what the public opinion was about these arrangements. Pro? Con? Neutral?

ROSE: There was nervousness about them being dragged into a non-neutral position and with China looming to the north they were very sensitive to that. And as I said, there was an insurgency in the northeast that they were trying to deal with. Another big priority there was trying to deal with the drug trade. The opium. It was being grown in both—well, all three—in the Golden Triangle, as it was called. Laos, Burma, and northern Thailand. And so, that was a big thing too, to try to build support for things like crop substitution programs that AID was trying to do. So, these were all locally focused objectives or goals. And the bigger picture, of course—that was still during the Cold War and so, you know, it was trying to build understanding of the U.S. place in the world and where we were vis-a-vis the Soviets and so forth.

Q: Yes, let's see. Were there echoes or subliminal memories of the Korea conflict? Did anybody think that, as you mentioned, China to the north, insurrection to the northeast, was there ever a sense that something like Korea 1950 could possibly take place?

ROSE: I never recall encountering that. I think they saw their situation as somewhat unique.

Q: Yes, okay. So, China, what was their attitude towards China? Did they think big neighbor, ignore them? Did they see them as a rival or an enemy or –?

ROSE: It was a very complex situation because I would say at least 1/5 of the Thai population was of Chinese origin.

Q: Oh, okay.

ROSE: They were regarded not in very favorable terms by a lot of Thais. It was kind of curious because the Chinese immigrants would go overboard with a Thai name, and so you could always tell who they were by how long their name was.

Q: Did they go back a decade or generations?

ROSE: The Chinese diaspora, of course, was ongoing over many years. So, some of them had been there long enough to have erased their ancestry. And unless they were very recent and fairly pure, it would be hard to distinguish them from the local population.

Q: Oh, okay. So, they were assimilated, those who had come before.

ROSE: Yeah. And then, of course, all of them by this time were full Thai speakers and so forth. But that did, I think, play in somewhat that there was not a real high regard for the Chinese and their business practices and things like that in Thailand. They were felt to be a somewhat different culture.

Q: We think of Chinese business now as being without ethics, go for the goal, do whatever you need. Was that the case back then?

ROSE: Yeah, I think the Thais felt like they were more relaxed about the way that they did things.

Q: Interesting. Now, this is fifty years ago, but the way we think of China now, suddenly very successful, we think of them as cutthroat competitors. This could be a cultural thing. I think you're implying that this goes back—this is seeming to be part of the way Chinese culture was doing things, at least as far back as the 1970s, maybe more.

ROSE: Yeah. Now, on the other hand, anyone who was honest about it had to acknowledge that they had been a factor in the development of the country.

Q: Kind of like India East Africa, kind of.

ROSE: Right. Exactly. I think that would be a good comparison.

Q: Interesting. Now, you were there for four years. This drew you into kind of an EAP identity. I think your career is mainly an ARA one. Did you ever think of yourself as possibly becoming more active or more specialized in Asia? Because you liked Bangkok, you said.

ROSE: We loved our time in Thailand. One of the things that made it so pleasant and enjoyable was that three years into my assignment they needed a new branch public affairs officer in northern Thailand.

Q: In Chiang Mai?

ROSE: In Chiang Mai. And because my Thai had become functional enough at that point that I qualified as a Thai-speaking officer, they offered me the position.

Q: Fantastic. So, suddenly you had a small empire.

ROSE: Yes. And it was absolutely delightful. As I said, that was our second favorite post. We enjoyed Bangkok. There were a few things that we did not enjoy. One was that the first house that we got was too close to one of the khlongs, which are the canals that run through the city. It's kind of like Venice. They are transportation corridors. There were more at the time, most of them have been filled in by now. But at that time, they were still very highly functional and boats would operate up and down just like bus routes and all of that. And so, we were only one house away from one of these khlongs, or canals, which offered a quick escape route for thieves. And in the two years that we lived in that house we had eight attempted break-ins, two of which were slightly successful. Fortunately, our landlord who lived in the house next door came out with his shotgun and ran them off, the *K̄hmoys*, the thieves, before they could load all the loot from the driveway into their vehicle and take off with it. So, we were able to take it back in. But they would cut the glass on our house quietly and find a way to get through the windows and break into the downstairs while we were upstairs sleeping. So, any little noise at night became very disturbing because we didn't know if it was a *K̄hmoy* (thief).

Q: Well, that's a house invasion. Now, you said you loved Chiang Mai. Not everybody would love a place where you had eight attempted break-ins.

ROSE: Well, this was in Bangkok.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, after two years we had had enough of that, our lease was up, and we rented a fourth-floor walk-up penthouse in our apartment building for our final year in Bangkok.

Q: Okay. So, two years in a house, one year in a walk-up. I get it, K̄hmoys *(thief) don't want to go up. And an added year in Chiang Mai.*

ROSE: Now, in Bangkok one of the things we enjoyed was the school there was excellent, our children liked the school there, it was a good education for them. When we moved to Chiang Mai there was a small English-speaking school operated with a protestant missionary board, but with an American curriculum. And the kids loved that school as well. In fact, I became a member of the school board there. So, all the schooling worked out fine. It only went up through eighth grade, but we didn't have anybody out of elementary school at the time. One other thing that was worth noting in Bangkok is that we had our fifth child there.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, this time the accommodations in the hospital were much better than they were in Arequipa. It was a nice little private hospital, very clean and well-ordered with a delivery room and nursery and all the things that had been lacking in Peru. So, that was a relatively easy one. Ruth stayed behind in Bangkok for a little while after I went up to Chiang Mai with the rest of the children. She stayed back with the baby for our oldest daughter to be able to complete summer school because she was enrolled in summer school and this assignment came up on short notice. So, we went up on the train and got established in Chiang Mai, and then Ruth and the children came up later. But I had a wonderful staff in Bangkok. My primary assistant was a product of minor royalty. So, she had some cache in the society and her father was the son of a consort of one of the previous kings.

Q: Wow. I mean, how was it that USIS managed to get these amazing FSNs everywhere in the world? How did they do that?

ROSE: I know, it was just phenomenal. I think it was because we had such interesting jobs for them to work in. You know, they loved that kind of work. It worked. It gave them the opportunity to go out and serve their country, their culture, and offer things that people wanted.

Q: Good point. And we did pay regularly. I don't think we paid a lot, but it was always according to local market wages, which worked against some of our employees. But yeah, those who were inspired by this, they were amazing in representing the U.S. to a foreign culture which was actually their culture. It's amazing what they did, what they've always done. Now, meanwhile your language proficiency improved enough so that you went into a language designated post. How did that happen? Did you work on your Thai in those three years in Bangkok? Did it just kind of come because of being immersed?

ROSE: You know, I think it was a combination of things. Part of it was, when you have household help that speaks minimal English, it's fun to go ahead and talk to them in Thai. And so, I would always address the household staff. Ruth spoke with them in English, but she learned Thai words for a lot of things at the market and things like that, but she didn't really have the opportunity to learn Thai. And our kids were in an American school, and I think they took a Thai course but just kind of minimal. But I would interact enough with the drivers and the members of the staff who did not speak English and the local

population enough that it just kind of came. I had a pretty good base because even coming out of FSI I think I tested at a 3, a 3/2.

Q: After six months.

ROSE: Because I looked so good alongside my colleagues.

Q: No, that's objective proof that you really do have amazing language aptitude. Okay, so were you retested ever?

ROSE: Yes, on my return because there was an incentive. I got a little boost from having learned a hard language and getting a 3.

Q: Excellent. So, maybe you went out with a three and you tested as a 3. That's amazing.

ROSE: Yeah, I would say it was probably part of it was a gift when I tested going out. By the time I came back I think it was a legitimate three because I was interviewed by television stations in northern Thailand and could manage an interview. But I have to share with you that we had one phenomenal Thai speaker. Our student affairs officer was a Hawaiian of Japanese ancestry named Pat Hodai.

Q: Oh, yes. Pat Hodai. What a character.

ROSE: Okay, you knew him.

Q: I've met him and he's quite famous within the USIS world. Was he a CAO?

ROSE: He was a student affairs officer.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: I only knew him as a senior person. He was junior at one point.

ROSE: Yeah, that was his first assignment, I think. And talk about language aptitude, I mean, he was phenomenal.

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: So, he was the best Thai speaker in the entire embassy.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah. So, this took place later, I think when I was—I'm trying to remember if it was before or when I went to Chiang Mai—the ambassador went up and decided that it

would be nice to address the students at Chiang Mai University, and by this time some of them were getting very nervous about what was going on in Vietnam and everything, so it was not a very friendly audience. But anyway, Pat Hodai went as his interpreter. And they were together on the steps of the administration building where the ambassador had a mic and a sound system and was addressing the students who had assembled to hear him. And Pat was translating for him. Well, the students got a bit unruly, and they decided that maybe this wasn't a great situation and so they whisked the ambassador out through the administration building and out the back door to his car. But not before someone from the local press snapped a photo and a picture appeared the next day in the newspaper with the caption, American ambassador addresses Thai students at Chiang Mai University, brings along Japanese sumo wrestler as bodyguard.

Q: Pat also had an amazing sense of humor. I knew him a little bit in USIA and on St. Patrick's Day he would wear a very ornate green, and people would look at him and he would say well, it's my personal festival day. It's St. Patrick's day and I'm Patrick. He was very funny.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: And a brilliant, wonderful colleague. I didn't know him very well, but his name comes up all the time. So, that might have been his first assignment.

ROSE: It was. Great guy. I loved working with him. He was so much fun.

Q: Yes. Everybody did. Did you ever run into him later? He became more of an EAP person, I think.

ROSE: Well, his assignment after Bangkok was to Poznan, Poland.

Q: Oh, yes. That's where he met Bob Gosende, who talks about him all the time. Yup.

ROSE: That was a good friend too, so he was deputy director of the program office, PGM/D, when I worked there.

Q: Yes. I'm in monthly contact with Bob now.

ROSE: Oh, good. Give him my regards if you're in touch with him.

Q: Absolutely.

ROSE: Anyway, Pat got out the post report to look at Poznan. In the recreation section there was one thing listed, ice skating six months of the year.

Q: Oh boy.

ROSE: So, he went off to Poznan and he went to call on the mayor and as he went into the lobby of the mayor's office, he looked down the hall and noticed that there was a little American flag on the desk of the mayor alongside the Polish flag. And he thought, oh, what a nice little touch. And then he saw the mayor look down toward where he was and immediately summon his aide and all of a sudden, the American flag was replaced with a Japanese flag.

Q: Oh my gosh. And Patrick took this in stride. He was amazing. He just had so much fun with this. Some people would resist stereotypes, but he played them to the hilt, much to his credit. That's great. So, if you know that anecdote, that's an indication that you stayed in touch with him after he was in Poland.

ROSE: Yes, I did have a chance to meet with him again in Washington.

Q: Yes, another amazing person.

ROSE: My friends from Bangkok really lasted for a long time. We got together in Washington when we had Washington assignments. Dave Krecke, I don't know if you ever ran across him.

Q: I remember the name.

ROSE: He was another one that we were very close to. Our kids were the same age and were very close to each other. So, those lasted a long time.

Q: I'll just say, I once took an Arts America group to Thailand—I was there less than a week—but I remember meeting with the USIS staff. Every single American officer had a Thai wife. Every single one.

ROSE: Interesting.

Q: So, there was something about it.

ROSE: Yeah. Well, my boss during the first part of my assignment was Perry Stieglitz, who was married to the daughter of the prime minister of Laos.

Q: Oh gosh.

ROSE: Souvanna Phouma.

Q: Oh.

ROSE: Princess Moune.

Q: Wow. Souvanna Phouma. Those were from the very nasty days of the Indochina war.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: And poor Laos. What a terrible time. In fact, the killing fields were at this same time, when you were in Bangkok in the mid 70s.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: I knew a Laotian economist—it's a separate story—but I heard his stories about surviving the Pathet Lao, unlikely that anybody would. I mean, they evacuated the capital, Vientiane, they just evacuated. It was extremely brutal and might not have happened but for the ongoing conflict in the region. I think that's playing the what if.

ROSE: Very difficult times. I was actually there in Bangkok still when Saigon fell.

Q: Oh.

ROSE: It was very interesting because I was a scout master for a group of Boy Scouts—American ones—and we were camped at Samae San Army base, which is right on the beach of the Gulf of Thailand. We had camped on the beach one night and we woke up in the morning and there was an aircraft carrier offshore a little distance, and all of a sudden, these big sky crane helicopters were coming in and lifting fighter jets off of U-Tapao Air Base and putting them on this carrier. I go, what is going on? And then we got back to Bangkok and learned that what we had witnessed was that when Saigon fell some of the Vietnamese Air Force pilots loaded their families in their jets and flew into Thailand.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: Landed on U-Tapao Air Base, and before the Thais would get ideas that those planes belonged to them, our military got them off and lifted them onto one of our carriers in the gulf.

Q: I'm writing this down. This is remarkable.

ROSE: We were very good friends also with a Montagnard woman who had married a guy named Paul Struharik, who was a famous prisoner of war.

Q: North Vietnamese?

ROSE: From his work in the highlands. He helped try to organize the resistance to the North Vietnamese among the Hmong or the hill people of Vietnam.

Q: Yes.

ROSE: And he was captured when they overran it, and we lived through that with her and her children since they were close friends.

Q: Oh my gosh. Would this be when John McCain was captive?

ROSE: Yeah, it was during that era, I think.

Q: Yeah. I wonder if they might have seen each other?

ROSE: No way of knowing.

Q: Yeah. This is profoundly historically significant and maybe we should have a session even just on that topic. This would have been in '78?

ROSE: We were there from '73 to '78. So, the fall of Saigon, I'm trying to remember, was it '75 or '76?

Q: Well, we can—

ROSE: We'd have to pinpoint that.

Q: Yes.

ROSE: It was during the time I was still in Bangkok.

Q: This is quite important, and we should maybe—I'm not saying end this session, but maybe we should have a session just on that. Because there you were seeing it all as only a person can from a neighboring country. I mean, to be in the fog of war and all of that anxiety and stress and horror, you may have had a more clear view, in fact, of what was happening, because of not being in the line of fire, so to speak. I'm sure this was emotional for all Americans in Thailand and in the region.

ROSE: Very.

Q: It was a terrible thing. We can talk about that a bit now or we can—I'm thinking we should have a separate discussion on what it was like to be in Bangkok during the fall of Saigon.

ROSE: It might be worth that because there are some other aspects of it that I think are worth discussing.

Q: Yes, I think so. If you had been spending 100% of your attention on educational exchange, BNC activities, I would guess that suddenly this changed a lot?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Because of the emergency and the crisis situation. Terrible. Yes. Every American my age, and I think we're the same age, we remember going through that and it became very personal.

ROSE: Right.

Q: Every American of draft age had very different reactions, including fear, anxiety, disgust, willingness, I mean, it was the whole gambit. And it was the crucial moment of—let's see 1972 was when I was 26, old enough not to be drafted. I was determined not to be engaged in the military in that particular conflict. I thought of myself as a pacifist, which was probably incorrect. But yeah.

ROSE: That's where I was too. I mean, I even told my wife we may be moving to Canada when I was a graduate student, before I–

Q: Well, we have a lot to talk about because this was the crucible. It was certainly a four-year trauma of dealing with this morally and logistically. Dealing with parents' anxiety and friends. Yeah, my options were Canada among others. It doesn't matter what mine were, but there was prison, volunteering to be a medic knowing 50% of them were killed. This was a terrible period. It could have been a different matter if we had been attacked as we were in Pearl Harbor. This was a very different situation.

ROSE: Oh yeah.

Q: I mean, I saw it as an unnecessary conflict. But there are legitimate differences that people have about this. I think we should have a session on that. Let's maybe go through just your activities, your assignment, and I think maybe next time we will talk about how the Vietnam conflict affected us personally—you, rather—personally. Especially being right next door.

ROSE: I think we can go back to that, if you'd like.

Q: Let's do that. Let's get to Chiang Mai. Let's see, you were there until '78, I think you said.

ROSE: We went to Thailand in '73, so it would have been '77 I guess because four years.

Q: The last year was Chiang Mai. So, after one year in Chiang Mai did you feel you really should have been there longer?

ROSE: Oh, I would have loved to have stayed there longer. It was absolutely a fascinating thing. We have our own little USIS information center there. It was a little ways across town from the consulate, but I was part of the operation, of course. I went over probably twice or week or so to the consulate and dealt with the consul general and we discussed public affairs as part of the things he was focused on. A lot of the focus of our information activities at the branch post was on drugs. The DEA (Drug Enforcement

Administration) agents were operating in the area trying to interdict the opium trade. USAID people there, trying to do crop substitution programs.

Q: That never worked, did it? Crop substitution?

ROSE: They just could not find a competitive crop.

Q: Likewise in Afghanistan, likewise in Colombia. They keep doing it and it never works.

ROSE: The money is just—the spread between what they can get for growing anything else is just so great. I used to go out—Chiang Mai is on the border by the hill country of northern Thailand, and so we used to go out into the hill country to visit the hill tribes. Fascinating cultures, each one very different from the other. And Karens, Yunnans even from China, Hmong, Lisu, Akha, all these different hill tribes. And we would wander through their opium poppy fields, and they were beautiful. Gorgeous. But we knew what it was there for.

Q: Not every USIS officer was adventurous and inquisitive as you were to go out and see these different people. I think you did it because of anthropological curiosity, I think. Am I correct to think that you got out there?

ROSE: It was. My wife was absolutely fascinated too by their handcrafts, their weavings, all of those kinds of things that she was fascinated by. One of the funniest incidents during that time was when I somehow met somebody in the Thai forestry department and learned that they had an experimental forest near the Burmese border and that they had a guest house out there and they invited me to go stay. So, we went out to this beautiful place and from there, there were trails going out into some of these hill tribe areas. And someone had told us that a three and a half hour hike into the hills would lead you to a Karen village which had almost no contact with outside people. There was no road into it or anything. They were still logging teak logs with elephants and all of that. And so, we said, this should be fascinating. So, we got our kids and put our little young one that was born in Bangkok in a backpack and hiked out to this village. And when we got there the people of course immediately assembled around these blonde, blue-eyed kids and just couldn't believe that we had come into the village. One of the women just kept asking something and I spoke Thai, but I didn't speak Karen. And so, she kept asking something and we noticed that all the little boys and the children in the village wore kind of a smock-like outfit. And finally, she came up to our little boy who had probably something like sweatpants on and reached up between his legs and then turned around and said something which we assumed was, he's a boy.

Q: Okay. Who needs language? Wow. In other words, is it possible they had not seen people of European ancestry?

ROSE: They had seen adults because some people had been there, probably missionaries or something, but children were new.

Q: And your own children, what was their reaction?

ROSE: Well, they were fascinated by all of this, of course. My little boy wasn't really happy about…

Q: Being grabbed, yes.

ROSE: And sometimes they got tired of the attention. Because, you know, everybody wanted to feel their hair.

Q: Imagine, yet another future conversation. The life of a Foreign Service child. Amazing. It seems as if 50% of them absolutely thrive and they become very worldly. The other 50% decide to have the opposite kind of lifestyle. We'll talk about that later. And it seems to be quite divided.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: I mean, I understand and admire both reactions. Those who are excited to see the world and want to see more and those who feel my parents dragged me to these places, enough is enough. I think they too had very reasonable reactions.

ROSE: Yeah. And we saw that within our own family, the different members of the family.

Q: And you know, there is this subliminal American propaganda, it's good to be beyond your comfort zone, it's good to explore. The job is more important than home and family. And this is nonsense. Many people legitimately are sedentary by nature and should be permitted to be so. It's a whole dilemma about the human character. Enough from me. Okay, so your last year, your last weeks and months in Chiang Mai, I'm guessing, once again, a little bit of regret at the idea of leaving.

ROSE: For multiple reasons. One thing was that from a family perspective it was probably one of the most pleasant living experiences that we ever had. We had a beautiful home in the branch PAO residence there that was leased permanently, so it was some place that we were able to move right into, it was all furnished quarters, and we even inherited my predecessor's household staff. Five servants. We had a very good local staff at the information center, both on the information and cultural side. We were able to host a lot of very pleasant, and I felt productive, receptions and dinners and so forth in our home because we had a good household staff that could handle that. And we were welcomed in the community, I felt. People who mattered to us felt that they enjoyed our company. One of the enjoyable parts of the job was at that time we were still distributing Voice of America tapes to radio stations in the outlying villages—I won't say villages—towns. So, it gave us a lot of travel opportunities. And then I would still visit educational institutions, TV and radio stations, newspapers, in the cities around the north. Because Chiang Mai took in the northern part of Thailand. So, I got to visit all the significant cities in the area and get to know people in the colleges and the media and so

forth. So, a lot of interaction with Thais. And as you've observed, very hospitable and delightful people. Happy to host you at their places and so forth. So, it was just delightful.

Q: That's great. And you were immersed in the culture, the language. You saw villages that we would call remote and had very little contact with the outside world. This is the best of everything. Can you give a little hint of what comes next, and we'll get to it next time or should we leave it in suspense?

ROSE: Well, I've now been overseas for three tours, a total of eight years, so you can probably see what's coming next.

Q: Okay, yes, I can. And we're going to get you back to Washington like a yoyo. We're going to get you.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Well, Doug Rose, this is your life, as that television program used to say.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: We'll leave that little bit of suspense. We know where you're going, but we don't know why or what. We'll sign off, this is Dan Whitman talking with Doug Rose, it's April 27, 2023, this was our fourth conversation. Really looking forward to the next one.

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Okay, this is Dan Whitman talking to Doug Rose, this is our fifth conversation. It's 05/05. That's not the sign of the devil, I don't think. This conversation is on the fifth of May, but it's not 1955, it's 2023 as far as I know. Doug, you left us in suspense. I mean, come on, you were in Bangkok watching Saigon, we would call it the fall, I guess they would call it the victory. Depends on your point of view.

ROSE: I guess so.

Q: But you told us a little bit about what it looked like from your point of view next door in Thailand. Tell us more from whatever point comes to mind.

ROSE: Well, there were a lot of connections of different kinds. We knew people who were involved in the conflict because they were operating from Thailand. There were a number of bases around that were involved in the Indo-China war, I guess I would call it because it was not just Vietnam, it was Cambodia. For example, the Army base, Samae San in Thailand, was primarily engaged in supporting the fight against Pol Pot in Cambodia. And they would run barges up the Mekong River out of there, prepare them and outfit them in Samae San and then take them over to the mouth of the Mekong River.

Q: For the transcription can you spell Samae San?

ROSE: Samae San.

Q: Okay, great. And that is a region or a city or something?

ROSE: It was just kind of a place name in Thailand on the Gulf of Thailand.

Q: And it was a military base?

ROSE: Yes, it was actually operated by the U.S. Army. All of these bases were nominally Thai bases but operationally they were run by the U.S. So, that was one example of what was being run nearby.

Q: Yeah. There's lots to say about this. First of all, I mean the Thai government obviously gave permission to the U.S. to do this. Do you have any sense of what people in Thailand felt about having a U.S. Army base? I'm asking because the one in Manila was very controversial. What was the one in Japan where we still have troops? The island of Okinawa. And there are many mixed feelings, I think. What was your sense of Thai attitudes, both government and the people, which are two separate things.

ROSE: Yes, indeed, and it's important you make that distinction. Because the perspective on it, I think, varied a lot according to who was benefiting from it or who was worried about it from a geopolitical standpoint or a number of other things. From the average Thai citizen who knew anything about world events—so, I would say an educated Thai—would be very worried about giving place to the United States to launch a war which was being supported by China on the other end. So, it was not so much– I think the Thais were pretty confident that they could handle anything that might come from the old French territory in Indochina, but the fact that China was supporting the north made that a much more difficult problem for them. And if we were to fail in our effort to defend South Vietnam and Laos and Cambodia for the side that we were on, they were worried that it could bring retribution from China. And I think that was the big worry.

Q: Important point. Historic anecdote and a personal anecdote, I have become friendly with an individual in Pennsylvania who's Cambodian and who went through the so-called killing fields. He escaped from Cambodia, walked across—the usual story—made it. We know that the Thai soldiers in the UN camps were hostile to Cambodian refugees, they didn't want them, and they even fired at them, but they had a system of signals by night and such. And this individual obviously survived. I was very surprised because I remember when President Nixon ordered the bombing of Cambodia, and I remember how enraged many Americans were. This individual, a close friend actually, said thanks to god Nixon did the bombing; it's what saved my life. Does that make sense to you geopolitically? He gets emotional and so I never got a full explanation, but it appeared that the violation of Cambodian neutrality—which was never really neutral—stirred up a hornet's nest. But was there a positive side to that? Here's one individual, from the region, directly affected, who felt that the bombing of Cambodia was a positive thing.

ROSE: Interesting. Yeah, it's really hard to know. Laos and Cambodia, of course, were up to a point something of a little bit of a buffer between Vietnam where all of the fighting was going on and the U.S. forces in Thailand, but that eroded of course over time and eventually communist factions in those countries took over and it changed the complexion a lot. The Thais, of course, especially towards the end of the war got much more nervous because it was spilling over into their country, and there were communist insurgents in the northeast of Thailand, which was the poorest region of the country, and they felt that they had been economically deprived and had not benefited any from the U.S. involvement there, whereas other parts of the country seemed to be somewhat more prosperous as a result of the American presence.

Q: Many things going on here.

ROSE: Yeah. The one thing that I would just mention is that I too had a Cambodian friend in Thailand who was an interpreter, and he was actually of Vietnamese ancestry but living in Cambodia, so he spoke not only Vietnamese and Cambodian, but he learned English. And so, he was quite a linguist. Probably spoke Thai as well because he was eventually stationed in Thailand and was working for the U.S. military. But his family was housed on an Air Force compound in Cambodia, and when Pol Pot's forces came through, they executed all of them. So, this poor man lost his wife and his children. She had stayed back in Cambodia rather than accompanying him to Thailand because she was expecting a baby and she wanted to be there where her mother could take care of her, and so you can imagine what kind of impact that had on him. He eventually was given asylum in the United States as a result of his service to us and remade a life for himself in Long Beach, California, and I did have a chance to visit him again there. But he was still pretty depressed about the whole thing and what had taken place there.

Q: Very emotional, hard to even imagine. Even though you were there, the people directly, personally affected, you still had a bit of distance. You had a black passport; you were there for a relatively short amount of time. You mentioned fear of Chinese reprisals if our allies in South Vietnam hadn't won the conflict or in any case, win or lose, there could have been Chinese reprisals. What else do you think was going through the minds of Thais who probably just wanted to be as distant as possible from it?

ROSE: Yes, that was the big concern really is that they found themselves embroiled in something that they had no particular interest in. They didn't much care what the Vietnamese did on their side, but there were a lot of people who feared Chinese communism, and I think there was certainly a significant share of the Thai population who felt that the presence of those American bases in Thailand was something of a protection for them. Plus, the fact that they received quite a bit of material and that to their military, and they were at least token participants in the war. In fact, there was a funny story from one of my friends who told me that he was leading a patrol of South Vietnamese troops through the jungle and down a jungle trail and there was a Thai contingent there with him. And the Vietnamese were with them. And there was some critter that skittered across the trail in front of them, and the Americans jumped back and said, is that dangerous? And the Thais jumped forward and said, is it good to eat?

Q: That's a good one. Exactly what would have happened in Africa. Yeah. There's a great description of road walking in Spain. A British travel writer who was on a slow boat to Porto, Portugal and then he walked across Spain in the 1930s or 40s, and on the three days voyage an individual lifted his shirt and said, would you like to see the scars from my appendectomy. And all the Spaniards leaned forward to look and all the British leaned back not to look. So, we definitely have a cultural thing.

ROSE: There is something to that, isn't there. And again, on a personal level, there was a fairly famous prisoner of war, an agent who was working in the village of Ban Mê Thuột, which was one of the Montagnard villages and had married a Vietnamese Montagnard wife named Hlume. And she was living in Thailand with their children and was a good friend of ours. Her husband, Paul Struharik was captured when the north overran Ban Mê Thuột and was a prisoner of war. So, one of our best friends was, of course, very concerned about where things would go. Fortunately, he was not executed. There was a prisoner exchange at the end of the war and Paul Struharik became a free man again and was able to take his family back to his country, the United States. But he was there, of course, under USAID cover. So, anyway, you definitely felt when you were serving in Thailand that you were in the middle of a conflict. You know, the military presence in Bangkok was very large. They had recreational facilities. We were the beneficiaries of those things. It was the only place in my Foreign Service career where I had access to a PX (Post Exchange). So, you know, we could get anything there.

Q: So, you seem to be adaptable to any circumstance—you personally. What about your colleagues? Having this conflict next door and having within the country the northern poor section conflict going on. Your morale seems to be absolutely steady in all matters, what about your colleagues?

ROSE: Well, I think part of it depended on what your job responsibilities were. I was interacting in my job primarily with educated Thais who had studied in the United States, were grateful for the education that they received there, and were trying to improve the education system in Thailand. So, there was a very positive relationship there, even though probably among them—I think they were as I recall not particularly anxious to discuss what was going on to the east because they felt grateful to us for the support we were giving them and everything, and they knew I represented a country that was involved there. But I would imagine that most of them, their underlying feelings were the same kind of nervousness that I was talking about before. Because I was among the educated Thais and particularly the students. The students who were looking to the future of their country and quite worried about where things were going. The Thai military obviously felt that they were beneficiaries of all of this, and so they were very supportive of us because they knew that in the end, they would end up with all these bases and a lot of materiel and so forth.

Q: Well, so two questions—

ROSE: As far as my colleagues, I think the ones who were trying to influence the media—the people on the information side—found it somewhat difficult, especially toward the end of the war as things went in the wrong direction from what we were trying to achieve there, and then they were trying to defend the operations that we were trying to hold on to—listening posts and things like that—they had to deal with the fact that there was a lot of Thai opposition to any military presence in their country that they felt would attract Chinese interest and so forth. So, in just private conversations among my colleagues, most of us were pretty nervous about where things were going to go. Of course, I did stay on after the fall of Saigon and the North Vietnamese takeover, and so things were a little tense there. I mentioned the incident with Pat Hodai, and the U.S. ambassador being run off the university property by students. So, there was a fair amount of hostility in certain quarters to—especially among the student population—our presence there.

Q: So, you're talking about professional nervousness. Any sense about the personal emotions of Americans posted there? Did they feel like staying, did they feel like leaving?

ROSE: Well, unlike those who had to serve in CORDS Vietnam who were right there trying to do what we were trying to do in that country, we in Thailand had enough other things to be involved in, drugs and a number of other things like that, that I don't think we felt as personally involved in the conflict as certainly our colleagues in Laos and Vietnam. So, for us it was more of I think there was a general feeling that probably the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was a mistake.

Q: It wasn't a mistake, it was a lie. Let's say what it was.

ROSE: Exactly. And anyone who had studied the history of that and how we got involved and that just said, you know, we got ourselves involved when we should have had better sense just as the French did and got out.

Q: Well, let's say it was President Johnson who created the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, let's just put that on the record. You mentioned the struggle against drug production, which I assume was a failure. Did we learn any lessons from that?

ROSE: Well, it wasn't a total failure. I think we did manage to get some cooperation from the Thais and interdiction of opium shipments and so forth. But as we know, wherever we're trying to do those kinds of things, whether it be Colombia or Thailand or Afghanistan or wherever, it really has only a marginal impact on the flow of drugs.

Q: And the unwittingly productive countries will say, it's only a problem because Americans create a market for these.

ROSE: Exactly. And that was the whole argument that I heard over and over again in my career, both in Latin America and everywhere, is you've got to deal with the demand, that's the only way to solve this problem. It's not the supply side.

Q: Right. Which I think is increasingly publicly admitted by the U.S. government. At the time we're talking about there was a big division between the information side and the cultural side, nowadays not so. They seem to be almost interchangeable. Were these two parts—and now we call them PAS, Public Affairs Sections, you would call it USIS, I guess—how did they interact? Did they have similar goals? Did they ever cooperate on projects? It sounds like the IO side had a pretty miserable time.

ROSE: Yeah. It depended on where you were. During the last part of my tour there I was definitely on both sides, because as a branch PAO I was the only American officer in USIS in northern Thailand. So, I ran VOA tapes, Thai language tapes to radio stations; I sent out press releases to the Thai press in northern Thailand; and I hosted cultural presentations and arranged for speakers and other kinds of things. And so, it was very much across the board. And I think even in Bangkok where we had separate responsibilities, there was a lot of interaction. And staff meetings we would all meet together and discuss what our interests were and how we might be supportive of each other. I remember that on one occasion, even though I was on the cultural side, the PAO invited me as one of the members of his staff to be present when we had a visiting media representative from the United States who was looking into something in the country. So, anyway, there were some opportunities for interaction. The film programs were kind of across the board when we got later into the satellite transmissions and all of that. It became a mix.

Q: But for conflict, drugs, and morale issues it sounds like the perfect assignment. And in Chiang Mai, how separated were you from USIS Bangkok? Were you pretty much on your own? You said you had yearly meetings or quarterly meetings in Bangkok?

ROSE: Certainly I was much more connected to Bangkok in Chiang Mai than I was as a BNC director in Peru or Brazil. Nominally I was still a USIS officer and had some minor responsibilities for contacts and so forth with media and that. But in Thailand I felt pretty connected to Bangkok. We had regular visits from the deputy PAO and the cultural and information people, and I felt very supported by the Bangkok office. Maybe part of that was a product of my having a very good relationship with Jim McGinley, the PAO there, and a great deal of respect for him.

Q: You just said something, I wonder if I got this the right way. When you were BNC director, were you not officially USIS? Did that change your status?

ROSE: Well no, it was clearly understood within the Embassy that I was a foreign service officer, but there was actually some question about whether or not they were going to give me any kind of a diplomatic title when I was in Arequipa. I mean, in Brazil for some reason it was not an issue, but because we didn't have a consulate in Arequipa, they didn't let that bother them when I was in Brazil. But I think possibly it was because I was assigned first to the consulate, and so I had a vice consul title, then I went up north.

Q: I mean, you didn't have to resign and then be rehired or anything like that?

ROSE: No, nothing like. They would still pay me. But the question was, how do we arrange a title for the position? And so, I think in Arequipa I actually did not have a consular title. I don't remember if I—I don't think I was a third secretary or anything like that.

Q: In later years there was no such question. People directing BNCs were officers. I don't know if they called the first secretaries or what. Okay, so there was that distinction, which is odd. There were many BNCs at the time in the world, I think.

ROSE: Yes, but a lot of them were run by grantees who were not officers, and they were not commissioned Foreign Service officers and did not have inherent in their position a diplomatic title.

Q: Got it. Well, that's of some importance. To the nearest fifty, how many BNCs do you think we had in those days? This would be in the 70s, right? We must have had like forty of them or something?

ROSE: I would guess it was more than that because that was the period of the Alliance for Progress in Latin America, and we had BNCs in any city of over three or four hundred thousand in Latin America. They were all over Colombia, Brazil. And most of them had an American officer assigned or a grantee. And then outside Latin America Bangkok had a big BNC. Spain, Madrid.

Q: Yes, the Washington Irving Center. I worked down the street from them. We can talk now or at the end of our discussions about the value of soft power, which you were experiencing, you were creating it, you were utilizing it at a time of conflict. You pointed out that explaining this to the media was very problematic, whereas maintaining friendly relations with graduates of U.S. exchange programs really was fun, it was productive, and it didn't have the explicit goal of making people agree with us, but the value of having some open exchange which of course we've lost somewhat with the disappearance of USIA. Oh, I was going to say, in Africa we had these things called cultural centers and libraries, which as you know, now you're not even allowed to say those words. Those are like swear words. And that I think was the early 90s when they said no libraries, no cultural centers. Did those crazy politics ever affect you? Maybe later in your career?

ROSE: It really didn't come along during the time that I served. Because, of course, the latter part of my career I was in places where—well, in India we had information centers as we had in Chiang Mai, and I had a library and a film program and a student counseling center operation and all of those things. It was a place where you went if you wanted information about the United States. So, I had a staff of I think around eight people in Chiang Mai.

Q: Wow. Eight people.

ROSE: Yeah, so I had an information assistant, a chief cultural assistant, an administrative assistant, a secretary, a driver. I'm trying to remember, I think I may have

had a film guy there. Maybe it wasn't eight, I think it might have been more like six. But it was an office with a building, and we did actually even do some English teaching there, so in that respect it was a private operation kind of. It was just space we provided, but students came there for English classes.

Q: Some of the English teaching programs were later privatized under the Wick period and were either self-sustaining or closed.

ROSE: Right.

Q: So, these really were the salad days. In terms of what USIS was doing, I think you represent the best of it.

ROSE: It was. That's why I said my perspective on it was that the best jobs were at the bottom. They were the ones that the young officers who had just come in were occupying, and as you worked your way up you got more responsibility but less fun.

Q: Yeah, I would, as I said last time, I would say it wasn't the bottom, it was the periphery, which is where the fun was. And you were certainly not at the bottom maintaining a BNC, Bi-national center with a staff of eight. That's nowhere near the bottom. Okay, so you were there. You watched—I mean, I guess you saw on television the same things Americans were seeing as the catastrophe of Saigon falling, the copter on the roof and all that. Very emotional. I think you mentioned that some of those who were evacuated came to Thailand?

ROSE: Yes, I mentioned the experience on the beach at Samae San and watching the fighter jets being offloaded from U-Tapao Air Base onto the American carrier that the Vietnamese air force officers had used to transport their wife and family out of—crammed into the backseat of a fighter jet.

Q: Incredible. These were Vietnamese pilots of American planes?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Evacuating their families. Wow. How long would you say this was a crisis for American personnel in Thailand? Was it for the rest of the time you were there?

ROSE: Well, of course, with the end of the war things drew down pretty quickly. The air operations out of the northeast ended, the bombing of course stopped and all of that, and so those air bases quickly reverted to Thai control and a lot of American—I would say that at least there it was not like Afghanistan where we were trying to destroy weapons and all of that. We decided what we could afford to give the Thais and what we needed to take back home. And so, it was a pretty orderly phase out from my perspective. And the big joint U.S. military assistance group to the Thai military, which was the principal operation in Bangkok, gradually phased out. And a lot of my friends, people I went to church with and all of that, were transferred out of there. Just last week at Ruth's

memorial service one of the speakers was a friend who was an officer in the Navy that I met in Bangkok, and we've maintained the friendship over many years.

Q: So, there was generally a sense among Americans—the embassy, the consulate, the desk in Washington—that Thailand itself was going to remain stable. Was there a concern that there could be a domino effect that could affect Thailand?

ROSE: I think that there was enough concern that we definitely continued to give the Thais quite a bit of military support in terms of materiel and everything for their operation. Probably some surveillance and that sort of thing up in the northeast, and they successfully dealt with that insurgency and put it to rest.

Q: So, we trusted the Thai military and the Thai government.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Okay, this is all very emotional. And so, I get the sense from the way you're describing this that all hell was breaking loose, but Doug Rose kept his head on his shoulders and just proceeded. That's the way it looks to me, is that the way you remember it? Crazy.

ROSE: I remember it was one of our favorite assignments. It's just such an inviting country. An ancient culture and just so many things going for it that it was hard even in the midst of all that turmoil and being on the periphery of a warzone and everything, it was still just a delightful place. And we had good people, the local staff that worked for me in both Bangkok and Chiang Mai were just wonderful. And I made a lot of good friends there. So, it was a fascinating place to go. I think I mentioned, while we were in Chiang Mai, we got interested in the hill tribes. It was a beautiful country to travel around in. So, yeah, I left Thailand with a very good feeling and one little side note, is of course the embassy would exchange any Thai currency that you still had on hand into dollars as you left the country if you wanted. Instead of doing that, I made my final trip up to Mae Hong Son, which is on the Burmese border, and bought jade and rubies with the Thai currency.

Q: Fantastic. Yeah, well done. A good investment. And lots of fun to have. You mentioned ancient culture, with some of those—Japan, China, Iran—it's very difficult to read through the body language, the language. They say that you can learn perfect Japanese, but you'll never really understand the culture. But you're adding to that another variable which is that the Thais you said were very hospitable. Did that make the ancient culture more easy to—I won't say you weren't assimilated—but did you feel you understood the culture around you?

ROSE: I made an effort to. I tried to study Buddhism, to learn. Because it's very much a part of the Thai culture. There are monks around all the time and their temples and that were among the interesting places to visit and so forth. So, definitely that was all there. I think part of it was—and I think I mentioned this once before—is that because it was a culture that was not interrupted by colonialism that the preservation of their culture and

history and their monarchy, they maintained a strong monarchy with a beloved king and queen who intervened appropriately in some of the political turmoil and helped save it from getting so bloody as it otherwise would have. So, all of those things made it a very interesting and enjoyable place to be. And yes, I did feel that I had enough of an understanding of what motivated the Thai people and everything. One of the ugly sides of it, unfortunately, as occurs in any place where there's a large military contingent, is that the bars and the prostitution and all of that that we experienced in Bangkok—fortunately none of that was up in Chiang Mai—but in Bangkok that was an ugly side of the whole picture.

Q: That was an industry catering to U.S. GIs.

ROSE: Yes, and the sad thing about it is that even after they left, it became a destination for Europeans, Germans, sex tours.

Q: So, we have some responsibility for that. Now, you said in passing you studied Buddhism. Not everybody does, I want to point that out. You really made an effort. We talked about language, and body language, but then studying the religion of a very different culture, it takes effort, and you made the effort, let's put that on the record. I mean, do you think of Buddhism as a fatalistic concept that sort of accepts whatever comes as opposed to the western way of thinking, we must take things in hand? Did it create any passive fatalistic—is that separable from the culture, I guess I should say?

ROSE: I didn't see that as a dominant aspect of that religion. And of course, the progression through stages, there was definitely a sense that it had some positive moral impact in that you could expect a better life if you were charitable and looked out for your fellow men in this life and that. That you could rise to a state of enlightenment.

Q: Not so extremely different from the Christian concept of heaven.

ROSE: Yeah. I found enough compatibility in it and everything that I felt pretty good about.

Q: Yeah, that's great. So, Thailand. Just tell me what comes after Thailand. We won't get there yet.

ROSE: Well, I think we've pretty well covered what Thailand meant for us, myself and my family. Our children were in good schools there, we were happy about that. So, it was a good experience all around for us. And at the conclusion of it of course that was my third tour overseas. I'd had two in my primary area and one out of area assignment, and it was a four year assignment, so it was now a total of eight years abroad and I think you can see what's coming next.

Q: I think you mentioned that Arequipa and Bangkok and Chiang Mai were your favorites. Does that mean everything else after that was downhill?

ROSE: Well, they each had their good points, but looking at it as a whole, yes. Part of it was living quarters in Chiang Mai, which is the final part of our tour there, it was just idyllic really. We lived in a palace. A teak palace with a big yard.

Q: I don't think it was a palace.

ROSE: I counted; it had seventy chandeliers.

Q: Why?

ROSE: Some of them were wall sconces.

Q: Oh my gosh. Okay, I take it back, that's a palace.

ROSE: But it was all built out of teak wood.

Q: I mean, we do have a tendency to think of our first assignments more fondly than the later ones because maybe we had more youth ourselves at that time. That's very subjective.

ROSE: Orchids growing in the garden…

Q: Okay, so it was three years in Bangkok and one year in Chiang Mai?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: It sounds like an idyll. Too bad there was a terrible war right next door, which you sensed, you dealt with it, but luckily you didn't have direct exposure to the horrible violence. You probably met U.S. servicemen who had PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), you probably met them in Bangkok.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Terrible. So, we know you're going back to DC, unless you changed your nationality and decided to become Belgian. So, any parting thoughts? You've painted the story as a very positive one in your own personal life.

ROSE: Yes, it definitely was. My kids enjoyed the culture there and everything. There were a couple of family things that were a bit difficult there, but overall, I would say that it was a—

Q: As you left you had four children?

ROSE: Well, the fifth was born there in Bangkok.

Q: Okay, so you had an infant and the oldest one would have been eight?

ROSE: Yes, she was finishing elementary school.

Q: Okay. Well, that's a task in itself, running a household with five children in elementary school. That would be age nine or ten down to zero. That's quite a range. And in a palace. Did each child get their own room and their own chandelier? I mean, wow. If you have any comments.

ROSE: Well, they look back on it as a very enjoyable time. There was a forest preserve near our home where we could walk through it and see wild animals and things. Just a lot of things that they really look back on in a positive way.

Q: Okay. So, when did it dawn on you that the long arm of Washington was coming?

ROSE: Well, I knew it was coming, of course, by that time, so we began making arrangements for moving back and I had gained a friend in Peru, and she was now living in McLean and had obtained her real estate license. So, I said, we're going to be coming back—well, actually, now that I think about it, she was the one that helped us get our first house in McLean, the little Cape Cod. So, she contacted me, or we were in touch enough that I told her we were moving back, and I said, well we'll probably remodel because our family has grown and there was an unfinished upstairs in that little Cape Cod we had. She said, don't go through all that hassle, let me find you a bigger house. I said, no, we absolutely love that neighborhood, we don't want to live any place else. We love the school there, it was close to the public library, there was a nice little path through the forest to get there, and I said, we just want to stay right there in that neighborhood. So, a couple weeks later she came back to me and said, well, I found a house five houses down the street.

Q: Perfect.

ROSE: The high school principal who owned it is retiring and leaving the area, and she said, let me grab it for you.

Q: Doug Rose, you kind of live in a state of grace. I mean, well deserved. Good things have happened.

ROSE: So, anyway, we bought it sight unseen.

Q: Wow. And had no problem in selling the old one, I guess?

ROSE: No, it had appreciated, of course, and so that gave us enough for a down payment on a larger home.

Q: Fantastic. Well, maybe if you want, we can get into the move now or next time?

ROSE: Yeah, we could start today.

Q: Let's just say, who were you in touch with to determine your next assignment? Was it the HR USIA?

ROSE: Yes. And I don't remember if they dangled more than one position in front of me or if they just said, we think this would be a good position for you, but I ended up in the policy office.

Q: Which they called P (Policy), I guess, right?

ROSE: Yeah. And I was given a portfolio of assignments, mainly dealing with the developing world because I had served in both Latin America and Asia in developing countries and so I felt fairly comfortable there. I had good colleagues, felt like I was in something, I was able to put my writing skills to work. One of the highlights of that job was that I did kind of a paper on North-South relations that examined what the issues were between us, all the issues of exploitation of resources in developing countries and how that created challenges for us in those countries and everything and the whole investment and financial pictures and things like that. One of the advantages that I had was they put me in the six week immersion economics course, and so I got a better feel for that as well, the perspective that that gave me. So anyway, I felt that I got an opportunity to do some useful things there. I don't know if anybody ever read those, but one person did at least, Bob Hormats, Robert Hormats, who was assistant secretary of state for Latin America.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: Made my paper mandatory reading for his people in the State Department who were dealing with those issues.

Q: Wow. This is great. So, we should point out to the reader of this transcript, P was the prestigious part of USIA. That's where the brains went in those days, not the cultural side, which our colleagues in State never took seriously. There were even people in USIA who considered the E (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs) bureau as kind of the elephant's graveyard, where the action was in P, which later became IIP (Bureau of International Information Programs) and now has been dismantled entirely. I don't know if you have followed that, but it was merged into what used to be P. But anyway…These administrative changes do matter because it shows a pattern of how the leaders in the system perceive the different relative importance of what you did in P in the days before easy internet access, it was everything. It was the source of information. You put out pamphlets and you had contiguous information going to the field. Now, with the internet, P became IIP and then it went away entirely, I think because of the internet. P produced these reader things that they would send by Telex to posts and then they would publish them locally. What do they call them?

ROSE: Papers and other kinds of things.

Q: The wireless file.

ROSE: The wireless file, exactly.

Q: Which when you say wireless it sounds like World War One, but these were virtual, digital things that went over a Telex system if I remember.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Before the internet had easy access. And it went overnight, and it took a long time, and we had an FSN (Foreign Service National) who would put this together, publish it in hard copy, and then drive it around.

ROSE: And supposedly we were influencing VOA as well.

Q: Oh, let's stop right there because that has never been a smooth relationship.

ROSE: Right.

Q: We could leave that for next time, but I know that there were more downs than ups between—there were a lot of fights, which I remember actually. USIA versus VOA, and the VOA people would say, we're an independent new agency, get out, don't bother us, we have the right to say whatever we want. And then the geographic offices would find actual errors in the VOA editorials and say, you can't say that, it's not true, and there were terrible fights. Were you part of any of that? It was pretty rough going.

ROSE: That describes the dynamics there. And you know, we recognized that the news operation of VOA was supposed to be independent and so forth, but we felt that they needed the perspective of at least what their government positions were. So, we would write policy papers to try to delineate what U.S. government policy was on a whole range of issues to try to give them at least a background perspective from which to create their broadcasts.

Q: Right. Well, we're talking mainly about editorials here, not news?

ROSE: Right. It was the editorial side.

Q: An example, I remember I was in the European bureau of USIA briefly and there was an editorial that said, Eastern European Warsaw Pact citizens have no right to travel, which in Poland was not true. And I remember a big fight. The European bureau said, you cannot say that, it's not true, and VOA was on their hind legs, they were furious. It was just a factual inaccuracy. But you were composing policy pieces, hoping that they would reach receptive ears. You couldn't force this on VOA, could you?

ROSE: Right.

Q: But you were hoping. Very interesting, a paper on North-South relations, exploitations of natural resources. I'm guessing that you would want this to be known by VOA reporters, maybe to use it, I don't know. What's your feeling about—in statutory terms it's VOA.com, not VOA.org and they've always prided themselves on being independent of the U.S. government even though every penny that they make comes from the U.S. government. How do you make sense of this? How do you explain this to somebody who's, let's say, a Russian, who knows the difference between government propaganda and private media? How do you see this looking back?

ROSE: Well, you know, it wasn't always that we were at war with each other. I think there was tension, but there were times when I felt that our perspective was at least somewhat appreciated, that they felt like it was a source. Maybe like going to a White House briefing or something like that. Something at least worth listening to, to get what the government's saying.

Q: Let me get this straight, this was before Wick, therefore you were at 1776 Mass Ave, is that right? Physically.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So, you weren't across the street from VOA. It wasn't easy to run across the street and say, hello. You didn't have time to do that sort of thing.

ROSE: No.

Q: Later that was the case. Okay. If you think of your sphere of concentration on a scale of a hundred, how much of it was taken up by thinking and dealing with VOA? 10%? 15%?

ROSE: Well, it really was the output from the policy office that was kind of directed toward the people in our news production facilities, the publications and all of that, and we expected that they would find it more—that they would be informed more by it and would have some responsibility for paying attention to it. Whereas, with the VOA we felt like it was more like feeding a press release out to someone in the news media and seeing whether or not they would pay attention to it or not.

Q: Right. So, because you're a mile or two away, I guess there was no real familiarity.

ROSE: Right. It wasn't within the building. I think there was—I'm trying to remember if they sent someone over to some of our meetings.

Q: They should have.

ROSE: Yeah, that's the way I recall it. I think I went there for a tour, but I never went over there to talk to people.

Q: Probably the same guy giving the tour now. He's been there forever. The relationship between P and the geographic bureaus. You had Africa, Europe, and so forth.

ROSE: Yeah. We of course respected that they had a role to play in dealing with the policies. Because later I actually became a policy officer for AR.

Q: And then later you were the director of that office.

ROSE: But that will come down the road quite a ways.

Q: Were there regular meetings with the geographic offices?

ROSE: Yeah, as I recall we did have once a week. I think we brought them in and discussed some of the things that we were working on.

Q: That's important. We brought them in. You didn't go to them, they came to you.

ROSE: Yeah, we had the five who came.

Q: That's the way I remember it. Which again emphasizes that P in the authority chain was really the top of what USIA was doing. Outsiders wouldn't know that.

ROSE: Yeah. So, I felt like it was making good use of my writing skills and research skills and that, so it was kind of a nice academic job.

Q: I'm sure. Did you come up with the idea of North-South or was it a group consensus that there should be a paper on that?

ROSE: No, I just felt that coming out of countries where we had some commonality of issues even between Asia and Latin America where U.S. investment went and that was suspect and so forth, and we had various things that caused tension in our relationship with the developing countries that it would be something useful to do. It was in the talk at the time, a lot of seminars going on in the think tanks and that. And so, I just felt like it would be something that I was actually given free rein to take on. I don't recall it being an assignment.

Q: I was going to say, you got a long leash, your bureau trusted you. Maybe because it was you or maybe they trusted people in general.

ROSE: I think they did. We had some bright people.

Q: I know.

ROSE: Mike Schneider was one of them.

Q: Oh, yeah.

ROSE: You may know him.

Q: Well, I saw him two weeks ago.

ROSE: Did you really?

Q: Yeah, he's in DC. Well, he's in the Public Diplomacy Council of America. Yeah. And I think he still runs the Maxwell School outpost in DC. I think.

ROSE: Glad to hear that that brilliant mind is still being put to good use.

Q: Some years ago, they posted, they said, Mike is resigning, who wants to replace him? But I don't know what happened. I think Mike is still there. So, okay.

ROSE: So, anyway, he was one of my favorite colleagues there and there were some other capable ones.

Q: These were brainy people. Later, maybe you were there earlier, Miller Crouch was one of those people, I don't know if you—maybe later you ran into him.

ROSE: Yeah, I think that was not in my time.

Q: It was later.

ROSE: I'm trying to remember who was our boss at that time, and I should know. I mean, Alan Carter was over the whole policy apparatus.

Q: The head of P. okay.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Is that a political appointment?

ROSE: Let's see, Hal Schneidman was the top guy, I guess, and then Alan I think was his deputy, and so Alan was career. He had been PAO in Japan.

Q: Oh, yup. Which at the time we sometimes forget it was all about Japan. China didn't exist. It was all about Japan and how they were getting the better of us in production, in commerce. In the 70s and 80s, particularly the 80s, I think. They were our economic rivals. I don't think we even think of it that way anymore.

ROSE: I know. So, it was a satisfying place to work for two years of my four year stint in Washington, and after that I went to work for Ed Schulick and Bob Gosende and PGM/D (Programs and program development where I was given charge of a four American

officer staff that oversaw the American participants program in economics and science and technology.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, that was my section of PGM (Programs) that I oversaw.

Q: Again, thinking nostalgically, AmParts, there used to be plenty of funding for this, now it almost doesn't exist anymore.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: But if you were a country, let's say Thailand, not big, not small, how many AmParts do you think you could expect in a given year?

ROSE: Well, I remember when we would review the country plans and things like that and how many they requested. It would be maybe a dozen for a country like Thailand.

Q: Yeah. Today I'm guessing it would be two at most.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Of course, we have internet capabilities. It was costly moving people around.

ROSE: Yeah. I got to meet a lot of really interesting people because we would have economics professors from Georgetown and American University and these other places and we would try to sometimes bring them in for briefings before they went out, and so I got to meet some of them, and we were doing some interesting programs. I remember, one of my favorite employees that worked with me was a Civil Service member of the staff named Walter Froelich and he was a NASA guy. He knew everything about the space program, and he was the one who was recruiting people and developing programs on the space program.

Q: Moon rocks.

ROSE: Yeah, we were doing moon rock tours and that sort of thing.

Q: We've all heard anecdotes about the moon rock going missing and someone reaching up and just putting any rock in. These are apocryphal stories but they're funny.

ROSE: One of my favorite things about Walter is he wore two wrist watches, one on each arm.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: One on eastern U.S. time, the other on GMT (Greenwich Mean Time).

Q: That's perfect. You mentioned earlier that you benefitted from—of course it was FSI, I guess—the six, seven weeks in econ, which is a magnificent thing. Were you mainly with econ officers in that immersion course?

ROSE: Well, no, actually this was one that was developed especially for USIA, and it was given on our premises. What they aspired to, at least, was to give us the first two years of an economics major course.

Q: Fantastic.

ROSE: Short time and very intensive, but I just learned so much about international finance, investment flows, and all of that whole panoply of stuff related to… we even had Samuelson there as our textbook and the whole works.

Q: Fantastic. And so, you brought this with you in your writing in P and then later in PGM with Gosende you really put this to work by knowing the field that your AmParts were in. Did you ever deal with Larry Summers or anybody like that?

ROSE: Oh yeah. He was part of the picture.

Q: Really? Fantastic. Did you ever have an interest in economics prior to that time?

ROSE: I had taken one economic course in college. It was all I had before that, so it just opened up a whole new world to me.

Q: This is a great story and it's an exercise in nostalgia. I'm not regretting the loss of all these things, I'm just happy that we ever had them.

ROSE: Yes. It was a real blessing.

Q: Well, maybe we should get into the PGM assignment later.

ROSE: Really there isn't a whole lot to say because that's essentially what I did at that time and I loved working for those people —Bob came in I think part way through my assignment and I'm trying to remember, well I think maybe Carl Howard was the previous deputy to Ed Schulick.

Q: People think of Bob as a hard charger. I love this man. How do you remember him? A lovable hard charger?

ROSE: Yes, exactly. Very fair and if you did your job well, he recognized it and let you know about it.

Q: And he has a very strong baritone voice, and he uses it if there's something he doesn't like.

ROSE: Yeah, he was a forceful personality, there's no question. But I enjoyed it.

Q: And did you guess at that time that he would be—we didn't know that he would be going to Somalia, but did you guess that he would be a chargé or an ambassador at some point?

ROSE: No. I didn't foresee that, but I wasn't surprised when it happened.

Q: Okay. Well, with great references to Bob who's somewhere on a cruise at the moment—

ROSE: Oh good.

Q: Something about the Panama Canal. They're always going somewhere. Maybe it's time to sign out. It is five, five, five. It's the fifth interview on May 5, 2023, with Doug Rose and Dan Whitman and we will call it a success.

ROSE: Thank you.

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Q: Okay, this is Dan Whitman talking to Doug Rose, it is our sixth conversation, and it is May 12, 2023. Doug, when we left a week ago you were in the P (Policy) bureau of USIA (United States Information Agency). It's kind of like being in the Roman Empire; it's a thing that no longer exists but which had a great presence in its time. I just came up with that.

ROSE: Well put.

Q: And AmParts, American Participants, a great program which still exists but which is a shadow of its former self. We don't need to dwell on current reductions in the great things that public diplomacy has done, let's just go back and enjoy the great stories. You were about to leave for another assignment.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Do you have any further comments that you might have on your experience in the P bureau? P for policy, which was the vanguard of USIA. It was the prestigious place to be in USIA. Now, long gone. Any other thoughts about that looking backwards before we go to Venezuela, India, and DC?

ROSE: I would just say that I think that the basic structural arrangement for officers to spend a certain number of tours abroad and then come back to headquarters was a very valuable approach. It really did give you the chance to see what the constraints and the opportunities and the attitudes and all of that are. It helped you get a little better picture.

If you were strictly a field man or strictly a Washington man you would have a different perspective on how things can and should be done. And I think the fact that USIA and the State Department had that approach of bringing people back and rotating them through positions where they would have to be feeding the field officers was very helpful. And it also helped me, I think, in my onward assignments to know what resources were available and how best to tap into them.

Q: Yeah. And that point of view. When you're overseas the enemy is Washington, when you're in Washington, the enemy is overseas.

ROSE: Exactly.

Q: Yes, so the rotations, they give you a sense of the resources you will need in the field, and then also enable you to really understand the system, which is good both pragmatically in understanding where the resources are, but also in career development. Because frankly, there's some networking that takes place, and sometimes the better assignments go to people who are known from their Washington assignments. So, that's a powerful point.

ROSE: One other point that I would just mention that was of interest there is I served on some promotion boards while I was there. And so, that also gave me some good insights into how all of that worked. So, yeah.

Q: I never did a promotion board. When you participate in that, do you believe that the process—the process is quite transparent, but it's very cumbersome, and it has to do with narratives. In the military they check boxes, in the State Department they write fancy narratives. Tell us your feelings about the evaluation and promotion system. Does it pretty much work as it is? Should it be revamped?

ROSE: I think the biggest handicap was that people tended to be rated too highly and so it was hard to find—everyone looked like they were high performers when you knew when you served alongside some people that they were not high performers.

Q: Well, and it has much to do with the eloquence of the boss.

ROSE: That too.

Q: Irrelevant, isn't it?

ROSE: Yeah. So, those are some of the challenges associated with it. But I don't know how you would do anything that was—with the kind of work that we were doing, a lot of it was something that really could be evaluated. Would be hard to objectify and create—

Q: Again, I've never seen the format of the military, but apparently, they just check boxes. Would that be any better? It's still subjective, right?

ROSE: Yeah, I don't know that that would have worked. I kind of liked reading the narratives.

Q: Okay. And do you feel you learned about individuals and also about the system in reading the evaluations?

ROSE: Yes, I think it gave you a reasonable picture, enough to make judgments that would not be too out of line.

Q: And did you ever track what actually happened from your recommendations? People got promotions, did not get them. Were you pretty satisfied with the outcome?

ROSE: Good question, I don't recall.

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: I think basically once we did our work that the decisions were pretty much made, and people were either promoted or not.

Q: And not to beat a dead horse, but I think there were numeric limits to how many could be promoted?

ROSE: Yes, that's true. Yeah. So, there were the cutoff points.

Q: I think those were set by Congress maybe?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Were some people excluded that you wish could be included?

ROSE: It was generous enough at that time—most of the time that I was working with it—that I didn't think that it was grossly out of line. I mean, there might have been a few people that I would have liked to have seen be able to make it, but I thought maybe by next year, you know.

Q: We know that in 1999, 2000—we did not know this at the time—but State Department colleagues believed that we were getting too many promotions and they took vengeance in 2000, 2001, and they said no more for you. And in that first year or two, I think they severely limited the PD (Public Diplomacy) promotions. Anyway, our good-hearted colleagues. We loved them. So, did I understand that Venezuela was your next assignment? Should we get you on your way there?

ROSE: Yes, I think we can move on to that.

Q: Okay. So, the timing, I've lost track of what years this was.

ROSE: Well, let's see. That would be 1980–. I came back from Thailand in '77 and spent four years in Washington. '81, yes.

Q:'81, okay. Now, going back to—we called it ARA (Inter-American Affairs) back then—going back to ARA was a natural move. You had served in Peru, and did you think that ARA was a logical next step? I mean, another post in ARA.

ROSE: Yes, not only the area, but also the position. Because I had served as education officer in Thailand, where I worked with educational exchanges a lot. So when they offered me the position of cultural affairs officer, cultural attaché, in Caracas, that looked like a very logical choice because I had had experience with bi-national centers, I had had experience with educational exchanges, and even though on the cultural end we were with the American Participants and everything I had seen all of that, which was primarily handled through the CAO's (Cultural Affairs Officer) office, and it was an opportunity to take a position that had some supervisory responsibility of both Americans and local staff.

Q: So, this seemed like a proper placement. Do you remember if you thought at the time, really, I should be a PAO? Did that ever occur to you?

ROSE: Not at that point, I don't think. I'll get into something during my Venezuela assignment that will give you some perspective on that, but at the time I thought, this sounds great. It sounds like a good position, something I feel like I can handle and do a good job in.

Q: And I'm sure you did. We must remember we're not in a world where Venezuela seems like it's in a state of doom and horrible—

ROSE: Very different.

Q: And this was a very different time where, at least relative to now, it was more open, it was a little bit more prosperous, I guess. How would you describe Venezuela of 1981 socially, economically?

ROSE: Well, one of the first things is that the dollar didn't go anywhere near as far in that country. When I arrived, I could barely afford to eat out.

Q: Really? What is the currency?

ROSE: Bolivar.

Q: Of course.

ROSE: And it was four to one, a stable exchange rate and we could barely afford to eat at a fast food place.

Q: Wait, you were an American diplomat, what about Venezuelans?

ROSE: I know. Well, they were awash in oil money, you know? It would be like Saudis.

Q: Yes, but you're talking about the elites, I guess.

ROSE: Well, the people I associated with, yes. One of the first things that really caught my attention was that occasionally they would say, well let's fly up to Miami for lunch.

Q: That says it all. We talk about the 1%, do you think it was 10 or 15%?

ROSE: It was a big enough group and there was enough oil money around to take care of most people. And with the spoils system in their government and everything, people were well paid if they had jobs that in any way would interact with mine.

Q: So, you know about the Gini coefficient. Would you say that Venezuela at that time had a large or small discrepancy between rich and poor?

ROSE: Well, it was very large because the people at the very bottom who were the street sweepers and the servants and so forth were like elsewhere in Latin America where they were underpaid and there were slums on the hillside and all of that. So, you knew all that was out there, but you didn't interact much with those people.

Q: Right. Because at that time USIA had a policy of dealing with elites, not from snobbishness but because of a lack of resources to get further.

ROSE: Yeah. But it was a place where we could shop in a supermarket, and we'd pay about what you would pay in the U.S. for your groceries. Unlike in my previous assignments where you would go to an open-air market and buy things for one third or one fourth of what you would pay in the United States.

Q: So, you had been in Brazil earlier. Brazil is, I think, the country with the largest discrepancy according to the Gini coefficient. Did it seem that way in Venezuela also? Largest in the world, I mean.

ROSE: Yeah. It could very well be.

Q: Okay. Now, you mentioned the hilltop. I've never been to Caracas, but I guess the elites live at the top of a hill?

ROSE: Well, no, actually we lived down in the valley. Well, no. There were kind of two of the upper-class neighborhoods if you want to call them that. There was Prados del Este, which was on the southwest side of town, and a lot of the business people lived there. The embassy was kind of in the east side of town, but down in the valley. My home was within walking distance of the embassy, which was wonderful.

Q: The valley being south of the coast?

ROSE: Well, the location of Caracas is that it's in a valley between ridges. The floor of the valley where the main road and all of that passes through runs east-west, bounded on the north with an eight thousand foot peak or little range. When you got up to the top of it you could look down and see the ocean, the Caribbean on the other side of it.

Q: Yes, I've heard descriptions of that, but is that a residential area?

ROSE: No, it was a national park. But we lived—a lot of the people that worked in the embassy because it was kind of in the east side of the main part of the city would live on sort of the slopes leading up to that mountain.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: And then the others lived on the other side of the valley on the slopes leading up to the main Andes range. So, anyway, that was kind of the configuration and the geography there. But we were close to most of the things that we frequented, like the concert halls and the museums, the universities, that were all kind of down in the floor of the valley and not very far from where we lived.

Q: I imagine it as, certainly back then, a rather elegant city. I've never been.

ROSE: In certain respects, it was. There was enough money for public institutions for the museums, the concert halls, places like that. They had three symphony orchestras, several museums of note, some excellent universities and some not so excellent.

Q: So, this is a vibrant country, a vibrant city. Lots going on. This is what, a three year assignment?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: So, '81 – '84?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Now what was the size of the American staff in USIS (United States Information Service)? USIS, what we now call the Public Affairs section. You had a PAO (Public Affairs Officer), a CAO, an IO (Information Officer). Anything more?

ROSE: Yes, we had a PAO, an IO, an assistant IO, a CAO, and two assistant CAOs.

Q: Great.

ROSE: And an administrative officer.

Q: Well, that's pretty impressive. That's six or seven Americans and maybe twenty locally employed staff?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Wow. So, your whole life was based partly on the local employees working under the cultural side. We used to call them the cultural side and the information side.

ROSE: Right, exactly.

Q: It was kind of a false distinction, but in those days, it was a clear distinction. So, tell us about your local staff? Were they well-connected? Very conscientious in working with you?

ROSE: One of the most interesting people who ever worked for me was my primary assistant, Hildegard Fischer. Doesn't sound much like a Latin name because it was not. She spoke with a strong German accent.

Q: Julia Fischer?

ROSE: Hildegard Fischer.

Q: Hildegard. So, I guess she was born in Germany and ended up in–

ROSE: Well, here's her story. Hildegard was the daughter of a university professor in Germany from Heidelberg. And in the post-war period because she spoke English well, she was able to get a job as a translator for the occupying forces and continued to perfect her English. But she had a boyfriend who could not find work and decided to emigrate to Venezuela. And said he would send for her when he was situated.

Q: Wow. And did, I guess.

ROSE: And did and then jilted her.

Q: Too bad for her.

ROSE: So, here's this poor woman who has come across the ocean to a place that she knows absolutely nothing about and finds herself alone. And so, she went to the American embassy and said, I was a translator for your armed forces, is there anything here that I could do for you? Any work that you might have? And I don't know what her original position was, but eventually she worked her way up to be the senior Foreign Service national in USIS.

Q: Amazing. This would have been in the 60s or something like that? 50s or 60s?

ROSE: Yeah, that's when she would have come to that country. So, she'd been there a long time, had worked for several of my predecessors and knew, and was well known by all of the cultural luminaries in the city. So, I had the best of both worlds. I had German efficiency, well-connected to Venezuelan society and respected by them.

Q: Yes. You know the joke about heaven and hell? Let's see, heaven would be German efficiency, British diplomacy, French cooking, Italian art. And then hell would be Germany diplomacy, Italian efficiency and so forth. Anyway, she had perfect Spanish, I guess?

ROSE: Yes, it was accented but she spoke it fluently.

Q: That's great. So, you were friendly with her, and she really helped you.

ROSE: Yeah. My secretary worked really more for enjoyment and the connections and to be a part of the cultural life of the city than out of economic necessity. She was the daughter of a general in the Venezuelan air force, I think. And very capable and well-connected. She used to let us use her beach condo sometimes.

Q: Not bad. Again, Mr. Rose, you lived a great life, I think. These are wonderful stories. Now, usually when you go to a new USIS post you spend a few weeks figuring out what is here and what can I do during my limited time. Do you remember going through that process and what were your conclusions?

ROSE: Well, in some respects that really did not take place in Venezuela because I was swept up by what was going on at the time.

Q: What was that?

ROSE: So, let me characterize that for you. The first thing was that we had an ambassador who was unusually interested in cultural affairs.

Q: Okay, that's good and bad, right? Yeah.

ROSE: His interest developed during a time when he was an escort officer in the Soviet Union for our exchange program there when we were sending luminaries from the United States because it was the only way we could connect with the Soviets. And so, he got to know a lot of important people in the cultural world of the United States.

Q: Have you seen the current issue of Foreign Service Journal that has a big article about that topic? I can send it to you.

ROSE: No, I haven't. A colleague of mine mentioned it.

Q: It's the cover story that exhibits a gang of brothers and sisters, many of whom became Sovietologists.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Very good public diplomacy officers.

ROSE: Well, early in his career Bill Luers was one of those people.

Q: Bill Luers.

ROSE: William Luers.

Q: Well, that's to be noted because that's a bit of history that's important.

ROSE: His wife was a great asset as well. She came from a wealthy family from La Jolla, California, and was very comfortable dealing with people who were well-connected in Venezuelan society. Well, one of the ways that that played out—this was just an amazing opportunity for a cultural affairs officer—is that Ambassador Bill Luers would watch weather reports in New York. And on a particularly nasty day when there was a blizzard going through New York, he would call up Arthur Miller and ask, Arthur, how's the weather up there?

Q: Oh, no, that's great.

ROSE: You know Arthur, if you would come down here and turn yourself over to my cultural attaché for a couple of days, I'll take you diving at Los Roques.

Q: And did he?

ROSE: And he did.

Q: Wow. So, you had Arthur Miller all to yourself?

ROSE: Arthur Miller, Edward Albee, William Styron.

Q: Oh my god. I've met those two latter ones. Yeah. Albee came to South Africa when I was there and Styron that's another story.

ROSE: Yeah, he was the least effective of the three in my case.

Q: But my gosh, this is stellar. Venezuela. Because of an active ambassador with connections. Amazing.

ROSE: Yeah. So, I had a very good connection with the ambassador and the PAO, John Kordek.

Q: Oh, John Kordek, of course. Yeah.

ROSE: Very happy with that arrangement because it made all of us look good.

Q: Yeah, sure. John Kordek was the head of the European Bureau in USIA when I was a junior officer, so I remember him well. They sent him to Botswana; I don't think he liked it very much. But amazing. Kordek was of course an Eastern European hand.

ROSE: Right, exactly.

Q: He was from the Chicago Polish community and served in Poland.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Quite a notable character. So, wow. You're surrounded by celebrities there. I would even consider Kordek a celebrity.

ROSE: So, that was a good start to it and then it got even better.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Because I was there for the two-hundredth anniversary of Simon Bolivar's birth, and the Venezuelans wanted to celebrate this great occasion of their native son, and so essentially, they made an offer to the embassies in the city, you deliver someone on our shores, and we'll pick up all the local expenses.

Q: Wonderful. So, you brought, let me guess, Mark Twain? No, I don't know.

ROSE: Go way to the top.

Q: Let's see…

ROSE: Try the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

Q: Leonard Bernstein.

ROSE: No, it was led by Zubin Mehta at the time.

Q: Zubin Mehta. You brought Zubin Mehta? Wow.

ROSE: I had to translate his press conference.

Q: Wow.

ROSE: And someone asked him, what do you think of the Venezuelan national anthem as a piece of music?

Q: And he'd never heard it, I suppose.

ROSE: He said oh, it's fine, it's like most Latin American national anthems, they all sound like they were written by Italians.

Q: That's a great quote.

ROSE: I've got another one of them for you too. Someone asked, how difficult is it for you to assemble musicians of the quality that you have in the New York Philharmonic? And this is when Glenn Dicterow was the concertmaster.

ROSE: Anyway. So, he said, oh, the music schools like the Juilliard are turning out so many good musicians now, it's like replacing Ford parts.

Q: Oh my gosh. He is a very charming person, I think. But comparing a thing that they were all composed by Italians. Today that wouldn't go over very well.

ROSE: So, anyway, that was of course the biggest name.

Q: Amazing.

ROSE: So, I still have my tie from the New York Philharmonic that I was awarded.

Q: It wasn't worth more than twenty dollars, right?

ROSE: Right.

Q: At that time. This is remarkable. This is wonderful. So, you had face time with these people.

ROSE: Oh yeah, as I said, I translated all their press conferences and interacted with them, and it was a very heady time. Because in addition to the New York Philharmonic led by Zubin Mehta, I had the Alwin Nikolais dancers, I had Dizzy Gillespie.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra with Pinchas Zukerman.

Q: My god. There's no greater chamber orchestra than that one. Wow. Did they come with the performers or was it just Zukerman?

ROSE: Oh yeah, it was the whole orchestra, the whole dance troupe.

Q: Woah, did the Venezuelan government pay for this?

ROSE: The New York Philharmonic was able to build on that to do a Latin American tour, so they also went to Buenos Aires.

Q: Amazing, I'm humbled. These things just don't happen anymore.

ROSE: Well, it was like you'd died and gone to CAO heaven.

Q: Yes, absolutely. Venezuela. Did you ever know John Coppola by any chance?

ROSE: I knew of John.

Q: Yeah, okay. He was doing exhibits at that time, I think. The late John Coppola, a great guy who was of Italian origin, and I think he worked a lot in ARA, but anyway.

ROSE: And we were the beneficiaries of a major art exhibit as well that I was able to get into the art museum there.

Q: Fantastic. Now, when you had these great names, I'm guessing the ambassador would have wanted to take these away from you.

ROSE: Well, Luers was very good about that. Basically, he supported us, and we all basked in the glory of it.

Q: That's great. Did he do performances in his residence?

ROSE: Yes, we did have a couple of things at the residence, but most of it was down in the city.

Q: Well, just for a second, these incredible stars must have put you personally on the map in terms of recognizing you down the road as what you later became, the director of ARA. Did this in fact bolster your image or the perception of you within USIA?

ROSE: Possibly it might have because all of these events came off successfully. One of the interesting things about it was that the other countries were also invited to do the same thing, and no one quite measured up to what we were able to do. But the Soviets sent one of the Bolshoi's companies and so I got to attend some of those events as well.

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: There was a great little story that one of the culture ministry officials shared with me. When they invited the minister of culture from the Soviet Union, he had never been to any place in Latin America but Cuba, so he asked when they made the visit to Moscow for the invitation, what do people wear there? He said, do they wear the guayabera, the shirt like they do in Cuba? And the guy said, yeah, we see those around.

Q: But not at official events I guess, right?

ROSE: So, the day came to be taken out to the fanciest restaurant in Caracas, $120 a plate, he came in his guayabera, and everyone else of course was in suits. He got to the door and the doorman stepped in front of him and said, sir, you can't come in here without a coat and tie. And the Venezuelan officials of course immediately said, no, you don't know who this is, you have to move aside and let him go in and he was not having it and there was an argument at the door which the poor Russian fellow didn't understand. But finally, he had to borrow his chauffeur's coat with sleeves up almost to his elbows.

Q: That's a good one.

ROSE: And they loaned him a tie to put on his guayabera so that he could eat lunch.

Q: A guayabera and a tie. Fantastic. That would be the opening scene of this documentary. Now, of course the U.S. is the big brother in the western hemisphere, the Monroe Doctrine. We talk about the Bolivarian Revolutions as the second ones in the western hemisphere after the American Revolution. And we know that Latin American countries have a love-hate for the U.S., but I guess they would have expected the U.S. to be the main contributor because of our revolution and their revolution.

ROSE: Right.

Q: Was there talk about the Monroe Doctrine at that time. John Kerry later pronounced it dead a few years ago and Latin America jumped for joy. It was just rhetoric, but it was in the background I suppose. Did people discuss it, or did they resent it, or did they take it seriously?

ROSE: Not so much as a doctrine, I think they were more concerned about the issues of exploitation of resources and those kinds of things than political hegemony. So, yeah. Certainly, in discussions if there were discussions about the politics and historical things then it would come up there, but I don't think by that time—certainly not in Venezuela where they felt like they were integrated in the world economy, playing a powerful role with their oil wealth and that—

Q: What were the American entities? Was United Fruit in Venezuela at all?

ROSE: No, the Rockefellers were in Venezuela in a big way.

Q: Oil?

ROSE: Probably somewhat although not so much. They actually were in agricultural operations; they also established the principle supermarket chain, and so I actually met David Rockefeller while I was there because he came.

Q: Oh my gosh. What a cavalcade of stars. So, any sense of the general—well, there are many Venezuelas, there's the top, the bottom, and the middle.

ROSE: Yes, by and large I think they felt very connected with us. They interacted with us a lot. They had these wonderful musicians and orchestras and things like that. I mean, I listen to NPR (National Public Radio), the classical music station, regularly here and I'm just amazed by how many times the even the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra even will appear on NPR with recordings and a whole bunch of Venezuelans conducting the Berlin Philharmonic, all these Venezuelan musicians of note.

Q: El Sistema is what, Dominican Republic, I think?

ROSE: Yeah, I'm not as familiar with that one. But anyway, unlike Peru, for example, where I think there was a feeling of resentful inferiority complex, in Venezuela they definitely—partly because I think if they had to be associated for me, they could serve a better dinner when I went to their home than I could when I invited them to my home.

Q: Really?

ROSE: I mean, I could bring the Johnnie Walker Red Label, I guess, but they would have Black Label at their home.

Q: Okay, that tells it all. So, after you were there—do you want to talk about what went wrong later? The populist president took over, and became very anti-American. This was decades later, but did you see any of the seeds of that?

ROSE: Yes, very definitely. You know, there was so much wealth there, you would think there would be enough to go around for everybody, but again, it's the standard problem of distribution. And so, it was easy for someone like Hugo Chávez to, from a position of power in the military with guns behind him—he did something that could not have been done by a civilian politician. The civilian politicians were resented by the opposing party enough because the spoils system went all the way down to the elevator operators there, and they did have regular changes of power between the political parties. And so, a lot of people would lose their jobs, even fairly menial jobs, when a new party came to power. And so, there were people who were forced out of work, and they saw the wealth of all of these—

Q: Okay. Remind me, when did Chávez become president? It would have been like fifteen years later?

ROSE: Yeah, something like that.

Q: Okay, so there was kind of an undercurrent of resentment.

ROSE: Yeah, and some people feeling that they just weren't getting in on this great deal that all the wealthy people had. And so, I think that the conditions were such that

someone who would be able to come to power with the backing of the military and then the underprivileged population, that that combination was enough to put him in power.

Q: So, this is very noteworthy, the public resented the military less than they resented civilian politicians.

ROSE: Yeah, because the military, the generals and the colonels maybe took care of themselves and had business interests and all of that, but the common soldier was getting by on a pittance and a meager living.

Q: But the non-military public, when they saw the civilian politicians and the military, they tended to be more negative towards the military, I guess?

ROSE: Well, I would say that they probably felt like most of them would have known of the—the poorer sector of the population—would know at least some of the military as people who came out of their class.

Q: Their class, yes.

ROSE: Yes, exactly. And so, they would identify with them, and they would say, my brother's in the military, my cousin's in the military, or something like that. He's a common soldier, but if General Chávez is going to take care of him and take care of us too, why not?

Q: Very interesting.

ROSE: I mean, that's just kind of a very shallow explanation.

Q: No, not at all.

ROSE: But at least I think it helps provide some context for the rise of the Chávez rule.

Q: It's frequent and logical that civilians would be distrustful of the military in many countries—Chile, Uruguay, Argentina—but less so I guess in Venezuela.

ROSE: Because they had always kept their place, almost always anyway. It was the longest existing democracy in South America with peaceful changes of power between parties up until Hugo Chávez.

Q: Wow. I'm underscoring that. Would you say that goes back to—not back to the Bolivarian Revolution?

ROSE: No, but it went back to, I'm trying to remember, the 20s or something I think when the last military dictator…

Q: That's even more tragic when you see what's happened to it since then.

ROSE: It really is.

Q: Yeah. Well, of course nobody had any way of knowing in 1981-1984 that this was going to happen, but the seeds were there, we didn't see them.

ROSE: One of the things that also plays into it is the wide swings in prices for their principal commodity, oil. While I was there the bolivar—suddenly oil became very cheap—and the bolivar went from 4.1 to the dollar to 17 to the dollar. So, suddenly I could afford to eat at fancy restaurants, buy a stereo in a local shop.

Q: Well, that's critical.

ROSE: I mean yeah.

Q: Because oil was less expensive, right?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: And was Venezuela part of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) at that time?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Yeah, okay. So, OPEC played their games, mainly directed by Saudi Arabia, I guess, and the others either fell in line or didn't.

ROSE: But whatever it was that produced that glut of oil in 1983 or so just knocked the wind out of the bolivar and suddenly everybody was poor.

Q: Any comments on this thing we call the resource curse or the oil curse? This phenomenon began, I think, in the Netherlands in the 17th century. Something about tulips, were they really worth it? It's like bitcoin, right? It wasn't really worth anything, but people were investing in it, and it disrupted the economy and it's now called the resource curse. Do you see any relation between that and the fluctuation of oil prices? One day you're rich and the next you're not.

ROSE: I don't know that I have any real insights into that particular aspect of it, but one thing that did strike me about Venezuela is that I felt that I was living in a society where there were an awful lot of wealthy people who had not earned their wealth.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: And that's not a particularly attractive social environment. The ostentatious clothing, let's fly to Miami for lunch thing. Just flaunting their wealth and that. There was something kind of unattractive about all of that.

Q: So, there was a subliminal resentment among people, it wasn't coming out clearly, but it was probably there. Of course, now the ostentatious flaunting of wealth is painfully present in most of the world. Okay, well, maybe things sometimes don't get better. Wow. So, you had these remarkable visitors, Zubin Mehta and others. So meanwhile you kept the machine going, the international visitors, the Fulbrights and all.

ROSE: Right, all of that was functioning very well with excellent help from Hildegard and as I say, support. Now, during my time there Ambassador Luers finished his assignment, and we received a new ambassador who was Austrian born, Ambassador Landau. But he obviously did not have the connections and that of Bill Luers nor the interest in it, but he was a very capable and good man to work for as well. We also changed PAOs. Marilyn McAfee became the new PAO after John Kordek.

Q: Yes, I think I remember her. Wasn't she head of AF (Bureau of African Affairs) at some point?

ROSE: Yes, I think so. Very efficient administrator, valued her people, and I very much enjoyed working for her as well as John Kordek.

Q: Okay. Now, let's see, do you think you were getting your fair amount of international visitors and Fulbright grants?

ROSE: Yes. Obviously, the big thing about my time in Venezuela was the cultural events, but all of those operated at a very satisfactory level and I felt like we were making good use of the resources we got. So, we had an effective bi-national commission there for the Fulbright program as well.

Q: Oh, you did, okay. A commission.

ROSE: So, all of that operated well.

Q: For those who are not familiar, let's talk about the advantages and disadvantages of having a commission. It puts the CAO and the PAO somewhat sidelined.

ROSE: Yeah. Off to the side a bit. I think I sat on the commission. I'm trying to remember because I had one in Thailand too and I don't remember the one in Venezuela as much, but I believe we had one there as well. It's been a long time.

Q: Did the Venezuelan government put money into the Fulbright program?

ROSE: I think there was some support if I'm not mistaken. For some reason I just don't recall that side of it as well.

Q: Well, there was a commission to do that. Of course, it relieves you a little bit of the selection process but then it also removes the authority to choose.

ROSE: Right.

Q: But it's meant to be a good thing.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Wow. So, you pointed out many ways in which Venezuela was really very different from other countries in Latin America.

ROSE: Yes, it was. It was quite unusual in terms of the issues that we were dealing with and everything. I mean, still by that time it was—there were the Cubans and those kinds of things that were concerns, and Venezuela had quite a large Cuban refugee population. It was a little bit like Miami.

Q: Oh, because in the nasty times later Venezuela and Cuba became very close allies and worked together. So, when you say Cubans, you mean immigrants.

ROSE: Right.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: The other thing I think was a little bit interesting is that it was not just a Latin American culture but a Caribbean culture. So, there's a flavor about it that comes with that. Even a lot of the vocabulary, the words for some of the fruits, were Carib Indian words rather than Spanish.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: What about neighboring countries, Guyana and even Colombia next door.

ROSE: Trinidad, Colombia. It was an interesting dynamic with all of those countries.

Q: Now, did you have regional PAO meetings that brought you together with PAOs in those countries?

ROSE: I don't recall any at that time.

Q: Okay. I'm guessing that the work was quite different maybe. Colombia already had a drug production challenge and gangs.

ROSE: Right.

Q: And did the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) exist?

ROSE: Guyana of course was dealing with a totally different political situation. I'm trying to remember when Grenada took place.

Q: I can tell you. It would have been '83.

ROSE: Yeah, a little bit after, that's why I dealt with that from Washington.

Q: I only remember because that was my first year in USIA. Grenada, what's that? We invaded? It was quite surprising.

ROSE: So, yeah, most of those kinds of issues were not—

Q: So, you've mentioned Hildegard several times, I forget her last name.

ROSE: Fischer.

Q: Fischer. The role of locally employed staff, I think we've made the point amply that they were really crucial, very helpful. Were these personal friendships that lasted beyond the assignment?

ROSE: Yes, we continued to correspond. Hildegard eventually went back to Germany when she retired.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Yeah, she invited me to come and visit her and come and stay with her, but we never did have the conditions that made that possible, I would have loved to have gone.

Q: So, this whole thirty year part of her life was kind of a deviation. Or forty years. That's interesting. Now, you've mentioned previously the Church of Latter Day Saints, was there one in Caracas?

ROSE: Yes, and curiously enough, they actually had a kind of leadership shortage in one of the local congregations.

Q: Let me guess, you became involved.

ROSE: I was asked for a period to be bishop of a congregation and to train a counselor.

Q: I'm going to take off my guayabera and put on my—

ROSE: Clerical collar.

Q: A bishop, wow.

ROSE: So, a bishop in our church is not like a bishop in the Catholic Church, it's just that the head of a congregation, not a diocese. But I was the leader of a congregation of about three hundred Venezuelan members on my Sundays and so I trained a dentist who was my counselor over an eighteen month period to become the next bishop. A Venezuelan, of course.

Q: Were there other nationalities? Were there Americans?

ROSE: Most of the American members that were there with businesses and that were with another congregation that was in the southwest part of town.

Q: So, there was more than one in Caracas?

ROSE: There were about eight congregations there. And some of them had more ex-patriot members in them than others.

Q: Why was Venezuela so far advanced in that compared to other places? Was there an extra effort?

ROSE: Colombia I think had even more, and Brazil certainly had more by this time.

Q: And yet they were local members mainly?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Do you know the history of that? Did someone come from the U.S.?

ROSE: The history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Latin America really begins in Buenos Aires in 1925.

Q: Let's hear.

ROSE: Then they worked their way north.

Q: Who did this? Americans?

ROSE: Yes. It was one of the apostles from the church in Salt Lake that went to Buenos Aires in 1925 and established a mission there. And as I say, eventually by the late 1950s they had expanded into Chile and Peru and Brazil and then gradually from there they worked their way north to Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela.

Q: So, the torch was passed to Latin Americans who themselves became missionaries?

ROSE: Yeah, that was the way they operated. They sent missionaries to establish the church there, find members, and then train them to take over the leadership positions because we have lay leadership.

Q: I don't mean to compare this to evangelism, but was there an element of distrust for the Catholic Church because of its association with the corrupt leadership in Latin America?

ROSE: There was a little bit of that I think that played into it. I remember more as a missionary in Peru finding people who were disaffected and felt that way.

Q: That may have helped in making this change. Ivan Illich, liberation theology. People who remained Catholics but basically their message was really anti-Vatican. There was a lot happening in Latin America.

ROSE: Very reformist and oriented toward the social needs of people rather than the ecclesiastical needs.

Q: And in the case of the Catholic Church, they either adapted or lost their congregations.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: No, that's a very important history. 1925. Okay. So, Venezuela three years. It was a three year assignment to begin with. Were you tempted to extend? We used to have extensions.

ROSE: I mean, it was a good experience, as I say it was probably the best job I ever had because of just the circumstances, but we were kind of ready to move on at that point. And I mentioned that there was something that occurred there that really changed my perspective, and since we've just talked about religion, that played into what happens next. And this is pretty personal, but I'll share it with you.

Q: Please.

ROSE: Because of the circumstances and the opportunity to look good, I guess, in my work, I don't remember, I think by the time I finished up in Venezuela I was a FSIO -01.

Q: Oh, well that's pretty quick advancement.

ROSE: Yeah, so I had advanced well in my career and everything, and I had come to know many of my colleagues—or several of my colleagues—who shared my religion. And there was something very disturbing that I observed.

Q: Let's just get this in there, you know, when the transcript comes out you can edit, you can delete.

ROSE: Okay, so I'll be completely honest and upfront with you about what took place.

Q: You can remove any of this later.

ROSE: Okay. So, what happened is that I said to myself, what is wrong with being a Mormon in USIA?

Q: That's a very important topic.

ROSE: Because what I had observed is that of the LDS officers that I knew about, the only two who moved into the senior Foreign Service had done so after discontinuing their religious participation. I watched many young LDS officers make a good start, but then they would leave the service.

Q: Interesting.

ROSE: What I found with the ones that left was that they were doing very well in their careers, their performance was excellent, but their wives said, I cannot deal with this lifestyle. And they gave them the ultimatum. I was blessed with a wife who perhaps because she had had previous foreign experience even before we joined when she was very young, felt comfortable with that environment and was willing to deal with the minor challenges of being a diplomatic spouse and having to host cocktail parties and things like that that some of the wives couldn't deal with. And I said, I want to see if there is a way for me to be able to become the first LDS person that I know of who can move on into the senior Foreign Service without abandoning his faith. And so, that became an ambition and an aspiration. And I thought, so I'm really going to put myself into this work. And then I watched two of my colleagues lose their marriages partly at least because of the amount of time that they were putting into their work instead of their relationships with their spouses.

Q: Now, with your two colleagues was this worldwide or in ARA?

ROSE: They were good friends I knew personally.

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: So I watched those two marriages fall apart. And at that point I changed my mind. So, when HR came to me with the proposal for my next assignment they said, you know, you've done really well, we've got a position that will almost guarantee you advancement into the senior Foreign Service, we need a DPAO (Deputy Public Affairs Officer) in Belgrade.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: And I said that sounds very interesting, let me check into some things. And I found that the American school in Belgrade—this was of course when it was still under communist rule—

Q: Gentle communism.

ROSE: Yes, gentle communism, exactly. I found that there was no American high school. It only went up through eighth grade. They said, that's no problem, we'll pay for your kids to go to school in Munich or Vienna or Rome and they can come home and see you on vacation. And I had three high school kids at the time. And I said, no, I'm not going to sacrifice my family for my career. So, I said, what else have you got? And they said, well you're not going to like this, but the only other thing we can offer you is a position in India at your present grade level.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: And it's not going to get you promoted most likely. And if it's a four year assignment, you'll be very close to twenty years of service, and you'll be very close to a trigger point where you might find yourself leaving the service.

Q: Now, in these days you did open your window? You're familiar with open your window?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: So, when you became a -01, how quickly did you decide to open your window? Right away?

ROSE: Apparently yes.

Q: Okay, so you had a deadline of seven years.

ROSE: So yes, that was an issue.

Q: So, very honorably you saw India as an opportunity to keep a stable family. You had seen counterparts suffer and break apart because of not—

ROSE: Putting a career before their family.

Q: Very moving. Very interesting. And obviously you did get promoted later. We'll get to that later, I guess. I see the situation of spouse versus career. Right. Well, we know that the Foreign Service is very destructive to relationships. The statistics are—I don't know if you know this, they were doing a study years ago collecting data and the results were so shocking that they halted the study.

ROSE: Oh really?

Q: They didn't want to demoralize people. Yeah. The percentage was very high. We should mention, and I know you're aware of this, you mention people who chose church over career or career over church, there were some who were basically proselytes for

some churches, including the Church of Latter Day Saints, and by the way were using the Foreign Service to pivot their proselytizing, which I think is probably not a good thing.

ROSE: Absolutely, and I tried to be very careful about that because we do have lay leadership in our church, and everybody is expected to play some role. I admit that Venezuela was the one where I felt the most uncomfortable because I was in a visible leadership position. And I don't think it was known to people like my contacts and that I was a leader in the Mormon Church, but I was conscious of the potential for that to become an issue.

Q: Well, you were aware of the distinction which speaks much to your credit. I've met others who took the Foreign Service very lightly and as an opportunity to…whatever their personal agendas were. And I found that tacky.

ROSE: No, I totally agree.

Q: Well, this is remarkable. So, we're going to get you to India at some point. Now again, you were dealing with a very helpful and humane HR office that cared about you and actually said to you, this one will lead to a promotion, this one maybe will not. This is a remarkable level of individual attention and frankly caring. What was his name, the HR guy? He was wonderful.

ROSE: I think Harlan Rosacker was there.

Q: These HR people in USIA were fantastic.

ROSE: They were.

Q: They created kind of an extended family feeling. They cared. This was a great loss. Yeah.

ROSE: So, we looked into the school in New Delhi and it had an excellent reputation. We said, this sounds like a wonderful place for us.

Q: Let us dedicate this conversation to Ruth who bolstered you, who supported you, and who was fully a part of the effort and made all the difference.

ROSE: She really did. I remember one incident that I even mentioned when I read her life sketch or obituary in her memorial service a few weeks ago. When we were in Venezuela her cook quit the day before we were to host a big dinner.

Q: Let me guess who made the dinner?

ROSE: She immediately trained our children as servers, cooked the meal herself—went up to the market and bought everything and cooked everything herself and my guests just thought it was delightful that my high school age children were their servers.

Q: We will put this whole story on pause, and we will thank Ruth who is somewhere and really made a tremendous difference both to you and to the Foreign Service and to USIA and to these foreign countries. I never knew her, I'm so sorry I didn't. So, Doug Rose, this is our sixth conversation, it is May 12, 2023, and thank you so much for this great series of anecdotes.

ROSE: Thank you so much.

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Q: Okay, this is Dan Whitman talking to Doug Rose. It's May 25, 2023, and this is our seventh conversation. You left us suspended in our last talk Doug. You decided not to go to Belgrade because of family considerations and so you got—no, New Delhi, which was completely outside your previous experience. Let's hear about that. Did you get area studies? What was the transition like? You went back to Washington I suppose?

ROSE: I had home leave and I'm trying to remember if I even had area studies. I don't think so.

Q: You probably said, but what year are we in?

ROSE: We're in 1984.

Q: Okay. So, a brief transition.

ROSE: Yeah. My recollection is that it was a non-language designated position, so I did not need language study, and I think I just had brief consultations in Washington and then got ready to head out to the post.

Q: And you were what? CAO?

ROSE: It was program director.

Q: Oh yeah.

ROSE: Director of programs. And so, I supervised four more junior officers and a good sized staff doing mostly American Participant, AmPart programs, and the kinds of things I fed people from Washington in my previous assignment and now was going out to be the recipient.

Q: Yeah, so again, another idea assignment.

ROSE: Except that as mentioned, it was at my current grade. I was a -01.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: And they had warned me that it would be very hard to advance because it was mostly an internal job that did not involve a lot of contacts with host country nationals, and therefore it would be hard to stand out.

Q: That's very kind of them to even think of that.

ROSE: Yeah. Of course, they were trying to persuade me at that point to take the DPAO Belgrade position and that was the drawback, but for family reasons New Delhi looked very good and I said I'll take my chances, go ahead and throw me into that briar patch.

Q: Now, you were a -01, does that mean you had opened your window for senior?

ROSE: Yes, I think so.

Q: So, for the reader you have six or seven years and then you're up or out if you decided to play that card. So, does it seem like you opened your window before going to New Delhi?

ROSE: It may have very well been right before. I don't remember exactly, but you recall from the last conversation—

Q: I'm sorry, I have to pause. There we go. Sorry, a little interruption there. You supervised four JOs (Junior Officers), you had staff. It was a question of opening your window. There was some risk of not getting a promotion because of the type of job, but for family reasons you went to New Delhi.

ROSE: So, you'll recall that at some point during the time in Caracas I began to aspire to a senior Foreign Service level and so that's probably when I made that decision to go ahead and open a window, and so I really fully expected that by going to New Delhi and taking that assignment I would probably be looking for a new career in a few years.

Q: Or you would do a promotable thing after New Delhi because you had six or seven years.

ROSE: Yeah, but it was a four year assignment and if I opened my window, I might only have a year or two after New Delhi and I might be due for a Washington assignment, which would not be auspicious either.

Q: Okay, so this becomes existential.

ROSE: Yeah, so those were all considerations that were going through my mind at that time, but I just decided that I would rather take that chance and go to a place that was good for my family.

Q: And we should remember, these four year assignments don't exist anymore, but that was one of the virtues of USIA, you really got to know the place because the assignments were longer than State Department assignments.

ROSE: Yes. So, I'll just share with you a fun little experience on our arrival in New Delhi. One of our children had graduated from high school in Caracas and was going off to college, and so we had five children with us that we were taking to New Delhi, ranging from a senior in high school down to elementary school. So, I was to replace Chuck Loveridge, who was moving into a different position, a better position. He was going off to a new place, a new assignment. Anyway, somehow the notification of our impending travel did not get transmitted. So, we arrived in the New Delhi airport with five children, seventeen bags, and no one to meet us, and I had no idea where we were supposed to go. So, the only thing I could think of was to try to find my way to the U.S. embassy. And my options for that were hire four taxis—

Q: Oh my god.

ROSE: But on the way out from one of the money exchanging windows at the airport, I discovered that there was a window for the Ex-Servicemen's League bus service.

Q: Of course, any window that's open is the right window.

ROSE: So, I went up to the window of the Ex-Servicemen's League bus service and asked them if they had a route that went anywhere near the U.S. embassy.

Q: Well, yeah. Okay.

ROSE: They said well, yes, we have one that could take you by there and if there are that many of you and you pay that many fares, we'll make a special stop at the embassy. So, great, we went out and loaded our seventeen bags and our five children on a bus and they took us to Chanakyapuri, where the U.S. embassy was located and at the break of dawn—probably sometime between five and six in the morning because it was summer—the bus door opened and the Marine guard watched a family of seven and seventeen bags being unloaded on his doorstep and he came out to see what was going on.

Q: Okay. I guess that's a reasonable question. Now this is crazy wow.

ROSE: So, I explained to him that I was arriving as a newly assigned officer with USIS.

Q: Did he know what that was?

ROSE: Yes, we were known. So, he said, let me see if I can get ahold of someone for you. So, he was able to contact Chuck Loveridge and he said, yeah, we kept waiting for a notification of your travel plans, we just never got anything. So, he said, I'll be right over.

So, he came over with a large vehicle that would take our things and told us that they had reserved a house for us.

Q: Okay. That's important.

ROSE: Yeah, and it was close to the American school, which was a big advantage.

Q: Excellent. So, at least they did that.

ROSE: Oh yeah. And he said the house is not set up for entertaining, but there's not much entertaining in this job. And so, he said, it should accommodate your family fine and I think you'll be comfortable there. So, we went there, and he described it exactly. It was a home that had very little space for entertaining guests; it was two floors with a rooftop area for laundry and so forth. And a very small yard and it did have servants' quarters for a household staff and that. So, it was very convenient to the embassy and to the school and there was a small market in the area. So, anyway, it turned out to be a very good location and a perfectly adequate home. It was smaller than the one I had as CAO because I had representational responsibilities in Venezuela, but it was fine.

Q: And did you miss having that representational role? You had fewer representational events, I guess. Did you miss that?

ROSE: Yes. Really there were almost none because it just was such that the other officers who had representational quarters hosted the events and basically, I provided the program management. So, it was pretty much an internal job but a very good well-qualified staff. One of the first things that happened when I arrived is that the PAO sent me upstairs to a very patient Indian lady and told me, go learn how to use a computer from her.

Q: Yes 1984.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Did you have a Wang?

ROSE: Yes indeed. And I had learned to use it a little bit in Washington. Anyway, she was very patient and taught me what I needed to know because Jim McGinley had seen the wave of the future and decided that USIS would become one of the first 287 charter members of the Indian internet system.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: And so, he signed up for VSNL (Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited) as it was called, and that was the host node for India for the internet. And of course, over the period of that time there the world was really transformed for us because the wireless file and all those kinds of things were all transmitted by internet and it became a totally new resource and transformed our operations, really.

Q: So, your PAO had the foresight to realize this is coming, let's do this. And in many other posts this was not the case. So, you used a local server? Imagine that. Nowadays that would be unthinkable because of security, but that's what there was. Did the Indian server work quite well?

ROSE: Really it did. India was trying to become a tech country. Of course, they've since moved very far down the road in that respect and become a major center of technological development and software development and all those things. So, it was an exciting time being on the ground floor of that.

Q: From other posts in the world, any sense of how many were that quick to change over? Not too many probably.

ROSE: I would guess maybe not. Jim was an interesting guy. He had come out of a background working for a Florida newspaper, so he was in the original lateral entry recruits of USIA officers, he was one of those who came in on the media side and built his career on that.

Q: So, this is the PAO, right? Jim, what was his name?

ROSE: McGinley.

Q: Okay. And you reported straight to the PAO, is that right?

ROSE: No, I reported to the deputy PAO, Steve Espie, who was basically a publications specialist. He had worked in headquarters magazines and those kinds of things primarily during his career, but they wanted to give him some foreign experience and so he went to New Delhi as a deputy PAO.

Q: That was an excursion tour? He was civil service?

ROSE: I'm not exactly sure what his status was. Very nice guy but did not have a lot of background in foreign work.

Q: So, I was once something called a PDO (Public Diplomacy Officer), which sounds similar. There was a PAO and then there were three people of equal rank, IO, CAO, PDO. Did you all report to the deputy PAO?

ROSE: Yes, I think that was the way it worked. So, we had a CAO, IO, and a PDO.

Q: Now, how much did your work overlap with the IO and the CAO? Quite a bit I'm guessing.

ROSE: We coordinated a lot, but our functions—because of the program office, the CAO really concentrated on cultural presentations and exchanges.

Q: You did mainly AmParts, is that right?

ROSE: Right. And I also had responsibility for film programs, as I recall, and anything associated with that. We were doing a lot of World Net stuff too.

Q: Oh yeah, right.

ROSE: So, that was part of that picture.

Q: World Net would be used mainly by the IO, right?

ROSE: Well, not really. We had expert speakers.

Q: Okay. Did you have a center?

ROSE: Yeah, we would have them at various locations. USIS had its own installation in New Delhi, separate from the embassy. It was a fairly substantial operation because we had a large country operation with four branch posts in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay—three—plus the capital. So, we were feeding a lot of this out to the branch posts as well, so there was a lot of coordination of travel for AmParts and setting up various kinds of programs around the country as well. And so, I got to travel even a little bit to get to know the branch posts and consult with them on what we needed to do to service their needs. And we had kind of a program office for Delhi, so really, I kind of fed four operations.

Q: Okay. And these other posts, were they one officer posts?

ROSE: Oh, no, they each had an IO and a CAO and large Indian staffs.

Q: So, there was a World Net that I guess you would have to be working with the IO and the CAO depending on the topic of the World Ney, right?

ROSE: Yes, to some extent.

Q: Did they tend to be large audiences?

ROSE: That was when my junior class colleague, Barry Fulton, had revolutionized our whole thinking on target audiences and all of that, and so one of the things that we were doing was a lot of record keeping of who we invited and analysis of who mattered—the influencers in the country—who mattered and on what issues that intersected with U.S. interests.

Q: It used to be called the DRS (Distribution Recording System).

ROSE: Yes, exactly.

Q: Which was an enormous resource which was abandoned pretty much when USIA was brought into State and then State tried to recreate it.

ROSE: Well, Jim was sold enough on that. Barry Fulton was the guy who developed all of that. He had a PhD in communications.

Q: Yes, I saw him recently. He's still around. I forget where. I saw him somewhere. But yeah, Barry was the head of what they used to call P (Policy) and so he's also the one who at a later date in the late 80s, I think, reconfigured the whole office space thing with the cubicles and nobody had a private office and it was supposed to be horizontal, basically trashing the morale, to the great pleasure of Al Gore, who had introduced total quality management.

ROSE: Anyway, he certainly knew what he was doing in terms of refining our audiences because I just felt like we were so much more scientific and effective in our outreach ability. Before it was round up whoever would attend, and he said no, we've got to figure out who matters on things that matter to the United States.

Q: And so, the DRS was really instrumental, the Distribution Recording System, something like that. And this was really what you went to in order to find who would fit in which event, right?

ROSE: Well, McGinley had enough power in the country team that he even got the political and economic sections feeding into it.

Q: Excellent, that's ideal. That happened in very few countries. Great. So, McGinley got—that's important. He was the PAO?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: PAO involved pol, econ, etc. in DRS development, can we say?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: That's great. That's terrific. Okay, so meanwhile you were buzzing around talking with counterparts in four consulates?

ROSE: Three consulates, Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, now Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. And managing a staff of four and trying to parcel out the programs in a rational way and so forth. So, it was a very manageable job, not particularly challenging, and they had given me an accurate assessment that it would not lead to anything I could stand out in. Everyone was very happy with my work. Steve Espie gave me great ratings and Jim reviewed them and all that, but it probably would have taken me nowhere except that two years into the assignment Steve Espie was suddenly needed back in Washington before

his time was up. So, there was no one in the pipeline and Jim came to me and said, would you like to apply?

Q: I mean, I'm sure you deserve it. Good luck story after good luck story. So, you became the DPO?

ROSE: Yes, two years into the assignment.

Q: So, suddenly you were promotable.

ROSE: And that brought with it a change of house because I was doing a lot of—the way things were set up in the country it was really kind of curious because the IO in New Delhi basically serviced the Hindi press. And so, the DPAO really worked primarily with the English press, which was the more powerful. And so, I got basically as my principal assistant a highly effective Indian senior foreign service national who really knew his way around the press and media. And he would tell me exactly who I should meet and who to invite to my home and who to watch out for and what to do, and I just learned to trust him. And so, he probably made me look better than anybody else.

Q: As good FSNs do.

ROSE: And so, one of the great things he did is we hired a good cook and he would set up background lunch sessions with senior editors in the English press. And it was a very sensitive time because India was neutral, a non-aligned country, all of that. Most of its military equipment and everything was coming in trade with the Soviet Union, and we were trying to break through in technology, so some of the first deals for American military aircraft were made during that time. Caspar Weinberger came to the country, the first visit of a U.S. defense secretary. I was responsible for managing his press activity in the country and so forth. So, there was a lot going on that really made you feel like you were doing something significant and substantial in that era.

Q: Any recollections from the Weinberger visit that stand out?

ROSE: All night vigils in the hotel and things like that. But it was significant and the press statements that came out of that and what we were able to do with building a climate of public opinion that was accepting. I mean, most Indians were pretty happy with this. Culturally and politically, they were more aligned with us than they were with the Soviet Union. And we of course played that card to the hilt that we were the two largest democracies in the world.

Q: Yeah, now there's some alteration in the current India which has been very nasty to Muslim populations, questioning whether they are really a democracy. I remember from the Cold War period, the Soviets would plant a story in a newspaper in New Delhi—I don't know which one—and this was how disinformation—active measures–it was often Pakistan, China, USSR, India, right? And so, I suppose they were paying these newspapers. Did you see this?

ROSE: Oh yeah. That was one of our major efforts to try to counter the Soviet disinformation efforts. Because it would be picked up and legitimized by some small Hindi language paper or whatever, and then the Soviets would spread that around as a story sourced to India rather than their agencies.

Q: It went viral, so to speak. I was always curious about this, was it a single paper or was it a variety of papers?

ROSE: No, they put heavy resources into that country. They even went out into the provinces and found people that they could pay to plant stories. And so, there was just an awful lot of that. One of the things that I did—well, this actually came a little bit later—but Jim had me prepare a speech for the ambassador that basically just focused almost entirely on why U.S. and Indian interests coincided more and why we were not trying to destabilize their country. We had challenges around the country because there were some things going on. One of them that was troublesome was that some of the evangelistic missionaries from the U.S. and a couple of other countries had worked with people up in the northeast of India where they were somewhat ethnically different and kind of poor, and basically these evangelists tried to persuade the people that it was not in their interest to support a pagan government that suppressed them, and so there was this whole movement in the northeast of an insurrection that was kind of abetted at least ideologically by these evangelists. And eventually when the Hindu nationalist government came to power, they kicked out all the foreign missionaries.

Q: Were the evangelists largely American or were they everything?

ROSE: It was a mix.

Q: Do you think they were sincere in what they were doing or were they being paid?

ROSE: Well, I think, you know, imagine yourself as a fundamentalist Christian evangelist and being plopped down in a country where you see idols and sacrifices and all the superstitions that they would say were contrary to biblical teachings.

Q: Yeah, you said pagan, I was thinking secular, but there were actual traditional symbols of others—like Hinduism. This played into the hands of the Soviets.

ROSE: Right. Yeah. They tried to convince Indians that we were fomenting insurrections in the country.

Q: So, when you say insurrection, were there violent incidents?

ROSE: Oh yeah, up in Nagaland up on the Burmese border there was actually a movement that was fighting the Indian armed forces. I mean, it was controllable, but they were trying to secede from India.

Q: Crazy. Okay, so the Soviets loved this.

ROSE: Well, the other part of that was these missionaries were appealing to the untouchable caste. They were able to make a lot of converts because when you became a Christian in India you adopted a Christian name, and it hid your caste. And even though the government had programs to try to elevate the untouchables, the Dalits, Harijans or—what did Gandhi call them, the children of God?—anyway, the scheduled castes, as they were known. A lot of them saw it as a way to break free of that.

Q: So, this tended to be in the outlying districts. Was it an issue in the large cities also?

ROSE: Not really, it was mainly concentrated in the northeast, the most remote part of the country, and along the Burmese border where a lot of the people were ethnically more Burmese than north Indiana. So anyway, all of those were things that were going on. We were there in the aftermath of the Golden Temple incident where—

Q: Yeah, the Sikh temple.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: It was attacked, right?

ROSE: Yes. And that eventually led to the assassination of the prime minister, Indira Gandhi. So, we were there for that.

Q: That is a story in itself, which we should get to next time. That's a huge story. I didn't realize the connection between the Golden Temple destruction. Those are Sikhs who are not Hindus and considered themselves an oppressed minority. Do we know who assassinated Indira Gandhi? Was it Sikhs?

ROSE: Yes, it was a Sikh bodyguard. And the aftermath of that was that the Hindu nationalists went out and raided all the Sikh taxi stands and burned them out and killed people in retribution. So, it was a horrible scene, and we had to hide Sikh members of our USIS staff in embassy homes for a while to keep them safe.

Q: So, in your staff you had a large number? Sikhs were a minority.

ROSE: Yeah, but they were a significant enough minority that they were well-represented in our staff and were well-loved by the other FSNs.

Q: This is a big historic moment. We should give it proper attention in the next talk, I think. Oh my, I'm supposed to go to the next phase in my…

ROSE: That's fine.

Q: An anatomical thing we don't talk about. Okay, so this is—

ROSE: Well, we probably stopped halfway through my tour, essentially, and I've now transitioned to DPAO and that's where these things are starting to take place, so we can finish out what takes place during that remaining time and the remaining two years in India and go on from there.

Q: That does make sense. So, this is Doug Rose talking to Dan Whitman. It's May 25, 2023, and that was our seventh conversation.

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Okay, this is Doug Rose talking to Dan Whitman. Today it is June 2, 2023, and Doug, this is our eighth discussion. When we stopped last time, we had divided the Delhi assignment, the first half in your PDO position and then—I would call it a miracle—suddenly you became the deputy PAO, which is about five steps up. Can we get you into that position? That's a big step, I think.

ROSE: Yes, and it was also a major change of focus because in the program management side I had been mostly working with what I would call slow media. Issues that were not breaking issues or anything like that. But with the move to DPAO, because of the way the post was structured we did not have a country IO as such.

Q: Why not?

ROSE: Because Delhi was considered one of the branches, so we had a branch IO.

Q: The capital city is a branch?

ROSE: Just organizationally, obviously. But in a sense, there were four IOs in the country, Delhi, Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, who were sort of managing press relations.

Q: For the reader and the transcriber, an IO is an information officer or a press secretary.

ROSE: Yes, thank you. So, what this did is that we had an amazing information assistant—a local one, Tony Jesudasen was his name—who had excellent contacts with the English language press, which was national. The other IOs worked primarily with the vernacular press. So, I ended up doing quite a few things that would normally be done by an IO, and I think I may have mentioned one of two of those. When Caspar Weinberger came to Delhi for the first visit of a U.S. secretary of defense, I was involved with his press conference and working with that.

Q: This was the first Secdef who visited India?

ROSE: Yes. Because as a non-aligned country but really not very neutral, the defense relationship had been primarily with the Soviet Union. And they were just beginning to decide that maybe that wasn't the way they wanted to go in the 1980s.

Q: An opportunity for us, I guess.

ROSE: Yeah. There was an opening with some fighter jet agreements and some things that were coming into play there. Part of it was that this was also the period when the Soviets had not learned from the British that Afghanistan cannot be conquered or governed.

Q: It's a graveyard of empires, yes.

ROSE: Yes. And we were later to learn that lesson. But anyway, there were a lot of things going on that were changing the whole dynamics of the region. Because India had issues with China, they saw us as a possible support as a fellow democracy to try to mediate that situation and so forth. So, really the whole outlook—and the population really was more western-oriented anyway. They were more oriented towards the United States than the Soviet Union, but officially the government had been non-aligned but kind of leaning toward the Soviet Union. So anyway, there was all of this interplay, and the Indians were trying to figure out where we were going, who we were. One of the things that we did was to negotiate a major cultural agreement with India, and while that would be more on the cultural side, I ended up being one of the principal negotiators on our side in working out a bilateral agreement on cultural exchange.

Q: That's very important. That's big.

ROSE: Yeah, it was a big step in building a stronger relationship with the country. And at this time, of course, technology was becoming a major attraction to India as well, and once again they could see that they needed to work with us, with companies in the United States. So, the commercial relationship, the investment relationship, all of this was expanding. And so, it was an exciting time to be there and to see this opening.

Q: I know it's here somewhere; this would have been early 80s? Like '82 or something like that?

ROSE: Right.

Q: Okay. Yeah, very exciting. And the Soviets made the mistake exactly as we did twenty years later. And so, now the largest population country in the world—wasn't quite the case back then—but it suddenly tipped in our favor, and there you were in a very big position.

ROSE: Well, there were still points of difficulty and challenge between us and one of those almost got me in serious trouble.

Q: Let's have it.

ROSE: The information assistant who I mentioned, Tony, set me up periodically—about monthly—with backgrounders for the English language press.

Q: Very dangerous.

ROSE: Representatives of the Times of India, The Indian Express, and other major national English language newspapers. It was usually the editors who would show up to these, not reporters, and I would have as many as a dozen to fifteen representatives from these media outlets, just trying to help them see through Soviet disinformation and give them a clearer picture of what the common interests were between India and the United States and why we were very interested in the opening that seemed to be going on. But at that time, of course, their major rival was Pakistan, and we were working with Pakistan on an agreement to give them airborne early warning airplanes, which could become a force multiplier for their fighter jets, which we had also given them. And so, the Indians were not at all happy with that, and our little agreement about fighter jets for India or parts or something like that was not comparable in their minds. But they kept referring to them as AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System).

Q: Which they were, right?

ROSE: Which they were not.

Q: The Indians referred to…

ROSE: They knew there was an agreement in the works with Pakistan. And they were just beating us up all the time about giving AWACS to Pakistan. And so, in this backgrounder I pointed out to them that they needed to look very carefully at what was being announced by the Department of Defense and our embassy and that they needed to pay close attention to the letters. Now, all of this was on background. And of course, what we were actually negotiating with Pakistan to give them was AEWs (Airborne Early Warning) not AWACS. And there's a significant difference because with airborne early warning aircraft, true, it would enhance Pakistan's defensive capabilities, but it would not give them control capabilities over a squadron of fighters that could be used to attack India. So, by using AWACS, they were assuming—and the public was assuming—that they were getting control as well as early warning. And that was a significant enough difference that I felt it was important to have that background. Well, the next day the Indian Express had a front page piece, Pakistan not to get AWACS. Which is true, but I hunkered down and waited for a call from Ambassador Hinton out of Pakistan to say, who put that out? Because what it looked like is we had decided not to go through with the agreement.

Q: Oh my gosh. At this date and time in life this is funny. They got it right but our ambassador in Islamabad didn't like it.

ROSE: Well, at least I feared that it would come to his attention, and he would come down on us very hard because he was not a man to take things lightly. I knew something of his personality and capabilities.

Q: You mean, it sounded as if we had a deal and we negated it?

ROSE: Well, that's the way it kind of played out in the way that the story was presented. And of course, the deal did go through, and they got the small Grumman early warning aircraft which our Navy used at the time, but they did not get the big Boeing 707s with the big radar disk on top.

Q: So, in fact, no deal or policy had changed, it was just the spin.

ROSE: It was just the spin, exactly. So anyway, fortunately Ambassador Hinton had other things to worry about that day or something and never raised the issue and I kept my job.

Q: Well, were you the only one in Delhi who thought this would be a problem in Islamabad? Was this your paranoia?

ROSE: No, I certainly went and talked it over with the PAO. And well, actually from our embassy's point of view it was a positive story. But they were probably worried about the same thing that I was, but fortunately it never materialized.

Q: You mentioned Hinton, I don't know who was the ambassador in Delhi?

ROSE: We had John Gunther Dean.

Q: Oh my gosh. Okay.

ROSE: Yeah. He had replaced Harry Barnes. Very different personalities, very different ways to work with them.

Q: So, Dean was not concerned, but you were.

ROSE: Yeah, essentially.

Q: I think we'll give you a pass Doug.

ROSE: Because it didn't blow up, we didn't have to deal with any flak from it. So, all that passed, and it turned out to be a very satisfying assignment, good opportunities. Certainly, enhanced my credentials as a full Foreign Service officer since I had worked mostly with cultural affairs previously, so it was definitely a broadening of my opportunities and experience and so forth. Then toward the end of my assignment in the four years something else happened that was quite the development. Our very talented and well-regarded and highly valued PAO, Jim McGinley, was suddenly needed back in Washington.

Q: Did you become acting?

ROSE: No one was in the pipeline for PAO until summer.

Q: You were like the chargé.

ROSE: So, I became acting PAO for the remainder of my tour.

Q: Wow. It's like a miracle. That's quite dramatic.

ROSE: Yes. So, it was about a three to four month period. I can't remember how long it was. It wasn't a year or anything.

Q: Oh, three or four months as an acting PAO can be an eternity.

ROSE: Yeah. And before he left, Jim warned me that Ambassador John Gunther Dean had been pressing him repeatedly to give him copies of a publication that we put out on U.S.-Indian relations. We published a magazine, I got to write the editorials for it during my time there and I wrote a speech for the ambassador on the subject, but we had also published a beautiful book—a presentation book—on U.S.-India relations, highlighting all of the things that we had in common as the world's two largest democracies and reviewing our growing commercial relationship and other things.

Q: So, did this come from the P bureau?

ROSE: No, it was actually an in-country initiative, and we published it in India. In fact, we published a lot of the books that were used worldwide in India because of the cheap publications and English language capabilities in that country.

Q: Okay, so there was Barcelona, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Paris, Delhi, and there was one in the Philippines or something like that. So, there were five or six. They're gone now, which was just really stupid. So, you were running one of the five publishing programs in the world.

ROSE: In terms of personnel, because we had loads of FSNs, foreign service nationals, it was the largest post in the world at the time, I believe, in terms of number of employees.

Q: Isn't this funny, you were advised don't take Delhi because it won't be promotion material and boom. This is remarkable. It's a lovely story.

ROSE: So anyway, the book issue, sure enough it probably wasn't three days after Jim left when the ambassador approached me about getting a number of copies of this wonderful book, we had published for him to distribute to contacts, guess where.

Q: I guess in Delhi?

ROSE: Not in India, but in the United States.

Q: No. is that legal?

ROSE: No. And so, I told him the same thing that Jim McGinley did, that will get us both in legal hot water. Congress has prohibited USIS materials from being distributed to anyone in the United States and so fortunately he did not press it too much after that.

Q: This is remarkable. This would have been for personal glorification?

ROSE: Well, he just thought it was such a wonderful publication that he thought some of his folks in important places back in the U.S. should be aware of it.

Q: Did he think he was the author?

ROSE: I don't know. I had written some speeches for him that he liked for the American Chamber of Commerce in India and other places like that. I had a good relationship with him.

Q: He was very famous. He was a political appointee, right?

ROSE: No, he was actually career. He had been ambassador in at least two other places. Cambodia.

Q: Lebanon?

ROSE: Yeah, I think so. Very interesting personality. And you know, one of the things that I found very revealing on one occasion, before I became the acting PAO, when I was deputy, I went with one of my colleagues to a reception at his place. I think it might have actually been a film showing. Merchant and Ivory produced that wonderful series of Remains of the Day, A Room With A View, and Howards End, and because Ismail Merchant was from India, they had a special sort of preview that the ambassador got to host at his residence. So, it may have been that I don't remember exactly the occasion. But after everybody went home and the cigars and brandy were over and everything, he invited us into his study, myself and one other USIS officer, and we wondered what was coming and I thought the book was going to be raised again. But really there was no agenda. He just wanted to visit and relax and have a conversation. And it suddenly hit me after that, when you are the ambassador, you're always Mr. Ambassador.

Q: And you have no friends.

ROSE: Exactly. And he was just looking for some relaxing conversation with somebody who could be friendly rather than one of his underlings who was trying to respond to him as Mr. Ambassador. And I just thought, you know, that was a revelation about the office

of president and ambassador and these positions where you are at the top and everyone else is under you and looking for direction rather than friendship.

Q: And escaping condemnation. So, was this a rare instance of the ambassador as a human being?

ROSE: Yeah, it was just this one occasion, and we had a very pleasant conversation and everything and then we went home. And I tried to figure out, what was that all about? And it finally dawned on me that really, I'm quite sure that's exactly what it was about. He was just tired of working all day and not having any relaxing conversations.

Q: But when he called you into the study it seemed like a command performance, is that it? Was that the only time that he appeared to be human?

ROSE: He respected our work, he relied on us, on USIS, he saw our place and understood it very well in the embassy and all of that, so we had good relations throughout. I would attend his country team meetings and all of that and he would look to us for advice and counsel on the things that mattered on our side, so I very much felt that we had a place with the political officer and the economic officer, that we were right up there with them in terms of how we were regarded as members of his team.

Q: Did the country team include the deputy PAO?

ROSE: No, it did not.

Q: Only when you were acting.

ROSE: Only when I was acting, yes.

Q: Which occasionally happened before that, I suppose.

ROSE: Yes, there were times when the PAO was traveling or not available and I would attend for him..

Q: Okay, so three or four months of acting. From the previous position you're up like five levels now. This is amazing.

ROSE: It really is. And so, I believe—I can't remember the timing exactly—but I believe by the time I left India I had been promoted.

Q: Okay. To what? OC (Counselor)?

ROSE: Yes. OC.

Q: Okay. I had a brilliant comment, it's gone. Oh yeah, so the title of this story would be, he did not mess up.

ROSE: Yeah, I guess.

Q: I always look for a title. Well, I mean congratulations. A bit late to be saying that but this is remarkable. And it also speaks to the trust that the PAO had in you, that the USIA people in Washington had in you. You had developed trust within the system, and I think well-deserved.

ROSE: Well, thank you.

Q: And they give a little bit of leeway, but they knew they had a solid person. They would not have done this with another person, I think. So, you left Delhi as an OC. Let's properly fill in what should be filled in. During those last two years there was the Secdef visit, there was the issue of the books—

ROSE: Indira Gandhi's assassination.

Q: Oh my gosh.

ROSE: The secretary of state for her funeral.

Q: Oh, yes, well where were you that day? I'm sure you remember.

ROSE: Yeah. That was fairly early in my assignment to New Delhi, so I remember the turmoil and the mayhem that took place, and I think I mentioned once before that we had to hide our Sikh employees and so forth. But anyway, just by reiteration of the major events that took place there, the assassination.

Q: Was it the Sikhs who did the assassination?

ROSE: Yes, in retribution for the Golden Temple operation.

Q: Yes, I remember the Golden Temple invasion or whatever.

ROSE: Yeah. So, anyway, all of that was taking place. But it was a fascinating time to be in India and it's a fascinating country. We got to do some wonderful travel, both personal and official. The Taj Mahal, of course.

Q: The Whole world, the north and the south and the heat and the mountains. How many languages? Fifteen or twenty?

ROSE: Official languages, yeah, somewhere in the twenties I think and dialects up in the two hundreds.

Q: And of course, you were conversant in half of them, right? Did you ever make it to Sri Lanka? Was that part of your world or not?

ROSE: Not in my assignment to India. We did make it to Nepal. I took R&R (Rest and Recuperation) or a vacation there and the PAO was kind enough to let me stay in his house while he was away. So, we had a comfortable place to stay.

Q: Oh, there was a PAO in Kathmandu? Fantastic.

ROSE: So, anyway, we had a very pleasant visit there and got to see a lot.

Q: So, Nepal. It sounds to me like the most exotic place on earth.

ROSE: It is an amazing place and I got to visit it again in a different capacity after retirement, but we can talk about that another time.

Q: So, I guess you had a certain positive impression if you returned.

ROSE: Yeah, it was definitely a fascinating place.

Q: What can we say about it? High altitude. Were you affected? Well, you had been in high altitude in Latin America.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: I think of them as very soft, nice people who are not very emotive, I guess. What are they like in Nepal?

ROSE: Well, oddly enough they come across that way, but the Nepali Gurkhas are considered to be some of the most fierce and reliable warriors on the earth. And there was enough political turmoil in that country to make it kind of a difficult place politically, but very welcoming and pleasant to visit as a tourist, which is how I was there. I mean, sure, I stopped by the embassy and called on a few people.

Q: It's not a huge country, did you get outside Kathmandu?

ROSE: We did go to Pokhara. It's one of the most amazing views in the world because you can't see Mount Everest from there, but you can see Fishtail, Dhaulagiri, and Annapurna II. And you're looking up at them from an elevation which is subtropical, 3,000 feet. There is no other place in the world that I know where you can look up and see the top of a 22,000 foot mountain from 3,000 feet. So, you're looking at this thing that just goes up and up forever.

Q: It sounds scary to me, seeing this big thing.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Tell me about Sherpas. There are stories in the paper about Sherpas because I guess those days are drawing to a close. The days of people wanting to go up there. And Sherpas are now kind of discarded, right?

ROSE: Well, I don't know. I haven't really stayed on top of that issue. I do know that a couple of them recently—within the last couple of months—set a new record for the number of ascents to the summit of Mount Everest.

Q: Do we know, were they Sherpas because Europeans hired them and encouraged them and paid them or were they always climbing these mountains?

ROSE: I think it was because they were hired.

Q: Well maybe some of them climbed up there for the first time because they were employed to do so.

ROSE: Yes. I mean, Edmund Hillary is credited with being the first—

Q: Because it's there.

ROSE: —the first one to the top and he had Sherpas with him.

Q: This would have been in the 50s, I think?

ROSE: Yeah, I think sometime around there.

Q: So, were there still crazy Europeans and Americans going up there when you were there?

ROSE: Oh yeah, and still are. They limit the number of people who they allow to go up there. They have to book it in advance and all that. So, yeah, it's still very much an attraction.

Q: 3,000 to 22,000. Wow.

ROSE: It's amazing. And Dhaulagiri is over 20,000, Fishtail is like seventeen or 18,000 but it's just such an interesting shape, and then Annapurna II is the tallest of them, I think it's like 22,000 feet or something.

Q: So, Everest is behind all of that.

ROSE: Yeah, you can't see it. I don't know the geography quite well enough to know what the lowest point that you would be able to see the summit of Everest from is, but I'm quite sure it's not 3,000 feet.

Q: Wow, so you spent like a week or something like that?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: That's fascinating. And there it is, right at the border and why not. What about southern India which is so different, the spicing of food and all that.

ROSE: Yes, I very much enjoyed the opportunity to go to several of the places. I think I may have mentioned that we spent another three years in India in retirement.

Q: Really? No, I forgot that.

ROSE: I may not have even mentioned it.

Q: Well, then you clearly love the place.

ROSE: We spent from 1998 – 2001 in New Delhi once again in a very different capacity as the founding directors of Latter Day Saint Charities.

Q: Yes, it's in your bio.

ROSE: Yes. And Nepal was also within our responsibility there, so we were back to Nepal.

Q: Fantastic. This is a wonderful bridge between some fascinating work for your country merged with your personal religious beliefs. This is amazing. It's fantastic. And so, if I say between the mission and your fondness of India, was it in equal amounts that you decided? Did you know that you were going to spend that long when you went there in retirement?

ROSE: I didn't know at the time I retired, obviously.

Q: Was your commitment for a three year period?

ROSE: Yes, when we were contacted—they were looking for someone with India experience.

Q: That would be you.

ROSE: And one of my friends from Caracas knew that we had gone to India, and he was the deputy or associate general counsel for our church at the time that they needed this person in India and so he called me and said, would you mind sending me a resume without asking me what for? So, we knew something was in the works but did not know what, and I thought, well, the church must have a public relations problem somewhere in the world and want someone to consult on it. And my wife said, well I just hope they don't want us to move to Salt Lake.

Q: The capital, so to speak.

ROSE: Yeah. So, a couple months later when we got the call asking if we would be willing to go—at our own expense of course. They would pay our air fare. The irony of all of that was, if the Rockefeller Foundation or the Ford Foundation or one of the other NGOs had offered me $110,000 to go back to India I would have said no, I'm happy in Boise.

Q: Wait, you went back with only an air ticket, and you covered the expense of everything else?

ROSE: Yeah, that was where I really learned to appreciate educational allowances. Because we had a grandson that we were raising, and he needed to go to the American Embassy School in New Delhi at $12,000 a year.

Q: Oh my gosh. This is really remarkable. And we've got to spend at least a conversation on that. Chronologically that comes later.

ROSE: So, that's just a little teaser, I guess, for what comes in retirement. But it's so related to the time in India and Nepal, but in reality there's a little bit—and again, it was as a country director for Latter Day Saint Charities, so I traveled to those cities in both India and Nepal multiple times, both in my embassy or USIS assignment and in my Latter Day Saint Charities director assignment, so some of it gets confused and I don't remember which experience goes with which one.

Q: I think you can say there aren't many Americans who know that country better than you do.

ROSE: Well, it was a total of seven years that we lived there.

Q: This is remarkable. And very compelling and very impressive.

ROSE: Thank you.

Q: Let's make sure that we give this the full time that it needs to work that out. Should we get to figuring out what happens to you after in the Foreign Service?

ROSE: Sure, I think there's an opportunity to take a few minutes to talk about my next assignment, which was on return to Washington. I had been now three years in Venezuela and four years in India, so seven years abroad and it was time for another Washington assignment. And the policy officer position in AR (American Republics), Latin America and the Caribbean was open and so that's where I landed. I had been away from Latin America for a while but was able to go there and started another research and writing job.

Q: And we know what happened later, but we'll keep that in hiding for a moment. What are the names of people who stood out from AR at that point? We're still in USIA where the country bureaus, the geographic bureaus, were really where the weight and prestige were.

ROSE: Yeah, I think that's a fairly accurate statement and I was blessed to work with a great guy as my supervisor, Carl Howard, who was one of the nicest guys I ever ran across.

Q: He was the director of AR?

ROSE: No, he was the deputy, so I worked with the deputy director. Stan Zuckerman was the area director.

Q: Yes, the man who later figured out how to keep USIA financially solvent, I think.

ROSE: He was a brilliant guy, and I learned an awful lot from him. His capacity for strategic thinking was very powerful, so I really felt privileged to work for him.

Q: We're not quite into that assignment yet, but how was the transition from more than three years in Latin America total—Foreign Service and church service—and then four years in India. Was it still the Latin America that you remembered from before?

ROSE: Well, I had been in Venezuela four years earlier and of course had had assignments in Brazil and Peru, so South America was familiar territory. What was not was Mexico and Central America. So, I had to do some quick study to try to figure out what our interests were. I mean, obviously I was well aware of Nicaragua and the Sandinistas.

Q: We're now in the middle of that war, right?

ROSE: Yeah. And in fact, a lot of what I was focused on in my policy officer job was what was going on there, and I think even as policy officer I got to travel to–

Q: I should hope so. This was 1985? Something like that.

ROSE: Yeah. '85 and '86.

Q: Yes. That's when I entered USIA and before I knew it–as a junior officer, remember they used to take skeptical FSOs (Foreign Service Officer) in Europe and send them to Central America so they could–. Somebody dropped out and I suddenly took the place of somebody. I was the junior person, all these very important PAOs from Europe plus me. It was very interesting. We spent one day in each Central American country. Unforgettable. And I don't know, maybe you even arranged some of those things. I think the idea was that the agency believed that PAOs not familiar with Latin America might be inclined to disagree with American policy. I think. I think that's why they spent the money to take

them there and they were shown the terrible things of the butterfly bombs and all. It was terrible. I think both sides were pretty bad actually. So, you were involved.

ROSE: Yeah, there was that. There was the military activity in Honduras that we were using as a support mechanism and along with all of that there was Grenada.

Q: Oh yeah. That was '83. Did that come as a surprise? I was actually a junior in EUR (Bureau of European Affairs) at that time and I thought Grenada? What? Was AR taken by surprise by that move?

ROSE: Well, we could see it building because of course the big issue was the runway that the Cubans were building that would accept Soviet aircraft, and as I recall that was the issue and we did not want a launching pad to South America in the Caribbean.

Q: It's funny because again, I was an embryonic policy person in EUR. I don't remember that. I remember something about the medical school being infiltrated.

ROSE: Right. There was that.

Q: But that sounded like an excuse, frankly.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: You know, that's really interesting and that deserves some time on its own, I think. From the point that you learned about this to the point that you were the policy officer you had to develop talking points and their rationale and explaining this through what, the wireless file?

ROSE: Yeah, we would feed first policy guidance into VOA, which could ignore it if it wanted to, but in its editorials it paid attention, I think. Of course, one of the other interesting issues that we were dealing with at that time was Radio Martí.

Q: Wow. The blimp.

ROSE: The blimp, exactly.

Q: I don't know anybody who took Radio Martí seriously. Maybe they should have, I don't know.

ROSE: It was–

Q: I won't even say this as a question, I'll just say that senior people I've known in AR—all of them—have said to me that our policy towards Cuba was a failure and we should have changed it at an earlier point. I'm not really asking for a response, I'm just saying.

ROSE: I certainly couldn't find a whole lot of data to counter that.

Q: Well-spoken sir. We could say this is on background. Radio Martí. And we know it existed because of the Cuban lobbying in Miami and this was kind of an open secret. I don't think any country in the world could make sense of the Grenada invasion. I mean, you just mentioned there was a valid reason, but I think most countries—this was Reagan—were very puzzled by Grenada. Many people had never heard of Grenada. So, it could have been a potential mini Cuba, I suppose. And Reagan was a cold warrior. He got the wall down. He did really play a positive role, I think, in that part of the Cold War. We should talk about that too, how much credit he gets and how much credit Bush Sr. gets for actually getting to 1989. But that's a bit outside of your bailiwick, but it's very interesting to me. People credit Reagan, but I think maybe it was Bush. Anyway, both of them together. Well, Doug, I think we need another conversation on your tour in AR because this is not just a placeholder, this is a really dramatic moment in history. A very conflicted moment. Lots of challenges. You know, it was painful for everybody to see, regardless of who was good or who was bad. There were a lot of people getting hurt. And this affected all of us, I think.

ROSE: Yeah, it was a challenging time because on top of all that, of course, there was the drug issue. I'm trying to remember when we took out Noriega.

Q: I think it was '87 or '88, something like that.

ROSE: Because I wrote the public affairs strategy for that operation. I don't know if anybody ever paid any attention to that.

Q: Again, it was remarkable. And he said, I used to work for you. Just like Saddam Hussein, I used to work for you, how can you be doing this? I guess personal loyalty is not a big element in strategy. Okay. And drugs you mentioned in a period where we still thought it might be possible to control that situation. We failed, but at that time our policy and Nancy Reagan believed we really must give every effort. And that's perfectly understandable, I think.

ROSE: Yeah. So, those were big issues with Peru and Colombia and even Panama and so forth and all the drug shipments and interdiction and so forth. And then we had, of course, the FARC in Colombia making life difficult there, not for us but for their government.

Q: The narcos, right?

ROSE: Well, it was the insurrection.

Q: Oh, the FARC, yeah. Which seemed at the time that it would go on forever. There was a semi-solution later. Well, that's very challenging. And we must remember now that we've kind of forgotten Latin America, it was the center of our world at the time you were in that office.

ROSE: Yeah, we were quite concerned about the way things were going, especially with Nicaragua and El Salvador and all that going on.

Q: So, you did policy. I can think of no—well, I can think of stressful jobs, but this must have been very demanding.

ROSE: In some ways because it was essentially a thinking job it was something that I really enjoyed.

Q: That's your thing.

ROSE: I enjoyed writing.

Q: Thinking and writing and editing. Yeah, there you go.

ROSE: And people seemed to like what they were seeing from me and placed some value on it, so I really enjoyed that job, I was perfectly happy in it. It was satisfying. And it was one that I could do with a carpool. You know, I got to go to the office in the morning at a reasonable hour and be on the shuttle home at a reasonable hour. Or on the Metro, whichever.

Q: You were in Virginia?

ROSE: Yes, McLean.

Q: McLean, okay. And rush hour in those days, that was pretty difficult. Now post-covid it's not quite as bad. I'm sure there's more for us to go over in that very crucial job. Every job you've had is crucial in ascending order, I think. I mean, you got the opportunities, you actually met the challenges all the way through. We should actually say that.

ROSE: Well, thank you. And again, it was part of that period, what I found to be a very satisfying and fulfilling career. I'm so grateful for the opportunity I had to be a part of what I was involved in over the course of my entire career.

Q: And I can say they benefited from you as much as you did from them. This is great. Well, let's say it is June 2. This would conclude our—I'll figure it out, seventh or eighth conversation—with Douglas Rose and Dan Whitman, and we'll stop the recording, and we'll talk about what comes next.

Interview nine:
We're going to take a running approach here. We were talking about your assignment in DC, suddenly crazy things had happened in your previous assignment and there were sudden vacancies and opportunities. You took them and you did not follow your mentor's advice because he thought this would not be a job leading to promotion, and yet the exact

opposite happened. So, you became a policy officer in the Bureau of—AR is American Republics, right?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Now WHA. Let's see, Carl Howard was the deputy. Oh, you reported to the deputy, I think.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: And you mentioned Stan Zuckerman as the AR director, you found him brilliant, a strategic thinker. And this craziness—to me—the invasion of Grenada in 1985 [1983] and I do remember that. I was down the hall from you at the time. I was in EUR at—what was his name?—the professional Polish person from Chicago. Kordek, John Kordek. And I was in his office and suddenly there was an invasion of Grenada, I thought, Grenada, what's that?

ROSE: I had lunch last Friday with Guy Farmer, who apparently was PAO there at the time.

Q: Why does that sound so familiar? Guy Farmer. Oh, in Grenada. I see. Oh my gosh. So, that completes a circle. I mean, when this happened did you have any inkling of it? Did you even know what Grenada was?

ROSE: No.

Q: And you were the policy officer.

ROSE: And suddenly—well, I mean we knew that there were bad things going on there from our interests, that the Cubans were building this long runway that would accommodate Soviet aircraft.

Q: Just a coincidence, I guess. But the actual invasion was not known to USIA in advance?

ROSE: I don't think so.

Q: And it coincided, if I remember, with the creation of World Net, and I think the first World Net, the topic was Grenada.

ROSE: Interesting. That I didn't remember.

Q: Well, it comes at around the same time. So, you had Charles Wick down the hallway. I'm laughing because what a character. Let's start with, do you have any recollection of Charles Wick? What a strange fellow he was. I mean, you didn't often meet him, but he was up there on the same floor as you.

ROSE: Yeah. I mean, I saw him on occasion.. Obviously, he came with baggage that kind of caused people to be dismissive of him.

Q: Meaning?

ROSE: His production of Snow White and the Three Stooges.

Q: Bedtime for Bonzo

ROSE: Yeah, Bedtime for Bonzo.

Q: This didn't seem like a qualification. But his real qualification was being a personal friend of Ronald Reagan, right? I mean, I always joke, his real name—he was from Cleveland—and his name was Zwick, and he changed it to Charles Z. Wick. And I'm from Cleveland, and if I did the same, I would be Dan W. Hitman.

ROSE: I love that.

Q: So, I decided not to do that.

ROSE: Perfect.

Q: Okay, Wick. The reader may not be familiar with Wick, he's long gone, but he was a very difficult person, a very dictatorial person, but he increased the budget very dramatically of his agency on the basis of his friendship with the president. How do you remember all of that?

ROSE: Well, I think gradually the World Net thing and the new technology approaches and so forth caused some of us to begin grudgingly to give him credit for some innovative thinking that might have—

Q: I seize that word grudgingly. He was so unpleasant; he was so nasty. He was such a racist, among other things. Remember the Z grams?

ROSE: I'd forgotten about those.

Q: Yeah. I mean, I think generally people disliked him very much, but they appreciated the expansion of the system. He did it with a very kind of meanspirited approach. But he did expand the whole–and World Net, before the internet became easy to use, it really was the cutting edge. It was very expensive because you had to rent satellite time.

ROSE: Right, exactly.

Q: Were you involved in setting up World Net? You probably were as policy officer.

ROSE: Not on the delivery end, of course, but in guiding what issues would be dealt with and those kinds of things, yeah, there were opportunities.

Q: And you were in the hot seat. AR, the Western Hemisphere, was the region most dramatically affected by the wars in Central America, by the invasion of Grenada. It must have been a pretty swift-moving operation with lots of demands.

ROSE: There were quite a few things going on at the time, a couple of them that I remember most significantly. I'm not sure, I'm trying to remember when the timing was of Noriega's removal from Panama.

Q: Right, that was slightly later, '86 or '87, I think.

ROSE: Yeah, well I'm trying to remember. I returned from India and took that policy job, and it would have been—let's see, I was five years in Washington and working backward from '93 would be '88.

Q: Yes, it could be that late, I guess.

ROSE: And so, one of the things that I remember specifically contributing to was preparing a kind of guidance document that functioned sort of as a policy document for a public affairs strategy for dealing with Noriega's removal.

Q: Not an enviable thing. I mean, he said, but I was your employee, which I guess was true. And it really didn't look good.

ROSE: But at least we can all feel good about it after. Hemmingway described something moral as something you feel good after. Not while you're engaging in it.

Q: And someone else described conscience as the sense that somebody is looking. Well, okay, so how consonant was your own thinking with the policy briefings that you were required to produce. Were you comfortable with the conclusions that the U.S. government had made and now required some explanation? It should go the other way around.

ROSE: Yeah. I think we all recognize that we're hired to do a job, and so I didn't let my personal feelings about anything stray too far from the line that I was expected to try to produce because I had to be able to provide a rational or a reasonable explanation for what we were up to, and so other than Iran-Contra and some things like that, you know, the basics of what we were trying to do of trying to keep Cuba from expanding its influence in the hemisphere, trying to deal with the drug problems. You know, even though we have long since learned that cutting off the supply is probably not an effective way to try to approach that problem, but it was what we were doing at the time, and it was the best we knew how.

Q: Interdiction. I sometimes tell students, articulating a point of view that's not exactly your own is not hypocrisy. It's giving an idea a chance because you may be right, you may be wrong, you may have your own changes in your own beliefs and opinions.

ROSE: That's a good way to look at it.

Q: And then sometimes, you just said, there was a large agenda, which was the danger of having a Soviet-supplied Cuba so close to this country after the missile crisis. This was a real existential danger. President Biden apparently at a recent bilateral with somebody, he was being criticized for America being imperfect, and he said, in my next life I would like to be working in a country that has never done anything wrong. And the interlocutor—I think it was maybe the Chinese foreign minister—he laughed. He saw the humor in that. Of course, there's something wrong always and we work with it. Anyway. Forgive me, that's more me than you.

ROSE: The other thing that I did feel very positive about was that we were seeing at least some movement toward more stable—well, not stable—but at least experimentation with democratic norms and institutions in Latin America. That was the trend at the time. We go back and forth in Latin America, of course, and things aren't looking really great right now.

Q: Anywhere.

ROSE: Authoritarian approaches are—

Q: No, and I remember Freedom House and Larry Diamond in the mid 80s and through the 90s feeling very positive, very optimistic.

ROSE: Yes, it was.

Q: And now it's a disaster. But in the late 80s and 90s they were counting the number of countries who had moved toward democracy, and that number was increasing.

ROSE: Exactly. And that was an encouraging thing. And we found that we could work with those governments on things like drug interdiction and so forth. And it wasn't all successful, but at least we had working relationships with them and were seeing things moving in a positive direction there.

Q: My own colleagues—I mean I was in Haiti, but I never really understood the Western Hemisphere—colleagues who did have told me that they found the Cuba policy of the boycott and the blockade and whatever, they found that just pragmatically it never really worked. Did you have an opinion one way or another at that time of the U.S.-Cuba policy? So controversial.

ROSE: Well, I think the thing that all of us were just so troubled by, the policy was being made in Miami, not in Washington.

Q: By the Cuban exiles, right?

ROSE: Exactly.

Q: Who had leverage over the Florida politics, right?

ROSE: Right.

Q: And they were all conservative. This is no longer the case in Miami. That's a very astute point.

ROSE: So, we had Radio Martí.

Q: Crazy right. And the blimp.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: We knew it was being jammed.

ROSE: Being jammed, of course.

Q: And it was done for Cubans. Was this purely to gain some political leverage in Florida?

ROSE: I can't imagine any other rationale for it.

Q: Enough said. Got it. You're just confirming things from everybody I know who's worked in Latin America. I guess the White House had an equation and we don't know exactly what went into that, but it was partly a question of keeping the Republican party dominant. We don't need to judge that. We can have our private judgment. So, it was a very demanding and turbulent time.

ROSE: One nice thing about being in that position is that Stan and Carl felt that I should have opportunities to get the pulse of what was going on in the area, so they did give me a couple of trips during the time that I was serving there. And I'm trying to remember, I think one of them was to El Salvador where the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) hosted a key, I thought, event at his home that I was invited to while I was there, and the head of the right-wing, Roberto D'Aubuisson, was there with the insurgent leaders in an attempt to try to get them talking to each other. And I met with some radio station people who were supportive of the insurgency and a negotiated solution to the conflict.

Q: So, D'Aubuisson was talking to the enemy?

ROSE: Well, he was in the same room as them.

Q: That's very interesting.

ROSE: Yeah, that was something I thought was kind of a watershed moment.

Q: Do you suppose it might have been the DCM who urged D'Aubuisson to do that? Do you think D'Aubuisson did it just to please the Americans?

ROSE: It's hard to know, and obviously it didn't lead to an immediate solution, but it wasn't too long after that that things began to move in a direction where there was at least some kind of a resolution.

Q: That's fascinating. So, that would have been '86, '87? Something like that.

ROSE: Well, it would have been a little after that because I didn't get back to Washington until '88 because I was in India from '84 – '88.

Q: Okay. Well, very interesting. And that was of course the peak of the conflict was in those few years of the 80s. So, Salvador and what other places?

ROSE: Well, it was a Central American trip, so that was when I got to go to Guatemala, and I went to Nicaragua and Panama. Those were all included in that as I recall.

Q: Yeah, I think I mentioned, they were taking PAOs from Europe who knew nothing about that area and giving them tours. I guess they were kind of like propaganda tours. I was in a small post in Copenhagen, my boss couldn't go and my boss' assistant couldn't go, so I went. And oh my gosh. We went to Nicaragua. We were at war with this country. We went to the airport and the customs official said, welcome, bienvenidos *(welcome).*

ROSE: Yeah, it was kind of a strange thing.

Q: Did you have the same experience?

ROSE: Yes. The feeling that here we are, you know, supposedly this is the enemy and here we are going around the country and meeting with people.

Q: It says a lot about them to be that hospitable. I think they're very hospitable people, I guess.

ROSE: I guess so.

Q: Very interesting. Did you go every year or once or twice?

ROSE: I think there were two trips, and I can't remember. It's hard because I was in three different positions.

Q: Again? Just couldn't keep a job.

ROSE: Yeah. So, I think I was a policy officer for the first two years.

Q: So, what happened?

ROSE: So, at the end of those two years it was time for Carl Howard to go out to the field again and he was assigned, as I recall, as PAO Bogotá, and he went off to Colombia, creating a vacancy as the number two person in the area.

Q: So, you became number two.

ROSE: Stan invited me to apply, and I ended up in Carl's job.

Q: I see a pattern here.

ROSE: So, for the next two years I was deputy PAO and I got to supervise—well, supervise may not be the right word—I got to oversee and do the ratings on the officers at the smaller posts.

Q: That's supervision, yeah.

ROSE: So, Stan of course, because they were senior officers, wrote the ratings on the PAOs in Mexico and Brazil and maybe Argentina, I don't remember, but I had the opportunity to travel to those posts, meet with the PAOs, and do some interesting things. And it was during at least one of those trips that I went back to Central America and had the opportunity to go to one of the bases where it was a Honduran army base down in the lowlands near San Pedro Sula and visit the military operations there where we were doing quite a bit with National Guard people coming in for summer tours and doing public works projects in the country to try to build a favorable relationship with our military.

Q: Because of the war we were—

ROSE: We were operating next door, of course, in Nicaragua and in various ways supporting.

Q: Well, with the cooperation of the Honduran government, right?

ROSE: Right, exactly. So, that was kind of interesting because I had the opportunity to meet with—I think it was on that same trip that I went to Panama and at that time still got to look at our relationship and our military presence there and see the canal.

Q: No, the canal had been turned over.

ROSE: It had been turned over. That was during the Carter period.

Q: '75 or something like that.

ROSE: But we still had a presence there and so…anyway. It was an interesting time. Guatemala as I recall was what Guatemala always is. Problematic because of repressive leadership and concentration of wealth and all those things that make life difficult for anyone who's not one of the elite.

Q: Yes, and of course—again, I don't know, only from things I read—we did stage a coup I guess in the 50s, and so we have some responsibility for that country's lack of democracy. But I mean, that's decades before. That was not you, that was not your predecessor. What was his name? the one that the U.S. government removed? Anyway.

ROSE: It escapes me too. So, anyway, it was interesting to visit those countries and see what was going on and what our PAOs were dealing with. And generally, because I was rating their public affairs officers I got to meet with the ambassador in each country. In fact, in Belize the ambassador hosted me, he said, come and stay with me, which was very nice of him.

Q: So, you were visiting as the deputy you were visiting mainly the smaller posts, I guess.

ROSE: Yeah. And so, I think I got to—I'm trying to remember which ones I went to in the Caribbean. I think I got back to Jamaica. I had done an inspection tour there earlier in my career.

Q: There's Barbados, which covers some of the neighboring places.

ROSE: Yeah, I don't think I went there, but I did go to Trinidad. I didn't make it to Haiti, and I almost went to Cuba but didn't. Something came up that made it an inconvenient time for people to be going to Cuba. Things periodically do happen that way.

Q: For readers who don't know the background, what was the American presence in Havana?

ROSE: Well, we had an interest section and we did have someone from USIS serving in the interest section, of course.

Q: We didn't call it an embassy because we didn't recognize that government, right?

ROSE: Right.

Q: But the interest section functioned pretty much like an embassy, I think.

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Was it under the auspices of the Swiss embassy?

ROSE: Yeah.

Q: Okay, but I suppose we were bigger than our hosts, the Swiss.

ROSE: Probably.

Q: Very interesting.

ROSE: Yeah. That's one of the marvelous things is the way that we stretch things to be able to accommodate what we need to be able to do and still put a different face on it. Diplomacy.

Q: Little tidbit, you probably remember Linda Jewell—

ROSE: Yes.

Q: —I was friendly with her, and I said to her once—I was coming out of Madrid, I guess—and I said to her, I speak Spanish, I want to go to Havana, and she said, you also speak French, and we have a place right next door. And she sent me to Haiti.

ROSE: That's how that happened.

Q: It's so sad that we've lost Linda, she was really wonderful. Did you ever overlap with her anywhere?

ROSE: I knew her, just slightly, but I don't think we served at the same time.

Q: Yeah. So, she was the head of that office as you were. First you then her, something like that. So, you said you had two changes. You became deputy and then there was another change?

ROSE: So, the next one was that—and I don't even remember what the particular task force or program was that the State Department was putting together, but they needed high level representation from USIA on the team, and so Stan Zuckerman was asked to go become that person.

Q: So, that was you.

ROSE: So, what that meant was we suddenly found ourselves without a director for the area, because I was serving as the deputy to Stan.

Q: So, you became acting?

ROSE: So, I became acting. And I was greatly blessed by one of our best—in my opinion—directors, Ambassador Catto.

Q: The director of USIA?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Oh yeah, Catto. Yes okay.

ROSE: He asked how long will it be before we have whoever's in the pipeline, and they told him about a year. And he said, remove the acting.

Q: And you had fond memories? Really? They made you the official director?

ROSE: Yes. So, I was officially named the director of the office of Latin America and the Caribbean Affairs.

Q: Incredible. Just like that? He just did this because he was a decent guy? Because it was reality. He wasn't going to get a director anytime soon, and why give you the responsibility without the authority. That's very decent. What else about Catto?

ROSE: Well, we talked a little bit about some of our previous directors, and I think he was universally regarded by people in USIA and the Foreign Service as someone who knew what he was doing and would represent us well. He was a person of stature and particularly in our relationship with State Department, which of course during the periods when we had people that they did not have much regard for, that reflected on the whole agency that they directed. And so, when we had someone like the former ambassador to London in charge of our agency, that reflected on all of us as well, and so I felt that when I went over to the State Department both during my time as deputy director and again as director and sat in on meetings with the assistant secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean, Bernie Aaronson, that I was respected and my opinions mattered. So, the example that I think I've mentioned to you before was that when the Haiti exodus, one of their periodic ones, was taking place and many of them were becoming shark bait and everything it was just terrible and there was a task force that was put together and the negotiations were going on so most of the people at the table insisted that we just needed to get the Coast Guard to round these people up when they came out and put them back on shore.

And there were indications that among those economic refugees there were some people who had a legitimate fear for their lives. And you put them back on shore and that was a death sentence. And so, I argued pretty much by myself that that was not a workable approach. And the Coast Guard was at the table and the Department of Defense and the State Department and all the players, and eventually the White House was involved as well. And so, I insisted that we had to have an alternative for the legitimate asylum people. And finally, it was agreed that some poor souls who worked for Immigration and Naturalization Service would be posted to Haiti to interview people as they were put back on shore and see if there were any potential asylum candidates among them.

Q: So, I want to give you credit for that. Is that partly your doing?

ROSE: Well, it was pretty much yeah, my doing.

Q: That's remarkable.

ROSE: So, then what we did is we drafted a statement for President Bush, who was vacationing at Kennebunkport at the time, to let people know that this was the solution that we had come up with. That there would be interruption of the flow, but that we were making arrangements for asylum seekers to receive interviews and protection until they could be processed. And so, he the next day went on the VOA with our statement , which was translated into the Creole service and that announcement was made and the flow went way down, of course. People stopped putting out when they realized that they were going to be put back on shore.

Q: Got it. Yes, I mean that was still the case when I was there, ten, fifteen years later. It was a major effort to get people to understand the risks they were taking. My own experience was that they were perfectly aware of the risks, and they felt that staying in the country was much worse for them than taking a risk of drowning at sea. That's pretty sad.

ROSE: That really is. And unfortunately, still pretty much the case. Things haven't changed.

Q: Well, yes. Even more so now. And I'm sorry to say, but when I was there the distinction between migration and asylum, in reality there was no opportunity. If they read them something on the ship in English saying, if you feel you're in danger, blah, blah, but they never made it understandable. They never really gave them a chance to explain that they were in danger. So, your very good actions helped tremendously during that time and I'm sorry that they kind of vanished some years later. Well, gosh. Catto. Now, ambassador to London. A political appointee under Reagan or Bush.

ROSE: It would have been President Bush.

Q: Right because Wick was there for all of Reagan. Tell us anything. I don't really remember Catto; I think I was overseas. What do we need to know about him? He was a political appointee, he was a decent man, he treated you well.

ROSE: My recollection is that he had a—I'm trying to remember what the relationship was—with the secretary of state at the time. They knew each other.

Q: Was that Shultz?

ROSE: No, Shultz would have been earlier. Jim Baker?

Q: Maybe the forgettable one in between.

ROSE: Anyway. I just recall that he valued his people and obviously we didn't see him a whole lot; he was busy with his responsibilities, but all of us I think felt valued in our weekly meetings as area directors. I never heard a bad word about him.

Q: So, you did meet with him once a week. There were what, five areas? And the P bureau would be…

ROSE: I'm saying when we as area directors met. He wasn't meeting with us at that time, it was just the five of us. We would get together and just kind of compare notes on what was going on and where our concerns intersected, see what we were dealing with, and we could grouse about things that were commonly offensive to us.

Q: And you could compete to get the better candidates for the posts. A little knife to the ribs. I remember those. Now, you had just come out of EAP (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs)? Was it EAP?

ROSE: My entire final five years of my career were spent in Latin America and the Caribbean office, first as policy officer, then as deputy director, and finally for the final year as director.

Q: Oh, so we're getting to the end of your career. And the beginning of the activities that followed. I didn't realize. So, you had had your foreign assignments.

ROSE: So, I was approaching the point at which I had already used up all of my Washington time because I was approaching five years and so there was an expectation that as soon as a new area director was available that I would be assigned back out to a post. And at this point that would probably mean, having been area director, that I would be looking at one of the large posts, probably in Latin America, as a PAO. Possibly Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, or something like that. And so, that was what was facing me, but at this point I had married children who were no longer eligible for government funded travel and everything. I'd had a very satisfying and rewarding career. I had occupied one of the top fifteen career positions in the agency and I was trying to figure out what the incentive was to—

Q: To keep going.

ROSE: —to keep going. And so, at that point my wife and I began talking about maybe this was a good time to look at retirement.

Q: So, I see two patterns in your career. One is you had these incredible opportunities, you took them, and nothing ever went wrong. And secondly, you always put family as your highest priority.

ROSE: That's pretty much the case. And so, at the time I had—well, during my tour in India I had been in charge of a fairly extensive public opinion research and polling program that we had there to try to gauge the Indian public attitudes towards the United

States, especially during the Cold War and all of that. So, I had a fair amount of experience in that area, so as I was approaching retirement at age 53 thinking that I would probably need a second career or at least something to do after retirement, and I happened to know Richard Wirthlin, who was the head of what was regarded at the time as probably the third most highly regarded public opinion research and advising firm in the country after Gallup and Roper. And he thought that there were definite possibilities for someone with my background in that field, and offered—

Q: So, this was a third one. Okay.

ROSE: Yeah. And they generally did a lot of the public opinion research for the Republican party.

Q: And was it named after him? Was it Wirthlin–?

ROSE: Wirthlin Worldwide was the firm he founded.

Q: Okay, so you just moved.

ROSE: But he didn't have operations country-wide, he was based in Washington. But he knew of one of his former employees who had established a firm called Populous in Boise, Idaho.

Q: I see. This is like the pistol on the mantelpiece.

ROSE: As it turned out, it came to nothing.

Q: And yet there you are in Boise right now.

ROSE: It was a prospect. So, what happened is I applied for retirement to retire in June of '93. And I was privileged to take the State Department retirement seminar. So, during that I got access to a book called Retirement Places Rated, and Boise was number 87 out of 200.

Q: Couldn't you get it up to 50 or so?

ROSE: But we started looking at it. It had wonderful outdoor recreation opportunities. It had a university. It had a temple of our church. It had a symphony orchestra; it had a Shakespeare festival. Lots of attractions.

Q: And it wasn't Salt Lake City.

ROSE: Right. So, we decided to fly out and take a look at it and even engaged a realtor. During the week that we were here I interviewed with Populous, they said they could work out an associate arrangement for me where I would have access to their computer crunching capabilities and all of that, but I would need to develop my own clients and

give them 20% of what I earned. And so, I thought that sounded pretty reasonable and so we actually found a house and made an offer on it during that week that we were here in April. And I went back to Washington and finished out my retirement seminar and my responsibilities in the area and retired in June of 1993.

Q: Owning a house in Boise.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Incredible.

ROSE: And then when I got here, I knew no one, and I thought, okay, I'm supposed to develop my own clientele and I don't know anyone. So, instead of doing that I thought, well maybe there are some other alternatives. So, a man was running for office and had the endorsement of the then-current governor of the state because he was his attorney general and they were both from the Democratic party, Cecil Andrus, who was the governor, and had his endorsed candidate won he would have become the first Native American governor of a state in the United States. It was Larry Echo Hawk.

Q: Wait a minute, there was a democratic governor of Idaho? Really?

ROSE: Yeah, can you believe that?

Q: No, I don't believe that.

ROSE: He was a very popular one too.

Q: Remarkable.

ROSE: He had been secretary of the interior as well.

Q: Okay, so this has something to do with you. You got to know him, I guess?

ROSE: So, what happened was I went down to Larry Echo Hawk's office, and I said, I've had some experience with public affairs. Is there any way I could be helpful to your campaign? And he said yes. So, I began doing research—unpaid, this is volunteer—and speech writing for the Democratic candidate for governor of Idaho. And he didn't win.

Q: But you did, you won.

ROSE: And therefore, I did not have a job as a press assistant or anything in the office of the governor.

Q: And it's okay because you were now getting a pension.

ROSE: By this time, I found out I could live on my annuity, and I was enjoying life in a city where a river runs through it. Good life. I planted a garden and put in thirteen fruit trees and did all other kinds of fun things and never went back to work.

Q: Really? So, this whole thing with Populous was just…

ROSE: It was part of the attraction of coming to Boise, but I just didn't follow up. I knew the director of it, and I just told her, I just don't know if I could make it work because I don't know the territory well enough.

Q: Was that arrangement part of the reason you made a bid on a house in Boise? Was that an element?

ROSE: Not really. We had vacationed in Idaho during home leaves with my wife's sister and her husband, so we had camped in some of the beautiful mountains near lakes and so forth around the state. So, we looked at a couple other places, but I said, you know, Idaho looks really good. And she said, well if we're going back to my home state, I want to live on the warm side of the mountains, not the cold side where I grew up.

Q: That would be the East side?

ROSE: Yeah. The east side, Idaho Falls, where she grew up, was 4,500 feet of elevation, Boise is 2,500, and there's a huge difference in the climate.

Q: Amazing. And Boise's on the west side. Does the continental divide go right through there?

ROSE: It actually moves over into Wyoming and Colorado, that far south, but it's not far from there. Further north.

Q: Well, it sounds like a paradise. I've been to most states, but I have not been to Idaho. I'll have to correct that and come out and see you.

ROSE: Well just going back to my career, I had a couple of those kinds of places. I managed to visit every continental country in the western hemisphere except Ecuador. I never made it to Ecuador. And it's one of the nice places to go.

Q: I guess so. I mean, Quito is charming, I guess. Guayaquil is not. So, you've been to all the countries in the western hemisphere?

ROSE: Not in the Caribbean. I have not been to Haiti or Barbados or some of the little ones like there. But I even went to Suriname and Guyana.

Q: Oh, you mean in Latin America. There's French Guyana, which is not what we deal with.

ROSE: That's the only colony left.

Q: Amazing. Well, I want to have at least one more session talking about—I know you then became involved in the church to a greater degree and there's lots more for us to find out about you. You retired in '93, that's thirty years ago, and you've been doing things since then and I really would like to get more of the story of things that have happened since. This is absolutely remarkable. You make it sound as if this is a career and a lifestyle where stress never happens, only successes. It's a wonderful story Doug, really. It's great.

ROSE: Well, I felt greatly blessed to have served the way I did. I had the opportunity last week, as I mentioned, to attend a lunch of retired Foreign Service people in Utah. Vance Pace heads up a group there, I don't know if you ever ran into him, but he retired about four or five years after I did from USIA. But he hosts a group there once a month. They get together for lunch and invite speakers and he had lined up Ambassador Tueller, who had retired a year ago as ambassador to Iraq as the speaker. And I really wanted to hear what he would have to say, so Vance invited me down and I was able to spend a night with him and enjoy reminiscing about our careers and all of that and listen to a very interesting presentation by Ambassador Tueller on his career and his current perspective on what the State Department is dealing with in the world. It was fascinating. But anyway, there were four of us from USIA there. Jim Palmer, Guy Farmer, Vance Pace, and myself. And then the others were retired State Department or in some cases Foreign Agricultural Service and even a couple of businessmen and so forth. It was a group of about twenty-five. Anyway, that was a delightful time.

Q: It's a pleasure to hear people's thoughts years later, as it is to hear yours. Well, I insist that we do another one of these. I think this is number nine, I'm supposed to put a marker in here.

ROSE: Great. Yeah, I was told to expect four or five so you're giving a great amount of time and I appreciate it.

Q: No, I don't do those. I do the ten to fifteen ones. Especially with you because this is a really inspiring story. It is June 23, 2023, and this is Dan and Doug, and I think this is our ninth conversation and so that will be our marker. I will stop recording.

Session 10
This is Doug Rose and Dan Whitman, I believe this is our tenth session, and it is July 4, Independence Day, 2023. So, Doug, we sort of had you almost at retirement, June 1993, and you mentioned some of your activities after that. It's important what people do after retirement. You worked on a gubernatorial campaign, you were sort of hired by a public relations firm and asked to—you know, eat what you kill kind of thing. But various things happened. So, let's pick it up at that time around June '93.

ROSE: Okay. Well, in April of that year, it was actually right before the retirement seminar, so I went back there—no, it was during. I don't remember exactly when it was.

In any case, we had flown out here and made an offer on a home in Boise, Idaho, and it was more than I could have hoped for. I really wanted to be able to get a home in a place where I could do something that I hadn't really done on any kind of a scale since I was very young, and that was to plant things, including fruit trees, and let them come to bearing stage and look into fruit preservation and those kinds of things. And I wanted to see how the world works. That was my aspiration. That natural world.

Q: After seeing the world you wanted to see how it worked. So, this is what Voltaire would call tending your garden.

ROSE: Yes. That's exactly what I did. We bought a half-acre in the foothills of Boise and it had thirteen fruit trees and I terraced it and—it was on a hillside—and planted a huge garden and even built a root cellar on our house so that we could preserve the things that came out of it, and for the four and a half years that we lived there it provided basically all of our produce that could be eaten fresh or canned or frozen.

Q: Really? That's very unusual to get all of your produce.

ROSE: It's just amazing how productive all that was. I had studied, I had even been a subscriber to Organic Gardening Magazines and other publications and really studied what I needed to do and had had a little garden at our house in Virginia when we lived there while I was still working. But this was a chance to really upgrade to a much larger scale with cherry trees, apple trees, several types of plums, peaches, pears, a big raspberry patch, grapes, and of course all the fresh vegetables and that and ones that could be kept. And so, we could eat the winter squash, Hubbard and Butternut and Acorn and those things, clear up until May or so of the following year after harvesting them in September.

Q: Incredible. Did you have any extra to share or sell?

ROSE: Oh, yes, a great deal. And we discovered a farmer's market that would take trade. So, I could go down with rhubarb and bring back oranges.

Q: Fantastic. Now, I don't think oranges grow in Idaho, I don't think.

ROSE: No, those were brought in.

Q: Was this something you thought about years before or had always wanted to do?

ROSE: Well, hearkening back to what I told you was my first job, picking fruit in Utah as a child, I really was interested in fruit trees and gardening and all of that. So, in a way it was trying to revisit my childhood. I'd moved back to the Rocky Mountains.

Q: But not Utah. You've mentioned a few times you didn't really want to be in Salt Lake City, but in the periphery. But this is marvelous. So, it was kind of a bookend to an earlier chapter.

ROSE: Yeah, and it was an idyllic life while it lasted. We had, as I say, this big property, and that was where I got into wood carving, and I was able to take a course from a world champion wood carver and learned how to do songbirds and duck decoys and all of those kinds of things. So, that led to something that has been the closest thing I've had to post-retirement employment.

Q: Employment in that—I mean, it doesn't really matter, but did you sell your wood carvings?

ROSE: Yes, after putting them in a few competitions and improving my skills I began to get orders, commissions, for different types of birds and so forth. And kind of an amusing but nice outcome of that was that about three years ago, after doing this for several years, I got a notice from Social Security saying that it appears that you have only one quarter left before you will qualify for Social Security. And I thought, no, I haven't worked for twenty-some years, that's impossible.

Q: Twenty? Like 1993, '03, '13?

ROSE: Yeah. More than twenty.

Q: So, wait, you were one quarter short of getting Social Security?

ROSE: Right. You need forty quarters. I had worked prior to my federal service for a few years as a teaching assistant at the University of Oregon and working for Western Airlines putting myself through San Diego State. Things like that. So, I had some credits before I engaged in this, but I didn't even know that just by reporting my income from my wood carving sales there was self-employment tax that was being taken out of that and reported to Social Security. So, I set up an account and checked into it, and sure enough, I was one quarter short, and that year I qualified. So, now Social Security is paying my Medicare premiums.

Q: Yay.

ROSE: And I even get fifty-two dollars more a month.

Q: That's funny. Were you thinking you would get Social Security?

ROSE: No, I didn't even know that that was being recorded. I thought I was just paying income tax.

Q: That's funny.

ROSE: But in some place where our government works efficiently there is an automatic reporting of income to Social Security.

Q: That's funny. So, making duck decoys became a livelihood. That's a bit crazy. I mean, not on your part, but on the government's part to consider that.

ROSE: This won't go into the transcript but here is an example. (Holds up a bird carving.)

Q: Let's have a look. Oh my gosh, that's beautiful. The contours of the feathers. Fantastic.

ROSE: So, I've done both decoys like that and songbirds, where I do the habitat and all of that.

Q: Fantastic. Those are more beautiful than the original, I think. Now, you were trained to do this by a carpenter?

ROSE: Yeah. Remember that I had taken some art classes at Berkeley before I flunked out of architecture, so I'd had some design work and things like that, and I'd done a little wood carving prior to retirement, but not much. And my wife was looking for some way to keep me out of her kitchen and out of her hair, so she ordered a decoy kit for me and that was my first thing and I started selling things and buying tools initially and then eventually it became a source of income for vacations and subscriptions.

Q: Fantastic. How do you get contours of the feathers? It's so beautiful.

ROSE: It's a number of different tools that are used. The first thing I do is from a block of wood I cut out on a band saw the basic shape of the bird and then start rounding it down and putting the basic shape in. and then when we get to the detail I use what is—I guess the most similar thing that most people would be familiar with would be a dentist drill—a high speed rotary drill with diamond bits in it to put the detail into the feathers, along with a wood burner to create all the little separation of the parts on the feather.

Q: Every interview we've had you have an enormous surprise of one turn or another. That's very good.

ROSE: My real interest in this came from a visit just prior to retirement to Salisbury, Maryland, to the Ward Museum, which is a history museum of the art of bird carving, wildfowl carving.

Q: Really?

ROSE: And the world competition for bird carvers is in Maryland, Ocean City, each year at the convention center there. And so, the guy that I learned from has been to those competitions and comes away with blue ribbons. So, I had a very good teacher and it allowed me to get into this. So, I've been taking commissions. In fact, tomorrow afternoon I'll be delivering a bird to someone who's coming over from Sun Valley to pick up his Magpie.

Q: Yes. Of course, this does not work in the interest of the live birds, does it? But that's not your department, as they say. Those are very beautiful. Let's see them again. They're very beautiful. I love those. And they seem more beautiful than the original.

ROSE: That's the Mallard.

Q: So, the Mallard, it fools me, I guess it would fool a Mallard pretty easily.

ROSE: Well, these of course are decorative decoys. The origins of this art form do go back to working decoys. But at some point, some of the wealthy hunters decided some of this work was too beautiful to fill full of shotgun pellets and started putting them on their mantles.

Q: Okay. I didn't know any of that.

ROSE: I'll show you one more.

Q: Please.

ROSE: This is the Magpie that my client is coming to pick up tomorrow.

Q: Very beautiful. Better than a Magpie. My gosh. You've delved into all sorts of things.

ROSE: Well, while we're on that subject I'll just follow it through to where it goes, rather than chronologically.

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: So, I found out that there is an Idaho Woodcarvers Guild, a club of wood carvers, and so I joined that and then I found out that they put on a show every year in Boise and for several years I started entering the show and competing for ribbons there. Then that led to people getting to know my work and so that was very helpful in generating clientele for my work. And I asked if they could use any help with publicity for the show because I had experience working with media and so forth, and they said, yeah, we'd love that. And so, I became a member of the show committee and have served for something like twenty-six years now as the publicity chairman for the Idaho Artistry and Wood Show, which brings together carvers and woodworkers, even gourd artists from all around the Northwest to a competition here in Boise.

Q: Fantastic. Is this largely—you mentioned Maryland—is this type of artistry more prominent in the Northwest than other places?

ROSE: No, it really has—the centers of strength for it are the East Coast—Maryland, New Jersey, places like that. There are several competitions in the East. Ohio. And one of the reasons that it really took off there is that the Ward brothers are the ones who turned

decoy carving into an art form. And so, Steve and Lem Ward, who lived on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, were honored by having a museum named for them and even the world competition is called the Ward World Wildfowl Carving Competition.

Q: So, can you describe the creative process? What happens in your mind when you're doing this? Does your mind drift? Does it have a calming effect? How does this artisanry affect your mood and your thinking?

ROSE: Well, in some respects it's just a lot of hard work. I mean, there are pleasant parts of it. When I'm dealing with a client, someone who comes to me, we talk about what kind of bird they want, what kind of species, and so I've carved everything from raptors to Corvids to game birds. The biggest project I've ever had was to do a pair of life-sized Ring-Necked Pheasants. That took about a year and a half. I don't remember how many hours of work, but the commission was actually for a bronze work and because I am not used to working with clay, I said, I'll make the model for the casting out of wood. And so, I did this pair of Ring-Necked Pheasants, a male and a female, and took them to a foundry in Utah and had them cast the work and it's now in the Idaho Botanical Garden as one of their sculptures.

Q: Where is that? Is that in Boise?

ROSE: In Boise, yeah. So, they have some bronze sculptures in there and that's where that one is.

Q: And you made the mold. Wow.

ROSE: And then I cleaned up the casting model, got all the releasing agent off it and everything, and went on to paint the pheasants and was able to sell them to a collector.

Q: This was the bronze casting that you sold?

ROSE: The bronze castings were ordered by a person who wanted to donate that sculpture to the garden. So, she was through with me when the bronze pheasants were affixed in the garden. But then I still had the casting model, so I went on and finished the wood birds and made them available for sale, and a businessman in Boise who collects wildfowl carvings bought them from me.

Q: This is amazing. It's so different from everything else that you've told us in these stories. It's working with the hands, which did not come out in the earlier interviews. So, what about working with the hands, what does this do to a person? Very few people do that anymore. Any comments about that?

ROSE: Yeah. I actually got started with it in my high school shop class and I enjoyed carving the little wood carving unit that they had with that, along with learning to operate a table saw and other tools. But my parents saw that I was interested so they bought me a little set of hand carving tools, and that was how I started out in wood carving. And I

actually carved a couple of pieces while I was still in high school and college and also learned some woodworking skills, so fairly early on I bought saws and drills and things like that. But I love working with wood. It has a natural beauty to it, and it responds well to tools, and you have to learn qualities you want it to take on and so forth. But anyway, I just find it very satisfying to do. So, I earn about probably an average of four dollars an hour for my work.

Q: I would have thought so. No, I love wood and I play the viola and I subscribe to Strings Magazine, and they have these beautiful photos of—of course, these instruments are all made out of wood and they're so beautiful. Even the ordinary instruments: the tone, the color, the patterns of the wood. Wood is really beautiful.

ROSE: So, yeah. I mean, on most of the ones that I work with everything is painted because I'm trying to make the colors of the birds and everything, but then I will put them on a natural base as I did in this one. So, a piece of Aspen where you can see some mineral content in the wood that has come up because it was close to the root.

Q: Very beautiful. That's a Cardinal, I think.

ROSE: A relative. It's got the crest like the Cardinal, but it's a Cedar Waxwing.

Q: Wow. So, you know your species.

ROSE: Well, I'm a birdwatcher too.

Q: What motivates a bird watcher? Is there a certain thrill when you see a species that you haven't seen before?

ROSE: Yeah. People who are serious birders are a different breed altogether. I enjoy seeing them. I do take my National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America whenever I travel and hope to find a species that I haven't seen before and all of that, but I'm not really into it the way people are who will travel across the country if they here that there's a vagrant Flycatcher from Europe or something that's appeared some place.

Q: Fantastic. We all love birds, and we all love wood. This is fantastic. Very few of us ever follow through.

ROSE: It becomes a fairly technical process after that initial contact with the client where we determine what species he wants and roughly some idea of the presentation. What kind of base or habitat. The habitat is determined by what is the natural habitat of that bird and what kinds of leaves I'll make or things that go around the bird. So that all comes into play. And then I have to do a lot of research on the dimensions of the bird and the feather layout and all of that kind of information so that I know where the various colors are on the bird and all of that. So, once I have all of that then I'll draw up a pattern that I can put against a block of wood and trace around it and then cut around it on a band

saw and then begin reducing that block of wood to something that looks like a bird. And then there's the texturing with the wood burner and the diamond bit and finally the painting. And I use acrylics, some people use oil. But acrylics give me the finished product in a shorter time.

Q: Amazing. So, what is the time elapse in conception to realization? Is it two months?

ROSE: A typical songbird—here's a little Lazuli Bunting. A very simple habitat, just a couple of cross sticks and that's about a forty hour work.

Q: Wow.

ROSE: I try to get a couple of hundred dollars out of that.

Q: Absolutely marvelous. Do you suppose birds do people watching?

ROSE: Some of them do, I'm sure.

What they're looking for is people who put out food for them.

Q: Okay. Birds are lovely. I don't think they realize. We don't know, I suppose. There's a lot we don't know. We know that all animals are extremely smart and extremely well-adapted to whatever it is they need to do. It's kind of amazing, isn't it? Every species has survived because they've become very well adapted to something.

ROSE: Mallards, for example, have become very well-adapted to humans.

Q: Mallards?

ROSE: Yes, for some reason that particular species of wildfowl has become very comfortable around human habitation. As have Canada Geese.

Q: I guess they don't get much thanks from us, do they?

ROSE: To the point that they become almost a nuisance on golf courses and all of that.

Q: Really?

ROSE: Oh yeah.

Q: It's a whole world.

ROSE: And the species that have not adapted to human expansion are of course threatened.

Q: I suppose some who are adapted go innocently to the hunter that brings them down, I suppose.

ROSE: Yes, by far the most harvested species of wildfowl is the mallard.

Q: Mixed feelings about that. So, between the woodworking, which you learned in high school, and the actual interest in birds, did this all—you had it latent, didn't you, before retirement?

ROSE: Yeah. It really came when I discovered the opportunities and particularly after I saw the opportunity to learn from someone who could produce the kind of works I saw at the Ward Museum in Salisbury.

Q: So, you're a disciple, you're a master, you're the public relations president of the local organization. This is great.

ROSE: So, I reach out for sponsorships and publicity assistance from the newspapers and the Idaho Commission on the Arts and mayor's office, the Boise Arts and History and so forth. So, it's given me an opportunity to connect with the community as well.

Q: Great. Does this go into neighboring states?

ROSE: Yeah. The competition—and actually I've taken my work to other places as well, invitational sculpture shows. One in a museum in Utah. And I take my birds over to the Columbia Flyway Wildlife Art Show in Vancouver, Washington and to a show in Utah and that. I even, when I was in New Jersey, showed some of my work in a show in Rumson, New Jersey.

Q: This is a whole new world. Fascinating. And these are very beautiful objects. Well, there's that aspect and you make four dollars an hour. Maybe you've done some other things. I mean, you have such a series of skills and experiences. Your career, your religious commitment. Let's hear about some of the rest of it. I think you don't spend all of your time with wooden models.

ROSE: You've already heard about two of my post-retirement activities, gardening and wood carving. And I've been pretty active in both of those over the many years since retiring. Another component you just mentioned has been church service. So, shortly after arriving in Boise, because our church has a lay ministry, we don't have professional seminary-trained pastors and so forth, it's volunteer and you serve for a particular period of time in various capacities. And so, after a brief stint as a youth leader I was asked to become a counselor in the bishopric of our congregation. That's the three person group that heads up a congregation. So, I was one of the assistants or counselors to the bishop of our congregation. And so, that began to take up some time and was an opportunity to serve and try to be helpful to people. That lasted for about four and a half years.

Q: What does a counselor do? Is this a guidance role?

ROSE: Well, we take turns conducting the meetings, the church services on Sundays. And so, that gives us responsibility to find the—we don't have a pastor who gives the sermons, we invite members of the congregation to speak. And so, I would have to line up speakers, make sure the music was ready and that the songs were chosen and all of that, and then we would call and interview people to serve in the various positions, the Sunday school, the women's organization, relief society, the youth organizations, the children's program and so forth. And a counselor would normally have responsibility for one or two of those organizations and would look after them. And then we would make visits to the homes of members to make sure that they were doing okay and those who were having difficulties of some kind we would pay some extra attention to them, maybe try to mobilize some resources if needed and so forth.

Q: Yes, I was going to ask, it sounded as if most of the activities were communal, but the individual aspect—when I hear the word counselor, I think of somebody who can advise a person who's facing some difficulty.

ROSE: The heaviest responsibility for that falls on the bishop himself, but the counselors do some counseling as well. So, if it's not a moral issue, that we leave to the bishop.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: But if it's just someone kind of struggling with a loss of a family member or something like that the counselors could be helpful in that kind of thing.

Q: Would you call those grievance counselors?

ROSE: Yeah, it might include those kinds of duties. I did actually serve as a bishop during a brief time. I mentioned that in Venezuela, and in that time, I had to deal with moral issues as well. People who might require some church discipline as we called it, might even be excommunicated for serious offenses of adultery or something like that.

Q: Very challenging. Lots of dilemmas and challenges there. And you want somebody doing that who has a solid sense of themselves, which you do. I'm imagining you would be the best possible counselor I could imagine. Humane and yet establishing the limits.

ROSE: What you try to do is to work with people who have committed serious transgressions to map out a program of repentance so they can make their way back and be forgiven by the Lord and be in good standing in the church again.

Q: When these cases came to you were they volunteered by the individuals, or did somebody tell you?

ROSE: Normally that is what would happen; they would come and confess to the bishop. I had two or three callings or positions where I was the person that received these confessions, if you will, and had to help with them. So, one of them I'll get to later. But

yeah, it was primarily them recognizing that they did not feel good about the life they were living or had lived and mistakes they made and wanted to rectify things, so they would come and discuss them. Once in a while there would be a situation where a spouse would find out that the partner had been unfaithful and then the unfaithful partner would be invited in and given an opportunity to confess.

Q: Very challenging.

ROSE: We would tell them we'll try to help you resolve this and see if there's a way we can preserve your marriage and help you through a process of healing.

Q: So, of course in the Catholic Church confession is part of the weekly routine, but not in the Church of Latter Day Saints.

ROSE: No, there is no schedule. It's only as things occur.

Q: So, people were motivated by understanding they had deviated, and they wanted to get back on the right track?

ROSE: Exactly, that's the approach.

Q: Interesting. Let's see, I'm not comfortable asking the particular offenses, but were they sometimes liturgical as opposed to family issues?

ROSE: There could be. One of the serious offenses is apostasy. If you start teaching things that are contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ as we understand it and trying to gain other people to adopt those views, that can be…

Q: That's very interesting. Can you define apostasy? When I hear that word I think of Sharia law, for example. And I know that this is done in a different spirit, but what is apostasy? I think you just said, but let's examine that a bit.

ROSE: To give you one example of a case I dealt with when I was in another position where I had that responsibility, one young man had joined one of the north Idaho groups that was basically working toward an insurrectionist set of positions. You've heard, of course, of the famous north Idaho Neo-Nazis.

Q: Oh yes.

ROSE: While he wasn't a part of that specific movement, Idaho and north Idaho specifically seems to attract people who are not comfortable with our government or other things. And one of the tenets of our faith is that we believe in being—the article of faith, as it's called—is we believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, magistrates, and in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, if someone starts advocating positions that the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) is corrupt and we shouldn't pay income tax, we should arm ourselves and be prepared to defend our individual rights with arms and form a militia and all of these kinds of things. So anyway, one young man had been subjected to discipline by getting into one of these groups in northern Idaho. He subsequently moved to southernIdaho, and he had disavowed those positions and was trying to make his way back into full fellowship in the church.

Q: So, he was a church member when he strayed.

ROSE: So, I dealt with him and helped him map out a path by which he could try to make up for any effort he may have made to dissuade others from obeying the law and help him find a pathway back into the church. We were able to do that.

Q: So, he understood as a member of the Church of Latter Day Saints—he was a member, I guess—he understood that what he was doing in disobeying authority—you said kings, presidents and such—he understood that this was outside of what was permitted in his own church.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Okay. And so, he had misgivings. I'm curious whether his comrades were members of the church?

ROSE: It was actually his parents who were members of the church who had gotten him involved in this. Like so many churches or bodies of religion there are fringe groups. The most famous ones, of course, are the polygamous groups who still consider themselves Latter Day Saints, and they've all been excommunicated because our church does not allow polygamy.

Q: I mean, of course, those who don't know much that's the first thing they think of.

ROSE: Precisely.

Q: I do remember a short visit to Salt Lake City and the beer that was being sold in the hotel said, this is Mormon beer, why have just one? It was a six pack, and I thought that was pretty funny. And guessed that these were not loyal members of the church who would sell this beer in a six pack. But wow. Okay, so what about the effect of the—

ROSE: I'll just follow up that one with one more. I actually, when I was in that same position, had some time for a different offense with an individual whose picture has appeared in the news all over the country from the January 6 attack on the Capitol.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: And interestingly enough, he is one of the few who came forward voluntarily and met with the federal officials and gave himself up and I think probably received a somewhat lighter sentence than some of those who have been convicted.

Q: There have been many convictions, I guess. Yes. Of course, very few of them were church members, I suppose.

ROSE: Right. I think there were very few of them, but he was one of those fringe people. I dealt with him on a different issue, as I said, but he was a young man with just very poor judgment.

Q: So, you knew this man? Or you had met him, I suppose?

ROSE: Yeah. I counseled him on his other issue.

Q: Was this prior to January 6?

ROSE: Oh yes, it was prior to that. So, he's had kind of a troubled life.

Q: Where do people's troubles come from? It's very sad to think of a person so uprooted and misguided that they do crazy things. Why do they do these things?

ROSE: It's hard to know. You look for predictors. And certainly, sociologists and psychologists have studied to see if there are predictors and certainly some things, troubled childhoods, abuse and other things, lead to adult manifestations with a lot of difficulties and everything. But this young man had no predictors. I just could not—his father had served as a bishop, he grew up in a good intact family, served a mission for the church in his youth and everything was just fine. He married a young woman and everything and then something just got into his head and took him off track and he started getting himself in trouble.

Q: There was some kind of crowd phenomenon that day which drew in many observers and actually motivated them. It was a bit crazy, this mass—have you thought about that? What is it that makes normal human beings do crazy things when they're in large groups?

ROSE: That is a good question. There is something about it and I suppose it's related to the fact that we as human beings are social beings, and therefore susceptible to influences both positive and negative. It's sort of the opposite of I guess, if you feel that there's a place for religion, of the revival of the Great Awakening, where people were brought to Jesus, supposedly to lead a better life, but on the opposite side you've got people—everyone from the worst manifestations from the Charles Mansons of the world and the Jim Joneses and so forth and cause them to do really dumb things.

Q: The Great Awakening was a fascinating and very key moment in American history. What was it? It was not mass hysteria. What was the Great Awakening? This was like the late 18th early 19th century, I think.

ROSE: Right.

Q: There was a mass sensibility. No internet, no communication, and yet mysteriously many people had very deep spiritual experiences, sometimes positive, sometimes negative.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Any idea what that was all about? It wasn't really religious, was it?

ROSE: I don't know enough about it to really have a strong sense that I understand it. I would say some of the factors could have been—and this is just my trying to figure it out myself because it's a question in my mind as well—but could have been that in the wake of sort of the excesses of Puritanism—the Salem Witch Trials and all of that—that religion had lost its hold, but people still wanted to have some form of religion in their life that would give them a sense of security and something to aspire to and hope for and so forth, and maybe that helped create an environment in which—because I don't think the Catholics were affected by it or anything, it was mainly the people who had probably had ancestors who were Puritans.

Q: Yes, and of course we think of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had an ancestor who was active in the witch trials, and he lived with guilt his whole life just because he was descended from this. Maybe that was an indicator of not just Hawthorne but many people. Even while they themselves had not been involved, I guess they felt tainted by their ancestors doing these things.

ROSE: Yeah. And so, the revival preachers were from the standard Protestant sects, Presbyterians, the Methodists, and so forth. The Quakers even. So, here was an alternative to Puritanism that didn't have the excesses associated with it but still offered the hope of salvation.

Q: That's fascinating because it was such a formative thing in the American consciousness. And it seemed unexplainable. In a period before communications people simultaneously had these spiritual experiences which I have to admit, I don't understand. That's a very interesting, plausible explanation. We don't really know, I suppose. They needed a spiritual content, Puritanism had not worked for them, and so they came up with an alternative with the help of very powerful sermons and preachers. The earliest American literature is actually sermons.

ROSE: Yes, one of my ancestors was one of them.

Q: Really?

ROSE: The Reverend Solomon Stoddard, who inherited Cotton Mather's congregation.

Q: Yes, you mentioned this once. Cotton Mather. Wow. This was in New England, I guess?

ROSE: Yes, in Massachusetts.

Q: What do we know about Solomon Stoddard?

ROSE: Well, he married I think it was one of Cotton Mather's brother's children or something, so he was actually related to him. The only thing that was somewhat distinctive about him is he did liberalize some aspects of the very hardline Puritanism in an effort to attract people back to the church. Because there were people that were falling away and just felt like they couldn't stand all the guilt. He was very conservative on some other issues, but I don't remember what those issues were. That was kind of his place in the development of the post-Puritan era.

Q: So, this is your flesh and blood, so to speak. Did this ancestral connection have a noticeable influence on the life that you decided to choose?

ROSE: Not directly. I mean, obviously I only found out that he was an ancestor as an adult and my mother had researched her genealogy and her line of descent and she was a Stoddard and so we found out that he was in our ancestry.

Q: Wow. When did your mother become interested in this and how did she find out that?

ROSE: Well, I think others in the family had done quite a bit of research on her ancestors. Her great, great grandfather was one of the very early members of the church. He was a close associate of both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. He was actually the scout for Brigham Young's crossing of the plains to Utah.

Q: Joseph Smith I think was assassinated in Indiana, something like that?

ROSE: Illinois.

Q: Illinois. What is your sense of what that was all about?

ROSE: Well, like so many things it's hard to separate religious practices from politics and other things. The thing that got him into really big trouble was when he—I mean, he got early opposition from the already established religions or churches of the day because he was winning converts from their congregations, and that obviously didn't sit well with them and so they tried to find doctrinal reasons for opposing him. But the real issue that I think became the one that eventually led to his assassination was when he declared that Missouri in Jackson County would be a gathering place for the establishment of a new Zion. And all of these New Englanders started moving into a state that up until that time had been primarily slave-owners.

Q: So, the New Englanders I guess were mainly abolitionists, I suppose.

ROSE: Yes. And so there were all these non-slave holders and people who—he tried to say, well we're not here to interfere with your politics or your slavery even, but because they were amassing so many people in Missouri that they would likely become a majority and vote as a block, probably, and eventually it could threaten slaveholding in Missouri. So, the Missouri Compromise came a little later but that was all part of the mix.

Q: 1830, I think. That's fascinating. I never made that association. I know that Missouri was kind of—well, they were slaveholders and abolitionists in the same state, and of course that created conflict. I did not realize that Joseph Smith—I guess you're saying, not intentionally but he did become a factor, or he antagonized the slaveholders.

ROSE: Exactly. So, the result of that was that all of the members of our church who had settled there were driven off their lands and driven out of the state and Illinois opened its doors to them. So, they went there and then he started establishing Nauvoo and it became the second city of Illinois after Chicago.

Q: Wow. Okay.

ROSE: And he got a city charter that allowed him to have a militia and a university and a lot of autonomy that the neighbors became very concerned about. And eventually the practices of being kind of an insular group of people who shopped at their fellow member stores and so forth raised so many suspicion and opposition within Illinois that the mobs began to form there too. And then when some Missourians came after him because of an assassination attempt on Governor Boggs that they believed was connected to him which it never was proved that it was, but the Illinois authorities in a neighboring county came up and arrested him and took him to jail in their county where a mob stormed the jail and shot him.

Q: So, Joseph Smith never made it further west than Illinois, but Brigham Young did.

ROSE: He actually predicted that he could see the opposition coming and he predicted that they would probably have to establish their Zion outside the United States, at that point. He said the Rocky Mountains. And so, Brigham Young sort of inherited that mandate and was the one that led them out of Illinois after his assassination and across to Utah.

Q: So, the chronology. Was Brigham Young side by side with Joseph Smith.

ROSE: Very much so. Joseph Smith's goal, and he felt it was inspired by the Lord, was to reestablish the New Testament church that Jesus Christ established. So, he had set it up with twelve apostles and Brigham Young was the head of those twelve apostles, like Peter. And Joseph was the prophet that led the church.

Q: So, Joseph Smith kind of sensed everything that was going to happen. He didn't know they would end up in Salt Lake City, but—

ROSE: He was amazingly prescient.

Q: Really?

ROSE: In the 1830s he predicted that the Civil War would eventually happen, and it would start in South Carolina. And they buried that prophecy for a few years because they thought no, this is too far-fetched.

Q: That's really fascinating. So, okay, Brigham Young. He escaped the calamities, I guess, and then he gathered what remained of the members and they went in the Conestoga wagons and went through all the—

ROSE: Right. All the new converts that were flocking to the United States from Europe.

Q: So, this was demographically pretty important.

ROSE: Yeah. And my ancestors on both sides—my dad's and my mother's—were part of that movement. They crossed the plains in those wagons and established their families in Utah.

Q: Any idea why Brigham Young chose Utah as opposed to going West?

ROSE: It was uninhabited, and the surrounding area was uninhabited. In fact, one of his people who was sent around Cape Horn with a shipload of people going to Utah got to San Francisco and said hey, California looks a lot better than that desert, why don't we all come out to California? And Brigham said no. We like being isolated.

Q: Well, these were very long trips. We forget how arduous. I mean, Cape Horn it would have taken six months or something to get from the East coast to the West. Crazy.

ROSE: Yeah. Members of that party were working at Sutter's Mill when gold was discovered.

Q: Okay. Which benefited those who got there first, and I guess not those who got there later. What else about the culture of the Church of Latter Day Saints? From the outside we see them as having a great amount of solidarity, supporting one another. They say they are the best neighbors you can have even if you're not one of them. What are the characteristics of this group? I did not see the Broadway play, but I guess it's a riff on the cheerfulness, the positivity, the optimism. Is that an accurate view of how it is?

ROSE: I think part of the key to that is there is a doctrinal thing that comes into play. There's a phrase in the New Testament that Christ uses, "be of good cheer." And that has been picked up and amplified even in teachings from the Book of Mormon, "Adam fell that man might be, men are that they might have joy" is one of the lines from the Book of Mormon. And so, there is. And Brigham Young and Joseph Smith both—the early leadership of the church—really tried to build a social order that was not—again, maybe

we go back to kind of distancing themselves from the Puritans who we tend, at least from our historical position, to look back on as a kind of dour people.

Q: So, we can see the Great Awakening as the trunk of the tree and the Church of Latter Day Saints one of the branches. Where does this word Mormon come from?

ROSE: Well, the book that Joseph Smith—his first contribution to the whole religious movement—was that he said he received revelation that there were some golden plates buried in a hill in New York that were a history of ancient America and that there were actually people here who were Christians but that they were wiped out and eventually there were no more Christians, there were only Aztecs, Incas, and Toltecs and Mayans and so forth. But that there was—and that Christ even visited the Americas after his resurrection. And so, this whole history that was written on these gold plates was written by a man whose name was Mormon.

Q: I see.

ROSE: And so, Joseph said that he translated this book that was written on these ancient plates and then he brought it to publication in Palmyra, New York. And so, even though he said the name of the church that was revealed to him should be the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, it became a lot more common for people to call them Mormons because they believe in the Book of Mormon. And so, it was not a name applied by our church, and in fact our current president of the church has said, we should use the real name of the church as much as possible.

Q: I thought that. I have understood that the word Mormon is not preferred. But the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is a very long name, so it's easy to say Mormon.

ROSE: Yes, it's a shorthand.

Q: It's not offensive, it's just not the preferred term.

ROSE: No, it just refers to the book we believe in but not the official name of the church.

Q: What else can we say about the belief, the lifestyle, the mode of social organization. We know it's very cohesive and that members get great benefits by being members from other members. What else should people know about this fascinating movement?

ROSE: It's interesting, during the time that we served our second senior mission in New Jersey we lived in Lakewood, in which 40% of the population is made up of Orthodox Jews.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, 40 percent of 110,000. And so, I got to look at our community, what a community in Utah looks like to an outsider.

Q: Interesting. Yeah. You know, I used to travel with African visitors to the U.S. and when I took them once to the Pennsylvania Dutch country, and one of them said, can you remind me, what's the difference between these people and Orthodox Jews.

ROSE: Well, yeah.

Q: They appeared to be similar. And he said this very guilelessly, very innocently.

ROSE: Yeah. Really since the middle of the last century the church has tried to kind of move away from that and has started partnering with other organizations for charitable work and other things and we go, to the extent that we're allowed, to councils of ecumenical efforts and things like that. And our current president has been to Rome and had an audience with the Pope and all of those kinds of things. So, I think we're moving away from that, but originally you can understand why after all that persecution people would have formed such a cohesive unit and tried to become independent of outside influences and people. And there are some distinctive practices that set us apart. Obviously one of them that you just referred to is what we call the Word of Wisdom, which proscribes the use of alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee.

Q: I don't remember referring to it, but yes. Also, tea and coffee. Is this a lifestyle thing or is it a liturgical thing?

ROSE: Yeah, originally when Joseph Smith revealed it and made it a part of his teachings, he said it was strictly voluntary. And so there was a long period when members—he said, I give it not as a commandment, but as a word of wisdom. These things are not good for you.

Q: Okay.

ROSE: So, I think it was really anything that forms a dependency is sort of the unifying characteristic. It's actually broader. He counseled in the full revelation, as he called it, not only to avoid things that are not good for you, but he advises the use of grains liberally and meat sparingly.

Q: Now, Mitt Romney, what are we to think of him? Is he a role model, do you suppose?

ROSE: He is considered to be a practicing member of the church and yeah, I think unfortunately in my mind the right-wing fringe of the membership of the church considers him to be too liberal because he is probably one of Trump's main detractors within the Republican party.

Q: So, what's the relationship between membership in a church and support for Trump? I don't understand that at all. Is there some logical relation there?

ROSE: I think it's pretty clearly traceable to the fact that over the years the Republican party has emerged as the party of self-reliance, the democratic party is seen as the party of welfare. And the church has a very strong ethic of self-reliance. We are taught that we are to take care of ourselves. So, just because Trump emerged as the leader of the Republican party, he inherited that, but there were an awful lot of members of the church—including myself even though I'm not a Republican—who were uncomfortable with his morals.

Q: He seems to be the opposite of self-reliant. Silver spoon in his mouth. He himself is the incarnation of something which is absolutely the opposite of self-reliance.

ROSE: But because he's emerged as the leader of the Republican party I would say the majority of the members of the U.S. church—by the way, I would say at this point over half the membership of the church is in other countries, not in the United States. But within the United States I would say that the majority of church members have that tradition of voting for the Republican party.

Q: I don't want to say it, but that seems to go in the face of critical thinking.

ROSE: Yes.

Q: Blind obedience.

ROSE: It certainly does in my mind. And there are more than just a handful of us.

Q: I lived in Denmark where I know the church is very strong, in Jutland especially, and I guess that has to do with Danish migration to the U.S. I mean, every Dane is related to somebody, and many Danes live in Nebraska. There is a connection, I think it's a genealogical thing. And the church there does have a very strong influence, especially in Jutland the peninsula.

ROSE: Right. In fact, one of my neighbors who lives here in the senior living community that I'm living in now because of Ruth's need to be here, both she and her husband are of Danish ancestry, and they were actually called to serve a mission back in Denmark and he was the president of the Danish mission during an earlier stage of their life.

Q: So, you say half of them are outside of the U.S. Denmark. Are there any concentrations in any geographic area?

ROSE: There are ones that you probably would not predict.

Q: Like Venezuela?

ROSE: No. I think the highest percentage of the population of any place in the church is Samoa.

Q: You're right, I would never have guessed that.

ROSE: 30-40% of the population of that country is LDS (Latter Day Saints). Chile, roughly 2% of the population are LDS. And Brazil and Mexico, the numbers are in the millions. Most recently the most rapid growth points of the church are in West Africa.

Q: Well, we know that in West Africa what we collectively call evangelist churches are making tremendous headway to the detriment of the Catholic Church. I think Africans are kind of sick of Catholicism because it did not treat them well and it was very condescending to them. I think various churches that are not Catholic are growing very strong. Africans are very religious. They've turned against Catholicism, I think. To what extent is the growth of the numbers an important aspect? Is this a stated goal?

ROSE: Absolutely. I told you that the whole concept was that Joseph Smith felt that he was called to restore the New Testament church. The final instruction of Jesus to his apostles was "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel of the kingdom, baptizing…" and so forth. So, that was part of the restoration movement, that that responsibility now falls to the church. And so, there is a force of approximately 60,000 missionaries who are willing to give two years of voluntary service around the world to try to let people know that the New Testament church has been restored and to offer them the opportunity to learn about it.

Q: From the scriptures do we have the impression that Jesus actually intended to create a new religion?

ROSE: No, he built on Judaism.

Q: I don't know, I suppose he never imagined this would create a religion that would try to replace his own native Judaism.

ROSE: Well, it's hard to know because he did say, "old things are done away, all things have become new." It was definitely a revolution within, but it was within Judaism because they still had the practices associated with Judaism. Centrality of temple worship and other things that go on there.

Q: Something like what Martin Luther did. He wanted to break the hypocrisy and the corruption of the established religion. We'll never know, but it's interesting to wonder what he might have thought about that. We know that the money changers at the temple, he was enraged by the corruption and hypocrisy of the established religion. We don't know if he meant to reform it or replace it, I guess.

ROSE: That's a good point. So, the view from our perspective is that the Reformation was a precursor to the restoration and that the work of Calvin and Luther and Wesley and all the others was to prepare the way so that this restored church could thrive, and that is one of the reasons that many members of our church are so strong and solid in their faith.

Q: I don't mean this in a deprecating way, but it does sound like a dialectic, the way Marxism—the inevitability of something happening in the future. And it seems to me there seems to be a similar kind of thinking. Not that it's like Marxism, but the idea that one thing—

ROSE: Leads to another and that there has to be a set of circumstances that are precursors to what takes place later and so forth as the evolution progresses to a better state.

Q: And actually, I mean, this is kind of silly, but Joseph Smith wrote and was active only about fifteen years before Karl Marx was. There was something, this sense of dialectic, this sense of etiological process. Very interesting.

ROSE: I'll add one more piece to that. Somehow our family inherited a 1909 or something edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. And I looked up Mormonism in it. It said, see communism.

Q: So, I guess I touched a nerve. There. Really?

ROSE: Well, one of the things that was characteristic of the church in the early days is the restoration of that New Testament practice of having everything in common. People deeded over their property to the bishop and then he distributed it according to need.

Q: I mean, the reason this is so funny, we think of Marxism as opposing religion, in fact it's kind of similar. Wow. Okay, that is a subject for a conference or a lecture. I want you to do this Doug. Why are these things contemporaneous? It's very interesting. I guess because conditions in North America and Europe were so miserable for most people, they had to imagine how things could be less terrible, I suppose. Yeah. Fascinating.

ROSE: Well, that's probably enough on that branch of my retirement.

Q: It could be. Are there other things we should mention? Carving ducks and activities in the church.

ROSE: Well, let me just throw in three significant pieces that are associated with my church and religion and belief. And that is that four and a half years into retirement, as I alluded to earlier, I received a phone call from an attorney that I had known in Venezuela, and after catching up on our lives since we had last seen each other or been in touch, he said, would you mind sending me a resume without asking why.

Q: You alluded to this at one point, yeah.

ROSE: I said yeah, okay, so we knew that something was in the works that we were going to be asked to do something, but I didn't know what. And that was the one where Ruth said, I just hope they don't want us to move to Salt Lake. And when I got the phone call two and a half months later it was a request to come to Salt Lake, not to stay there

but to talk about an assignment to spend three years establishing Latter Day Saint Charities in India.

Q: Which I think you did.

ROSE: Which we accepted. And we left in May of 1998 to go back to New Delhi, which had been our last overseas post, and went to work getting this new NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) registered and building up its programs. And we partnered with Indian institutions and international NGOs, including Catholic charities and others to carry out humanitarian projects in India and Nepal and provide relief from earthquakes and floods and things like that. So, it was three very satisfying years of work in a totally different type of thing than I had done previously.

Q: Well, you knew the terrain, you had lived in India, and this was a different experience but a familiar environment, of course.

ROSE: And that of course is why they were looking for someone like us who would be willing to go there. One of the interesting things about that is there was some issue about getting a visa because the government at that time was the same party that's in power now, and it's a Hindu nationalist party.

Q: If you're not Hindu, you're bad, right?

ROSE: Well, at least not as welcome. And so, they had evicted all of the North American missionaries from the country that the Congress party had let in. So, when the church looked at the remains of the day there were three couples that were serving in humanitarian capacities there who were invited by their host institutions, the National Institute for the Deaf, an orphanage, and I don't remember what else. But anyway, they said if we could at least build up the humanitarian program, it would put a different face on the church, not just as an organization looking for converts, even though most of our converts were from other Christian churches, not Hinduism or Islam. And they said, at least we'll have a presence here until we can get things back on track.

Q: So, was it difficult to get a visa?

ROSE: It was because they had said that they would issue no more visas to missionaries. And so, we had to figure out in what capacity we would go because we would not be invited by an Indian institution. So, one of the Indian politicians who had a son at BYU (Brigham Young University) was in Salt Lake visiting his son at the time—or in Utah visiting his son—and they arranged a meeting for me with him and said, see if he can figure out a way to get you in. and he suggested, just go on a tourist visa and explore the lay of the land and see how the other NGOs do it and try to take it from there. So, we did just that. We got a tourist visa, we went to the country, visited with other NGOs, and started getting a feel for what kind of work they were doing and where we might find a little different niche that would be useful and so forth. And then someone while we were there suggested that the Indian embassy in Bangkok was pretty liberal about issuing

business visas, which would give us the authority to enter into contracts and establish a bank account, which would be required for the work we would be doing. So, we flew to Bangkok and spent six weeks there and finally had a very pleasant interview with the Indian consul general there who told us yeah, we'd love to be able to help you, but that kind of thing can only be done in the country of origin.

Q: That's what I thought.

ROSE: Exactly.

Q: Which is what the U.S. government does.

ROSE: So, right at that moment there was a terrible cyclone in Gujarat state of India, and I sent off a message to humanitarian services in Salt Lake and said, you know, it might be helpful to make a big donation to the prime minister's relief fund to help deal with this cyclone. And the church public affairs representative in Washington, D.C. went down and gave the ambassador a $10,000 check to contribute to the fund. And so, I showed up a few weeks later in Washington and was ushered into the DCM's office in the embassy because the ambassador was out of town. He was very grateful and he said, I understand you are one of the tribe. And I said, yes, I was in the diplomatic service of the United States for twenty-five years, but I said I'm looking for opportunities to provide humanitarian services now and I need a visa. And he called the consul general and said, this one is not a missionary, give him a business visa.

Q: I salute you. Smart. Every step of that is very smart.

ROSE: So, we went back to India a few weeks later and took up our position and had a very satisfying tour. We brought in several couples to serve in work for the blind, sent shipments of food and relief supplies when there were earthquakes and disasters and so forth, the kind of thing the church has become noted for.

Q: That's very smart. So, three years, you said?

ROSE: Yes.

Q: And then straight to Boise after that?

ROSE: We came back to Boise and a year and a half later or so—let's see, we got back in 2001 and in 2003 I believe it was I was asked to become president of the ten congregations of the church in east Boise.

Q: Ten congregations?

ROSE: Yes. So, I would be responsible for overseeing the work of ten bishops who head up the individual congregations.

Q: Boise is not huge, why ten?

ROSE: We had multiple groups of congregations, what we call wards, in Boise, and I was called to preside over, be responsible for, the ten because they figured that was a manageable group for a president and his counselors and twelve—

Q: Again, was this a lay position? Not paid?

ROSE: Yes. So, it took about twenty hours a week.

Q: Oh my gosh. That's like a job.

ROSE: Yeah. And most people who occupy the job are not retired. The man who replaced me was the vice president of Albertsons supermarket, still employed.

Q: Oh gosh. So, people are very busy when they take these positions.

ROSE: Yeah. So, I had to be careful to make sure it didn't become a full-time job, or I would have made it difficult for my successor.

Q: You were the advisor, the counselor for those overseeing their congregations.

ROSE: Yeah. And so, I did deal with some difficult cases and and advised them on ways to deal with the challenges they were facing. And I actually issued the invitations for them to serve as bishops and released them when their time was up, usually they serve for about five years. My assignment was for nine years.

Q: Oh, well that brings us pretty close to the present, I think.

ROSE: So, I filled that and was released in 2012 after which Ruth and I—my wife and I—said, you know, we've probably got time where we could serve one more mission, let's just tell them we're available. And we sent in our application, and they said, we could use you in New Jersey. So, we were assigned for eighteen months to help in a Spanish-speaking branch in south-central New Jersey.

Q: Okay. With 40% Orthodox Jews.

ROSE: Right. The other 30% of that community were Hispanics who worked for the Jews. So, I had the opportunity to serve in our country where Anglo-Saxons are a minority.

Q: Amazing. Let's see, the groups you've mentioned, did any of them respond to efforts of proselytizing?

ROSE: We did not attempt to proselytize in the Jewish community, it was all with the Hispanic community.

Q: Yeah.

ROSE: And English-speaking. The few. The remaining 30%.

Q: So, you had your house in Boise?

ROSE: Yeah. Our daughter and her husband moved into it while her husband was working on a degree at Boise State, a second bachelor's degree. And so, they occupied our home during those eighteen months, and we went to…no, actually they occupied our home during the India assignment. We came back to that. We had downsized somewhat from my farm. During the time that I was a president I didn't have time to be a farmer anymore. And so, we lived in another part of Boise, a smaller home, a smaller garden, and then sold that house when we went to New Jersey.

Q: Oh, okay. But you kind of knew you would go back, perhaps.

ROSE: Yeah, but we put our belongings in storage and left for eighteen months and had a delightful time working with that small congregation of Hispanics. I just was visiting with a preacher, a pastor, for the United Church of Christ today, who is one of my closest friends, and he had just been to a wedding. And he said, yeah, I finally got them married, they've been living together for a long time. I said, yeah, that's what I did in New Jersey. A lot of the Hispanics there were reluctant to go to a government office to get a marriage license and they'd been living together for quite a while, but one of the requirements of our church is that if you're going to be living with a spouse and sleeping with a spouse you have to be married. And so, I learned the rules of how to get marriage licenses and how to get the county offices to accept Mexican passports instead of other documentation so that they could get married.

Q: Well, great. So, we've been to Venezuela and Peru and India and Thailand and New Jersey. It's a direct line, a dialectical progression to New Jersey. Now, New Jersey was new territory for you. Well, you had lived in Virginia but not really in…

ROSE: Yeah. So, it was very interesting, and we found ourselves sometimes doing things like going with some of our people to doctor's offices and school offices to get their kids enrolled because they didn't speak enough English. We served as interpreters for them and did all this kind of thing. We left the proselytizing to the young missionaries, but they would sometimes bring—because I became the marriage expert—they would bring some of the people that they were teaching to me and say, get these people married so we can baptize them.

Q: Great. So, you lined things up, and that's kind of pattern when you were counselor and then you were president. So, you never did not have a commitment to the church. You did other things. You had time and energy to do more than one thing. This is admirable. Well, we've gone around the world. Is it time to have some concluding thoughts, Doug? This is a very fascinating story.

ROSE: I think so. If you've got just a few more minutes I think that's all it will take. It was at the close of that time in New Jersey that Ruth was our branch pianist for the church. And I may have mentioned that toward the end of our time there, occasionally she would lose her place on the page in the music and would start playing a different hymn from memory.

Q: Interesting. So, you knew that something was changing.

ROSE: She began to lose her place when she was reading from the Bible or the Book of Mormon. And the members just said, oh, it's because her Spanish is not good enough. It wasn't that. She had the same problem in English.

Q: So, you knew something was happening?

ROSE: So, they asked us to extend to a two year mission, and I said no, I need to get my wife back and get her evaluated. On return we took her back to the neurologist and he said yeah, you're dealing with Alzheimer's, and we need to help you learn how to care for a spouse.

Q: Very challenging, very painful.

ROSE: So, we bought a smaller home in a 55+ community where all the yard work was taken care of, and it was a place where I could monitor her and support her, and I took over all the cooking and the shopping and all of that. And initially she was still able to interact socially and so forth, but it was when she lost her ability to read that it just really became difficult because that had entertained her, and I was spending an awful lot of time with her. Our daughters, two of them, gave me respite to help out a couple of times a week and that, but eventually it got to the point where I could see that caring for her in that circumstance in that environment would be difficult, so we moved in 2019 to our present location, a senior living community where there are three stages of care available. We spent the first two years in independent living where I could still care for her, and then things became difficult enough with delusions and hallucinations and getting up at night and everything that it was time to have her go to the memory care unit. And so, I was just a few steps away. At night she would say, where are you going to sleep, and I'd say, my room is over there and point to the left.

Q: So, how many months or years was this the case? From the time you knew?

ROSE: Interestingly enough the literature on Alzheimer's says that the average lifespan from diagnosis to death is eight years, and that's almost exactly what hers was. Eight years. And so, she spent two years in the memory care unit and passed away on April 6 of this year.

Q: Which was the date of our first conversation.

ROSE: That's right. It's also the date of the establishment of our church.

Q: Really?

ROSE: April 6, 1830.

Q: Okay. Well, I think the principal importance is that's the day I met you. Well, you were very brave, very steadfast, we need to say that. We know it's terrible to see a loved one lose their memory and then we know it's very much of a strain. I have a very close friend in Oregon who's going through this right now. I try to talk to him often. They say they have a new medication, but we don't really know if that's ever going to really work. It's a very cruel and long process and you were there throughout. Good for you, Doug Rose, good for you.

ROSE: Thank you. Well, I will just make one final observation and that is that I had to learn to live alone for the last two years and now to even see what remained of her pass away three months ago, approximately. So I have learned what it is to live alone and I've decided that I don't like it. So, I've started dating.

Q: According to the precept of the church. Good for you.

ROSE: There's a line in the Bible that it's not good for man to be alone. In Genesis.

Q: Oh, I never saw that.

ROSE: It was after the creation of Adam and when the Lord was getting ready to make Eve.

Q: Well, that's very intriguing, I won't ask for any details. I absolutely approve of what you're doing, and I know Ruth would. I know she would approve.

ROSE: Well, in fact when she knew what was going to happen, she essentially told me she would not be upset if I found someone else, so this week I actually had someone to dinner that I'm very interested in.

Q: Well, congratulations.

ROSE: She's the executive director of an NGO here in Boise that teaches work skills to refugees.

Q: Terrific. Yeah, I'm working with PRM (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration) and refugees is big. I don't deal with them, but I deal with the statistics, the tragedy, the challenges. 100 million people in the world cannot live in their place of origin. It's just absolutely—the last time I looked it was 60 million, and I remember that because it was the population of Great Britain, now it's almost double. This is not working. Good for you to find somebody who's trying to address that issue. That's great.

And we will stay in touch, and you will tell me how that proceeds. I don't need to know every detail but I'm very glad. You're a man of principle and you still are and this whole story has been a lesson in the value of living by your beliefs, which you have always done. This is—I was going to say remarkable—no, it's normal, it's just that most people don't do that.

ROSE: Well Dan, this has been a very satisfying and enjoyable journey with you, and I will stay in touch. I've got your email and phone. And I would also like to hear from you on your Ukraine involvement.

Q: Count on it. I just bought a ticket to go back in October and I'm very excited. I should say from my part, this has been a revelation. A small r revelation. This has been for me a profound experience and a lesson of a life that I did not choose but which I totally admire. So, it's been a great privilege, Doug. And yes, you'd better be ready to hear from me because you will.

ROSE: Good.

Q: So, we're supposed to sign out. I believe this is our tenth conversation, it is July 4, 2023. Doug Rose talking with Dan Whitman. Thank you, and if you have any other thoughts, we'll put together another few of these any time. It's been a tremendous pleasure and an enrichment. Thank you, Doug.

ROSE: For me as well, thank you.

End of interview