

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

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEONARD F. WALENTYNOWICZ**

*Interviewed by: William D. Morgan*  
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## INTERVIEW

*SUMMARY: Leonard Walentynowicz, a political appointee to the head of consular affairs in the State Department during the Ford Administration, gives a very personal and direct accounting of his two-plus years directing visa, passport and American citizen services. He opens with considerable background--frank and highly pointed in detail--on the considerations that brought him to this assignment. The political realities of how he was appointed--actually delayed in his appointment under the Nixon Administration--as Administrator for Security and Consular Affairs, should be enlightening and real-world background for the reader. Once on board, Mr. Walentynowicz describes in detail how he was welcomed, briefed and brought "on board" by the professional employees. He then spends most of the rest of the interview outlining his experiences and opinions on how immigration law is developed, carried out, and changed depending on the many forces at play in American society and Congress. His anecdotes of his own experiences as a novice in such work are most personal and point to many of the managerial techniques needed in directing such a large and important function of foreign affairs. He ends up giving considerable inside views and facts on the relationships with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. [The final twenty or so minutes of the interview were not transcribed due to a failure in the tape recording device. Mr. Walentynowicz did not edit the transcript.]*

*BIOGRAPHY: Mr. Walentynowicz was brought up in Buffalo, New York, in close association with the Polish community. Going on to obtain his law degree from the University of Buffalo, he found his legal career tied with this and other ethnic communities as he felt drawn to the need to help his fellow Polish citizens assume more responsible and rewarding places in American society. This aim also found him in close touch with Republican party circles so when President Nixon was re-elected it was felt in Polish circles that one of that ethnic group should be represented in the federal government. After he resigned with the end of the Ford Administration, Mr. Walentynowicz went back into private law, but because of his new experience has since done considerable legal work in immigration law matters.*

This interview of Leonard Walentynowicz is a part of an ongoing series of oral history interviews under the auspices of the Abba Schwartz Foundation of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation. Retired Foreign Officers Charles Stuart Kennedy and William D. Morgan are the recipients of a grant from the Schwartz trust aimed principally at interviewing ten present or former senior officials of the State Department associated with migration to the United States. While the interviews deal in the individuals' over-all experiences, particular emphasis is placed on the visa function.

Leonard Walentynowicz held the position of Administrator for Security and Consular Affairs under the Ford administration. Shortly after he left in 1977, the office became the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, which it remains today. Mr. Walentynowicz

came from a law firm in Buffalo, New York, and as he discusses in the interview was appointed for his work with the Republican Party and his close association with Polish and other ethnic issues.

*Q: Let me start off our interview, Len, by your telling us a little bit of your background before we get more deeply into your ideas and experiences.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I welcome this opportunity to help Bill and Stu in their work, because I think these oral histories are very beneficial in filling out kind of historical background that America needs. Not so much that my experiences are so unique and special, but more in a sense that if we are going to make a better America, we have to understand how America worked in the past so that we avoid the mistakes, to prepare better for the future. So in that spirit, I am going to be as open as I possibly can to Bill in responding to his questions and in responding to his task.

I'd like to begin by making some comments that are much broader than just my perspective in coming to the department of state. Because, quite frankly, I come from an ethnic background, I'm a Polish-American, American first, no question in my mind about it! I'm happy to have been born in America, but I'm also happy that I have my ethnic heritage. There has been, and I think will continue to be in this idea of identity a challenge for America for the foreseeable future. I grew up in western New York, and I was a blue collar guy, I don't say this made me better, but on the other hand, I'm just telling you what I am.

My parents, neither one of them went to high school. My father never finished grammar school. He was born in a part of the Soviet Union which was known as Belorussia, but he was Polish, also a little bit Lithuanian. My mother was born here in Buffalo and we came out to the east side of Buffalo to Kaisertown, Kaisertown meaning the part of Buffalo which is like German, Polish, etc. It was an ethnic enclave over there, and I enjoyed my childhood. It had the smell of the market, the food going down, and seeing all of the merchants, and the meat cutters, and the sausage makers, the open air markets, and so forth. It was very enjoyable growing up.

I started in a parochial school, but then, I switched to a public school, I'm a product of the public school system, P.S. #24, and I graduated. I went to Buffalo Technical High School, and then to the State University of Buffalo, but at that time, it was called the University of Buffalo. I got my B.S. degree in accounting in 1953, and my law degree in 1955. I enjoyed it.

*Q: Where did you get your law degree from?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: The State University of New York at Buffalo, and I started to practice law. I was a member of the district attorney's office for seven years before I left that office in 1963 and went to private practice.

*Q: Were you prosecuting attorney with them?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, as a matter of fact, and this, I think is of some significance. Not that I want to overly emphasize it, but I think that it is of some significance, because at that time, ethnic identity and recognition were very, very important, and I was, so to speak, the second Polish-American brought into the district attorney's office in Erie county, and I was the first Polish-American that got to be as so high and when I left the office, I was the number three guy in the office and I was, let me see, how old was I at that time? I was only 31 years old.

*Q: Did you sense discrimination to use that word that means so many things?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh yeah, yeah. Not in the same sense as let's say as blacks or some of the other groups that were singled out later on in the civil rights movement, but there was no question whatsoever in my mind, that the doors were closed. I will give you a vivid example. As I was going to college and I wanted to supplement, not really supplement, but to actually earn some money with which to continue college, and so forth, I went to an accounting firm in Buffalo to get a job, and the guy told me out and out that one of the reasons that they weren't going to hire me was because of my name. Well, later on when I got to be assistant secretary of state, I came back to Buffalo and made a call on this guy.

But in any event, that's part of my history, see. So achieving recognition, etc., was very, very important, and again, I don't mean to... It's over. But the essential meaning to me was you achieve recognition on merit. That was very, very important to me, no matter what I did whether it was in sports -- I used to run cross country, I used to wrestle in college -- whatever I did. I was active in CYO, we did one-act plays, we did public speaking. I happened to win the spelling championship at some point, and I won an American Legion medal.

But the idea was, you get recognition because you work hard and you did the right thing, and you did it on merit. I wasn't so naive that nothing else mattered, it wasn't that, but the primary ingredient was merit, ok. Yes, maybe there may have been an occasion where you knew this person or that person and you had to get your case over, and what have you, but as I said, the idea was merit. I think that that is very, very important, because I think it will reflect significantly as to how I happened to come to the Department and on my proceedings, my role in the Department, my interrelationship, and what I did thereafter.

So, what happened is, I left the D.A.'s office in 1963 and I opened up a law practice and I did all kinds of other things. In fact, one of the first cases that I had about three or four years down the line, was a criminal I took over in New York. We had the case of People vs. McCall, which is a landmark case. I was able to establish in the court of appeals in the state of New York the fact that when you have a search warrant for eavesdropping, the

telephone, you have to have probable cause, constitutional principle, but that wasn't the only case. I was in the court appeals, maybe in my lifetime, 100 times or more.

*Q: In your own practice, was it more criminal law, civil law, or the whole smear?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Both, but I did a lot of criminal practice. And then, I was reasonably engaged in politics, I wasn't overly engaged. I never ran for public office, I supported candidates and so forth. For example, I was one of the few guys in East Buffalo, Polish-American, who supported Rockefeller, and now that was like heresy, because the Polish-Americans in Buffalo were all traditionally Democrats, and yet, that year, Rockefeller was able to win, and win big. And then of course, we cut our feet off because he raised taxes after promising not to do that.

*Q: Of course, he was the governor of the state of New York, so he had some credentials going (chuckle).*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, no. Rockefeller wasn't at first governor, he was just a wealthy guy and you know, to try to convince blue collar people that wealthy guys have their best interests in mind, its tough!

*Q: Did you find yourself with this ethnic background in difficulty with your fellow ethnic group?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh sure, at times, that happened, particularly since I was Republican and Polish-Americans in Buffalo are Democrats. One of the reasons, I'm not saying exclusive reasons, I made a conscious decision to be that was that my father was a Republican. What happened, actually, the Polish-Americans in Buffalo would have been Republican traditionally, except for the depression. They made a significant switch after Hoover got elected in '28 and then it was just a movement over to the Democratic party, and they remained ever since.

*Q: Because the Polish people suffered from unemployment, and depression more than just purely economic?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, yeah.

*Q: How about today, just to bring us up to date?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh no, today, the Polish-American voter, at least in Buffalo, is very independent minded. He registers Democrat, but he will definitely be a switch voter. He, provided, or she provided, I don't want to be accused of discriminating, that voter provided a great deal of support that elected Ronald Reagan, in 1980 and 1984, and also, pardon me, 1988.

*Q: Are these what they call the Reagan Democrats?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yep, yeah, yeah, though interestingly enough, Reagan did not do as well in Erie County as he did statewide, like more people supported him there. The Democratic machine in Erie County is very effective and the people just had to vote Democratic.

*Q: We had better get you back though to the real world, that is to say, what happened? (chuckle)*

WALENTYNOWICZ: What happened? Let me just give you an idea of what occurred. So, I'm involved politically off and on in various campaigns, do this and do that, and so forth. I am also involved in ethnic organizations, and during this early part of my career, I became a member of the National Advocate Society, which is a national group of attorneys, Polish-American attorneys. It was basically a social, professional type of organization. This group of lawyers also met at the same time with a group of physicians and dentists, also Polish-American heritage, and in the course of these meetings, I got to know a lot of people nationally, ok. All kinds of people, and although I wasn't too involved in the Polish-American fraternal, I did meet some people involved in the fraternal organizations. If one would trace the history of the American colonies, you will find that every ethnic group had various power structures, and in the Polish-American community, the primary power structure, the formal power structure was the fraternal in an organization that is called the Polish-American Congress, which is supposed to be an umbrella group of all of the organizations.

*Q: Did they call it a PAC, as they use the term today?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: That's right, they call it a PAC now, but it's not so much a PAC, because now PACs are purely political. This group had a role beyond that, it had a mission, in fact, almost a messianic mission. They were going to free Poland, they were very disturbed that Poland fell under the influence of the Soviet Union in 1945, because of the Yalta agreements, and that was their mission.

*Q: So they blamed Roosevelt and Truman.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh, absolutely, yeah!

Q. So, anti-Democratic party?

WALENTYNOWICZ: Very. This particular group was more Republican than Democrat, no question. Absolutely. That doesn't mean that some of them weren't Democrats and some of them didn't support Democrats when the occasion arose; it just meant that, basically speaking, they were anti-communist and they would support the Republicans solely for that reason. Nixon got a lot of support from this group, which will tie in with my other remarks. Well, in any event, what happened is, I became known personally to numbers of the National Advocate Society. That society gets a large number of its

members from Chicago, ok. The head of the PAC, at the time, was Al Mazewski, who was also from Chicago, and Nixon was running.

*Q: What year again?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: This is now we are talking 1960, 1960. Nixon doesn't win, he loses to Kennedy, but the point is, there is this connection. Then there's 1964, with Mr. Johnson, he wins. Then you have '68, now '68 is very, very significant, because this is time that you have Humphrey running against Nixon and Nixon wins.

*Q: You were continuing through this period in your own practice, doing straightforward legal...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: ...straightforward legal work, conducting a general practice of law, not involved in anything that is like State Department work. I'm not saying that I never thought about it, being in State, but I was not doing anything, didn't have any background in international law, and so forth, but I did achieve a reputation as being a good person for law and order. Because during this time, I also was teaching trial practice at the University of Buffalo, N.Y.; did that for ten years. I also was an instructor at the Sheriffs' Training Academy, an instructor at the Buffalo Police Academy, etc. So I acquired a bit of a reputation that I was knowledgeable in the field of law enforcement, both ways, criminal defense and prosecution. So, I'm doing all of these things, and also involved to a certain extent politically and also ethnically. I want to say that it was my reason for existence, but it wasn't. I was involved politically, and I would say in a generic sense. I would say that I was doing generally speaking what, an "American" gets involved in.

*Q: Especially lawyers...(chuckle)*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, lawyers, exactly, right, you got it! You do a little politics, you do a little community work, a little of this goop, and you may believe in it, which I did, but it also helps you professionally, business and so forth. So, I'm not going to say that I'm mundane or only motivated by some great movement, you know.

*Q: Sounds like real-world humanism.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, so you do all of these things, and you get involved with people that have problems, and you do all of these things, and at some times you have fun. Which means I go to these conventions and people get to know me and etc. So now, you have the background. So, what happens, in '68, Nixon wants to win, and Nixon does win. In '72, he wants to win again. He is looking for support, looking for support in ethnic groups. Nixon, more so than any other president, recognized the fact that ethnic groups, such as Polish-American, were being left out. Remember, this is not Johnson's great society, and so forth. We have all of that civil rights legislation, we have all of this emphasis on certain select groups that are receiving, and perceived to receive, right or wrong, preferential treatment. OK?

*Q: Sort of like today, the black and Hispanic struggle, or Korean?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, whatever. See, so, at that time, it was called a white ethnic, you have to understand the word white. I will talk to you later about that, in my State Department role. I don't know what the hell white means. OK?

*Q: It's not Anglo?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, it isn't. Is it a language? No, it can't be, because white people speak all kinds of languages. Is it a color? No, because there's...

*Q: Shades.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: ....shades. And not only that, but I got a major clientele of Arab, Yemeni people or they certainly are not as white as I am, and yet they are classified by the government as white.

*Q: Is there a box on all forms that says white or black or ...?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, we'll get to that later on, because I think that is an important part that I played in the State Department, in fact, it was one of the last things that I did, and I will talk to you about it later on. But, it's important also, because it tells you what my frame of mind is. Where I'm coming from. Here I'm coming from this point. Well, Nixon recognized us. OK?

*Q: You didn't know him personally, at this time?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh, I happened to have, I'll tell you, met him because I was in politics and, I think, the second time Eisenhower got elected, I think it was like '56, I happened to be in Washington, and just to shake his hand. It's the closest I ever came. But in any event, later on I got to meet him, it was different, but I was just talking about now. Now, between the period of '68 and '72....

*Q: ...in his first term?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: First term. So, he gets elected his first term and he's doing his thing and his policies and all of that kind of stuff, etc. Now he comes to be elected in '72, ok, and he got elected in part in '68, because he had the support of certain ethnic groups. He got the endorsement and the support of the Polish-American Congress and the Polish-American community. That doesn't mean that he ran out of the Polish-American community, but it was significant. It helped him to form his majority. Well, the point that I'm getting at is, that, you play politics, and so forth, there is this log rolling idea. You do something for me, and I'll do something for you, alright. At that point, because of the emphasis on other groups, and the fact that up to that point, Polish-Americans were never

recognized in any high places. I can't prove to you statistically, because, then, and even now, the government never made any studies or created any statistics on Polish-Americans, Italian-Americans, or any of these other quote "subgroups" of the white category. We have all kinds of data regarding women, gays, and I don't know what the hell else, but we don't have ANY kind of statistics on these other ethnic groups, but...

*Q: That's surprising, even in the census, that context, nothing?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Nothing. Even in 1980 when I left the Department--I went to work for the Polish-American Congress, as a lobbyist, a representative here--was the first time we really had an ethnic question in our census. We had a question before in the other census, "Where were you born?"

*Q: But that doesn't say...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: ...what's your ethnic identification? Right, see, so what happened, is, and the census never says what is the upward mobility of your group, or how many are you in this category, that category, it doesn't have that information. But in any event, it would be obvious, regardless of whether you had numbers or had studies, the fact of the matter is, you in the community know what's going on. There weren't any. There were no Polish-American's in high places.

*Q: And they felt un-represented? Was there a...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Discrimination? They are saying, hey, wait a minute. You know, we are being fed this information by Johnson people, intellectuals, and so forth. How do you do this? You look at a particular group and say, how many blacks are there? OK, and so then you say, why don't studies like that happen? Why don't numerical imbalance disparities mean anything to us? Do you follow me? They certainly didn't think that quote "Nixon" or any other non-Polish-American represented them as a white American. They didn't feel that way, there was no symbiotic relationship. "OK, yeah, I voted for you because you have position and so forth, but are you really one of us?" So, to get to the point of what happened, Al Mazewski said "Hey, wait a minute, I supported you and so forth, I want to get some appointments."

*Q: Al Mazewski, again?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Al Mazewski, president of the PAC. OK, he was the titular. I would not say he was the only, leader, but the so called titular. So, what happened, he goes to Nixon, I'm not saying that he made a personal visit or anything else, but you know, communicates with him, lets use that word, in some fashion, whether it was through a group meeting, through memos, or what have you. What happened in effect is, look, if you want us to support you, you are going to have to give us recognition. There was no deal cut, there was no barter, nothing illegal about it, it was just normal American political, not only American, I would say that it happens in any kind of country.

*Q: Perhaps, in part the way Abba Schwartz came to the State Department, to the same job?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah!

*Q: Given Schwartz' political connections and his background in refugee affairs during the post- World War II period --perhaps not unlike the way you came into the same position...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, exactly, in other words, you have merit, you have ability, but in addition, you have this extra fact, some people call it the x-factor, some people call it influence, whatever you want to call it. OK, but I don't find it to be improper nor do I find it to be illegal or any other of that nature. The point was, look, you wanted us to support you, we've got a problem, we are not being recognized. We are being discriminated against, we have other things too on our plate, conditions in Poland, human rights, and all of this stuff, but one of the other things on our plate that we want to use the political leaders to respond to is give us some recognition! Ok, so an understanding was reached, I don't know how, it certainly I don't think was ever put down on paper, but an understanding reached, that there would be some recognition.

*Q: At the White House, certain at the personnel office level?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, but it was conditioned, and I have to give Nixon and his White House staff credit for this. I'm not saying that no other staff should be given credit, so I don't want to get into that, but I think that that staff more so than some of the other staffs later on, including the present president's [Bush], I think. It is one of his present problems, he's got people who are really incompetent around him who don't really carry out his policy.

*Q: Not a very good personnel officer? (chuckle)*

WALENTYNOWICZ: That's correct. But, Nixon had some good personnel people. They said, look, before we want to consider anyone and so forth, we want you to give us a list of qualified people. We just don't want somebody, some rum-a-dum, or...

*Q: Payoff...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, payoff, I want somebody with quality, and so forth. I know I'm being a little arrogant talking about myself, but, and I don't want to leave that impression, but that is the dynamic. You are asking me the truth, so I'm telling you what happened, see. So Al gets this commitment, now he goes around searching for people, ok. Now he's got some people, obviously in Chicago, he doesn't know me from ring-a-ding.

*Q: Oh, he didn't know you?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, not at this time. He knows me generally, there's this guy out there, you know, because I was involved with some activity out there, but he doesn't know me personally, or anything else. He actually tries to, I'll be perfectly frank with you, to get people from Chicago that he knows, and he gets somebody! And I'll tell you who he gets, he gets Mitchell B. Guwalinski, who is a personal friend of mine, and I think he is just a magnificent human being, I'm going to see him later in a couple of weeks. I have maintained my friendship with him, and he gets to be appointed a member of the Export/Import Bank. Actually, he gets appointed by Nixon before '72, just like the last year or two of the first term, he gets appointed in there. So, that's the first appointment, and it turns out marvelously, and it was a great appointment and everything is clear sailing, fine job, in fact, the chairman of the bank at the time was William D. Casey.

*Q: He's deceased.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, right, but the point is Mitch works out beautifully; ok, so he was like a leader. So now what happens is Nixon gets elected again, and they are pleased with Mitch and what they are saying is that you gave us a quality candidate for the Export/Import Bank, etc.

*Q: They were surprised to see a qualified Polish-American!*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Boy, did you say it, a secret, ok. So, they have no answer but, "I've got to have more." So then Al goes around, and he starts talking and he tries to get some other people, but you know...

*Q: Targeted for certain jobs, or just general?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, nope, just general. See, that's the point, it wasn't targeted for that and I will give you some information that you didn't know before about me. Let me just go on with the story. "Just get a qualified Polish-American, we'll find a spot for him, just give me his qualifications, etc., we'll locate him in government, so just find somebody that we can be proud of, that can do the job, etc." That was what was going on at the time. So Al is looking around, and quite frankly, a lot of people don't want to go to Washington, but Nixon wanted somebody to come to Washington. If I'm going to give you a spot, and I can give you some local things, but I want, you want to benefit from it, you want visibility, I want visibility. I want somebody to come to Washington. So, Al finally talks to some of the lawyers, and he talks to Mitch and he also talks to Gene, I think his name is. He has been retired for a while now. He happens to be president...

*Q: Is this the PAC president?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, this is Gene, from the National Advocate Society, and I had been president of the National Society, and I have a lot of friends, and they know me, so they say to him, what about this guy up in Buffalo, how about Lennie? Al looks at me and

says, well, I liked him immediately for one reason, everybody will know that he is Polish-American, with that name (chuckle).

*Q: That and Guwalinski will be unpronounceable (laughter).*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Great, but that's what happened, see. So what happens, is, I got the name, but you know, that's not enough, they got to look you up, and to make a long story short, apparently, they were satisfied that I had the necessary criteria. I didn't have any skeletons in the closet, etc.

*Q: FBI clearance for example?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, that came later, but initially they did their review.

*Q: They, being the White House?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, this is Al. Al has a sense of responsibility, he isn't going to simply just send somebody up their to add to the problems, because he is recommending him to the President. So then, I get recommended to the White House, and then I go through a screening process. Now, the screening process is quite remarkable.

*Q: Again, you didn't know for what position?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Not at the beginning, but then later on I did, before I saw the head honchos, I did. I went down, and I saw the people in the White House personnel office. One of the people that I saw, actually, was Dave Weinberger. Another was Stanton Ames, and a third person is, as a matter of fact, you probably know him, Greg Lebadov.

*Q: Um hum, very well, a lot. I know him through you.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, so Greg actually has the action piece, ok. Stanton and Lebadov are just talking to you to see where you are, how do you react, just like we are talking right now. You are sizing me up, but you don't have to size me up, because you know me, but the point is the same idea. You've been in the Department, you've done personnel work, you know how this goes. OK, so it's sized up. So, apparently the match is going along good. OK.

*Q: Who is the incumbent at the time?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Barbara Watson. No, well, in the State Department, that's not what I was selected for...

*Q: Yeah, oh?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Come on, now I'm going to give you the story. So, what happens is, they make a decision that Jeris Leonard, who is a former congressman, and the head of LEAA, Law Enforcement Administration, now defunct, is leaving. He was going to retire. He says, "Leonard, you're the guy, we're going to slot you the head", and so forth, and I had briefings. I talked with Jeris, I was prepared to take his space, and so forth.

*Q: Did you sense that it was a winning organization or still on the rise?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, and from what I saw, the function was supposed to be. I mean I may have differed a little bit with Jeris Leonard, and I figured that there was going to be some policy action there. As to what direction, how the money was going to be used and so forth, but, to me, it was a challenge, what the hell. I am a guy from Buffalo, I said to myself, look, I've been howling, because I was howling at that time, about the lack of recognition at the high places, I don't care what, Democrat, Republican, whether it was a private industry, I was howling about it. I was criticizing Buffalo banks, no members on the board of directors.

*Q: It was the monster?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, and guess who were the largest savers in the Savings and Loan. Yes, the Polish-Americans and they haven't got a damn representative on the board, and inside it is like fifteen or sixteen people.

*Q: Sort of like Rochester, New York, my hometown, and their attitude towards Italians. Until that "white group", or whatever it was, lost an election!*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, exactly, you would have it well, well in hand, same thing, ok. So, I said to myself, Jesus, you know this isn't going to be the easiest piece of cake in the world, and I may go into a land mine, and what have you. Little did I realize what kind of a land mine that I eventually got into, not so much for State, but some controversy before I got into State. But, I said, what the hell, I've got to put my mouth, I got to do my thing with my mouth. I am going to holler and if the chance comes and they want me, hey, I'll come! And, I felt this, not only as a Polish-American, but as an American! I keep coming back to this idea that for me there is a dual identity, I'm American first, but there is another identity, ok. This other identity I may have to fight, but I'm going to make a better American, I'm not doing it because I want Polish-American's to be superior to everybody else in America, I just want them to have the same shake as an American.

*Q: And this was in the party, which has historically not had the number one title of supporting ethnic groups, like the Democratic party, so that you were in a party that may be a little strange?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct. However, having said that, I have a lot of Democratic friends; in fact, I think that I have more Democratic friends than I have Republican friends, but that's true. But the point that I am getting at, Democrats, while they

supposedly support ethnic groups, they don't. In fact, in other words, sometimes they give a lot of lip service, ok, to them. I'm not saying that the Republicans are not equally guilty, or even more guilty, but that's what it is, ok. So, what we got now here, is a situation, where I'm supposed to go to LEAA, and now, I'm going through...

*Q: The date? '73 maybe?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, he gets elected in '72, ok, so this is like December of '72, after the election of November of '72. Nixon is going to be inaugurated in '73.

*Q: Watergate has not reared its' ugly head yet?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, it happened, it just hasn't surfaced, the scandal hasn't surfaced. This is very important as to how I eventually get to the State Department, very important.

*Q: It's just down the street from Watergate.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, among other things, and not only that, but when I was sworn into office, all of my friends and relatives from Buffalo came and they stayed at the Howard Johnson [across the street from the Watergate]. (laughter) But then the thing started (look out Walentynowicz!). That's what he said, "Look out!" So, this is now December, going to January. They are prepping me up and so forth, and then, in January/February (the exact dates I don't remember now, but sometime in that time frame), I told them why shouldn't they be happy. So, I see Haldeman, and I see John, can't think of his name, I see them all. Colson, the guy with the beard, but we'll get it. I see them, and I'm interviewed by them, and I've got my own impressions. I remember coming home from the interview, talking to my wife and I said to my wife, it's true. He is a liar and a cheat. I'm talking about the attorney general of the United States, I've never seen him before, I had one interview with him...yeah, and I said to my wife, this guy's a liar and a cheat! I have much better opinions about the other two gentlemen, who were decent enough to me, and were nice. I felt that Haldeman was very uh, sort of ramrod.

*Q: Obsessed...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, unsympathetic, obsessed, preoccupied with himself, ok, but the other guy, John, (can't think of his name)

*Q: We'll put it into the transcript when we correct it.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: He was a delight, I really mean it, Ehrlichman! He was a delight, he was most charming, affable, reasonable, no idea that he could be cunning, or devious...

*Q: Or end up in jail...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, now how that happened, I don't know, so I can't comment. And again, more conversations with Jeris and so forth, ok. So then, it looked like everything was going, and then along about April, or early May, something like that, all of a sudden the Nixon administration makes a switch and points at the Italian-American people. That is the same guy who, I can't think of his name, I think it starts with the letter S, who was one of the first Nixon appointees' to criticize Nixon over Watergate. He was gone then. But that was one of the ironies of it.

*Q: But he got the LEAA job?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: He got the LEAA job. So, now, I'm no longer there.

*Q: How did you find out, a telephone call?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, a telephone call.

*Q: Buddy, you didn't make it!*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, you know, I crabbed and so forth, but that didn't disappoint me so much, because I knew that politics are politics, ok, and I was a Republican committeeman for six years before that, I had done political work. You know, I mean, I got out the vote, so I mean, I knew politics. So, I understood that, disappointed yes, but to say to me that I was frustrated or mean or mad, no, what the hell, I mean politics are politics, that type of politics besides that, sometimes politics can be very mean, but in that, I didn't think that was an act of meanness. It was just one of those decisions that had to be made. But Al was upset, and rightly so, because he felt that this somebody was renegeing on a promise made to him. "Find him another spot!" The other spot that we found, and there was only a short time thereafter, it wasn't next week, but a couple of months later, was the post of the assistant secretary of state, or at the time, the Administrator for Security and Consular Affairs. That was the post, it wasn't assistant secretary.

*Q: Alright Len, now we have you in the State Department, but let's back up slightly. You got the position offered to you because...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, because the LEA job went to someone else, and Stanton Anderson and Greg Lebadov and those people made a search and they decided that I should be slotted for the State Department job.

*Q: To the position that Barbara Watson was in?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, now..

*Q: As a Democrat?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, having said that, I don't think I was selected for that position because somehow Leonard Walentynowicz had the credentials for that post, ok. Now, let me put it this way; I may have had the credentials in a sense that yeah, I could do the job, but that wasn't the driving reason. The driving reason, in my opinion, was that Nixon had uh, in a sense, this maybe is the wrong word to use, but let's use the word "accepted," accepted the notion that a black female, Democrat, staunchly Democrat...

*Q: Johnson appointed, anti-Nixon...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Anti-Nixon, remained in the State Department and...

*Q: Got under his craw...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right! If you know anything about Nixon, it got under his craw.

*Q: Why did she stay there so long, four years, plus?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: We soon discovered why she stayed there so long when my name was nominated by Nixon. We discovered it because after I was nominated, I was going to be prepped up for the nomination process. In fact, my name was submitted, submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the usual time-honored tradition required by the Constitution, required by law, and so forth. All of a sudden, my nomination gets on hold, ok.

*Q: Some congressman or senator up there?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, it's a senator! And this explains the answer to your other question.

*Q: A New York senator, perhaps?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: You got it! The senator's name is Jacob Javits. Jacob Javits, if you know anything about him, and I know a lot about him, because I had campaigned for him, he was a Republican.

*Q: Liberal?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: From New York, ok....

*Q: An undisputable leader...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No doubt in my mind about him, he was a conscientious guy, and I supported him, I had no trouble about him. But I was perplexed as to why all of a sudden he put a hold on me.

*Q: A fellow New Yorker?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: A fellow New Yorker, a Republican, I had supported him, I mean, it's not like I was some Johnny-come-lately. I busted my buns for the guy. Now, I found out that I didn't do enough, and not only did I not do enough, but I wasn't perceived to be important enough, and that is because Barbara Watson came from a very respected Jamaican background. She's an American, but she had a Jamaican background, liberal ties, woman in New York City, and...

*Q: Harlem, and very good credentials from Harlem?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, all the way, she had a good record, but what it amounted to really, was that Jacob Javits had supported her throughout the first Nixon term. Nixon had done this in part, I didn't say totally, but in part, as an accommodation for Javits and also in part for other reasons. I mean, for example, she was a black woman. It would not profit Nixon too great politically if he would eliminate a black woman from ...

*Q: And she was doing a good job, I say, as someone who served under her.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, correct, there is no...

*Q: Animosity?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Warts or anything else on her record. So, in '72, after Nixon got elected and so forth, he felt that the political need was no longer there and he was going to move her out, and Javits put a stop to it. Now Javits' hold would probably have only lasted a short time, because even though there is this tradition, senatorial courtesy, they would put a hold on it. I think that after a couple of months, three or four months, he wouldn't have had a justification, it would have to have been resolved one way or the other.

*Q: The exception of that would have been a Jesse Helms holds?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah.

*Q: A different story.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, no, but you got to remember, there were other forces in place, to, and I think that happens with Jesse Helms. Ok, but my point is, with respect to this whole situation, Javits was the key player. Now, another factor, as the hold was placed on there, Watergate develops. Ok, now, Nixon needs Javits' vote, Javits' support, so he's not going to alienate Javits. So, he just, Nixon in effect, just let's me hang out there.

*Q: How long did this go on?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh, wait, and I will tell you the rest of the story. Waited all the way, until Nixon left, because you see, the strategy then that was adopted was "look, we can't alienate Javits. I don't want to go ahead and create much more political ripple by moving out a black woman, even though I had already done that openly because I had nominated Leonard. Hopefully, I'm in a win-win situation. All I said was that I would nominate, I did my job." The block is in; to Nixon the block is the U.S. Senate: "See, so, I did what I was supposed to do." See, so, you know, Nixon comes out a winner. He doesn't alienate Javits, he did what he did do. How can he be faulted? And it was that hopefully, as he felt, that I would just simply go away. I would become frustrated, and ask that my name be withdrawn, and...

*Q: Back to Buffalo...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, actually, I never left Buffalo. I would just disappear, because I wasn't here, see. But this goes to another character trait that Polish-Americans have.

*Q: Don't say the word stubborn (chuckle).*

WALENTYNOWICZ: We're persistent. That's why Poland survived after it was partitioned for 125 years, it came back and it survived communism and so forth, because Poles are persistent! And, so, I was persistent, I would not withdraw, I just let it hang there.

*Q: Were you asked specifically to withdraw?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, no, never asked to specifically withdraw. I was not encouraged to do anything else, I mean, nobody every said, "Leonard, we've got a road block here and I am going to make you something else. I'll make you mucky-wuck of this or what have you, you know." It was there, you see, all of the reasons why this came about this way, I'm not privy to. You have to remember I'm not in the Nixon White House, but I was persistent.

*Q: And they were in trouble, and getting more into trouble.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct. And, but on the other hand, I have to say about the personnel people in the White House, they were supportive, you know. They didn't try to discourage me, they said, "fine, you know, it may take a while, and so forth, it's up to you, you make your own personal plans, we are not going to tell you about that. But, if you want to hang in there, fine, we'll hang in there with you." So, the thing was going on, and on, and on, and then, what happens, is Nixon leaves, resigns. Ford comes on. Ford obviously has different values, too, his priorities are different.

*Q: A different staff, a totally different staff.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Different staff, but his personnel staff was not that significantly changed when he first came on after Nixon. What happened, is Ford came from a Michigan district. He respected and he had no problem with Javits. So, what he did is he resubmitted my name. Nixon leaves, which in effect, kills his submission, but then he (Ford) resubmits my name, and then there is a media event, because Barbara Watson doesn't resign, she wants to stay on.

*Q: All secretaries have to resign at the appointment/arrival of the new president.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh, but she wasn't quite, ok. So whatever the reason was, she didn't want to withdraw from office. That may be so, but I think it is more tradition than legal.

*Q: Like ambassadors that must submit their resignations?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, so, she doesn't do that. At this point, it becomes a media event. There are articles in newspapers, including about Francis Knight.

*Q: I waited for this name to come out. Tell the reader who Francis was.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Francis Knight was a dedicated conservative. She was the head of the passport office for I don't know how many years.

*Q: Fifteen or twenty years...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Fifteen or twenty years, and quite an intelligent woman, but very definite in her values and beliefs. There was no flexibility in her.

*Q: And she did not consider herself an employee of the State Department.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct.

*Q: She was over and above.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, she had her own pipelines. She had a husband, who apparently was in the airline industry and was quite influential. He also had some publications as I understand it. She was, you might say, the advent of what later happened to be the conservative movement, or whatever. What came on in Republican politics.

*Q: And a hot-red-line to Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, on her desk.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Absolutely, no question in my mind about it. So, what happened, partly because she and Barbara Watson did not get along together--two strong personalities.

*Q: That's an understatement, but go ahead.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: They did not get along, she took up this cause, you know, and she didn't take up the cause for Leonard Walentynowicz.

*Q: Anti-Barbara?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, that, but it was actually framed that each president should have his own appointees. That was the way it was framed. I don't know whether it was aimed at Barbara, for her point, but maybe from Francis Knight's point, but not from the rest of it. I didn't see any real anti-Barbara moves in congress or anything else. The issue was framed only in terms that each president ought to have his own appointees, ok. And, the most notable peak of this media event, was Eric Sevareid, who had a five minute talk. He used to do these talks at the end of the CBS news. He had a five minute talk on this, my nomination and Barbara's departure on TV, and it was broadcast nationwide. His position was that she should go honorably, with grace, that President has the right for his own appointee. So, it happened, Barbara did resign gracefully, no problem about that. She did resign gracefully. She went, in fact, I don't think she even resigned. I think she resigned from that post, but then she was given some other post, as I recall.

*Q: In the State Department?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Something, I don't remember.

*Q: Ambassador to Malaysia?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, she got another post. I know she got something. She didn't just disappear, she got an Ambassador post, and then that opened up. I was nominated, no controversy, I had a very pleasant appearance before the Senate Foreign Affairs subcommittee.

*Q: Mr. Javits supported your nomination?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, Senator Buckley did. Javits didn't oppose it, but Buckley was the one that presented me.

*Q: The other New York senator?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: The other, at the time. And then I remember Fulbright was there, the Chairman of the committee--very charming, very gracious, very pleasant, nothing remarkable.

*Q: Your credentials were acceptable. You hadn't blotted your copybook politically or professionally, and you were fulfilling the right of the President to appoint, and even maybe the staff and the Bureau to accept.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, that I know.

*Q: Tell us about your arrival.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I'm telling you right now, I came in, and I started to do my briefings. This was in December of 1974.

*Q: It was two years!*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, I was supposed to get the appointment two years before, and finally I get something, in December 1974. And, the first person, Ron Somerville, the first personality, I will tell you quite frankly, that impressed me, and he was a great help, and I'll tell you right now, there is no doubt in my mind, he is a quality person. Not that I'm saying there are not other persons, but to me, he is Ron Somerville. He was courteous, gracious, he did briefing, there were many other people that I could talk about afterwards, but he was the first guy on the scene, and he welcomed me and he made me feel like I would be welcomed.

*Q: Well, tell the reader that Somerville was the Executive Director, the administrative person that had been there for a number of years, and knew where all of the bodies were and knew how to make sure the Bureau ran well.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, he knew. And I'll tell you quite frankly, based upon my lack of experience, with the State Department, based upon my lack of experience on a day-to-day basis with the immigration law. Yes, I was a lawyer, and I knew how to litigate, and all of this kind of stuff, but I didn't have the hands on experience with immigration work or visa work, or even welfare and protection work.

*Q: And didn't even know how the State Department runs its funny little Foggy Bottom.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, Ron was an immeasurable help, because I will tell you quite frankly that I could have slipped and fell innumerable times, so to speak.

*Q: This was then still the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: That's correct.

*Q: And, on your watch, did it become the Bureau of Consular Affairs?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Afterwards.

*Q: After you left, so we will call you the Administrator through all of this.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, I am always the administrator, never got the title of assistant secretary, only the administrator. Now, when I came on board, I also had a briefing, not only with Ron, but also with my superiors. The first briefing I had was with Larry Eagleburger, who was the Under-Secretary of State for Management.

*Q: Who was the Secretary at this time?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Henry Kissinger. Now, that's very important, because, you have to understand, one of the first lessons I knew, you know, and in a way its good and bad. Here's a guy who comes from Buffalo, who, I have a problem with perception, how will this bureaucracy treat me, I mean, will they treat me with respect? Why should they treat me with respect, I'm 43 years old, going to be 44. I know my university credentials are not from respected institutions.

*Q: ...and I'm Polish.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: That's absolutely true. A little bit about that, comes later with Lorie Lawrence. But the point is, you know, I'm vulnerable. How do I get people to respect me, to listen to me? How do I set my mark, what will happen? And I don't even know what kind of problems are going to come up.

*Q: You don't even know what the game is yet.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, and that is going to be very vital, because, I'm going to give you another happening that happens later on in February of 1975, just about six or seven weeks after I come on board, where I have to go and testify before Congress. Ok, only seven weeks on the job, see, but let me just, not to get out of sequence, let me just talk about that. Ron was very helpful, then I'd meet with Larry Eagleburger, and I'd first find out that form in the department is not what it all sets out to be.

*Q: Did Eagleburger tell you that right off?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, not quite that way you see. But I get it. One of the things that I have always been known for is to be a pretty good learner, a quick study, see, and what happens is Larry gives me a briefing. He tells me what role I am going to play and what he wants me to do.

*Q: What did he tell you, in sum, what he thought the consular function was?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: He didn't give it to me. I'm to learn.

*Q: Oh. No policy guidance? Shut up and don't bother me, or...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, well that's what I'm getting at. No, he didn't say shut up and don't bother me, I want you to run your bureau with the least amount of trouble for me.

OK. Now, that message is important, ok, but it also gives you an idea of what my other thoughts, contemporary thoughts, regarding the role of the Department today. Because, if you know what I said, run your department with the least amount of trouble for me, ok. That is also, I did not quite realize it at the time, but to me now, twenty years, well not twenty, but seventeen years down the line, is an indicator of how important that function is to superior people, see. That's very, very...it's a subtleness, but that's what it is.

*Q: And glad that it has not changed?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Ok, right, but that's important later on as we go into this, and I don't know whether we are going to do this with one session.

*Q: Will do.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: But, this is very, very important, because that is the message that I got from Larry Eagleburger. The other message as to form I got was that even though Larry supposedly is number eight on the post, Larry is really number two in the Department. You know, he is Kissinger's man. What Larry says, Kissinger says, ok, so I'm not worried about Ingersoll, if that's his name, who was the deputy secretary and could care less about Ingersoll. I mean, it's not that I couldn't care less, I mean, I wouldn't show him disrespect, but the point that I am getting at is that I knew that when Larry speaks, Kissinger speaks.

*Q: You knew where the power was.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right.

*Q: And it hasn't changed?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: You don't have this, you know, you're number three, under-secretary, and all. Forget all of that stuff, ok, it just doesn't work like that.

*Q: How did you get along personally with Larry?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Excellent. Outstanding, excellent; I had no trouble. I tried to fulfill his mandate. The best example of fulfilling his mandate is my relationship with Francis Knight. Because, while it started out well, she just refused to give any sense of respect to me. She wanted to continue operating the passport division and her function in the same way as she did with Barbara Watson.

*Q: She didn't work for you!*

WALENTYNOWICZ: That's ok. I didn't want her to work for me, ok. I didn't want her to order. I had a number of discussions with her in the office where I wanted to have a fair understanding and work with her. I mean, I wasn't out to hurt her, or undermine, but you

have got to understand that there has got to be some sense of respect for me. You are supposed to be working, you know.

*Q: At least with me....*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct. She wouldn't accept that. Her way of doing this was refusing to attend staff meetings and communicating only through memos. Ok, I said, ok, I would live with this, I told her, and I reported it, you know that we've got a "modus operandi", so to speak.

*Q: Did Larry bring it up with you, in the first instance, or did it evolve?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: It evolved. Ok, all he wanted to know: "Can there be cooperation, can you do the job between passport and consular affairs?" I said, yes, it may be more difficult, but I can live with it. If you want me to live with it, I can live with it. If you want me to go ahead and make an issue of it, I can make an issue of it, and he just wanted to live with it. So we just lived with it. I mean, that was...

*Q: He wanted a non-problem.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, correct, correct, and throughout my tenure the only time where there really became any real difficulties was at the very end in January 1977 when President Carter came on board. There were some personnel changes that she wanted and I had sat on because I figured that this was her effort to lock into the passport department certain personnel which I didn't think was beneficial. What in effect happened, is that she got to Larry and I talked to Larry, and Larry then said, the only time, "do it, you know, just get it done." So, I then I did that, but that was the only time that Larry in anyway suggested or interfered or anything else with my relationship with Francis Knight.

*Q: What about other than Francis and Ron Somerville? What about others in the bureau?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh, let me get into that. See, Ron was very, very important because, like I said, he avoided a lot of problems that I could have really been submarined on because, like I said, I had this problem: how will the Department accept me? How will the foreign service, etc.? Here's this guy, who is he, I mean, we are supposedly, the creme de la creme of America, we were carefully selected and so forth, you know, why would they respect me? I mean, what is there about me...

*Q: And unfortunately, you did not have a loser before you. It's always nice to succeed a loser.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, and not only that, but I also didn't have the patrons, so to speak. The best patron that I had was Lorie Lawrence. He was the only patron that I had, and I mean it, and for whatever reasons, good or bad or any, I don't even know of them, Lorie could have deflected some of the efforts.

*Q: Len, I would argue that you had another patron, and you have already spent most of this interview telling us about it, and that is that you have come from an ethnic background. Our nation is a bunch of immigrants, and the largest chunk of the consular bureau is dealing with visas, foreigners, and people who are going to be Americans, or can't be. As well as, American citizens traveling abroad into foreign countries. So, your credentials were there.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, and I agree with what you are saying Bill, but let me just expand on that a little further. The best patron that I had--haven't said all there is about the patrons--the best patron I had, I found out, was really some of the people of the foreign service. Ron Somerville is one example, Cornelius Scully is another outstanding example. But there were others too down the line. Ok, I'm trying to...

*Q: Just a little feeling, first impressions, as you walked into that group beyond Ron Somerville, as you entered your first staff meetings, as you started to enter the real world.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: There was a guy, I can't think of his name, he was shifted from my office to Oporto; he was my first staff assistant, he was very helpful. I can't think, he went to Oporto; Vern something.

*Q: Vern Penner?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: That's it, Vern Penner was my first staff assistant. He was helpful, in a sense that he gave me some idea of flow of work through the office, that's all. I'm not saying you understand that, but that's all he did, because he moved on soon on. Another guy who was helpful to me in terms of staff assistants, you know, flow of work, was Andy Antippas. OK, he was with me for a while, he did that. Other people though, in terms of the immediate staff, the two people that I'm talking about were Somerville and Cornelius Scully.

*Q: Scully was in visas. Basically the bureau, or whatever we want to call this grouping, was passports, visas, and protection of Americans.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, those are the three functions. In other words, as I was being briefed to my responsibilities, it became clear that my job required policy decision-making, supervision, and all of the other things attached in those three areas. Welfare protection of American's abroad, visas, issuances of visas or implementation of the immigration law, and also citizenship. You've got to remember that's part of the passport function. Citizenship, determination abroad and then, in addition to that side, protection and visas, we had the passport function, which not only involved the issuance of passports, but also, citizenship determination. Then, I had to go and learn it. So, in terms of learning this, I had a problem early on that I wasn't going to get any real help from Francis Knight, ok. So I had to go to some of the subordinates that were there. I will tell you about another guy who wasn't too bad, was Roy Mackay, he was very helpful. Ok,

those two were very helpful, I had no problem with that. Those were two people that come to mind immediately.

Now, on the welfare protection thing, that really blossomed out early on in my tenure. I don't want to lose the broad picture, but let me give you a focus on the welfare protection. As I said, seven weeks afterwards, I met congressmen on the Hill. Now, Ron Somerville is trying to help me out, trying to tell me how you testify before Congress and what to anticipate. You know, my nomination, but this is not a policy and so forth and so on.

*Q: ...what to say, and importantly, what not to say.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, ok, and you know, how to handle these. You know, I come from the perspective, and I still do, even though I'm not so sophisticated about it, I want to do what is right for America! I'm talking about from this role, ok. So, to me, part of that is accountability, part of that is openness, part of that is a healthy examination of the facts, etc., etc. I came away also, from my first congressional hearing, which was soon corrected, with the idea that this approach would be the approach that would be followed by all of the congressmen, congressional people. And it's not, I mean, it's far from it.

*Q: Different agendas?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, everybody has a different agenda. So, the issue, and this is a learning process, but the issue that came to me was the welfare and the protection of the American citizens being arrested and convicted for drug use in Mexico. It was a very big thing on the platter. Then visas and so forth. And I testified, Holtzman was there, and I testified, Fascell was there, and I testified. Who was the guy from Philadelphia who resigned from congress?

*Q: Albert?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Albert, ok, he was the chairman of the committee, but this time, it was not immigration, this time, it was Foreign Affairs, Dante Fascell himself, ok, who is now retired. The guy that was going to zing it to me but zing it to me good, was Fournety (Pete) Stark out of California.

*Q: Oh yes.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Jesus Christ, I'm over there, I'm trying to create a paper, and Somerville is trying to put together a paper, or statement and so forth, and I don't even know who the hell in the welfare protection section it was who helped me out. I don't remember the name, forgive me Bill, but we're trying to make a presentation ...

*Q: Alan Gise.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, Gise, right.

*Q: The guy I wanted to replace and you made me an inspector instead!.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: But anyhow, very good. So, he's trying to go ahead and help me out and so forth, and quite frankly, in that respect, the paper and the position, was not very strong. It was not the greatest thing in the world, but, what happened, is that Fournety Stark is running all over me. He says, "Why didn't you do this and why aren't you doing this? I says, "Why are you asking me these questions? Ask Barbara Watson, I've only been here seven weeks on the job, see." I then realized that this problem had been in existence for months!

*Q: Years, years.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, I just want to give you the facts on this, see. At least my background, so what happened is, he is dumping all over me. He's got constituents and apparently, it so happened that a lot of these people were being arrested, Americans, came from his district and ....

*Q: ...California, and they had many years of experience with drug use.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, and I also found out some other things about you know, his involvement, representing their interests, and all of that stuff. I'm not here to condemn, but he is dumping all over me, I mean, oh God, is he giving me a lathering.

*Q: He is speaking to his constituents.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, not to me, he didn't care about ...

*Q: But through you...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: He wasn't even [speaking] through me. He wants to whack me. The thought that he wants to give his constituents is that I want to get this goddamn bureaucrat who is a Republican, who is a law enforcement guy, who is unsympathetic to drug dealers, etc., etc.

*Q: So, that was your impression as well?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, I think so; he resented that Barbara Watson... He was a Democrat, she was a black woman, and one of the arguments when I came on board, was that you don't touch black women. It is such a special event, that if they are doing a good job, you leave them alone. Doesn't make any difference what their political view points are, etc.

*Q: Were you warned that this might happen?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, never warned, pre-warned, no nothing. Even the controversy with Barbara Watson, I wasn't warned.

*Q: Oh, that's too bad.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, I wasn't warned at all about coming up on the hill. Nothing. I wonder what the hell's happened? But you know then later on, you know, I don't have to get hit on the head twice.

*Q: You weren't alone, there were Alan Gise.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I mean, Gise isn't going to be asking the questions, or answering them.

*Q: No, no.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I was a target, so I don't remember all of the controversy. My wife is there, it's the first time I've seen her. She's saying to me, "What the hell is this guy doing? Why is he picking on you?"

*Q: Back to Buffalo?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, there was a moment there, but not me, you got to understand me, when the going gets tough, I get going, see; and like I said, I'm persistent. So, after this episode, then you can see, I didn't go and rant and rave afterwards, but on the other hand, I made sure we had staff meetings and I was going to get fully briefed as to what in the hell was going on and everything else.

*Q: Did you feel you had been undermined in any way by your own staff? Did you feel anybody was sabotaging?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I don't know about any kind of deliberate plan to undermine Leonard Walentynowicz. I do think that there was a feeling in the Department -- the consular part and so forth -- to minimize the problem in Mexico, to pooh-pooh it.

*Q: It's extraordinary, serious, and without going into detail, I know from first hand experience we were in part guilty in that.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh sure, that's, what I want to get to the rest of it, see. What happens after we get the briefing, it was only me. But the point was, somebody had to energize, because, my feeling about the Department, always, the Department has a lot of qualified people. Not everybody, but a lot qualified. But you've got to energize them and you've got to say this is what we should be doing, this is what we should be doing. They are looking for leadership. The State Department is not one of these self-energizing operations, ok. It just is not designed to work that way, see, so it needs leadership.

*Q: It compromise. By definition, a diplomat comprises.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, you need leadership, not only from the Secretary's level, but more importantly from the assistant secretary level, or that level I'm talking about, the second level.

*Q: You sensed this right away.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah!

*Q: How did you manifest this?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, we tried to go ahead and have our own initiatives, I mean, we did this through Ron. One of the other things that we did was, also, I wanted to get some good thinkers on board. Ok, so one of the guys that I thought was beautiful, he came on board, he refers to a guy by the name of ... he's a red-haired guy, he was the first deputy administrator, Tom something.

*Q: Yeah, umm...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: But, he left.

*Q: Tom Recknagel?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah. But Lorie Lawrence was very, very important!

*Q: How did you find him? Who was he?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Ron Somerville. Ron Somerville, and so forth. I'll tell you, quite frankly, Ron was very, very beneficial to me.

*Q: He was a personnel officer. He's supposed to be personnel officer.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: He gave me--I'm not going to say that every person that he gave me turned out the greatest--but he gave me some really good leads. Lorie Lawrence was very, very good.

*Q: Where was Lorie at this time?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: He was at a post someplace. He said that this guy is good and he is going to help you.

*Q: So you bought him in as deputy assistant secretary.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh yeah.

*Q: For?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: ...for administration, the whole thing, he was my first deputy.

*Q: He was senior deputy then?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, yeah, he was senior deputy. In fact, he came back and he helped me a lot, and I was very disappointed when he left. He didn't stay on long, he was only on for... Of course, I didn't stay very long either.

*Q: What date did you leave?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I left physically in January 1977, I left the department payroll April 1977.

*Q: So, you were roughly three years in the job?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, about two years and couple of months.

*Q: Well, back to the selection of your deputies. You sensed right away that they were vital to your establishment of leadership, which was needed?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, absolutely. I also had to have people that I could be working with and comfortable with, because there were so many problems. First of all, you had this problem with welfare and protection. It was a major problem. I mean, I didn't--as I began working the problem--I didn't realize what forces were involved. I later discovered that I had to take charge of -- Barbara had to take charge of before me -- of welfare and protection. At the same time, you had DEA being told by the White House to do whatever they have to do in order...

*Q: To arrest anybody?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: ...to eradicate traffic. Their philosophy was, brutalize the son of bitches, pardon my language..

*Q: It was even worse than that. It was they are better off arresting Americans in other countries like Mexico, because that is where they will get the real treatment.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly.

*Q: And in this country, they will waffle it away.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, that's it exactly, that's the point. And, they had a strong law-and-order president. I don't think that ever in my mind that President Nixon, and I know definitely President Ford, ever approved even tacitly of the abuse that the Mexicans were giving the Americans over it. But there was this general direction...

*Q: Glad to see it happening...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, there was a tall grey haired guy from DEA, he was a special assistant secretary, whatever it was; his name was John something or other. We had a couple of meetings right after this appearance on the hill. He is trying to tell me that I should take the flag and this is the way we are going to control drug abuse, and etc.

*Q: He had the answers?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: He didn't quite say to me, look the other way, I'm not going to say that, I don't think anybody would ever say that. They wouldn't say that to me because they didn't know me. They may have said that to another colleague, but they didn't know me, so they didn't know what the hell I was going to respond. And that's one of the benefits of a newcomer coming on.

*Q: Well, you came on with the reputation of being a law-and-order man.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: That's true, agreed, but you gotta understand me too. Remember I also told you that I came from a Polish-American background, and if there is anything that is ingrained in Polish-Americans and Poles, it is a value of human rights. I mean, that is absolutely essential.

*Q: And that's what you are talking about when you are talking about leading protection of Americans abroad?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly! So, when you are talking about that, yes, we are law-and-order. We respect property, and so forth, we don't like violence as an alternative. We want recognition as an alternative. We want recognition by effort and merit, not by numbers.

*Q: Now let's pick up right where we were.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: We will pick up, like I said the welfare and protection thing was a major challenge, because you know, I am being told by one part of the Department, by the assistant secretary, don't aggressively pursue human rights and due process for Americans, because we have this drug problem. Well, I had to make a decision, and interestingly enough, you asked me about Larry Eagleburger. Larry, never ever interfered with the decision that I made. He didn't tell me to go this way or that. It was my decision, OK, but he never interfered. To me, that was a signal that it had at least a chance of approval by the Secretary. The decision I made was that we are going to do a bang-up job.

I don't give a good goddamn whether all 600 and some odd were guilty, but we are going to do what we have to do.

*Q: Protection of the individual.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, and ...

*Q: ...and to the best of your ability under a sovereign law of another country?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, and as a result of that we have a couple of specific initiatives which I think were, forgive me if I'm blowing my horn a little bit, something new in the history of this country. We actually come out with a manual. There was no manual, ever. We came out with a manual.

*Q: Told the officers in the field how to do it?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct.

*Q: ...and what not to do?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, and how often to visit, and this, how to follow up, and all of this stuff. We expected them to comply with that, and if they didn't comply with it, they better have good reasons for it. OK. So we came out with a manual. That's the one.

*Q: What type of a reaction did you get from the field offices?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Resistance, all kinds of resistance. What the hell are you doing; you're coddling, and this, that, etc. We had consular conferences throughout this time, and that's another thing that I give Ron credit for, because, he saw that it was necessary for me to go out in order to gain respect. OK, and...

*Q: ...to be known. You were an unknown quantity.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, see, but he saw that, I didn't see it. It was the first time I'm administering anything. Maybe I administered four or five staff people in the DA's office, but this is a big organization, 268 posts at the time, about 8,000-some-odd people, you know. You got about 8,000 people in the consular cone, I mean, I had to be known. You know, what is this guy, is he an idiot, or what is he a milk-toast, what is he?

*Q: He's from Buffalo..*

WALENTYNOWICZ: He's from Buffalo, but that's not too good, you know, if I was from some other place, it may be better. And besides that, I'm a Polish-American, you see. So, we started with that, and we also started later on, and it was not concluded in my term, but Barbara, I'm happy to say signed a treaty.

*Q: She came back after you?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, Barbara took my place after I left. She was a Carter appointee. I have some other thoughts on that too for Barbara's sake, but that's for another time. But, the important thing is we then had a treaty with Mexico, the first time in the history of this country, where we exchanged, so to speak, prisoners, or defendants in criminal action, when we gave them that option. And, what was remarkable about that treaty, it was sustained under constitutional attack, and it was sustained only because I insisted, this is where I am going to take a little horn blowing. My practice, as a lawyer, from Buffalo, my tradition in human rights, when the treaty was originally prepared, it did not contemplate the involvement of the individual. This was between two sovereign states. They decide who goes where. I says, no way Jose. And then under the US constitution, and not only under the US constitution, but I think, it is a matter of international human rights. You've got to get the person involved; you've got to tell him what's involved and you've got to get his consent. Does he want to do that? He may want to stay in Mexico.

*Q: He might want to stay where drugs are more available in jail.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: And that's the same way for the Mexicans; they may feel that American jails are better than Mexican jails. I don't know that it is, so you see, my point is, I insisted on this, because there were conferences, and I insisted with Bob--from legal--he brought in the treaty. That was Bob Dalton. I insisted, and I said, "What are you talking about?" and he said, "You know, all of the people are saying this is sovereignty, this is between sovereign states." "What are you talking about, this is human beings involved, see." And guess what was the reason why the second treaty wasn't put under attack and was sustained? Because that treaty had that provision in it.

*Q: Protection of the individual choice?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct. So, I feel good about that, that we got that in there. There were two major initiatives in offering protection, which still are there, and not only that, but the Mexican treaty became a prototype for other treaties that the United States has, not only with Canada, ...we started one with Canada when I was still there. But I understand now, of course I haven't followed up on it, but with many other countries, including Turkey. And some other countries, similar treaties, not identical, but at least similar treaties, that provide... and I think that's a major human rights...

*Q: I think that the reader should know that at this time also was an explosion of the drug problem, that had started a few years before, but had really reached a crescendo. Also, the attitude that you described before of "they're all a bunch of bad guys"--but especially the official emphasis on anti-drug policies, which is understandable-- caused you to walk into these issues just as you came on board, just when the brakes had to be put on.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes.

*Q: Someone had to do something, even though you went through what you went through, on your very first congressional encounter. It was good.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, yes.

*Q: It really alerted you to the human sensitivities, and the political sensitivities.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Not only that, but I want to make sure that the record is clear on this. I am not taking credit for originating of the idea on this, because this to me, was brought to me by two people, I can't think of their names, from New York City. There was a man and a woman. Very nice people, they were from some kind of a defense fund, OK, you know, that's what they were from.

*Q: Um hum, a defense fund...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Anyway, whatever it was, they brought it up, and I want to give them credit. I can supply their names from my notes later on, but I just don't want to say that I was the originator of the idea, but I certainly energized the idea in the Department.

*Q: Again, going back to your opening point, you sensed the need for leadership, and you saw this was one of the points where really, leadership was called for.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, exactly,.....

*Q: We diplomats can't lead in something like that.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct. In other words, this is an outside force. There was always a debate within the department, as to why is the President bringing all of these outsiders into the Department, you know. And it's always going to remain, OK, it's never going to disappear. And my only point is that there is a need for this. Now, that doesn't mean that every outsider is going to do a bang-up job, naw, I mean, you can...

*Q: But, insiders can't do a lot of things.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, correct. They can't do a lot of things, and you know, there is a definite need and my only point is, and I think they would be beneficial, if there would be more careful selection of the outsiders that are brought in. In other words, this now goes to personnel selection, presidential selection, a review of what do you want to do, and also, in terms of issues, which I am going to get into later on if we ever have the time to, like immigration. Because it was always my position that the movement of people in one of the most important things that is facing the world then, today, and will for the foreseeable future. We've got to be able to deal with this movement of people, and....

*Q: Especially now with the Soviet Union no longer, and the Haitians coming up, and nationalistic explosions.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, correct, I mean, we see, we haven't dealt with it, because we have felt kind of secure, we've got an ocean on one side and an ocean on the other side.

*Q: It's called isolationism.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, in a form of that, and we can't deal with that because we have got a different world. We've got a world that has almost instant communication. People know what's going on every place, they know the other opportunities, they know where a better life is and when this happens, and so they then have an increase in mobility.

*Q: You have walked us right straight into the other, the last function of the consular affairs, and that is the Visa function, which is another way of saying all of those foreigners that want to come to America. Tell us your first impressions, and how you managed and led the Visa function.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: This is where Scully comes in.

*Q: Dick Scully of the Visa Office?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Absolutely. When I was on the Hill testifying after only seven weeks, then in March, Albert wants testimony on immigration things to be formed. Of course, immigration was really a big thing at that time. Always has been, and still remains. OK. I think it will for the foreseeable future. Anyway, so, I needed some briefing. Hell, I didn't know immigration, and so forth. As I told you before, I am a practicing lawyer from Buffalo and so forth, but I try to do the job.

*Q: He doesn't run the act yet?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Not all of it. No, in fact, I don't think I ran ten percent of it. I am not saying I didn't have an idea, but I certainly, wasn't well versed in it. So that the point that I'm getting at is I needed somebody to give me help to understand the Act, because, there is no sense in my giving testimony and details unless I have some understanding. I'm willing to learn, I'm willing to acknowledge I am not the smartest guy in the world on the immigration act, and so forth.

*Q: So, for the immigration act, we better explain to the reader that this is the Immigration and Nationality Act that changes over the years, back from the days when it was called the McCarran-Walters Act, through various evolutions. But the particular Act we are talking about right now, is the Immigration Nationality Act of...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: 1954

*Q: 1954, as amended, because every year it gets amended, but that was still pretty much a rigid anti-foreigner, in many ways, act.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, well, it was anti-foreigner, it was restrictive, it was supposedly more fair because of the '65 Kennedy amendments, OK. But I didn't understand anymore, OK, but what Scully did, that was some of it, and that was another key move, and Scully and I took the time. I remember, it was, I think two days we spent four hours briefing in my office. Each day, just going over it and so forth, and for that, I always thank Mr. Scully.

*Q: This wasn't the director of the Visa Office, though, that was briefing you?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: No, he was legal support.

*Q: The head of the Visa operation at that time was Julio Arias, and the deputy was me...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, yes it was. I will tell you that there is no disrespect to you or Julio...

*Q: You needed technical...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, I needed somebody and Scully did it. I get along good with Irishmen, because both of us have a lot of Irish...

*Q: He is also a lawyer.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, true, true, but the guys that I am friendly with are not only lawyers. I used to go out with them every Saturday and play golf, Maddigan and Walsh, the two Irish leprechauns, against Ruda and Walentynowicz, the two Polish egos. But anyway, that's another story. But, Scully did this, and he did a really great job. I got a much more thorough understanding of the law and I could then sense what was involved and what needed to be and so forth.

*Q: You agreed with Dick in the sense of the facts, you not only absorbed them, but you saw the directions that the facts were taking?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, and I saw the law in a couple of different lights. One light was, you know, what was the broader movement, and the conclusion I reached was the U.S. Government really doesn't have any... didn't have it then. I don't think it really has a sound policy today.

*Q: There's a law that says who can come and who cannot come?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah.

*Q: But that's about all?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, you know, but that's it. It doesn't have a policy in terms of what we think is fair, it doesn't have a policy on what is beneficial to the United States, it isn't in the terms of the policy what is fair to the people who want to come here, and at that time we didn't even join the United Nations in its definition of refugees.

*Q: Right.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: So our refugee policy was even worse.

*Q: Correct.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: And the reason for that is because there were a lot of senators that felt we should not commit America to someone else's ideas of refugees, and so forth. We can go into that, but that's the overview, and then you had the specific things. And I found that Albert and his committee were only interested in addressing specific aspects, that's number one. The other thing is that at the time that I was there, the Democrats controlled the Senate. And I'm not picking on the Democrats, I'm just simply trying to give you a history, because the Democrats also controlled the House, and Albert was a Democrat. The House was doing work, but the Democratic guy was Eastland, and Eastland never held a hearing.

*Q: Because he didn't believe in the immigration policies, and didn't believe in getting involved.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: He didn't believe in any policy. All he believed in was making sure that farmers of the southwest and the south had enough Mexican migrant workers to take care of his political constituencies, that's all he cared about, so he didn't want to mess up the... He never had any hearings, he never got anything done, I mean, he just never had any hearings. And, you know, to me, forgive me, the name of Mr. Eastland and so forth, but I thought that that was disgraceful. I thought that was irresponsible.

*Q: I think you will find everyone in the Visa office felt the same way.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, I know, I mean, here the Senate of the United States has a definite responsibility and so forth, to do positive things, and its' not doing anything, OK. And then on the House side, you have a lot of hearings, and a lot of action, but they are doing what is now known as micro-managing, you know, instead of doing the broad policy things. Now, some of the micro-management made some sense, you know. I remember in retrospect, I don't know if I would still support it, but one of the things that I

know was hot on the agenda for the House, and I did support it, was to make sure that a child can't petition his mother and father until 21 instead of upon birth.

*Q: And this was aimed at Mexicans, for example, that would come across the border, have their birth, and go back home.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct, and I understood that logic, and I supported that logic, but on the other hand, it also bothered me that really isn't going to solve the problem, you see, that was what I meant about micro-management instead of macro.

*Q: Also, micro-management might be something that we in the Visa Office under you had at the time: we definitely felt individual intervention on behalf of a constituent or a particular individual or whatever. How much of your time focused on that?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh yeah! There was a lot of that, there is a lot of congressional interest that had to be responded to, there was a lot of that.

*Q: The Visa Office has more inquiries than any element of the Department of State.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, but there are two parts of that, this is where you and I differ a little. To me, I think there was, at times, not always, at times, an effort on the part of Congress to unduly influence decision making. No question in my mind about it. On the other hand, the Congressional inquiry, a lot of their interest was because the visa officers, the people in the place -- I don't know whether it was the guy in the line, his manager, the consul general -- someone on the line was making lousy decisions.

*Q: I don't disagree with a word that you said.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Ok, alright...

*Q: Not a word.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I will give you a classic example that I had. I will give you a classic example that always bothered the hell out of me. Now you always had this controversy --doubt as to whether or not a visa decision should be appealed. And we can go into that, but I don't want to take up the time in this session to do that, but there were some hard cases. For example, people, there was an American who's permanent residence was in America, who could file an immigrant petition for a relative abroad. Mostly, mothers and fathers, but the mothers and fathers didn't want to come here, they didn't want to live here. Maybe, sometimes there was a possibility that they might come for an extended visit, more than a year, and wouldn't go back right away within the six months or year time frame. But they didn't want to leave their ties and so forth. But Visa officers, would always say no, no, no, because of the fact that since the visa petition could be filed. Therefore, he was inadmissible, could not overcome the presumption of immigrant status.

*Q: Which is technically true?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, if you put it in that standard.

*Q: If it is a Napoleonic law, really, you are guilty, the applicant is guilty until he proves otherwise.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, but you see, it was my argument, and I even wrote a piece a couple of years after I left the Department, that the law was written, the way it was written by Congress in, I don't know what you want to call it, a devious fashion. There is a certain deviousness, because Congress did not want to take the responsibility. They wanted to shove the responsibility off on the bureaucracy or the administration. OK, so they wrote it in such a way where there is a lot of flexibility and discretion. My argument was, don't try and reject that, in fact, welcome it! See, and my argument was, take it. All you do, is you follow it not in the literal sense but what's best for the United States. Now, I know that the law doesn't say to issue a visa for the United States. Well, the reason the law is not written that way, because if it was not written that way, you could argue for hours. So, you had more standards, like, is he an intending immigrant or not? But within the context of that kind of a standard.

*Q: But how do you translate that flexibility, that sophistication to 497 visa officers on the line, and their leaders, and their bosses, and all of the staff in the Visa Office that gives out advisory opinions? How do you translate that; what you are saying is a sophisticated, enlightened response?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, agreed....

*Q: How do you do it?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: How you do it is leadership. That's my answer. Refinement in regulations, operating instructions, in your consular conferences, and so forth; it has got to come from the top. Because the guy in the line has to be confident that he is not going to get screwed or undermined because he can say this is what the guy on the top is saying. Then, that is also important, because the guy on the top is usually the assistant secretary, OK and he's the operational leader. The point is he is the assistant secretary. I mean, we've talked at the beginning of this conference...(or she, who is she? I'm not here trying to attack anyone's reputation, but I think it goes without much gainsay, that there are a lot of people who don't give a good goddamn. They just want the position as a stepping stone.)

*Q: Or they don't want their reputation blemished by getting involved in something that is controversial and ugly.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, and ugly, and they don't want to do this. The best example that I can tell you right now is the other side of the immigration service. That I am going to tell you about...

*Q: The other side being?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: INS.

*Q: The Immigration and Naturalization Service?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes. General Chapman was a Marine general but I will tell you right now, I think he was the perfect guy for immigration. And even though he was ramrod, I thought he had a sense of compassion and a sense of direction. I really mean that, I say this most sincerely.

*Q: Were you the Administrator when he was the head of INS?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, exactly, he was the Commissioner, and I worked well with him. We didn't always agree; I'll tell you there were some major decisions we disagreed on. I know we disagreed strongly on the issues of the Nazi war criminals, which was, you know, going through the process of reviewing the records of suspected war criminals, etc. etc.. And this was something else that came up, and I had the action piece in the Department, and I can go into that, OK.

*Q: I think you should remind the reader, at this point, INS is not just an adjudication service, like visas, for entry in the United States. Its' also a border patrol, so you had the police function. You have almost by definition, a contradiction between lawyers who adjudicate equitably and cops, who defend and protect the border.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh yeah!

*Q: How do you lead such a conflicted organization?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: It raises the issue as to whether or not there should be such an organization, OK? But I agree with you that it does call for something, because, I used to have ongoing discussions with senior INS, and also District Director Ben Farrow, who is now in Rome, because they keep saying that they're a service agency. Well, you're not a service agency, you are a police agency, and a you're also law enforcement. And a lot of our problems stem from the fact that you're trying to create this kind of dichotomy, which results in schizophrenia.

*Q: You are living the dichotomy, and you had better learn how to live it.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, and to me, for the lay person, it causes trouble. Because, a lay person goes in there and says they are going to help me, you know, and then he

discovers that this officer has obtained information which he is now using against him, and I could give you horror stories on that.

*Q: We should tell the reader that, after (you are jumping ahead) you left the Department of State, you went on and had association with immigration questions.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Oh, absolutely. Since that time, I have served as a consultant to a number of the commissions that came afterward, 1980, Silva, but I am engaged actively in the practice of immigration law. I have a lot of immigration cases. I handle them. There is a whole variety of the business cases, asylum cases, normal routine visas, immigrant visas And I practice out of Washington and Buffalo, and have a lot of contact with the Central Office of INS and the State Department, you know, consulates abroad, the whole smear.

*Q: So, now we can go back to your reasons for continuing questioning of or observations on the immigration policy.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, you see the point is, in terms of the policy, as I saw the overview, is that you've got Immigration Service doing one thing, while we are doing another thing...

*Q: The State Department?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, the State Department, forgive me, I still identify myself with the State Department.

*Q: You should!*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Ok, and then there is no cohesion there is no...you are asking me where does the leadership come in, you know. That's the point we were saying, you know the guy in the field, he has to know where to lead. We lack that, and we lack it because I think Congress has failed to realize the importance of the work that the State Department consular service does. I don't think it has recognized it, really.

*Q: It hasn't taken it away from State, but...the efforts to move it elsewhere?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, that's different, that's different, than recognizing the importance.

*Q: Um, hum.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: See, because, the, you know as the problems get more extreme and more difficult, then the pressure to do something about it is increased.

*Q: But you can't face, as a congressman, I would argue, the subject of what's blowing up around the world in terms of ethnic civil wars, questions like Haiti...every single congressman and senator has constituents and they are writing about things that they want from an immigration service. Why do you think that congress won't focus on it?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, not only the congress, but also the president.

*Q: Why?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Several reasons. One of them it took care of itself, maybe badly, but it took care of itself. OK, maybe it didn't do it the best way, but it took care of itself. That's number one.

*Q: Is that like Larry saying to you, "Just don't make it a problem that comes to me?"*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, in some ways, yes. Another thing, is congress and the president can't, they haven't yet dealt with the problem that each of us, at some point, were immigrants in the first place, ourselves. They can't come to grips with that, so they don't. They can't make the, you might say, the heady decision making things for the best, for the new flock of people that want to come to the United States.

*Q: And these new flock are not even like the old flock that came?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Exactly, exactly, that's the second point. Another thing is, the new flock that comes in, and this is something which I said when I left, I wrote a memo on this, and I was told that I was far off base, and so forth.

*Q: You were rocking the boat!*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I was rocking the boat, OK, and then it is this: You know we have developed a system now where we give certain people a preferential treatment. Ok, the bulk of the new immigration, if you will notice, based upon the figures that were reported this morning in the Washington Times, I'm not talking about the comment, about the facts. The bulk of them, are the very people who are the beneficiaries of this preferential treatment. So, what you are saying, mainly...

*Q: ...the Mexicans?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Mexicans, and also Asian-Americans, and Latin Americans, and Hispanics, you see what I mean. So what you are saying now, to the Americans that are already here, is "We are going to bring all of these newcomers, and we are not only going to give them a chance to be Americans, but we are going to give them an even better chance at being an American. You have got to share what you have built up. And you have to deny your kids the right to be a police officer, or what have you, a fireman, or go to school, because these new people are coming in". Now, that's only going to go so far.

*Q: Is that called backlash?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I wouldn't call it backlash, because I think backlash means, to me, some kind of a negative connotation. I think all it means is that an American wants fairness; that's what I want. In other words, we've got to have an immigration policy to welcome newcomers, we have to do it fairly.

*Q: What if the Hispanic speaking immigrant takes over and it's Spanish that I've got to learn and what if I can't get my job because that Asian got it in my stead?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: That's what I'm getting at. Not only do you have the preferential treatment problem, but then you go to the other part of it and that is you are going to change the fundamental makeup of America.

*Q: You define Americans as what?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, that's the point. This is what, remember at the beginning of this whole discussion, we talked about dual identity, see? I mean, I've thought about this many, many, many, many times. We still have an America, OK. I don't know if we defined it as crisply as some commentators may desire, and so forth, but I do think that we do have some kind of fundamental ideas about America, OK. We have a Constitution. We have a system of jurisprudence. We have a system of government. We had a system of values, and it was based upon family values. Yes, we tried to keep religion out of politics, but that doesn't mean we didn't have values. I mean, whether or not you called yourself Catholic, Quaker, or Anglican...

*Q: ...or none of the above.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: ...or none of the above. There was a certain kind of value. America meant something. I tell you for the reason that is because of the comedians. The comedians make fun of things, and make fun of values, we do this, and we do that and we get foibles and I'm not just talking about comedians, I don't just mean satirical comedians, but I'm talking about the guys like Jack Benny, who could tell a story. Or one of the other guys, Irvin Cohen, who would tell a story and so forth. You know, the Jewish mother and her penchant for matzah ball soup, and so forth to cure all illness, you know chicken soup to cure everything.

*Q: Ethnic jokes?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Sure, and a lot of them were bad but a lot of them were good, you know.

*Q: Right.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: And the point that I am getting at is that I don't know whether or not, I'm a fear monger; I'm not, because I welcome them. I'm the guy that said in the last office, I think that we can bring in more immigrants than we are.

*Q: Bring in though, but bring in legally, you are talking about legal immigration.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I'm talking about legal immigrants. Define immigration that has a purpose that we are doing it for the reasons like we said before. We have to protect the immigrant, we have got to protect ourselves, and we do it in a fair way.

*Q: So much of it is what we used to call back door, or illegal, or...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: It still is!

*Q: ...or some other way....*

WALENTYNOWICZ: It still is. This is the reason why I posed it essentially the way I did. I'm not saying there shouldn't have been some amnesty, but the way we gave amnesty in '86. I think it was terrible!

*Q: What was that again?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: The amnesty of '86. We said that anybody who was here illegally in '82 comes in.

*Q: Oh yeah, their status is legitimized.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Right, and the reason for that, you know there was only one reason, because the bulk of that, and the statistics will prove it, 80% of the people that got legalized were Mexicans. It was a Mexican "reliefdom" and what did it do? Did it help any? No!

*Q: It gave them a legal status here.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, yeah, it helped the Mexicans, but did it help the Americans? Did it control the problems? Did it help them at the border? We did none of that, none of that happen? In fact, we had the next volume of people coming in, wherever they may be. And I think that's kind of unfair, because there are a lot of other people from other parts of the world that want to come to America.

*Q: Go back to your identification of this issue, namely the congress and the executive branch doesn't know how or want to do anything about it. You have now delineated what some of these reasons are, and they are very good ones, like I don't want to touch that thing with a ten foot pole! You would argue, however, that it has to be touched.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes.

*Q: How would you touch it?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, the traditional way is to form a commission. Ok, we've had those, and the reason why they have not been very successful is because they have been perceived to be special interest commissions, made up of special interests. So therefore the recommendation, no matter how solid, is... something I'd just discard..

*Q: Could you make this non-special interest? Everything you have identified as one of the problems, are some sort of special interest, political, or ethnic, or economic?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yeah, but I'm not...you can't. Let me put it this way. Having said that, I don't think you can have a neutral issue. You can't have a process which is just completely neutered. You have got to have a special interest of some type. So, my point isn't to eliminate the special interest, or the special interest, or looking at them and see how they can be reconciled.

*Q: Um hum, um hum..*

WALENTYNOWICZ: I would argue that what you need is a process, and I haven't, quite frankly come to the point where I can say, yes, the process has got to be this kind of a commission, composed of this many members. I haven't gotten down to that kind of fine thinking, but it's got to be a process where the primary overriding concern is the common good.

*Q: Of the nation, of this nation, not of the world?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Of this nation. We still have to concentrate on this nation, because we...That doesn't mean that I'm an isolationist, it doesn't mean that I'm going to close the borders, or anything else like that. But the world has not come to the point where we still have one world, we've got a long way to go if we ever get there, if we ever get there.

*Q: We won't, hopefully, always be a magnet, as well. Unfortunately, there are other countries that don't attract, and that is becoming even more demonstratively provable. But, how can we stop attracting people? We need them, it's in our tradition. Whether or not we need them or not, we are still going to be the golden streets.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: We're going to be attractive because we've got the highest standard of living, along with all of the problems.

*Q: Short of going bankrupt totally, and becoming immoral and all of those other things that would cause people to run away from us, how do you control the people coming in? The Hispanics coming across the Mexican border, for example?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, I don't have any magic solutions. I'm not going to be defensive about it here, but I think we have to make some decisions, much smarter decisions than we have now. Let me give you an immediate example. We have very strong border control, all along Canada, and in the gulf ports and Miami, we do! I know. I get called periodically by the federal court service about being caught and so forth, many times. Those people get caught, and they get prosecuted, and they get prosecuted firmly, ok. I'm not saying that its paranoid, but they get prosecuted. For what do these people get prosecuted for? In the southwest, nobody gets prosecuted. That to me is unfair because it is a big issue of selective prosecution.

*Q: But is it volume that brings this about. From Canada no one is running away, to speak of. But from Mexico they are coming in by the millions.*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Volume, volume, right. In other words, not only that, but also the agreement. The Canadians respect this more, our relationship with Canada. So you are asking about Mexicans, I think that one of the things that we have to do, is to make it clear to the Mexicans that we mean business.

*Q: How do you do that?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: It's hard! It took me 18 months...

*Q: ...to build a wall?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Well, you know, obviously, you are saying to me...well, we have been talking about Mexicans. I don't know. I know I talked with the Mexicans for 18 months. I talked to the attorney general, and we never got any place until -- I will tell you what happened -- until I caught the eye of Mr. Kissinger. I didn't talk to him personally, but I mean through Larry. This is a good treaty, this is good, everybody will benefit from it, OK? and finally, this was it. I don't know if this has really happened. I think of that happening as an effort to control the flow of people, in this US/Mexican trade treaty.

*Q: So we are really talking about two nations very different economically, one who is third world...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: And culturally, and also that they respect each other.

*Q: But Mexico needs an escape valve, and we happen to be a very convenient one. And they are not discouraging people from leaving Mexico to send remittances back...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: But we permit all of this.

*Q: Technically, it is all illegal isn't it?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Yes, technically, it is illegal. But my point is that it is illegal. If we do all of this stuff for other countries, people would get offended. But somehow we are supposed to accept this from Mexico.

*Q: OK, back to INS. You started off by saying that you were very, shall we say, disturbed with INS's present behavior. Do you think it has gotten worse since you ...*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Sure, because, I think that after Chapman left, it was a disaster. I think Carter appointed Castillo, I think it was. And Mr. Castillo, forgive me, I'm not here to attack you personally, but I don't think you did the job that was expected of you. I will just leave it at that, OK? If anything, there was a demoralization at INS.

*Q: As well as [a lack of?] leadership in some hard areas?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Correct.

*Q: Support?*

WALENTYNOWICZ: Support, right. Then you had Alan Nelson, coming through Reagan. Alan's a mixed bag, OK. Yeah, he did some good things, and so forth, but he also, in my opinion, did some bad things. He didn't set a tone, OK, and I could go one further, but let me just get to the other guy... .

*End of interview*