

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

JACOB GILLESPIE

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: February 4, 2010
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 4th of February, 2010. This is an interview with Jacob P. Gillespie. And what does the "P" stand for?

GILLESPIE: Priester

Q: Priester. Okay, and you go by Jake?

GILLESPIE: I do.

Q: Okay Jake, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

GILLESPIE: I was born on July 4, 1939, in Cairo, Illinois.

Q: In Cairo? Oh yes, that was a big center for the Union army going down the Mississippi.

GILLESPIE: It was Grant's headquarters for the Union army. It was an important town because it's at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers.

Q: For the transcriber, Cairo is spelled like Cairo, C-A-I-R-O.

GILLESPIE: And frequently mispronounced. I ran into former- the late Senator Paul Simon once when he was overseas and I-

Q: He was a senator from Illinois.

GILLESPIE: Yes. He was; moreover, he was a congressman before from the southern part of Illinois, and I said, "Senator, I was born in your old congressional district." He said, "Oh where?" When I said Cairo and pronounced it "Karo," he said "yes, you were." Cairo was an important town at the time of the Civil War. It had been a bit of a boomtown; it was a rail hub, the river traffic was very important. The other reason that Grant wanted his headquarters there was that it was Copperhead country and he wanted to make sure he knew what these guys behind him were doing.

Q: Copperheads being people living in the Union but sympathetic to the South.

GILLESPIE: Correct.

Q: Somehow when I think of that place I think of lead. Was there a lead mine within-?

GILLESPIE: There are lead mines but not there. The lead mines are east and obviously north of there but there were lead mines, there was some coal but mainly it was built around the river- rail traffic; it was farming.

Q: Okay. Let's get to the family. What can you tell me about the Gillespies?

GILLESPIE: My father was Frank Gillespie. His father, William, was a railroad man. He was yard manager in Cairo and died before I was born.

Q: Do you know where he came from?

GILLESPIE: Yes, his family was all from southern Illinois, but the Gillespies were originally pre-Revolutionary settlers who were probably indentured servants in North Carolina and worked their way west. My father's mother's family was the similar. They were all farmers. Both of my father's grandfathers fought for the Union and both were imprisoned. My paternal great grandfather, James Bryson Gillespie, was fortunate enough to be an officer and went off to the officer camps, which was somewhat better. George Huffman, Dad's maternal grandfather, went to Andersonville, was there for two or three months, survived that and Florence, South Carolina, and eventually escaped from a prison camp in Goldsboro, North Carolina. They both left some written history; consequently I go on more than I should there. But that history was important to his family and to him – and to me. Dad and his brother and sisters were raised in little rail centers throughout that region, one being Hope, Arkansas, where he started school.

Q: That's where President Clinton came from.

GILLESPIE: That's right. I asked my father in 1992 what it was like to be a boy in Hope. He said they weren't liked because they were Yankees. We forget at that time in American history that meant a great deal.

Q: Oh it did.

GILLESPIE: He married Annetta Priester, that's my middle name, the daughter of a businessman in a small rural town across the river in Missouri, Charleston, Missouri; Jake Priester, where my name comes from, was a son of a German immigrant who spoke German up until he was about 12 or 13 when he quit school.

Q: Missouri was a very German state.

GILLESPIE: Yes. His family was from the St. Louis area. He quit speaking German and it was not until just before he died that I ever knew that he still could understand it because before World War I he just stopped and he never used it again.

Q: Well now, on your father's side, what sort of education did your father have?

GILLESPIE: My father's education stretched out for a long time because he was the oldest child. My grandfather did not do well. He and my grandmother eventually divorced. My father went to work doing a variety of things, in various places, to make sure that his three sisters and younger brother all got an education. He went off twice to school; he started at the University of Illinois and then he went to Washington University in St. Louis. But he kept having to go back to Cairo to work. In the late 20s, he left and came to Washington and came to work for the Bureau of the Census. And went to what has become George Washington University Law School.

Q: Yes, I think it was called Columbia Law School.

GILLESPIE: That's right. He started there and it took him almost four years. But he lived here for those few years and then went back to southern Illinois to practice law.

He finally had his degree, his sisters were married and he went into practice. He ran for county attorney in Alexandria County in 1936. This was something he never talked about. I think it hurt him badly, because he thought he was going to win and he didn't. His twin sister told me years later that he should have. She said he was cheated. She said it was well known that they cheated because they couldn't buy Frank. He was an extremely honest man. He practiced law. In 1938 he married my mother. World War II came. He was born in 1903 so he was older and his brother was in the service. He was never called but he basically helped run the Cairo post office, as his law practice slowed down.

Q: All right, let's talk about your mother, her background and education.

GILLESPIE: My mother was younger than my father, born in 1916. She went to high school in Charleston, a small rural town, and spent a short time at the Southeast Missouri Teachers College in Cape Girardeau.

Q: Missouri?

GILLESPIE: Missouri. She returned home and shortly after that, she would have met my father.

Q: Alright, let's talk- How big was your family?

GILLESPIE: I have a sister, Mary Jane Gillespie

Q: Older, younger?

GILLESPIE: Younger, four years younger. She is retired and lives in Amesbury, Massachusetts. She is very smart, went to Wellesley and then to Harvard Law. I was in Burundi when she was accepted to go to Harvard Law and I wrote a letter that said- of course there were no emails; this was the day of air letters and so I wrote her and said

congratulations but why on earth are you going to Harvard Law? And her reply was because she was on the waiting list at Yale.

Q: Okay, now let's go back to Cairo.

GILLESPIE: Cairo, Cairo. You can sound a little more, maybe a little more southern.

Q: Well that's kind of the way I've heard it but anyway, as a kid growing up there, let's talk-

GILLESPIE: Well I didn't really grow up there, Stu. My father left the law practice there after the war and went to Chicago where he went to work for the Veterans Administration.

Q: Okay, so where in Chicago did you live?

GILLESPIE: We lived on Austin Boulevard in Oak Park, Illinois, a very nice middle class suburb. It's right next to Chicago and we lived on Austin Boulevard, which is the border. If you walked across the street you were in the west side of Chicago.

Q: Oak Park later got renowned by resisting black inclusion-

GILLESPIE: In fact, I think that's Cicero.

Q: Yes, Cicero is in my mind.

GILLESPIE: Oak Park has always been famous as Ernest Hemingway's home town and former home of Frank Lloyd Wright. It has been among the Chicago suburbs, I think, considered the most successfully integrated. Now, it is not home; I left it later too, but we were there basically because my mother asked around, especially of my father's three sisters and their families, where the best schools were.

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

GILLESPIE: I was there from the time I was five until I was 15.

Q: Okay, let's talk about being five and on as a kid, growing up there; what was it like?

GILLESPIE: Good. We lived on the third floor of a walkup apartment.

Q: A three-decker?

GILLESPIE: Three-decker; you can see them all over Chicago. When I was younger, we all played in the alley behind. It was the post-war period. There were a lot of kids. I remember good times. We walked to school and, as I tell my grandchildren, in six feet of snow, bare feet, every day but it was a nice eight block walk that you became very

accustomed to. You learned the way. You met people. You knew everyone on the way. It was interesting that as you went west in Oak Park the houses got bigger and you know, I never really understood that except we were the only ones in the area, it seemed, except for the friends who lived right along Austin Boulevard who lived in walkup apartments. But it was a great place to grow up. You get a bicycle and you ride around. I had a paper route for three years where I didn't ride a bicycle; I got a route with 10 blocks of those walkup flats and I pushed a big pushcart that would be full of the old Chicago Tribune. I built up a nice throwing arm, just being able to toss the paper up to the top, and I learned to put a newspaper back together very nicely and to walk it up when it fell apart as I threw it up. But it was one of those things where you did it in all weather and that could be pretty miserable weather some days.

Q: Well, when was your route, in the morning or the afternoon?

GILLESPIE: Morning. So I would get up at about 5:00 in the morning and the main circulation would have delivered the papers; I would fold them and roll them and load the push cart and start off and try to get on the road by 6:00 and I would try to get home by 7:00 but I rarely did. I would get home by 7:30.

Q: Okay, well we'll do school in a minute, but was it still the era where, the way I was and the way so many were, I assume you kids were kind of feral. In other words, after school, okay, get out and do something.

GILLESPIE: Come home and tell me what you're doing and then good-bye.

Q: And we'd eat at 6:30 or whatever it is but after that you're on your own.

GILLESPIE: That's right. Probably up through about eight years old or so you played; you played in the back- we were pretty feral even with that. The radius was remarkable. There was a shopping area a block away, Stu, you could walk down- If I still had a couple of nickels left I could go in and have a Coke from the good old fountain in the drug store or you took off with the guys later and went somewhere and we played baseball, we played football.

Q: Unorganized, of course.

GILLESPIE: No, it was wonderfully organized by the kids themselves. I did not see anything organized until I was about in seventh grade and at that time there was a baseball coach and teacher in the high school who ran a summer program in the park that he called the baseball school, and he had two or three high school players who would come work with him. I don't know, I think you paid a couple dollars. He couldn't have made much money with it. And he taught a lot of baseball fundamentals that were really remarkable, the sort of thing- how you do it. Thirty-five- 30 years later I remember making a play in softball on a Saturday in El Salvador with something the Marines set up, come on, we'll all play, and it was everybody against the Marines. And somebody hit- I was playing second base and somebody hit a ball and I went to second base, got the

throw and made the pivot, and these two young athletes from the embassy said how did you do that? I said I don't know; that's what I did. But it was things like that; until then, I don't remember anything organized that we played. We had, you know, gym classes in school, there was some after school sports but it was, again, very minor league compared to what I see kids going through today.

Q: Okay, in the first place, were you much of a reader?

GILLESPIE: I was very much a reader. There was always a book going. One of the great things, of course, Stu, about Oak Park was the library system. We went over and everybody got library cards and you met the librarians and the librarians knew you and there was always a stack of books. My mother was a great reader and actually was self-educated after missing any other higher education.

Q: This is very much the pattern.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: That generation really was very well read, much better probably than today.

GILLESPIE: I think so. It wasn't just that there were books around, there were always books, but the other things that we had that were there was if you had a couple bucks to put together, Dad would get a subscription to "Saturday Evening Post" or to "Colliers" or to "Life," and you know, and those were there all the time. And "The National Geographic" came.

And you know, I read the things that I have foisted off on my grandchildren with middling success but they were wonderful books.

Q: Can you think of any books that particularly you enjoyed or impressed you, series or anything like that when you were a kid?

GILLESPIE: One that everyone still reads was Johnny Tremain.

Q: About the Revolutionary War.

GILLESPIE: Revolutionary War, yes. The Robert Louis Stevenson books, much more than the Fennimore Cooper books and I don't know, those I liked more than the others. Later on all the Jules Verne books. When I was, oh, seven, eight, nine, I got taken away with a whole series of books written by a New York "Herald Tribune" sportswriter, John Tunis.

Q: Oh yes. Sports books.

GILLESPIE: Sports books. I loved them; I just thought they were terrific. Gee, what else? Probably a number of other things.

Q: It was a reading era.

GILLESPIE: It was. It was very much.

Q: Now on your family, in the first place, what sort of politics did they have or did they? Were you-?

GILLESPIE: Ah. We should go back to one of the first things I mentioned. I had two great-grandfathers who were Civil War prisoners of the Confederacy. My father's family and pretty much my- yes, my mother's family too, I think, as far as I know my mother's family, but definitely all my father's were Illinois Lincoln Republicans. Now, were they involved? No. Not really. I do think some of my father's sisters' families were much more involved but did we talk- We talked about it a good bit. This was a tough time; this was- you know, it would not have been my choice as an adult but the "Chicago Tribune" was there every morning-

Q: Which was heavily influenced by Colonel McCormick.

GILLESPIE: That's right. It was quite a conservative paper.

Q: Oh yes.

GILLESPIE: This was a time when you started to see things. I remember as a boy, as to being feral and going around expanded as we got older, we could get on the streetcar, the Chicago Avenue streetcar, and go in the summer to go see the Cubs play or we could go other places, and I remember, well, I must have been 11 or 12 years old, I must have been 11, when General Douglas MacArthur came home, I remember going- two or three of us got on the street car and went down to watch the MacArthur parade.

Q: Because Colonel McCormick and company were tremendous supporters of Douglas MacArthur.

GILLESPIE: Yes, yes.

Q: He wanted him to be president.

GILLESPIE: That's right, although I don't know how much of that I knew until later. But you had- there were things like that. You had McCarthyism that was coming along and we saw that. I don't think my father was very fond of that. He was still a government employee but it was something he didn't talk about a whole lot.

Q: What about religion? How important was this?

GILLESPIE: Church and Sunday school every Sunday. Methodist, I was raised a Methodist. I certainly am not practicing today. The church has played a major role in the

communities. You had youth groups, you had- And I will be perfectly honest, I think I was first attracted to this because they had sports teams and facilities and you might be able to play some.

Q: Sure.

GILLESPIE: And later on, of course, I managed to stay attracted to it because girls went.

Q: Oh yes. All right, in school. Let's take elementary school; in the first place, how were you as an elementary school student?

GILLESPIE: Good, very good. I liked school all the way along. I enjoyed school. Both my mother and father were very insistent that I would work hard in school and I would behave. And discipline at home was not really terribly hard but it was still enough that I knew that I'd better behave. I did very well, I liked it, I liked everything. I still remember the names of every one of my elementary school teachers.

Q: Can you think of any of those teachers that really impressed you?

GILLESPIE: Yes. Yes. There were two, who were two of the later teachers. They were teachers that- one was the mathematics teacher in seventh and eighth grade and the other was the social studies teacher in the same time period. They were imaginative. Neither one was an easy teacher or kind of what you would call a warm and loving person in the school. There was no Mr. Chips but they were just wonderful people in many ways.

Q: Did the outside, particularly we're talking about still elementary, junior high, but did the outside world intrude? I mean either through ethnic divisions or just what was happening outside?

GILLESPIE: Not very much. Oak Park was white. There was, to the best of my knowledge, one African American in Oak Park, Illinois. His name was Percy Julian. He was a world renowned chemist, one of the developers of cortisone who had, I think two children who were younger than I was. They didn't live in the same elementary school district that I did. . Were there things happening? No. That comes in my second high school career.

Well in high school, you went to two high schools?

GILLESPIE: I started at Oak Park and River Forest High School in Oak Park and I was there for a year and a half, I enjoyed it greatly. It was then one of the great high schools in America. I enjoyed it; I had friends, old friends, new friends. I worked hard, did pretty well. High school sports were great fun. I started there and then in the fall of 1954 my parents moved- my father was transferred; they moved to Baltimore. He was with Social Security by this time.

Q: Social Security Administration?

GILLESPIE: That's right. He went first and then my sister and mother joined him. I stayed and lived with one of my father's sisters for about three months, until the mid-term break, and then I moved out and lived in Baltimore, in the city. There I went to Baltimore City College,

Q: But you were going to high school?

GILLESPIE: I was in high school. Its name was and is Baltimore City College. At that time it was a public boys' high school that focused perhaps more on the liberal arts than the sciences, although you wouldn't know it for the number of doctors in my high school graduating class. It took students from all over Baltimore. It was selective and in fact some parts of it were very selective. It was one of the three or four oldest public secondary schools in America.

Q: A little bit like Boston Latin? Or that thing-

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: Very, very selective.

GILLESPIE: That's right. But it was fun and it was a great school. As much as I had liked living in Oak Park and as I had gotten older had wonderful freedom and access to things in Chicago, I think moving to Baltimore and going to City was probably the most important thing in my life, other than getting married.

Q: Well let's talk about Baltimore at the time. You were there sort of as a boy from when to when?

GILLESPIE: I was there as a boy- well, I was there from all of 1955 until I- for me, although my parents moved once and back, until I joined the Foreign Service.

Q: Which is when?

GILLESPIE: Sixty-one.

Q: Okay. So what was Baltimore like as far as you were concerned?

GILLESPIE: We lived in a nice, but small, row house. The big change for us, of course, was we had a house. The school, which was the center for me, was one of the most remarkable changes I have ever gone through. There were boys from all over Baltimore. My guess is it was probably about 40 percent Jewish, because it was a very good selective school, and good students went there, but I sat down in class, in my homeroom class, and I started to think about it about three or four days later, none of the people sitting around me would have been at school with me at Oak Park. There were, you know, Walt Malinowski sat on one side and Tom Reilly became a close friend. And then

my two best friends, Howard Braitman and Phil Weinstein. These were guys I wouldn't have known otherwise.

It also was the first year after *Brown versus Board of Education*. Baltimore schools had been integrated in the fall of 1955 relatively peacefully, thanks to a lot of very hard work and political courage by Thomas D'Alesandro, the father of the current Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi. He was a remarkable person. His city solicitor, the city's attorney, was the father of a classmate of mine, Tom Biddison. I think that the two of them made the decision.

That first year perhaps a dozen African American students came to Baltimore City College. It was a remarkable bunch, I mean, it was a tough- it was scary. I became friends with two of them and both said, in effect, that it was a little scary.

Q: Did you find yourself specializing or leaning towards any particular field of study?

GILLESPIE: I liked the humanities and social studies a lot, more than the sciences. And it's funny, my two best friends were both very scientifically oriented and both became world class physicians and researchers. I liked that I was interested in American history, and again, I had two glorious English teachers who got us to read and to write.

Q: Who were they?

GILLESPIE: John Pentz and Elsa Glaiser.

Q: I ask these names because this will eventually end up on the Internet; by God, I think teachers deserve to get into the history.

GILLESPIE: You're darned right. And these- certainly these two do and one history professor who I had -- Ben Emenheiser. Those three people in many ways taught me how to think.. And certainly gave me what writing skills that I had later on. Pentz increased my love of words and books.

Q: But anyway, did you run across within your family or elsewhere, Catholic bias or Jewish bias or anti anything of that nature?

GILLESPIE: It was something that was around. I think in my father's family, perhaps.

Q: It would seem- I mean-

GILLESPIE: Given they were from the South, yes. But my grandfather, although he was an early orphan, he was raised by aunts and uncles for awhile and then sort of disappeared on his own. He had been raised in the Catholic Church, and his sister and her family were Catholics. So they're in that little town of Charleston, there was a strain of the family that was Catholic, which made a little bit of different because that very definitely would have- although there were Catholics there and they were as part of the

town as much as anything else, they were, you know, somewhat different always. Of course, in Charleston, as long as you had the black community for everyone to be against it was easy not to have any conflicts there.

Q: Well you know, I was born in '28 and one of the things I was told just- when I started dating, you've got to watch dating Catholic girls because if you marry them the children will have to be Catholic and this was considered to be pretty awful. You know, I mean, it was just part of the folklore. Of course today who cares?

GILLESPIE: I have two children, I have a son and a daughter, they're both in their mid-40s; I have a Catholic family and a Jewish family. .

Q: Well, were you aware, by going to the homes of Catholics or Jews, that this was kind of a different atmosphere and all?

GILLESPIE: Maybe.

Q: Where did you live?

GILLESPIE: We lived in Northwood. The first place we lived was on Cold Spring Lane, about two blocks up from Morgan State College. The first house we bought was in Northwood and it was a rather Catholic neighborhood. These were the people I knew and the friends I made, some of whom were Catholic, some of whom were Jews, some Protestant and some I still have no idea. But yes, there were differences.

Q: It's interesting, in a way, the Italian area was somewhere else, wasn't it?

GILLESPIE: Little Italy was in another part of town and then you had Greektown, which is another- Baltimore was an ethnic area, where there was-

Q: This was a major port at one point.

GILLESPIE: Major port and it was still a major port in '55 through '61. It was and, to a certain extent, still is a city of ethnic neighborhoods. Mayor D'Alesandro lived in Little Italy in a row house, a nice row house, but a row house. Classmates Hank Majeski and Bob Montgomery lived in Hampden, west of the Johns Hopkins campus. The Jewish community lived mostly north and west but not entirely. And the town was so varied that it was a fascinating place to live.

Q: Well, while you were in high school, did the outside world begin to intrude?

GILLESPIE: Yes. Yes. John Pentz, the English professor, assigned to us the responsibility of writing a paper on Yalta, because the Yalta Agreement had become public.

Q: Very political.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: Who gave away Eastern Europe to the communists?

GILLESPIE: Exactly. And this was interesting that he did this because basically the faculty at City College I think was probably politically very left of center. And they were remarkable teachers. They were one of the unplanned blessings of Depression because they took teaching jobs. But they were there and they were- Later, after I was an adult and I'd run into some of them or I'd go back, go over before they retired and see them, there was no question; I mean, they were people who were thrilled with Kennedy being elected. I think there were a number of them who were quite afraid of McCarthyism but, you know, this was the sort of thing that they did; they said you're going to think about this, what is this, why was this done. I don't know very many 17 and 18 year olds who had any answers - But it meant we all had to read this stuff and that was good. Obviously the beginning of the civil rights thing intruded, because we were there when schools were integrating.

Q: Yes. This was essentially a southern city.

GILLESPIE: Geez, come on. You know, you had- yes it was, in some ways, but at the same time this is the home of Bethlehem Steel, this was a major industrial center - Every bit as much as it was a southern city.

Q: I have a- I've done an interview and the name escapes me now of the lady, you probably know her, who went to Morgan State and she got involved early on in the- Morgan State being a traditional African American college- and she got- she said she got arrested for demonstrating; they were even thrown into prison for a couple of days, much to the horror of their parents. But- and she joined the Foreign Service.

GILLESPIE: The only Morgan State- no, I might know her but the only Morgan State-

Q: She has a Nigerian name; she married a Nigerian.

GILLESPIE: Was he from the Ivory Coast?

Q: No, Nigerian.

GILLESPIE: Okay. I knew one who married an Ivorian and later on, the man came back here as the ambassador. She had served with us in the Congo.

Q: Anyway. But I mean, there were all sorts of things going on.

GILLESPIE: But yes- Oh, listen. The beginning of this, not a whole lot in Baltimore in the late 50s but of course in the late 50s you already had the sit-ins throughout the South;

you had the Freedom Riders going down on the buses, leaving from Morgan State in many cases. It was always around us.

Q: Was any of this affecting you particularly? Were you sort of just being a high school student then?

GILLESPIE: One thing did. We went to a Methodist church with Morgan State down the street. I was in college after '57, but I never remember seeing a black face there, but other than a much greater awareness than I had – or probably would have had – in Oak Park, I was not affected. But we knew what was going on.

Q: Okay, back to high school. What was dating like in your era?

GILLESPIE: Well you know, you're new in town and you go to a boys' school; City College was across the street from an equivalent public girls school, but they were big campuses and pretty far away. You didn't see them and there certainly wasn't a chance to meet them. City College is right across the street from where the old Memorial Stadium used to be, a big neo-gothic tower structure up on a hill, so that put limitations, and this is where a kid learns to rely on his friends.. And so it was tough; it was possible. There was a fairly active social life. Nobody lacked; I probably struggled a bit more than most, but not that much.

Q: Well it was pretty much movies and Cokes, wasn't it?

GILLESPIE: Movies and Cokes, high school dances. Occasionally a party somewhere but that was rare.

Q: Well then, you're moving up- You graduated when?

GILLESPIE: Graduated in June of 1957.

Q: Did you by any chance get involved in extracurricular activities in high school?

GILLESPIE: Oh, I played all the sports. I played football, basketball and I learned to play lacrosse. I gave up baseball when the baseball coach told me to try lacrosse. I guess he was telling me something. I was elected class president and those all kept me busy, kept me off the streets. Occasionally I would work. I worked all summer, always, from the time I was old enough to get a job.

Q: Doing what?

GILLESPIE: Oh geez; I worked on the truck crew at a Boy Scout camp one summer, collecting garbage -- not the most pleasant of jobs but we had a certain cachet among the staff. It was-dirty. Then I worked one summer in the warehouse of Reed's Drug Stores.

Q: "Run right to Reed's."

GILLESPIE: Very good. Run right to Reed's. That's good. I had forgotten that.

Q: We had a Reeds Drug Store in Annapolis.

GILLESPIE: Well they were all over and then were acquired by People's Drug Stores before CVS ate up the world. But it was a good job. And then, that would be my sophomore year, my junior year, my senior year, as I was getting ready to graduate, maybe first part of May, middle of May, a teacher asked to see me. His name was Mel Filler. Mel Filler was an art teacher. I had never taken an art course and I knew him but only slightly, not well. He was an assistant football coach later on but I'd never played for him. He asked if I had a job. When I said that I did not, he said asked if I wanted to work with four teachers managing the fishing headquarters at Loch Raven Reservoir. A small outfit had the franchise to do this from the, I forget who it was, the city or the state, I think. He said it means getting up really early. He said he wanted to talk to my folks because it would mean using the family car some days. The same four were also part of a larger group of teachers who parked cars at Orioles games. This is when I learned the economics of education in America and what a sin it is the way we pay teachers. Not the way we pay teachers today, which is awful, but the way we have paid teachers, public school teachers for years. These four were wonderful men. Mel Filler was a great coach and teacher. He's still a friend. He just turned 80 and came to my fiftieth high school reunion.

And so for two summers this is what I did. I learned a lot. These four men put me in charge for extended periods. They said there's the money, there's the powerboat out there, it's only supposed to be used for this and this and this. Don't lock up here and just goof off. There will be long periods when no one is here. And that's what I did. I did that after my senior year and after my freshman year in college.

Q: Let's talk about going to college. You were getting out of-

GILLESPIE: City College.

Q: City College; what were you looking towards doing and where did you want to go to College?

GILLESPIE: What was I looking towards doing? I had my fiftieth high school reunion recently and someone sent me, before it happened, a clipping from the high school weekly newspaper. There were interviews with seniors with a series of questions. They asked me what I wanted to do. I said I want to join the Foreign Service. I know that that was something I had thought of. Now, that has little to do with what I did about college. I went in and I applied to a collection of very good schools. All of this was dependent on getting financial aid. I had a good friend from Oak Park High School who was at Dartmouth and so I went to Dartmouth.

Q: Well in the first place, how did you run across the two magic words “Foreign Service?”

GILLESPIE: Reading. You know, this is very interesting, how and why. I have, you know, I don't know where but it was certainly something that I knew, something that I knew a little bit more than oh, there's just a thing called the Foreign Service. I knew that they were diplomats, they were at embassies and they worked overseas. If I had to try to do some self analysis, I would say that deep inside me there was still the boy from Cairo, Illinois, and I figured this was the only way I was ever going to get out of Cairo.

Q: Okay. You're off to the wilds of New Hampshire. Why Dartmouth?

GILLESPIE: Who knows? Who know, you know? I had a terrific time, I think. I did fairly well. I was no scholar, I had fun; I played lacrosse, I played some basketball. I worked hard; sometimes I did things really well. I don't know why Dartmouth. I couldn't tell you and once I got there I'm not sure because there still was the thought in my mind that I was going to go to law school too.

Q: Okay, well let's- You were at Dartmouth from when to when?

GILLESPIE: I graduated in 1961. I went in the fall of '57.

Q: Alright. What was Dartmouth like when you went there, first arrived there?

GILLESPIE: First arrived there. Well, the first time I ever walked in it was, as it still is, absolutely beautiful. It is one of the most beautiful college campuses in this country. But my parents took me up; it was the only time my mother ever set foot on the place until she came for graduation. My father came up one other time. I think in many ways it was appropriate that, because we were going on a trip through New England, we made a stop at Mt. Washington -- the windiest, most isolated place in the White Mountains.

Q: Oh yes. It's something to go up to the top there; it sometimes has the strongest winds and coldest temperatures in the States.

GILLESPIE: That's right. And then we went up to Hanover. Because it dawned on us once we were there, gee, it took us a long time to get here and gosh, there's nothing else around here at all. We were isolated, you were there, it was all male and it was- You know, it was probably, I mean, it was an interesting atmosphere. As I think back on it, it probably wasn't the greatest thing for me.

Q: It was all male then, wasn't it?

GILLESPIE: It was very much all male; it was very macho, very masculine.

Q: Very woody.

GILLESPIE: There was a very outdoors connection, of which, in spite of running that fishing camp outside Baltimore, I had none. Because I played basketball and then messed up knees doing so, and although I managed to play lacrosse, I never learned to ski. I tell people I'm the only person who ever-

Q: God.

GILLESPIE: Yes. Who went to Dartmouth and- And I have a whole family of great skiers, but not me.

Q: Well, did you belong to a fraternity?

GILLESPIE: I did belong to a fraternity.

Q: Which one was that?

GILLESPIE: It was Delta Tau Delta when I joined and it became Bones Gate. If you have spoken with any of the other Dartmouth graduates from that period and talked about this, of whom there are a number in the Foreign Service, at that time- First of all, fraternities were important and probably still are but shouldn't be. They still are because it's a source of social life. If you're off in the woods there's not much else. Of course, fraternities had that other great source of socialization -- beer.

In 1957 the trustees of Dartmouth decided that no fraternity with a national relationship that had a discriminatory clause based on race or religion could remain. In other words, you had to get them to change the rules, their own bylaws or whatever it was, or get out of the national fraternity. And so we got out.

Q: It's interesting because, again, I'm 10 years older, I was the class of '50 at Williams and we still had discrimination and it was being fought and all of us were uncomfortable because it just didn't make sense.

GILLESPIE: That's right.

Q: And it was- say discriminatory, it was anti-Jewish-

GILLESPIE: Yes, they were the ones that felt it the most. In fact, for the school to lay this down was terribly hypocritical. Here was- as I'm sure at Williams- here was this school that had its own quotas and limitations and it was pretty well a given, although I didn't know this completely until much later, that there be no more than five percent Jews in a freshman class and there would be- was definitely a limitation of Jews on the faculty.

Q: It was a-

GILLESPIE: It was a crazy question. And, of course, blacks, well-

Q: Well there weren't many.

GILLESPIE: We had three in my incoming class, not in my graduating, my incoming part of the class.

Q: Yes. You're talking on the Jewish side; here I was with men who had liberated-

GILLESPIE: That's right. Your period is more-

Q: And yet they had this thing, stupid laws, and most of us didn't- it's not that we didn't question it, we didn't think it was good- It wasn't a matter of great involvement, I have to say.

GILLESPIE: No. And that was one of the problems. I was talking about this at dinner the other night with college friends. One – a member of another fraternity said they had one battle over this issue. I think we had about the same with long but not very thoughtful arguments with six or seven members who did not want to change. It's funny, but that is the only time while I was in Hanover when we discussed discrimination where it affected us directly. I mean, I thought about it when we discussed the news. I thought about George Wallace. Eisenhower had just gotten the troops into Little Rock when we started at Dartmouth. But in terms of dealing with it directly it was the only time we did, I think, the whole time. We had no reason to otherwise.

Q: What were the dating patterns? Smith or what?

GILLESPIE: Oh, again, it depended. I came out of a situation where I didn't have a large number of female friends. And I didn't have much money. I had no automobile; you relied on friends. My freshman year I think I had two dates. But in my senior year, I met Susan Wagner at Skidmore. She became my wife.

Q: I hitchhiked all the time.

GILLESPIE: I hitchhiked to get home. I'd get a ride to somewhere. I remember once I got down as far as somewhere on the Jersey Pike and hitchhiked to get back on, it was- took me three trips, three cars and it was one of the craziest rides I had ever, you know, trips I had ever been on and I saved up money after that and I'd hitchhike a lot. I didn't have time to run off, lots of times, on weekends very long because of sports, again.

Q: Okay, what were you doing?

GILLESPIE: I played basketball my freshman year and my sophomore year until I tore a knee. But I played lacrosse all the way through.

Q: What position?

GILLESPIE: I was a defenseman.

Q: With a big stick.

GILLESPIE: A big stick. Both my son and all the members in my family play lacrosse, which is very funny, except my daughter, who was a first class field hockey player. But they're all attack and midfielders. And I said oh, you know, the best looking and the smartest guys are all the ones with the big sticks.

*Q: Yes. I played on the Williams team but as a substitute, way down on the list
What were your subjects that you particularly-?*

GILLESPIE: At the beginning I took what you had to but it was very obvious to me early on that I was very attracted to the social sciences. I mean, generally, I found there were sociology courses, history courses, government courses I was fascinated with and government professors I really liked.

Q: This is before the virus of political science got there.

GILLESPIE: That's right. Actually Dartmouth may still have government. What I asked to be accepted into was they had the international relations major, which had two advantages. One, it gave you some concentration but gave you a wide range of things to do, from, well virtually all the social sciences and some humanities. And it was a good major my junior and senior year. I worked hard but I had a lot of fun. There were other courses, I remember. Dartmouth was good this way. Ramón Guthrie, who was a French resistance fighter and a poet, taught a wonderful course in French- twentieth century French literature. It was great fun and I think, again, you know, a men's school, as you know, professors can do things they wouldn't do otherwise and about half of the course was just glorious, bawdy things that we wouldn't have read otherwise or known about. There was a wonderful course in the philosophy department that was the philosophy of Freudian psychology, taught by a fascinating professor who was a psychotherapist as well as a philosopher. He designed the course so that the last lecture ends with *liberté, fraternité, égalité*. That's a glorious way to wrap up; it's one of these things where everybody's cheering.

I loved a history course of Europe from the Franco-Prussian War to 1914 taught by John Adams. Adams was originally Serbian. He was with the OSS (Office of Strategic Service) during the war. He would draw these glorious maps in very detailed colored chalks on the blackboard. And I remember that the last lecture. There is a map of Sarajevo and he literally walked us through the day and what everyone does. He knew the streets and the actors. His closing line was "a shot was fired and Europe was changed forever."

Q: Alright, talking about the way you change, political changes, it probably wasn't as much a change as somebody who's been- but you were there during the Nixon/Kennedy election and this one was probably more than almost- until maybe the recent one with Obama and McCain, but it really caught the students. How about you?

GILLESPIE: Yes. There was not nearly the political activity at Dartmouth starting with the New Hampshire primary as there is today. But this was exciting. Kennedy campaigned in Hanover and spoke to a large group of students. He excited us, but almost any school in the Ivy League at that time, was a majority Republican. I voted absentee which sort of set a standard, I guess, because I voted absentee then, in '60, and I voted absentee until I moved back here in 1993 before retiring. 1996 was the first time I had ever walked into a voting booth but I never missed a presidential election.

Q: Well then, you- what were you aiming towards? You know, you're getting ready to graduate in '61?

GILLESPIE: Sixty-one. And I want to say December but I think maybe it was January or- December of '60 or January '61 I took the written Foreign Service exam.

Q: It's usually done, I think in those times, it was the first Saturday in December.

GILLESPIE: I think you're right, it was. But you waited a good while for a response and you waited and you waited. Well, I took it and then I also applied graduate school for- do something in international relations or political science. I interviewed with a couple of companies and I made arrangements to take the law boards in the spring but I really didn't want to take the law boards and I don't think I, you know, I really wanted to go to graduate school either. Some time in February, I think, I got the information that I had passed the written exam. I sent in all the forms and received a letter telling me to show up for an oral examination in Boston on such and such a date at such and such a time. A fraternity brother had been the valedictorian at Dartmouth the year before and had not passed the oral exam. So I looked upon this as a bit of a lark, an excuse for a trip to Boston. I had given up law school by then but I had been accepted at Northwestern to study political science, which was a real fallback with nothing else to do, and I had talked seriously to the Marine Corps. I had interviewed with CIA.

Q: I was going to say, CIA-

GILLESPIE: Yes, they had us all; they had us all.

Q: You know, I mean, I think if you're interested in the Foreign Service, CIA was also, I mean, that was part of the New England culture.

GILLESPIE: Of course it was. And you know, there were pipelines and I talked to them and I had gone far enough with them that they had said we would like to have you. So I knew I- if I wanted to I could do that and that's when I was going to have to spend some time in the Marines. But I went down and I took the oral exam with USIA (United States Information Agency), the Foreign Service exam, and I went through it and I sat there and the first, you know, the first question was "What is the Bill of Rights?" And I sat tried to enumerate the 10 in my mind and I finally thought that I had to say something. So I said, "It's the first 10 amendments to the Constitution." And they went on to the next question.

When I finished the exam, the examiners asked me to wait a minute or two. All I remember were three guys in black suits and they asked serious questions. But I thought well, I answered most of them. After a while the chief examiner came out and said “Congratulations. You have passed the oral.” Or something to that effect. I had to complete medical and security examinations and they would be in touch. I was thrilled. I thought holy smoke. Again, it was a little bit of this- the thing- all the way back to grammar school, in elementary, I achieved something, I passed the test. I did something. Later on, I told people that this is an achievement, it’s a terrific achievement.

A few days later I spoke to Richard Sterling, Professor of Government, and a wonderful advisor. He and Gene Lyons ran the international relations senior seminar. He said you took the oral. Tell me what happened. I told him and he said that’s wonderful. He had been in the Foreign Service for a while before he left to teach. I asked to talk with him and said that I didn’t know what to do. I’ve had been accepted at terrific program at Northwestern and I had passed the orals. He looked at me said, “My God, Jake, I never thought you would go to graduate school.” He said USIA is ideal. If you like it, in your first five years you’re going to have more fun there than you would was anywhere else. If you find that’s worth doing and you like doing it, okay. If not, I could change to State or go back to graduate school or go to law school. And that’s basically why I sit here today.

Q: Alright. Well why don’t we stop at this point and we’ll pick this up when you enter the Foreign Service, talk about your class, your early class and its composition and then on what you were up to.

GILLESPIE: Okay.

Q: Great.

Today is the 18th of February, 2010, with Jake Gillespie, and Jake, where are we now?

GILLESPIE: We are in the fall of 1961, after a summer of a few jobs and a little bit of substitute teaching at my old high school.

Q: Where was your old high school?

GILLESPIE: Baltimore, Baltimore City College. In October, I went to Washington and I should explain that the next year is the most important, probably, in my life. It sets the whole tone of everything that has happened with me since. One of the things that we did talk about last time a bit was the problem of getting a date at Dartmouth, you may recall, that it was difficult. And in the spring of 1961, before I graduated, I went off with three friends on a spur of the moment road trip to Saratoga Springs.

Q: Skidmore.

GILLESPIE: Skidmore. Where none of us knew anyone but whereby the most fortuitous chance of all I met Susan Wagner. In the course of the summer and through the coming fall we became more and more serious and in the spring of '62 we were married.

Q: Can you give us some background on her family and where she came from and all?

GILLESPIE: Yes. Susan was from Fairfield, Connecticut, originally. Her father was the son of a German immigrant, a young man who had come to the United States at age fourteen and went to live with an uncle. He arrived probably on the east side of New York before Ellis Island had opened, and he worked his way up to upstate New York, where he started a furniture company in Herkimer that actually became moderately successful until the Depression. Susan's father, Arthur, was one of five children, two brothers and two sisters. He was an engineer and spent the greatest part of his career with Sikorsky as a test engineer on new developments in helicopters throughout the '50s and '60s.

Q: Sikorsky being the major helicopter company, which was started by a Russian immigrant.

GILLESPIE: Yes, that's right, that's right. And it is part of United Industries now. But he studied at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the Wharton School and had a remarkable career; His wife, Margaret, was from Ilion, New York, which is a small town not far from Utica. And he grew up, you know, hunting fishing. We have a wonderful picture of a snowmobile that he built with parts from his motorcycle. He turned his motorcycle into a snowmobile probably in the very early 1920s and Susan kids and says that she would have been a different life if he'd only patented it. But in any case she had a comfortable but very middle class upbringing in Fairfield.

Q: What was her major?

GILLESPIE: She was a major in business but I was the complete villain of the Wagner family. She was the only child. Not only did I take her off on a Foreign Service career which became quite difficult, but I took her out of school. And they did not see their first grandchild until he was eighteen months old. I finally have accepted complete responsibility for this, although I'm...

Q: I ripped my wife untimely from the academic womb when she was- she finished her sophomore year.

GILLESPIE: Ah. Well, Susan was in the middle of her junior year.

But to return to the fall of '61, I came to Washington having almost no idea what to expect. I had a little money but I was wise enough to move into in the old Y, which was on F Street, right off of 18th, for my first three nights in Washington. On the 30th of October, 1961, I was sworn in by Edward R. Murrow as a Foreign Service reserve officer for USIA. I was the youngest of a group of 20 officers. It was a fascinating group of

people. There were film producers and radio commentators and writers, journalists, and they ranged in age from my 22 to 32, which was the maximum at that time.

Murrow walked into the room, smoking a cigarette. He put it out as he reached the front of the room. He lit another as he began to speak. He spoke to us for about ten minutes without notes. He talked about the administration, about the Agency. He commented on our backgrounds. I was awed by him. He finished his comments, put out his cigarette and swore us in. He lit another and walked down the line, shaking our hands and chatting with us. I will never forget it.

Four years later, he was dead of lung cancer.

Q: To put it in context, this was the, sort of the first class after Kennedy saying ask not what your country can do for you but you can do for your country.

GILLESPIE: I think we were Murrow's second class. We might have been the third, but probably the second because there had been a hiring freeze in State and USIA and there was a great backlog on the Foreign Service register and it just took time, I guess, to get that going again. But I will never forget the day of the swearing in. Murrow was a hero already amongst a great part of America.

Q: Well he had taken- not only was a great radio man from the London Blitz and all but he had taken basically a stand, he called it like it was against McCarthy-

GILLESPIE: That's right.

Q: -which was really the beginning of the end for McCarthy.

GILLESPIE: I think it was. The day of the swearing in we started in the old Walker Johnson building.

Q: Yes. Across the street from the Old Executive Office Building.

GILLESPIE: Down the street, that's right, yes. And we filled out papers and we did all of this and we met the people who were going to manage our time and told what we would be doing and then they said at 11:00 we will all go up to 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue for the swearing in, which we did. We went into the large conference room at USIA, on the top floor, room 1100, and we waited. A number of obviously senior people came in and then everyone stood up because here came Director Murrow. Director Murrow came in with Don Wilson, who was the Deputy Director and who I do remember being there, and I'm not sure who else. And Murrow, who of course died from cancer of the lungs, smoked- was famous for smoking, he always had a cigarette in his hand, came in with a cigarette in his hand, and he put it out as he got to the front of the room and lit another one and proceeded to talk to us. It was obvious that he had been well briefed; he talked about every one of us in the class. He mentioned you have done this, he even said we have a boilermaker. Well- And he said you know, who is the boilermaker? I've always

liked boilermakers, which of course he was laughing about, but I was the boilermaker. I had spent two summers while I was in college working as a boilermaker working on big boilers of one kind or another. Actually a big boiler for Kansas City Power and Light the first summer and then the second time I was working on cracking towers up in New Jersey. But- so I kind of gleamed and raised my hand and- but he did that until he finished the cigarette. He put the cigarette out and walked down the line and shook hands with each one of us and spoke with- and stopped and spoke with each one of us, which impressed me. He finished up, lit another cigarette and left. It was a- you know, obviously an experience. It's lasted for me for more than- forty-some, almost 50 years.

Q: As you tell it I can visualize this. I mean, it's one of these things that makes it so much fun being in business ____.

GILLESPIE: That's right, that's right. I discovered later on that he made a rule that every Foreign Service officer who returned from overseas would spend a half hour with him or with Don Wilson or with Tom Sorenson, who was the number three. You were scheduled as you came in on home leave. And I know of no director in USIA after Murrow who did this. I mean, the Director usually would meet with senior Foreign Service officers coming back or the Deputy Director but not with every Foreign Service- I came back later after my first tour and met with Don Wilson, who had a number of very good questions for me.

Q: Well this is how- this is what a good executive does.

GILLESPIE: But anyway, we proceeded out of our swearing in, not all of us as starry eyed as I perhaps, and we started off on what was, for me to be 10 months of training in Washington. We spent the first three weeks or so at USIA, doing a lot of administrative things but also making the first sort of visits to and briefings by the various sections and various divisions of USIA. And then we went and joined the A-100- started the A-100 course with the recently entered State Department group, and we went through that. At that time it was eight weeks and then we went through a collection of training courses that every so often I sort of remember one, and some of them were really- There was one called something communism, and they gave it at FSI (Foreign Service Institute) and it wasn't a bad course but it had sort of every reserve officer who could manage to cut a boondoggle who come in and take it as well, and there were all sorts of people who were in it and by this time I think we were all probably getting a little- we'd been there a long time. And we were all ready to do something else.

The other thing that I did that was important, I- one of my colleagues raised his hand about the third day and said I have found an apartment in a good location; is somebody looking for a place? I'm looking for a roommate. His name was Bob Dickerman. He was a Midwestern newspaperman before he came into USIA, and he and I took a very strange apartment in what is now a multi-million dollar brownstone in a townhouse around Dupont Circle but at that time it was not really- there was no million dollar houses in the area at that time.

Q: Your wife was going to school?

GILLESPIE: Susan and I didn't get married until April 1962. She's in school and the long distance romance is difficult for both of us and then finally she decides to drop out. Originally it was only going to be six months of training for me. I was assigned to Ghana, which built up a lot of enthusiasm and excitement.

Q: This was at the height of the discovery of Africa.

GILLESPIE: Africa was on the front pages of every major newspaper on a regular basis. A big reason was in 1960 the Congo problem had started. But Ghana was an important country and I had been told that I was going to go in April. So Susan dropped out of school after the first semester and we planned April wedding. After all of this was done, USIA decided everyone had to have language qualification before they went overseas, even if they were going to an English speaking country. I really agree with the policy, but this meant was I was assigned to French and did 16 weeks of French language study. That kept us in Washington until August. Bob Dickerman, who spoke one or two Nordic languages, was leaving in April because he had his S3R3 (Speaking/Reading) qualification in at least one of them. So I had an apartment and we got married in April. I was terribly excited about Ghana and I think she got excited too. Kwame Nkrumah was the president. Although at the time Nkrumah was still looked upon in the United States very positively...

Q: I was in African INR in 1960- '61, and I remember the first time I heard somebody said Nkrumah has charisma, and I thought, "Oh my God, is that fatal?" Because I'd never heard of it. It was sort of the new buzzword.

GILLESPIE: That's right. President Kennedy had it and Nkrumah had it, and I will say, I met the man once and there was no question that he did. I watched him speak several times and this was later on when I did not have such a positive feeling about him because I think his megalomania had taken off a bit.

I studied French for 16 weeks, I got my 3/3 and tried to figure out how I would keep it as I went off to Ghana in August of 1962. We took off from Idlewild Airport, now JFK, and flew to Lisbon, where we spent the only real honeymoon we had because we- I'd gotten married in the middle of French language training and they wouldn't give you any time off; I think I got a half day off to get married. So we spent two nights in Lisbon. That was it. I have been paying back the lost honeymoon for years And well I should. Susan has gone through a lot and I doubt that I ever thanked her enough.

We flew to Accra and were met by the PAO (Public Affairs Officer) Mark Lewis and his wife, Darragh. Plus the whole American staff had come to the airport. It was a wonderful welcome to the Foreign Service. We had already met Mark and Darragh Lewis when they were in Washington on home leave. They could not have been kinder to us. Everyone was like that. We really were sort of adopted as the kids of the post as we were very

young, but no one was easy with me on the work. At the beginning it was terrific. We stayed with the Lewis' for a few days and then we moved into an apartment.

I have gone through letters that that we wrote to my parents. My mother had saved them all. What is interesting as you read this is how much of your time at the beginning, or certainly what you reported home about, is about the details of life. And you know, what things were available at stores and how expensive everything was there, and then later on that there was nothing. Then what did things look like. Of course, suddenly we had gone to a tropical area. Neither one of our families had any experience with this. It was completely different to us. You had, of course, the lushness, the heat, the smell. That was what was interesting to us

One of the things that I was asked to do early on was to get to know university students. And I found that easy. I was still a student's age. Younger than many. I met several students early on through a young American professor, David Finlay, at the University of Ghana who was engaged to a Peace Corps volunteer, and this sort of built up a collection of contacts and we spent a lot of time at the University of Ghana at Legon, which was quite a good university still then. David and Belva Finlay became close friends.

Q: Might point out that during the Kennedy period, particularly with the push of Robert Kennedy, there was a tremendous push on youth.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: And get out there and meet potential leaders and all.

GILLESPIE: That's right, that's right.

Q: This is a very strong element in that administration.

GILLESPIE: It was. And it was fun. What this meant was, when people like James Baldwin came, I-

Q: Famous author.

GILLESPIE: That's right. He was traveling with his sister trying to write some pieces for New Yorker that he owed them. He had already received several advances to write about Africa. He never did write about Africa, but the work he owed New Yorker became The Fire the Next Time, one of his greatest works. He was not traveling for the US government. He was still considered "risky." I even had to loan the USIS library my own copies of two of his works for an exhibit in the window before he gave a talk there. I was asked could you set up a chance for him to talk at the University. That was very easy. I talked to a couple of professors who were delighted to have Baldwin come out and sit with about 20 students. Of course for me the real thrill of it was just joining the CAO (Cultural Affairs Officer), Bill Davis, to brief him and the drive out to the university and back and having a drink afterwards. That became important to me. About three weeks

later, it was Ralph McGill, who was the editor/publisher of the “Atlanta Constitution” and a very brave man who had taken stands against segregation, really at a time when very few white leaders in the South were doing so.

Q: They were ducking all over the place.

GILLESPIE: That’s right. And McGill was an older man and he came out, and again, he wanted to meet students. We set up a small dinner party with about seven or eight of the student leaders that I had gotten to know, and McGill. One day he was free and Mark Lewis asked me to go with him into the Aburi Hills, north of Accra. It isn’t really high, but it is just enough to have a micro-climate of its own. Its cooler, it’s pleasant. There was a wonderful snack bar up there run by a Southern American- a Southern African-American woman, who had immigrated to Ghana. And we went in and he asked what could we eat. She claimed that she made the best fried chicken in Ghana and he was thrilled. Again, it was a chance to do things with him.

And the rest of the work, you know, things were going on all the time. There was an assassination attempt on Nkrumah shortly after we got there. He had already arrested the foreign minister and one or two other ministers. He put a curfew on, which lasted about three or four months, which meant that we got to know all the other people in the six-apartment building that we lived in very, very well. And we learned to do things differently. It made things very difficult at the office because all the buses would stop at 4:00 and that meant basically that the Foreign Service nationals had to leave at 3:00. They couldn’t get in, really, until 8:30 or so, which was about an hour later than we usually opened. And this made things tough to do. We produced a regional monthly in English that was done in a tabloid format but producing this on a timely basis was very difficult. But the politics were heating up and they affected all of us.

I was given specific assignments but at the same time I was moved around to every section in USIA. I spent a long time working in the information section and working on the monthly “American Outlook,” and then on other press relation things, which was very frustrating because there was no good press in Accra.

Q: What was the media like?

GILLESPIE: What was the media like? The media was completely controlled by- Well, I should be careful. There were two newspapers that had relatively brave editors and I think it would be unfair to say they were controlled but the major papers were completely controlled by the party and Nkrumah and they were virally anti-U.S.

Q: Why were they? I mean, what was- Was this part of the non-aligned movement or-?

GILLESPIE: It was part of the non-aligned movement; there was a strong Soviet effort and I understand now a good bit of Soviet money that went in as well. But the non-aligned movement was certainly what the Soviets were able to use. That was perfectly alright with them. If they could move Ghana completely out of being, as it naturally was,

a Western- based or certainly not an anti-Western country, it would work. And Nkrumah was a chameleon. I mean, he could change. He was very happy to be decent to us because with a large amount of AID (U.S. Agency for International Development) money and with Kaiser Industries he was building a major dam and increasing aluminum production.

Q: This is a Volta-

GILLESPIE: Now Lake Volta and Volta Dam, which led to a major port development at Tema and large-scale bauxite production. Our ambassador, Bill Mahoney, who was an enjoyable man, used to laugh and say the most important American in this country is Edgar Kaiser the moment he gets off the airplane. Kaiser could say things to Nkrumah that no one else would. Whatever Nkrumah's worry was, Kaiser could say "That's not important, I'm worried about this and this and this." And Nkrumah, who wanted that project done and thought it was terribly important, would listen. But the moment Kaiser got back on the plane you could sense it on the national radio. (There was no television yet.) On the national radio and in these two newspapers, just immediately change their style and just turned it right back on.

Q: In these oral histories, catching junior officers on their first post is an extremely important time because all their antennae are out and they're not prejudiced by how- or changed by- well, they've been there, seen that, done that and all. What were you picking up about- I mean, Nkrumah was the darling, you know; I'm not sure where it was by the time you got there but I mean, he was the first African leader and he went to Lincoln University, I mean, that whole thing, how- can you describe sort of, maybe an evolution of what you thought and your fellow officers thought about this during the time you were there?

GILLESPIE: I was there for about one year and when I arrived Nkrumah was- even though shortly after I arrived he arrested the foreign minister, Nkrumah was still thought considered in the embassy as the man who was trying to make this country work right. About three months after I was there G. Mennen Williams came to call.

Q: Who was Assistant Secretary?

GILLESPIE: That's right.

Q: Of African affairs but quite a power.

GILLESPIE: That's right, that's right. He was a political power. He had been governor of Michigan and was one of Kennedy's first appointments. He came with a number of people, one of whom was Rudy Aggrey, who was his spokesman. Ambassador Aggrey, later on, actually Deputy PAO for me in the Congo later on, Rudy Aggrey was the son of the man who after Nkrumah was the greatest hero in Ghana. His father had been a great educator, had built two major schools and was considered the father of Ghanaian education. Rudy, who was something of a shy man, found the attention that was given to him very, very difficult. He had been asked to go down and speak in Cape Coast at one of

the schools that his father had founded. And it was in the schedule, it had been built in and cleared with Governor Williams, and Rudy really didn't want to do it, but he did it. I went with him. It was somewhat perfunctory from his point of view but he did it. The students were thrilled and we returned to Accra. Williams was having something of a difficult meeting with Nkrumah; things were not as smooth as he might have liked but that night or one of the nights he was there Nkrumah threw a gala for him and the- all sorts of people in the embassy were invited as well to come to the president's palace and watch a performance of "Raisin in the Sun," which was actually quite good, and some traditional dancing.

Q: "Raisin in the Sun" being about a family in Chicago, was it?

GILLESPIE: Family in Chicago and it is-

Q: A Negro family.

GILLESPIE: That's right. And it's a very famous play by Lorraine Hansberry and a very strong play.

Q: Very strong.

GILLESPIE: That's right. We were invited for that and of course all of us were thrilled that we were invited. We went through a receiving line and met "Osagyefo" as Nkrumah was called, meaning the great leader. I could sense his charisma, he came out and things were positive. But as that year proceeded there was more and more repression. J.B. Danquah, who was probably the most important opposition leader, a lawyer who taught at the law school at the university, went to the university to speak at a large student gathering, and it really was political. To everyone's shock and surprise the police came right onto the campus, which they never had done, and arrested Danquah and threw him in jail.

Danquah was already something of an elderly man and this sort of set everyone back because they- the students had seen how he was treated, which was not good. They knew that the president had to approve it and this led to more demonstrations.

Q: This was in summer-

GILLESPIE: Summer of '63. Nkrumah was much more negative than positive.

One other thing that did happen when I was there that I remember very vividly was the first International Congress of Africanists. This was a major academic meeting of international significance. Scholars of Africa from all over the world gathered. About 25 Americans who came from the U.S., major people whose books I had read, whose work I had studied, Coleman, Herskovitz. Bob Brown from Boston U. The keynote speaker was W.E.B. Du Bois, the American black leader who had immigrated to, and I think he did consider it immigration, he had left the United States and moved to Ghana in 1958. He

was very elderly and was not really healthy and you didn't see him very- I mean, you never- And this is what was remarkable, that Du Bois was there, Du Boise spoke and it was really an interesting opportunity.

Q: Were, looking at the Africanists, particularly the American Africanists, were they predominantly white at that point?

GILLESPIE: Yes. As a matter of fact, most of the Europeans as well.

Q: I would imagine so.

GILLESPIE: Of course, some of the French who were both French and French-African. But yes. The African scholars who were there were Nigerian, there were exiled South Africans. I don't know, was it predominantly white?

Q: I would imagine so.

GILLESPIE: I think, no, I'm thinking of the whole organization. It might- probably was. It was something they talked about and a problem for them all.

Q: Sure.

GILLESPIE: But I do believe that as an institution it has gone on and managed to survive in one form or another.

Q: How did we look upon Francophone Africa at that particular point? I mean, from the American point of view, because the French really considered it their private hunting ground and they sure as hell didn't want us involved.

GILLESPIE: Yes. I had a friend from the A-100 class who was assigned to Lomé, Togo and about once a month Dick Stork would draw the courier run from Lomé to Accra and would come to visit and we would have lunch. Sometimes more but usually he tried to do it in one day, do a round trip. But he was my first real contact with Francophone Africa on this- in this sense and he said you know, we don't really have much to do over there. We don't want to step on the French toes; on the other hand we want it to be recognized that we are who we are but, you know, we don't want to mess with this. Let the French have it as long as they want. And I think that was pretty much the sense except in the areas where I was about to go on my next assignments, which were Francophone but were not French, or former French. And we were much more active in both places.

Q: I want to say, Jake, when you're putting this together during the editing, if you've got these letters, if you want to put excerpts of these letters that you feel, you know, point up viewpoints and all-

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: -I think it would be very interesting. So don't hesitate.

GILLESPIE: I think they are better as they go along in some of our own wide-eyedness.

Q: Well we want to catch the wide eyed too.

GILLESPIE: That's true, that's true. The most important things that happened in the course of our year in Accra was the birth of our son, which was quite an experience. We arrived and Susan had already mentioned to me she thought she might be pregnant but she wasn't sure. She soon became sure once we were in Accra. She joined a group of women: the PAO's wife, the IO's (Information Officer) wife, the Ambassador's wife, the number two in the political section's wife, about three AID people, women, all of whom were pregnant. They all went to see the same doctor. We had an embassy doctor, Carl Nydell, who later was the head of State Med., and Carl had found this OB-GYN in Accra. Carl said that he was terrific. He was from a very prominent Ghanaian family. The women would gather periodically at the ambassador's residence, have coffee and go off to Dr. Bentsi-Enchill's office. This was very good for Susan, because she was young and she had no family there.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: And this became her family, in effect, which was a wonderful thing to have. I think it helped get us through this because it became more difficult. She said in February- the baby was due in the first part of February and didn't come and didn't come and she said, once, she said I think this is it. And so we- I said okay and called the doctor and he said go to Korle Bu Hospital, which was the major Ghanaian hospital, major in the whole country but in Accra certainly and it was the largest birthing hospital, which is unusual because very few, a low percentage of Ghanaian children were born in hospital, but if there were complications they were. And so we went off and it went on for quite awhile. Susan was having a hard time and finally Dr. Bentsi-Enchill said "I'm going to do a caesarean."

Well, I called up Carl Nydell and said Carl, I need you to hold my hand. I'd like you to see Susan but I need you to hold my hand because now we're into something that is, you know- and he said well don't worry; he said this guy is very experienced - And so while she went into the delivery room- He said I'm going to be there the whole time. And I don't know why - I like Carl very much, I thought he's a wonderful man and he's a great doctor but he had no experience in delivering- doing caesareans but I felt better with him there.

Q: Oh yes.

GILLESPIE: And I- so I asked him before Susan went in, I said how many of these do you think Dr. Bentsi-Enchill has done? And he said oh, I'm sure a number. But after James Bryson Gillespie was born, the next day or so Carl came, he said Jake, you know, I asked him that and he said well, since all they do there- there are four OB-GYNs in the

hospital, connected with the hospital, all they do are complications. And he said there are about 60 caesareans a week and I do my share. And he said I've been doing this, you know, 10 years now, before more, and he said, except for the month I go off to lecture in Vienna and at Oxford. You know, after Carl told me that I said well, I can do the math, you know, and of course Carl said, I have never seen anything like it; he was like clockwork. He said it was perfect. And it was and everything went well. Sue delivered that day; she was moved from the birthing hospital, from Korle Bu, to a secondary hospital which of course was the old colonial hospital and had air conditioning and which, I think, probably was more comfortable. But that was the other big experience for us there.

Q: You say both you and your wife, obviously she was pretty well tied up with the birth process and all, but what about contact with the students and the Ghanaian society; I mean, the people you were around; what were your impressions?

GILLESPIE: To this day I think Ghanaians are among the most enjoyable people in the world. They are pleasant to be with, they are open, they accepted us. The entire staff had a ceremonial birthing celebration when the baby came home out in front of our apartment and everybody came down and we all drank- I think I had to buy the beer but they wanted to pass the hat, which of course is what they would have done and I said you can't do that. And they said oh yes, oh yes, we must do that. I don't remember what I did with the money, but I seem to remember that it went into an office Christmas party fund. And we were long departed by then.

The students, we became very close with, a number of them. Susan should not be cut out of this either. I remember her dancing the high-life at the Students' Union big party just weeks before Jim's birth. I became very close with one who was the president of the student union. The Ford Foundation had a major project at the law school. They provided the dean and several professors from the University of Michigan. The dean said he was the best student he had ever had; this man really matters. And so, you know, before- just about a month or two before I left we got him into a program of student leader grants. Like the International Visitor program, but aimed at a younger group of people.

Q: Well this is again part of this Kennedy push.

GILLESPIE: The Kennedy effort, yes, that's right. He was selected and left about two weeks before we left the country. This was a man with a future. I mean, he was very bright, and was hardly pro-American. I mean he- And he had a lot of very serious questions about the United States. We talked about segregation, civil rights, the role of the federal government, our constitution; we talked about all these things.

Q: Well, this is the time when things were things were extremely contentious in the United States.

GILLESPIE: Yes. It was very, very difficult, and we talked about this. You know, he was interested in American history. But he came back from this trip and I got wonderful letter

of thanks. He wrote about three times and each one was full of news and very thoughtful. Then, after he graduated, or maybe just before, Nkrumah picked him up and he was put into prison and he stayed there until Nkrumah was overthrown, about three years later.

Q: Was this Nkrumah trying to just reach to anybody who showed any spark or any-

GILLESPIE: Any strength, any possible political leadership, any hint of opposition.

Q: Would you call this almost paranoia or what?

GILLESPIE: Yes. It was a megalomania that had moved in that direction and of course it got bad. I mean, there were some crazy things that went on there. You know, you had- I mean, he'd taken Kojo Botsio, who was the Foreign Minister, just as we got there and put him in jail. Botsio was the second leader of the independence movement. He had managed to hang on. This crazy, corrupt Krobo Edusei who became infamous as the man with the golden- the minister who had had a bed ordered of gold from London. Just terribly corrupt. There was a lot of corruption. The Ghanaians started to sense it. There were some reactions and things he didn't touch; he never touched the market women, the market women who did demonstrate, he didn't touch them. It was in many ways it's tragic because Nkrumah was a man who had so much possibility- And Ghana was a country with fantastic possibilities and now it's taken them 40 years to come back to a place where they could have moved right on.

Q: Yes. Did you, one, while you were there, did you run into any feeling about, positive or negative, about the British?

GILLESPIE: Culturally they were closer than we were. You know, there still was, among the Ghanaian elites, there was still a cultural tie. But I think in many ways one of the things that always saved us was they could hate the British more than they hated us.

Q: Yes, being the former colonial power.

GILLESPIE: That's right, and it was easy. But the British were interesting, they were interesting. I mean, the British still had a role but they had moved out of it in many ways; they had moved out of positions and places of visibility. They still had a major economic role. The cocoa trade went through Britain. The Americans, the major American companies played but they played through their British affiliates with the possible exception of Mars, but the rest of them, I think, were British.

Q: What about the Peace Corps?

GILLESPIE: The Peace Corps. Ghana was, depending on which Peace Corps volunteer you talked to, the first or the second or the third group out. They were teachers, based all over the country. On every trip that I made around the country, if not the first stop, then the second stop, a third stop; I visited the Peace Corps volunteers. They wanted books. I took them films. If we had gotten to know some of them that I passed frequently, Susan

always baked chocolate chip cookies for them. But they worked hard. Again, maybe it was easier for them than other Peace Corps volunteers in some ways. They lived within the school society. They spoke English. I think the Ghanaian early groups are still very close with each other and close to Ghana. And I think they did, you know, a pretty good job. I don't think Nkrumah ever threw volunteers out.

Q: Was it in Ghana that they had the postcard problem? Was that-?

GILLESPIE: I don't remember that.

Q: Well there were- a volunteer- I think it was Ghana but it might have been Nigeria, wrote a-

GILLESPIE: Wrote it on a postcard. Yes, it was Ghana.

Q: Saying, you know, this is a pretty cruddy place or something. I don't know, but I mean-

GILLESPIE: Yes, I think that's right. And some of them were in pretty cruddy places. I think the top choices were to be in Kumasi, so you'd be away from headquarters but you'd still be in a big city that was nice or in some of the top Ghanaian schools, which were quite good. But those who were way out in the bush were really isolated.

Q: Alright, then you left there in '63 -

GILLESPIE: In the middle of the summer of '63, the African Area Director of USIA, Ned Roberts, came on one of his periodic visits through the area. Mark Lewis, the PAO, had a dinner party for the staff and Ned would get up and move around and talk to everyone. He sat down next to me and said what are you doing here still? You're supposed to be in Burundi. No one had ever said anything to me. He told me that I had to get over there in the next week or two. The PAO is sick and has to go on medical leave. Well, this was always a problem. Information filtered out of Washington. I went to Susan and I said we're going to Burundi. and you know, we'd always, I guess we had sort of hoped we could go to Senegal or Abidjan, but my God, it wasn't Conakry, thank goodness.

The first problem, as I looked at it, was that you couldn't get from Accra to Bujumbura in two weeks. First you had to get visas and you had to get visas for all the places you transit. The easy route would have been to fly on Pan Am down to Johannesburg, then back up to Nairobi, then to Entebbe and to Bujumbura. But it was very difficult to get visas from the South Africans. I think it was complicated. So we went another way and that was we flew via Lagos and Khartoum on a DC-6, bless its heart.

Q: That's a four engine-

GILLESPIE: -propeller driven but actually quite a comfortable airplane.

Q: It's a nice airplane.

GILLESPIE: It was very comfortable. It was such a long trip, of course, that we got to go first class and we were the only ones in the small first class section on Ethiopian Airlines-

Q: Run by Pan American or TWA.

GILLESPIE: TWA.

Q: TWA.

GILLESPIE: We flew Lagos to Khartoum to Addis, where we changed planes and we got the flight from Europe coming down that went to Nairobi. But that was altogether a long flight and the Ethiopian part was wonderful because the steward and stewardess who were both assigned to first class couldn't have been nicer. The stewardess became a babysitter for Jim. So it wasn't too bad. Of course we had so much. Someone had said to be sure to buy baby food and so we lined the bottom of the bassinet, basically with jars of baby food, which made it weigh a ton. We stayed in Nairobi for two nights; I had a good friend from Dartmouth who was at the Consulate General there. Kenya was not yet independent. We had dinner with him and he gave us some help. He said go do this, go do that. We got our first look at an African game park by going out to the Nairobi Park just outside the city. We sort of got our heads together and after two days the three of us got on the plane and flew to Bujumbura.

If for our families going to Ghana was going to deepest, darkest Africa you can imagine what Bujumbura was. I mean, Burundi was unheard of. No one knew what it was, where it was. We got off the plane and were greeted by the PAO, Darrell Drucker, who was not on his deathbed, although in a week or two he would go up to Naples for some medical treatment which he needed. The sky it was hazy. It was dry season and not very nice.

We went directly to our house. Darrell and Laddie Drucker were wonderful. I was blessed with my early bosses. They were wise, understanding, very capable and a lot of fun, all of them, but no nonsense. You know, I don't care how young you are or what grade you are, you're a body and we need a lot of work, which was wonderful. The Druckers took us to our house and he said you have one of the two two-story houses in the whole city. And it was, who knows, probably- it was a nice house, but he said wait, he said some day when it starts to rain again you will look out your balcony upstairs and you will see the mountains on the other side of Lake Tanganyika. He said just wait, that's worth coming here. All the way just for that.

But we checked in. I had been assigned to two countries, both Rwanda and Burundi. There was no USIS (United States Information Service) up in Kigali.

Q: Both these countries were, by that time, independent?

GILLESPIE: They had become independent in 1962. I think that Burundi was the last country where the chief of mission was a U.S. Minister. It was part of a very brief attempt to prevent the proliferation of Ambassadors and big embassies as all the former French and British colonies became independent. It didn't last long because the moment that Charles Withers in Kigali managed to be an Ambassador, Don Dumont in Bujumbura was terribly dissatisfied as a Minister and eventually was made an Ambassador. But it was a small mission, nevertheless. There was a DCM, Ernie Stanger, Joel Ticknor, who was the Consular Officer, Martin Bergin, who was Political Officer, Jay Katzen was a junior officer who was, I guess, a Political/Economic officer Earl Bellinger was the Administrative Officer and there was a GSO named Lindy Koga. Now, I am amazed because I think about four of those- five of those people I have not even thought of, Stu, for a long time, and I didn't read anything on this. But it was- Oh, we had a Military Attaché, Colonel Alexander. He had a warrant officer assigned with him. And there were three communicators. No, it was two communicators and three or four secretaries. That's what we had. Kigali was even smaller. I think that they had only five officers, a communicator and a secretary.

I got there in August and Darrell Drucker left in September for about a month, which was really a terrific experience for me. He said, "You're in charge." I was 24 years old, barely two years out of college. We had two very good secretaries here, one was Belgian, the other was an American who had been a Foreign Service secretary and married a Ghanaian UN employee. She was back and worked for us, sort of extended part-time but she was on the staff. And he said look, the two of them know everything. If you have any problems you go up to the embassy, they will help. You know, I knew who the FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals) were by then. They were a mixed group but interesting and pretty good.

And he left me with strange tasks. He asked if I knew anything about offset presses. And I said no. He said guess what? You're going to learn. He said we have a Davidson offset press. It works. It was set up for us and then the experts left. There were by that time maybe a half dozen that USIA had put in Africa and he said because we put out the only printed daily news publication in this country. Darrell believed it was important that we keep doing that. So the press has to keep working and I spent my first late hours and Saturdays, and probably some Sundays too, at USIS, as Susan said, ruining pairs of pants with ink stains.

Q: Well, an offset press, I mean, was this the kind that melted- I mean-

GILLESPIE: You made a plate, we used photographic plates. You made a plate and put it on the press and printed from that. The trick was to calibrate the press all the time. And it was an aggravating. That was the main reason Darrell said he wanted no more to do with it. Darrell had opened the USIS Bujumbura. He was a perfect person to open a small post in Africa, I thought, a USIS operation. Darrell had a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a doctorate in American studies. What a great combination.

Q: Sure.

GILLESPIE: He had built the USIS center in an empty storefront, basically out of packing crates because there was no wood in Burundi. So as all the packing crates came in, they became walls. And so we had a great darkroom, we had this little press that operated and it was a pretty good little operation.

Q: Could you talk a bit about the government and the people of Burundi and if it- and Rwanda but at that time?

GILLESPIE: Yes. The two countries are virtually ethnically and culturally identical. They are both ethnically divided into three parts; Tutsi, Hutu and Twa. The Twa are a Pygmoid people who basically you didn't see very many of. Most of them were in Rwanda in the forest and there weren't really any forests to speak of in Burundi. Both had been, up until independence, governed in a semi-feudal system based on land and cows, and cattle. The Tutsis were the aristocracy and provided the royalty and the Hutus, in exchange for cattle and land gave them fealty and taxes. The Hutus raised coffee in both countries and food and produce; the coffee went into plantations and basically was owned by Europeans.

The governments were different. Rwanda had a revolution before independence and the Hutus overthrew the Tutsis. It was a real revolution in the sense that the lower caste overthrew the higher. A democracy of sorts came in and the only problem was they oppressed the Tutsis. I mean, later on I flew over parts of Rwanda several times with a Swiss pilot in his small plane that I used to go up to Kigali. He would say do you mind if we take some time, and I knew he probably was doing some kind of intelligence work for somebody, but he would go all over. We would see whole hillsides burned out. This continued to happen off and on. Tutsi refugees had fled to Burundi, the Congo and Uganda. The Hutu government feared their guerilla groups. It was like this up until the genocide of the 1990s. While we were there, although the same potential problems existed in Burundi, the Tutsis managed to maintain power.

In Burundi there was a constitutional monarchy, although it was much more monarchy than constitutional. The king was known as the Mwami, Mwambutsa the Fourth. He had been given as a gift at independence a white Edsel convertible by the business community and Mwambutsa liked to drive so he drove with his girlfriend seated next to him and his driver and bodyguard in the back seat with the top down and they drove all over town. He was quite a decent man, but while he had a great deal of power he didn't govern much. The government ministers had no backgrounds for government. The Belgians had, in many ways, prepared them very, very poorly. There were 12 university graduates in the two countries at the time of independence and then one of them, the Prime Minister of Burundi was killed in an automobile accident three or four months after independence. It was always a difficult situation. At the same time there was a rebellion in the eastern Congo that was a carryover from the war that started at independence and this had a great effect on both countries. One, a large number of the Tutsis who had been thrown out by Rwandan Hutus at the time of the revolution had settled in the Congo. They had been there for almost a generation, maybe two, by the

time the most recent fighting has broken out, and that is their home now, for many. And this caused great problems. There were refugee camps in Burundi, several big refugee camps with Tutsi refugees. Our top FSN at USIS was a Tutsi refugee. He was an older man, the best that we had. He always claimed that he had nothing to do with the guerillas, but I always doubted that.

By September 1963, I'm learning many things by working on my own while Darrell was gone. And then after he returned in November that year, John Kennedy was assassinated.

Q: I'm thinking this might be a good place to stop.

GILLESPIE: Okay.

Q: And we'll pick this up November 22, 1963, John Kennedy is assassinated; you've just sort of arrived.

GILLESPIE: I'm now comfortable there.

Q: You're comfortable but let's talk about what you were doing and what our attitude was, if there was any, and relations with diplomacy, with the Belgians, with the French.

GILLESPIE: By this time the Soviets were there, the Hungarians were there and then in early 1964 the Chinese come in.

Q: Okay, we'll talk about that and other reflection from the Congo and Tanzania and-

GILLESPIE: And some about Rwanda.

Q: Yes, and of course you've got- Anyway, it's a mess. Okay.

Today is the 26th of February, 2010, with Jake Gillespie, and Jake, you want to go back a little bit.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: We're in Burundi in 1963.

GILLESPIE: I mentioned last week that my boss, the PAO, Darrell Drucker, needed medical leave. I have thought about that because I had about four weeks where, at age 24, I was the acting PAO and in charge. This would occur later when Darrell was transferred toward the end of his tour, and I was acting PAO again for about a month in 1964, before his successor came. And what was interesting, as I thought about this, is I have thought of those times frequently toward the end of my career, when I was a PAO at an important post, a major one in one case, where I had senior jobs. In 1963 you had virtually no telephonic communications with Washington; telegrams were used but expensive and still at a premium. You didn't send a cable unless you used cable-ese and you would get

it sent back frequently from the communications section if you used too many words. There was a PTT telex that you could use. I had occasion to do so later on for other reasons and it was so old and in such poor condition that you had- it would move frequently at 20 characters a minute. I was trying at that time to do a favor for a "New York Times" correspondent and send out his story and I ended up sitting there for two hours. But what this meant was you really were on your own. By 1990 I was virtually on the telephone with someone in Washington once or twice a day. And that was before wide use of email. Those weeks in Burundi were probably the most independent and freest that I ever had in my career in the Foreign Service.

By the time we got to October and end of November things were going rather well, we thought, in the office, and in November we had the visit from a wonderful, young Foreign Service Officer named Elton Stepherson. Elton had been hired while he was in Paris. He joined the Foreign Service and was sent to NASA and spent six months learning from NASA how to explain the U.S. space program. If you remember, in those days this was worldwide interest. It was terribly important. We were coming to the end of the Mercury program and going into the Gemini program with two astronauts in space. Elton was given a glorious traveling lecture/exhibit kit that came in four or five huge cases. He was sent to Africa, where he would, go to Francophone Africa. He spoke marvelous French. We were the second post he had toured. He had started in Madagascar and came to Burundi. We had a very full program set up for him and the first big kickoff night of his program was the 23rd of November, when John Kennedy was assassinated. We were in the USIS center; it was full of people. He had just finished his program and he was going to questions when Delores Aqua, "Doe", who was an American married to a Ghanaian UN official and a former Foreign Service secretary who worked for us, came rushing in. She went to Darrell Drucker who came to me and went to the Ambassador and others and said we're going to stop this right now. He said I'm sorry but there's been an emergency; we must stop here. And he didn't announce it, I think wisely. People left and the Ambassador pulled the Americans together and told us all what had happened.

This was a shock. It was for all of us, and I think for those of us who were isolated it was even more so. Doe had heard it on the radio. Elton Stepherson was staying with us and we spent virtually all night sitting next to the radio. We went into mourning as an embassy the next morning. I remember the memorial service at the cathedral barely. I remember the Ambassador and Mwami Mwambutsa, the king of Burundi, coming-walking in together. For about a week we did nothing else but this.

Q: "But this" would be?

GILLESPIE: Dealing with the assassination, putting out materials-

Q: Having people lining up from the country to sign the book of condolences.

GILLESPIE: Yes. Everyone was charged with taking turns to be there at the book. At USIS we had an enormous amount of wireless file material that came from Washington to put out. Of course, we had no images for a long time. Eventually some came by air

mail, perhaps four or five days later. And consequently for us, perhaps this stretched out longer and longer because we kept getting this, getting film, getting video, it all went on.

The PAO finally said to me you should go on with Stepherson's program because he's going to have to leave and we should get some things out of it. So I took him to the University of Butare in Rwanda, which was the first university in Rwanda. It was run by Canadian White Fathers, a wonderful group of people, and we spent two nights there while Elton lectured. He talked to virtually every student, I think. We talked into the night with the fathers and staff who were extremely generous and gracious to us. We then went to Kigali and back to Bujumbura for a series of other lectures. Elton was terrific. Elton passed away a couple of years ago. I never served with Elton Stepherson again, and saw him rarely. Our schedules never matched, we weren't in Washington together but because we shared that occasion, I think he and I always felt like extremely close friends.

There are two or three other things from Burundi that I would like to mention. The first is one I mentioned briefly the other day and that was the journalists, the journalists and the embassies that were there. For a little country in the middle of Africa Burundi became a diplomatic hot spot. It was loaded with- We had representation from the Belgians, the French, the Brits and the Germans, of course, and the neighboring African countries. But we also had representation from the Czechs, the Hungarians, the Soviets, and the Poles. Then the Chinese came to town, and the Chinese came in a massive way. They took over most of the rooms at the largest hotel in town, which was pretty big, and they moved in. It was an enormous embassy for little Burundi.

But the big occurrence was Tung Chi-ping, an Assistant Cultural Attaché at the Chinese Embassy.. About the third day he was there, he walked out early in the morning and hailed a cab. He got into the cab and asked in French if they would take him to the American Embassy and he defected. This was only the second time a Communist Chinese official had defected to the United States. And there we were. He arrived at the door of our Embassy and he was greeted by the Greek general services assistant who was opening the door. No one else was there yet. The next day we set up a schedule where each household in the embassy was responsible for feeding Tung, who became later known as Charlie Tung to us, and feeding him every day. So trays would arrive, they would be left outside the conference room where he resided during his stay and picked up the next day..

A U.S. Government Chinese speaker got there, actually rather fast to take care of him. There were problems with the Burundi government and we could not take him out. The Chinese had already done a great deal of financial cultivation of the Burundi government. So the government at the Chinese urging tied him up pretty tightly. We were stuck with him trying and negotiating to try to get him out of the country, and there was a second Chinese speaking officer who was sent out so they could alternate spending time with him. He took over the Ambassador's conference room, which is where he lived, and one of the intelligence officers came to me and said you've got to help us. He's going to go stir crazy. He speaks no English. He speaks French but he speaks no English. You've got to help us. So I went in and I scoured the film library for things I assumed might be

reasonably entertaining and I took a number of those and a projector up to the Embassy, set it up, taught everybody how to run it and I hoped Tung Chi-ping would learn too. Then I took all the French language books from our book distribution program, took those up there. And I thought later, you know, for someone who, although I was very pleased with most of the things USIA did, I would have hated to have been stuck with nothing but those films and a few books in French to entertain me for about four weeks.

Q: Yuck.

GILLESPIE: We continued to feed him. The word came down one day, no more rice, please. He didn't care for American rice. And then, I think it was after we delivered his meals when we had the food detail, about three days later we were told he'd been gone for four days and they got him out. This caused a great difficulty with the government for us for a good while. Actually it's funny now the attitudes we had at the time but we were really frightened of the Chinese. We had no idea what they would do. That was a serious time.

The regular journalists came back for this and were nosing around, but we had nothing to tell them. Media interest in Africa in the early '60s was enormous. The "New York Times" correspondent in Leopoldville, J. Anthony Lukas, came to see us frequently because of the rebellion in the eastern Congo. Tony was an excellent writer and became a very dear friend. He won a Pulitzer Prize for a great book on Boston called "Common Ground," about busing and the integration of the South Boston schools. He also won a Pulitzer for his reporting of a murder in Connecticut. He did great writing about the 1968 Democratic Party convention. But there were others. Arnaud de Borchgrave, who was later editor of the "The Washington Times" for awhile, was with "U.S. News and World Report." Jonathan Randall, who was with "Time" magazine then and then later with "The Post," and then all sorts of others who would come in and out. The correspondents taught me a lot, from the structure of the Congolese rebel organizations to the idiosyncrasies of the American press to Evelyn Waugh's Scoop and its relevance to contemporary Africa. I think about their coverage because today it's almost impossible to get any news about the murder, rape and pillage in the Eastern Congo. In the '60s this was on the front pages of American newspapers regularly.

Those are the things that I remember the most out of Burundi. The other event happened while I was there. We took our first R&R (rest and recreation) while in Burundi. Since we were still relatively broke, instead of going to Europe we spent some money and flew to Entebbe, in Uganda, rented a car, went to the Uganda game parks, which was a thrill and then drove to Nairobi. We stayed with a friend for Kenyan independence ceremonies, which was a wonderful thing to see, a great experience. And I think, again, something I will always remember, the emotion in the stadium as Prince Philip and Jomo Kenyatta walked to the center of the stadium and the light came up on the Union Jack flying at the top and then all the lights went out and when the lights came back on the Kenyan flag was going up the flagpole and the stadium was going crazy. I think Kenya then spent at least a quarter of its first year's budget on one of the greatest displays of fireworks I've ever seen.

We drove back to Entebbe and returned to Bujumbura after a long delay. In Entebbe we were supposed to take Air Congo to Bujumbura. The plane then would continue to Leopoldville. All the flights kept bypassing Entebbe altogether and wasn't picking up passengers and flying on because they had dignitaries from the independence celebrations. We waited several days before we could get a flight back.

It was a good tour and I think I learned a lot. In the summer of 1964 we prepared to go home on leave. As summer approached, we had been assigned to Conakry, Guinea, which of all the difficult places in Africa I think was considered the most difficult. Then just, about two weeks before we were to leave and before we had shipped anything, fortunately, our orders were changed and we were assigned to Leopoldville, now Kinshasa, in the Republic of the Congo. No one at home in the United States would understand why we were happy about going to the Congo. But we as went made our way home; we stopped for a few days in London, visiting with old friends, and then took one of the last opportunities that we had in the Foreign Service to sail home on the SS United States to New York.

Q: Oh yes.

GILLESPIE: It was a wonderful experience and great fun except that we discovered, even with a very nice interior cabin and no external light and the time change every night, Jim, our 18 month-old son woke up at 5:15 every morning. This obviously limited the late nights but it was a wonderful sail back. We arrived and had a great home leave. The grandparents were thrilled at the first opportunity to see their grandson and we were very proud to show him off and very happy to do so. It was an important home leave; it was the last chance I had to see my grandfather. He died during our next tour. My grandmothers lived until the 1970s.

We went to Washington during home leave. We arrived in New York on Labor Day, 1964. I was in Washington for some time, about three weeks, I think, and then I had to go back for some additional briefings just before I left in November. The most memorable meeting I attended was a gathering of the Congo Task Force under the leadership of Under Secretary Averill Harriman. My former boss in Ghana, Mark Lewis, was now the USIA Assistant Director for Africa. He took me along to the weekly meeting. Harriman was wonderful. His opening comments were pointed, his questions sharp. The he sat back and seemed to observe and listen. Mark said he heard what he came to learn and then turned his hearing aid off.

The Congo had become very difficult in the summer of '64. The rebels, who had gained a great deal of strength in the northeastern Congo, attacked and took the city of Stanleyville, the third largest city in the Congo, a major center of commerce and business on the Congo River, and in doing so they took hostage virtually every non-Congolese in the city, including our Consul, Vice Consul and two other personnel from the American consulate and were holding them. They continued to do this into November; on the fourth

of November I went to Leopoldville. Susan and son Jim stayed back and were going to come in about a month.

I arrived during a very tense time. My job was as field operations officer. The Congo was an enormous mission. USIS in the Congo had 25 American personnel and about 75 or 80 Foreign Service nationals working for us, and that's just indicative of the whole mission. AID was very large and the embassy itself was big. The tension in the town- in the embassy was palpable. There's no question that the holding of the hostages in Stanleyville had affected everyone, from the Ambassador, G. McMurtrie Godley, all the way down. I think Mac Godley felt a real sense of responsibility for Mike Hoyt and the other three American hostages. It was a very difficult time.

As we approached the middle of the month, after I'd been there about two weeks, John Mowinckel, the PAO, literally told me to keep my eyes and ears open because something is going to happen and I'll want you to go to work with Max Kraus, who was the Press Attaché. Max had been the branch PAO in Stanleyville, but went on R&R before the rebels took the city and was unable to return. In the middle of November, the U.S. Air Force picked up Belgian paratroopers, they landed on Ascension and based themselves there. There were third parties trying to negotiate with the rebels but nothing came of it. Just before Thanksgiving they flew into Leopoldville, refueled and flew to Stanleyville. They dropped some paratroops and then landed at the airport, unloaded the rest of the Belgian paras and retook the city in about 48 hours.

The freed hostages, including the four consulate staff, were flown back to Leopoldville. It was not a pretty picture. There were people killed, including a number of American missionary hostages, the most famous of whom was a Dr. Carlson, who, for some reason, the rebels had decided was the head of CIA in the Congo. He had been the basis for a Time magazine cover story about two weeks before the relief of Stanleyville. This was not a comfortable time for Susan, trying to deal with her parents and my parents at home.

I learned quickly what to do -- whatever Max Kraus told me to do. Max was a wonderful guy and he told me to stay at the Embassy, take his calls from the airport and write down everything I say. We will ask the Ambassador, DCM, PAO or others questions and find out what we can say. Most of the press was at the airport, waiting for the hostages to be brought out. This system worked pretty well. The airlift continued through Thanksgiving.

By the week after Thanksgiving things started to ease up. Even I could sense this. John Mowinckel, the PAO, called a staff meeting and said Ambassador Godley had declared the next week "get to know your family" week. This must have been the first week of December. The whole U.S. mission had been going at top speed since the summer. I'd sensed a bit of it because I'd been there about a month, a little more. Others had been there and gone through this from the time the hostages were taken and the Congo had been in a permanent crisis for months. In our office I noticed this from the day I got there. We worked normally from 7:30 in the morning to 4:30 in the afternoon. Well in fact, everyone showed up at 7:30 and somewhere at 6:30 or 7:30 they would go home. They'd all do the same thing on Saturday. I had nothing to do so I went on Sunday just to check

the mail and virtually our whole office was at work. And so finally they cut this out. No one was to work on the weekends except duty officers and everybody was to be out of the office by 5:00 or 6:00. This was helped because both Ambassador Godley and PAO Mowinckel went on vacation for about three or four weeks. The pressure was off. It was especially nice for me; a chance get to know my family again, because they had just arrived.

I made my first big trip just before my wife came, a round robin to the posts I was supposed to help, Elizabethville, Bukavu and Luluabourg. My first impressions were interesting. Elizabethville was still a fairly thriving town. It was the capital of Katanga, the copper mining region. As you drove around town, you could see that most of the shops were open and busy. Luluabourg was a sleepy colonial regional capital and probably four out of five shops were closed. Bukavu was an absolutely beautiful city, sitting on the shores of Lake Kivu. It had been the resort area for the colonial Europeans in the Congo. It still had some of that feeling, although there had been some fighting around there. At a higher altitude, the weather was much more pleasant. The markets were full of foods you could not get in the east. Whenever I went out there I was always charged to bring back a couple of big baskets of strawberries for the office.

I wrote to my parents on December 22, 1964, that “we live in a permanent manic depressive cycle with the emphasis on the latter. The slightest good news buoys us up but this is countered 10 minutes later by more of the normal stuff. The Congo lacks everything they need to end this two-bit rebellion that is quickly becoming a 10 dollar one.” What had happened was Stanleyville had been relieved but the rebels were moving through all of the secondary urban centers throughout the east and clearing them out was going to be difficult time. History has shown this to be true. Their brutal legacy covers the region.

In the first part of January, I made my first trip to Stanleyville. I went with Andre Navéz, who was, at that time, our Consul-to-be in Stanleyville. As it turned out, he never went there; he became Consul later in Bukavu. I went up basically to see what had happened to the USIS center. I was looking for our FSNs to see if they were around, if they were alive. We wanted to see what the Consulate looked like. We arrived and found that the Fifth Commando of Mercenaries, these were Mike Hoare’s mercenaries-

Q: Very famous in the South Africa- southern Africa.

GILLESPIE: I don’t know how famous he was in South Africa, but he was in the United States. Mike Hoare was a very interesting man. Famous, maybe. Infamous in many circles. He was a military logistics man by training. Shrewd rather than smart. I did not meet him on this trip, but did so later. We were under instructions not to spend a whole lot of time with him. He was not ours and we didn’t want it to seem as if they were one of us. For the most part, the South African mercenaries were a very unpleasant lot of people. They had been recruited out of the ports at Durban and Cape Town. They were vicious thieves, but they were disciplined. Hoare disciplined them with the firing squad. He wasn’t afraid to do it and he let them know that. On the other hand that meant they

obeyed orders but it didn't mean that they always behaved well. They had taken over the U.S. Consulate. To our great surprise when we walked in it was spotless. Everything was in place. The property that members of the Consulate staff had gotten into the Consulate was still there. Their own private things from home were gone, from their homes were gone. We were told that if we had any problems with the state of the Consulate we were to let the commander know. The USIS center was in pretty good shape. Someone had broken into the back; no one had done a great deal of vandalism damage, though. Someone had been in there, a few things were taken.

After two days I managed to locate the oldest of the three FSNs who knew where one of the others was and had no idea about the third. In fact, they all turned up eventually. I was helped a great deal by an American Catholic priest who had lived through the whole thing in the area, not in Stanleyville but had come back to Stanleyville. That part of the trip, I felt, was very successful. The distressing part was to go through Stanleyville. Stanleyville had been a city of 150,000 and now it was virtually deserted. There were, at most, 30,000 or 40,000 people living there. The signs of the rebels were everywhere. What they did was horrible. The rebels had held kangaroo courts during their control of the city. At the Lumumba monument, the monument to the first prime minister of independent Congo, in the center of town, was where they held the summary executions. Stucco, the base of the monument was coated with blood. It was inches thick. Months later a Congolese military officer ordered it will be scrubbed clean. I think psychologically, Stanleyville has never really returned to what it might have been.

I continued in the Congo. I had a number of jobs. In addition to Field Operations, I became Motion Picture Distribution Officer. We had a very large film program, showing them all over the country through the commercial film companies and with our own mobile units. We also produced documentaries including a regular monthly newsreel-like 30 minutes film. I worked hard.

Q: Well Mike Hoyt-

GILLESPIE: They all were saved. Mike Hoyt returned, came back to the States and stayed in the Foreign Service. I think all four did. I never knew any of them. The impact on the mission from Stanleyville was tough. A word about my impressions of Ambassador Godley, who I liked personally, although I think I might have disagreed with his own views. I believe he was devoted to his staff. He worked extremely hard and shared the work and the fun with the whole mission. As he came to the end of his tour -- and at the end of mine -- he and Joe Mobutu, who by that time had become the President of the Congo after a coup, didn't get along. Godley came in and he said I am leaving rather than causing the problem of being declared persona non grata by Mobutu. He surprised us at an unusual meeting of the entire staff. There were a lot of damp eyes as he left the room.

At this point I have a little problem putting things together. My time in the Congo runs together. I continued to make frequent travels around the country. I traveled on C-130s when possible because Air Congo was very undependable and private charters were

terribly expensive. The last year I was there I made contact with a manager of the Mobil Oil operation who was also their pilot. He flew the Mobil Oil plane frequently on business around the Congo. We would pay a cost share which saved a good bit of money and got me around more. There were those three branch posts plus Stanleyville and for a while we had a post in what then was Coquilhatville and now is named Mbandaka. There was no Consulate there, a situation like Luluabourg. We had one American working there with a small staff in a small center. A very good friend of mine, who had been a junior officer with me named Fred Hunter, was assigned to Coquilhatville for his second assignment. This was not what Fred had expected, when he was assigned from Brussels. But he actually ended up working very well there and he knew his way around. I arrived on my second visit in Coquilhatville, which sits right on the equator and on the Congo River, and Fred met me at the airport on the tarmac, and he said to hop in the jeep. He wanted to show you something before the rains started. We got in his car and took off and he said you've got to see this.

Fred was a writer and had published some and became the Nairobi correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor after he left USIA. We drove out of town and up the river outside of town. We followed the road along the Congo River and then we changed to the Ruki River, which is a major tributary to the Congo. We went up the Ruki for awhile and Fred turned on a dirt road. We drove down to the river. He stopped the car and he said get out here. We walked to a small dock out in the middle of the Ruki, where Fred announced, "This is where Graham Greene wrote "A Burnt-Out Case." Greene had written an article that Fred later sent to me, in which Greene wrote that he sat on that dock and wrote it while he lived at the leprosarium up the highway. Fred had found his own special Congo pleasure. We got back in the car and the noonday rain started and Fred said not to worry; it will rain until about 1:00, which it did. When the rain stopped the heat came up off of the pavement and it didn't do much to refresh. This is the way it is all the time. This was my introduction, really, to the center of the tropics in the Congo.

Later, in 1965, I made a trip to Luluabourg that was great fun because Barry Ballou and Pete Synodis, both of whom worked for USIS in Luluabourg, took me to the city of Bakwanga, now known as Mbuji-Mayi. We had gotten special permission to visit the diamond mines. This was highly unusual but we drove in. There were two cities. One was a small fenced and gated city where the senior employees of the mines lived and then there was the rest, which was really very, very impoverished. We went into the mining area. It was amazing. There were gigantic pieces of earth-moving equipment. It was huge areas of strip mining. I remember doing the computations that they took several tons of earth off daily and out of that they got about 28 to 30 pounds of industrial diamonds.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Yes. The Congo was the world's leading, and is still, I think, the world's leading producer of industrial diamonds, including some gemstones. On our way back Pete Synodis pulled out a pad and did some computations on how much they got and how much per day and annually and of course it came into hundreds of millions of dollars that they were worth. And according to the company people the government got a quarter of

this but in fact we knew that the Congolese central government only got about \$10 million a year and so we figured the rest was going in bribes to local government officials. It was a fascinating experience. They said they couldn't protect poaching although they were supposed to. They said they did a pretty good job protecting theft but at the same time Congo-Brazzaville was the sixth leading exporter of industrial diamonds in the world, although there was no diamond mining in Congo-Brazzaville. The diamonds came from somewhere.

I picked up some other assignments, in addition to doing the field operations. One of them was exhibits, which I didn't really enjoy. I hired a wonderful young exile, a refugee from Stanleyville, who was a talented art student. One day in late 1965, I think, John Mowinckel called me into his office asked for a special exhibit. He had some pictures here and wanted an exhibit of them. He explained that the exhibit was not for us, but for the Congolese government. He said to ask Joe Ensuki, the young exhibits technician, not to do this really well because it's got to look like it was done by the Congolese Foreign Ministry. But anyway, it was photos of materials from Che Guevara and the Cuban episode in the eastern Congo and southeastern Congo. I knew exactly where they had come from and that it wasn't the Foreign Ministry, but it was a fascinating collection. This is why when after Guevara's death, when all of his diaries became available, people would say that all of these stories about what Guevara's doing, this and that, really aren't so. I know he was in the Congo, there was no question about it.

Q: How did the diamonds get across?

GILLESPIE: Ah. Well, the first question is how did the diamonds get out of the area of Bakwanga, out of Mbuji-Mayi? There obviously were some- in small streams, there were some people who panned for diamonds, this happens, and you can dig and pan for diamonds in that area and you're never going to become rich but you might hit some. But evidently most were stolen – by workers or their bosses. It's a long way to get there. I assume there were a number of middlemen, but at certain places you can walk across the border and you know, once you get across the Congo River and on the north side of the river in the Congo, you can walk into Congo-Brazzaville or get on a small boat and run down the river to Brazzaville. It was possible to get them in. I have always been amazed that somehow they did.

Serving at the embassy in the Congo was fascinating from the moment I arrived, even at the peak of the tension. A lot of this came from Godley, a big man, intelligent, full of life, politically very conservative, very dedicated to the Foreign Service. There was an incredible social life. Sometimes I sensed that we would work until 7:00 and then party until about 2:00 and get five hours of sleep. I first got a touch of this when I was in Burundi, and Ambassador Godley came on the Air Attaché's DC-4 with members of the embassy staff to Bujumbura. They had been in Bukavu and overnighted with us. There was a dinner party for Godley and then afterwards everyone went to the only nightclub in Bujumbura. And I remember Susan and I were hosting the Information Officer from Leopoldville Wes Fenhagen and his wife, Betsy. Godley came in and people were dancing, having a good time, He announced, in his deep loud voice, "Wheels up at 7:00

tomorrow morning.” And everyone feared being left. But then he said, “No one leaves the nightclub until the Ambassador does.” And he went and stood in front of the door. He was the life of the party for the evening but you didn’t dare go, which drove my wife crazy because she knew that although we would be up to say good-bye to our guests, we would be up before that with one year-old Jimmy. But that’s what the way it was in the Congo.

But there were many very enjoyable experiences in the Congo. Godley took members of his staff with him when he visited all over the country. He would go call on governors, he would go and usually spend a night and whenever he went he took one couple from each section in the mission with him. And he always tried to take husband and wife when he could. We went on one and it was a delightful trip. Although we ate at the governor’s mansion and it was one of the worst meals that I had in the Congo- But we did things like this.

John Mowinckel asked me to find out if we could get into Parc Albert, the game park close to

Goma in the Eastern Congo. The staff at USIS Bukavu inquired and found that we could although we would be among the first visitors since the war started. So we arranged a trip to Bukavu with a weekend to Parc Albert. John’s wife and son and Susan came along in the Mobil Oil plane. He and I paid for their trips. When we arrived at Parc Albert, the name of which I do not know now, we were met by the head game warden who came up and introduced himself in English. It turned out that he had been one of the first AID grantees before independence and had come back. He was thrilled to see us. There had been no visitor to the park in a long time. He spent most of his time fighting poachers and the occasional rebels who came through, just doing malicious things. And he took care of us and it was, of all my visits to African game reserves over the years, this was really the most wonderful. The rangers knew what was happening. It’s a beautiful area. It was a very exciting four day trip.

But life settled into a certain rigmarole and steady diet of certain scheduled work. We got fewer visitors than we had in Accra, of course. Although Leopoldville was peaceful, we rarely got visitors. One day in May of ’65 we were told that the Woody Herman jazz orchestra was coming. Our Cultural Affairs officer, Hank Ryan, a wonderful man-

Q: That’s Duke Ryan?

GILLESPIE: No, not Duke. Duke was a junior officer with me. Hank was an older African American, had taught for awhile at the University of Arizona or at Arizona State and served mainly in Africa. He was delighted because he loved jazz but he said this is rather strange to be sending what basically was a white jazz band to Africa. What had happened was that it was another one of the little twists of the Cold War. Woody Herman was supposed to go to Romania, Bulgaria and somewhere else in Eastern Europe but things had tightened up. Suddenly there were no exchanges in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We had this wonderful band ready to go and no place to go. They may even have been Europe already. So we were available and they came out. The band was

terrific. Woody Herman was a delightful man, as was his wife, who spent a lot of time holding our new daughter, Betsy, fresh from her birth in the US. Ryan and the rest of the USIS staff had a great time showing them the wonderful Congolese popular music and dance halls throughout Kinshasa. That was our big cultural presentation in two years. We didn't have that kind of thing and I think all of us, the USIS bunch, missed it.

At the end of 1964 I got a second job. I was made the motion picture officer, which was very interesting for me. It was two parts. We had a large distribution operation. We put things on the commercial circuit which, believe it or not, was still working in the Congo throughout all of the chaos. There were one or two old Belgian colonials who had been there forever and had distribution networks. We would take a stack of USIA produced and acquired films to them and they would put them in the circuit and return those that had completed the circuit all over the Congo. They would loan us, as well, old Charlie Chaplin shorts and other things like this that we would use to go on the road with our mobile units. These were the famous USIS mobile units, a jeep station wagon that had a generator attached and was loaded so you could show movies from the top of the van. We had four mobile units, three of which would be on the road almost all the time. They would come back, spend four or five days at home and go out again. They showed movies all over the lower Congo area. What they would do, which was fascinating, was they would take light old popular cartoons or if they could get them, old Charlie Chaplin movies and things that everyone had seen 100 times, and they would show those to attract the crowd and then they would put our movies up and they would do, in addition to the French narration of them, they would do, through a microphone hook-up, their own Kikongo explanation of what was happening. I've often wondered what got through but they were appreciated and enjoyed.

One of the most enjoyable things I got to do was with George Stevens, Jr., who was the head of the USIA motion picture and television branch. He had been brought in by Ed Murrow and was still there, came to the Congo and we took him to see two or three- two films together. One was a film that had been made in the Congo in this one village and we took it to the village and we showed it. It was their premiere. And in addition to that, afterwards we showed them "Years of Lightning, Day of Drums," the famous Kennedy memorial film that Stevens had produced. It was a fascinating evening.

The other part, in addition to the distribution side of the film, obviously, was the film production side, and we had two American filmmakers when I arrived, one of them was transferred later and we worked with one, who had two Portuguese-Angolan cameramen and editors who worked with him and they produced a monthly newsreel that was distributed throughout the Congo and was extremely well received and they did that, I think, up until 1966 or '67, after I had left. I learned a great deal working with them. Up until then I had known nothing about the making of films and it was something that actually I appreciated very much. I never did it but I was able to watch, and I learned what they were doing and I learned what they were talking about. But I did this as well as field operations. I still was in and out of Leopoldville but we had limited Stanleyville to a small Cultural Center/Library run by the three Foreign Service nationals and we closed down the post at Coquilhatville so it wasn't quite as much work as it had been the first

year I was there. I still had some responsibilities for Stanleyville and I went to Stanleyville with the acting American Consul and one other officer. We were assigned by Godley to be the Embassy's representatives for the Northeastern Congo as it was retaken by government forces.

In December of '65 we went on R&R. My wife was pregnant; we went home, were there for Christmas. I returned to Leopoldville in January and-

Q: Your wife was from where?

GILLESPIE: My wife is from Connecticut originally. And she stayed there. We had paid a visit to my parents who by this time were in Lexington, Kentucky. We stayed in the States for about five weeks. I flew back to the Congo; Susan stayed in Connecticut and our daughter was born March 30 and in late April she came back to the Congo. It was an extremely difficult time for me. I didn't like the separation. In a very- a relatively short period of time, certainly short looking back from where I am now, I had become a complete married man. I missed my family and I sort of put it into work and I worked a lot. I was busy; I traveled a good bit. We were still stuck with the lack of communication problem.

The baby was supposed to be born the first week of April. And so at the end of March, I went off on a weeklong trip, including four days in Stanleyville. There was a new university that was being built by Protestant missionaries and I wanted to see what we could do to work together. I had a number of other things I was working on up there and I left. Well, mail in and out was such that it took about 10 days for an air letter from the States to get to Kinshasa, maybe a week if we were lucky. I flew back from Stanleyville, as planned, the night of the 31st. I was driven home, probably about 7:00. I decided to drive to the office to pick up my mail. I went down and the mail was stacked on my desk and I started to read letters from the top one up and of course that was the most recent. And what happened was my wife's doctor decided that they should push the birth up, and so they picked a date. Well, the letter that told me the date was at the bottom of the pile. The one on top started with I'm going into the hospital tomorrow. And so I rushed around and I finally found, in the telegram file, the chronological copy of all the telegrams, I found the telegram that had been sent for me, telling me my daughter had been born. So there I was, there was no way I could contact anybody in the States. I tried to place a telephone call to my father-in-law with no luck. He tried twice and then on the third time finally got through to me. But it was, you know, it was a shock. I had had no idea whether Betsy, my daughter was a girl or a boy. I went home; there was a case of beer that had been left on the front porch of my house. I hadn't gone in that entrance because I went in the back and there was a case of beer with a note on it saying congratulations to Miss Gillespie, signed by some friends. And so at about 8:00 or 9:00 I started- people started calling; they found out I was home and started calling me. It was a remarkable sort of a thing.

In any case, eventually I talked to everyone. I got a lot of letters and then my wife came back. I still think that she did one of the toughest jobs anybody ever had, one of the

burdens of the Foreign Service, of course, was that flight from New York to Leopoldville, Pan American; it was about 18 hours with a new baby and a three year old.

Q: Tell me, looking at, particularly the film program and all, looking back on it, do you think this was very effective or not?

GILLESPIE: It's very hard to say was the film program effective or not. In the Congo, given the history, probably not. Perhaps in the short-term, somewhat.

Q: Well, let's put the performances, the whole-

GILLESPIE: Every film, of course not. But there were some very good, very purposeful films that were not only excellent films, but successful in reaching their goals. The films, there were a lot of films that were really quite good. Most of the films that USIA made and acquired and distributed were made with a real purpose. Did they all reach their goals, no. But who did?

Q: How to prevent malaria.

GILLESPIE: Well, yes, but also films to teach people about the United States, diversity in the United States, how this country works. The health films were acquired; the AID-type movies. Walt Disney made a series that were really quite good. The question still comes, how were they used, Stu. It isn't just was the film good, was the program good, but how, once it got there, it's still those last three feet. It's about getting that film, that book into the right hands. In this case, get the person, those eyes in front of that film, and that was- that's always difficult. I don't know.

Before I went to the Congo, I remember going to this screening for senior Washington officials of a film made for Africa. All of the top guys came in and sat down to basically say yea or nay on this rough cut of this film. It dawned on me later that we had there were men who weren't filmmakers talking about this should be cut so it's a little faster here and do this and this, not talking about the policy that was behind the film at all or the content, but trying to be filmmakers. That was often a real problem.

There were some wonderful and very useful films made. The film on John Glenn's first space flight was quite good. On the other hand, if you consider what it cost, it is a tough call. Was it useful or not? I will say this: George Stevens, Jr. put together at USIA probably the most talented group of artists that have ever worked for the government at one time since the WPA (Work Projects Administration). It was a remarkable group of young people who made films and a number of them, surprisingly, stayed for a long time. They were excellent. Now, basically, we just don't product anything. They do produce some programs.

Q: You know, I was thinking back to Stanleyville and the Simbas and all?

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: I interviewed Mike Hoyt and Mike was saying he was not a fan of Godley.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: Godley thought it would be a good idea for us to stay behind, which has never seemed to work out very much. I mean, I've talked to people who have stayed behind in China and in-

GILLESPIE: And Godley knew that that was a mistake.

Q: Yes. And Hoyt, I think at one point, he said that, you know, Godley was saying, you know, sort of sorry and all, and Hoyt said well, one consolation was, if I went down, in other words got killed or something, I know it wouldn't help you, you know.

GILLESPIE: Well, I'm sure there was that thought. I mean, I think among a lot of people, among Hoyt's predecessor, John Clingerman, who went to Stanleyville with the Belgian paratroopers because he knew his way around the city and could go find people, especially- he was looking to find Hoyt, find them. The question is, should these people have stayed, should it even have been close? A lot of people had left and it's- you know, I don't know. There were a lot of private Americans there – mostly missionaries. I think the real problem there, Stu, was no one really thought that the Simbas could possibly take Stanleyville, could possibly reach this area. Even though that was the heartland of the Lumumba supporters it was difficult; it was difficult.

There had been a threat to Bukavu at about the same time Stanleyville was taken. I was still in Bujumbura and we evacuated Bukavu. The PAO and his family came to Bujumbura and stayed with us . I remember they stayed with us because John Graves had six or seven children (only a few stayed with us.) It was our introduction to early teens and pre-teens who ate like crazy. We couldn't keep enough food in them. We were happy to have them but John said there's no sense staying there. He said if this isn't really going to be a problem, we'll be back there in another two or three days. And they were. They all went back. I think that's what we thought would happen up and down that area. But in Stanleyville, the rebels just completely overran the government forces when they took over.

The next event of importance, while I was there, was the coup. At that time, Joseph-Desiré Mobutu, later Mobutu Sese Seko, took over the country. It was Thanksgiving 1965. Joseph Kasavubu, the President, had named Moise Tshombe Prime Minister the year before. This was probably good internally for the country because Tshombe brought the Katanga support into the country finally but it was terrible internationally. The other Africans and Europeans had a very hard time supporting Tshombe at all. He had led Katanga's post-independence separation bringing the United Nations in and leading to a war. He was a fairly good leader, compared to the political leaders in the Congo, which had no real national political leadership. He was as good if not better than most but it wasn't good enough.

On Thanksgiving morning, keeping with USIS and Embassy habit, before dinner I drove down to the office. Wes Fenhagen, the duty officer for USIS, was there. The streets were virtually empty as I drove in. As I went into the office, and Wes said, "Have you heard? There's been a coup. Mobutu took over." Wes smiled and said I had the pleasure of calling Larry Devlin, the Chief of Station, and telling him that Mobutu had taken over. There weren't a lot of people around; it had been quiet for us. (NOTE)

Mobutu took over and during the time I was there I think it was a positive change. I was only there for another year and his corruption was not yet fully evident. There are a number of things in governing that a military can do and they do them rather well; things that demand order and precision and some control. The military does that fairly well. The Congo learned, as other countries have learned, that the military isn't really equipped at all to manage most of governing. They aren't great economists; they aren't by trade, doctors or health care specialists; and so this sort of thing falls to the side and that happened too, later on. But I think that first six months probably was rather positive, although during that time, as I said earlier, the Mobutu-Godley relationship fell apart. Godley left and at that time also there was a big turnover in the rest of the mission.

Q: Well you left around that time, too, didn't you?

GILLESPIE: I left shortly afterwards.

Q: When did you leave?

GILLESPIE: Maybe the middle of December '66.

Q: Sixty-six. Okay, what I'm thinking this is a good place to stop.

GILLESPIE: Fine.

Q: Where did you go after?

GILLESPIE: I return to Washington and take 16 weeks of Spanish language training and go off to Montevideo.

Q: Alright. Well, we'll pick it up then.

GILLESPIE: Good, that will be fine.

Q: Great.

Okay. Today is the 5th of March, 2010, with Jake Gillespie. And Jake, we had left, you were- you had some things- You were in the Congo from when to when?

GILLESPIE: I was in the Congo from late October 1964 until about the 10th, I think, of December; 10th or 12th of December in 1966.

Q: Okay. You had a couple things you wanted to add before we move on.

GILLESPIE: Yes. First of all, in September of '66, there was an attempted coup in Leopoldville. Mobutu had taken over in '65, in November of '65, and it was rather evident that he was loading the government with people from his part of the country. Mobutu was from a small tribal group in the northwest of the country but he was loading his government with cronies and colleagues and it didn't look like much of an improvement. He also was not treating well the people who were from the Bakongo, especially those working in government from the Bakongo area, which is the area around the mouth of the Congo River. Joseph Kasavubu, the first president of the Congo, had come from there. The coup was attempted, was quickly overthrown. The leaders were all arrested and could have been put in the courts. There was adequate evidence of what they had done and the Congolese courts would have handled it. It would have taken awhile; the Congolese courts were not the most efficient, certainly, and they weren't always the best. But Mobutu set up a kangaroo court within a week of the capture and rounding up of the conspirators. They were convicted in two days and executed the following day. What concerned me directly, struck me and concerned me, was not the authoritarianism, the way that Mobutu did it. I thought the kangaroo court was very bad for the Congo to do; it was another bad example of the Congo to the rest of the world when they needed to give better examples. But what really concerned me was the evident blood thirstiness of the man in the street in Kinshasa. Although I had seen evidence of the results of that, perhaps, in Stanleyville, where the rebellion had been so horrible, this was really the case, people parading through the streets, screaming for blood. It was something that concerned me; it concerned many of the Americans in the Embassy who had been there for awhile. We were seeing something that perhaps we always thought possible, given the history of this poor country, but we had never seen it ourselves. Then, on top of this, the FSNs were extremely concerned-

Q: You're talking about our Foreign Service nationals.

GILLESPIE: Our Foreign Service nationals.

Q: These were Congolese working for us.

GILLESPIE: Yes. And my own staff, with whom I had become quite close in some ways, was extremely concerned about this. They didn't like it at all. Of course, looking at it today it is evidence of a lot of the problems that we have seen in the last 20, 25 and 30- ever since I- throughout the history of the Congo and certainly in the last 20 years and the last five years in northeastern Congo.

Q: I have just finished an interview, some time ago, but with Aubrey Hooks, who was our ambassador to the Congo around the turn of the century, 1990- late-

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: And talking about the disintegration of the Congo, how at the head of it Kabila, the son of the guy that took over, controls maybe- controls being a very vague, not quite really correct word, about a third of the country and the rest being held by a variety of groups, including outside powers and here is probably one of the richest areas in the world with raw materials and all, and how it's just gone to hell, that at the beginning, when the Belgians may have- didn't educate their people but they left a very solid infrastructure; roads you could drive around there but-

GILLESPIE: There is some question. Since I was there closer to the beginning I might differ there a bit. There were no roads more than about 20 miles east of the Leopoldville, Kinshasa. This was a difficult area because then you begin to get into rain forest. River transportation was about the only way to ship goods or people. There was some rail but most of the rail went east to the port of Matadi but that was about it.

Q: You were there when?

GILLESPIE: I was there 1964-66 and it was shortly after independence. I was out in areas where you would get some finished roads, perhaps not paved but good finished roads, for maybe 10 and 15 mile stretch in some places but the copper all had to be shipped out in one of two ways, and this was always a problem. It either went out to the west through Angola on rails that the Portuguese had that went that way, or it went out through the east through what is now Zambia and down into Zimbabwe and up but it went out via South Africa or Mozambique. Of course that was not Zambia and Zimbabwe, it was Rhodesia. And so in effect the Congo was tied to colonial countries and, even worse, it went out Rhodesia and went further south and it was exported out of South Africa. So this was always a problem. There were some rail systems and they did work. The river system was good and it did work. This is very true. The education system was in the hands of the church and extremely limited. I have no doubt that the infrastructure has deteriorated since I left, but it wasn't great when I was there.

Q: Okay. Is there anything else you want to add?

GILLESPIE: Yes. The other thing I wanted to mention about the Congo; I mean, we can you're right, it's a big rich country with enormous troubles and we could talk about it all day. But I did want to say something about the staff, the American staff. These were remarkable people who for a short time were brought together. While I was there, I say "remarkable," myself not included, but Ambassador Godley; Bob Blake, the DCM while I was there who became ambassador; Monteagle Stearns, the head of the Political Section when I arrived and for most of the time I was there, who became Ambassador to several major countries; Harvey Nelson succeeded him and had quite a successful career following. The Political Section had several remarkable characters; one, our friend Ken Brown, who went on to become Ambassador; Jack Davidson, who was an Ambassador in two other African countries, and Hank Cohen, who became a senior department official

as well as Ambassador in several places and I think is considered one of the African experts in the United States today.

Q: Yes,, yes he is.

GILLESPIE: And the others were really quite good and although perhaps never achieved the heights of these people but Jim Farber, Andre Navé, Jay Katzen, who left the Service and was elected to the state senate in Virginia and did a great deal for- for Foreign Service officers living in Virginia. This was really a remarkable group of people. Larry Devlin, who is well known and John Stein, who was a young officer who came out there, later ended up Acting Director for a brief period of the Central Intelligence Agency. USIA, my own office, was headed by John Mowinckel, something of an unusual background, grandson of a Norwegian prime minister who fought with David Bruce's group in the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), came out, had spent seven years as a PAO, a deputy PAO in Paris before he came to the Congo because he was broke and he needed the money and went on to an interesting career. One of the deputy PAOs was Rudy Aggrey, who went on and was Ambassador in Senegal and Romania. McKinney Russell, who was an Assistant Information Officer, became the Consular at USIA, the third highest position there. I'm hesitating- But it was a remarkable group of people and a great pleasure for a young person like me. I remember, I was, I think- I left in '66, maybe all of 27 years old by the time I got out.

Q: Well, it also was a time when world attention was focused on the Congo. I mean, you know, I knew, like, Kasavubu, Tshombe. Lumumba; I mean, these are all household names to anybody interested in foreign policy and later moved to Southeast Asia. But at the time this was where the focal point- I mean, this was-

GILLESPIE: In any case, I left in December. I went home on a very welcome home leave with two small children. Susan and I had a good leave, settled briefly in a rented house we found in Bethesda and I went to Spanish language training.

Q: I want to ask you one question before we go on. Was there concern of you and your family during this coup, the aftermath of the coup and the blood thirsty crowds, were you afraid they might turn on you all?

GILLESPIE: No, because it was brief. It was brief; two or three days only. We did more or less clamp down and say everybody stay home, don't come downtown, don't go to the markets downtown, stay home if you need to. I discovered that the man who was probably the leader, Emmanuel Bemba, had been in my office two weeks before, where he had discussed with me and with two of the senior Foreign Service nationals, a film that we had made of a school that he supported three years earlier, and he said the school is finished, and he was trying to talk us into going back and making a follow up film to show. It was not a ridiculous request at all as we saw it; as I thought about it later I thought well, you know, he was trying to do a little self-promotion for things that he had supported, which is understandable, and would have been even if he had not been

planning a coup. No, I don't think there was great fear at that time, to answer your question.

Q: Alright; Spanish training. Whither? I mean, where were you going?

GILLESPIE: I was assigned to Montevideo, Uruguay, where I was going to be an Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer. Of course, it was a complete change in everything for me; I had no background in Latin America. I really had not worked as the kind of cultural affairs officer that they had in Montevideo so it would be very different. It was sort of a normal assignment. Although it was one of these things, it was such a great shift of area and difference, I was surprised by it. The personnel officer for Africa, who had made the assignment, was the person who had preceded me in the Congo. He is a good friend. We've know each other for a variety of reasons ever since, and he said he always thought that was a really good assignment for you. And I said it was just off the wall.

However, I went into Spanish language training; because of the French that I had and because I had gone through French language training at FSI and it was still the same system, I did well. I remember I ended up the last four weeks with a wonderful teacher the majority of the time. There were only two of us in the class and one of the things that we did was read Borges, which again, was an introduction for me and that in itself was great.

We left in the middle of August in 1967--and went to Montevideo. The PAO was also new and we were all staying in the same hotel. When we settled into the hotel we didn't know we were going to be there for six- eight weeks, which eight weeks in two adjoining rooms in a very nice hotel where they treated us well with two small children, as my wife reminded me, doing diapers in the bathtub and things like this, was not really a pleasant sort of a situation. We withstood it, eventually found a nice house, settled in, and things started happening for me rather quickly.

The PAO's name was Arthur Diggle. Although he was pleasant enough to me he was really not a warm man at all. He had children the same age as ours, basically, but they did not- we didn't gather in the hotel much. So Susan and I got out; on weekends we would take- we would rent an Embassy or a USIS vehicle and drive the city. We looked at houses; getting a house was terribly difficult and until we did we were not going to be happy. But about two or three weeks after I was there, the first big event that I was assigned to happened. Let me go back a bit.

My responsibilities, principally, included the exhibits program and contact with Uruguayan artists. We produced our own small exhibits programs, shipping them around the country. Major ones came to us from USIA in Washington. It actually turned out to be fascinating although it was not something that I was enthusiastic about at first. I ran our book program. USIA had a very large and intensive Spanish language translation book program and we worked with book sellers, which was not a very positive thing at that time. We also did our own book distribution to libraries and schools, a lot of that.

In addition, I worked with the exchange programs a bit. There was a Cultural Affairs Officer and another Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer and we all were pretty busy. Coming from the Congo, Uruguay looked wonderful; houses, apartment buildings downtown and people were busy, everyone was literate, the newspapers were active when they weren't on strike, and they were on strike for the same reason others were going on strike, the economy was collapsing. It was really a very serious time.

About two weeks after I got there, Stu, the Fulbright Commission had a reception for all the new Fulbrighters. The majority of the Fulbrighters, the great majority, of course, were academics, and in this case senior academics. And the reception, which was held at the USIS center as opposed to the Bi-National center. There were two operating in Montevideo; the Bi-National center was largely an English teaching institution and was going through construction. The reception was held at the USIS center, the Artigas Washington Library, Artigas being the father of Uruguay, whose statue sits just across the street from the Department of State. It was a big reception and in the course of it we were introduced to a Uruguayan mathematician and his wife, Juan Jorge Schäffer and his wife Ines. They were extremely pleasant and nice to us. In the course of the reception I also met an American Fulbrighter, a Harvard mathematician. He saw me talking to Schäffer and afterwards he came over to me and said we have been trying to get him to come to Harvard permanently for years and so is every other major mathematics department in the United States.

Well, about a week later the Schäffers called and invited us to tea on a Sunday afternoon and we did. It was very pleasant, although I was trying to figure out what I might have in common with a Uruguayan mathematician. It turned out this was really one of the most fascinating men I have known. We are still friends. Jorge's family emigrated from Austria in the mid-'30s to Uruguay.

Q: Were they of Jewish extraction?

GILLESPIE: Yes. They came to Uruguay and he was quite frank about it, he said because we could not get into the United States and Uruguay accepted us. His wife Ines's family had come from Germany, actually a few years later, and came to Uruguay for the same reason. Jorge was one of the most brilliant men I have ever known. Although he was a mathematician, he wanted to talk about the Congo and Burundi. He wanted to talk about Burundi. This man knew as much about Africa as I did. I speak about him because he is someone who really is, I think, an important figure and a symbol of what the Fulbright program did. Here is a man who was a relatively young man when he was picked out by the Fulbright program and sent to the United States. He came back from the United States, became a tenured professor of mathematics in the engineering department at the University of Uruguay in Montevideo. He had a difficult time teaching there. The university was extremely political. Juan provided an opening for me into the senior faculty and leadership of the university, which in terms of what I was assigned to do was very important, and he also provided me a look at a part of Uruguay that I would not have seen otherwise. They had a son who was the same age as ours; we got together frequently, socially. We went to concerts, we went out to dinner together, and we got

together probably once a month when one or the other would call up and say do you want to play Scrabble? We'd go over, have a glass of wine and play some Scrabble. And we walked in and Jorge and Ines were just finishing a game. They said just a moment, we're just finishing a game, and they were playing in Russian.

Q: Ah.

GILLESPIE: And they pulled out Scrabble sets in German, Russian, French, Spanish and English. Ines was a language teacher. So we would play and Susan's great achievement was the night she beat Juan Schäffer in Scrabble, which of course, I said, well you know, a lot of that is luck, and she said, "No no. It is a great achievement."

I will get way ahead chronologically because as the years- my time there progressed, the political problems became much more difficult.

Q: You were there from when to when?

GILLESPIE: I was there from August of '67 until the- oh, about end of November, 1969.

But then the political situation became worse. The terrorist group known as the Tupamaros developed, and I will talk about that later on, I think. But there was a large center of the Tupamaros in the university.

Q: Well, they were essentially middle class kids, weren't they, or not?

GILLESPIE: Yes, there were some union organizers and there were- they certainly- Since there really was- By some standard all of them would qualify in Uruguay, probably, as middle class.

Q: What was- Well, we got the- What was sparking the Tupamaros? What were they after?

GILLESPIE: Originally the Tupamaros were sparked by the problems of the beet sugar workers in northern Uruguay.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Uruguay is a city state in most ways; more than half the population lives in Montevideo. It lives on cattle and sheep. But it did produce other agricultural products. And it started with a small thing over the sugar workers but it expanded. And the Tupamaros decided they would make examples of the corruption in government. As I said, I'll come back to it later but what happened at the university was that the university came under a great deal of pressure from the government and inside- Because the university was an old fashioned European university, completely self-governed. The government had no role there. By tradition and understanding no police officer would even walk inside the university. The university was governed by a tripartite council of

faculty, students and staff that held elections each year. The staff was always taken by the left. Each faculty elected its own government and university representatives. The university was broken into faculty of law, faculty of medicine, faculty of engineering, faculty of humanities and a few others. I remember talking to one of the architecture students about the elections that had just been held at the faculty of architecture and he said that they had slates that came in from the communists, from the anarchists, from the Tupamaros and one or two, three others. And I asked who won? He said, the communists basically won but we're really lucky because the far left didn't. This is what they were seeing. At the faculty of engineering, the head of the faculty, who was a very close friend and mentor of Juan Schaffer, was a communist. Juan said that he was basically apolitical.

Juan was trying to stay out of politics as much as he could. I think his family's history, knowing what happens when politics gets going on things like this, frightened him. It was not that he was apolitical personally but he stayed out of it at the university. But he had a harder and harder time. Carnegie Mellon had offered him an extremely good position. I asked why he had waited so long. He had already told me one political student group or another would come into his classroom and basically stop everything, for weeks at a time. He wasn't able to enter his office and his research was coming to a stop. But he said that Uruguay accepted me and accepted us when no one else would and I've always thought I owed it to them to stay as long as I can. But he said I don't think I can now. So they, with help from Carnegie Mellon, they left. It was very sad for us although we stayed in touch and we've always stayed in touch.

But one of the other things that I remember about Juan Schäffer, before he left, he called me one day and he said I'm getting rid of a lot of things here and I have an Encyclopedia Britannica that I would sell. The American school might want it. I asked how much are you asking for it? And he gave a price and I said that the new edition of the Britannica just came out and this is almost as much as it would cost in the United States to buy that new edition. He said that he had made all the corrections. I later picked up a volume at his house and there were three pages in a very small, absolutely neat handwriting entitled "errata," and every page had noted footnotes, and where there were corrections that had been made. It was remarkable. It was remarkable.

In any case, he was my first great Uruguayan friend.

Q: Well Jake, I wonder if you could talk a little about your observations at the time. I mean, I've never served in Latin America but I've heard of these independent universities which were-

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: But with them being disrupted all the time, see, you know the tradition is you go to the left, you come out, you immediately work for IBM or business or something like that, but the point being, it doesn't sound like much education takes place outside of, you know, leftist students are trying their wings out on disrupting things. I mean, that's kind of what they do.

GILLESPIE: The university structure was what it was. First of all, it took years for anyone to get a degree. There were great advantages in Uruguay and in most of these Latin systems, in being a student. You got a student card, which gave you free transportation anywhere in the city of Montevideo. It gave you discounts in certain restaurants by law. Classes were disrupted by strikes and sometimes for long periods. Most of the students I knew worked full-time. I mean, maybe they got some evening classes. In my time there I knew three students from architecture, one from law, who actually got degrees. And they would say that the faculty of architecture had about 500 students and graduated five or six a year and the law faculty, which was enormous, maybe 3000 students had 150 graduates and that's all. The humanities, they used to laugh, hadn't graduated anybody in years. And you're right. What did they learn? Having said that, there were some excellent people teaching there. When they had classes, I think they probably were good, they did learn things.

Ambassador Robert Sayre, who was the second Ambassador while I was there, called me in with the PAO. He told me that since I had contacts at the university, to take as much time as I needed and prepare a paper that will explain the university system and what is going on there. He was concerned because of its politics. It seemed like a terrible drain on the economy, nobody's learning anything, that sort of question. I spent probably two months, maybe longer, really working on this, false starts and stops and back and forth, finding people who were able to explain to me a lot of things that I really thought gave me a lead. Then finding someone else would say something opposite and I would back off and go back and start again. But after false starting I settled down and I said that it works; the problem is the system is too much part of the nation and the nation's problems. I said if the economy worked better people would go through the university faster, because if the economy were working they could come out of the university and get a job and a degree would give them a better job. It's very hard to do that now. They need-

Q: This was during the '60s.

GILLESPIE: This is during the '60s.

Q: I was, by the way, in Naples during the late '70s where- and you didn't get a job because you graduated number one in electrical engineering; you got a job because your family had connections-

GILLESPIE: Precisely.

Q: -in an electrical engineering firm and no matter how brilliant you were it didn't mean anything.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. And I think this system, which existed throughout Latin universities, throughout universities. If you go back to the early Renaissance the way that Europe- all European universities were detested for exactly this reason.

Q: Yes, yes.

GILLESPIE: University students were thought to be among the lowest of low. This was the thing; everyone who could went to university but people who really wanted to be smart were starting to do other things. There were some very good secondary schools that went on and perhaps gave you the equivalent of a community college- a very good community college degree.

Q: What about the Catholic schools, because they played a different game, didn't they?

GILLESPIE: Yes, if you go into the Latin world at large. Uruguay had its social revolution at the turn of the 19th/20th century and in effect Uruguay was an extremely secularized state that also set up the great social convention under José Batlle y Ordóñez. He was the first great leader who had a social contract within the country. The landowners could keep the land. And there were great estancias. They were able to raise the cattle, raise the sheep, export the wool and eat the meat and export the meat; this provided a living. But they were taxed heavily to pay for the social benefits for the people of the cities, meaning Montevideo. This meant education was free; education was required, compulsory education through eighth grade, so by the time I'm there, which is the post-war period, in the '60s, it was a completely literate country that is very middle class in many ways. The idea of the gaucho living out on the estancia taking care of the herds was largely myth. There were some, of course, because you had- but once you got out there, there weren't very many of them.

Q: You don't need much, really.

GILLESPIE: You don't need much of that. And so it was an urban country all stuck there in that one city right down on the coast in many ways, with this great big farm, great big ranch sitting around it. That's the easiest way to think of it. The Church role was nominal. Uruguay was one of the first modern Latin states. By Latin I would include Mediterranean as well, in that nominally the great majority of the country was Catholic; a very low percentage practiced. The Church had a very small influence, if any, in the economy- in the politics and the economy of the country or the education. The education was public. There were private schools; there were some Catholic schools, there were some good Catholic secondary schools but not large, and no- there were no private universities at this time. It turns out that one of the things and one of the reasons that I think Sayre wanted me to do this was that he was hearing from the business community that they wanted to start private university and he didn't know what to do about this.

In any case, I did the study. My argument was that the university was part of the society in which it functioned and was very affected by the economics and the politics of the country, taking both to certain extremes as universities frequently do. At the same time, within that system, the structure was not what was causing the university to fail. What was causing the university to fail was this relationship with the society in which it sat. The economy was bad and the politics of the country were starting to expand. I mean,

Uruguay had been run for, at this time, 65 years by two parties, basically, the Colorados and the Blancos, the Reds and the Whites.

Q: Did they alternate more or less?

GILLESPIE: Well, within each of those parties you had about three or four factions and then you would have the communists and two or three others. So you had anywhere from 10 to 15 parties that ran during an election. The Reds were not to the left and the Whites to the right. They were very, very similar. It is only in the last two elections, this century, when two parties of the left have been elected president, current president being “the” former leader of the Tupamaros. That’s the only time in the last century that either Colorados or Blancos were not elected.

Q: Now, what about the military? I mean, we’re talking about the ‘60s; you’ve got Argentina which is off and on run by the military and Brazil, which was definitely during this period run by the military, and poor little Uruguay sitting between. I mean, what was happening?

GILLESPIE: Uruguay was completely democratic when I got there. I guess you can blame me. The military had rarely taken a political role. Or the police. They always served under civilians. There were no coups. They looked at Argentina with no little disdain when the colonels took over. I was in Buenos Aires several times while I was there. Uruguayans did not think much of that sort of government. Brazil they blamed on development. They said that’s still an underdeveloped country, which of course was true. Amazing today to think of that. However, if you take the southern part of Brazil, most of the northern and eastern parts of Argentina and Uruguay, culturally, you don’t have a great difference. I mean, Uruguay is only by 19th century political chance not a province of Argentina, but they’re a very proud people and they were very certain that they would deal with their problems without the military taking over. However, I left in ’69 and by ’71 and ’72 the military is running Uruguay. The military ran it until they discovered they couldn’t manage it either. As someone said, they discovered that just being a general doesn’t give you good economic sense and they couldn’t solve the economic problems easily. And they turned it back over to civilians. Of course, they never admitted failure but they really had not succeeded.

Q: In the first place, what were you doing? I mean, in the first place, how did the United States view Uruguay at that time and what were you doing?

GILLESPIE: Okay. These were the days of the Alliance for Progress, John Kennedy’s declaration and great programs that were set out to create a closer relationship between the United States and all of Latin America. Consequently we did whatever we could in the Alliance for Progress. However, it was limited in Uruguay. There was an USAID mission that basically was a budget balancing group; it was a group of people who were, as one friend of mine who worked there said, we basically are responsible for shoveling the dough into the Uruguayan treasury to keep them from sinking. He said there are no great USAID projects here; there is nothing that anybody can see unless you’re a

Uruguayan bureaucrat or banker who sees where the money comes from. It wasn't a very big program, either. It grew some while I was there but by USAID standards it wasn't big.

Q: Well could you go in- There were times when it was dangerous for Americans to go into the universities in various parts.

GILLESPIE: You know, I never felt that. I did- I take that back. I was concerned about it at the beginning. I was introduced to some people; I was told by Juan Schäffer to walk through the door and go find the office. If you have an appointment, walk in. He said you'll see a lot of crazy signs; you might see signs calling for death to the United States because this is also at the time where we're reaching the peak of the war in Vietnam, and no one liked us a great deal anywhere. This is also the period when Che Guevara is caught in Bolivia. So there are things that are going on that were remarkable. But Uruguay was a country that was very intellectually active. It was very culturally active and we did a great deal with cultural presentations. We felt that this was still the way, a way for us to reach this group of intellectuals, and we didn't have many avenues into those groups. So that was a large part of the cultural section's responsibility.

One of the early things that I ran into, which was very important, was when I.M. Pei came to town.

Q: The architect.

GILLESPIE: He had designed the new embassy that was going up. When I arrived the U.S. mission was in several buildings all over downtown and a decision had been made to house us all in one building. These were the days when America's top architects were called upon to design our chanceries. Pei came; the ambassador had a reception for him and there I met the American architect from FBO (Federal Building Office) who was assigned to the American building and his Uruguayan assistant. The Uruguayan assistant, Giancarlo Puppo became a good friend. They were thrilled with Pei and the reception was loaded with Uruguayan architects, artists, art critics and engineers and others and they were talking about his visit.

Q: Architecture was really at the top of sort of the cultural pile, wasn't it, in Latin America at that time?

GILLESPIE: Very much, very much.

Q: I mean, all the way from Mexico on down. I mean, much more attention is paid to architecture than say, in the States.

GILLESPIE: Well, one of the reasons is at this time there was a great deal of public architecture going on. Of course, you had the new Brazilian capital.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Brasilia was being completely built out of whole cloth and magnificently designed. But you're right, it was more than that and Pei was considered one of the young American geniuses at this time. But for me the key here was meeting Puppo. Puppo was an architect but he was an artist. He became my entrée into the world of the Uruguayan artist, and there were a number of very fine artists who were highly regarded throughout Latin America and in the United States and Europe. One of the things that Puppo talked me into was an exhibit of six or seven major Uruguayan artists who have been to the United States, who have a tie with the United States. We used the exhibit space in the USIS library. Puppo included himself. He was a fine artist and had studied for awhile in New York. We did get five or six wonderful artists in there. I think the oldest was 51 or so. Puppo was a little bit older than I was, about 30. This made contacts for us in the cultural section and USIS. It started to open other doors, which helped a great deal.

I think Pei's third trip down while I was there, Ichi Mori, the American architect and I got together and said why don't we go to the students of the faculty of architecture that we know and offer a master class with Pei. The master class would be Pei taking them around the new embassy. The structure was largely complete. It wasn't going to be open for another year or so but was up and showing them and discussing it with them and answering questions. Pei agreed to do it. It was wonderful. The class was in English. There was no walking interpreter and the Uruguayan students at that level could handle the English comfortably. What I've thought about since is imagine saying we're going to have the architect walk the students from the most left wing faculty in the university around the inside of the new Embassy and see how far that would get past security.

Q: Yes, yes, yes.

What about American universities? Was there much appeal for the Uruguayans to go there or would they go to Madrid or to Paris or something?

GILLESPIE: I think there was great appeal and first choice in Uruguay and I think in Argentina, too, when I talked to my colleagues over there. The first choice would be one of the known top...

Q: The Harvard, Yale.

GILLESPIE: The Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Princeton at the graduate level; that's where they would go. In numbers, probably more went to Mexico, to France. Spain was not a great attraction at this time.

Q: It wasn't really- Spain was not- It was Franco and-

GILLESPIE: It sure was and this wasn't where- Spain got- Spain was still an attraction for Argentine students and some Uruguayans but not very many, not really very many. One problem was that they probably couldn't get in because the Spanish wouldn't let them.

Q: Yes. They were, I mean, they were coming from a left wing institution and this was Franco and-

GILLESPIE: That's right. A number- there were some who went to the University of Puerto Rico but the real preference was the bigger universities then France; Britain was still quite attractive. The British had had a long time relationship with the countries on the River Plate.

Q: Sure, yes. I mean, actually the British occupied Buenos Aires at one point.

GILLESPIE: That's right, and another thing that the Uruguayans would probably tell you they did not but they did; I mean, of course they occupied it and they controlled it because they controlled the estuary, the River Plate all the way up. But they were probably still a closer tie economically than the United States was. They're not today but they were then, through the meat packing and the wool.

Q: Yes. Were there any references that you heard while you were there to the Graf Spee and all that?

GILLESPIE: Oh yes, oh yes, to the Graf Spee. One of the American cultural presentations that came through was the Emerson Quartet, a wonderful string quartet, and one of the first questions one of them asked me, they were all Jewish Americans, and one of the first questions that one of them asked me was where is the ghetto? And I said I've been here for 18 months and I have a number of Jewish friends and I do not believe there's a ghetto. Oh yes, there's always a ghetto. I said I can show you where the synagogue is, or one of them; I said I think there's two or three. Then he said well, where are the Nazis who came in and where's the Graf Spee? Well, I said, the Graf Spee, no, I could point to, because I said when tide is low you can almost, if you were up on the Cerro, which is the hill, the big hill on the harbor, you could see the Graf. I was told but I never saw it. But I said the Nazis, I said this is an interesting question. I said I know of one German restaurant but I said, you know, this isn't, of course this wouldn't be anything that people locally would talk about much but I said the one or two who might, with me, if they were suspected around here, would let me know. And of course, Uruguay wasn't an attractive place for them to go. Argentina was.

Q: And Paraguay.

GILLESPIE: And Paraguay and Chile.

Q: And Chile.

GILLESPIE: Because they were places you could get out and get away in. It was- And actually southern Brazil, as it turned out, for Mengele, where Al Cohen found him later, or the remains. So there was a German relation- The Germans worked as they did everywhere in the '50s and '60s and '70s to re-establish themselves internationally as a

democracy and they worked hard at it but they were still a small mission. The British, the French, the Italians, the U.S. and to a lesser degree- or a special degree - the Spanish, and then the other Latin Americans were also important..

Q: Well did- Since you had such a tie to the campus and also were the Tupamaros basically campus centered?

GILLESPIE: No, no, no. The Tupamaros were actually, goodness, I'm sure I'm going to do a session on the Tupamaros sometime but I'll tell you now, the Tupamaros were brilliantly set up. They were very cell-oriented and there were small cells all over, a number of them still in small towns outside Montevideo and then a number of them in several places. As we discovered later there were all sorts of people who were Tupamaros and worked with them, including one USIS junior librarian who- that's a tale for later because it happened after I was there. But there were a lot. It wasn't a case of walking into the university and there were a lot of Tupamaros. It was the students knew who was attached and when he would say oh yes, that's probably a Tupamaro list of candidates, it might just be Tupamaro approved, it might be a number of things but it wasn't...

Q: Well were they taking, I mean, did we feel that they were targeting the embassy?

GILLESPIE: No. That comes-

Q: Later it was more Esco or whatever his name was.

GILLESPIE: Mittrione, Dan Mittrione, who was a good friend, a Thursday night poker buddy. But that- targeting us, I never had that when I was there, up until the time just before Dan Mittrione is kidnapped and Claude Fly, another USAID man who was kidnapped and Gordon Jones, our Commercial-junior Economic officer who escaped. That's later but up until that time, you know, not really. We looked at what they did; as they started to do things there were somewhat bemused looks because they were imaginative, there were no deaths, they stole, they made- they would make publicity, they robbed the casino in Montevideo once and discovered that they had taken, in addition to taking other things, they had taken the tips so they put an ad in the communist paper saying where they would leave the tips because they didn't steal from the workers.

Q: This is real Robin Hood stuff.

GILLESPIE: Absolutely. And that's what I think was their thought. They did things like- Well. Maybe I should- Let me go back, if I may. I arrive in '66 and a man named Gestido, was a senator, a senior politician of Colorado, who had been elected president about four or five months before I got there. I have not been there two or three weeks, well maybe longer, months, maybe two months, and President Gestido dies suddenly, unexpectedly. His vice president, a man named Pacheco Areco, two names, last names, Jorge Pacheco Areco, becomes the president. Well, Pacheco Areco, unlike Gestido, was not thought of as a major politician until he became vice president and it was not, up until

this time, really a major position to be held. I mean, elections were held and someone else- you were replaced.

Well, Pacheco came in. I would also mention that the Ambassador when I arrived was a man named Henry Hoyt; very pleasant, I met him two or three times and then- I don't want to say that I was a curse but at the annual American picnic, which was not held around the Fourth of July because that was winter and it was cold and rainy, it was held in November, while pitching a softball game at the American picnic Henry Hoyt had a heart attack and died. And that brings us more or less to the first parts of 1970. Pacheco's government, which was pretty much Gestido's government and pretty typical, some changes, everyone said this is sort of the kind of thing we've had. They don't have anybody my contacts were saying, they don't have anybody that's going to change anything. And there were complaints of corruption, there were big demonstrations sometimes going down through the streets. I don't remember the first time that I was caught in one and police on horseback came in and were moving people out and I got back to the office and I was talking about it and everyone said well stay out of the way, don't get caught in one. There will never be much violence but you might get hurt because you'll be knocked down. You know, that was the sense. My feeling at this time still was not only was this a terribly literate country but this was as democratic- I'd never seen such a democratic country. Everyone had a voice, everyone could do things but just the economy was collapsing. And about that time the Tupamaros picked up a bit in terms of they would rob a small bank, they would rob this or that and then one day they robbed a big financiara. A financiara is basically a mortgage company. And we heard that it was robbed but there was no more information. And a week went by and the Tupamaros again put out a little notice that they put into the communist newspaper and said we will start distributing the things that we found when we robbed the financiara. And what they had were all sorts of papers that implicated about four assistant Ministers and then Ministers in the government had to resign. I mean, they found evidence of obvious corruption. And they would put these out one a day. I mean, as someone said, they're doing a great deal for the circulation of this second rate, as most communist papers were, very second rate piece of junk but everybody would buy it to read what was in there. But that was the sort of thing they were doing; they robbed the casino and they picked up a bit. And this went on. I mean, you had some of this and the Tupamaros would, you know, you'd hear something here, you'd hear something there but it really didn't pick up until my last six months there when it was very big.

Q: Alright, well let's talk about the last six months.

GILLESPIE: Oh, okay. The government had been quite successful by all measures and certainly what we thought in the Embassy, I think, in the mission, was that the government had been very successful picking up Tupamaros. Once a day you would see "captured," and there would be pictures and identification of Tupamaro leaders and they frequently would have names and they'd have ages, and the ages would be- often you would see 42, 35, 37, an older group, and they were picked up and put in jail. In June or July, I haven't gotten this far in my letters home, didn't know exactly the dates, a group of young people- a young family, I think they were posing as two brothers, a wife and a

sister, went to a funeral home and said we are going to move Uncle Jose's remains from the cemetery over here and rebury him out at the family plot in Pando, a small town outside Montevideo. Well, I don't know, Stu, if you've ever seen the funeral wagons in parts of Latin America; they're big.

Q: They had them in Naples.

GILLESPIE: Yes, the same. They're black, huge-

Q: Yes. Plumes.

GILLESPIE: Plumes, the whole thing. And so this was a normal thing and the funeral home said yes, what will you need? Well, we'll need one to take the family, his wife and his sister and others and so we need one and we need one for the casket. Okay, they would set that up. They met on a Saturday at the funeral- at the cemetery; someone jumped the two drivers, tied them up, put them in the back of one of the wagons where the casket would have been and a bunch of Tupamaros climbed in and they drove to Pando. They got to the center of Pando, proceeding, of course, at a very slow pace all the way along. No one said much; they hopped out, they went to the police headquarters and one other place and the radio station and something else and the police came out and they started firing and there was a lot of gunfire. There was a larger number together than anyone ever remembers; there were about 15 Tupamaros and they seized both the radio station and the police station and they announced we have seized Pando. They forgot to get to the radio- police radio in the back and one policeman called the national police headquarters and in they came. And there was a real gunfight at OK Corral sort of thing with a lot of killing, the first time that there had been a lot of killing and anything that the Tupamaros had done. But for me, the thing that was important was they showed the pictures and identified the dead and the captured of the Tupamaros and their names were there but the ages were all in the 20s and what had happened is the older, wiser heads had been caught and were in jail and it was the younger, probably wilder, bunch that was running things.

When this happened, again, it was like the other things they had done, we all roared with laughter, what an imaginative sort of a thing, and it wasn't until later it started to dawn on us what this had really meant. The Tupamaros started to do more and more dangerous things. There were several kidnappings before the American kidnappings; there were some assassination attempts but the kidnapping of Mitrione and Claude Fly of course in the United States set a real standard and it was very sad. Fly was released after several weeks and I don't know how Claude Fly is. At one time I know that- this was an older USAID agricultural expert and my understanding was he was never well after he recovered.

Dan Mitrione was an Indiana police chief. USAID was then running a police training, and they did it all over Latin America and really the world. That's what he was there for. I, to this day, do not believe he had anything to do with Central Intelligence or anything like that. Of course, what happened publicly over the years was Costa-Gavras made a brilliant

movie called “State of Siege,” which publicized this and built up the whole myth that Mitriane was the head of the torturing and the head of all of the horrible things that went on that actually happened much later in the Uruguayan security forces. And the film is a brilliant film; it is wonderful art.

Q: What’s it called?

GILLESPIE: “State of Siege.” Costa-Gavras earlier had made a film named “Z.”

Q: “Z,” that was-

GILLESPIE: Well, that’s one. “State of Siege” was the second. And it is a brilliant film. Costa-Gavras’ working partner on these was a man named Jorge Semprún, a Spaniard who had been a communist who was a novelist, a writer, lived in exile many, many years, and he was the screenwriter on this. Semprún was later Under- Minister of Culture in Spain under Felipe Gonzalez when I was there as Public Affairs Officer and we became friends, not close but friends. Semprún had become a socialist and was a very strong supporter of NATO and of other things among the socialist party, which did not leave him always in good stead. He and I were at a major museum together for the grand opening of an exhibit from the Guggenheim that was a major event and we were standing- it was the night that the U.S. first attacks in the Gulf War, in the first Gulf War, started.

Q: This is in the 19-

GILLESPIE: In 1991..

Q: Nineties, yes.

GILLESPIE: And we were standing together and he said we’ll never forget this. Of course, he had supported Spain’s efforts to help in that. And I said no, I guess we’ll never forget this. And we got talking and we were laughing and we were greeting guests, I think we were waiting for senior officials to come still, and we chatted and I said I hope you will forgive me but we have become good enough friends that I hope I can say this. I said you know, I have admired your work, your novels, I said the one that I have read, the great work with Costa-Gavras, and he said oh thank you. I said I must tell you one thing, however, and he said what is that? I said I served in Uruguay with Dan Mitriane. He said oh. And I said I admire “State of Siege,” it is a great work of art. I said but it’s not good history. And he said ah. He didn’t say thank you in return; he gave me a little smile, he said, we’re still friends.

Q: Tell me about your, was it during your watch, the USIS librarian.

GILLESPIE: Oh that’s much later.

Q: Yes, but what-

GILLESPIE: Okay. Well this happened, this goes on- The government continued to be very successful and picked up a lot of Tupamaros and the Tupamaros were all put in the main jail, which was a great big imposing thick walled place, really about in the center of Montevideo. I was gone but the Tupamaros, of course they didn't separate them; this was Uruguay, we're still a democratic, you know, they're prisoners, they're in there, getting out, but of course they got together and they would talk at times and they would see- and evidently they went to work, and over a period of about six months they tunneled. They tunneled under the wall, under the street, all the way across under the street up into the home across the street; that home, of course, had been conveniently rented or bought, I don't know which, by someone who supported the Tupamaros at least. A hole had been put in the house directly behind that house. The Tupamaros went down; they went two or three at a time up in and went into the second house where the house was full of clothes. They changed out of their prison uniforms and walked out onto the street; over two days 150 or more Tupamaros, the leadership, the top, including, I believe, the current president escaped. The second house belonged to one of the assistant librarians with the USIS library. This happened, I will have to check, but this happened about 1974, '75. It was, you know, of course the librarian ended up back in prison, too.

Q: Well, I'm just looking at the time; this is probably a good place to stop.

GILLESPIE: Okay. There are- because there are, yes, there will be a number of other things. I mean, the Tupamaros set the standard while I'm there but at the same time what also is set, I think, is the whole standard for the recovery after the military gives up.

Q: Okay. So what we want to do is pick it up not so much beyond your time but where things stood at your time.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: And then where did you go afterwards?

GILLESPIE: Okay, I go back to Washington afterwards, but we do have- I mean, because basically I still have about a year and a half of things.

Q: Okay, so we'll pick it up then. Great.

Today is the 15th of March, the Ides of March, 2010, with Jake Gillespie. And Jake - you have done your homework.

GILLESPIE: I've done a little bit. You asked me last time, I believe, just what did all the cultural presentations mean, or something to that effect.

Q: We were talking about in Uruguay-

GILLESPIE: In Uruguay with all of this going on. Well, I went back through our letters home to my mother and certainly my thoughts at the time. The things that we were doing were almost the only way to make contact on a continuing basis with the intelligentsia in the country. And the intelligentsia in a country like Uruguay was rather interesting and rather broad; this was a very middle class country, you remember, and it was artists on one side to scholars on the other side, writers; Jorge Onetti, a very fine novelist who was the head of the national library. And then that next level which of course was all of the younger students, and students in Uruguay would go to 35 or 40 years old because they could stay, basically, on the government ride if they were doing that. However, I looked back at things we did and things I was involved with and they were a remarkable spread of things.

The other thing was very important, of course, and hanging over all of this was the Alliance for Progress, which was the Kennedy/Johnson overall plan for relationships with Latin America. And we had exhibits, we had speakers. When the public affairs officer left to take another assignment in Spain he said at the staff meeting I am so tired of the Alliance for Progress; I am delighted to take the Deputy PAO in Spain and leave here for that reason because it was a constant drumbeat. However, we did other things.

I spoke last time about the I.M. Pei visits and master class but they stretched from things like the University of Houston basketball team, which I was given in my first- second week there to take care of when they came through town, which as a former basketball player I loved. And I was surprised that this, again, attracted the student community.

We put on an enormous, a really big exhibit with the Department of Labor, a Labor USA exhibit. It ran for a month in the largest- in the midtown exhibit area, which was the largest in town. It drew almost a quarter of a million people over the month. Meanwhile, we're surrounded on the streets outside by constant demonstrations, some about the labor- most of them not at all about the collapsing economy and anti-government. The exhibit facility was downstairs underground, and we had three different Molotov cocktails tossed into the entryways and a very alert FSN on one hand saw it and managed to toss it out. Police officers covered one of the others and one went off but it didn't do much. Just before the exhibit started we had a major crisis. One of the AFL-CIO representatives who had come down to be part of the exhibit discovered that some of the clothes in the fashion show, which was a major part of the exhibit, didn't have union labels and they threatened to close the whole exhibit down two days before it was supposed to happen. We very quickly got some replacement clothes sent down, took out the non-union ones and spent a long time appeasing the two labor union activists. But it was an interesting experiment in something that had worked in other countries, but in fact I don't think did much in terms of labor relations. The labor unions were far left, controlled by the communist party and I don't think that the AFL-CIO affiliates ever made great headway there.

I forgot to mention yesterday that the Chargé d'Affaires following the death of Ambassador Henry Hoyt was John Topping, a wonderful man, DCM, who was chargé for an extended period, seven or eight months until Ambassador Robert Sayre came. Topping

was graceful, kind, intelligent; all that we needed and managed to keep the embassy together.

The cultural presentations ranged from the LaSalle Quartet, a string quartet that did extremely modern music, pianist Ann Schein, who still performs in the United States, the Swingle Singers, pianist Malcolm Frager, a major U.S. art exhibit on the new figure that ran for about two months and required a major construction for the installation, and unfortunately in the middle suffered vandalism on two major works, one by Philip Pearlstein and the other by Lester Johnson.

Q: What was this?

GILLESPIE: The vandalism? The person was arrested and appeared to just be mentally disturbed, as most vandalism in art exhibits is. And it's- the subject, the new figure, was very interesting. It was contemporary works of art that drew figures - arguably figures in all the ways. They went from the almost completely abstract to things like Pearlstein, which are very realistic but take unusual angles and perspectives on the figures. Pearlstein's art were all large nudes and when I first saw what had happened I thought this is what had provoked it but it wasn't. Lester Johnson was one of those very close to abstract. The curator had come and worked with us for a long time, got the show opened and had returned to the States but quickly got on a plane, along with conservators and others. The big paintings were taken out of the show immediately and shipped back. And I understand both were well restored but as the person who- for USIS - who was in charge- and responsible for this I had several sleepless nights, of course.

Malcolm Frager, an American pianist came, and through Malcolm I got to know Jose Batlle y Ordóñez. Jose Batlle y Ordóñez was a concert pianist. His great-grandfather had been the founder of Uruguayan social democracy at the turn of the century and after Jose Artigas I think the greatest of the Uruguayan figures in history. He was a fascinating man who had studied in Europe and was fascinated with Switzerland as an idea for the economy - which of course made some sense except the Swiss did it with banks and money and Uruguay was trying to do it with cattle and sheep and there is a difference. Jose's father was a president of Uruguay when Eisenhower was president of the United States and he made the first state visit to the Eisenhower Administration. Jose was young; he's approximately my age and so he was still a young man and the State Department called him in while they were in Washington and said we can arrange for you to go to Juilliard. Well Jose, who was already something of an accomplished said you know, I really don't want to do that but I would like to spend the summer in Marlboro with Rudolph Serkin. And they arranged this and it followed that he was there every year and taught there and is- I think still does; he was there five years ago when I last saw him.

Q: Marlboro is where?

GILLESPIE: Marlboro is in Vermont. It is a summer music camp and festival with students who are extremely advanced, some of whom already- performing, who are professionals and performing, they spent time- Jose became a student of Serkin's and

very close with Peter Serkin, the son of Rudolph who still performs and is a major American pianist, and of a young guy named Malcolm Frager.

I learned a lot about Uruguay in this one evening when Malcolm Frager gave his recital. We had arranged for Frager to come. Frager gave a recital and Jose had a dinner afterwards in honor. The night before I had gone to a soccer game with the lowest employee at USIS, the lowest paid, and afterwards we went to his home and my family showed up and we all ate spaghetti. This night I went to Jose Batlle y Ordóñez's house-home out near the farm where they lived. It was black tie; the recital had been delightful. We sat- there were 18 around the table, including Batlle's mother and a number of other leading figures, of course. I have since thought that this sums up Uruguay, what a democracy it was that I could one night go from the lowest paid USIS staffer, who spent half of his time on the char force but was a great soccer fan and a wonderful guy, and the next night go right up to the upper parts of society. Battle's brother was the leader of one section of the Colorado Party and since the military gave up has been President twice of Uruguay. And this was the way that we frequently got into things there.

But the high point of my whole stay there was a three-day visit that we arranged over a long period by the Duke Ellington Orchestra. The impresario, who we had worked with on a number of things, an Argentine, came in to see us about three or four months before and he said that we were talking about visits of chamber music groups and could we help with this and could we help with that, which we frequently did. And he said how would you like to co-sponsor a concert by the Duke Ellington Orchestra? And I went absolutely crazy. I said I'd love to. I said we couldn't afford it in a million years. And he said well, here is the problem I have and Ellington has. He will be in South America; he has an open date between Argentina and Brazil. He starts in Argentina and he's working his way north and there are three open days. Consequently, if you can cover the hotel costs for the orchestra and we can arrange with the impresario at the leading theater in town, I think I can get him to you for that cost. He said I'll talk to his manager; I think you probably could get a press conference, I'm sure you could get that, and you might- and a reception and some other things.

Well consequently we got two short visits, because Ellington stopped on his way to Buenos Aires because the plane did and we went out to the airport and got publicity pictures and things like this and then we had a three-day visit that included a press conference on the first day where Ellington just talked. I mean, he was one of the most gracious and charming people I have ever met. I was struck by this. We had a concert that was terrific. I thought there were going to be real problems because the tickets were expensive. They gave us 100 tickets and I had requests for 200 or 300, but I gave them to the Ambassador and the PAO and they distributed them. And then the Ambassador hosted a reception after the concert.

This had started at a country team meeting, a staff meeting that Ambassador Sayre had and we sat at the table and the PAO, when it became his time, said well the Duke Ellington is coming to town and, you know, someone- and the Ambassador said to him well should I do something? Should I throw something? And my boss poked me and I

said yes sir; I said you should have a big reception and probably invite the President. Consequently we had Ambassador Sayre, the President and his wife in the Presidential box at the theater. At the reception, people just kept coming into the Sayre's house and this was difficult because this was the first big event that they had done. I said I'm going to get killed as I saw people coming and others trying to keep people out. There were people, there were musicians coming in who had heard about this after the concert and had their instruments under their arms, which I said they have to check, they couldn't bring them in.

Ellington solved it all. He came a little late. My wife and I had to pull him out of his dressing room where he would have sat forever signing the autographs for every person who came in and was doing it. We said no, you've got to- we've got to go. We went in; he was very charming with Ambassador Sayre and his wife and the President and his wife and talked to them for a good while. But you could see it was- most of the orchestra came and if you were a jazz fan, as I was, as I'd been growing up and I definitely was, and here you had the Duke Ellington Orchestra and Duke Ellington, and he leaned over to Mrs. Sayre and he said I see you have a piano. Would it offend you if I played? She said oh, of course not. And he played. For some of us, I think for most of us, what more could you ask? Duke Ellington playing the piano at your, you know, at your cocktail party, at your reception. But he went on and he played for an hour and a half. Because he arrived- the concert was at 7:00 and I managed to get him to the Sayres' about 10:15 and I think about 11:00 he started to play.

And so the DCM John Topping came over to me and said how do you think we can get him to stop? And I said oof, and I went to Mercer Ellington, Duke's son, who was in the orchestra, and he was standing there talking. Mercer was talking with one or two other members of the band and some other people and I leaned into him and I said he's going to wear himself out. Shouldn't we get him to stop? You know, people will keep asking him to play forever. And he, Mercer looked at me and he said nobody tells my father when to quit playing the piano. Whereupon, you know, I passed that word back to Topping and I tried to get over to the Ambassador and Mrs. Sayre very graciously worked her way to the piano through, who knows, crowds of all sorts of people, and leaned over and said Mr. Ellington, this has been wonderful but you have a very tough day tomorrow. And so Ellington, seeing that, this was the lady of the house, rose, took her arm and walked back to say good evening to the Ambassador and to the other dignitaries that were still there; the President had left. And we worked our way with him and got him into the car and got him out of there.

Well, the party broke up about 1:30 or 2:00, which of course was not terribly late by some standards but I think for the Sayres very late and I'm sure it destroyed the representation budget for the rest of the year. The next morning, I thought I'm going to really get in a lot of trouble. I took Ellington to the airport. When I did I was told Ellington had set up that evening in the hotel- he had had a piano moved into his room with a number of other people until about 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning, still playing I took him to the airport. He had taken a great shine to my wife Susan. Ellington loved women.

He was gracious; it was not that he caroused although I think he did carouse but he just loved- he liked young, pretty women.

Q: Well yes.

GILLESPIE: And so he took Susan and had Susan walk him out to the tarmac, out to the plane and he turned to me and shook my hand, then he turned to Susan and he talked to her for a bit and kissed her hand and said good-bye and mounted the plane and they flew off to Sao Paulo.

I was, you know, waiting for the storm when I went back. Well nobody said too much except the PAO and the CAO said that probably went on far too long, and there were too many people and people are going to complain. And nobody complained very much.

Two weeks later when Ellington was home it was his- what is this, 1968- it was his sixtieth birthday party. That would be right. Sixty-eight; yes, probably his sixtieth birthday party, and the party was held in the White House and he was guest of Richard Nixon. Well- It was '69 obviously because Richard Nixon was there. But anyway, he saved me because his picture was on the cover of "Time" magazine, there was a spread in the middle of "Time" magazine and so I think- and no one was going to complain that- Ambassador just said to me once, did you see "Time" magazine? I said yes sir. And he said we did it first.

But you know, Stu, I have thought of my career as I've gone through things and thought back on it, frequently as Zelig. If you will remember the Woody Allen movie, Zelig shows up- and he's in everything, from the Russian Revolution to- the Kennedy administration. Well I've often thought...

Q: He's always a figure off on the sidelines but somebody who was involved in major events.

GILLESPIE: Always. Well mine weren't major events although they were in some ways; they were major events in minor countries perhaps would be a better way to put it. But it was fascinating people who passed through, wonderful people. I mean, this was one who was. People have asked me later what was your biggest thrill? You did almost 40 years in the Foreign Service, you know kings and queens. And I say, I spent three days with Duke Ellington, and I said you know, I think I wouldn't trade those for all the rest and it is- it really is.

I saw him once afterwards in New York. He was playing at one of the clubs, and this was really toward the end of his life, and I went up to him after the set and I reintroduced myself. He was, of course, extremely gracious to us both. I'm sure I was one of millions but those three days were very special.

Other things went on. We were under great pressure because of the Vietnam War. We had a visit from a man named Douglas Pike.

Q: Yes, who was very much involved- Wrote a book called-

GILLESPIE: "The Vietcong."

Q: "Vietcong."

GILLESPIE: He was probably America's leading expert on the Vietcong.

Q: He established a center, I think in Texas somewhere, of documents, both sides of the Vietnamese war.

GILLESPIE: Doug was-

Q: A USIA man.

GILLESPIE: A USIA officer who was in Vietnam throughout a great deal of the early years. He was and he had always been a scholar of Southeast Asia. He spoke Vietnamese, spoke it well, and it was time for him to be transferred. Oh, past time. He had done two consecutive tours in Vietnam and Doug wanted out. Things weren't necessarily nice. And he was about to be transferred to Hong Kong. I think maybe he was. And the assignment had been made and as the story goes, Hubert Humphrey made a trip to Europe and Vice President Humphrey took a real beating everywhere on Vietnam. He tried to speak in several places and of course they were disasters, frankly; demonstrations and arguments.

He came back to the States and as I understand it, there was a meeting at the White House with Humphrey, the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and Leonard Marks, who was the Director of USIA and of course a very close friend of Johnson's. He had been Mrs. Johnson's lawyer for a long time. But Hubert was saying this- how bad it was and he said we have to get someone out who can talk to these people, explain what it is that we're facing in Vietnam; no one really understands. And someone else in the meeting, it might have been McGeorge Bundy, said there was a brilliant young man in Vietnam who has done all this work on the Vietcong and Marks said yes, Doug Pike. And he regretted probably later that he ever opened his mouth. Pike I know did because Johnson- somebody said where is he now? And Marks said we've just reassigned him to Hong Kong, whereupon Lyndon turned and in his wonderful Johnsonesque way and said Leonard, you dumb son of a bitch, get him back here and get him out on the road. And, Pike told me the story when he got off the plane in Montevideo. I picked him up and he said you don't want me here at all, do you? You have no idea why I'm here or what I can do. And he said don't worry; I feel the same way. Doug spoke no Spanish but he tried to get even our intellectual audiences, who were strongly anti-U.S. policy in Vietnam, of course, to start to think about the details of how the Vietcong works. We had a dinner with one nice round table and a reasonable discussion and he said don't worry about me. He had another day there and he said I'd like to wander around town which he did.

The Uruguayans were demonstrating; when there weren't large union demonstrations about the economy or strikes we had other major problems. The riots got worse and worse and they were always peaceful. I mean, they were broken up but there was no major violence. And then in one riot in 1969 a 28 year old student agitator was killed, shot by the police. He was shot reportedly by a rookie cop. Why the rookie cop ever fired 16 shots no one knows. This caused everything to shut down. The university shut down entirely. Four days later 30,000 people marched four miles to the cemetery for the funeral. And this probably led to the real kick up with the Tupamaros. The kidnappings started in July that year. The first person kidnapped was the president of the electric company and he was held for about two months and from there on the Tupamaros were what we watched most of all.

Q: Jake, a question I have, a quick one; the origin of the word "Tupamaros"?

GILLESPIE: Ah. Well it's very strange because Tupamarac [Ed note: Túpac Amaru] was a Peruvian Indian leader who led a revolution against the Spanish shortly after the conquest.

Q: Ah yes. Now I remember. Yes.

GILLESPIE: So it was- why on earth this Uruguayan middle class group decided to select the name "Tupamaros" I have never been able to figure out. I probably- if I had a chance I would like to ask the current President, who was at one time the head of the Tupamaros. But it's very strange. Why that- And people always were confused when you said "Tupamaros" because those who knew Latin America would frequently think that it was a Peruvian.

Q: Sort of like the Shining Path or something.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. No real reason. Mentioning the current President makes me think one other thing I should mention I did that was fun during the last year I was there but it didn't really I didn't know of the impact for 25 or 30 years, and of course that was the International Visitors Program. We had a major cutback, Stu, in staff, both in budget and staff and we lost one officer in the Cultural Section so I picked up the management of the International Visitor Program. Some wonderful people were selected and went. However two that had stood out were Luis Lacalle and Jose Sanguinetti, who were both Presidents who succeeded each other. First Sanguinetti in 1985 to 1990, then Lacalle 1990 to 1995, then Sanguinetti again from 1995-2000. As with so many who went to the U.S. on the International Visitors Programs throughout the history of USIA, they were really good.

I left Uruguay somewhat sad about leaving but it was time.

Q: You left in-?

GILLESPIE: I left at the very end of '69, went home, had home leave and reported to work in Washington end of February, 1970. For the two of us the U.S. experience, which

we had then about five years or six years was interesting. We were still relatively young, in our late 20s, early 30s. We had missed the 60s. The United States had changed a great deal, a lot had happened. It affected us but long distance. The riots in '68, starting with the Chicago riots and then the post King riots, assassination riots.

Q: The burning of Washington.

GILLESPIE: That's right, the burning of Washington affected us secondhand, really, and it was interesting; in Uruguay 1968 was more marked by what went on in Paris, which of course was very important.

Q: This is May-June of- days of 1968-

GILLESPIE: Days of Rage. Days of Rage are Chicago,

Q: Whatever that-

GILLESPIE: Yes. It basically caused Pompidou his job once and then- And of course the other one that did have an impact that was interesting because it was Czechoslovakia.

Q: That was August of '68.

GILLESPIE: That's right. And what happened was the Uruguayans didn't take a great deal of interest and there was no reason to pay much attention but of course when the Soviets went in it really setback the Uruguayan communist party.

Q: Which it did around, I mean it was equivalent to the Molotov- Ribbentrop -

GILLESPIE: Yes, yes, or the Khrushchev speech.

Q: Denunciation of Stalin.

GILLESPIE: Stalin, yes.

Q: This really shook an awful lot of rather devout communists outside the Soviet Union.

GILLESPIE: And the Uruguayan party had always been very Stalinist and very Muscovite. Now, they weren't important politically. Oh, I shouldn't say that. Because of the unions they always had an importance but they never had a parliamentary importance and this really set them back and set the unions back a great deal. And actually is probably one of the things that gave the Tupamaros a boost, because there was no other left that was terribly attractive to anyone other than the Tupamaros at that point.

But we went home to the States. There was a mid-career training program that went on at USIA where you were assigned to several different things over the time you were in Washington, one of which would be outside the agency. For many people it was a year at

graduate school, for others, other things. I went back and the person who ran it, Rob Nevitt, I think maybe the second or third time I met with him said you know, we have had an officer who went over and worked at WETA, the local public television station. Would you be interested? And I said yes, that sounds fascinating. I had this vague sense of discontent, as I think a lot of people did at that time in the Foreign Service and foreign affairs part of government. I wasn't anxious to revolt or leave but a chance to get out sounded interesting.

I met with the people at WETA; they offered me a chance to be, as far as USIA was concerned, an intern. As far as WETA was concerned the man I met said, "Look, you are a warm body and you're free and this station is virtually broke all the time. We've got a lot of things for you to do." And it turned out that way. After I spent about a month learning the ropes in the programming division I worked with Lincoln Furber, the head of public affairs programming then and we did a number of things and he showed me what he was doing and what he had done and he brought me into something very quickly because he had a bit of a conflict of interest with it. It was a program that still runs called "Washington Week in Review." It was an exciting for me but it was very simple. You had three journalists who were regular panelists and a fourth one who you brought in every week and a moderator and for one hour they discussed the week in Washington and the things that had gone on. The regular journalists were Charlie Corddry from the Baltimore Sun who covered the Department of Defense; Neil McNeil of Time magazine who covered Congress and Peter Lisagor, who covered the White House for the Chicago Daily News. Lisagor got more fan mail at that station than anyone at all with one exception, and that one exception was Julia Child, which is rather remarkable for a public affairs program.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: I mean, he would get 50 to 100 letters a week sometimes.

Q: Julia Childs being a famous cook who's also a foreign service spouse...

GILLESPIE: Who was related to USIA moreover, yes, and who came and did two programs, promotional things, at the station and who was a delightful person. And of course when I introduced myself and she found out what I was doing she said oh, good, you should look up my old friends, and gave me a name or two.

But, in any case, we did this. Linc had a conflict with this because the President of the station had decided that he would be the moderator and it was Max Kampelman, later Ambassador.

Q: Whom I've interviewed, by the way.

GILLESPIE: Yes. And a wonderful man.

Q: Very much a Washington insider.

GILLESPIE: At that, and also someone who liked to talk a lot and the complaint was always we've got to find a way to keep Max quiet. I mean, Max was not the star and when Max was not available Linc Furber was the moderator and from his point of view- and the station manager and others- it was a better program although you know I could argue the other way because I always thought Max was a fascinating person but he was politically always very tied to the Democrats and that added a certain political tone to the program and the station at a time when public broadcasting was still quite controversial in Congress and this is what scared the station manager more than anything else. Public broadcasting, PBS, was just starting. Fred Friendly, the former President of CBS News- who was at the Ford Foundation, had had a great hand at this. Friendly was the former producer of CBS of documentaries who worked very closely with Murrow. But in fact broadcasting generally and probably news reporting generally, was taking a very serious look at a lot of very difficult questions and a lot of people in Congress weren't happy about it. There was a documentary that wasn't done at WETA but as Linc Furber always said yes, but what's the name of the station that the members of Congress see it on? And that's where they go first; they come to us. And so there were great discussions about should we do this, should we do that. One person in management said look, we can't run "Sesame Street" and "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" all day long and all evening long. They're great programs but...

Q: These are children oriented-

GILLESPIE: Children, children's programs, both of which were new, relatively new at this time, and in fact all of the television people, the technical people, the lighting people, watched "Sesame Street" and of course we loved it We all thought it was really remarkable and it was- and it is still. It was then really remarkable television. They watched it for technical reasons. Look how they're doing that and see they can do this. And it was interesting television.

By the summer- I ended up being producer of "Washington Week in Review" for about seven or eight months; my broadcasting claim to fame. All the producer had to do, very frankly, was make sure that the three regulars were going to be there and that they had decided which subject they were going to focus on and pick a fourth journalist in a different field to come on. And there was a whole stable of other journalists and so that meant that you spent the day before on the telephone lining somebody up.

Q: Was there any effort at that time, I mean this in a way was very- to get, particularly African American or women-

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: -people on as the third- as the fourth party? Because this is fairly new.

GILLESPIE: It is and there was- it was- and we looked- Women we found now and again. We had Mary McGrory once or twice, I remember. This was always a problem

because Peter Lisagor was the star and he and McNeil were very funny men; Corddry was a dry, serious, and of course Mary, who was a delight, would come on. This always got under Peter Lisagor's skin because in many ways she was more amusing even than he was and to a certain extent covered the same beat. But they were hard to come by. Who were the African-Americans? I'm trying to think. There was one African American who was on this- but he was hard to get and they were hard to bring on. However, another public broadcasting effort at that time was to try to create a new kind of news program and this had started in San Francisco, where there was a newspaper strike that went on for a very long time, more than a year I think, and the television station set up what they called "Newsroom." And this brought in journalists with an editor and a desk and they talked about the day's news and what they had covered and what was going on. And it was extremely successful in San Francisco.

I might point out this project developed and went on, although it had one very successful ending. I always wondered about the failures out of it, Stu, because San Francisco always had lousy newspapers.

Q: I was going to say-

GILLESPIE: Ever since Hearst died there hadn't been a decent newspaper.

Q: I was going to say, you know, I mean, there's no particular loss.

GILLESPIE: Exactly. Washington was not in that case.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Washington had two great newspapers and one good one there and everybody- and all the other major papers came in. So it wasn't the same thing. However, they started one in Dallas, they started one in Pittsburgh and they both did moderately well so they decided to start one in Washington. And I sat in with the man who was selected to be the editor and I'm ashamed to say I've forgotten his name. I remember that he lasted about four months and his successor was Ben Gilbert, who was a longtime Washington newspaper editor. But as the program was being set up there was a real effort to get women reporters and young reporters. We were getting people- we had applications from all over the country and they were people who were different. Some very good, very bright people but there were only one or two of them had I ever heard of before and they did get two women regularly, one- and two African Americans; one of the women was African American and they did a pretty- they were good. The program never really got going well. It's difficult to do. However, and this was a Fred Friendly project, underwritten by Ford Foundation, and it withered and died after I had left the station.

But one thing remains from the whole PBS project which of course has been extremely successful and this is the PBS NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. McNeil and Lehrer came out of these programs and developed something that has stayed on with some success.

Q: Yes. Well, I mean, on the newspaper thing, of course Washington, unlike almost anywhere else, everybody sits at- you know, the whole working apparatus in Washington reads "The New York Times" and "The Washington Post" each morning and that almost sets the agenda, including the State Department.

GILLESPIE: You can start a newspaper here and if you make it moderately serious and at a certain time take political positions- If you come in about 1981 and decide to make a newspaper that's going to be very conservative, even though it never has much circulation at all it must be read by everybody in the State Department, the White House, Defense Department, and I'll give the example, there is "The Washington Times."

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: "The Washington Times" hired some pretty good journalists.

Q: Actually there is some pretty good stuff in it.

GILLESPIE: Absolutely. "The Washington Times" of course now is withering and about to die because they never had any circulation at all. And the Reverend Moon, I think has decided that, you know, he's put in enough millions, which he did. However, that's another subject.

Q: We're way off.

GILLESPIE: Yes, we're way off.

I spent a full year at WETA. I had great fun. I learned a lot; I learned a lot about Washington, about people. We did little programs in Washington. We went out to parts of the city, to neighborhoods and took out sort of a homemade mobile unit because the station had no mobile unit, it couldn't afford one, but we could rent a truck and put some stuff in it and go out and do things, go back and make a half-hour program about various neighborhoods in Washington, which was very interesting. We covered some things; we covered city council hearings that were controversial, all of the hearings on transportation, which was a major issue at that time. It had been the Three Sisters Bridge, which was never built. Ninety-five coming down through the city and that was very controversial. We covered all of that. We covered every head of government or head of state who spoke at the National Press Club. And if you will remember, in those days everyone who came to town gave a luncheon speech at the National Press Club. And these were extremely important and fascinating for me because we had people like Willy Brandt speaking.

Q: Did you ever get any complaints or direct attempts at direction from headquarters?

GILLESPIE: USIA?

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Oh, USIA sometimes forgot I was there.

Q: Well I'm sure they did.

GILLESPIE: But no one ever- No, not at all. I mean, the only one that I had was as the year was drawing to an end Rob Nevitt called and said I think you should come- start making plans about coming back. So I stayed for about 14 months. I went back to USIA somewhat jobless.

Q: Just one second. Alright.

GILLESPIE: It turned out, after some talking and looking around, my next assignment was in the training division itself. It ended up being as the chief of the workshop section, which was a new thing that personnel and training were trying. The head of the training section was Stan Moss, who was an acquaintance; he was someone I had met several times through a former PAO. Stan had been a filmmaker and the problem they had was there was a feeling that the training division was out of step. The major things that they did, language training, university training, were very good but the rest, the specialized training was not keeping up with the times. People didn't take courses, they weren't interested. And so he wanted to have something created that was really lively and drew people in and was helpful.

He brought over a man named Bernie Udell. Bernie was another filmmaker, came from the motion picture and television section of USIA, had done some wonderful work and it was well known. Stan pulled him back as he was about to leave the agency and Stan said try this; it will be a lot of fun and I'll give you free reign. And Bernie and one other Foreign Service officer named Dion Anderson managed to talk everyone into giving them the largest conference room at USIA, room 1100 on the top floor of 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue and that whole hall. And they brought in a designer who covered everything with super graphics of various things. They stripped the conference room and turned it into a small multimedia room, really one of the first that USIA had. So you could do anything with it. The lighting was there, there was a lot of audio equipment and they started some seminars that they did. Two were quite successful and were continued for a long time. One was called something America. I don't remember exactly what the title of that one. But it was really a one week seminar on reintegration- coming back- for people returning from overseas, many for the first time but others who had been away for awhile, as I had, and we brought in all of the people you'd never heard about before. There were black leaders of various types, there were student leaders, and there were some very interesting social scientists who took part in it. They had evening programs where they put Foreign Service officers into police cars and sent them out with the DC police.

Q: Yes. Sounds like the Senior Seminar.

GILLESPIE: Very much but it was one week, so it didn't go that far. Because the Senior Seminar was starting to do this then and just afterwards, yes. We talked to community leaders. When I first took over the job I started to look at a list; I said well who have you had? I looked at a list of, you know, the programs for the last two or three times and one of the regulars was a high school basketball teammate of mine who was a lawyer, African American lawyer in Washington who ran an interesting community program.

In any case, two things happened, or maybe three. They made big plans; they had a grand opening of the room where they got all of the senior people at USIA and some from State who came over and saw what we had done and what we were doing. I had been there all of two weeks when they did this. And the next thing was they had been invited by the Public Affairs Officer in Tokyo and the head of the Eastern European branch of USIA to run major week-long training seminars in media and other things in Tokyo and in Vienna for the Eastern Europeans. And they had had all sorts of things added on to that.

Well I was back and I had said I'll help you get through this opening and I'll cover for you when you guys go off to do these things, whereupon Bernie Udell died suddenly, which was very sad. He was a wonderful guy; I enjoyed him. We had worked together only two or three months but he was great fun. And Dion Anderson had managed to talk himself into a university year studying. He left and suddenly Stan Moss came back and said well you're in charge. I sat back at this point, Stu, and I looked at the staff that I had which was sort of a collection of the dirty dozen.

Q: A movie in which they-

GILLESPIE: Put together a military actually out of- who had done something wrong, who were on the edge-

Q: Were all taken out of a military prison.

GILLESPIE: That's right.

Q: Sent to go out and do-

GILLESPIE: That's right. Some had been really bad-

Q:-nasty stuff.

GILLESPIE: Really bad. Well, this was people who had been almost, almost who had gotten into big trouble. There was a wonderful Foreign Service officer who has become a good friend who had gotten in trouble in Palestine or- no, had gotten in trouble in Jerusalem for a number of things, most of which had nothing to do with work. And so Richard was a black sheep there. There was a daughter of a congressman that no one quite knew what to do with. There was a filmmaker, again a very good one, who everyone knew had a drinking problem but who had gone on the wagon several times and sometimes for extended periods but he had a major problem when he was assigned to

Kinshasa because he got in a fight in every bar he went into. And he was back there. I had a brand new technical guy, a fresh face who had never been in trouble, who came out of Minnesota and kind of was frequently slack jawed around the office as he watched this other bunch. And there were other odds and ends. Somehow we got it together because they all were talented. The congressman's daughter was really knowledgeable and expert in American art and she had put together the other great seminar that we ran for years, which was called "Art in America." A lot was happening and this was extremely popular, ran four or five, no, more than that, maybe six times a year and was always full and brought in some wonderful people from all over the country who- which was great fun and we got it going and did wonderful things with that. A young woman who had stepped on a number of toes because she was quite outspoken, which was fine but in your first overseas assignment it's not really always the wisest thing to do that but she had a lot of very good ideas and they put very good things together. And I sat down with them; I said well here's what we've got to do. We put together a round the world trip where we were going to go to Japan, spend three weeks, put on this seminar; we hired two contractors who turned out to be wonderful guys and great at doing this. We were also charged with putting together a big multi screen slideshow for training and personnel so they could show what posts do. These two guys were the photographers for that and could do a number of other things.

What else? We picked up all sorts of equipment that we had bought in Japan, all of the latest video equipment so we had recording stuff that no one else did at that time. We brought all that back. We brought it from Japan, of course via New Delhi which you had to do.

Q: Because they had surplus money left over from the excess currency.

GILLESPIE: That's right and you could fly- that's how the government flew around the world.

We sent off a team from this group that I regret very much I was not part of, that went to Afghanistan to cover the post up there. We went to Vienna, where we ran the seminar. A small group of us went back to Addis Ababa to cover the last post and after about ten weeks, I arrived home. I had no idea how we had done but I think we'd done pretty well and it was well thought out. I walked into the office and Stan Moss said they want you to do it in Cologne for the German staff and I said not right away. But in any case we continued.

I did this job for about two years, maybe two and a half. And I enjoyed it very much. I think we did it well. Looking back on it we did some things that I would not have done; we didn't do some things I wish we had. Occasionally my team of black sheep got a little bit out of hand. Ed Hunter called me; he had taken some leave to go to California where he was from and visiting with his wife who had worked at Rand. Ed called me and he said I'm coming in tomorrow; you'd better find a place to hide me. And I said oh my God; I said who did you hit? He said, "No, I didn't hit anybody but it will be in the papers tomorrow morning.

I was arrested in Los Angeles.” He said he was arrested with Tony Russo as they were on our way to pick up Dan Ellsberg at the airport. Russo was the person who had helped Ellsberg copy all of the Pentagon Papers. And so I hid him. We got him back and Stan Moss came in as it was in the papers the next day. Stan said my instructions were not to let him into public sight, certainly not in the sight of Frank Shakespeare, Henry Loomis or Stan- or Wyle Mosley, who were the three bosses.

The next big crisis was on the day of the march on the Pentagon when the Norman Mailer-led group wanted to shut down Washington and we were in the middle of our return to America seminar and Cathy Kline, who was the imaginative staffer who did so well on this, had arranged for Nicholas Von Hoffman to come to speak.

Q: He was a critic of-

GILLESPIE: He was a critic; he was a columnist at that time in “The Post” with a very, very left wing column. And it was suggested when the bosses saw the schedule that we should perhaps disinvite him. I understood it caused a great crisis and Cathy said I can’t disinvite Von Hoffman. And so I said well, you know, we’ve got to do it. And it was arduous. No, we can’t do it, she said, I’ll quit. I said well, okay. You won’t do it, I will do it, and I called “The Post” and I got Von Hoffman and we talked and I said you know, we’re going to have to postpone your appearance. He said he understood. He said I’m not going to come in anyway. He said it’s going to be crazy. He said you shouldn’t even be open. I said well, the government will remain open, I guarantee you. But I said I hope you will come back some other time, and we did have him about six months later. He was fascinating; a little kooky in some ways but fascinating.

Q: I’d like to stop at this point because this is about the right time.

GILLESPIE: And I am going to leave this job. Again, I could play Zelig and list all the interesting people who came through but we won’t.

Q: Okay. And so where do we pick it up?

GILLESPIE: I go to Dutch language training.

Q: Okay, fine, we’ll do that.

GILLESPIE: Great.

Q: Today is the 16th of April, 2010, with Jake Gillespie, and Jake, where did we leave off?

GILLESPIE: We left off probably, if we were to put a date on it, at about 1975, and I have pretty much completed my Washington assignment.

In the summer of '75 I was assigned to the Netherlands as Information Officer. I studied Dutch for 16 weeks with tutors since there was no available FSI class at that time. So I had 16 weeks of one-on-one instruction in Dutch, which really was quite good, and I, in January 1976, I flew to the Netherlands and I spoke the language getting off the plane. Now, not as well as I did five and a half years later when I completed the assignment, which was very long.

As families are, and especially children at that time as they're in their, I guess, pre-teens, they certainly did not want to go. It was a very tough. We laugh about it because they hated the idea, and they were mad at me. It's the famous time that my son uses the words that my wife had thought so often, "I didn't join the Foreign Service, you did." However, if you were to ask the family they would all agree, everyone thought was the most wonderful five and a half years that they spent.

Q: How old were your kids?

GILLESPIE: My son was 13, my daughter was 10. In any case, we went to the Netherlands. Before I arrived everyone had asked why I wanted to go to The Hague, a sleepy little place that doesn't really matter? Well it turned out for a variety of reasons that it was a new center of Europe and especially of media interest, which made it interesting for me as the Information Officer and Press Attaché. I very quickly received an introduction to Dutch press and society. It was about two weeks after my boss had a very nice farewell and welcome reception for my predecessor and for me. "Vrij Nederland," was the top political-social-cultural weekly in the country and was extremely good and over the years I came to appreciate it very much. I didn't at the very beginning when they ran an enormous front page piece naming CIA names in the Netherlands. Philip Agee, scoundrel that he was, was living in The Netherlands at that time, down in Zeeland. Now, in fact, I was never able to confirm that Agee had provided names and I'm not sure that he did. If you will recall, at about the same time the East Germans published a book of-

Q: "Who's Who in the CIA."

GILLESPIE: Precisely.

Q: I was in it.

GILLESPIE: As was I. Well, I think I was in an appendix that someone published later.

Q: I was in the regular thing. You know, I picked it, say, I wonder whose name is- and there I am and it was because- I think they picked me up because I had been in INR, you know, a regular assignment.

GILLESPIE: Of course. Well mine was. I spoke six lines of Russian and in Burundi that's what I spoke once to the Soviet ambassador.

But, in any case, I did not show up in this list in the paper but of course it gave me an incredible opportunity to learn and meet a number of other journalists who I was quickly able to impress with the fact that I wasn't going to say anything except that off the record. This was scurrilous and did raise some serious problems for some very decent people, such as our General Services Officer who is still one of my best friends, who they just named. He was married to a German woman.

However, within the next two months my second cause for major introduction happened and that was that the Lockheed scandal broke. You may recall this was a case of bribery that Lockheed had done in a number of places around the world.

Q: Including Japan where it-

GILLESPIE: In Japan where it-

Q: -cost Tanaka-

GILLESPIE: That's right, it caused the fall of Tanaka. Well, in The Netherlands the principle contact for Lockheed for The Netherlands was Prince Bernhard. Prince Bernhard was the consort of Queen Juliana. Juliana was older at this time. In fact, just as I was leaving The Netherlands preparations were being made when Juliana had already announced her abdication in 1981. But Bernhard, in the late 1960s and mid '60s and late '60s, all the way into the early '70s, had been asked by the Dutch government to help them bring business to The Netherlands and he worked on it, in the course of which it appears he received a great deal of payment. There were some fascinating things that came out. For the first time the Dutch looked openly at their royalty and it caused a great deal of complications. You know, The Netherlands, as it was explained to me by a number of good Dutch friends, was really a republic that happened to have a queen and a royal family. Over the period following this, maybe in the next six months or so, I got to know a number of younger members of parliament, one of whom was quite outspoken. He was a Republican and he had no use for them at all. In fact, especially Labor members of the Labor Party did happen to be pure Republicans; it wasn't that strong a thing. We were having coffee in the parliament building with friend of mine, Tom Martin from the political section, and we were talking about this. Tom's a realist and I asked who he would vote for president here if you're going to have a republic? He said it's easy; I'd vote for Juliana.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: And this was- But Bernhard had the additional burden of being a German by birth. He had been something of a war hero; he had already married Juliana. He was in the Dutch air force and flew with the Brits and then actually came back and worked with some of the Dutch resistance groups and was a legitimate war hero and had earned, in spite of the problems from World War II, which were still very serious, he had earned acceptance.

However this other story started to break and very good journalists were looking at it seriously and they said where did the money go? He gets a lot of money, we pay him well. Well it turns out as it had been suspected, a great deal of it went to two women in Paris, one of whom had been Bernhard's mistress and the other was his daughter. And this set off a stream of other problems. Bernhard pulled back; he basically gave up everything. He even left his position as the honorary chairman of the World Wildlife Fund, which he had helped start. As someone said, my taxes go to that family and it's all very well and good but I pay Bernhard to sleep with my queen. Bernhard then basically moved out of the public eye for an extended period.

For me, this was a major thing. Lockheed was producing the F-16; the Dutch were going to be major partners in the European production of the F-16. They were going to buy a number of them. I was required to learn a great deal about the Justice Department, about the SEC (Security and Exchange Commission) and about the Senator Frank Church's Committee, which you may recall.

Q: This was when the Church was investigating this-

GILLESPIE: That's right. And it wasn't just Lockheed; it was a number of companies and it led to some new American law that basically has gotten stronger over the years prohibiting bribery in foreign countries.

Q: For awhile it was a real inhibitor.

GILLESPIE: Absolutely.

Q: I mean, other countries were playing the same rules.

GILLESPIE: And still-

Q: It's changing somewhat but-

GILLESPIE: Yes, but my own experience is that a number of them don't. The Europeans have become much better. The Japanese have become much better. There are other Asian countries that are not quite as good and certainly some of- in the post Cold War period I'm not sure that the Russians are. However, however, that was the first big thing.

The next thing that-

Q: Before that-

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: -a little sort of nuts and bolts. You were there from '76 to '81?

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: When you arrived who was the ambassador?

GILLESPIE: I was going to get into that.

Q: Okay, alright.

GILLESPIE: This is a good time. During that period I worked for three ambassadors, three very interesting people, different ways, two of whom became very close friends, personal friends of the Gillespies. The first- When I arrived Kingdon Gould was the ambassador. Kingdon Gould is a fascinating man who was a Washington developer and businessman whose family development firm still is a major firm in the Washington area and Kingdon had been a supporter of Richard Nixon and he was in his second tour as an ambassador. And he said, quite openly, I paid \$25,000 to help elect Nixon the first time and I went to Luxembourg. So I called up as we were approaching this second election and I said how much do I have to pay for a better place? And I paid \$100,000 and got The Netherlands. However, Gould was more than just someone who bought a seat. Kingdon Gould worked very hard at what he did. He came from the Gould family, although he was-

Q: Jay Gould.

GILLESPIE: Jay Gould. And he had spent a great deal of time in Europe. He spoke flawless French and had taught himself some Dutch, enough to make small talk, do an opening three lines in every speech and then say quickly I will not bore you anymore, and he had enough sense to do that and get out of it and speak English. He was an athlete. He played everything. He was still going back and he was a goalie on a veterans' field hockey team that played. He was a golfer. He rode his bicycle everywhere he could. He occasionally drove us crazy with doing things but in fact, as I look back on it I have great admiration for him. When he left that he came back to Washington and started the annual JFK field hockey tournament here in Washington that brought clubs, not college teams but clubs from all over the country and the world in some cases, and they used to play on the mall and he underwrote the whole thing.

When Ambassador Gould was replaced, the Dutch and the journalists, the people that I dealt with most often, thought it would be so nice if we could finally get a good career ambassador. They felt all they got were political appointees and they were tired of them because they didn't really know anything. In spite of the fact I think Gould did a pretty good job.

They were thrilled when in the late summer of 1976, Bob McCloskey was named to replace him. McCloskey of course had been for many years the State Department spokesman under Rusk, Rogers and he was very highly thought of. He had also been the principle negotiator of the Spanish- or re-negotiator of the Spanish bases treaty. We were all thrilled. I was somewhat nervous, although I recognized he was a wonderful person, all I could think of was I've got the man considered the best spokesman ever coming here

looking over my shoulder now. In fact, he was terrific. He never directly said anything to me that was not either a compliment or- about my work- or in an exchange with questions about what was happening that he was interested in.. Any criticism that he had, and he did, he gave to my boss, a wonderful man named Victor Stier, who had also been an information officer in several posts, an old newspaper man, and Vic would come in and chat to me. Vic also was one of the kindest men going. And so I never really got chewed out, which was nice, although I was often corrected.

Bob started off wonderfully but he came at perhaps the wrong time. The Dutch government fell; they went to elections and then they went into what was quite common for them, an extended period of formation. They tried to form a new government and they had, of course the government holding but it couldn't do much. And he was sort of stuck.

At the same time there were elections in the U.S. which led to, for us, a change. The Carter Administration came in. It didn't affect Bob directly but I think in all honesty what happened, Stu, he was bored. This wasn't what he had hoped for. And so after less than two years he took an assignment to Greece. And this led to another crisis of moaning and groaning by all the Dutch, of my contacts, the politicians, the foreign ministry types, we lost the best ambassador we've ever had. He would say he hardly was. He said there was nothing for me to do. And he was replaced after a period of time by Geri Joseph.

Geri Joseph was a woman-

Q: That's J-E-

GILLESPIE: G-E-R-I Joseph.

Q: G-E-R-I.

GILLESPIE: G-E-R-I. She was from Minnesota, from Minneapolis. Her husband was a major grain dealer, which caused some perturbation because he also had done a great deal of business in the world's largest port, which was Rotterdam. She was the Vice-Chairman of the Democratic National Committee and she was a very close friend of all the Minnesota Farmer Liberal Democrat Party, that's DFL, Democratic Farmer Liberal; Hubert Humphrey and Vice President Mondale. And we had no idea what to expect. What we got was a vivacious, intelligent, extremely hard working diplomat who came right in and said I don't know anything and you all are going to be sick of teaching it to me but I'm going to learn it.

In any case, those were the three ambassadors. She ended up doing a fantastic job anyway. She is the principle reason that I spent five and a half years there.

In my first year there the U.S. elections came up.

Q: This is-

GILLESPIE: Nineteen seventy-six.

Q: This is Carter-

GILLESPIE: As it turned out, Carter against Ford. And the United States elections are very big in the Netherlands to this day but at that time, I mean, I was flabbergasted; they knew a great deal; they sent a large amount of media coverage to the U.S.; they had correspondents there; they put television crews, several of them working in the States. My secretary reminded me that every four years we have a big election seminar for all the editors. We go somewhere for two or three days. Well, what happened was the only place we could get, which turned out to be satisfactory, was the Holiday Inn in Leiden. The disadvantage of Leiden was it was too close to Rotterdam, Amsterdam and The Hague and it was too easy for editors and-

Q: To go back to work.

GILLESPIE: -to go back and forth. You've got to get them away. Well of course it's a small country and it's hard to get them completely way.

But, in any case, we did. John Gilligan, the former governor of Ohio and the future Administrator USID and the father of the current secretary of HHS Kathleen Sebelius (Department of Health and Human Services) was our featured speaker. We had several others; we had two or three very good local academics and I was amazed. The top editors and foreign editors in the Netherlands came and they sat down and they took it very seriously; they knew things; they wanted to talk about things; they knew Watergate backwards and forwards; they wanted to know things like what do you think the impact will be of Ford's pardon of Nixon; what do you think this will be; how is this going to affect but who is this guy Carter? Because by that time Carter running and was serious. It was an extremely successful event and just the beginning for me of what went on for the rest of the year on the American election. Universities from all over the country would call, we went and spoke, and I had a lot of fun doing that.

The other event in 1976 was the bicentennial. And this combined with the Holland Festival, which was held every year. In the course of our bicentennial year we had the Boston Symphony, the North Sea Jazz Festival which went on every year but it was even bigger. The North Sea Jazz Festival is a four-day event usually the week before the Fourth of July and it brings all sorts of people in. Martha Graham Company came. I remember sitting watching Martha Graham when, after the lights had gone down, there was a pause. We had very nice seats, and two women came in from the side and sat in the box in front of us. When the program finished, they kept the lights off and the two women left and went backstage. My boss said we'll go back and say hello to the company and thank them, which we always did. We went backstage and there was the Queen, which was a wonderful thing.

The other event from that I will always remember was the New York Philharmonic came and played, under Leonard Bernstein, played in The Hague. 1976 set records for heat in

Western Europe but at this time of the year it still was beautiful. It was spring-like and they took over what was a great ice hockey rink, and put the Philharmonic in the middle. It was a great. Bernstein was Bernstein, doing what Bernstein did and doing it very well. When they started playing encores, he came back and he stood and he said perhaps a few light pieces by the conductor. They played some musical comedy pieces, "Candide," and "West Side Story" and of course they kept calling him back, calling him back, calling him back. And so he walked back out, raised his hand and just lowered it and they played "Stars and Stripes Forever." I love listening to the big military bands play. I think they're wonderful. But I have never heard "Stars and Stripes" played like this. Julius Baker, the first flutist, took up his piccolo and stood and played that glorious piccolo solo. The place went wild.

The last thing, for the Fourth of July bicentennial, Kingdon Gould said we must have a party. And we took over the Congresgebouw, the big conference center in The Hague, where the North Sea Jazz Festival had been held the week before. And we took it over. We had things here and there and the big dance downstairs. This was underwritten by the American Chamber of Commerce and others. Basically, it was all the American community and there were some others but there in the middle, greeting everyone who came in, was Ambassador Kingdon Gould as Uncle Sam on stilts, and he stayed on stilts the entire evening. This was a man in his mid-60s; it was a remarkable performance.

We went through the Dutch elections, which went on and on. McCloskey left, as I said. Carter came in; Carter brought one of the more fascinating cabinets in with him, certainly from the national security side as both Harold Brown and Cyrus Vance were remarkable men. At this point two things really shaped the rest of my tour in the Netherlands. One is the neutron bomb. Department of Defense let it be known that we were looking at the construction of a neutron bomb, which was best described as being capable of killing people and saving the buildings. Of course this brought the European far left to the streets. And to think back, 1976, this was still- this was post '68 in Europe; there still was a lot of dissatisfaction and anger and they came out and demonstrated. Well of course, the administration had never said we're going to build the neutron bomb. They said they were talking about it and they were talking about it seriously and it was being talked about at NATO as perhaps something that would make sense in Europe.

By that time my friends in the Dutch Labor Party and in the Centrist Christian Democrats, which were just forming from the three parties, would come in and would say how can you do this? How can you do this? Well, in any case it was in about six months to a year completely surpassed by the NATO decision to deploy intermediate nuclear forces. Over the next several years they made the decisions about what this would be; there would be several bases of Cruise missiles in the Netherlands; there would be some in Belgium, and Pershing II rockets in Germany.

Q: By the way, this was in response-

GILLESPIE: To the SS-20-

Q: Of the Soviet Union.

GILLESPIE: -of the Soviets, which we were quite concerned about and it wasn't-

Q: These were intermediate range-

GILLESPIE: That's right.

Q: The idea being that the- by putting these intermediate ranges the Soviets were saying okay, you Europeans, we can hit you and we won't threaten the United States and you no longer have the-

GILLESPIE: You no longer have-

Q: -cover.

GILLESPIE: And this would give the cover. A majority of serious European strategic thinkers agreed with this. And we pushed it.

Well, the problem was it basically became the only major issue for us in the Netherlands for the next two or three years. The Dutch government was a center left government. The Prime Minister was Joop den Uyl, an economist and a fine man. The Foreign Minister was Max van der Stoep, perhaps a great man, certainly considered so in Greece where he had been a leader in human rights questions and led the battle to get rid of the colonels. The Dutch Government supported INF, but they weren't happy about it. The problem for the Dutch was that they recognized that their only real power, other than their economic power, was through European organizations. They wanted to play a major role in NATO. It was very important to them. And if NATO said this is what we ought to do, they would probably go along with it but politically in the Netherlands it was very tough. They knew that they would have a hard time agreeing to the whole package as it came in. They couldn't get it through their parliament and they probably couldn't win an election based on it. Both the Labor Party and the Christian Democrats had the same problem. The Christian Democrats were the second partner of this coalition, but they were just forming. There had been three traditional parties, two Protestant and one Catholic; it had been a major event for them to pull together. I found the Netherlands in the 1970s continued with many of the old social divisions that had existed in the Netherlands for 200 or 300 years.

Q: But still.

GILLESPIE: Still. It was at this time I took a group of journalists to NATO. We went by train from The Hague. There were about 10 of us and we took off toward Rotterdam. Well one of them was a man named Frans Bletz. He ended up as the deputy director of the Netherlands' largest think tank and left his journalist role but he was really a very, very smart guy, and as we pulled out of Rotterdam and started to go down across Brabant, the southern part of the Netherlands, and I think it was when we crossed the Meuse River, he jokingly said Jake, you know, I need a visa to come this way; this is the

historical division of Catholic and Protestant Netherlands. These were fascinating things to me. I was so intrigued by this.

These three parties were joining together and they had each played a role. The Catholic Party had been in every government in the 20th century at that point. They were always in the government. There are more Catholics in the Netherlands than any other group. That's because the Protestants are so divided. There are a lot of Catholics and we often forget this.

Q: There's no established church?

GILLESPIE: I don't think so, although the Queen and the Royal family have been Protestants – Reformed Church – forever.

However, the influence that this had on the INF debate was great. One leader of the three parties said he was a pacifist. He refused to support any of this, and, although he held his parliamentary seat and no little political influence, he was moved out of power in the new Christian Democratic Appeal – the CDA.

What it all meant for me was an enormous group of journalists coming in. American journalists wanted to know what are the Dutch going to do because this was a big story. The Dutch had never had so much foreign press interest. The other thing it meant was that this became “the” issue for USIS. We did seminars; we did round tables. We would get an American official who would come in; if he would give us two hours, the end of an afternoon, we would bring in 10 journalists and sit around the conference room and talk about this kind of issue. USIA sent us a number of academic experts, some very good ones. They would come in and we'd do the same thing. And it got so we could call journalists in on a moment's notice. I mean, virtually 24 hours. We'd say, we're going to do this tomorrow, are you available? And they would make time. They would come in for it. We prepared materials that were sent from USIA, press materials that we'd put out. And I think the proudest day that I had there was when they had the first big parliamentary debate. Ambassador Joseph, as did several others from the Embassy, sat in the diplomatic boxes. We saw on virtually every desk, stacks of the bulletins that we had sent out with the distinctive “Stars and Stripes” banner across the top. I looked and thought, I don't know if they will agree with it but at least they're reading it. I can't ask for anymore than that. And these were the members of the parliament.

The debate went on. It was not resolved during the time I was there, Stu. It went on and on but I think we made some inroads. We sent IVs (International Visitors), one of whom became minister of defense; later another one, actually two of them minister of defense. And others took major positions. On this issue it was always a question what would the left wing of the government do. If the government didn't feel it had the support, the government wasn't going to bring it up to parliament.

Now at the same time there were other- I don't want to say that there wasn't anything else going on.

Q: Well before we turn away from that, I was wondering if you'd talk a bit about sort of with the spotlight on the Netherlands but this was happening elsewhere, these tremendous demonstrations against this. I mean, we were perfectly- I mean, they weren't against the Soviets for putting stuff that was going to go into the Netherlands. I mean, was this a chance for kind of the left that at last they had kind of an issue where they could show that they were anti-American or they weren't under the thumb of the Americans?

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: I mean, what was going on?

GILLESPIE: I think there was a bit of that. As this blew up, as it started off, I started in my own mind with the conception that this was a level of anti-Americanism. We polled, Stu, we polled a lot. We used the Dutch polls, the Dutch Gallup which was extremely good. I was never able to get anything and our people back in research who did- looked at all these we were never able to get anything that showed this.

Q: Showed the anti-Americanism.

GILLESPIE: It wasn't there. We did other things in the midst of all this and would see no indication of it. On Memorial Day we would go to Margraten, the American military cemetery outside Maastricht. Limburg's a little more conservative; you've got a couple of NATO operations down there, maybe it's a difference. But you would have thought that we had liberated the Netherlands. In fact, the Americans didn't liberate the Netherlands. The Canadians did. After the Americans and the British under Montgomery went so far and the attempt at Arnhem failed, we pulled back through that winter. I have Dutch friends to this day who talk about the horrible winter of 1944-45, when they had nothing to eat. The Germans came back in and took horrible revenge on the people. It was the Canadians who went to liberate the Netherlands as the spring came in 1945. We had been tied up all that winter in the Battle of the Bulge.

However, the Dutch were always appreciative of our war efforts and the Marshall Plan. At the bicentennial they recognized their wonderful historic ties to us. They were very proud of the fact that a little Dutch island in the Caribbean had been the first place to recognize the American flag.

Q: Yes, yes.

GILLESPIE: And, you know, I mean, we see it still today.

Q: Do they talk about New Amsterdam and all?

GILLESPIE: New Amsterdam. And we see this today. And New York, they just celebrated the Henry Hudson 400th anniversary. The ties are close. I mean, you can't walk around New York without seeing them from Wall Street to Brooklyn. I mean, those

are all Dutch names. And the Bronx; they're all Dutch names. But at that time, the left was frustrated. What had happened is that the Socialist International parties in Northern Europe had moved pretty much to the center, with the exception maybe of Sweden. Sweden as a neutral didn't really count that much because the ones that mattered were the Germans, Belgians and the Netherlands. The Germans started with Willy Brandt, who, you know, by the time he was in power was hardly a raving leftist. Joop den Uyl, the Dutch Prime Minister and the leader of the Socialist- of the Labor Party, was a moderate left economics professor and the same thing in Belgium. So the left wings of those parties were frustrated, no question. Also, in the Netherlands, and I think in Germany too, there was a strong pacifist streak that ran through the left and the anti-nuclear was terribly strong.

Maybe it was 1980 the Tellers came to visit and I was assigned to take-

Q: This is Edward Teller.

GILLESPIE: -to take care of Edward Teller.

Q: Who's the father of the-

GILLESPIE: Well, the H (hydrogen) bomb. But you certainly didn't want to say that in front of him and he made a point of it; he said don't have anybody say that, please. He was a charming man, a fine pianist. He said he wished that he'd just been able to keep playing the piano.

We went to see one of his old friends, a Dutch physicist, who set up a chance for Teller to speak at his institute. And we went to see him and the two of us sat there, talking to him. The two of them were talking and I was listening and, you know, an awful lot of my high school physics was pfft. But they were talking and then he said, he said you know, this may not be a terribly warm reaction. Teller said they cannot be any worse than what I get in the United States and I've pretty much learned to take it. In fact, he dealt with every difficult question. He agreed with many of them. He said you know- he said I do have some things that I believe in. I believe in nuclear power; I think it's vital. I think there are ways to handle waste disposal. He went on. But it was very interesting. I had some pickets outside the embassy the next day. I mean, we had done no publicity on him. We had taken him to this and we'd taken him to two or three other places and we thought this would be it, but I had pickets because the word got out he was there. It was a strange sort of a thing the way that it spun off and built up. It also became a way for opposition political parties to try to get a jump on the parties in power. And it was basically a political thing, I think, by the end.

Ab Slichting, who was a politician who had become the chief advisor to the minister of defense and the spokesman for the ministry, as I was leaving he said "Jake, I'm sorry, I just don't- I'm not sure we can do it." It happens that I went back on a visit about 18 months later after I had left the country and he came over to me at a reception and said we're going to accept it. We're going to accept it. And of course they did. The small

bases were built, protection went in. The Cruise missiles went in. Fortunately the Pershings never were actually based and their principle purpose, as it turned out, was to get an INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) treaty that limited and, you know, basically eliminated the SS-20s and got rid of all of them. And so they went in and they came out. It was a great expense and I think very, very much worth it.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Was that Carter's idea? I don't know but Reagan certainly adapted it and turned it into that.

It was a crazy sort of a time. The big issue in the Netherlands around INF for many of these people was would it include the possibility of reductions and how much. When we said we will reduce bases; would we include the possibility of reducing these to zero, having no missiles at all. Carter said yes, but no one would buy it. Reagan came in and that's what he did. Everybody said, oh you'll never do that. You'll put them in; you'll never take all of them out. You might take a few out. That's what it was.

There were other serious political issues going on. Of course there were trade issues. We had trade issues all the time; this was a major trading partner but the other ones, the things that went on that I found struck us, especially as my career went on was terrorism. In Europe the two main terrorist groups that were working were the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and the RAF (Red Army Faction) in Germany. They both came into the Netherlands. The IRA killed the British ambassador in a frightening, a really frightening assassination for all of us.

Q: What happened?

GILLESPIE: He was walking out of his home and they just blasted him. Came by with a car and blasted him and drove away. The RAF did two or three other things. They would come across the border. The RAF worked a lot in the Dusseldorf-Cologne area and they would come across the Dutch border and rob banks to get some money in the Netherlands and run back. They may have had some ties in Amsterdam but I don't think anyone ever found any real Dutch terrorist violence. The one terrorist group that was Dutch, although the Dutch didn't like to admit it, was the South Moluccans. South Molucca is a small island in the Indonesian chain. .

Q: Yes, I'm just looking at it.

GILLESPIE: The Moluccans joined the Dutch Colonial army and, in effect, they became the Dutch Gurkhas. They were good fighters and as Indonesian independence took over the Moluccas, they didn't have much future short-term there. They, with their families, were taken to the Netherlands and put into camps. The Dutch later realized that this was a horrible thing to do, and re-settled them. However, among the South Moluccan leadership in the Netherlands there was always a belief that they had been promised an effort to

return to their island with independence for South Molucca and that the Dutch would help do it.

The Dutch weren't about to do that, obviously, and in the fall of 1975, South Moluccans hijacked a train running between Amsterdam and Utrecht and held it for a number of days. The last thing in the world the Dutch wanted to do was to go in and get into a shootout. This is not the way the Dutch police work. That train sat there for almost a week. This happened the year before I arrived. People had generally forgotten when in 1978 they did it again. It was a different train; it was outside The Hague and the Minister of Interior said we're not going to put up with this. And it was not nice. The Dutch cut off all supplies to the train. But the situation still lasted about a week.

I had gotten to know a young member of parliament because my contacts in parliament in the Labor Party had come to me and suggested Henk Molleman for the International Visitor Program. He was a sociologist and taught at Leiden University. His interest was the Moluccans and other immigrant minorities in the Netherlands. He recognized that this was going to be a major problem. We arranged the IV and he did some interesting things. He said the Cubans in Miami are a lot like the Moluccans. They're going to do anything they can to go back. They'll never stop talking about it even though most of their community is moving off and assimilating in the rest of the Netherlands. He became the Labor Party point man on immigrants for many years. He dealt with the Surinamers, the African immigrants, and I still see his name now and again dealing with Arab- or Muslim issues.

Central America became a major issue. There were a number of people who were very interested in Central America. There had been Dutch assistance programs in a number of those places; they were very taken with Nicaragua and had great hopes for the Sandinistas. Then, in 1980 two Dutch journalists were killed in El Salvador. This is somewhat ironic as I look at the rest of my career; I spent a lot of time the last year and a half there dealing with Central America. As we moved toward the end of my tour there in 1980 we came up to the second American election while I was there.

There is one thing I should mention that we were very involved in and this was Iran. In 1980, after the Iranian revolutionary guard took over the American embassy in Tehran we filed suit in the International Court of Justice, which is in The Hague. There was a lot of press interest. American journalists were coming in all the time and it was- this was fascinating and time consuming and probably in the greater scheme of things did not mean a whole lot, although it kept attention and pressure on Iran.

But as I was about to say,, our elections were coming up again in 1980 and so very early on this time I said we're going to have another seminar. Geri Joseph was there and she agreed to participate.

I asked Washington for good speakers and they said we have a great one for you, Fred Harris, former Senator from Oklahoma. He teaches at the University of New Mexico and would love to do it. So Harris came and I had Geri Joseph. I had a visiting American

professor at the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies who had been on the Wisconsin Democratic Committee and I had a young American who taught political science at Leiden. Well, it turns out all of them were Democrats. I went to my friend, Bruce Gregory, who was working on this in Washington and said get me a good Republican to come here. I've got to have someone. And about two weeks later he called back and said I've got someone for you. His name is Tom Korologos. Now, I didn't know him but he was Nixon's Senate liaison and had worked in the Senate.

Q: I'm interviewing Tom.

GILLESPIE: Bruce said he didn't know him but he came very highly recommended.

We had a wonderful group of participants and we were out in the Dutch countryside, a wonderful place that these days they could never do because even though the journalists paid their own way; I would love to see what the inspectors would say today about it. But it helped to draw the editors and senior columnists..

We opened with a reception and dinner and Harris opened the presentations. We already had a small American gathering in The Hague before we all went out where we met each other. And I could see that Korologos was fun and would be enjoyable. But I still had no idea how anyone would be before this tough audience. Fred Harris is a hilarious man and a dynamic speaker. We were finishing up and the journalists, all headed to the bar. I was setting up for the next morning. And Korologos stops me in the hall. He said you SOB, Gillespie. You set me up with Harris. In good spirits, but he was obviously concerned.

Fred Harris is a great speaker. I don't know if it was in the opening or later on that he used what I thought was one of the great stories. One of the Dutch journalists asked why must all of this campaigning go on forever and ever. You wipe out your candidates before they can ever be president. Harris said maybe you're right. But you know something? I come from a very poor family; my father and mother didn't have anything. Father was a sharecropper and a lot of time in my early years I would have to work all the time and I chopped cotton and I would have to pick beans and I'd do it all day. And he said you know something? I've chopped cotton and I've run for president and running for president's a lot easier.

But anyway, the next morning Korologos didn't come down to breakfast, and I was afraid he might be ill. I called his room, he picked up, he said I'm fine. I'll see you there. Don't worry. He said I had some breakfast up here. And what he had done was he had been on the telephone. He went back after the evening session and called his office and said get me the latest data. Tom Korologos is a delightful person and he had not spent most of his life in politics without knowing how to speak to a slightly hostile audience. He opened up his first remarks by saying my name's Tom Korologos and I'm probably something you have never seen here. He said I'll tell you what I am. I am a conservative hawk from the state of Utah; I am a Greek American. I am a lobbyist. But I have been a journalist. Then I think he ended up by saying I'm conservative and I am very hawkish and you don't have many of those, which of course was absolutely true. The Dutch right falls- at that

time would have fallen into our middle politically. But he proceeded to just absolutely wrap everyone. And so here we had two great speakers. The others were very good, each made a presentation. We went on with questions and the two of- Korologos and Harris, would just take off. One of them would tell a joke, the other would tell a better joke. And there may have been some learning, I don't know. I think the young professor from Leiden drew the job of always talking about how the system works. Well these guys had an idea but this was to refresh them so they didn't forget what happened and this sort of thing. And we came down to the last morning. The panel had done what had to be done. I said all right, last round of questions. I've got the question for everyone. What's going to happen? Make your predictions. And they went around- And I should explain. Tom Korologos, after this trip, actually came back to the Netherlands at least once but he later became a member of the USIA Advisory Commission and then later the head of it. This is a man who was, in many ways, a great friend of anyone who ever worked in public diplomacy in USIA.

Q: Yes, he cost the- he might have been conservative but he-

GILLESPIE: There was no politics; there was no politics. Later on Tom learned that my wife worked for Paul Sarbanes. Well that was pretty good, even though he was a great liberal, because he was Greek.

Q: Greek, yes.

GILLESPIE: He's been married to-

Q: -the McLaughlin.

GILLESPIE: Anne McLaughlin.

Q: He was ambassador to Belgium too, of course.

GILLESPIE: Yes. And then later he was Ambassador to Belgium. And I think from all I've heard really a pretty good one.

Q: As a matter of fact I heard from Beth Jones, who's our assistant secretary for European Affairs during-

GILLESPIE: That period.

Q: -the Colin Powell period, that she focused on him and said he was really the best of the political ambassadors because he would go to the government where he was and carry tough messages.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: A lot of political appointees don't.

GILLESPIE: Don't like to go; they send their DCM.

Q: By the way, I was- I had another session, I'm working with him, Monday, this Monday, so Tom and I are well-

GILLESPIE: Oh, good. Well give Tom my best.

Q: I sure will.

GILLESPIE: In any case, as we went around the room saying what's going to happen, and remember this is 1980, we got to Tom. He said something like, "I've done my best to show you that the situation is right for a Republican to be elected. I have a hard time imagining that President Carter can be re-elected and the public probably wants to elect someone else. And so I feel confident that it would be a Republican. Except it's the Republican Party and we'll probably do something stupid like nominate Ronald Reagan." Of course, again, the place all laughed but they didn't think about it until later on. I've never forgotten it.

We went through the election; it was the same thing for my section and I think others in the embassy. I lectured everywhere from Leiden University to a union training program in the port of Rotterdam on the American elections. People were interested; people followed it. And of course it was extremely important because the Dutch at that time were very nervous about what was going to happen with their own political situation and the INF question. Reagan was elected. This came as a real shock in the Netherlands. It wasn't just that he was elected; of course, it was a landslide.

The morning after, starting at about 5:30 or 6:00, we had a coffee and donuts at the embassy, open to everyone. The American embassy in The Hague then, happily, but, no longer unfortunately, was down the street from one of the main palaces, a block from the foreign ministry and a block and a half from the Houses of Parliament. A better situation; you could not ask. It was designed by Marcel Breuer and was of that stark style. The stone and the color made it blend in perfectly with the 18th and 19th century buildings all around, including the palace. We held the event down in the auditorium in the embassy and we had teletypes, boards with detailed results of House and Senate races, some written analysis and as much else as we could get. We had the Dutch television, which was still covering it. They covered it all night and kept going. And people started coming in early in the morning. They knew what had happened and we had all of the results hanging, states, Senate, House, everything. And the Prime Minister came in, Joop den Uyl, and he said I'll need no help, I'll be okay. He got a cup of coffee and started looking at the results. And I saw him and I said- I walked over and he said you know, this is terrible. He said I'm looking at all my friends who were defeated; Church, McGovern, all of the senators who were defeated. I stood with him and helped him find certain races. Within a year the same thing would happen to him. And although he stayed in the Parliament and led the opposition after his election, he moved on and then actually did not live terribly long, which was very sad. He was a fine man.

But the Dutch elections were fascinating. The moment ours ended it seemed like I started on another. Because the Dutch- they had this crisis and because this was important to American interests.

I can think of no other election from the Netherlands, occasionally Belgium would get some interest because it would be Flemish-Walloon battles but no other election from the Netherlands where you had front page stories two and three weeks before the election on the Dutch elections in "The New York Times," "The Washington Post," "The Boston Globe" and "The Wall Street Journal" The TV networks covered them very seriously. Since most of the American correspondents in Europe and others knew me from talking about INF. They would come and they would ask, you know, can I get a briefing with someone here, what do you know about this, who should I talk to on the Dutch side when they came. When the elections were coming they came to me and they started to say what, you know, what's going to happen? And I always said well you better understand what's going to happen because the Dutch have a very complex election system. It is a proportional with carryovers; there is a first past the post in some cases but always and it builds up. They had, I think, 12 or 13 parties in the parliament. The idea is to give the representation to everyone. So I would describe it; I had a little diagram I could draw for them on how it happened. It is very complicated.

Well I must have done this briefing ten or twelve times before the elections.. One day I got a call from the spokesman at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It's three or four weeks before the election, maybe less. And he said could we have lunch? He said he was going to bring two or three people from his office. Now by this time, I should explain, my Dutch was such I worked in Dutch almost all the time. The great question everybody asked when I did so, well why on earth are you studying Dutch? He said let's have lunch in English. And I said well you all speak very good English; perfectly all right with me

He said you've been talking to all the American journalists who come through about the Dutch elections. And I said well, and I thought oh my God he's going to- they're going to complain about this. And I said well yes, I have. You know, they come in and we talk about things they want to know. He said well it's a very complicated - what do you do? I said well I explain what's happening and I said I explain your system. You know, I've been through one election and I've watched and I've talked to a lot of people and I try the best I can to explain what's going to happen. And he said would you tell us what you say and talk to me about it. And I said I'd be glad- And we walked through and got through and he said our problem is this: we're going to have British, Irish, American journalists coming in. We're going to be briefing and we have never talked about this stuff in English. It's all technical jargon and we don't know how you say this but you managed to do it. And so this confirmed one of the things that I had discovered over my five years there; the reasons for learning Dutch may be somewhat limited, but you should learn it because there are certain things that the Dutch just don't speak about in English. They didn't talk about their political system in Dutch, the political system and Dutch literature. I discovered this kind of by chance. I could get the Dutch to talk about their political system in English but I had to force them, which probably wasn't good. It was better to

kind of stand there and take part and that's what happened. And by this time this probably made those 16 weeks studying Dutch in the heat of the summer and fall in 1975 worthwhile.

In any case, the Labor/Christian Democrat government fell. A new government was elected. It was chosen after, again, a long period. The prime minister was Dries van Agt who had been the Minister of Justice in the previous two Labor/Christian Democratic governments. But this was a Christian Democratic/Liberal coalition that formed the new government. Even they were not certain when the government was formed that they had the votes to support INF and it wasn't for another difficult year that they managed to pull it together.

We too elected a new government. In May of 1981, on his first official trip abroad, it was Susan's and my pleasure to host at dinner for Director Charles Wick and his wife. Wick was supposed to make about three stops on a trip but his confirmation was held up. He wanted to go to the PAO conference that was being held in Berlin. He was sworn in and had nothing on his schedule for three days because the trip had been messed up. They came to the Netherlands two days early. Wick had scared everyone by this time. And I don't know why, actually. Well, I do know why. He could scare people. So he came out to our little duplex with his wife and the Director of European affairs for USIA. It is on the edge of a canal in this small but very pleasant suburb of The Hague. Their introduction to USIA overseas was having two kids pass him a few hors d'oeuvres that Susan had thrown together and we had, we actually had a delightful time. I can see all of the faults of Charles Wick and I'll talk about this if you want, but we're going to want to go on forever.

Q: We will on this.

GILLESPIE: Well next time. I see all the faults but in fact, like I also see an awful lot of good things that he did and I think like most USIA career people I have now come to the conclusion that he was really very good for us.

Q: I think that's the- that's what I get from-

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: But we'll pick it up.

GILLESPIE: Because I leave at this point and return to the States.

Q: Okay. Today is the 20th of May, 2010, with Jake Gillespie.

And so Jake, we want to sort of set out a bit of the framework of what we want to talk about.

GILLESPIE: Okay. I believe I have already talked about the Washington tour but to make sure let's just mention, there were some highlights. There were some things that were interesting that I focused on. Having spent a great deal of time in the Netherlands working on issues surrounding the installation of intermediate nuclear forces in Europe...

Q: This is the SS-20-

GILLESPIE: Versus Cruise missiles and the Pershings. When I returned to Washington I worked first in a section where I dealt with NATO issues, security issues, all of the things that nobody in USIA ever thinks they deal with. But what happened, because this was such a key issue, Director Charles Wick was very interested in it. First of all, I went with the Deputy Director to attend all the meetings of the McFarlane Committee in the-

Q: This was Bud McFarlane.

GILLESPIE: Bud McFarlane, at the National Security Council, and this was a big interagency group dealing with a number of issues but not directly the INF decision issue. But while I was there I not only met McFarlane and a number of other fascinating and interesting people from there and other places but also got my first introduction to Ollie North. And that name will pop back in briefly later. I also was the USIA representative sitting in on the State-Defense Committee chaired by Richard Burt or Richard Pearl, you may have your choice, depending on which one you talked to, I'm sure, on the direct issue of the installation of NATO INF. This was much more interesting to me because it really showed the complexity of the problems that our own government had dealing with this decision and dealing with our allies in working out the decision.

Charlie Wick took a considerable interest in this. I imagine that USIA got more attention paid to it than normal was because people knew that probably twice a month Charlie Wick spent his weekends at Camp David with the president.

Q: Mrs. Wick and Mrs. Reagan, who was a, you know, I mean-

GILLESPIE: They were best friends.

Q: They were best friends and so, I mean, you know, when you think about Byzantine politics, when you think about the wife of the director of the information agency and the wife of a president have- can bring significant clout of another agency, of the information agency.

GILLESPIE: Yes. It goes way back; it goes way back. It went to when their children started school together in California.

However, I have always imagined, I do not know it's so but I do know- did know Charlie Wick well enough to know that somewhere in Camp David there was a piano and on Friday night he sat down at the piano and started to play and had a drink and the president was there and I'm sure President Reagan, who was a warm man, went over and said

Charlie, how are things going? And I will guarantee you that everyone else in the foreign affairs community in Washington worried that Charlie was going to say I'm doing fine except, you know, there's this guy over at- and he's a little bit of a problem. And Stu, that was a source of great power.

Q: Yes, oh of course.

GILLESPIE: Which I only saw used once. The president had made a speech early on in his first term and I think it was his first major foreign affairs speech. And it was on the issues of intermediate nuclear weapons and what we proposed to do, in which he talked a bit about what was known as the "zero option." And the zero option was well, we can reduce both sides to zero and have none of these.

Now my own history in the Netherlands taught me that they didn't believe this very much. They really did not believe that the United States would ever go down to zero but President Reagan mentioned this. The speech actually had a good bit of resonance for maybe three or four months. In Europe it got good response. About a year later I was working on this and out of the blue Director Wick called a meeting; maybe a half dozen people who were involved in this, senior level or others, and he said I believe the President should make a second speech. It's time to follow up on this. We need more push to get this through. Now that's a perfectly reasonable thought and appropriate. Whereupon he and my immediate boss in the section, a man named Scott Thompson, were called later to a meeting with Director Wick where he talked for maybe half an hour on his vision of this speech and what should be in it. And so he said Scott, you and Jake draft this speech. No, draft me a briefing for Bill Clark and the Security Council with charts. Okay. And we went back and went to work.

Well the problem was that he had his remarks to us transcribed for a tape he made. We received a transcript. And so I went to work and sort of used that as an outline, that's what he wanted, and I gave it to Scott. I said that some of these things are wrong because his numbers are way off; factors of tanks in the Warsaw Pact by, you know, are maybe off by a factor of two or three. I said, you know, he really doesn't want to go in and do that. And Thompson agreed with me, he said we can't do that. He said there are a couple of others- Let me work on this. And we had a second meeting.

Thompson, who had been the son-in-law of Paul Nitze when he started this job, was in the process of getting a divorce. He was very smart; he is very smart, a good writer. He had been at Tufts, at Fletcher, and Scott was smart. The problem was he made a point of letting the Director know how smart he was and Charlie didn't like this. And Charlie, I think also had talked to Nitze who could not abide Scott Thompson at this point. Scott sent Director Wick a draft. So we had another meeting and Charlie laid him out and said Jake, you go back and redraft this. And I just gave it- Thompson turned it in as his draft which I thought was- he shouldn't have. I mean- Well no. It was a mistake. If it had been my draft I could have taken the hit; I don't think Charlie would have done it to me; I was too far down the pecking order. And so I did this and he said this is fine, take it around and get it cleared. Get it cleared in Burt's office, get it cleared. So I did, I took it to Bert.

Q: Bert's office was European Affairs?

GILLESPIE: European Affairs at this point. I had the whole presentation sent over to Burt's office. That didn't get a reply and then someone said you come over here. And they just let me have it. Burt and his staff looked at me and said this is the silliest thing. The only person who was decent to me the whole time I was there was Charlie Thomas, who was a wonderful man and had been the Peace Corps director in Uruguay when I was there. Charlie, as we walked out, he said "Look, you got to do what you got to do." And they wouldn't clear it.

I went back to USIA and Wick hit the ceiling. Wick had Jock Shirley, who was Counselor – the number three position in USIA -- call a meeting of all the interagency committee in Director Wick's name. There were representatives from all interested offices. Jock started the meeting and said we want to talk about this, we know there are problems and so on. Then Charlie walked in. Jock acted surprised and said something like "Oh, Director Wick, come on in, have a seat. Would you like to say something?" Charlie said I think I would. And he looked around; Bob Blackwill was there from Burt's office. Steiner, the secretary of the NSC, who was the son of the Columbia professor, a very bright young guy was there and a number of others. And Charlie said I would like to read you all something and he proceeded to read from the executive order creating USIA that is re-signed every four years by every new president. It says that the Director shall do this and this and this and shall advise the president. Charlie said I will not be fulfilling my charge if I do not advise the President and I hope you will go back and let your principals know that I am going to advise the President, whether they like it or not.

The next day Charlie's draft was cleared with the worst errors corrected. About three weeks later, the President gave the speech; it went through the NSC with Clark and all the others. Overall, it did not get as high praise as the first INF speech, but it got good marks, in Europe and the US. It was one of the most wonderful examples of uses of political and bureaucratic power in Washington I think I've ever seen.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Now, and the speech had an effect and it worked to some extent. Eventually, of course, the Europeans came around.

Q: It also was a forerunner of the- what became the Reykjavik-

GILLESPIE: Yes, yes. That was when they moved from talk about INF to talk about strategic weapons and a forerunner of all of our negotiations with the Soviets after Reagan. But once again, it's having a bleacher seat in the seventh game of the World Series. It was a great thing to be involved.

Q: This is the sort of thing that I find that our oral histories bring up. I mean, the inner dynamics of things, which you don't get if you look at the official correspondence because it just doesn't appear there.

GILLESPIE: No.

Q: And often-

GILLESPIE: And Charlie Wick is gone. I'm sure he would never have admitted to this; I'm certain that Burt and Clark would not refer to it in this way but I think it had, you know, some impact. In any case, that's one item. After several years, about four, doing this I shifted jobs, not a minor, yes, something of a shift. I moved about three offices down at USIA but we were a small agency so you could make great shifts with only three offices. Actually, it was more like three cubicles down.

I became the Chief of what was known as the Fast Guidance Unit, which was a terrible name.

Q: The what?

GILLESPIE: Fast Guidance Unit. We were responsible for providing the daily policy direction for the USIA media. Now, this was always a battle within the media because the Voice of America took no direction in principle. They did listen to us, as a matter of fact. But the main way that we did this was either I or my assistant were the USIA participant in the preparation for the State Department spokesman's daily briefings. And doing this I learned that the best possible way to learn what U.S. policy is, public policy, on any issue that you want is to read the spokesman's daily briefing book.

Q: Some of those things, of course, may never be- issues may never be raised but it's-

GILLESPIE: Were it to be-

Q: It's there.

GILLESPIE: That's right.

Q: And you've got a copy of that.

GILLESPIE: I wouldn't go to the early meeting that they had. I would get a call from the Deputy after they did that. Originally it was Alan Romberg who would call me and he'd talk about what they were going to do. It was a very fixed structure. They met with the Secretary and other principles in the morning and having met themselves they said here are the news, starting early. Here are the issues we've got to answer. And they farmed out the questions across the State Department and the federal government. These were assignments to prepare guidance and get it cleared and get it into the press office by

11:00. It was and, I believe, still is, a remarkable machinery that they've got going. Of course, they now use computers and email and do it faster.

I would go to that 11:00 meeting and sit with, let's see, who was it? John Hughes was the first spokesman there when I went, a wonderful man, a former "Christian Science Monitor" editor and current "Christian Science Monitor" columnist, although John may be retired now. He had come with USIA first and then became director of Voice of America and Secretary Shultz asked him to come over to be Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and spokesman. John and Romberg were a terrific team. They worked well together. John did not know State, Alan did. I never met anybody who knew policy as well as Alan Romberg, I'll be perfectly-

Q: He's here in Washington still.

GILLESPIE: Yes. I haven't seen him for two or three years. I've run into him occasionally.

Q: I want to get a hold of him.

GILLESPIE: He's- It's one of the think tanks.

Q: Yes. It's the Center of something.

GILLESPIE: You're right, you're right. It may be the Center in Asian. ...

Q: Something.

GILLESPIE: Okay. In any case, they would go through this in great detail, argue back and forth. John would make handwritten changes; he said I'm not going to say that. John was a writer and John knew what word to use and he said you can't say this or this and he would make changes. That book would be put together with his handwritten notes in it and would be copied. John would take it into the briefing and use it in the briefing. Everything- every guidance that was used he wrote on. I sat in the briefing and additionally made notes and it was fun. I became kind of a part of this. I mean, I knew John from his time at USIA a bit, not well but a bit, and he opened up- And then I got to know Alan and worked with him well.

The briefing done, we went back to the press office director's office. We had a post-mortem; what went right, what went wrong, what's going to come up again, who's going to come after something. All of these and some assignments were made. The staff, meanwhile, copied the book. I got a copy- I got two copies of the book and I headed back to USIA with these under my arm. I sat down, when I got back, I grabbed a sandwich, ate the sandwich and prepared for an early afternoon meeting. Representatives from offices all over USIA—usually ten to twelve -- came in and we discussed what had gone on and why. Many of them had listened to the briefing and so it was a short 15, 20 minute meeting after that and then that was it. It was a fascinating job. It went on for-

Q: I assume you- within the bowels of the institution the word was passed on to posts overseas.

GILLESPIE: Yes, because it went to the regional offices and they sent the things out, but the main way was through the wireless file.

Q: I've got a question. It's sort of institutional. When you were there, particularly doing this work, did you find that USIA was sort of bipolar or something? I mean one was- the people, they wanted to get out the American word, the American way, culture, but the whole thing and the other one was let's push what the policy is today. And I can see that there would be a certain conflict between the, you know, the American way type things and the thing of by God, we want to get this accomplished today. Did you see-?

GILLESPIE: You know, I think when I sensed it in Uruguay. There was a real sort of a push and pull between the culture guys and the information guys and I was a cultural guy at that time. Then when I was in the Netherlands I spent an extended period as Information Officer and the Press Attaché and I spent an extended period as the acting PAO. I saw it start to move together and I had a very wise PAO there, Vic Stier. He said if you really are interested in the policy things, and he said they're important, you've got to remember that what you're doing is fertilizing the field, making it possible to understand. Otherwise how is that guy in Chad ever going to know what a whale is?

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: And so at the top level in USIA there was an understanding of the conflict, but awareness that there really wasn't a conflict. It fit together. At the working level there always was. Who gets more money? Oh, the Fulbright people get all this money and we don't get anything over here for film. VOA never lacked for money. And so there was some difference, but not really a conflict.

Q: Well did you find yourself, maybe, I mean maybe you're too far removed from it but I would think there would be political types; I'm talking about Congress or newspaper people saying you know, what are these guys doing with this artsy-fartsy cultural stuff? I mean, particularly a new group coming in who seized political power through elections. You know, we've got a policy, want to do this, and don't worry about that.

GILLESPIE: Well, of course, that was a problem. I went through two major changes in Washington. I never had that sense of the problem with the Carter people. No, I went through three really, but I had no sense of the change at all between Johnson and Nixon and people coming in. I was in Uruguay.

Q: That was still the era where the foreign affairs, you know, politics stopped at the border practically.

GILLESPIE: Yes. There was some conflict as the Reagan people came in. But not in USIA because we had Charles Wick who was well aware of the policy problems and on the other hand, he was a man with a background in the cultural stuff.

Q: Yes, sure.

GILLESPIE: He was a musician, he was a film producer, and he knew these people.

In Congress you frequently had a problem and I think it comes up a good bit at my last post, Madrid. Some congressional people, it could be a problem. They would tell us to give some money for this. But no one ever objected to the Fulbright program.

Q: Which, you know, when you look at this, I mean God, of all the things that are productive, this is, I mean, it's stood us in great stead because it introduces people to the American way.

GILLESPIE: My favorite Fulbright story comes from my last post. There was one event or other, one celebration or other; we had a very big Fulbright program. And the Minister of Education came to speak.

Q: Of what country?

GILLESPIE: Spain. And the Minister of Education came to speak and he talked about a young political radical in the '50s and '60s, at the University in the Franco era and how hard it was. And he said but, I got a passport because I got a Fulbright. And I got on the boat at Cadiz and we went to the United States. We sailed from Cadiz. He said we watched and the moment we were out of Spanish territorial waters we opened a bottle of champagne. That minister became the Foreign Minister; his name is Javier Solana, he spent four years in the States. He marched against NATO with the Socialist party in Spain. He, of course, later became the Secretary General of NATO.

Q: NATO, yes.

GILLESPIE: And, is now the head of Foreign Affairs for the European Union and is a wonderful guy. But that's- I mean that's what Fulbright does.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Well, okay. The split, you always sense the split when you're talking- when you are among the worker bees down there. They feel it. They feel it when the other side- the other side gets listened to and they don't; when the other side gets more money than they do; when they need resources and they see the other- they sense this and they sense it a good bit. But I think by the time you're up into lower levels of senior management and maybe even upper middle management you start to move past it and people understand that this really fits together. And frankly, I think that the problem in State is

that we've completely separated these things again and we've gone back, in effect, to the '50s where we had CU and then whatever information things we do on the other.

Q: Yes, yes. I, you know, I think we really should recreate the information age just to see where we are.

GILLESPIE: Well that's- I may think- I may agree with you but Humpty fell off.

Q: Well it's not-

GILLESPIE: It's not going to happen.

Q: It's not going to happen.

GILLESPIE: In any case, I spent about three years working with- two years, two and a half to three working with the State Department press office. It was a great bunch of people; it was an interesting time. John briefly- John and Alan followed by Bernie Kalb maybe a year and Chuck Redman and then Chuck, as I left Chuck took over. I was assigned to El Salvador as PAO. It wasn't really, you know, at first it would not have been my choice, obviously. We had a real conflict; my wife had a very good job. She worked for Senator Paul Sarbanes. She said I'm not sure. We had one daughter in college and a son who was about to graduate when I took the assignment. And she said I'm not sure I want to, that I should go. So-

Q: He was graduating from high school?

GILLESPIE: He was graduating from college.

Q: College, oh.

GILLESPIE: Our daughter was in college. Susan said you know, maybe let's see. I said look; it's a two year assignment. I can commute. I can come back and forth frequently. You can come down when you get leave. And you know, I said I'm sure Senator Sarbanes will let you go when they're in recess.

In any case, that was how we started. And so in the summer of '86 I went to San Salvador. By the time I left we had pretty well decided that that was not going to work. Our son graduated from college; he had been living at home and working in Washington for a year and he had a job in New York that he would be going to. She said maybe I'll get him moved and we'll see when I come down. And I said come down and look at it first. So I went.. Salvador was a very interesting place.

Q: Alright. Would you describe the situation when you went out?

GILLESPIE: Okay. I was there from 1986, from June until late 1988. There was a major guerilla war going on. There were two guerilla wars going on in Central America at the

time. The group known as the Contras were fighting to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. In El Salvador there had been a really serious guerilla war since late '79 or '80 that had been going on. There had been horrible violence.

The Embassy was fortified as much as it could be. It was in town but it was fortified. We had grenade screens up. It had been hit. I learned later that my office on a Saturday had had an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) go right through it before I got there.

Q: That's rocket-propelled grenade.

GILLESPIE: That's right. But in any case there was a small staff. I had an Information Officer; a position for a Cultural Affairs Officer in addition to my own job. There was an American administrative secretary and there were the makings of the full panoply of a small USIA post there. We had a film section, we had a radio man, we had a good little press assistant, we had two cultural affairs assistants, one who handled the Fulbright program mainly and the other one handled all the other kinds of exchanges and other kinds of programs; both of them were wonderful. There was a bi-national institute that we had broken relations with because they had some people on the board who we really did not approve of as they may have been involved with death squads. The death squads had been evil.

Q: The death squads are on the right.

GILLESPIE: The death squads were on the right. Their most infamous act had been to assassinate the archbishop of San Salvador, Archbishop Romero in 1981. The guerillas were everywhere. The left controlled the National University in San Salvador and I was told by the security officer and backed up by the Ambassador when I got there, you're not going to go there. We just don't deal with them. You can deal with the other university, which was the Jesuit University of Central America which was a much better university but also was quite far to the left.

Q: This tended to be a pattern in Latin America where national university was taken over kind of by the Marxist left and all whereas the real education was done by the Catholic Church.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

On the other hand I did get to know the people at the UCA, the Jesuit university. There were two American Jesuits and a number of them had studied at one time or another in the United States. It was an excellent school. They were interesting people but they disagreed with our policy strongly. On the other hand, although I believe we had some good intelligence that showed they did have some contacts with the guerilla leadership they didn't actively support them. The government in El Salvador had been elected in maybe moderately free elections because the right wing lost and the Christian Democrats were elected for the first time. And the government was headed by Jose Napoleon Duarte, another American-educated engineer. He went to Notre Dame. When I got there I think

the feeling that was that about half of the government officials were pretty good, that the level of corruption was acceptable. I don't know what that ever meant. I never had any great sense of corruption myself although strangely enough there was one minister I did deal with regularly, Fito Rey Prendes, the Minister of Information and Culture. Fito, I'm pretty sure had his hand in every till he could get them into. And he was a great character. His father had been a vaudeville clown and he grew up traveling around. And so he was fun.

Duarte was, I thought, an extremely brave man. The U.S. Government had decided to support him and to put some money behind him; however, the Congress never supported this strongly. The Congress made rules here that we would not put military there. We had a military assistance program with a unit that could not have more than 80 boots on the ground at any time. I guess that's 160 boots, two for each of them, but that was on any day. Ambassador Ed Corr started every staff meeting by looking over at the head of the Mil Group and asking how many they had at that time. And the closest it ever came was that there was one getting on a plane right now and we have 80 when he's up. But it was tight. They were down as low as 70, low as 65 or 70; it never went above.

The Embassy otherwise, had a large USAID mission that did good work in difficult situations and some fascinating things. One of them was the team that was responsible for keeping electrical power running as a sign that the government worked. The FMLN may blow up power lines or a station but they kept power going. The way they did this was with pre-located, all around the country, power poles. They would take crews in on helicopters. When the guerillas blew up a couple power poles they'd take a crew in on a helicopter with a military crew flying with them to protect them and they'd go in and they'd get the power back up. They did this 24/7. For over half of the country, certainly, they kept power going regularly. The other half maybe not as regularly but as much as they could. One-third of the country was largely in control of the guerillas.

Embassy people could travel in roughly one-half of San Salvador. The rest was off-limits. My first week there I told my driver and bodyguard I wanted to go to the cathedral. These were two very brave young guys and I thought they would. They said come on. And the bodyguard said I'll look, you stay in the car. And he got out, he walked around. He said well okay and I got out. I said if you can walk around I can walk around. He said no, no. The Embassy was still uptight. Six months before I got there in what was known as the Zona Rosa, which was in a very upper class neighborhood, it was restaurants and bars, very nice ones. Five off-duty Marine guards were sitting and having a beer. Guerillas drove by and just let them have it, killed them all. In an Embassy that was already a little uptight, this really shut them down and I arrived in that.

Because we had the war going on, there were as many as 50 or 60 foreign journalists, mostly American, some European. There were a couple from Mexico and I think at one time we had a bureau set up by an Argentine, one of the Argentine papers. This was the last of the days that American media had foreign bureaus. There was a CBS office and NBC and ABC flew in from Mexico or Miami. We had all representatives from the major papers, the wire services. Ambassador Corr let me know very early that that was my

responsibility to take care of them and not let the Embassy get in trouble. The journalists were good people, doing a tough job. They had had colleagues killed. There were some very good journalists there. Doug Farah, whose op-eds still appear; James LeMoyne who wrote for the New York Times, a wonderful guy, a fine journalist, who left The Times to become the UN negotiator in Colombia. But it was a difficult job. Things were difficult. Embassy-press relations could be tough.

I got there in June; my wife came out at Labor Day for an extended visit and said that she thought that she would come for good the first of the year and maybe come for Christmas and then come back the first of the year to stay. I was starting to feel comfortable that we could do some things here. I watched the exchange programs; they were pretty well run. I was having a hard time getting a CAO assigned to-

Q: Cultural Affairs Officer.

GILLESPIE: Yes. Two had dropped out on me. But the two FSNS, Foreign Service nationals were terrific, who managed most of the programs there. And the Information Officer had been Cultural Affairs Officer before so he could help me. After Labor Day I think the embassy was starting to feel better about things. We did, as an embassy, one of those big training sessions where you bring in everybody and they throw one crisis after another-

Q: It's crisis training.

GILLESPIE: Crisis management. We did one of those three-day things, which you know, if nothing else I think Ed Corr was right; he said one of the reasons he wanted to do this, it's probably good for morale to get, you know, get the senior people to work together.

Then, on the Friday before Columbus Day weekend in October 1986, at approximately 12:00 noon, San Salvador was hit by a massive earthquake. It ripped through any number of the city buildings. Because El Salvador is on the chain of Central American faults and volcanoes that run north to south. This hit big and at the end there probably were four or five thousand people who were killed. The Embassy sat right on a fault, literally, or right next to one but not the main one. However, as it turned out, the top three floors of the Embassy were destroyed. It was a four story building and the top three floors were never used again. Donna Oglesby, USIA Deputy Director for Latin America and my Washington boss, was there. She and I were sitting with a temporary TDY Cultural Affairs Officer talking with the FSN who did the Fulbright program in the Cultural Affairs Officer's office when it hit. And I don't know why I knew but I grabbed her and put her in a doorway and I put the other two in another doorway and I jumped in with Donna and I said just stay here. The quake went on for what seemed a very long time. It ended, I got them out and then I spent probably was not more than 15 or 20 minutes but it seemed like forever, making sure that everybody was out. Then with the young man who was my driver, actually, who was a very big, strong young guy, we went to the film and book section. He and I were throwing books and films over because that had all collapsed

and there were- we thought there were three people back there, but there were only two. We all got out of the building.

Of course at this time, in 1986, there were no cell phones. We worked with radios which, of course, didn't work half the time. Everyone got out of the embassy safely out into the motor pool area. We had no real injuries, a few scrapes and I think the Labor Attaché messed up a knee but that was it. And it was really a miracle when you saw the buildings around the Embassy that pancaked completely and people were lost.

And after we got everyone out, the Ambassador called a stand up country team meeting. He said for everybody else to take it easy. We're not going anywhere. We all knew right away we couldn't let people go until we knew what the guerillas were doing because there were always guerillas in town and the question was whether they would take advantage of this. And so we had all the security people, the military people, the intelligence people on what communications they still had trying to find out what people knew. The military group leader had one of the six helicopters that we had flown in and it landed on a field next to the Embassy. After some time five of us went up to look and it was awful. The devastation was really bad. However, the residential areas where probably most of our people lived were not devastated, but there was damage.

When we went back the Embassy people were very upset for a number of reasons because they had no idea where families were or what was going on, no way to contact them.

Q: Was your wife in-?

GILLESPIE: My wife was back in Washington then; she had not yet moved.

Strange things, funny things in retrospect happened. The GSO went into the Embassy and turned all the power off and secured things which that I think was quite brave. Kevin Milius was the General Services Officer. He and the security officer then went back and went into the commissary, which was in the Embassy at that time. They came back out with warm soft drinks. There wasn't a lot of bottled water. They had warm soft drinks and cigarettes. Everybody's nervous, they're standing around smoking. It's hot, it's midday in Central America, we're in the motor pool; there's really only one covered place in that motor pool with any shade and that's right next to the gas tanks, the gas pumps. The next thing I know I see everybody over at the gas pumps smoking up their free cigarettes. I asked Donna Oglesby to help take care of our people. She spoke very good Spanish. I said they know you, they like you, get them together, see if there's any trouble. The Ambassador told me to get people away from the gas pumps. I told them the motor pool gas tank's right underneath us. We have no idea what shape it's in. Please don't smoke here. And they'd all leave. And I'd walk back to talk with my staff or the country team for some other reason other and they were all back again. So I spent a good bit of time doing that.

Finally we got out and we went home. Things were all right for staff. We made the kinds of adjustments that you make in this. Some people had houses that were okay, others that had some that weren't. I had to get the Washington boss out of town if I could. But we worked all of that out.

The complicating factor for us, though, had been that two days before, while Donna and I at a conference of Public Affairs Officers in Tegucigalpa, my counterpart there walked in at the beginning of a meeting and put a piece of tickertape down in front of me. It was a big long AP (Associated Press) story. A Contra plane with arms and two Americans had gone down in Nicaragua. It named the two Americans and it said that somebody named Hasenfus was talking-

Q: Yes, Hasenfus became quite a household-

GILLESPIE: Household name. It was something. Hasenfus said that they had flown out of El Salvador. That was a base of operations to do this. Oof. This was a problem, obviously. So, in addition to probably 200 journalists coming into town to cover the earthquake I had maybe another 200 coming in who were there to follow-up on Mr. Hasenfus.

Q: Were you aware of these flights?

GILLESPIE: Not at all. Not at all and this was one of the interesting things because I have never, ever figured out who was. The Ambassador knew; there was an agreement with the government, unwritten but spoken, that they were going to land some planes over there. There were some people who were housed in town. He knew this and I'm assuming a number of others. That's all I knew at that point. But we talked about it frequently.

Every morning the Ambassador had a big wide country team meeting at his residence where he and the DCM setup their offices. USIS had moved to my house. There were a lot of people. Later on there were specialists from Washington, on all sorts of subjects. I was in a house by myself and we had the advantage, Stu, of a long weekend. We had three days. I got into the Embassy after it was secured and went in to make sure that our offices were secure. Our offices were a mess but there appeared to be no really bad damage, some water but nothing structural. We were able, later on, to move back in after they did a lot of reconstruction. I made the decision right away that USIS would move to my house. It was a big house, Central American style, big garden and there was a large guest house in the back. I put the administrative section and the information section in the back; I had guest bedrooms on one side that opened on- out to the garden that were- that turned into the cultural section. I said the front room is a conference room and I told the staff that there are only two places that are out of bounds -- my bedroom a terrace off my bedroom, but that became my office. We worked that way until maybe March of the next year.

Q: By the way, when you were divvying this up, was there any thought to, I think it was our- an Ambassador's name is- I can't think of right now but who had- when there was a bad earthquake in Nicaragua sealed his residence off and, you know-

GILLESPIE: No one could go there.

Q: What? I mean, that must have been on everybody's mind, wasn't it? I mean, of making sure that nothing like that happened.

GILLESPIE: No, I don't think Ambassador Corr ever thought of that. He and Mrs. Corr opened their home to anyone who needed it. They had some people who needed a place to stay and they stayed there. Until all the hotels were functioning his house and the DCM's became emergency housing. The USAID director, who had a big house, did the same.

But meanwhile, we went through about a month of really crazy stuff. Until Thanksgiving we had journalists coming down. In addition to Hasenfus the other name that came up was Rodriguez, Felix Rodriguez. Ed Corr, who I think was really a terrific Ambassador, knew Latin America probably as well as any ambassador that we had at the time. He'd been Ambassador in Bolivia and Chargé d'Affaires in Peru for a long time. He'd spent almost his entire career in Latin America. He was hurt by this. Not the earthquake; I think everybody gave him high marks on that but he was burned by the Contra business, probably unfairly. I don't know any more than I know and from what I know I would always come out on his side on this.

Years later I spent a day and a half before Patrick Fitzgerald's lawyers; he was the Special Counsel named to look into Iran-Contra. For me it was basically just going. They read press clippings back to me and, this was several years later, asked me to create what I said to whom and when in the first week after the earthquake. It was pretty tough. Corr had always been very open to the press and insisted that I be too. He met with almost anyone who asked, maybe not right away, but he would meet with them.

Q: You were the PAO so you would often sit in-

GILLESPIE: I was in on most and every one of them was on tape. If I was not available Pen Agnew, the IO (Information Officer), would sit in. - I should be careful here. I said "almost." We'd get people who would request to meet with him and he would ask us. We would tell him what they wanted to talk about. Early on they wanted to talk about USAID programs, where the money's going, about the Mil Group, how big is it, what's it doing, U.S. relations with Duarte, maybe an arrival briefing from the ambassador. We did a lot of things where the briefing would be on background but he would give them one or two good quotes on the record to use. He was good at this; he liked journalists.

But as good as Corr was, he and I had a talk after the earthquake and with what was known as the "Hasenfus affair" going full steam; we just made a decision that he was too

busy to be available to any journalist and we kept it that way. Pendleton Agnew, who was the Information Officer, and I worked out a thing where we would individually talk to journalists, as many of them as we could, every day. The U.S. Government had made the decision, Stu, we didn't want the earthquake to turn out to be disastrous for the Duarte government, which was a key component of our Central American policy. Duarte was what we wanted to see; Duarte-like governments was what we wanted to see in the other Central American countries, freely elected, dedicated to his country and less and less corrupt and more and more competent. So we started these daily briefings, which began maybe Sunday if the earthquake was on Friday. The country team got together on Saturday for some reason, but we met on Sunday, met on Monday and we would meet at 8:00 every morning at the residence. Pen Agnew would drive to one of the large downtown hotels where most of the journalists had worked and many of them stayed when they came to town and everything up to the fifth floor appeared to be okay there. Well, that's where several of the main offices were but many of those who came in also were in a tent city not far from there and so we would work those two places. Pen would go at 8:00; I would go to the morning meeting. The morning meeting could go on for two hours by the time you got reports and arguments. We got briefings from the Geological Survey people on what was happening and what the aftershocks look like and how bad this had been and what it was. I learned more about earthquake geology than I wanted to know.

Q: How many were lost in the earthquake?

GILLESPIE: Maybe as many as four or five thousand. It was big. The damage was a result of where it hit and when it hit. The main place that it struck San Salvador was right down the heart of downtown. It hit at noon and so you had people going to lunch. They still were in buildings and it was bad.

In any case, Pen and I would exchange information; we'd finish up, I would get on my radio and I would talk to Pen and I would ask what are they talking about? And he would say here are the questions I'm getting. And I'd say here's what I know and I would give him answers to all of them that I could and I'd take the others back to get agreed answers before I took off to join him. After talking to journalists individually or in small groups, Pen and I would head on back to the office. Once telephones were operating we might stay there until lunch. But in the first days one of us would head back to the journalists or to the residence to see what was going on. We corresponded on the radios, which always seemed to be running out of power or going on the fritz. We did that a lot. The number of press just became overwhelming.

Q: Okay. Now let me ask the question that you all were being asked; who the hell was Hasenfus?

GILLESPIE: Eugene Hasenfus.

Q: What were you getting, how could you answer this whole operation?

GILLESPIE: Not much. I couldn't say much of anything about that. I could give them all the answers that I could get on the earthquake and earthquake relief, which was a very serious question. The earthquake was the lead story and the cover story in both "Time" and "Newsweek." That was when those two publications really meant news. But on Hasenfus or Felix Rodriguez, basically I would listen to the questions and take them back to the Ambassador. The press was learning a lot on their own. I was hardly the sole source. I eventually got to where I could talk about it some. Actually, I don't think I ever got to where I could say a lot. I did answer some questions. Marjorie Miller of "The Los Angeles Times," came with Alan Riding of "The Post" (then, later New York Times) and Alma Guillermoprieto, who was with Newsweek at that time, all three of them came to the Embassy residence one evening when we were meeting and asked to see me. I went outside to talk to them and they said Felix Rodriguez was seen in the Embassy and was seen even in the commissary; does Ambassador Corr know Felix Rodriguez? I told them what he had told me, which was that he did not. That wasn't when that- I may have said I do not- you know, it was before that question got there. The question was something else about Felix Rodriguez and I said he's not- he doesn't work at the Embassy. He has no tie to the Embassy, which was true. However, Felix Rodriguez had been a longtime CIA employee under another name. He had served in Vietnam and done a number of other things.

The gimmick for Oliver North that was great, he thought. An arms deal with Iran would provide money that they could just kept off the books. And they used it then for somebody to give to the Contras so they could buy the weapons they need and pay off this little front airline, freight airline outfit out of Miami that would fly things for them.

Q: To put it in perspective, payment to the Contras and all was forbidden.

GILLESPIE: Absolutely. By Congress there could be no payment to them. And so this was what Ollie thought was beautiful. I'm sorry; Colonel North is not one of my favorite people.

Q: I have to tell you a story I got from a man whose name escapes me right now but around this time was DCM in Honduras and his Ambassador was gone and he got a call from the second city in Honduras-

GILLESPIE: San Pedro Sula.

Q: Yes. And they said your boots are ready. And he had no idea what they were talking about but he said he thought well maybe somebody was sending him a pair of boots or something. He said well just send it by mail. And the man said, you know, all 5,000 of them? And he- I mean, you know, these- there were wheels-

GILLESPIE: Oh, there were all sorts of things going on.

In any case the airport, the military end of the airport in San Salvador, was probably a good location to use because it is miles away from San Salvador and it's not anything that

people see really at all. That was a place where they flew larger planes, unloaded equipment; warehoused stuff there and then took them out in a couple of smaller freight planes and dropped them in Nicaragua. They had a crew that was sent, lived in a house in San Salvador, maybe two places. Rodriguez was in charge of that. I don't think I ever laid eyes on the man.

In any case, we went on for about two weeks. The first big thing we had was on the Thursday after the earthquake hit. And, although I have admired him for this, it certainly made life a little crazy for us. Secretary George Shultz loaded an aircraft with senior officials, Inter-American Bank people, ambassadors and representatives from the OAS (Organization of American States) and other- and Western European countries and all sorts of dignitaries and flew to San Salvador. He brought them all up to see what happened with the earthquake and try to get money in there. I thought it was really a terrific idea at the time except they were going to go see Duarte and Duarte said we will take them from the palace, the presidential offices, and he said we'll put them on the buses and we'll drive them and then we'll walk right down the main street for about three blocks. We decided that's what they would do, and when they got to the end that's where they would stop and Duarte and Shultz would have their joint press conference.

Well, the first big battle I had was a physical one. This meant stepping in between Ambassador Edwin Corr, a wonderful guy, and the head of the advance- senior advance security guy. The senior advance security guy said no, no, they're not going to do that. They will not do that; they will not do that. And Corr, who was an all American wrestler at the University of Oklahoma and still would go off and wrestle with the Salvadoran national team once in awhile, was a feisty guy, ex-Marine, and he went right up where this meeting's going on and stood there. I said this will not end well. And Corr was just saying you're going to have to get somebody at a lot higher pay grade than you are to tell me, in the country the President of the United States has assigned me to, what they're going to do and what they're not going to do. And actually he won the battle.

So we went to work in that little section known as USIS to try to set things up. We got the word out to all of the media where they would be; we managed to get two or three interpreters. The State Department press crew was bringing theirs; the resident foreign press didn't need them and I didn't and wasn't going to worry about the others but I was worried about the Salvadoran media a bit. And I said let's get some people who will be right there and will do what they can do for the Salvadoran press. We went out and set up all of the loud speakers and the microphones and had it all done. Well, this was the perfect place to do it. So the next morning, the day of the press conference, Thursday morning, we went out to the site because they were working right there. They had the Fairfax dogs in one building; they had-

Q: You're talking about rescue-

GILLESPIE: Rescue dogs-

Q: Were from Fairfax County.

GILLESPIE: That's right.

Q: Which responds often to-

GILLESPIE: Yes, yes. They're sent out by USAID; the Guatemalan fire department, which is remarkably good, was working in another building there, and the French team was working at a third.

Q: Again they have-

GILLESPIE: They're excellent. Incidentally, of all of them, if you're ever somewhere in that area and a thing happens like this, an earthquake hits, get the Guatemalan fire department. They were in San Salvador the afternoon of the earthquake. They whipped up all of their equipment. They'd just driven- just got in and took off. It's not far but it's still several hours away-

Q: But still.

GILLESPIE: I mean that and everybody said they were terrific.

However this was- the site that became famous as the symbol of the earthquake because in the building the French were working in, which had really gone down, there was a pile of rubble. They were working in the back and because they didn't want to move- You know, you don't move things at that point because you're afraid you'll cause something else to collapse and this is six days later; they were still pulling people out. Not many but a number came out as late as, I think eight or nine days afterwards and lived. But the symbol was this one hand, just an arm sticking out from the bricks.

Well, our young press assistant, who was a terrific guy, went down there early in the morning with the radio guy to start setting things up, and he was there and about 10:30 I went- I was going around checking on everybody to see how things were, what was happening; the press office- our Information Officer, Pen Agnew, was there and I got there and he said this is going to give them a good dose of what it is because it was a little ripe, and he said I think it would be time for you to take Eduardo Torres, who was the assistant, take him back to the embassy and put him in the embassy motor pool where- and let him organize that because that's where Shultz was going to meet with all the staff afterwards. And he said put him there and he can do that. He said Eduardo's a little green; this has not set well at all. It was tough; it was tough.

Shultz came in, had good meetings and they marched down the street. The State Department press was duly accommodated although there were a couple of them who were overly demanding. They said can't you do- why don't you do this, why don't you and I finally had to say do you realize what we've just had here? I said we don't have any of that stuff. Oh. And Jim Anderson came over- Jim Anderson was the UPI (United Press International) correspondent and the senior correspondent at the State Department for

years, and Jim came over and he said you know, probably everyone on this trip has wanted to say something to her like that the whole time. I will not tell you who it was. But anyway, they got through it; it worked. It did from the Embassy's point of view and I think from the point of view of the government and certainly from George Shultz's point of view, what we wanted to do. We impressed the world with how serious the disaster was and how serious the Duarte government was by doing something about it.

Q: Had the guerillas more or less declared an armistice or something?

GILLESPIE: Tacitly. And the reason was, we determined about this same time or maybe even earlier, probably early in the week, the guerillas had been hit even harder than we were in this city. Their communications were hurt; some of the guerillas' headquarters around town were badly hit. So you know, things seemed, you know, at least nothing happened that way. Out in- outside of San Salvador the war went on.

Q: Well now, I would think- When we talk about the press corps, you had, you know, sort of a derogatory term but the people who hung around in Nicaragua, the "Sandalistas," using the play on the word "sandals," these were-

GILLESPIE: We had some of those.

Q: But I mean these were basically people from the cultural left, socialists from France, you know, I mean, in other words sort of quasi-Marxist. I'm not trying to denigrate but I mean they were sort of committed leftists who were trying to play up Nicaragua as being- their government there as being great and also to knock down what we were doing and, you know, a lot of these are very smart young college kids who pin on the credentials- I saw some of these in Vietnam when I was there.

GILLESPIE: Oh yes.

Q: And I would think this would have been an ideal place for them.

GILLESPIE: There were some of those. We referred to them as "backpackers." They would come in, they were stringing, they got somebody to write a letter for them saying yes, he will be serving us as a stringer, frequently it was home town newspapers.

Q: Oh yes, sure.

GILLESPIE: It was individual public radio stations. NPR (National Public Radio) had some people there; NPR was not as good then as it is now. But other than that most of the 75 percent of the people we had were legitimate, serious, full-time, on salaried journalists who may or may not have been convinced of one side or another's thing. Most of them were not; most of them were writing news. One of the problems that we had was the news wasn't always good for us. The hostages thing was a mess. There is no question as they looked more and more into some of the atrocities that had gone on that the Salvadoran military had been involved. This was very difficult for us.

Q: Had the nuns been killed at this point?

GILLESPIE: Oh the nuns were, yes, the nuns were killed earlier, yes, and that was still there. The nuns were killed; there were three Dutch journalists who were killed. I don't know if you recall that, and the Dutch Ambassador for Central America was based in San Jose and he was the Foreign Ministry spokesman the last three years I was in The Netherlands so I talked to him frequently when he'd come to town and he said look, don't expect anything friendly out of The Netherlands on this because that hasn't been resolved well at all. And he said I come in here and go talk to the President and he says he will do something and he can't get anything done. And this was a problem. But that sort of thing was there. In all fairness to USAID it was a very tough thing to try to do, Stu; it was difficult. And they weren't always very successful. And a lot of USAID efforts there were directly or indirectly just budgetary support. El Salvador was broke because of the war. This was difficult. And as you know, trying to defend budgetary support to anyone, especially Congressmen or American journalists is difficult

And to try to tie it up, there were two other press things that were interesting. The official head of the foreign press club in El Salvador was Doug Farah, who was the UPI correspondent there at that time and a fine journalist. Doug came to me and he said why doesn't Corr have a press conference? We need something. I said there must be ground rules. He said we'll accept ground rules. Lay the ground rules out. And so I said well, would they accept something where he's only going to talk about the post-earthquake relief. And he said well, you know, why not? He said there are a lot of people who would like to get the American Government on record on a lot of this. I said let me see what we can do. Corr and I talked about it and he asked what I thought. I told him that he had to agree with me about the rules. Before you get there I will lay out the ground rules for everyone on the subject. Questions on other subjects will not be taken. He agreed.

And so we went to the Hotel Colon. We had a podium on risers and probably had 200 people. By this time the hotel was functioning again and we were in the main lobby. TV cameras, the whole bit. I laid the ground rules down. I said if they are broken, in other words questions about the Hasenfus business asked, I will interrupt and if it happens several times we'll just stop. And for about 20 minutes it just went fine. It was just what I had hoped for. Good questions, good answers. And I noticed way in the back a small group of the best journalists, maybe James LeMoyne, Alma Guillermoprieto and Alan Riding of the New York Times, maybe Marjorie Miller from the Los Angeles Times. I am no longer certain which of them were there. They weren't asking any questions. This was strange because two of them were resident there and were arguably the two best journalists working in San Salvador. I said maybe they feel they see him enough and they know what's going on. And then suddenly Marjorie raised her hand and asked do you know Felix Fernandez? I started to jump in and say that's not an appropriate question and by the time I got there Corr had said no. If you listen to the tape closely you could hear that he was about to say something else. I mean, he started but I interrupted, which may have been the cause of the problem, because he was about to say "No but, I know him under his real name."

Well, that led to one crisis after another where Corr says he doesn't know that the guy was seen in the Embassy; what he was doing there. And of course, we didn't have any more questions, the press conference went on, went back to the subject that we dealt with all the other things, but they kept coming back. And finally Miller and LeMoyne admitted what had happened. The three of them back there; they'd drawn straws to see who was going to ask the question and Miller and LeMoyne came in together to talk to the Ambassador and he said Jake didn't let me finish. He did his, you know, he let me off the hook but by this time none of this sat well in Washington. It led to a bunch of us spending time with the Special Counsel. I am sure that it burned Ed Corr badly and led to the end of a fine career. Throughout this period and going on up into the next year, I think that everyone in the mission, I thought, was quite open with me and answered any question I had honestly and completely, with one exception who I think didn't and told me a lie. Ed Corr was always straight with me and I am very sorry that this business hurt him.

In any case, as with most things in this world, we weathered that storm. We survived it, El Salvador survived it. The rebuilding took a very long time, of course, and a lot of money, including the chancery.

Q: Which is now, I'm told, in a huge fortress which is sort of ridiculous.

GILLESPIE: Let me tell you the story of this. The DCM, David Dlouhy, was given the task of finding property for a new Embassy. David, an extremely diligent man, worked very hard on this. He'd had people from FBO (Foreign Buildings Operations) down and they had looked at things and were about to complete the deal on the new property. This was toward the end of my tour but he took the country team out for look at the property and hear the plans. We all drove out to the site and walked in. It was huge. David said the chancery will go here, over there will be the residence, the DCM's residence will be back here, the Marine house will be over here, there will be an USAID building and a warehouse, and so forth. It was a gated community planned to just absolutely do everything. Donald Trump would have loved it.

I was walking with John Ellerson, then Colonel John Ellerson, now General John Ellerson, who was the head of the Military Group, and the Station Chief who was a very dry wit.

Anyway, the Station Chief looked over at the two of us and said, "You know something? If we lose this war, there's going to be about ten of us here. If we win this war, there will be about ten of us here." And I have thought since how sad it is but it's true; we were living in Henry Kissinger's report, the famous Kissinger Commission about Central America, the Kissinger dream. The whole heart of that was to stick to it, to stay there. The plans seemed much too big.

In fact, however, friends who have served there say it's not very big, bigger than needed maybe, but not too big. It's terrible for public diplomacy because we're far away from everything and it's hard to get to us. El Salvador is better without having Uncle Sam all

over the place. And we still have a good sized USAID mission and the law enforcement people have replaced the military. I think there's still a small military group

Duarte lost the next election, the right wing party ARENA won several elections and now the leader of the party that was the major guerilla unit is now the President. El Salvador moves on. People ask what did you all accomplish after that? Well, I don't know. It looks to me like this is as close to success as you can ask.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: In any case, in our time, as we got into 1987, we started to pick up- I got a new house and I moved out of my two room facility but that remained the office. Actually, I said we were- that was an office for almost six, seven months and it worked pretty well. The Embassy slowly moved back into facilities, some in a reconstruction of what remained of the embassy and others in new buildings elsewhere. And we tried to get back to work; we tried to start doing things.

Q: I was wondering, Jake, this might be a good place to stop because it's just noon.

GILLESPIE: Oh, okay, okay.

Q: So we can pick up sort of after the earthquake-

GILLESPIE: And yes, because then we can go through that briefly-

Q: And then I'd like to also ask about elements of Salvadoran society, the military, the media.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: You know, I mean, how you were seeing things, were they- was this one of these places where they have the top ten families- I mean, what were the dynamics-

GILLESPIE: Yes. I should have done some of that before.

Q: Well we'll pick that up in that next time.

Q: Today is the 21st of May, 2010, with Jake Gillespie.

And Jake, where did we leave off?

GILLESPIE: Well we left off with El Salvador and the Embassy trying to come back to normal after the earthquake. "Normal" was a very special term to use with El Salvador in those days because we still had a war going on around us with which we were very definitely concerned and involved. But we were trying to get back to normal.

There were several things that I thought, as I wrap up the rest of my tour there that I ought to mention. One of the first things was part of life, if you were a senior officer at the Embassy, was Congressional Delegations. We had, throughout 1987 and well into 1988 an average almost three CODELs a week, Congressional Delegations. Few of them stayed very long; they rarely stayed overnight although some of them stayed two and three days. As happens in this kind of case, everyone wants to get his or her ticket punched, that they'd been to Central America, they've done the tour. This was time-consuming; sometimes nerve-wracking because we felt, I think, as a mission, that the success of our mission counted very much on the success of our relations and the administration's relations with Congress. Congress had to continue to support us. They once had not supported us; they were very upset, still, about death squad killings, correctly; they put limitations on us. There were a number of them that were very upset about the lack of progress in terms of USAID projects and really showing success from what USAID was doing. There were those who we battled on the issue of what the military did and how they did it, how well the Salvadoran military was doing, how much they followed their own human rights rules, how much they met congressional and our standards for this. They often were upset about training programs across the board. I'm happy to say that in this one case USIS was probably the one thing they weren't terribly concerned with. It didn't mean that we weren't involved with them a great deal.

One of the mission's toughest critics, but in many ways a very reasonable critic, but a critic nevertheless was Senator Chris Dodd from Connecticut. He was knowledgeable, he had been in El Salvador before; he'd been a Peace Corps volunteer in the area. He spoke Spanish, he knew his way around. He had a rather knowledgeable staff, two of whom in particular were very aggressive and frequently very unpleasant. This is another case where I found my mediating skills called upon to the limit where I stepped in between our aggressive Ambassador, who again was just making the case that he would decide who came to dinner at his wife's table with one of Dodd's staff people, who I think felt left out. He was left out intentionally, I might add. This was the same visit where I got a call from I think David Dlouhy, the DCM, who said we have set up tennis for Senator Dodd tomorrow morning; you're playing him. It was very strange for me. I liked Senator Dodd myself, but as far as most of the country team was concerned, this was a grudge match and was expected to beat him. We split two sets; we played comfortably, we had a good time. But I think, you know, many of my embassy colleagues were extremely disappointed; they had expected me to take someone who frankly was younger than I and maybe a better athlete and run him into the ground, which I could not do. I thought I played pretty well. Congressional people were there all the time. They were there after the earthquake and they- you could always count on them.

We also had other visitors. We had a lot of human rights visitors from the United States. We finally set up something. We had a regular briefing that we did, a good one. It was where everybody in the country team was supposed to have three or four minutes to make their presentation, and we always laughed because the economic counselor started off- we called his briefing "And the earth cooled." He tended to go on a bit. I finally convinced Ambassador Corr that he did not have to do these. It was wearing on him. This

came after he, you know, he was terribly upset with Mary Travers and Peter Yarrow of Peter, Mary and Paul, who were there.

Q: What was this about?

GILLESPIE: It was human rights. They were dealing with a group of mothers. There was a small group, not anything approaching what you had in Argentina and later in Chile.

Q: We're talking about the disappearances-

GILLESPIE: That's right.

Q: And the ladies in the square in Buenos Aires.

GILLESPIE: Buenos Aires. And in Chile they did it later as well. Those in Buenos Aires continue. In El Salvador we had become convinced that there might have been three or four possible cases but there were about 25 of mothers who were out there. The Embassy had been unable to find any legitimacy to most of their claims. And unfortunately we said this, and I can't remember who it was, and this started with Peter Yarrow who was the smaller of the-

Q: This is a very well known singing group, Peter, Paul and Mary.

GILLESPIE: That's right. They were among the famous folk revival of the '50s and into the '60s and today

Q: Yes, great songs.

GILLESPIE: Oh, wonderful, famous songs. In fact, by the time they were there their principle period of popularity had long passed but they still had some clout.

Then we had Richard Gere come through.

Q: Who is a movie actor.

GILLESPIE: A movie actor. And I won great points with the American executive secretary and having her assigned to meet him and bring him up to the briefing.

Q: A very handsome personable person.

Q: Could you talk about the Peter, Paul and Mary thing? I mean, just as an example of what were the dynamics with them and the ambassador?

GILLESPIE: The dynamics, we were in a small conference room; we didn't have really big conference room after the earthquake. We were in a small conference room in the Embassy. They came in with one or two other Americans who were representatives of

NGOs and I do not remember which Non-Governmental Organizations. But they came in; there were about six people from the mission who were there. In this case, since the Ambassador was there, he had asked two or three other people to give a brief, quick briefing. And, is it Yarrow, maybe? I can't remember which one was tall and which one was short. But in any case-

Q: She had long blonde hair.

GILLESPIE: Yes, she you could pick out. She was a very attractive woman with long blonde hair even well into her late 50s, 60s and 70s, and at this time I think it was probably close to 60. He was short and glasses and extremely aggressive and basically stopped the briefing and just started to ask all sorts of questions, pointed, and the Ambassador took over and it went on for about a half an hour, much longer than we had planned, of heated exchange, none of which was pleasant. Every so often Mary Travers would come in and make some sort of an ameliorating remark and then they'd go back. And it was very difficult.

In any case, this went on, it probably went almost an hour. This was in a time when, frankly, I think we all considered the mission understaffed in some areas and the calls on the Ambassador and the DCM and a number of others were enormous.

So after this was over, the next morning I asked to see the Ambassador and went in and we talked for about 15 minutes. I gave him a one paragraph memo that said I don't think we achieved anything positive, we didn't really do anything good at all, and then I chatted with him. For one, I said if you think that raising your blood pressure and the rest of ours is good, okay, but I don't think any of us here are suffering from low blood pressure. And I said your time is too valuable. You should probably come in, welcome them, if they are at a level that deserves it, introduce either the chief of Political Section or me or even the DCM if he's going to do it, and then leave, and say they'll be happy to take all of your questions, I hope you have a successful trip while you're here, and leave and get out of there. And that's pretty much what we set up except for high level visitors, which of course included all the Congressional Delegations.

Q: One of the things- All of us who have been in the Foreign Service, you know, have problems with, particularly with certain demanding Congressional Delegations and often more so with their staff.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: But at the same time, when we sit back and contemplate, here we have a chance-

GILLESPIE: Exactly.

Q: -to call to our masters on our own ground to explain the situation and we have an unparalleled- nobody else- I mean lobbyists would kill to have that.

GILLESPIE: We understood this. We spent a lot of time for those who came for longer than a two or three hour period. One of the things to remember is it took an hour after they got off the airplane, or more, and got together to get up to San Salvador. So if they came-

Q: The airport was-

GILLESPIE: The airport was toward the coast; San Salvador is up on the mesa just below the volcanoes. If they were just going to spend one day and we advised against going out on the roads at night down to the airport, although it wasn't too bad. We probably advised people to do that to get them out of their sooner. We certainly advised them because we didn't want our people to have to come back by themselves. So they didn't have much time if they were there for one day. There were always one to three senior officers who spent the greater part of a day with one of them. At the time of the legislative elections, which came up in the spring of '87, we had a large number of election observers including a big Congressional Delegation and we put one officer to each person. And you're right; these were invaluable and remarkable sorts of things. I got to know, and of course I had an advantage with the Democrats because my wife had worked for Senator Paul Sarbanes. And she was in San Salvador there by then and frequently would meet them at a luncheon or at a social event and that would help some but I met a number of others whom I had never met – members of the House, Republican senators and you're right. It is a great opportunity to make your points. Only a few of them came in thinking they had all of the answers. They're not stupid people and usually if they took the effort to come, even if it was a short trip just to get their ticket punched, they had taken some effort to understand what they were coming in to look at, whether it was the economic stuff or the military or human rights; those were the three major things they came to see. I think of so many posts where the mission was dying to have somebody come.

Q: Yes, nobody- That's probably the way it is there now.

GILLESPIE: I would imagine; I would imagine. When he retires, Chris Dodd said he would go back for vacation because it's a wonderful place to go for a vacation.

Q: Well, let's talk a bit about the milieu in which you were doing-

GILLESPIE: Yes, yes.

Q: I mean, in the first place, the society and the political class, when you were there, what were the-?

GILLESPIE: First the earth cooled. I won't do that.

Q: It's a very long-

GILLESPIE: A long time ago. There had been, basically, since the '30s, a very, very strong class division in El Salvador. First, it's useful to note that there were few Indians,

as we think of them, in El Salvador. There were some; you had to go way out into the country. You could see a few Mayan descendants, but not many. It was a country for the most part of mixed Indian and Spanish. There probably were still some pure Europeans. There were some who were more recent emigrants. So that was the racial makeup of the country.

Q: Did you have Lebanese traders and all that?

GILLESPIE: There were Palestinians and Lebanese who were known as Turcos, because when they arrived they arrived at the beginning of the 20th century, they came on Turkish passports. It was a sizeable community and actually, in most cases, almost fair to say was not a community. It had completely intermingled.

Q: It was not necessarily the commercial establishment.

GILLESPIE: No, it was not, although there were a number of them who still were in the commercial field, but it wasn't solely. El Salvador was a plantation economy; basically, they made their money off of coffee. It was wealthy landowners and large plantations. It wasn't very successful because that meant you ended up with an impoverished, relatively impoverished agricultural worker community with little land. There had been efforts, or just talk over the years of land reform. The first big cry for land reform, which became violent, was in the '30s and the land owners and the government wiped the workers out. I mean, literally. It was a terrible- and of course this became the basis of the war that they were still fighting. The political elite, by the 1980s, was landowners based. They worked out an arrangement with the security forces so that the military and landowners controlled the governments. The FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) was formed, along with two or three other organizations that basically went into a guerilla war with the government and took over large sections of the country. It's a small country and by 1986 the FMLN and its supporters controlled as much as half the territory of El Salvador, including the border area with Honduras. In terms of population, not nearly as much, because those were the less populous areas. They controlled it by just making it difficult for anyone to go, which is easy for a guerilla group to do.

Q: Sure.

GILLESPIE: But they did control, consequently, sections where it became easier for them to move weapons in and move people in and out because of the border areas and some of the small fishing ports. And they were pretty successful. The US government was extremely concerned because they were Marxist. Their leadership was young intellectuals. There were not really very many of them at a leadership level who came from the working class; almost all of them were middle class leaders. Intellectuals and a number of others. There were a lot of people who went into exile. Most of the Christian Democrats went into exile until the early '80s. Duarte had come back earlier and set up the Christian Democratic Party to oppose what was known as the ARENA, the right wing party. The right wing party's leader was Fernando D'Aubuisson Riso, who was a terribly

charismatic man but I sincerely believe in almost 40 years of service overseas, I don't think I ever met anyone else who I think was really evil, but this man was.

Q: He was at Georgetown, wasn't he?

GILLESPIE: D'Aubuisson, no. He was very smart. He was very vicious. He was directly responsible for the murder of Archbishop Romero and of setting up the initial death squads along with a number of other landowners and major business people. Fredy Cristiani, who succeeded him as head of ARENA and was elected President after Duarte, went to Georgetown.

Q: What were the death squads?

GILLESPIE: The death squads were small, paramilitary groups, made up of former military and police. They killed political leaders, kidnapped others, and terrorized El Salvador in the 1970s and 80s. We had a question later on as to really how many people the death squads killed and I have no idea, but it probably was less than the most extreme estimates that I have read, which were in the thousands. It probably was in the hundreds. Of course, that's all you have to do in the right political milieu. Terror operates by fear.

Q: Sure.

GILLESPIE: And you install the fear and then it only takes a telephone call to get someone to pack their bags and move to Miami or to Mexico City or to Panama.

In any case, in 1985, to everyone's, frankly, I think great surprise, Duarte won the election. They had enough people to take a majority in the parliament; they set up the government and by the time I arrived in '86 they were functioning fairly well. ARENA had the landowners and the upper classes. There were a few landowners who supported the Christian Democrats. The Minister of Finance had been the Deputy Minister of Finance in the previous government. He was talented and I think, apolitical. ARENA reorganized. They realized that the first thing they had to do was get D'Aubuisson out of the lead. International pressure was such that the world would never accept D'Aubuisson as the leader of their political party. And they put Cristiani, in charge. D'Aubuisson became vice president of the party. I think he thought Cristiani would be a good front man. Cristiani was rich, smooth and acceptable. D'Aubuisson did not speak English well. But Fredy Cristiani did. He was well known and well accepted in the Embassy. We liked Fredy, but we had some doubts about his ability to lead ARENA. I think he surprised us – pleasantly. That's where we were at that time and they were trying to put their party back together.

What had happened to El Salvador was that the middle class and lower middle class had taken over to run it politically but the economy remained controlled by the right wing. The Christian Democrats had made known that they thought land reform was necessary and they tried it in some places. They tried it with large estancias that had basically been abandoned because of the fighting, and they took them over, divided them up or tried to

set up co-ops and work that way. They got a lot of assistance from the Venezuelan Christian Democrats who came down and put some money into it. I think a lot of that money was awash through from the European Christian Democratic movement. The German Christian Democrat's Konrad Adenauer Stiftung was active through them.

Q: Sort of a Socialist-

GILLESPIE: No, no, that's Ebert; Ebert was the Socialist. El Salvador politically was still an iffy issue and an iffy place to be involved if you were a Western European.

Q: What about the French, you know? The French, particularly French intellectual left, always made a lot of noise about Central-

GILLESPIE: Yes they did and they were- But- And you had, you know, we saw some of that but not much, not nearly as much as I would have expected. We saw a good bit more from the Dutch.

Q: Your friends.

GILLESPIE: My friends. And you know, I always made a point when the journalists came through on this to speak to them and brief them in Dutch and I tried to make some points but I don't think I did. The Europeans weren't really terribly involved.

Q: Scandinavians?

GILLESPIE: Oh, maybe once in awhile but not much, not much. You had the Venezuelans and Mexicans.

Q: What were the Mexicans after?

GILLESPIE: Well I don't know. I think that if the Mexicans think we are the Goliath to the north, the Salvadorans tend to think the Mexicans are the Goliath to the north and so they never had a great deal of influence.

The political wing of the left, which was the Frente Democrático Revolucionario, was based in Mexico City and in Panama; there were two leaders. And we spent a great deal of time the last year that I was there trying to convince those two leaders – Ungo and Zamora -- to live in El Salvador and be based there. They had made little noises that they were ready to move back. We talked to the government. Duarte was perfectly willing to have this happen, but ARENA was not at all. Ungo, the principle leader, was an anathema among the right. In any case, they did move back. They had lived there about four months when Ambassador Corr asked me if I thought we should invite them to the Fourth of July party, and I said why not. I said we can do nothing else. We invite a whole lot of minor figures from the major parties. I said look, you will have ARENA people walk out. Not all of them, but maybe a lot. And many of them won't talk to the FDR people. But I said we should make a point that this is the way to go. We did invite them. I

think it was very well received, all in all, and quite successful, Stuart. We had one or two of the old line ARENA people who walked out. Fredy Cristiani did not. He stayed and in fact he did not speak with the two leaders, but a couple of the ARENA people did. As somebody said, this is a small country; we all are related by intermarriage or some way. You know, or they went to school with them and so they're going to talk to one another. It turned out that my principle contact in the government was the Deputy Minister of Information and Culture and later the Minister. He said I went to school with Zamora, we went to university together; I've known him since we were-

Q: Little kids.

GILLESPIE: Yes. I think this was a major step along the way to the reconciliation which started and was successful after I left.

Q: Did you start doing something that- Say in South Africa we did of, you know, having dinner parties where we brought people together from different things.

GILLESPIE: We usually did. There were times when we just wanted to talk to one or the other but we tried to get them together as much as possible. I had met this couple; he was a businessman. I also played golf with him once in awhile. Nice guy; he had gone to the University of Texas, married an American woman. He'd lived in the States for a number of years, had his family business and was quite successful. There was an American AFL-CIO representative working through their international arm, helping the non-Marxist labor unions build up the strength. I invited them both to a party. It was a pleasant party, everybody got along, but I talked to Felipe later. He said, you know, he's a nice guy but he's never going to be successful because no one will ever let any of them in. And I said isn't it beneficial to have him organize a democratic union rather than one that's tied to the FMLN? And he said the moment my workers tell me they want to organize I shut the plant down. That's the sort of attitudes that were there that were. I don't know how we could break through them. There was a group of moderate, but still very conservative but politically moderate, more moderate, less extreme businessmen who had organized together and were trying to do some things. We could pull them together with others. We tried to get the whole community together but there were animosities there that had existed for decades.

In any case, we did succeed in some ways. There were things that still were remarkable, I think, and one was the types of things that we still managed to do as an institution; USIS, with those programs you asked about the other day, about what happens in the division between the culture vultures and the information. Well, here we were in something where basically I was a press officer and an advisor to the Ambassador. Those were the things that I did, mostly. But, starting when Pen Agnew was CAO before I arrived, we developed an Exchange Program that worked. One of the things in crisis in a place like that is you do get money and we were sending International Visitors off regularly, a lot of them; there was a new program under the academic exchange system that was set up. We had a small Fulbright program; it was ongoing and pretty good. USIA provided a great deal of money and the emphasis had to be on students who were not yet in university and

who were not wealthy, poor. We had to make that effort. The new Cultural Affairs Officer, Gene Santoro, and the academic exchanges' assistant, Jorge Piche, really developed a terrific program. Students went to the States for a year of English to make sure they could function in a university and then they sent them to small state teachers colleges around the country. It was a wonderful program.

The other thing that was strange was ongoing cultural presentations, either that came from the United States or that we arranged and were in the area and we picked them up. Every year a young conductor from Northern Virginia whose name was Richard Williams and I think he may have been conducting the Fairfax Symphony, he later conducted the Norfolk Symphony, he came down and he spent three weeks with the Salvadoran National Orchestra. The Salvadoran National Orchestra had kept going through all nation's troubles. The National Theater where they performed was downtown in the old section of town. One day when they were rehearsing, gunfire broke out all around. The theater doors were open and he paused. He said he didn't know whether to throw himself on the floor or what. And he paused and he looked and he turned to the concert master and he said should we take a break? The concert master said you only have so much time here. Rehearse. And no one moved. The orchestra played. They played concerts regularly. They were the best concert orchestra in El Salvador, let's put it that way. And they, you know, they made an effort. They were wonderful people.

Pendleton Agnew, who was the Information Officer when I first got there, had worked in an earlier post in Guatemala and he got a call from the BNC that Phil Wilson from the New England Conservatory of Music, who Pen had met in Guatemala two years before was coming back to tour Central American BNCs.

Q: BNC?

GILLESPIE: Bi-National Commissions. They are a variety of things; most of them were built around English teaching but they have cultural programs. In some cases they are a direct cultural wing of the Embassy; in other cases they're more separate. We had separated from the one in El Salvador because the board members were tied up with some things we didn't care for. But Phil Wilson was going to come back with a jazz quartet, would we be interested? When Pen came to me, I said can we do it? It was early in my tour and I wasn't sure. He said that we could. They put on a concert and one master class. Wilson had two students and another faculty member from the New England Conservatory. Wilson still plays and teaches, but he had been one of the leaders for a number of years in Woody Herman's orchestra and had played for Stan Kenton. He is a great musician and it was wonderful.

About six months later the cultural presentations people said how would you like to have Wayne Toups and his Zydecajun Quartet, Cajun music, and I thought, oh my, how will we do this? Well, we pulled that off. The President's wife and her organization co-sponsored an outdoor concert that was great fun and packed. We had a concert party at my house. We had three Salvadoran bands, we had Wayne Toups and the staff had gone out of their way with the guest list. We had the most diverse group of invitations you can

imagine. Everyone from two of the soccer stars to Miss Teen Salvador to President and Mrs. Duarte. And it also coincided with Susan's and my 25th anniversary. And it was delightful, as was the whole tour.

Around Thanksgiving USIA offered us another cultural presentation – a great jazz musician, Don Cherry and a fantastic quartet. We offered them to the university, the Jesuit university and there was a concert there, and then we had a big open air concert in an entirely different place in the heart of town. A great success.

So we were pulling this kind of thing off. We restarted our American Fulbright program and we had three people come and spend a year while I was there, a playwright-theater director and a printmaker, and both were quite successful. The third was Mike Jerald, an English teaching specialist from the Experiment in International Living who came with his family. He was terrific and has returned to El Salvador several times. Mike and Judie Jerald have since become close friends.

The types of visitors changed. We had a large delegation, 20-30 women, who came from the Women's National Democratic Club, led by Dorothy Dillon, who was a former senior official at USIA. She had proposed a lot of the schedule and she asked me what else to include. She said I want this and this and this. Well, she wanted Duarte. I said difficult but we'll see what we can do. Since she had several major Democratic Party fundraisers there and actually a rather talented group of women we managed to get a meeting with the President. She wanted to meet with the ARENA Party leaders and we set up their principal briefing with a wonderful historian who became the peace negotiator when Salvador settled the war and they ended the violence. And he was the one who, when asked, toward the end of a briefing with a Congressman, if there was a good history of El Salvador? He said there's a wonderful one volume history, "One Hundred Years of Solitude" by Gabriel Garcia Márquez

Q: Ah, "100 Years-

GILLESPIE: "Cien años de Soledad." And the people he told didn't really get it. But you know he said this has been a strange place.

In any case, things were coming back. There still was violence, there still was war, but things were starting to change.

Q: And reconstruction, of course.

GILLESPIE: And some reconstruction. We also had people coming down to ask questions about Iran-Contra because that had expanded from that initial blowup. There was Congressional testimony going on and, in fact, the Salvadoran hook became a much smaller one, although it was one that weighed on us for a long time, years afterwards.

In any case, as we got to the end of my tour, in late '88, the Salvadorans were gearing up for another election. We spent a great deal of our time watching this. The Christian

Democrats were having a hard time organizing around a candidate. Presidents could not succeed themselves and they didn't have a natural candidate. They had two men who wanted it; they eventually nominated the lesser of the two, frankly. Sometime in the fall the election was held, we had large numbers of election observers again. It was a pretty good election, all in all. The FDR opposition did not run. We tried to talk them into running a candidate but they would not. They made the decision that they'd still stay out. But they were more visible in San Salvador, the political wing, not the military. Cristiani, the ARENA candidate, was elected and the changes started. Ambassador Corr left. What was terrible was six months after we left the guerilla armies made what turned out to be their last big push and tried to get into San Salvador. They came down the hills, in the spring of '89. They came down from the hills, down the volcanoes. They had been on two of the volcanoes we knew, and used one of them as a major camp. They came through the barrancas, the gullies, into the city. It was major attack; they almost took San Salvador. The military reacted eventually and drove them out. While doing this, an army unit went into the University of Central America and killed the rector and four other Jesuit professors and officials at the university in what was, you know, it was just a horrible act of violence. And that set El Salvador back again.

Later on negotiations began and eventually El Salvador calmed down and started reconciliation.

Q: Well, one thing you haven't mentioned, before we move on, what about the influence of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the Cubans?

GILLESPIE: I think we made the case politically in the United States that the Sandinistas and through them the Cubans had a great influence. Some of the guerilla leaders had been trained in Cuba; there's no question that some arms came through Nicaragua. I'm not sure other than that. No one ever talked about Nicaraguans being captured or Cuban-

Q: Advisors-

GILLESPIE: I don't recall advisors being spotted or even spotted at all. This-

Q: It was pretty much a homegrown thing.

GILLESPIE: It was, I think it was very much homegrown. The Sandinistas, at this time, remember, had their hands full. I mean, the Contras were making some gains.

I did have some good friends, a wonderful- two wonderful Salvadoran journalists, one the editor of the only decent paper and the only thing approaching a decent paper and the other his top journalist and arguable the best editor in town and when- they were rather outspoken, both of them. The other two papers were both right wing, one trying to be respectable and just making money; it was loaded with ads. The other didn't even have any pretense of that; the editor/publisher/owner lived in Miami because he was afraid, he'd been threatened once by, he said the left wing death squads and I don't doubt it. And he just- he wrote 75 percent of the paper from Miami and never set foot in San Salvador.

He did come once or maybe twice; once I met him. He was, you know, a young guy, he wasn't terribly interesting. But they weren't any good. The government television station was poor; the private television stations were interesting, working on entertainment. One of them was run, for the most part, by the Venezuelans sent down, the Christian Democrats.

There were two cable systems in Sans Salvador, neither one could really make much money but the advantages of them was that they were all pirating shows off of satellites and you would get all sorts of things. But the one that I subscribed to was recommended as the better system, was owned by Duarte's brother-in-law, who was a nice guy. He was a businessman, and we played golf on this little nine hole course together now and again and he was much better than I was but I saw him frequently, we'd laugh and talk. He once told me this story of he went in and he tried to go to Ted Turner to cut a deal. He told them I'd like to subscribe to these things, your baseball games and get this and get CNN. And they gave him a price. And he said that's silly. That's more than I make gross all year here, I can't do that. And so he said well the heck with it; he'd just pirate the shows. He said the reason I make anything at all is that I do this.

One day, it was one of the year the Redskins were really good, they won the Super Bowl, but it was coming toward the end of the season and they had a big game. I went home on Sunday afternoon and I sat down ready to sit and watch the game, and I turned it on and instead they had some other game entirely. As a matter of fact they ran them on two different channels and they had two games, both different. And I said this can't be. And I picked up the phone and I called him, just kidding, saying what are you doing, what's the matter? And he said oh really? He said we're supposed to have the Redskins; just a second. He said don't worry. I think there were some people over at the house, you know, guys, we were going to watch it together. So we sat there and suddenly the screen went to snow for about three minutes and then it flipped up and here came the Redskins game. I figured this was the best cable system I've ever had. You don't like it you call the owner and you get it changed.

El Salvador, lot of bad things still happened after I left. I mean, we had a sense that things were going to get good but- and they eventually did.

Q: Well maybe as a- before we wrap up this, the El Salvador, on the Ollie North thing, how much- you did mention that you got called in; did you find yourself at all involved other than this-?

GILLESPIE: I don't think so. We talked about it in the mission. By this time I was in Madrid and I got a call one day from a lawyer in the General Counsel's office, actually it was the Deputy General Counsel who was a career guy, who had been there for a long time. He said Jake, we have a letter of request here for you to do this, and he said they wanted to know where you were and I have a copy of it and they want you to appear. And so I kind of said you know, what does this mean? And he said I don't know; I can find out. I said do I need legal- I said will you provide legal help? And he said no, we can't. Do I need a lawyer? He said let me find out. And he called back the next day and he said

they're only interested in you as a witness and they're aware now you're in Madrid; they don't need you to fly back, but they are interested in when will you next be here. And at that time my mother had died, my father was in the middle states of Alzheimer's and I was coming back. There were also reasons for me to come back for consultations. And I said I can be back there within six months. I said, you know, I will let him sway. He said that's going to be fine.

So I flew to Washington, went in and I sat down and as I said the first time, they spent a long time setting the stage with me, what did I do, who was- did I know so-and so-, did I know so-and-so, and then they went through press clippings from back here. They opened- they had a file with my name on it-

Q: And you're showing about an inch thick.

GILLESPIE: Well it's not- no, let's make it a half inch.

Q: Okay.

GILLESPIE: But it was press clippings. It was press clippings and it went on, and you said this. And did the ambassador say that? And I said you know, I can check on some things but I can't check on everything. I can refresh my memory. I have some things. What I did not have, of course, I did not have the tapes of every interview the Ambassador did. Those belonged to the post. But when he did interviews I also made notes. They weren't very good. I mean, they were basically notes that would help me look at things or listen to things on the tape if I had to go back; one word, two words, and a notebook this size and-

Q: Just a small little one.

GILLESPIE: Yes. It was- And we went through this. I think the appointment was 2:30 or 3:00; we went to about 4:30 or 5:00 and I said well that's- and they said no, why don't you come back tomorrow morning? He was actually was nicer than that. It was a young lawyer with an FBI agent with him. And even that afternoon as we got into the questions the FBI agent was bored. You could see he was and he saw that I didn't have any information but he wanted me back the next morning. And I said yes but that's it. I said at that point I fly out of here tomorrow afternoon and I go to Boston to see my father. We had moved him from the Missouri up to be close to my sister.

The following day in the last hour he went back to individuals in the mission and asked a lot of questions. Other than yes, I knew them and maybe he did, or did you know what the head of the military group did. I said I have no idea what the head of the military group did except when he was in my office or we were in the same place together. I mean, it was this kind of thing. And at that point they said thank you very much, if we need anything else you'll hear from us. And I never heard from them again. It was probably about three hours of questions over two days. As far as I was concerned, on my

end it was a terrible waste of money. They would not fly me back and they were wise in that sense.

Q: Okay. Well I'm just-

GILLESPIE: Okay. I can quickly do the next year.

Q: What was the next year?

GILLESPIE: The next year I went back to Washington. There was no onward assignment immediately. I went back to Washington and by great fortune I became the Deputy Director of USIA's Press and Publications division. This was the division that basically was USIA's publishing business.

Q: This is '89, '90?

GILLESPIE: This is '89. I went back just before Christmas and I started doing this in January and I did it for about 10 months and it was an absolutely marvelous job. We put out a four- five- four publications regularly, "America," which went to the Soviet Union, was a very well known publication.

Q: Beautiful.

GILLESPIE: Yes, gorgeous magazine. "Dialogue," which was a very fine publication. "Topic" for Africa. The fourth one was an economic journal. In addition to that we prepared all sorts of pamphlets; any of the pamphlets- and they were good. The people that I worked with were remarkably talented. I mean, these were really remarkable professionals at what they did. And there were two other parts; one was the wireless file, which was USIA's press service that went out all over the world in French- English, French, Arabic- Spanish and Arabic and Russian. Again, limited. It was not a press service; they didn't do news. They did things of interest to the government, things-

Q: Things that you pass out American-

GILLESPIE: Yes, or things-

Q:-policy, things like-

GILLESPIE: That's right; policy statements, analysis of policies and events. That was all but again, a good service. These people, most of them, many of them had been journalists for many years. They wrote well and it was a good service.

Then in addition there was the printing section. It had three facilities around but no longer had three big printing facilities. They had the big printing facility in Manila, which prints U.S.- materials for U.S. Government overseas and remarkable amounts, beautiful things, all sorts of things and does it very efficiently and relatively inexpensively. That's relative

to the United States or to other places. They had an office in Mexico City, which used local printers and put things out only for Latin America in Spanish. And they had a small one that operated in Tunis doing the same thing in Arabic and there was also the office of an Arabic language magazine that was distributed. It was a delightful year that I spent doing this; worked with wonderful people. My boss was Vic Olason, one of the very talented senior officers of USIA who was a pleasure to work for and is a dear friend. We had three senior officers who made up the rest of our staff; the head of the publications division was Mike Canning, a very- a wonderful man, a very good friend. And Steve Monblatt, another old friend, who headed up the wireless file. And Terry Sullivan, who was the head of the printing division, a lifetime printer. Their Christmas party was packed with everyone because it was a Christmas party put on by all of these people with incredible sorts of decorations and other things that the artists made. It was really great fun. We had a good time.

And I thought- I had the job and I said to myself, this may be it. I may be perfectly happy; I can do this until I retire. And I went off on a trip to visit Vienna, where there was a local operation there that was aimed at Eastern Europe, and Tunis, which I had never seen, and to stop off and check on two projects, one in Paris and one in The Hague where they were trying new things with the wireless file on distribution.

And I was in Tunis when Vic Olason called me. Vic had left Press and Publications and had gone to the European area to become the Assistant Director for Europe, and he said Jake, you once said to me that the job that you thought would be the most fun, the best job you wanted overseas was Spain. Do you still feel that way? And I said wow. He said well if you do, you get your name in right away because somebody's not going and there's going to be a vacancy and we've got to fill it.

The next day I went to Paris and Susan was waiting for me. She'd decided to come along and she'd take a little vacation and so she'd flown over. And Susan had said she never wanted to go overseas again. She was working in Sarbanes' office again and was very happy. We spent a wonderful day; we went in the Musée d'Orsay and we walked. We ate strawberries in Paris and we did things and then we were in this wonderful little bistro and about the second glass of wine I said do you like this? She said this is really great. I said what would you think of living in Europe for a few years? And she looked at me and she said what are you doing? I said how would you like to go to Spain? And I managed to bribe her into it that way. And so in late '89 I left and I went to Madrid.

Q: Okay. And we'll pick this up-

GILLESPIE: Next Thursday at 2:00.

Q: Yes.

Today is the 27th of May, 2010, with Jake Gillespie.

And Jake, where did we leave off?

GILLESPIE: My wife had just said yes, you may accept the job to go to Madrid. The reason that this was a question, of course, was that she had gone back to a very good job with Senator Paul Sarbanes and we had more or less agreed when we came back that that was it, I would finish up and retire. But before I went to Madrid there was the problem of actually being named, and this got a little tricky.

It was the beginning of the first Bush Administration and the-

Q: This would have been-

GILLESPIE: It was 1989.

Q: Eighty-nine.

GILLESPIE: It was 1989, in the fall, and President Bush had named a number of political appointees as Ambassador, among them Joseph Zappala, a developer from Tampa, who was named to Spain. A number of the nominees, I don't want to say they caused a problem but they upset some Senators and finally the senior Senator from Maryland, Paul Sarbanes, he said we've got to do something and he put a hold on one. He said I'm going to put a hold on one symbolically and he brought out the fact that Mr. Zappala and Mr. Sembler, another nominee from Florida, both had their questionnaires filled out probably, as it turned out, by the same public relations outfit. And these were the questionnaires that were sent by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and they were filled out identically. And Sarbanes said look. We just had one of our senior career diplomats in Madrid-

Q: Who's that?

GILLESPIE: Reginald Bartholomew, an outstanding diplomat who was there for some very, very difficult things and Spain coming into NATO. Bartholomew had left, Zappala was there. Well of course, here I was stuck with the situation of Paul Sarbanes had a hold on the man who was to be my Ambassador if I were to go to the job. I went to Gene Kopp, Deputy Director of USIA, and I said Gene, here's my situation. I said I would like to go to Spain, it looks like a wonderful job, but if you think this is a bad idea for this reason I'll drop out, no hard feelings. Kopp just said no, impossible. You're our nominee. And until they give me a better reason why you can't go you're the nominee to go. Go talk to Zappala; see what he says. So I made an appointment with Zappala, I went over to the State Department and he was delighted to see me. Here the poor man had been sitting around for six months at this point and he didn't have a lot to do and so he was delighted to have someone come in and sit down and talk to him. And he said oh, we're going to have a great time. We'll do a lot of stuff and so and so. I said well, maybe I should explain something first. I talked to Zappala and I told him my situation. He said oh well, you didn't know you were going to get this job when she took that one. I said I thought you should know this and I don't want this to cause any sort of hard feelings. He said oh no, no, and he brushed it off.

Q: Is this your wife connection to Sarbanes?

GILLESPIE: Yes. She was his Executive Assistant and met with him regularly. And I said if this causes you a problem, you should know she will stay for about six months after I go to Spain. She didn't stay that long, as it turns out. Well he said no, no, it's no problem. Well, to make a long story short he said okay, I went back to USIA and said there's no problem at all. In fact all he had though-

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: -When he became Ambassador, we came to a pretty good working agreement, he and I. When he had two or three extra drinks in him though he would make sure I was in hearing range and start lambasting Paul Sarbanes. It was an exciting time to go. I went in November 1989-

Q: And when did you leave?

GILLESPIE: I left in December '93, so I was there for four years, four very exciting years. Spain was focusing on 1992. When I talked to the Spanish before I left and when I talked to people in USIA or in the State Department all they could talk about was 1992. Nineteen ninety-two was just enormous. It was the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus and there was supposedly a big bi-national Spanish-U.S., private Spanish-U.S. commission to organize all sorts of events. Well, the Spanish did very well with it; I'm not sure we ever did quite as well but we did a pretty good job.

Q: Well it was also- It got mixed up in local political correctness.

GILLESPIE: Well that comes later.

Q: Okay.

GILLESPIE: It comes later because the Spanish were interested in that. The Spanish actually supported some of the questions about what did the Trans Atlantic movement actually mean. What did the three-way movement actually mean? Of course it also brought Africa into it because it was the first movement of slaves to the New World. It was the movements of diseases both ways, the movements of fruits and vegetables and other flora and fauna.

Q: The introduction of tobacco to Europe.

GILLESPIE: That's right, which probably paid back the syphilis we brought there. It's a pretty fair trade, I would say. But that was really not a problem. The problem with Spain was that there was nothing at that time in Spain that was completely private. They were working their way out of a quasi Fascist government into a democracy and they had a socialist government at that time. Between those two factors the government had its

hands in everything. Well, that didn't work on our side and it was tough for us to make things work that way.

The next big event, of course, was the big Expo in Seville. The Worlds' Fair, which was enormous and was going to be phenomenal and my own feeling was later on it really was. Our participation was always a battle, a very serious one from my point of view because USIA was somewhat responsible for the management of the United States pavilion. It was very complicated because we were very limited on the federal monies that came in and that was a battle.

Then there were the Olympics. So this was all that year

Q: In Barcelona.

GILLESPIE: In Barcelona. And my own feeling was probably the neatest Olympics that were ever- I've only been to two others and Barcelona was....

Q: Well one always thinks of the guy with the arrow, shooting an arrow up in the air, lit the-

GILLESPIE: And lit the candle. Well, you know, it was all wonderful. I remember- no, don't get me going on the Olympics. There were some remarkable things and I'll get to that as we get into-

Q: We'll get to that.

GILLESPIE: But those events were out there ahead. In order to get to that, once I got to Madrid I first of all had to get settled and I had an extremely good staff, remarkable Cultural Affairs Officer named Edward McBride who was there for about a year and a half, almost two years with me before he went to London, and I still think he is one of the best that USIA ever had. The rest of the staff was extremely strong. The foreign national staff was remarkable. The senior cultural assistant was a young woman with a PhD in American studies. You don't get many of those anywhere. She was very, very good. The senior information assistant had been editor of a major daily before it closed down on him and he decided to come with us for awhile, which he did. But it was this quality that was constant in the office. The office was very good.

We had a huge Fulbright program that was bi-national and very nicely run. The Spanish may actually have contributed about 10 times as much money as we did to it. They were devoted to it. There also was a very large program that had some monies left although it no longer existed called the "Joint Committee," the Joint Committee for Education and Culture that was a leftover from the bases agreement. It was the old bases agreement, the one previous to the one that we were working under in 1990. The United States had operated out of four military bases in Spain. They all were Spanish bases, legally, but we were the principle operators. Three Air Force bases; actually there were five, the Rota Naval Base which was very big and then a very small naval base in Cartagena that was

closed down very quickly. So were the American operations at the three Air Force bases while I was there. That was to come. As part of that agreement the Joint Committee received every year this huge sum of money that basically went to the exchange programs. We had all sorts of people who were traveling; the number of Fulbrighters was huge, we had a very active Fulbright Commission. People participated. And the woman who was the Executive Director had been for about six years when I got there. Her name was Maria Jesus Pablos. Maria Jesus is today the Executive Director of the Commission, which celebrated its 50th anniversary a few years ago. It celebrated its 35th while I was there. We had a big program where the speaker was Prince Felipe, the Crown Prince, who was about to go off as an honorary Fulbright fellow to Georgetown. He was going to Georgetown anyway and we quickly latched on to him, a delightful young man who will be king some day.

To get to 1992 and those events we had to get through 1990 and 1991. In the end of 1990 the first Gulf War crisis began to grow. One of the air bases, Torrejón Air Force Base, was just outside Madrid. The original reason for the bases agreement goes the 1950s. It was made by Dwight Eisenhower. And the agreement was made because we had no strategic aircraft that could fly from the United States to the Soviet Union. And so we needed something else. One of the Air Force people said you are living on the largest aircraft carrier in the world, because that's basically what the Air Force looked at Spain as. Spain was a place where aircraft were based to take off and go to somewhere else because they couldn't go all the way from the States.

For the first Gulf War virtually every piece of equipment, every person who was flown to Saudi Arabia for that war flew through Spain. And by early '91 there were aircraft taking off and landing virtually every minute. As soon as one was off another would come in and it would be fighter planes that were going out; it could be C-5As that were loaded with enormous loads of equipment and that was just non-stop.

The problem was you were in a country, and this is the appropriate time to talk a bit about Spain at that time, were in a country where the fascist dictator had only been dead for 10 years. They had had a democratic government, new democratic constitution and government only for eight years. They'd had one successful change of power and the government of Felipe Gonzalez, a Spanish Socialist, long time, was in power. They had, throughout their history been anti-NATO, anti-Franco, and anti-U.S. They blamed the U.S. for propping up Franco with the bases agreement which we made in the '50s. You can argue this either way and it is an arguable case that is fairly legitimate. I know that wasn't the intent but in order to get that agreement completed there had to be an agreement for Eisenhower to visit Spain and that really was not a happy time in the early '50s. But for this reason it was kind of tense for us as we started off with them. In fact, the Spanish government was full of moderate, what I think we could call middle of the road European Socialists. There were two or three or four of the old line hotheads who basically took all their lines from the Spanish Civil War, but that's an entirely other month of history that we could go into. But we were working well with them. Spain had wanted to be in the Common Market; they needed to be in the European community. They needed this economically for them to grow. They understood that was important.

The European Community said okay, we would like to have you come in. You've got to meet our requirements but you have another one. Given this, you have to join NATO, and this was a bullet for the socialists. They did and it dawned on Gonzalez, I think, somewhere along the line, although it was never explicit, that not only did they have to join, they had to be a good member. They had to really participate, Stu, and this frequently was tough. In the course of '91, as we were approaching we had a visit from the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, who came to visit on a one day business call. They were coming in and out. They came, they spent the night; we had a working breakfast with them that I will never forget. It was the second time that the Secretary of Defense had been there. The Secretary of Defense at that time, of course, was Richard Cheney.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: And they had been there once before, now, where they had gone in and told the Spanish that they were going to pull out of all three of the air bases, which really shocked them. And of course now they were back to say well before we go, guess what? We're going to be using them like crazy. And they already were but they basically were in to discuss with the Spanish government their plans for using Spain during the war. And in the course of the breakfast they absolutely shocked everyone when they said they were going to put B-52s at the air base outside Seville that would sit there until D-Day and would take off and make their bombing runs on Kuwait and Iraq. And they looked around the table and Cheney looked at us and he said no comments? And he went around afterwards and he went one to one and he came to me- I had gotten to know Pete Williams, his spokesman rather well, and he came to me and he said Mr. Gillespie, Pete tells me you probably will have some questions on this. And I said I just can't imagine you can keep it quiet. I said with the bases down there, people are going to wander around; somebody is going to see these aircraft. When they do we will have major demonstrations in the street. And he said well, what's a major demonstration? I reminded him of the funeral for Dolores Ibárruri, known as "La Pasionaria", the communist leader from the civil war who died about two weeks after I arrived and I'd never seen anything like it. They filled the streets of Madrid. I mean, they absolutely stopped everything and it was packed and you couldn't move, you couldn't go out, you couldn't get out, you couldn't walk on the sidewalks. It was all the way down through the city. And it was probably half a million people proceeding through town. I said they'll do something like that only they'll just stop in front of the Embassy. And I said it won't be pretty. I said I'm not sure it will be that bad but I said they will not like it and it will be very loud and very noisy and there will be a lot of activists on the street.

I talked to the DCM later who accompanied them, along with the Ambassador, to their meetings. Ed said Felipe Gonzalez said there will be no trouble. Well, Felipe was right and I was wrong. There was no trouble at all. There was a remarkable performance. We were concerned after the war started about our own our people's security. I closed our Cultural Center for about 10 days. We just didn't open it to the public and we had extra

guards. We were worried especially because the Spanish had kind of a sweetheart arrangement with Hezbollah and some of the other Arab groups.

Q: These are terrorist groups.

GILLESPIE: These were terrorist groups. And the agreement was we're not going to say anything about whether you come in here as long as you don't do anything here, ever. And so there were very good intelligence reports and newspaper reports that they were in several cities around the country. There had been rumors that they had done some training of the Basque terrorist groups, ETA. I don't think they ever had; I'm not sure that they had. But we were concerned. In any case, the B-52s landed, they pulled it off and it was a remarkable sort of a thing.

The next 1991 event that followed this came in the fall. I was on home leave and I'd taken it a little early because my son was getting married and in fact it was a Thursday- it was a Thursday afternoon or maybe it was Wednesday and we were driving from Washington to Boston. My son was going to be married in New Hampshire and we were to wedding. And my wife was sleeping in the car, I was listening to the radio as we drove through Connecticut and the news came on and they said Secretary of State James Baker has just announced that there will be a Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid and the President Bush will be meeting with Gorbachev and all of the European Community leaders will be there and the Israelis and the Palestinians will meet for the first time. They are meeting next Tuesday. It was a very big deal. I called Washington and said my son gets married on Saturday; I can't leave. And there was a great deal of hustling and running and I stayed for the wedding. I left the next morning and went to Boston, got on an airplane, and of course my staff had done a wonderful job. The President was there; it was really something. And everyone had worked hard. We had a junior officer, a trainee, who was on our staff, named Jim Seward who spoke Russian, and he was the only person in the mission who spoke Russian and so Jim was over at the Russian Embassy coordinating meetings.

It was a remarkable seven days. Bush came and then Secretary of State Baker stayed for almost a week afterwards, continuing to negotiate with the Israelis and the Palestinians, trying to get negotiations going. And they made some headway. I think actually successful in that it got something started that has never really completed but it is ongoing.

Whereupon we got ready for 1992 to take off. I'm trying to think which one of those three things to start with; I think I will start with the Universal Exposition in Seville, known as the Expo. Countries take pavilions and the United States had been assigned a very big and prominent space for a pavilion. We had started off the way we had in the past for these and there had been a competition for design.

Q: Oh yes.

GILLESPIE: -and a major design was picked. Charles Wick, who was the ex-Director of USIA, was going to be the commissioner; Marvin Stone was going to be the Deputy Commissioner. The only thing that happened was the Congress wouldn't kick in the money to make it work. And there were a number of people on the Congress who said we just should not be involved in international expositions and world fairs; that's not government business. They're too expensive; we don't get anything out of it. There was money in the budget to get this one started but we couldn't get much more and we didn't get much more. Certain people on the Hill threatened to put a complete stop to it.

We had some friends. In 1990, Dante Fascell, who was then the Chairman of the House International Relations Committee and Claiborne Pell, who was a senior member of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, and I think about another 10 members of Congress and 20 staff and wives and others came to Seville to be briefed on what was going to happen and find out. Fascell supported us. Fascell was in favor of this and wanted Congress to help. They have a recess around Easter. And the NATO Parliamentarians organization was meeting in Madrid starting the week after Easter. So they arrived in Seville on Thursday before Easter. Good Friday is really important in Spain. I mean, it is major and all of Holy Week is major. Well Fascell came in and his staff, led by Spencer Oliver took off after me and said Jake, you know, Chairman Fascell really would like to play golf on Good Friday. He said get him some tee times. So, with some effort I got tee times. Many clubs and other things are closed on Good Friday. We got a colonel from the Spanish air force to help us out and off we went, although that morning Fascell said that if this was going to cause problems, we would not go.

Fascell loved golf and he and I took off played together. In the course of the morning he said Jake, I am willing to help you all I can but just remember there are certain things that I need and don't ever get after me about. I knew what he was talking about and it was something I wouldn't have anyway but USIA people did. It's Radio Marti and TV Marti, which were aimed at Cuba but this was his constituency and so Dante was perfectly willing and he took care of them as best he could. But he was very good to us as we traveled, we went around Seville. They certainly got all the wonderful tourist things, had prime seats in the mayor's box to watch the Holy Week processions go by, which is a remarkable thing if you've ever seen them anywhere in Spain but in Seville especially.

But the briefing was very interesting. There were only one or two people present in there who were questionable about this. At this point it was very interesting because it was the Democrats who were opposed, for the most part, to supporting the Expo, but not all of them. Fascell was a Democrat and a strong supporter. He said I want you to brief, Jake. And so I was briefing about it but basically it was Fascell's briefing. You could see. Someone would ask a question and I would answer it and Fascell would ask the follow on that made the answer something that he wanted to say/ And we did this all the way through.

In any case, they left satisfied. That was the first of several tough visits. The other one was at the same period was from Congressman Neal Smith, who was there two or three times. He was the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee for the State

Department and USIA. He really controlled the money. He became a supporter of Expo although somewhat more skeptical. He is a very nice guy who retired and went back home to Iowa.

We managed to fight it with Congress. Charlie Wick left and was not the Commissioner. Marvin Stone tried to be Commissioner for about six months and he said he couldn't do it because they couldn't raise any money and they couldn't get the support from the White House he needed. And the White House named a man named Fred Bush. Fred Bush had been the finance chairman for President Bush's campaign. He was a very pleasant younger man from Maryland; he's no relationship to the Bushes at all. He would introduce himself said I'm Fred no relationship Bush. But he had an impossible, very difficult job.

We put up a passable pavilion and I think managed to overcome a lot of the complaints by bringing in one of the few original copies of the Bill of Rights, and then making a very nice film, talking to leaders around the world about the U.S. Bill of Rights and what they had seen in it and learned from it. The last one that they interviewed was Felipe Gonzalez, and I sat in the morning they were making the film for almost two hours. He was really terrific; he was a warm, comfortable man who during the breaks cached cigarettes from all the crew, which I always thought was fun. He insisted, of course, in doing it in Spanish. And when they would talk he'd say I'm sorry, you know, my English isn't good enough. He'd sit down with the crew and informally chat with them very comfortably in English. But Gonzalez never really went anywhere after his terms as Prime Minister in Spain because he didn't speak English well.. He spoke some French and a little bit of Germany but he didn't speak enough of another language to go to the European Common Market, European Union and become the head of the European Union. He was certainly qualified otherwise and would have been elected easily.

The Expo went off. The Spanish were delighted. It packed people in. It caused us some other complications because we started having VIPs coming in that we had to, in some cases, shepherd around. Most of these were assigned to USIS to take care of and we split the duties among all of the staff.

The World's Fair was successful; the Olympics were very successful. The only headache we had in the Olympics was that President Bush names a representative to the Olympics, an official delegation, and ours was headed by the current governor of California.

Q: Schwarzenegger.

GILLESPIE: Arnold Schwarzenegger. There was nothing wrong with this at all except he was a bodybuilder and he had admitted using steroids in the past and this was the year that the Olympics were really going after steroids in a big way. And Arnold was Arnold. He wasn't yet governor; he was thinking of running for it, obviously. He had his two or three people who were surrounding him. And it turned out that he and my wife and I stayed in the same hotel that Arnold stayed in, by chance, and it was very close to the Olympic Village.

This became a little bit of a family story because we had gone to the Olympics first to watch the whitewater canoeing at a course up in the Pyrenees. My daughter's friend at the time was a whitewater canoeist in the doubles and we watched that event it was delightful. After his events were finished everybody went down to Barcelona. We went to Barcelona and our daughter ended up staying with us in this great big room in this hotel.

The Olympic Village was right next door. Well a lot of the athletes didn't stay in the Olympic Village because- especially the pros because they weren't- it wasn't private and it wasn't air conditioned. So some of the top track people and the tennis team, I remember, were staying at our the hotel. I was downstairs with the Public Affairs Officer from Barcelona, Guy Burton, who was taking care of Arnold. And he said Arnold is going to do an interview later and I've got to get him and he's supposed to meet me. Well he was down here and a lot of kids just hit him. Here was the Terminator and kids saw him and surrounded him. He signed autographs and he was doing that with a great big cigar in his mouth. Suddenly Mary Jo Fernandez and Gigi Fernandez, who had just won the women's doubles gold medal with their medals on their neck came in the lobby. And the kids, the whole group just moved like a cloud from Schwarzenegger to the athletes and he was standing looking somewhat bewildered. He couldn't understand. Where has my audience gone?

Other than that we had no problems at the Olympics; it was a wonderful, glorious event and everybody- I think everyone was quite happy.

Q: What sort of things did you get involved in, terrorism-wise?

GILLESPIE: We were extremely concerned, always about- that it was there. But it was, Stu, it wasn't something that was in front of us every day the way it was in El Salvador. It was- We knew it was there and then, suddenly, out of the blue, there would be a bomb blast and they would hit something. One day they hit a very nice little restaurant where an awful lot of the Embassy staff went down and ate. No one was there. The advantage was, of course, if you're an American you eat at lunch hour, usually on an American schedule and you're eating somewhat earlier than Spaniards and there were a lot of the military who went in there from one of the headquarters.

Maybe there was something that happened in Madrid once a quarter. It worried us; we were worried about Hezbollah but I think after '91, although we still thought about them that went away a bit. ETA was always present. I traveled a lot; I traveled up into the Basque country. I went to Bilbao as we had a Consulate there. We actually closed down the USIS operation while I was there. We kept one contractor who did some things for us. I talked to a lot of people. There was no question that the Basque nationalists had a great deal of influence but the terrorists did not. The Basque nationalists, there is a Basque nationalism that is somewhat strange and different, as most nationalisms are. Europeans nationalisms are rather vociferous, but peaceful. We worried about ETA terrorism. It was so unpredictable, Stu, that you could not really decide, you could not make predictions. You couldn't say you are not going to go to this place or that place because it's

dangerous, because you didn't know. There might be a bomb blast in Seville. We worried about big events but the Spanish security services were very good at things like that. It was something we lived with all the time and they still do.

Can we pause for just a moment? I want to look at some notes, Stu. I actually wrote down a couple of other things I wanted to make sure I covered here.

Q: We're back on.

GILLESPIE: In the course of trying to get things settled for our pavilion at Expo the Director of USIA at the time, a man named Bruce Gelb decided he had to weigh in and he had to make sure that the Spanish were not upset with what we were doing. And the way he was going to do that was he was going to talk to King Juan Carlos. Well, I got a call from Washington saying Director Gelb was coming in. You don't have to do anything except he needs an appointment with the King. And I said to the person who called me that, you know, this isn't something that you do by just picking up the phone and calling; you don't just say gee, is the king free, I'd like to stop over. This is a very proper Spanish- a very proper European monarchy and in fact in many ways it is one of the oldest and old-fashioned still.

Q: And the Austro-Hungarian monarchies had the reputation of being very, very formal.

GILLESPIE: Well yes. And then you add Bourbon sensibilities in on this. Now in fact Juan Carlos was known for being a very friendly and warm and open person but I went to the Ambassador and he said no. He said no, we don't do that; we don't just go up to the King because somebody wants to see him. We go up to see the King when we have a reason to go see the King. And this went back and forth and finally Zappala just got mad at me and said okay, you're doing it. I won't go. I won't have a thing to do with it. Make the appointment, get up there and go.

I made an appointment. My staff was quite good. Actually my assistant, Irene Diaz, did it. We were also going with not only Director Gelb; I was going with Director Gelb and a young woman who was a friend of his family's. The young woman is the daughter of Spyros Skouros, who you may remember was a Greek motion picture mogul, very well known and maybe a major player in Greece once upon a time. She was a New Yorker like Gelb. Well of course being Greek and from that family she was also a very good friend of the royal family because the queen, Queen Sofia, is from the Greek royal family. Austro-Hungarian intrigues were really wonderful.

In any case, on this day I picked up Gelb, I brought him to the office to walk around and meet staff, which he did. We got into the car, we picked up Miss Skouros. She had a package in her hand and Director Gelb asked what it was. She said this is a gift I have for the King; it's something that my company is starting to market in New York. Gelb looked at me and said do we have a gift? I said yes, we have two very nice books on sailing that I had stashed away the last time we had a chance to order some really classy books.

Q: Because the king being a sailor.

GILLESPIE: The whole family is. One of the daughters had sailed in the Olympics. The son, all of them sailed; all of them were athletes.

In any case, we go, we arrive. We don't go to the palace in Madrid; we go to the working palace which is outside. It's known as the Zarzuela and it's much more of a very pleasant, park-like setting but it's almost an office building. And we went in; we're in a waiting room with two military aides and the door opened and an aide took us in. We're introduced to the King and we sat and we chatted for 15 minutes or so about a variety of things, focusing a good bit on the problems in Seville and all of the other things that were going on and what we were doing. He couldn't have been nicer. He was well briefed. He knew what he was talking about and we came to an end and got up to leave. Gelb said may I speak with you alone a minute or two and they went in and closed the door and we went outside and that was fine; we stood outside for two or three minutes. The door opened, the two walked out and Miss Skouros said to Juan Carlos, this is something I brought for you. Gelb had already given him the books on sailing and we talked about sailing for awhile. And the king said what is this? And she said open it up. And it was a weighted training jump rope. You know, the kind you use in a gym but it was weighted. She said this is a new model and she said I knew you'd like it. Whereupon he took it out of the box and flip, flip, flip, flip, he jumps then hands it to Gelb, who goes flip, flip, flip, flip and tosses it to me. And I go flip, flip. I wasn't going to mess around too much and I handed it very nicely back to the aide. And so that was the day I jumped rope with the King of Spain. Hey, what more can you ask? It's very funny, you know. I think my epitaph will end up being "He jumped rope with the King of Spain."

Later in my tour we changed Ambassadors. Zappala left just before the Olympics. Actually Zappala left about five months after the Middle East peace conference. He was ready to go. That was his achievement. President George Bush had stayed in the Ambassador's residence while he was there and that for him was the high point of his ambassadorship. He left and he was replaced by Richard Capen.

In any case, one of the things you do in Spain, if you are an Ambassador, is you present your- you present your credentials. In Spain you do it officially. You present them to the King in a very formal ceremony. The Foreign Ministry sets them up, usually several Ambassadors in a day, one after another, the way our president receives ambassadors and letters of greetings, the same way and they are usually about eight of them. They never see each other; they go one after another. They all think they are the one. And we did too. It was the same thing with us. We met at the Residence and the Ambassador, along with four of his senior staff, goes. You go in morning coat which you rent, the stiff collar, the tails, everything.

Q: Striped pants.

GILLESPIE: Striped pants. You go to the place where you rent this stuff and the guy knows exactly what you're doing and what you're wearing because that's his business.

Q: Been there, done that.

GILLESPIE: He's got them all. He said we'll get you a hat and your wife will get a picture. You know, he said your wife will get a nice picture, you'll look good, that's fine, you can take it off when you get home. Don't burn a hole in the pockets, you know. I said I quit smoking. He said okay, that's good.

They pick us up at the residence; the foreign ministry sends cars and they pick you up there. For this you have to try to imagine a little bit the geography of Madrid. The cars then take you to the Foreign Ministry, which is in the old city, about four blocks from the Plaza Mayor, which is the big, gorgeous plaza in Madrid that is 18th and 19th century- 18th century for the most part in Madrid. It is beautiful with three story buildings all- houses all the way around, completely enclosed with gates, passageways in the corners. And they pick you up there; you go to the Foreign Ministry and you have a toast with the desk officer; there are two or three others, senior foreign ministry officials who welcome us all and we know them all and we all have a glass. It's all done by the numbers and they say okay, it's time. We go down and we get in and the Ambassador arrives. If you turn around you can get an idea of what it looks like.

Q: We're looking at a- actually a court painting of Korea.

GILLESPIE: That's right. He arrives in a big coach with the Spanish- the Head of Household the royal household and the Chief of Protocol. It is a coach with horsemen, a team of six or so in front and then the four staff get in a smaller coach not nearly as elaborate. We had a nice little black coach, It is taken out of the armory in the palace to use. I mean, it is 18th century, gilded, painted and beautiful. We ride behind and follow. You come out of the Foreign Ministry and there is a mounted Roman bugler that just plays a fanfare as the Ambassador gets into the coach. The mounted guard then with the drum and bugle take off and they lead; we all follow and we go down through the Plaza Mayor. The Plaza Mayor always has tourists and this is the part I must admit I love most of all because I couldn't resist. They're all looking and here are these college from the United States and I'm waving out the window. I just thought well, they're going to say which movie stars are these? And it looks like a movie; it really does.

And you go all the way through the Plaza. You're still in the old city and you come out to the eastern side of the city and there is the royal palace. And you come to the gate and there are two gates; the principle gate in the middle and then another gate to one side. The Ambassador's coach goes to the principle gate. Both coaches turn at the same time and proceed down past mounted troops all in formal regalia and a mounted band. Follow them down and as the Ambassador goes through the gate the band breaks into "The Star Spangled Banner." Well that tugs a big. You really feel impressed. We arrive at the front of the palace and we go so no one ever sees us; the Ambassador knows they can see him. They open the doors and we follow the Ambassador up the broad staircase into the second floor of the palace. The Royal Palace in Madrid is a long series of rooms. It's an

18th century palace actually and it has a series of rooms with a corridor with doors into the rooms.

You walk down; at every door stood two- what are they called?- they're Alabarderos in Spanish and I'm trying to think; they're pikemen.

Q: How about like the Vatican guard?

GILLESPIE: That's right; they look very much like the Vatican guards.

Q: X.

GILLESPIE: The halberd, it's on a spear; it's long and tall and about a foot wide with a blade about a foot wide at the top and they have these and they're all at rest. If you look down you can see they're all standing- And as the Ambassador proceeds through every door, the two of them will snap to attention and so as the Ambassador goes down through these half dozen corridors they just snap, snap, snap, snap all the way down. When we got down to the end we waited. The Chief of Protocol says it will be just a moment and the Head of the Household waits and goes in, then comes out the door a little bit and he says please and the Ambassador follows and we follow in and line up on the side. And they have told us all exactly what we are to do, of course.

The Ambassador goes through the formality. He presents his letters to the King and he says about 15 seconds' worth of how happy I am. The King says about the same thing, back and forth, whereupon the Ambassador then says I would like to introduce some of my staff. And we go over one by one and are presented to the King. And I was the second, the second or third and I go over and I stand there and the King looks at me as I'm being introduced and I get a wink as he nods, and that was it. We did not jump rope that day. And we go out.

I had been through a presentation to Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard when I was in The Netherlands on a day when the Queen receives all the diplomatic corps. It's done in a precise way and you go through formalities. It was in the big old palace in Amsterdam but nothing like doing it in Madrid.

I have mentioned almost everything of major importance except for the- well, there is one other event of importance that happened in 1992, of course, and that's the U.S. elections. For us this was a major- it's always a major event. The summer and fall we were on the road, the whole staff, we divided things up. A staff meeting seemed sometimes that all we would do was say okay, here's the list; who wants to go speak here? We'd do a program, you'd have a speech to this university class, that university class, this organization; all of them wanted to talk about the American elections and we had a team of about 10 people on our staff who would go out and do it and sometimes they'd go in pairs, sometimes they'd go singly and we covered the country. The Information Officer, Paul Saxton, and his staff put together and arranged the election night proceedings and the Foreign Service nationals kept saying to me, you know, this will be big; this is a big thing here. I said oh,

okay. And they managed it. They took over the two principle ballrooms of the Intercontinental Hotel in Madrid. We sent out some invitations and invitations could come right on in. We had an entrance for invitees but it was open to the public and we weren't going to open up until, I think, 10:00 that night or maybe even 11:00 that night. Well for the Spanish that's still early. Madrid is the only place in the world I've ever been where they regularly had traffic jams at 3:00 in the morning. I went home and somebody said go to bed. I went home and I took a nap and went by it about 9:00, I think, for some reason because it wasn't far from where I lived and went home again and the line was already starting to form. By the time they opened the line stretched for three city blocks and people just kept coming in all night and of course we sat there, this was the Clinton election in '92, which was quite close, and we sat there until the, you know, late in the morning, I mean mid-morning almost.

Q: Well were you having people from your staff get up to explain or-

GILLESPIE: We had some explanations going on; we had television screens all over. They were doing television programs live from there so we had telecasts going on. We had Spanish experts who would come in and speak. We had people from the Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad, each with their booths and their things set up and they just went on. Then of course the hotel, the Intercontinental Hotel, had all sorts of food and drink all the way around. And it was a remarkable evening.

Clinton was elected, things were going to change. The Ambassador stayed until about January of '93. He kept saying well I think I'm going to stay on because I have good relations with all of the Democrats on the Hill. Well in fact it was pretty much a done deal he was going to go. We got a new Ambassador in late summer. I only had about two months with him, Richard Gardner. But 1993 for me was great pleasure. There was much less pressure on jobs, on other things. I did a lot of the fun things that USIS does. We go back to the question that we had from the very beginning about what does public diplomacy do one way or the other and I can tell you now about the pleasures of sitting and having drinks and a light dinner with Joyce Carol Oates and her husband and a half dozen Spanish writers or-

Q: She's an-

GILLESPIE: American author. Or spending time with William Kennedy, another American author, or walking through his retrospective in the Reina Sofia Museum with artist Richard Serra as they opened it. And watching the Spanish just be absolutely thrilled that they were getting a chance to see these things that for so many years and hear these people that for so many years they had been cut off from. And Spain at this time was coming into the first years of really realizing what it was like to be part of the rest of the world. I don't think we realized how isolated Spain was from the rest of Western Europe as well as the rest of the world and the Western world from the time of the civil war all the way up to the death of Franco. There are things that we really don't realize and the effect of the civil war on the Spanish consciousness and how they- it's still a major thing.

One of the things I enjoyed was the Spaniards I spent time with. One special friend was a man named Pepé Ortega; Jose Ortega is a historian. He is the son of Jose Ortega y Gasset, the famous Spanish philosopher. And there is a Ortega y Gasset Foundation in Madrid and it is a Brookings-like institution, a think tank where they have a number of visiting scholars. Pepé very kindly started to include me in their weekly luncheons when there were American fellows who were there or anything like this, and he and I just started to have lunch frequently and chat with each other. And one day he said to me, Jake, when did you get over your civil war? And he was very serious. When did you, as a country, really get past all of the things after the civil war? And this is a man who has studied at great length in the United States, who knows the United States well. But I could see where he's going. I said I know it took us a long time.

Q: Well I put it after World War II.

GILLESPIE: Wow. After World War II. I started telling the story of my grandmother, who I mentioned earlier, who really did not forgive me for many years for voting for John Kennedy. She was a Republican. She was a Lincoln Republican. Her father and her husband's father had both been prisoners of the Confederates. Her father had been in Andersonville. She wouldn't consider the Democrats. And Lincoln, you know, and that was her party and that was it. And it was- And that's as late as 1960 so I know-

Q: As a matter of fact, yes, I lived in a southern town coming from _____ then _____ but I lived in Annapolis and the Navy was very southern.

GILLESPIE: Oh the Navy's very southern. I mean-

Q: And you know, it wasn't until maybe afterwards where you no longer talked about- the word "Dixie" sort of tainted out about then.

GILLESPIE: But then we also have had to come through the civil rights thing which comes from that.

Q: Which is almost a different-

GILLESPIE: That's right. But it's a difficult thing. He said you have no idea how difficult this is. He said I don't know if we ever will get through it in my lifetime. And I think of this; Spain is still going through this and it is something that you don't ask people what they did or what they're- where they were under Franco. You don't ask.

Q: You know, you've got to get rid of a couple of generations.

GILLESPIE: Absolutely. And that was fascinating. The other thing that was fascinating was how little we know as Americans about Spain, how little I knew. Spain was a strange country to us. There are a lot of Spanish in the Americas but they all got to the Caribbean and turned left, not right, quite naturally. I mean they didn't have to learn another

language so there were some Spanish immigrants in this country. There were some and very interesting people but they were much fewer than other immigrant groups and they had much less influence on what we learned. I don't think I ever learned anything about Spain after Columbus.

Q: I, just this morning I was interviewing Ed Salazar who grew up in Santa Fe, and he said they were- Santa Fe, they thought of the conquistadors but they didn't think of the Mexicans. The Mexicans were a secondary people and you know, things that happened on Plymouth Rock or something, I mean, that was just another world. But it was this isolated- But this was a northern New Mexican thing.

GILLESPIE: That's right. But there are other things. I told you, we have a place up in Ipswich, Massachusetts, that we go to. We spend a good amount of time there because it's close to where our children and grandchildren live. Ipswich just celebrated its 375th anniversary as a town. It is an old town. And people talk about, well you know, we're one of the five oldest towns in America. And they name them off; Plymouth, Jamestown- they admit Jamestown; they admit actually about three others in Virginia, they don't count them. Then they name Salem, Boston and Worcester.

Q: Not Saint Augustine?

GILLESPIE: And I just paused once and of course I don't want to get into a barroom brawl in a town where I'm really just an outsider sitting in, living there now and again. I said, well, what about Saint Augustine and Santa Fe, and all of these places. However we don't think of them as Americans that much, and of course we think of Santa Fe and we think of the California mission towns, we think of those as Hispanic, as Mexican-American; no, those are Spanish. And they're very different than the others.

Consequently there is a lot of Spain that I never knew about at all that is fascinating, that the Spanish history was fascinating, Spanish pre-history is fascinating. Again, thanks to a wonderful assistant and a friendship with the Director of the Spanish Archeological Museum, we got into the caves at Altamira. They closed them to the public, hardly anyone gets in anymore. We were fortunate that we had a chance to see them.. They were taking eight people a day to go in, or maybe it was 10 people in two groups, something, 12 people. That was it. There were six of us and a wonderful guide and it was a remarkable thing to see. Spain has history that goes from there. Spend time in Barcelona and you can, just ambling, you can go from art works that are pre-Colombian; pre-Roman, Roman, medieval, gothic, right on up, of course, to the great 19th and 20th century architecture that you can see and then the glorious 20th century, right- just walking on an afternoon's amble. But we don't think of the older things. Spanish history- The history of the civil war's a tragic and a remarkable

Q: I don't think it's even an inch in most American history. I mean survey courses.

GILLESPIE: No. A number of the Spanish will say you should forget us in the 19th century because there's nothing, the Bourbons were- actually the Bourbons were not very good. This is the great Bourbon king, the one they have now.

In any case, I came to the end. I had some wonderful times. There were fascinating things. The four years came and we packed up and we came home. We came home in time to see- We were coming home, we weren't going to extend because we came home just before Christmas and got settled, moved into the house and the first grandchild was born in December.

Q: I want to go back; were you in Madrid when they had the Madrid conference on the Middle East treaty?

GILLESPIE: Yes, I mentioned that.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: But how much were you involved?

GILLESPIE: A great deal.

Q: What was your impression of the various delegations? I mean, what sort of things- How were you involved?

GILLESPIE: I was more involved because we handled all of the press events during the initial meetings. Secretary Baker stayed on for another week so we worked closely with his staff. The first major events were the Gorbachev meeting with Bush that frankly we set up in the Russian Embassy. It was very interesting working with the Israelis. They are always extremely competent and know what they are doing. I've seen that before and I saw it in my next assignment as well. At that conference, they would come to their thing, knowing what they're going to do. The Israelis defend their interests very, very well and were very good at it. For the Palestinians at that time, this was the public beginning of that that wonderful Palestinian group where Hanan Ashrawi made her first appearance with them. The other Arab delegations I can tell you nothing about. The European Union was there as were the Brits and the French but really pro forma, I think. But it was an interesting sort of a thing.

We dealt much more working with the Spanish and the press facilities. The Spanish, again on a week's notice, took over the largest conference center in town, actually it's an old convention center that they had, and turned it into the press center, and it was enormous. This was the facility for everything and I was walking there with Milton Viorst, who wrote the piece for "The New Yorker." We were walking around and he said this is remarkable. He said they really have done a terrific job. But he said I have one minor complaint that really isn't a complaint. He said look; they have put little

sandwiches, they've come and they freshened these plates that are out there and they put plates of just nibbles and things at the bars, you know, and you say come, get a drink and get a soft drink or-

Q: This is tapas.

GILLESPIE: All over. Yes. Tapas all the time. He said the only thing is, look; this is the first Middle East peace conference in the world, and who do you have together? Who made up 50 or 60 percent of the journalists here? He said Israelis and Arabs. Right? He said what have you got out here on every table? Serrano ham. He said come on; how do you do this? And I said you know, you're absolutely right. It's funny none of it lasts long.

Q: Well it all of a sudden became less to be- It's Spanish turkey.

GILLESPIE: That's right, Spanish turkey, Spanish turkey. But it was an interesting time, an interesting sort of a time.

Q: Were you- Were there any glitches with the Olympics, from the American side?

GILLESPIE: No.

Q: I mean, people behaved well and-?

GILLESPIE: Oh, the people, yes. The people behaved well, the athletes were good. I will tell one other story, again, of wandering around Barcelona. We were with my daughter and a Dutch friend of hers who had come down; the two of them had played field hockey together at the University of North Carolina and were very good players. Both, the team was great and they were very good. And with them was my daughter's friend, the Olympic kayaker. As many athletes do at the Olympics, at international sporting events, you wear your warm-ups. You know, you don't have a whole lot of clothes. So if you're going out the nicest looking thing you had is that warm-up suit that says USA across the front. And you know, my daughter explained this; of course she said you know, it's really- this is one of the great thrills. She had been on the national team and there was a national, kind of a second team that she was on for awhile that went to an international tournament. She said walking through Vancouver wearing a shirt with USA on the front, she said you just don't know what a kick it is.

And we were in Madrid one evening; we had eaten and we were walking the Ramblas and the Ramblas are the wonderful walking streets with shops and vendors all along the side and there are everything; there are birds, there are, you know, just glorious things; magicians, there are things going on. As we're walking along, there's a crowd in front of us. They're standing around this one place and in the middle we can see it's an American athlete. We go and look and we're standing on the side and he's signing autographs. And it's Charles Barkley, the American basketball player, and Barkley sees our friend Elliot and says hey, come here, come here. Here, you sign these; just sign my name, that's

okay. I've been doing this for a long time, I'm going to go in and get a beer and he walked off and laughed, and everybody was happy.

We'd get on the subway; we went to see the track and field one night and we got on the subway the next morning. There was a young Dutch woman who had won the 800 meters the night before and she got on, and she wasn't wearing her warm-ups; it was during the day, it was hot and she was wearing regular clothes. When she got on and people recognized her and they applauded wildly.. You know, this was the whole atmosphere.

The Americans generally behaved well. I could have done without Arnold's cigar smoke but he behaved well. I think everyone was happy with that. We had visitors who were good. I don't recall any sort of trouble. It was a very happy Olympics all the way around.

The Spanish were worried all the way along that things weren't going to be finished. The reason I was in this big glorious hotel, as were others in there, was that this is now the Hotel Art Ritz Carlton. It is down close to the beach in Barcelona and the problem was they weren't going to finish it and so they didn't open it. And I had gotten rooms in kind of a shabby little hotel but rooms were hard to get. Our PAO in Barcelona called me one day and he said I've got a much better room for you; you're going to have to pay a little bit more but not too much. And he said but I'll guarantee you it's a much better room. He got us in it because they suddenly decided they were not finished; they didn't have a restaurant, all the rooms weren't open but they could open a few floors and serve a buffet breakfast; otherwise they would go broke. So they opened it up and instead of a five star hotel it was a three star hotel because they didn't have some things. And the prices, by Spanish law the prices had to go down, and that's why we ended up there.

Q: Did you run across Ruth Davis while you were there?

GILLESPIE: Oh yes. Ruth Davis was the Consul General when I got there. She was a true delight in the whole thing. She became very close with the Mayor and the Mayor was the principle mover behind the Olympics in Barcelona and he and Ruth were fast friends. Ruth was reassigned before the Olympics and invited back by the Mayor as a special guest, which was very nice.

Q: Did you run across, during you work there, the Catalan Spanish divide?

GILLESPIE: Oh yes. How about my own staff? That's a good start, it's an interesting thing. I speak pretty good Spanish and I would go to places in Barcelona, a little café where I would order in Spanish and they would answer me in English. If you don't speak Catalan over there they're not going to speak Spanish. It is in many ways an even a stronger nationalism than Basque nationalism. There is, arguably a stronger Catalan culture. There is a historical Catalan culture. There is a written language that goes way back. There is a Catalan nation maybe that stretches far beyond or beyond Spain, into France, includes the Mediterranean islands of Majorca and Minorca. It's there. There was once, while I was there, some violent terrorism, one event. Of course there had been an

earlier one when the Consulate had been bombed that appears to have been them. It could very well have been ETA too.

Q: That would be the ____ Basques.

GILLESPIE: Yes. And that happened about two years before I got there. But the Catalans of course have devoted their energies to entrepreneurship and commercial success and success in Barcelona, and that part of the country is terribly successful. The businesses are successful, it's industrious, they do well, they have a thriving cultural- institutions that have money and that function well. The truth is, this hurts, I'm sure, if I say this too loudly to the Madrilènes here but the Barcelona Opera is a much better opera company and runs better operas than Madrid. And of course where you see it, if you really want to see it, you can see it definitely twice a year, sometimes three or four times a year and that's in Madrid or Barcelona. Go into any bar because you can't afford a ticket to go watch the football game. And these are two they're certainly two of the five or six best teams in Europe.

Q: We're talking about Real-

GILLESPIE: Real Madrid and football club Barcelona. Barcelona for the last six years or so has been better.

Q: Well did we have any special Catalan programs?

GILLESPIE: We have an office there. The Public Affairs Officer always spoke Catalan. Actually, the one who was there while I was there spoke it quite well and his predecessor I know quite well because he's a good friend of mine; they both did. We do things with Catalan institutions but we do things with them because they're major institutions.

Q: Okay. Well I'm just looking at the time. This is probably a good place-

GILLESPIE: Yes, okay.

Q: So Jake, we'll pick this up in 19-

GILLESPIE: Ninety-three

Q: -ninety-three. Well wait, no, no.

GILLESPIE: I got back- Yes, 1994. I'm home.

Q: And where do you go? We'll just put it here.

GILLESPIE: I go to Washington. I become the Director of the Foreign Press Centers.

Q: Okay, we'll pick up then.

GILLESPIE: We'll pick it up there.

Q: Okay. Today is the 17th of June, 2010, with Jake Gillespie. And Jake, where did we leave off?

GILLESPIE: We are on the last lap.

Q: Okay.

GILLESPIE: I've left Spain, and I'm very sorry for our group here because now in some ways is the last lap is no more exotic or exciting countries. I came back to Washington.

Q: This was when?

GILLESPIE: This after Thanksgiving in 1993. Early in 1994 I took a job as Director of the Foreign Press Centers. The Foreign Press Centers are one of the more brilliant inventions of our government, I think, that have now existed since, in the case of the New York center, since 1948 or '49, I believe. It may be '50 but I think it's '48 or '49. The New York Center was established because with the formation of the United Nations it became obvious that for the first time there were a large number or a number at least, but more than there had been, foreign journalists, mainly from Europe at that time but there were a number of Latin Americans, there were some Chinese and some other Asians but they had come to cover the United Nations. But they were starting to look at other things too. This was their first time, for most of them, in the United States; they were trying to cover, occasionally cover what our government was doing, which of course as we got into the late '50s or the late '40s and the early '50s was extremely interesting to most of them. And our government really had no other way to deal with them. Originally the Center was, of course, run by the State Department and it was inherited by the United States Information Agency when USIA was created in the mid '50s. In the late '50s it was decided that there were enough journalists who had come to Washington that the second center would be created in Washington, about 1960. After having one or two other offices in Washington, the Foreign Press Center moved to the National Press Club. It has been there ever since in leased quarters that have expanded and changed over the years. There also was, for a number of years, a Center in Los Angeles that was smaller; it was created in the 1980s and lasted about 15 years.

My task was to be Director of all three. Each of the other centers had a Director and I have always thought of it as being a public affairs officer in the United States.

Q: Which is a complete no-no according-

GILLESPIE: Of course not. USIA couldn't have that but we were and occasionally there were some edgy things that perhaps that were done but I can get into those later on. In terms of the law, the Smith-Mundt Act, which was passed shortly after USIA was

created, prohibited the distribution of USIA's materials in the United States. The Foreign Press Centers always had-

Q: I might point out this was done because there was concern that the U.S. Information Agency might become a tool of the central government in propaganda-

GILLESPIE: There has been in our country, ever since really the '20s and World War I, the beginning of the 20th century, there has been an attitude against the idea of propaganda and we didn't want to propagandize Americans. And what came out of the foreign affairs agencies might be looked at as propaganda.

Q: Well it was promoting our policy and in a way it was, yes.

GILLESPIE: Of course it was. I mean, the definition of propaganda, which we could get dictionaries and kick around for a long time, basically means spreading the word. And that is what we did.

In any case, the Foreign Press Centers were fascinating. They each were somewhat different. The one in Washington was by far the largest by the time I got there in 1993. And I thought about this and in fact, as I look back on my career overseas, arguably the most important person to reach was the editor of the most important paper in the country. And the easiest way I figured-

Q: Which one would you define? "The New York Times" or-?

GILLESPIE: Here, but I would define as "El Pais" in Madrid and "NRC Handelsblad" in The Netherlands, maybe "Volkskrant," "Le Monde" in France. We can perhaps quibble about some of them at various times but they are leading papers. And as I thought about it the easiest way to reach him was through his most important correspondent with information about the United States, its policies or the processes. His most important correspondent and invariably the most important correspondent for any major news organization overseas was in Washington or in the United States. Some only had one correspondent here, but in '93, although news organizations around the world were cutting back, most of the major news organizations- international news organizations still had fairly large bureaus here in Washington.

At the Foreign Press Centers we did a variety of things. We tried to be a first contact for foreign journalists. A journalist would arrive here and the questions that he had that hadn't been answered for him easily about how to work could be answered through the Press Center. We had a staff of, in Washington, six program officers, who divided the world up regionally. We had a full-time librarian; we had one briefing officer who took care of scheduling all the briefings that we did at the Center, who also doubled as a backup program officer, and then there was a film unit, film and television unit, which was made up of about six people and they basically did work with the television people on production. Not necessarily the television people who were just coming to do an

interview but if somebody wanted to come and do a lengthy documentary or a series of pieces on a particular subject their contact would be in that television unit.

In New York we had about five officers working, again dividing the world up regionally, picking certain functional specialties that they dealt with as well.

Q: These were Civil Servants?

GILLESPIE: No, there were some. There were three Civil Servants and there were three Foreign Service officers assigned there. By the time I got there traditionally the head of the office had become a political appointee, occasionally a bit of a sore point but there wasn't, you know, don't fight city hall; that's the way it was going to be.

The Los Angeles Center had two people, both Civil Servants, and it worked, the system worked fairly well. The New York office dealt with a number of different things. They did a lot of financial matters, a lot of business, a lot of international economics subjects because of Wall Street. There were a lot of journalists assigned who were there working for that reason. They worked with the United Nations; the U.S. UN press office on any United Nations questions but by the time I was there that probably had become a secondary issue. There was a smaller, somewhat permanent UN press corps that was there but there was a much larger New York foreign press corps than that.

In any case, a foreign journalist would come; his first contact would be one of those program officers. The program officer would help him get press passes where necessary, in some cases would say here's how you go get a driver's license, here are the things you need to do. I mean, these were- and some of it was living, most of it was working. We wanted to make them as comfortable as possible; we wanted the Foreign Press Center to become a resource for them. We provided a large amount of information. There was a small library. The librarian was extremely good, very good research and reference library. I mean, if you were looking up funny things, unusual, this was the place to go if you were a journalist. So much so that the National Press Club expanded and built up its library and its research facilities to compete with our little one librarian operation, which I always thought was wonderful. The National Press Club now has a great library for journalists of this sort. In any case, that was our principle- the first job.

The second thing that we did was we did briefings. We probably did an average of four or five briefings a week. These varied from a State Department desk officer or country officer coming to talk about the trip of the Assistant Secretary or the Assistant Secretary coming to brief about his or her trip to Latin America. They might come before, they might come after, and they might come both times if it was important enough. We would have Cabinet Officers. During the Clinton Administration virtually every Cabinet Officer, with the exception of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, every Cabinet Officer who briefed- who traveled internationally came in and did a briefing before they went. It was a remarkable thing and my- And of course there are a number of them that are still around.

They are not quite jump roping with the King stories but there are a couple of small ones, one of them concerning the current Chief Economic Advisor in the White House who at that time, of course, was the Undersecretary of Treasury and- Larry Summers is a brilliant man. His mind is incredible the way it works and he is a brilliant man. He would come in and usually the briefer would come to my office first which we used as a green room, a place to sit and prepare for this briefing. Larry Summers would come in and instead of saying what sort of things do you want me to make sure the briefing covers, I usually had to spend the time saying Secretary Summers, your tie is way askew and your jacket collar is up; let's fix it because there were cameras that were working all the time. And then there was the time he was sitting on the stage, with cameras going. C-SPAN was probably covering this because after the first year or so C-SPAN would cover about half of our briefings. C-SPAN was going and he had some cards in his jacket pocket and he couldn't find them. And he was looking for them and in the course of looking for them he managed to dump them over on the small stage we used so I was down on my knees picking up the cards for Larry Summers.

The other one that was wonderful in a way was Ron Brown, the Secretary of Commerce at that time, who was a delightful person and who was probably the best dressed man I've ever seen. This was a case if Brown was coming I went to the men's room before and made sure my tie was straight, my shirt was clean and my shoes were shined. I told my wife after; I said that what worried me was even if I could afford the suits that he wore I would never look that good in them. Later on I found out maybe I wasn't the first to use it but Bill Clinton used that at his memorial service after he was so sadly killed in an airplane accident.

But there were fascinating things. Donna Shalala, who was the secretary of HHS (United States Department of Health and Human Services), came. I had met her in Spain when she was still President of the University of Wisconsin, and her problem was that she is a very short woman. She would sit and her legs would be off the floor and we had gotten used to this because we had a special box that we slid under there for the Secretary of Labor, who was Robert Reich.

Q: Who's a very short man.

GILLESPIE: Very short man. And so she was very concerned and she said what am I going to do. And I said you get the Reich box. And she was delighted.

Those were all official government types of things. We did official government things on subjects that ran from major issues of international importance to things that were very important but purely technical, like when the Department of Treasury and the Bureau of Printing and Engraving sent two people over to brief on the new hundred dollar bills when they were first printed. And of course this was a major thing internationally because they had to assure people that their old hundred dollar bills would not lose value and there were a lot of them around, a number of them for illegal purposes. They had to start to get the word out on what the dollar bills looked like. But we did any issue that the U.S. Government was dealing with, virtually, we would do a briefing on.

Q: Did you move into things that maybe had a distant connection to the U.S. Government but, oh I don't know, murder cases or unrest or-?

GILLESPIE: Well, fortunately at that time I did not go through periods of unrest or you know, for example the riots in 1968 and things like this but I know that the Center had in the past. We didn't duck issues. The decision was made, really in the late '60s, that this doesn't do any good. You've got to respond to it, you have to deal with it. I don't recall while I was there that any of those things came up.

Q: You were there from when to when?

GILLESPIE: I was there from '93 through '97.

Q: Did you catch the delightful time of Monica Lewinsky?

GILLESPIE: Yes, we did, and at that time we had started to get an arrangement, first of all, with Mike McCurry when he was the...

Q: White House spokesman.

GILLESPIE: No, when he was State Department spokesman, at the beginning of the Clinton administration. He would come once a month and brief for us. The complaint of the foreign journalists was that, with the exception perhaps of major foreign news agencies such as Reuters and AFP, they didn't get anything. It was hard for them to get the floor in the State Department briefing room for the daily briefings. And Mike would come and he'd give us about an hour. He did that three or four times and then Nick Burns, who succeeded him, did it regularly and faithfully and dealt with almost every question. McCurry, of course, went to the White House and I must have had 10 or 15 requests for him to come over during the Monica Lewinsky business. I talked to him a couple of times and he said I've got enough problems. And he did. He set up that the Deputy White House spokesman for the National Security Council, David Johnson, would come over and brief for us. Of course he would just say ah, that's not an issue that I deal with. And we ducked it, very frankly.

But other issues we didn't, as we briefed in a different way. As we approached 1996, in early 1995, the American elections started to be our major issue and we dealt with everything. We had people who would come to brief from both parties; people who would come to brief from a number of issue groups and special interest groups, from the left and the right. We covered the entire spectrum. I think it was something that added a great deal to the sense that we were a responsible place and willing to answer questions. There wasn't a whole lot of pressure on the Lewinsky issue or the impeachment trial. Most of that was there. It was out in public. We might help a journalist who didn't understand it, individually, but I don't recall that we ever briefed on it directly.

So we did the briefings in Washington and in New York and occasionally in Los Angeles on some issues.

Q: Well you know, I've just come back from Los Angeles and looking at the news and talking with people there, movies and television are not basically State Department things but I mean that's the name of the game there.

GILLESPIE: You don't think that American exports of films and television are a State Department concern? Be very careful. They are. When I was there Jack Valenti would have been all over you if you didn't. We did a number of things out there. We did it on issues of intellectual property, protection of; all of this was a major issue.

Q: This is, particularly copying-

GILLESPIE: Copying of video, copying of films. You can today buy around the world a first run American movie within a week of the time that it is out. It's copied somehow and it's bootlegged and it goes out there. One of the second things that we did, and this will tie into this, we did were trips, and the trips were all built around an issue. Part of the reason for the trips was to get journalists out of Washington, get them out to the rest of the United States, let them see something else, let them talk to some other people and perhaps expand a little bit of their understanding of the United States generally. We would- We did a lot of election trips. Those were regular. We always did that. We did not pay for a journalist to travel; journalists signed up and they paid for their own travel. We paid for a program officer, sometimes two, to accompany them. If necessary we would pay for things like a bus to get around a town and things like this but it was really very inexpensive sorts of things. We would let USIS posts and embassies around the world know that we were going to do this and sometimes they would arrange for journalists to come from overseas to join the trip.

One of the biggest ones that we did that I remember very well was a wonderful program on intellectual property that started, I think, in Seattle and with some lawyers at Microsoft when Bill Gates came in. One of the- Gates came in and sat down and talked to them for a half an hour, which was a fascinating sort of thing. They went from there, they went to San Francisco and they did Levi Strauss. I'm trying to think; there were one or two other companies. I joined them in Los Angeles where they did the Motion Picture Association; they did Customs, who brought in and gave them their full show of things that are illegal copies. They were instructed to just go around, pick out the copy. They had them studying your Gucci bag, you had your phony Gucci bag; you had your Levis, all of them, and they said pick them out. You can't, you know. They said we can. Some of them are bad, you can pick up. They had about seven Rolex watches; they said well, the easy way is to see what they're asking for it. If they're not asking, you know, a price you can't afford then it's phony. Very few people really sell Gucci bags on the streets. But this was the sort of thing and the companies all explained what this was costing them.

There were journalists who were sent up from Brazil, there were journalists who came, from Hong Kong, and we had other Chinese journalists who went from Washington with

us. And it was fantastically successful. Journalists later would talk about taking one of those trips and then kicking off and say you know, I really want to go back and I want to write something about something else in one area or another.

With the elections the first big travel that we did was we went to the New Hampshire primary. This was historically something that we would do. We'd go to the New Hampshire primary which by tradition is the first. We would set up a small center in a hotel so that journalists had a place to gather and we would just have material. We'd get material from every candidate and you can pick it up here. We'd have a list of where candidates will be today, and we have two busses and one bus is going to do this and one's going to do that, and we would have as many as 100 journalists who would go there.

In '96, where of course there wasn't any real interest in the Democratic side because Clinton was going to be re-nominated but there was a little bit on the Republican side by the time you were up there. There were several candidates and although I think Dole was already a favorite it had not been fixed. And the wildcard was Pat Buchanan and Buchanan's press secretary told one of our program officers, please keep sending the foreign press because he likes to target them and say you know, go back and tell your country this and this and this.

Q: He's sort of a-

GILLESPIE: He was a wildcard. He was a wildcard libertarian; I think that is really what Pat would consider himself. Maybe not, because he's still, he's still very conservative culturally. That was always sort of good fun and everybody wanted to go cover him at least once.

But one of the more interesting things during this trip was a journalist who I had known in The Netherlands when he was a very young man, came, and he said Jake, do you know what I did yesterday? I rented a car and I left. I went to the other side of the state. He said, I've been up here for three elections and I've never been to the New Hampshire-Vermont border. He said that's gorgeous over there. I said yes. We talked about it.

Q: That's the White Mountains-

GILLESPIE: Well, the- you go right along the Connecticut River all the way up and it is gorgeous.

Q: My wife's family comes from the Vermont side of the northeast-

GILLESPIE: That's right, that's right. And of course I went to college midway up in Hanover at Dartmouth. There were things like that that were extremely pleasant while doing this. -

The other major task that we assumed, in addition to the briefings and trips, was we had become responsible for setting up press centers every time there was a presidential summit anywhere in this country. We worked with the White House when we did it. If there were other big international events the State Department would usually call on us to do it as well for those. But it had been programmed in for the White House. The first one that we did while I was there was the Summit of the Americas where all of the presidents of the-

Q: This is a big deal.

GILLESPIE: This is a big-

Q: I've talked to Elliot Watson on setting-

GILLESPIE: And then, Alec and I worked again on one of them and it is a very big deal. For The Summit of the Americas, we basically took over Miami, if you can imagine, for a long weekend and the preparations of maybe a week, two weeks before. There were other people I'm sure like the communications and security guys who were down well before that. We had taken over what basically was the arrival hall for tourists- for cruise ships in Miami. It's down in the port. There was good transportation in and out and what the White House advance team, press advance team loved, we had beautiful sightlines for the president to do a press conference there. I mean, it was just gorgeous. He had the whole Bay of Biscayne and the Miami skyline behind him. The problem was, as we set this up, Greg Franklin, who was the head of the TV section for us and always worked very closely with the White House, said we can only do this at certain times of the day. And he said they aren't really great times for the- for TV; it was too late for the evening news. He said it's going to be too hot.

Well by this time we had already scheduled the first briefing, who was Carlos Menem from Argentina, a small man but who I think used Ron Brown's tailor. He was always dressed impeccably and he came up and he was wonderful. I mean, he briefed- we set it up for the Argentines; the Argentines came over, they put him up there, and he probably went on for close to an hour. After a half hour that wonderful tan tropical suit he was wearing was drenched and the sweat was running- And he didn't care. He went right on. Well, the White House press advance leader was standing next to me and she said air conditioning. And consequently three people spent the next day and a half chasing around trying to find portable air conditioners, enough of them to put on that stage, far enough away to be quiet so they didn't disturb the audio. They could provide cooling for anybody who was up because they were not going to bring our President up there and have him sweat on national television. And in fact, after about a day and a half it worked very well. But it was one of the little things that happened. There always are some things that go wrong, hopefully just minor. Menem was still delighted because all the Argentine journalists and the Brazilian journalists as well were there. He sat at the foot of the stage answering questions for a long time after the press conference. Our press briefings went very, very well, there was a lot of television. You know, it was a terrific show.

For me the great kick out of that first big event that I did, I guess about six or seven months after I started the job was that the President of Uruguay came. Working as a commentator for Uruguayan television was the next president of Uruguay, When I was in Uruguay at that time all the way back to '67, '68, '69, sometime in that period, we had sent both of them from our office as International Visitors to the United States. It was a nice thing.

Q: Sure, sure.

GILLESPIE: You know, and to be able, in one case talk to Sanguinetti for some time about that.

But, in any case, we did those; we did the G-8 Conference in Denver.

Q: In Denver.

GILLESPIE: There was an earlier one that happened that took place in Halifax and the White House asked us to go up and run a press center, which we normally wouldn't have done. But the White House and USIS Ottawa asked us if we would go up and set up a small center because they didn't have the resources otherwise to do it there. We did that. There were another two or three that we did in the course of the time I was there. These were events that would take three or four months' planning. We would have to put almost half of our staff there to run this center.

GILLESPIE: We had large Foreign Press Centers at the Republican Convention in San Diego and the Democratic Convention in Chicago.

At the Democratic Convention it was somewhat more personal. My wife at that time was no longer working for Senator Sarbanes. Susan, I think she had just gone to work for a non-profit. but she wanted to go to the convention. This is someone who had been very active in Democratic things locally wherever possible and had worked on the Hill and so she went as a volunteer to the Democratic Convention and I was working. I think it was the second night of the convention she called me and she had spent the first night they put there basically taking care of people going in and out of the vice president's box which she said was okay, but a little boring. The next night they put her in the reception room for major donors. And she called me and she said things are very quiet right now. Why don't you come on over and see where I'm working. She said its right behind the speakers' platform. I had been all over the United Center in Chicago where they were holding. I knew where that was. She said she would be outside the door. Where she was working and where they had this reception for these donors was in the Chicago Bulls' locker room. Now you have to remember, this is the Chicago Bulls at the peak of their greatness. This is Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman They were set up to take pictures. So you could take a picture in front of Jordan's locker space or Pippen's or Dennis Rodman's, and Dennis Rodman was a great character in American sports lore. Dennis was a little goofy; he did things.

Q: Changed hair color-

GILLESPIE: Changed hair colors, changed dress, cross dressed occasionally just for fun, and so you could have it your picture taken in front of Dennis Rodman's locker and they had a big feather boa hanging there. Susan said it's very interesting. The wives come in and this is say, oh, hey, fine, and they laugh. grab an hors d'oeuvre and a drink. It was a great place to hold this because they'd bring the major speakers right off the platform down to greet them and say hello. But she said the men walk in here as if they were walking into a cathedral.

In any case, '96 came and passed. It was an exciting time. The election, of course, was interesting although not close. At the end of '96 we did the inauguration, which you may remember was fairly cold but we still, we managed. We became a source for passes for foreign journalists to various places and this was great fun. Election night was fun; we had had a big event at each of the centers. And of course the other big event in the summer of '96 was the Atlanta Olympics. We had a small press center down there. There were what we called affiliate centers, which were privately run, usually by the Chamber of Commerce or some other organizations. There was one in Chicago, one in Seattle, one in Atlanta and one in Miami, frankly with varying success. The one in Miami should have been extremely successful. There were a number of journalists there and journalists went down often to Miami. But it always had some problems because it didn't have a strong organization that was supporting it. The Chicago one and the Seattle one were extremely successful. The one in Atlanta was wonderfully successful through the Olympics and then just sort of withered. But working with that group, they usually had a location and maybe one full-time employee and maybe a part-time employee or two who worked there. In Chicago they were terrific; they knew how to do a lot of things. They could get journalists who really liked to go there and work with them. The one in Atlanta was working well and they wanted to set up a foreign press center for the Olympics and so we agreed to send three people down. I said okay, anybody who wants to go, you put your name in a hat and we'll pull them out. But if you prefer to go to one of the conventions we'll do that as well. You can have one of the three big events that summer, which were great fun and a lot of work. But each of them was so much work that a number of people said they just didn't want to go. They didn't want to leave home for two weeks, things like that.

Ninety-seven we did the Inauguration. And then some other things but I was starting to draw down. My replacement was named in the summer of '97 and I left the Press Centers in, I guess November '97.

Q: I've got a couple questions. Back to the Miami Conference of the Americas and all-

GILLESPIE: Yes.

Q: -were the- did the Cuban exile group cause problems for you at all?

GILLESPIE: No. There was one man, you have to remember, who was close to USIA because going all the way back to the Reagan years he had been influential in getting Radio Marti started; his name was Jorge Mas Canosa.

Q: Oh yes.

GILLESPIE: Jorge Mas was a leader in the Cuban community and the Cuban American Foundation. That was very powerful in Miami; Jorge lived there. And basically we had no problem at all at that time. Now, Jorge came in; he let it be known that anyone who came down there and wanted him he was available for briefings and they did some briefings at their location, but there were no problems.

Q: Well how about, I mean, did you ever, in general, being involved with this sort of thing, run across or any stories about TV Marti, which-

GILLESPIE: Oh yes.

Q: -is the biggest boondoggle one can-

GILLESPIE: Going all the way back to Spain, Congressman Dante Fascell, chairman of the House-

Q: Government-

GILLESPIE: Foreign Affairs Committee.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: And a delightful man, from Miami, who made two trips to Spain while I was there. On the first one, I think I mentioned earlier, the golf - the Good Friday golf party. He and I played golf one day and we were out on the golf course. We stopped after nine holes to have a sandwich and he leaned over to me and he said I'm going to help you on the Expo as much as I can. And he said I will do this. This was a question of getting some more money for a U.S. pavilion at the 1992 World's Fair that was called "Expo" in Seville. He said you have to understand, however, that there's one thing that I know you don't like, even though you've never mentioned it, and I don't ever want you to mention it and you have to understand why that's important to me, and that was TV Marti. At that time it was in the papers which pointed out what a ridiculous thing it was. However, this is where his constituency was. And half of his constituency was Cuban. And he was a Democrat and a liberal Democrat running and he figured he could win but he couldn't rock that boat that much.

Q: You might explain-

GILLESPIE: TV Marti, ah ha. Well, Radio Marti was set up, first of all, in the early '80s to broadcast to Cuba. I think over the years it has had some modest success.

Q: Because of radio waves can penetrate-

GILLESPIE: You can broadcast from Miami on FM and short wave from Miami. You're only 90 miles from Havana and can reach Cuban audiences. There were times that Castro jammed it – a sign of success.

Television, on the other hand, was a completely different subject. The conservative end of the Cuban-American community wanted to broadcast television badly. If you had the right antenna in the right place in Cuba, you could watch television from Miami and easily from Key West. You could watch American television. No, they wanted to have actually the kind of television that goes back to what we talked about earlier. Its pretty propagandist and USIA, which had continual battles over Radio Marti because of this didn't really want to get into the television thing but eventually we did.

Now, the point is, there probably weren't more than 10 people who could ever watch this and they all worked for the government in Cuba. It was impossible to watch it, you couldn't receive it, it was easy to jam. The other problem with these two, both of these institutions, Radio and TV Marti, is that they were put under the Voice of America, They probably didn't belong there. By this time the American Government had taken over Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. They could have put them under that umbrella and I think it would have fit better. Neither one of them were ever comfortable in USIA.

Q: Plus the fact that it was a tool of a specific-

GILLESPIE: Community.

Q: -really community and a political entity in the American context.

GILLESPIE: That's right. And it became more of a political issue that popped up and pops up every so often.

Q: It's still going.

GILLESPIE: Yes, it is, and I am told by colleagues who work in the TV portion of the Voice of America that it is occasionally somewhat more successful but it's, very frankly, it's successful with pap, you know, absolute pap.

Q: But it's a boondoggle.

GILLESPIE: For the G-8 summit in Denver, the White House had chosen a man who had been the Deputy Chief of Staff the first term and was not made Chief of Staff the second. Harold Ickes. He is a political operator of the first order and the son of a very-

Q: Oh yes.

GILLESPIE: -famous-

Q: Secretary of the Interior.

GILLESPIE: Interior under Roosevelt, a man of some real importance. I think Ickes had been somewhat unhappy. He set up a small consulting operation in Washington. He took this job and he set up a staff to do it that was largely made up of the people who had worked for him in campaigns. But Harold Ickes, though in some ways a very brilliant man, manages by temper tantrum, which is not my choice nor is it pleasant to be around. I had the good fortune of not working directly for him and he actually sort of needed what we could provide him, although he thought we ought to provide a lot of money. He and I went back and forth on that and I finally said look, I do not think we can. If you wish to go to Joe Duffy, the Director of USIA and get the money, that's fine, but I have no legal authority to spend any more money than this. And that became a bit of a brouhaha that lasted even after the event as they were paying bills.

Q: Can I stop just for one second?

GILLESPIE: Yes, okay.

Q: Jake, I'd like to ask a couple of generic questions. What about- what was your impression of the various press corps? I mean, the Japanese, the Argentinean, the, you know what I mean; in other words...

GILLESPIE: Yes. When I was there at the Foreign Press Center I knew some of the Spanish and the Dutch. For most journalists it was a prime assignment. This was a step toward becoming foreign editor or editor-in-chief. Or it was a reward assignment. Many of them we see now and again as guests on U.S. news and public affairs programs. Some have been here for years.

Q: Yes.

GILLESPIE: Some have dual nationality. Some were great, some were not so good. Some were very lazy; some were frightfully industrious and really did some terrific reporting. And I'm not sure I can make a great differentiation by nationality. There are Italians who were terrific and there are Italians who were not so good. Same with the Brits and the French and the Germans.

Q: How about the Scandinavians, because they seem to be, you know, I mean sort of with the socialist background I would think they take sort of a jaundiced view of-

GILLESPIE: The Northern Europeans, not just Scandinavians, the Northern Europeans who by this I would include the Germans and the Dutch, really were not jaundiced. These are usually quite sophisticated and well-educated people who understand a lot about America. But they were often very interested in certain kinds of things. They were interested in social issues, very much, which tended to put us on the edge, of course.

When you cover social issues in the United States very few people cover them and say well here's something that's really going well. You cover them because they're going badly – poverty, homelessness, and health issues. That's why they're covered. I rarely saw what they wrote. Once in a while we would get some reporting from posts.. This was before the days of the Internet being what it is today, if you think '93 to '97, I couldn't sit down and hit my computer in the morning and read what every one of these journalists wrote.

Q: Well were you getting reports-

GILLESPIE: We would get some back.

Q: -from, you know, from Amsterdam, saying for God's sakes, what are you doing there?

GILLESPIE: No, the Dutch I knew too well but I might from Germany. They would say what's going on, occasionally, with a couple of things; there were a couple of issues. Where we had more of a problem of this sort, though, was that the Northern Europeans knew the United States. They had been around. Most of them tended to arrive for the presidential election. They came, they were assigned here so they came maybe six months before and they stayed for almost a four year cycle. Some stayed longer. But that was a normal cycle. . So by the time they were through doing the election, and of course in the election you get a lot of social issues and things like that that come up. Then they had to do the new administration, they had to learn their way around, there were the foreign affairs issues, the economic issues of real importance. And then they would have time, they would start to get into the social issues, usually about two years in, or if an event happened. I mean, if something happened or "The Post" or "The Times" covered something then they'd get on it. And yes, it could be an issue.

But where we saw the problems most were strange problems that came up; immigration problems, adoption, foreign adoption issues, India, Latin America, India-Pakistan we got a lot of reporting. And again, especially among the South Asians, the Indians, who have a large press corps here. There must be 25 or 30 of them. And there's a great difference. There are some older correspondents who have- by older I mean in their 60s and 70s who had been here for 25 and 30 years who really knew the issues and our country. India has a very good press, that's the other thing, and their media are strong. And when an issue would hit that was important, Bhopal was one before I got there, it often lingered.

Q: An Industrial disaster.

GILLESPIE: Industrial disaster of major proportions, much larger, I think, than we ever realized in the United States. That lingered; that was there.

The other one was body parts. Body parts, the history of body parts. This is the buying and selling of body parts.

Q: Like kidneys or-

GILLESPIE: Kidneys would be an easy one, yes. In the '80s or maybe even the '70s we found out this started as a planted piece of black propaganda by the Soviets that the U.S. was harvesting body parts, a terrible story. And it was one of these things where you could put out the fire in southern India and it would pop up in Guatemala. It went on and on and still does, to a certain extent. But it wasn't happening. I don't know of any case of where it has been done, where the parts have been actually exported to the United States legally or illegally. It was a terrible story and it caused problems around the world but in a strange way. It would be a local problem. And three months later it would be a local problem somewhere else. So people in USIA worked very hard doing what they could to put it out. Now, it wouldn't surprise me to see the issue pop up again somewhere because it's one of these things you could put out the flame but you never put out those embers and they're there somewhere.

The South Asian press corps and the Eastern Mediterranean press corps, by which I mean Turkish and Greek or Israeli and Arab, were fascinating to work with together. If we had a press conference and the Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia came to brief, I would usually ask him at the beginning if he would like to call on the journalists or wanted me to. And usually, since we did these briefings informally where the two of us would be seated on a stage for the cameras, he would ask me to because he didn't know them that well. I very carefully would recognize an Indian journalist, a couple of them maybe, and then I'd get the Pakistan journalist. I made sure they were mixed. And afterwards these two Pakistani journalists came into my office and they were furious. They said you can't do that, you can't do that. That wasn't an equitable briefing. And I said what? What are you talking about? They said you called on more Indians than Pakistanis. And I said yes, there were 20 Indians in the room; you were the only two Pakistanis. That sort of thing went on; it went on with the Greeks and the Turks as well. Not the Arabs and Israelis.

Q: Oh, I'm sure.

GILLESPIE: We had one, actually we had about three Greeks but one who showed up all the time and who was a very bright guy and knew a lot. He wasn't a troublemaker but he was always a bit of a problem. We had few jerks in the whole press corps.

Israelis and the Arabs -- most of the Israelis worked the State Department briefings and worked the White House and we only had three or four who came in. But most of them used their own local contacts. There were a number of very good Arab journalists, many who were dual citizens or had been here many years. We learned that it was unfair sometimes to the majority but we would try to keep everybody happy.

The Indians generally were good. The Turks had some terrific journalists who worked here. Both the Arabs and the Israelis, of course, had some really wonderful journalists. The Arabs, unfortunately, have, I think have suffered in recent years because a number of them have been threatened, and I knew of one, an Arab American of Lebanese origin, and he basically retired after a very serious bomb threat in his office in the press building.

There was a little bomb in his colleague's office right next to him. About two years later, he said no more, which is sad. I see him frequently and he was a great journalist.

Q: How about the Japanese? I mean, because they seem to have a hell of a lot of newspapers and-

GILLESPIE: They come at you like an army. They, first of all their staffs are big. They have a lot of, you're right; they have maybe 15 different news organizations with permanent representation here. The big ones have 10 and 12 journalists. Usually they will have two or three Americans on the staff as well as others and they do, they come in waves. The good ones are really good and the bad ones are still pretty good.

The Koreans were more difficult. For reasons I don't understand I think the Koreans didn't stay as long, they didn't seem to adapt to working in American culture as easily. The staff had to send back probably a half dozen very good bottles of scotch every Christmas, saying we can't take them. And we encouraged them to contribute to the annual holiday parties which the Press Center staff did jointly with the journalists. They brought the food and we provided beer and wine. This was a little our own selfishness because we knew we'd get really good food from them and we could always afford Budweiser. Every time they thought they wanted an interview with the President or the Secretary of State, they would show up with a bottle of Scotch. I would tell them that they really shouldn't do this to, people working for the American Government. And their answer was always that they did it at home.

Q: Yes, having served three years in Korea you have to be very careful about gifts.

GILLESPIE: Yes, but we had no representation funds to work with. The last two years I was there we actually got some and it was very unusual and we used it well, but not to repay gifts like these.

Q: In your time were the Chinese adapting to the system?

GILLESPIE: Some yes, some no. Some of them were having a very difficult time. The junior ones were not permitted to bring family; they came on their own. And this meant that they turned over rather quickly. We had the case of a senior; actually I think he was the head of CAN, the China News Agency. His wife and daughter came and the daughter went to college in Virginia, maybe James Madison, I'm not sure, I don't recall. But she let it be known when she graduated that she was not going home and he was called back to have some long discussions, and this is a very senior person, and didn't come back. His wife was to stay. He committed suicide out of a window. It's still difficult for the Chinese. What we did see while I was there, I think that it is much better today. I'm told that it is.

The others for whom it was new, and it was quite different, were the former Soviet Union journalists. This is '93 to '97; the Wall had come down. We had two Russian speakers on our staff; one was a full-time program officer, the other our IT person, who helped with

the Eastern Europeans as well. One might say let's make sure we include so-and-so in the next program or help him at briefings. He's really pretty good. She is good. There was a young couple, struggling with English a bit, but they were terrific. Others were questionable. There was one who was here for Izvestia for years and somewhat admitted that they worked for the KGB. We all wondered who is really paying him now.

We had some Ukrainians come in for the first time. We had a Belarus come in who was very distressed and actually, I'm not sure he ever went home. He may have just disappeared or may have sought amnesty. We had, toward the end of my time, and I did not really get to know them, we had our first Estonian journalist come. This was exciting for us because these journalists were excited about what they were doing. Now, unfortunately, their editors and publishers or the owners of the TV station were under frightful pressure at home. It wasn't always nice. Papers were closed and they were forced to shift jobs and all the time but their excitement was really terrific.

The journalists that we saw generally were the cream of the crop. Remember, this is the thing. This was the choice assignment. This was the assignment that that they had worked for. The Brazilians, Chilenos and the Argentines were terrific, really good journalists. We had some wonderful Mexican journalists here.

There were individual journalists where we'd all just say oh no, not- don't- be careful; he wants to ask a question to so-and-so; we know him to be crazy. Or wants to ask a question and it will go on forever. But generally I can think of very few problems that I had with journalists here that weren't completely understandable.

Q: Yes.

Well I think this is probably a good place to-

GILLESPIE: Okay. I can finish.

Q: Alright.

GILLESPIE: Let's finish. I left the Foreign Press Centers in 1997. I took a job as the Executive Director of a new big interagency committee, the Interagency Committee on International Exchange and Training. USIA was the head of it but basically that was an administrative thing, so my first job was to get an office in the USIA building and hire a staff. The new staff of five was excellent. The office turned out to be twice as big as we needed. We went to work and we discovered that there were 35 American agencies of one kind or another doing international exchange and training. Now the largest in numbers of people trained is the Department of Defense. Not unexpected. Trying to get any sort of information out of them was - mainly because it's done all over and they don't know - was very difficult.

Q: Yes, yes.

GILLESPIE: We had meetings. The second largest was a bigger surprise, the Department of Energy. People from all over. They give grants, had fellows, all sorts of things. The Department of Agriculture, NIH (National Institutes of Health) and down about fifth is USAID- or was at that time, and then about seventh was the one I always thought was the exchange portion of our government, USIA. It was fascinating. We were charged by both executive order and a law that had been passed with doing an annual report that had to include certain things and to set certain goals. Two of the congressmen who had supported this wanted to cut. So I said to the staff, let's start seeing how we can cut. Where are there redundancies? And it dawned on me that for budgetary reasons the programs had been cut for years. So we said that is how we are cutting. We got away with it that way and we had no legal requirement to design cuts, which would have been impossible for us to design cuts for any other agencies. We had no authority to do it.

I had sat on several of the committees dealing with the consolidation of USIA into the Department of State. This was not a happy time for me. I loved USIA. I thought it was a great mistake to do away with it, but what upset me most was I thought that they were planning the consolidation in ways that would make things less effective or just not work. USIA worked best, Stu, I think, because it was small, it was flexible, you could shift resources quickly, it could come up take ideas and put them into action relatively quickly; because it was small there were few bureaucratic layers. We made perhaps more mistakes than we would have because we moved quickly. But as a friend of mine, who had worked for USIA, once said in writing a magazine article about USIA and Frank Shakespeare that was in "The Washingtonian" magazine years ago, USIA doesn't have bombs; it's never going to kill anybody. The mistakes that we made, if we corrected, apologized and went on. But that didn't happen that often. USIA had a lot of professionals. I saw them, perhaps too many of them leaving but my career was coming to an end in any case. I had spent almost four years at that time back in Washington and I knew it was going to end.

In any case, one morning in late '98, I woke up and I sat down at breakfast with Susan and I said I think I'd like to retire. And I did. Looking back I loved what I did, I loved the people I worked with from all agencies. I think that over the almost 40 years that I did it and what I saw, I worked with some remarkable people, I met some remarkable people. We really did pretty well. The United States has moved; if you look at 1961 and where the world is today, even with all of our problems we've really moved a long way and the world is a better place. I don't know how much we had to do with it. The United States is safe, lives in a good place, and I think they miss USIA. I think I was correct.

Q: Okay, well thank you very much. Great.

Note:

Re-reading this transcript, I was flooded with memories, some partial, some fleeting, of people and places and things that I witnessed and people I knew. All are part of my career and of me. I thank all of them – most especially these: the wonderful foreign service nationals who were talented, dedicated and often courageous; my bosses -- Ambassadors and PAOs and supervisors, whose patience and kindness taught me so much; all those

who suffered under my supervision -- abroad and at home -- whose talent and dedication were and are remarkable. I said when I retired that although I was concerned about the future of our institution, I was not at all worried about those who worked for USIA. Their intelligence, abilities and wisdom would serve them well. I think I have been proven right in both cases.

Jake Gillespie

End of interview