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

AMBASSADOR MARY A. RYAN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: This is an interview with Mary A., is it "A"? Ryan. What does the "A" stand for?

RYAN: Agnes.

Q: Mary is an old friend of mine. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Well, Mary, let's start at the beginning. Could you tell me where and when you were born and something about your parents' lineage, mother and father.

RYAN: I was born in New York City. My parents were both also born in New York City, although my mother's parents came from Ireland. I'm Irish on both sides as far back as you can go.

Q: When were you born?

RYAN: In 1940. And I had two sisters who were twins who were 19 months younger than I. And all my life up until the time I joined the Foreign Service was spent in New York. My education was in New York at St. John's University for undergraduate and graduate.

Q: All right. Well, now, on your mother's side, what was her background? You say it was Irish, but do you have any idea…

RYAN: Well, we don't know very much, because my mother was an only child. Her mother died when she was only six months old. Her father apparently was very proud of his Irish heritage. His daughter, being a first-generation American, was not particularly interested in the history of Ireland. She remembered his telling her stories about Ireland, but she wasn't very interested in it, and of course he had died by the time, before I was born. So, I do know that he came from Roscommon. I investigated a little bit our genealogy and someone in Ireland who does Irish heritage came up with a birth certificate which purports to be his, but who knows?

Q: Well, how about education for your mother?

RYAN: Both my parents went to high school. My father had a little bit of college, but he was the oldest son of a family of seven children, so he didn't have the luxury of being able to spend time in college. My mother was the first woman officer of the Savings Bank in New York City and had quite a wonderful career up until the time that I was born. She gave up her career when she had children.

Q: So, do you know how your mother got into the savings bank business?

RYAN: She told me once that she knew someone who worked at that bank where she was ultimately employed. Somehow through her parents, who were just people who worked with their hands – her father was a mechanic and her mother was like a superintendent of the building where they lived in Manhattan – somehow or other they came to the attention of this man who worked at the bank and he got my mother a job there.

Q: And your father, do you know where he came from in Ireland?

RYAN: No, his parents were both born in the United States. My mother used to call them Yankees. So that's all lost in the mists of history. My aunt, my father's sister, who lived the longest [she just died in 1999), she thought that the family came from Tipperary, but I don't know on what she based that.

Q: And what did your father do?

RYAN: He also worked at a bank – the same bank. That's where they met.

Q: I'm going under the assumption that with the name Ryan and all that, that you're Catholic.

RYAN: Absolutely, yes.

Q: Now did you come up through the nun's school?

RYAN: Yes, I came up, my whole education – all 18 years of it – was Catholic education. Grammar school, high school, college, and graduate school.

Q: Well, for a kid in the late '40s and early '50s in New York, where did you live in New York, and what was it like?

RYAN: We lived in Queens in a town called Flushing, which at that time was very beautiful. There were lots of trees. It could not possibly be called rural, but there were parks and there were flowers. It was a very lovely way to grow up. And we lived in an apartment building, but the apartment building had a huge lawn, gardens. It was wonderful for children. There were lots of children in the building at the time. We just had great fun. It was a wonderful place to grow up. And we had, of course, all of Manhattan. We had all of the museums – the city, as we used to call it – there for us, at a time when people were not quite as fearful for their children as they are now and they didn't need to be. We used to take the subway into Manhattan on our own, looking back on it, quite young – early teens, 12, 13.

Q: When I was a kid I used to go through New York going to school up in New England.

You know, spent the night, and wandered around Times Square. Well, in Flushing, in the first place, the World's Fair had been there.

RYAN: The World's Fair was there in 1939.

Q: And then the United Nations [UN] started up there too. Did either of those things raise interest on your part?

RYAN: My parents talked about the '39 World's Fair a lot. It made a very great impression on them. Television was shown there for the first time and all of that. The UN I don't remember having; it didn't come into my consciousness. What I do remember is the creation of the State of Israel, because many of the people who lived in our building were Jewish. And I remember their tremendous joy and happiness and I guess you would have to say satisfaction at the creation of the State of Israel. And I was very little, I was I think 8, 7 or 8, at the time, but I do remember that, because they were so happy.

Q: Did you get, just to get a feel for the times, Catholic, Jewish, was there a good mixture and all? Did people divvy up at that time?

RYAN: There was where I grew up, the families were – the families with children, I should say, because I don't know what the other families were like – but the people with children were all Irish or Jewish. I mean, I grew up with the Finnigans and the Sussmans and the Levys, and those people. And they all had girls, and so we were all very, very friendly.

Q: Your mother being one of the first female bank officials, it sounds like she was a pretty powerful woman?

RYAN: She was a very powerful woman, yes indeed.

Q: How did she affect you as a kid?

RYAN: As a child, I always say that my father loved us – the three of us children – the way God loves us. We didn't have to do anything; we just had to be. But my mother had standards. But she was a very loving mother, and she was very proud of us. And I remember her saying how much she enjoyed when we were off and all the other parents were saying that they couldn't wait for their children to go back to school, and she was always saying how much she enjoyed having us home with her. She had her children very late. She married at 37. So she didn't expect, frankly, to have children. So she enjoyed us, I think. I guess I always wanted to be like her – have a career, be successful, and just like that.

Q: Well, you were fortunate to have an early, a real role model.

RYAN: Yes, I was very fortunate.

Q: How about at home? As you moved up, were politics a subject? National world affairs, were these subjects that got discussed around the dinner table?

RYAN: Yes, to a certain extent. My parents were very conservative Republicans. My father read three or four – at the time of course, New York had any number of newspapers, and I remember that he read three or four newspapers every day. He was very interested in I guess more domestic issues than international issues, but we did talk about it. We always had dinner together. Another thing I think that people don't do anymore, but we always had dinner – the five of us – together. And he would talk about all sorts of things. It wasn't like, you know, you hear about the Kennedys and how you have to be "up on everything", almost like an examination. It wasn't like that, but we did talk about things that had happened – whatever the events of the day were.

Q: Did the Depression, the experience of the Depression – did your family talk about that?

RYAN: Well, my father had been working on Wall Street when the Depression hit, and lost his job at that time. He found another one in the bank – in the bank where he spent his career – almost immediately. So, I think while everybody was poor – just looking back on it – they didn't suffer. My mother had her job and my father had his job. His father was a postman, a postal service employee, and then I think my father had at that time three sisters who were living, and they were in school. I don't think it was quite as bad for them as it was for a great many people.

Q: In those days, it wasn't how much you were earning, but did you have a job or not. That sort of set the standard. Well, what about World War II? Did this…

RYAN: I can honestly say that I don't have any real memory of World War II. I can remember my mother talking about…they were, my father and she were at friends' house, visiting friends on Sunday, December 7, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was attacked. And I remember her talking about that, and what a shock that was, and how afraid they were about what it meant – that it meant that the United States was at war. But, I was five when the war ended and so they protected us from that. And so I have no recollection of the second world war at all.

Q: What was elementary Catholic school? Where was it?

RYAN: It's an elementary school that's still in existence. It's called Saint Michael's. Saint Michael's in Flushing is the oldest parish in Queens and it has a grammar school attached to it. It has had the grammar school attached to it, I guess, for 100 years now. And all three of us went there.

Q: How did you find that? Was it run by nuns?

RYAN: It was run by Josephite nuns. I spent, I would have to say, most of my time, my eight years there, in great fear of the nuns. There was tremendous discipline. And looking back on it now, I guess you would have to say that some of the things that happened to children in my class would be classified as child abuse now, although it wasn't then. And parents knew what the nuns were doing and didn't object. Well, it was hard. I would have no idea how old any of these nuns were at the time they were teaching us; they all seemed so…I remember one time my mother saying, "That woman," meaning one of the nuns and my sisters and I being amazed, but we didn't know that they were women. They were nuns and they wore habits. But they were very, very strict.

Q: I always think of cracking rulers across knuckles and twisting ears…

RYAN: Yes, that. They used to hit kids' heads against the blackboard. I don't excuse that. It was a different time. And the classes were very large. And there was one woman – and who knows what kind of education she had or what kind of background she had to be teaching – you know, we had forty, fifty, sixty children in a class all through grammar school.

Q: Were the children you were having in class, were they all native born or basically English-speaking…

RYAN: I remember one little French child but she didn't stay very long in our class. And there was a boy in the seventh grade – I guess I was in the seventh grade at the time – who was identified to the class as a "DP", meaning displaced person, and he was brilliant. I don't know where he came from – eastern Europe somewhere – but he was much smarter than we were. I think they just accelerated him and moved him ahead.

Q: Were the classes mixed?

RYAN: Oh yes.

Q: Right from the beginning?

RYAN: Yes, right from the beginning. Boys and girls.

Q: Thirty, forty kids or more. Oh, the discipline problems. How about the education? I mean, what were you getting out of this?

RYAN: I think we got a decent education. We got a very good education in the faith, certainly. And for the rest of it, we got a decent education. Our books were quite old – like our history books ended in 1940, you know – so the whole second world war they just had to talk to us about. So we were poor in that way. There wasn't enough money for books. But I think I would have to identify the first time that I really started to think about the world as more than New York City was in the fifth grade. And we had a wonderful teacher, a very gentle woman. Quite honestly, looking back, there were two gentle women

that we had, three perhaps; one was a lay woman, that I remember. The others were very strict and angry a lot. But this woman in fifth grade, Sister Saint Therese, her name was. She I guess spent her own money or somehow somebody did it for her; she got us geography books that were brand new and they had pictures in them and they had pictures of people from around the world. And that, I think, was the first time that I thought about how interesting it would be to know people from around the world. I can't say that I wanted to be a diplomat or anything like that, but that was, I think, the first time that I remember knowing that there was more to this planet than New York City.

Q: You mentioned that you got a very good grounding in the faith. This is a pretty strict Catholic church in those days. An awful lot of "Thou shalt nots", and eat fish on Friday and all that. Did this penetrate?

RYAN: Yes, it did penetrate. And in many ways, I think it was very good, although I did rejoice about Vatican II. But looking back now, now that I'm as old as I am, we had a tremendous faith then that I'm not sure that people growing up now have. And I think it's a loss. I really do. Okay, so there were all these rules, and the fear of Hell was very real, but there was a great, what would I say, a great comfort, a great certainty in it, that I think is largely lost now. My parents were also wonderful Catholics, daily communicants, their whole lives. My mother into her 80s walking to church every day. So we got that faith both at home and at school. So the one reinforced the other. But at home it was a very loving faith and a very loving God and, you know, the saints we knew. You just kind of grew up talking to these people, and being aware of heroic people who shared your faith, who went before you. And so I think it was very valuable for me.

Q: Did this drive, I don't want to use the term "a schism", but say a wedge between you and the Jewish kids you were playing with?

RYAN: No, not at all. It never came up. They were all girls. Then, at least as far as I know, they didn't have Bat-Mitzvahs. The boys had Bar-Mitzvahs, but the girls did not have Bat-Mitzvahs as I remember. At least we were never invited to anything and I think we would have been.

Q: This is basically a fairly new innovation, I think.

RYAN: I do remember it that way. My sisters made their First Communion, and the little girls who were around their same age in our apartment building were quite taken with the veils and the white dresses and the little bouquets of flowers that they got. And we have pictures of these girls trying on the veils. And then, they didn't have Christmas trees, but their parents allowed them to come to us to decorate our tree. And so, there was a lot of that. It was very nice. It was just a lot of fun.

Q: Were you sort of in the apartments like that swapping cooking tastes and all that?

RYAN: Yes, our parents were friendly and the kids were friendly. It was a very nice

relationship.

Q: When you went out of grammar school, were did you go to high school?

RYAN: I went to high school at a high school called Saint Helena's High School in the Bronx, just over the Whitestone Bridge. The assistant principal and guidance counselor there was the sister of my father's best friend, who was a Dominican priest. She was a Dominican nun. Quite honestly, I was afraid to go to the high school run by the Josephites, which was called Mary Louis, because I thought I would become a nun if I did that, and I didn't want to become a nun. But I was afraid to go to them, because we had had all Josephites in grammar school and I thought if I went to high school with the Josephites that I probably would not be able to withstand the hard-sell that they did.

Q: You really felt the pressure…

RYAN: Yes. So I went to Saint Helena's, which was the Dominicans. They were very different from the Josephites. Of course, we were older too and of course, that was probably the reason, but they were very gentle for the most part. There were a couple of them, one or two, who were very, very strict, but most of them were very gentle, very nice – people you could be friendly with in ways you could not be friendly with the nuns in grammar school.

Q: Well, the nuns in grammar school, you said they were often angry. Looking back on it, was it principally the setting? Was it too many kids?

RYAN: I think it was too many kids. I think it was people who had probably no preparation to be teachers. They were women – girls, I have no idea how old they were – but people who went into the convent at that time, went in to serve God, and they did whatever the Order needed them to do whether they were talented in that area, or equipped to do that, or whatever. And so you have people who probably had not much education – maybe high school – dropped in front of a class of little kids who have very short attention spans. I'm tutoring now, so I know how short the attention spans are. And noisy…and you were supposed to teach them. And they taught everything. Whether they were good at everything or not, they had to teach everything. And so, looking back on it, I can understand why they yelled so much, and they made us so afraid, because it was a way of…you know, you were terrified, which I was – like for eight years, I was scared to death. Certainly it kept you in line. I never thought of doing anything that would get them angrier. So, you know, it worked. For me, it worked.

Q: Well, the Dominican nuns it sounds like are maybe a higher Order as far as selectivity and that?

RYAN: Well, I don't know. We were older too. We were high schoolers, so they didn't have to exert the pressure on us to do things the way they had to when we were in grammar school. Some of them were brilliant, I would have to say. Some of the women

who taught us in high school. It was all different subjects. There was one woman who taught history and somebody else who taught science and somebody else who taught mathematics and English and things like that. And some of them in their fields were quite brilliant, you'd have to say. I think I got a very good education from Saint Helena's.

Q: Now, both in grammar school and in high school, what about your reading habits?

RYAN: I always loved to read, thank God. I always liked to read. It was interesting, because my parents, as I said, they were very good Catholics, but the never censored my reading at all. They really didn't care what I read, and I read a lot of things when I was young that I probably had no business reading, because I really didn't understand it that well, but I did read them. And I think you're just blessed with a love of reading.

Q: Well, there's a good library system in New York.

RYAN: Yes. It was a very good library system in New York. And we had a good library in the high school. There, there weren't so many books that you shouldn't read. But I read a lot. I read all the time, I guess.

Q: Can you think of any books that particularly interested you?

RYAN: Well I read, I'm afraid I didn't understand it at the time, but I read a lot of the French existentialists – Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre – when I was in high school. I read Dostoevski when I was in high school. I read a biography on Dostoevski when I was in high school that started me on reading his novels. And then we did book reports on this and nobody said, "Oh, you don't know what you're doing" or "You don't understand any of it" or "That's above you" or anything, but it was okay. That's what you were reading and that was fine. It was interesting looking back on it. I was lucky.

Q: I remember in high school, Thomas Hardy grabbed me – God knows why. Sort of depressing, but I read all of Hardy.

RYAN: Well, they talk about children now, such a bleak period of high school and all. Almost a fascination with death and heaviness and dark and all of that. But I read them all, but I didn't become depressed or anything. But it was good to have parents who didn't say, "Oh, you shouldn't read this" or "You shouldn't read that." They encouraged us.

Q: How about in high school, what subjects were you particularly interested in?

RYAN: I loved English and history and that's what I was good at. Science, more or less okay. But math, terrible. And to this minute, terrible. I never understood math. I mean, once we got past addition in grammar school, I was lost, and I was lost for a long time.

Q: You never got those?

RYAN: Oh subtraction, I mean, I never understood it. I can do my checking account now, and balance my checkbook and that type of thing. But I can see it in myself with the children that I'm tutoring now; I have a lot of trouble beyond the fourth grade math with trying to help them. My sister – everybody in my family – I have two nephews who majored in math; my sister is very good in math; my parents…my mother when she was starting to fail and we were taking her for various tests to see how bad the dementia was, and they would have her do math problems. She would…I said to Kathleen, to my sister, "You know if they ask me to do these now, they're going to lock me up somewhere," but she could do them like that [snapping] and I can't.

Q: Did you get any feeling while you were in high school, we're now getting into…

RYAN: '54 to '58…

Q: '54 to '58, that they were trying to put you on the woman's track, or did you find that things were changing?

RYAN: No, they didn't do that, interestingly enough. The nuns never did that. What I do remember was, not in high school so much, because I was determined to go to college – I mean, we were all determined to go to college, my sisters and I – but I remember getting out of college and being asked how fast I typed and being told that the real way to get to the top was to be a secretary. I remember that, because the men that I was in school with were all given these management trainee jobs at various companies, and the women who had the same education and the same degree (or were about to get the same degree) were told that this was the way to really influence the company. I do remember that. But I don't remember the nuns, the nuns never did that to us. Never.

Q: How about extracurricular activities in high school?

RYAN: I was on the yearbook, which I loved. There were two editors, I was one of the editors of the yearbook. I really enjoyed that. I played a little bit of intramural basketball and softball, but that was all.

Q: Did you get any chance to get beyond the outskirts of New York at all while you were there?

RYAN: Well, not really, because when we went on vacation, we always went to the Adirondacks. We always went to some lake up there. Which none of us really wanted to, my sisters and I. My poor parents. My father only had two week's vacation, and I'm sure they saved money all year long to be able to take us away for a couple of weeks, and we never wanted to go. We hated it, you know. We wanted to stay home with our friends. Poor things. Oh, you look back on it, what my parents put up with. My parents had a friend who was a French-Canadian priest, and we one year drove to Canada, to New Brunswick, to visit his family. But it was Canada. It was very much like the States, except they spoke French. But otherwise, no.

Q: Well, then, you graduated from high school when?

RYAN: '58.

Q: '58. So you were pointed towards college. Where?

RYAN: I went to Saint John's University. It was in Jamaica, is in Jamaica. Queens. It had been a Brooklyn school and they had just purchased some property in Queens and were starting to build the campus. And as my sister says, we're not allowed to say that when we went to Saint John's there were only two buildings on campus, because now it's gigantic – buildings everywhere. They even have dorms. They have everything. But when we went there, it was quite small. It was still a very large university, but it wasn't so large in Queens. It was big still in Brooklyn. And I went there and majored in political science.

Q: Were you tempted to go to some other Catholic school?

RYAN: No, because we really couldn't afford it. I mean, I couldn't go away to school, because we didn't have the money. And I really, for all the time that I spent in the Foreign Service, I would not have been able to go away at that time. I was still too homebound, I guess, or tied to my family then. And Saint John's was reasonable. You could get a student loan, which we did. And it was close, so you could live at home and come to school. Vincension Order runs Saint John's and they're still there, and it's a very good Order. I even had a Jesuit tell me once that they really taught me how to think. So it was sort of the ultimate compliment. A Jesuit saying, "Oh, you didn't go to Georgetown or something, you know, or Fordham." So, I think I got a very good education at Saint John's.

Q: While you were doing this, were you able to get a pretty good education in New York City? As you got older, was New York still open to you?

RYAN: Oh yes, New York was open to us, because we were young and it was the Village – Greenwich Village. So we went down to the coffee houses, these sort of horrible – looking back on it – dirty, dark places. We were always dressed in black, and we sort of hung out, listening to people read really terrible poetry and drinking absolutely awful coffee, and feeling ourselves just so sophisticated and so advanced.

Q: You were the Left Bank…

RYAN: Yes, we were the Left Bankers, or what passed for the Left Bank.

Q: It was an interesting time. Did you get into folk songs?

RYAN: Oh yes. Folk songs and all of that. It was a lot of fun.

Q: If the kids of today could see the older people in their local environs back then. Did the outer world begin to intrude as far as political science, international affairs and that sort of thing?

RYAN: Yes, but what really intruded was the civil rights movement when I was in college. It was before Vietnam, so the civil rights movement was kind of my generation's crusade. And I was fortunate enough to have gotten a job as an intern to a congressman in 1963, Hugh Carey, who ultimately became governor of New York. And so I was in Washington in August of '63 when Martin Luther King had the march on Washington.

Q: But this is after college.

RYAN: Yes, well, between college and graduate school. And so, you know, I remember watching the television of the fire hoses and the dogs and "Bull" Connor and those people.

Q: Down particularly in Montgomery and that area. Well now, what about the campaign of 1960? For many of your generation, this was really something that grabbed people. Did this grab you or not? This was the Kennedy/Nixon…

RYAN: Yes, Kennedy/Nixon. Yes, to a certain extent, but then we weren't able to vote, because we couldn't vote until we were 21 then, and I wasn't 21. And as I said, my parents were very, very conservative and very opposed to Kennedy and very much in favor of Nixon. But it was just sort of this first stirring, I guess, of the fact that I realized that I didn't share their political persuasion. For my father it was very much tied to his faith, and he saw conservative politics as very much tied to Catholicism, whereas I was beginning to see liberalism as being more Catholic than conservatism. I remember the campaign, of course, very vividly. And I remember watching the debate and thinking in my own mind that Kennedy had it all over Nixon whereas my parents thought that Nixon was just brilliant and wonderful and all that. It was interesting, because it was when I was just beginning to form my own way of thinking.

Q: It's interesting that your family, particularly your father, were sort of rock rib Republicans, because normally Irish Catholics, just traditionally, have been Democrats. They were sort of the liberal vote in those days. But do you think it was because of your father and mother being connected to banks?

RYAN: No, I think what happened was that my father was educated by the Jesuits in high school and stayed very friendly with a number of the priests that he knew then, and some of his classmates became priests, and they were very vocal in the '20s and '30s and '40s against socialism and communism. And that, I think, is what persuaded him.

Q: New York has always been a hotbed of radicals who came out of Germany and other places – radical socialism that moved over to communism (you think of the Flauverts and you know). It was Jewish but it was also some other people who were of Western

European origin. Was any of this going on at Saint John's or was this a bastion of Catholicism?

RYAN: No. It was a bastion of Catholicism. Not that I remember. I don't remember any sort of left-wing kinds of things going on at Saint John's at the time – at all. Not at all.

Q: Did you get involved in any activities particularly at Saint John's?

RYAN: No, not really. I mostly just went to school and went home and studied.

Q: How about, both in high school and in college, did you ever get involved in summer jobs and things like that?

RYAN: I always had summer jobs, but they were really very, like waitressing and things like that. Once I worked in a book club. We just stuffed the books into the packages and mailed them off. So that was nice because you could sit down all day. I really, I hated working in restaurants, but it was easy to get jobs like that. And sometimes the tips were not bad. The pay was abominable, but the tips were very good.

Q: You graduated in '62?

RYAN: '63. I took a little bit longer.

Q: With a degree in political science?

RYAN: Yes.

Q: When you say political science, what did that mean then and what were you particularly looking at?

RYAN: Well, we were looking at things like, well, let me think. The history of the political parties in the United States. I don't even remember some of the courses that I took now. But it was a very new major at that time. In fact, when I went into it, it had only just begun and there were only about seven of us who were majoring in it. We had some constitutional law classes; we had, well, I don't know actually what courses we took.

Q: Well I was just wondering what sort of things for you particularly interested you in the political process?

RYAN: Well, I was very interested to be in the political process, although I moved out of domestic issues and I was more interested, as I got older, in international affairs. There was a professor at Saint John's who was like the chairman of the department. She was a very charismatic woman, and she had different courses and would be able to place us in places where we could work and learn about city politics. I worked one semester at the

Board of Estimates for New York City, and she was the one who got me the internship with Congressman Carey. And she was very interested in domestic politics and very interested at that time – which was very interesting now looking back on it – in polling. She wanted me to write a thesis on political polling and how people's opinions were driven by this and that, and how they expressed them and all of that. So she was very much in advance of her time, I would have to say.

Q: Did the Soviet Union, were you getting a good look at the Soviet Union? I mean, this is going to be the leitmotif of most of your time in the Foreign Service, so I mean, that was a great adversary. But I was wondering, coming out of a school that was run by Catholics that was obviously opposed to the Soviet Union, were they able to have the equivalent of professors who could give a pretty clear account of what was happening there? How did you find that?

RYAN: Well, I think as clear as we understood it at that time. I don't know that we really had a very clear picture of what was really going on. We had some courses in Soviet affairs, but I mean, mostly it was the thing that hung over your head all the time. Mutual destruction, mutually assured destruction idea. And, of course, we lived through the Cuban Missile Crisis, which as I look back on it, people were quite frightened. People were very afraid that we were going to go into nuclear war. But more than that, I can't remember. It certainly was an enemy. We certainly thought their political system was wrong, not just misguided, but morally wrong. But they were also a very strong adversary, and in some ways – certainly in early space exploration – in advance of us.

Q: When you graduated, what were you pointed towards?

RYAN: Well, I was lucky enough to get a fellowship at Saint John's and so I was pointed at graduate school. And I had a fellowship where I worked for a professor doing research for him in the political science department. And so I got my graduate school tuition paid for this very little work that I did – very little amount of work, looking back on it. And there, it was more interesting than undergraduate, because we got into things more in-depth. We had some courses in constitutional law that I remember enjoying very much. We had political theory courses. It was just very academic, but very interesting.

Q: Were you, at that time, feeling that you wanted to go on to an academic career?

RYAN: No, at that time, I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew what I didn't want to do, and one of the things that I did not want to do was to teach. I was never interested in that. And the same professor that I mentioned earlier, Dr. Colville, she was the one who told me about the Foreign Service and suggested that I take the exam and see about it. And I knew nothing about the Foreign Service at all. The State Department, yes. I had heard about the State Department obviously as one of the departments of government, but I didn't know much more than that. So, it was the old three-on-one oral, and I always thought that it must have been the day that they had to pass a woman, that I got in. I mean, I don't know how I got in, because I don't believe I answered their questions very

well.

Q: Well, one of the things that Kennedy did, and it lasted for some long time, was create a lot of enthusiasm for working for the government and getting out there. Did this hit you at all? Was this at all a motivator or was this just, in applying for the Foreign Service?

RYAN: Yes. Kennedy swept, as Senator Lieberman says, "swept" our generation into the government. When you're young and idealistic, hearing something like, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country" is very heady, very moving, and very exciting. His first State of the Union address, if I remember correctly, talked about "Let public service be a proud and lively career" – they said men then, they didn't say men and women, but you knew what they meant – "let every man who served his country say he served his country in its hour of need." That's terrific stuff for the young, I think. And so I am one of the people who was in the government because of John Kennedy. [The quote from Kennedy's 1961 State of the Union Address reads: "Let the public service be a proud and lively career. And let every **man and woman** who works in any area of our national government, in any branch, at any level, be able to say with pride and with honor in future years:" I served the United States government in that hour of our nation's need."]

Q: There's a generation of Foreign Service people who got swept into the government this way, and I think it permeated their service thereafter – I mean, their sense of mission.

RYAN: Yes.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the Congressman Carey. What were you doing? Because later this becomes quite important, because you become a real public servant working for these people.

RYAN: What I did for Congressman Carey was, I guess you would have to call it, constituent services. Drafting letters for his signature, talking to constituents who called about what they were concerned about. Looking back on it, I mean, they gave us no trouble. He was nice. I went for the interview to his office in Brooklyn and he said that I could come to Washington if I wanted and work for him, but he didn't have any money to pay me, but that was all right. And so I did come and worked for him and the people in his office were very, very nice to me. It was interesting. It was almost, sort of, public service. I look back on his, waiting to be interviewed by him, back to the time in Brooklyn, and he had a whole parade of people who were coming in for one reason or another. He was almost like the "ward boss", trying to find somebody a job, and trying to get somebody food, and that's what he did in Washington too. And people would write and people would call and they would want things, and if he could do it, he did it.

Q: Do you remember any of the questions that were asked on the oral exam?

RYAN: No, not really. It's like a blur to me. I don't even remember the names of the

people who interviewed me. Well, I would have liked to remember them. I was in New York. I didn't have to come to Washington for it. I mean, it was just pleasant. It was interesting. I had friends, fellow Foreign Service officers with me, who knew all sorts of things about the Foreign Service, who had gotten the journal, had gotten the magazine, and had studied and all of that, and they were very nervous about the exam – well, this is what they told me afterwards – but I wasn't nervous or anything. And it was just like a very nice conversation. I didn't realize how much was riding on it.

Q: Before you went, had you done any prepping on "what is the Foreign Service?" and "who are these people?"

RYAN: No. Not at all. I was kind of arrogant about it. But I know I didn't do anything. And they didn't ask me things like that because I wouldn't have been able to answer them. But, you know, I had my little education, my little degrees, my interest in international affairs, and you know, going into the government to make the government better.

Q: While you were at Saint John's, did you get much involved in observing the United Nations?

RYAN: Not really, no. I don't even remember if we went to the United Nations. I remember Dr. Colville bringing us to Washington once. And I remember, for example, meeting Justice Douglas at the Supreme Court, and his talking to us – a very small group of us – and how nice he was to give up his time and to answer our questions and everything. I remember that, but I don't remember the UN – going to the UN – at all.

Q: During this time, did you get involved in any of the civil rights things?

RYAN: I did, but only locally, because my parents didn't want me to go to the South on the "freedom rides", and then, you know, I was in my 20s, and you didn't do what they didn't want you to do – or at least, I didn't do what they didn't want me to do. So I didn't do that, but I do remember marching around in the city and around in Queens with old-time Socialists who told me that I wouldn't get into the Foreign Service because the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] would be taking pictures of us demonstrating and they wouldn't let me in. I remember that. Which wasn't true, because they did let us in. But they were older people, and they were, I guess, veterans of all sorts of demonstrations and very nice, very kind, but almost paranoid about the government.

Q: Well, many of them had unpleasant experiences [laughing]. Did you have any feeling about well, I mean, the whole security apparatus – security exams and all that?

RYAN: No, not at all. I didn't have any thought of it at all. None. It's interesting, because I had only lived in New York City. I had been abroad once with a church group in 1960 for a couple of weeks. I never lived abroad. I had never lived anywhere but New York. And it took nine months to get through the security clearance. I remember that, because it

still seems to take nine months even after 35 years.

Q: Well Vatican II was it called? When did that come?

RYAN: Vatican II was about 1962, 1963. Pope John XXIII.

Q: Well how did that sort of hit Saint John's and your family and all that, and you?

RYAN: Well, I remember liking a lot of the changes that came about through Vatican II, with the Saturday night Mass, with Sunday, sort of the relaxation of the disciplines and the penances and all of that. I remember that, liking that very much. But it did really empty the convents. A lot of the women left the convent. I'm not sure that poor Pope John XXIII meant that at all in his opening to the world. It was exciting, because it was so different.

Q: You took the oral exam when?

RYAN: Well, I came in in '66. I got out of graduate school in '65. So it was probably '64 or '65 when I took the exam.

Q: What, then, did you do in the interim between getting, what…did you come out with a master's degree?

RYAN: I came out with a master's in international relations and then I worked at some pick-up jobs – the same kinds of things that I did when I was in school, during the summer. And then, because I hadn't heard from the Foreign Service or the State Department, I had started as a social worker for the City of New York. But then I got a call from the Department on a Thursday, asking me if I could be in Washington the following Monday to start a course. And of course I said yes. And I was there. That was February of 1966, and I went in then.

Q: How would you describe your entering your class – the basic officer course, the A100 course – in February of '66?

RYAN: Well, it was interesting looking back on it, because there were seven women in the class. There were about under 50, 47 [in the class total], something like that. I remember being very impressed with April Glaspie who was in class, because she was writing Arabic. And I thought that I was probably not where I should be if I was in class with people writing Arabic script in front of me. I did not think that the training that we got in the basic course, or in consular training, was any good at all. And quite honestly, if I had had any other option, any other thing to do, I probably would have left, because I thought it was very condescending, I guess the word is. It was kind of silly, I thought. You know, how to write a cable and how to dress and all of that. You know, the old Foreign Service – how strict they were about various things. And consular training was only "talking heads". It was not practical training the way they do now at ConGen.

Q: They didn't have ConGen then…

RYAN: No, we didn't have ConGen. We had people who would come in and tell us war stories. I remember someone talking about how she shipped the wrong body to someplace, and those kinds of stories. They were entertaining to a certain extent, but they really didn't prepare you for going out and doing consular work. And some of my classmates I liked very much, and some, of course, I'm still in touch with. And some were insufferably arrogant and conceited the way they are. And so…

Q: Was Alice Kern running the training?

RYAN: Yes.

Q: My feeling was that she did not do the consular service any great service by doing this. Because it was run, well it sort of reminds of some of your nuns, sort of locking the doors. Did you get any feel for consular work?

RYAN: No, I had no feel for it. I loved it once I started to do it in the field. I really loved it. But I had no idea how to do it. And certainly, I mean, okay, I passed the test. They had a little citizenship test. They had a little visa test and things like that. It wasn't hard, but it didn't really teach you how to do the work, not in a practical sense. In a theoretical sense, I guess it did, but not in a practical sense.

Q: Did you get any feel for, at that time, that women were pushed off in one category and that men were in another or something like that?

RYAN: Yes, probably. Well most of the women in my class were consular or admin. I think April was political, but I don't remember any of the others being political or econ. They were still not sure of us. They didn't really expect us to stay, because then the rule was still if you were married, you had to resign if you were a woman. And so, they weren't so sure of us and they weren't so sure they wanted to waste their time teaching us anything, because we were all going to go off and get married and then we would be lost to the service. My love for the Foreign Service came when I got abroad at my first post, which was Naples. I started to do the work and realized how much I loved both the work and the living abroad, and the getting to know people, and just being part of the organization. But the training, the Washington end of it, I thought was abysmal. It was awful, I thought.

Q: Was part of it sort of a turn-off on Foreign Service per se as far as being maybe too hoity-toity, or too condescending or anything of that nature? Or was it that it just wasn't very good?

RYAN: I thought it was just that it wasn't very good. We didn't do the things that they do now in training, where you sort of go to parties and you learn how to "work the room"

and things like that. No, it was just I didn't think the training was particularly effective. And as I said, I would have left if I had anything else to do.

Q: Where did you live?

RYAN: Oh, we came in the blizzard of '66 and it was snowing like mad. I, fortunately, had been in Washington before, so I had some little sense of what the city was like – very different from what it is now. And I went first to the YW[CA], which was down around K Street and 17th, something like that. And then I just started to call places looking for an apartment, and I ended where I could afford. I had no money. And then they told us when we got there that we weren't going to get paid for six weeks. That was very exciting. They didn't tell us that before we got to Washington. At least, they didn't tell me.

Q: You joined the credit union as soon as you got sworn in [laughing].

RYAN: Yes, I joined the credit union. Borrowed $750 or whatever it was they allowed you to borrow on your signature, immediately. I lived up on Columbia Road. And I pass it every day now going up to tutor these children. 1669 Columbia Road. And they were very nice to me when I called. And they said of course they had an apartment and of course I should come. And, you know, it was blizzard, snow, unbelievable. And I finally did get there, and they were very nice. And I had this little studio apartment that I could afford, which was on the first floor. And I could open it with my ID [identification] card. You know, there was no security whatsoever as I look back upon it. No bars on the windows. Nothing. It wasn't as diverse, I guess you'd have to say, then as it is now, but it was still a little bit on the edge – a little bit rough. But everybody was lovely to me. Everybody was very nice to me.

Q: Well, your first post was Naples?

RYAN: Yes.

Q: You were in Naples from when to when?

RYAN: I was in Naples from 1966 to 1969. They had us do rotational assignments. You know, that was central complement where you were held against Washington and so the post was always happy for the little extra. And I started in the immigrant visa section, which was a very, very busy section at that time, with wonderful FSNs [Foreign Service nationals] with whom, as I used to tell the A100 classes, I never made a mistake. They never let a mistake of mine get out of the office, the FSNs. They fixed everything. They protected me. They were wonderful. And so consequently, people thought I was quite good at what I was doing, and I was completely and totally dependent on them to make sure I did everything right. It was just so much fun, because you would have these families…It was the old days where we had an office, a little office, and you would bring people into your little office, and you would sit down with them across the table and you would be able to talk to them. And not just interview questions, but, "How are things

going?" and "What does your son do in the States?" and "How long has he been there?" And it was just nice and it was fun, and it was sort of helping those people buy their way into the American dream. It was terrific. It was just fabulous.

Q: Who was consul general at the time?

RYAN: Homer Byington.

Q: Oh boy. Well he had been sort of the "Prince of Naples". He was born there. His father was a…

RYAN: His father was a consul general. His wife was quite a power too. She used to summon us. It was just all women. The wives had to do all sorts of things for her, and then there were a few single women officers at that time and when she had a tea for the women, we had to go. All of us. You know, we had jobs. We were supposed to be working. We had to go to these teas, I remember that.

Q: Was he sort of a distant presence?

RYAN: A very distant presence. I was terrified of him. But he did have a boat. The Consulate boat, or his boat – Zio Sam. And he would invite people out on the boat. And it was a very pleasant way to spend a Sunday afternoon, you know, going off, anchoring off Capri or Ischia, and swimming and having lunch. The drinks they used to make were so strong, it was a wonder that we didn't drown looking back on it. But we just accepted everything. You know, that was the way it was supposed to be. They were worried about us – the single women. They made me live in the Consulate, upstairs in the Consulate, for a couple of years before I could get out of that. And that was very awkward because the consul general lived there, having had some sort of dispute with his neighbors when he lived on the outside. And then he moved to the top floor of the Consulate, where, I mean, there were two apartments farther down. And the communicator lived in one, and I lived in the other. And so it was very awkward, because sometimes he would be having parties and you would have to sneak into your own apartment.

Q: I know it well, because I was consul general and lived there.

RYAN: Well, it was very nice living there. It was beautiful, I thought, but it was awkward.

Q: What was Naples like at the time?

RYAN: I thought it was fabulous. It was very, almost stereotypical southern Italian. You know, there was wash hung from the windows across the little alleyways. The sheep hung in the butcher shops. And at Easter time, I remember coming around the corner and coming upon this butcher shop with all of these carcasses hung. I believed the Italians when they told me that I spoke Italian well, and so I had no inhibition whatsoever about

speaking Italian. And by the time I left I did speak it well; when I arrived I did not, although I had good FSI [Foreign Service Institute] training, but I had a terrible accent. But I believed them, because they were so encouraging, so warm and nice and everything. And so I had no inhibition about speaking to anybody about anything at any time. And I had a wonderful, wonderful time. You had sort of the best of both worlds because you had Naples and Spaccanapoli and Capri, Ischia and Procida and then you also had the NATO base at AFSOUTH and we had the Navy, commissary and PX. So, I mean, it was paradise. In fact it was all like that, the Foreign Service. It was perfect.

Q: Where there a lot of consuls, vice consuls…

RYAN: Well, Bill Lehfeldt was the deputy principal officer. He was wonderful to me. He's the one who got me to stay the extra year. Our administrative officer was Chuck Cuenod, who I always think of as the best administrative officer I've ever met. And that was my area. I loved admin. Margaret Fagan was the chief of the consul section, and so I was very blessed because she was a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful boss, and also a woman – and a very successful woman.

Q: She was, I think, the first consul and Margaret Hessman or someone, were the two consul officers who finally broke the FSO3 [Foreign Service officer] barrier, as FSO2s.

RYAN: Yes, yes, she was a "2" then when she was running the consulate section in Naples. She was wonderful. She was very gentle. She was a lovely woman. She would have dinners and parties and things like that that she always invited us all to. She took me when I first arrived, she was the first person to take me to Capri. What a nice thing to do for a green, unaware vice consul. So I was lucky. I was very blessed. We were all friendly. We were all young.

Q: Did you get any feel for what were the immigration patterns at that time?

RYAN: Well, there was still a lot of family, a tremendous number of immigrant visas. I mean really, that was a gigantic immigrant visa mill at that time, and what I remember being struck by is talking to these people who were going to the United States, who came from southern Italy – Reggio Calabria, and really poor, poor parts of Italy – and how their children had gone before them. And how they would show me pictures of their son's house or his car and how successful people were. They didn't have such terrific jobs. You looked back on it and this one worked in a barber shop and did something else, this one worked in a gas station. But they saved their money and they were bringing their parents over, or they were bringing their wives and children over, and they were successful and they were Americans.

Q: Did you do protection and welfare and that sort of thing?

RYAN: Yes, we did do protection and welfare. I have to say, even though I had all those years in CA, I know I'm not a real consular officer, because real consular officers love

American citizen services, as we call it now (and protection and welfare as we called it then). I didn't like it at all. I thought the Americans abroad were awful, abominable, stupid, mean, you know, anything you could think of. I always thought we should give an exam before we gave them a passport, and if they passed, they could have the passport and if they failed, they couldn't because we didn't want them out of the country.

My first experience with an American was when I was in citizenship, as we called it then. I was in passports. And this young woman came in – clearly an American – with her friend – who was also clearly an American – and the first woman had lost her passport. She was young, but you know, not younger than I. But her friend had a passport and her friend identified her as an American citizen and all of that. So we were going to document her as an American with a passport and I told her it would take about 45 minutes to get the passport, and she started to cry. And it wasn't just, you know, little tears coming, it was heaving sobs, okay? So, what do I know? I didn't know if she was in a hurry or what. She thought she was going to stay in Naples, or Italy, for the rest of her life because she had lost her passport. And that's when I thought, they shouldn't be allowed out of the country. I mean anybody that naive…and every day, every day, we had people come in who had been robbed of everything they owned with them, because they had left their cars, with all of their suitcases and everything clearly visible in the car, and went off to Capri or Amalfi or wherever they went, and came back and everything was gone. And of course, we would never do that. Even then we wouldn't have done that in the United States. But it was all different, it was foreign, so you could do anything you want. They were upset and angry. And that's when you'd get, "I pay your salary. You have to do this for me." Not nice people.

Q: What about pensioners? Did you get involved with Americans, Italian-Americans…

RYAN: We had a lot of Italian-Americans who went back to Italy and lived on their social security. And when somebody died we used to do these social security trips, investigations, because social security would give a certain amount of money to bury the poor soul. And I remember being absolutely scandalized going to some town, not that far. I drove myself and went around to find out how much the funeral cost. And I remember talking to the parish priest who told me that the funeral was the equivalent of $5,000, and $5,000 would have bought and sold that town ten times over. And I remember being scandalized, because I knew he was lying, but he thought – they all thought – you're an American, America has everything, the United States has all this money. They didn't understand that there was a limit. And I thought social security was foolish to send us out and do these investigations, because if they paid whatever it was then, I forget, they should have just given that money.

Q: Yes, it wasn't that…

RYAN: It wasn't that much. Okay, so you find out that they didn't spend $150, they spent $130. Who cares? But it was interesting, because driving around Italy, a lot of pensioners came back. What I do remember is how many people had lost their citizenship because

they had voted in Italian elections. Because we had encouraged them, of course…

Q: This was the election of '48.

RYAN: '48, yes. The Christian Democrats. You know, don't vote for a communist. And these poor souls voted and then we told them they were expatriated. And they had no intention of losing their citizenship or giving up their citizenship. They had voted because their relatives in the States told them to vote, and told them how to vote, and they did that. And so I thought the decisions of Afroyim and all of that were good decisions. I agreed with that, although a lot of my colleagues thought that was terrible, you know, that they should lose their citizenship, you know, they're not really Americans. But they really didn't intend to give up their American citizenship. It was terrible having to tell them. Terrible.

Q: Did you pick up this feeling of Naples being the south, or did you find that you were up against almost a snobbery on the part of our officers in Rome?

RYAN: Oh sure. Oh yes. Absolutely. Rome and north. They felt sorry for us. But then, of course, we felt sorry for them. One of our colleagues was transferred from Naples to Milan. What a wonderful assignment, you know, we told him. And the other FSNs were so sorry for him, because it was so grey there and the sun never shone in Milan. He would be so depressed. But yes, they did look down on us. And God love them, the poor souls, when they came back to Naples, they were excited. They came by ship, most of them. Airplanes were not quite as popular as they are now. Almost every docking, somebody died. They were so overcome with emotion at seeing Vesuvio again, coming into the bay, that they died.

Q: These are Italians.

RYAN: Italian-Americans. And then we also had people who didn't have passports. I was called down all the time when the ships came in, to document people as Americans with passports. I even wrote back, I guess it was Frances Knight at the time, because it was like, well, they didn't have time to get a passport, and they knew that they could get one in Naples when they got there. And she stopped it. I don't know how she did it, but after we wrote and said that this was wrong, and that they were always coming without passports, and they shouldn't be allowed do that. They would get in overnight, and I would have to go down to the dock, and everything. She was outraged, and they stopped, and it just didn't happen anymore. She was quite a powerful woman.

Q: Oh, absolutely! She and Ruth Snyder had run the passport office between them for about thirty or more years. I remember Barbara Watson at your job couldn't stand Fran. They just didn't …

RYAN: Oh no. But Barbara Watson was a wonderful, wonderful assistant secretary for consular officers. She made us very proud to be doing consular work. She was just

fantastic.

Q: Well then, you were in Naples until '69. How about the military? How did you find our military?

RYAN: Well, the Navy, we were all young. Of course, we were all friendly with them. I didn't find them difficult or anything. What I do remember is how many of the young boys married prostitutes, clearly prostitutes when I met them, God love them. One woman came in to see me, and she had a letter from her mother-in-law, a really beautiful letter, welcoming her to the family, and just such a nice kind of letter you'd hope you'd get from your mother-in-law. And I wondered, you know, when this woman got off the plane or off the boat or got to wherever she was going, that that woman had to know what she had done in Naples, and I wondered how she would have thought about her then, because, I mean, you just looked at them and you just knew. But, you know, I think that the marriages lasted. I don't think they were marrying them – maybe I was very naive then – but I don't think they were marrying those boys just to get to the States. It wasn't like that. And, you know, it was interesting.

Q: You were there until '69. Where did you go after that?

RYAN: Honduras. Tegucigalpa.

Q: And you were there from when to when?

RYAN: I was there from '70 to '71. I was the personnel officer. It was not a happy assignment for me. I worked for a very old-time admin kind of person. I mean, it could have been a clash of generations as well as opposition to me as a woman. I don't know what it was. I was young, and he was not young, and he was a budget-in-the-back-pocket kind of admin guy. And I wanted to do things differently and all of that.

The service rescued me. I wrote to my counselor, who was Janet Hall-Diggs. Janet Hall she was then, and then she was Janet Hall-Diggs, now she's back to Janet Hall. She'd married Congressman Diggs, you know. And she was great. She got me out of there in practically no time. I didn't have to curtail or anything. I just got a cable one day telling me I was transferred to Monterrey.

Q: Let's talk a bit about Honduras. What was Honduras like?

RYAN: Honduras then, which was 1970, was before all of the terrible things that happened in Central America. It was a very dusty, very sleepy town for a capital city. There was almost nothing to do for young people, and so what we did was entertain each other in our homes. We were all friends. It was very nice that way. USIS, AID, all of us were very compatible. But it was after the Soccer War, after Jean Wilkowski, who had been the DCM [deputy chief of mission], had left. But they were still talking about that.

And it had sort of settled back into nothing, with a tremendous amount of drinking among the Honduran men, at least that I remember. You would see them in the city, in the capital, in the streets, drinking and falling down and passing out. There was nothing to do for them, and no hope. Very poor. And I thought very boring.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

RYAN: Hewson Ryan. And Bob Davis was the DCM. He was fabulous. He was a wonderful DCM, wonderful. The ambassador was sort of removed, and I was very junior, but the DCM was very nice and very good. The admin counselor and I, we didn't get along. I thought he was an idiot. Poor man.

Q: You were doing personnel?

RYAN: Yes.

Q: Was this sort of a normal rotation thing?

RYAN: Yes, it was the way they coned us then. By the second assignment they sent you to what they thought you were best at. And it was sort of stereotypical thinking then, of course, personnel being a woman's field. And it was very clerical. It wasn't what I always thought personnel work should be, which was much more interest in people and their careers and how they were getting ahead, and all of that kind of thing. It was just, you know, forms, and I didn't like it at all.

Q: Well, then you went off to Monterrey?

RYAN: Then I went off to Monterrey in a consular job.

Q: And you were there from '71 to '73. Monterrey, what was it like when you got there?

RYAN: Well, the consulate general was a very, very busy consulate post. Everybody – immigrants, non-immigrants, and protection work. Ed Dobbins was the consul general Mac Adams was the deputy principal officer. Our chief of the consular section was a most wonderful man, an FSO3 [now O-1] by the name of Denman Stanfield, who really taught me, just by being, just by the way he was and the way he ran that section, a lot about how to be a supervisor and how to be in charge. Because we worked like dogs, and there was just so much work and so much pressure. No matter how hard you worked there was always people left over at the end of the day, and so that meant they had to sleep in front of the consulate again that night and all. And he was just a lovely, lovely, lovely man. We would have coffee with him in the mornings, before the day started. He was always accessible. He would sometimes say, on Fridays or before Friday, "Leave at noon Friday. Go into the border. Take the weekend, get away." He was just terrific. And he knew everything. He knew everything, I thought. Everything. Everything about the law, everything about how to take care of Americans, everything that you could do and

everything that you couldn't do for them. I didn't realize it, how much I'd learned from him, just by the way he was.

Q: What did you do first?

RYAN: First I did immigrant visas. Then I did non-immigrant visas. And then for a year I ran the protection of American citizens.

Q: Let's talk first about immigrant visas. What were the patterns then?

RYAN: Well, then, it was the law then that if you had a baby born in the United States, that baby could take the whole family with him or her. So there was a lot of fraud in people saying that their babies were born in the United States when they were born in Mexico. There were certain midwives in Texas who would lie and create birth certificates for babies. But then there were a lot of babies who were born in the United States, parents who were migrants who had gotten across, undoubtedly illegally, to have their babies in the United States just to get to the United States.

That's when I first became aware of how exploited people like them were in our country, how exploited Mexicans were in the United States, by us. That definitely was what pushed me so hard when we were working so much on the temporary worker program and regularization at the beginning of the Bush Administration, because they would come, finally, they'd return to the country and with visas. They had been in the States illegally. I had one man who had been deported six times. They worked for practically nothing. They were taken advantage of terribly, in many cases by the growers and by the ranchers. Some ranchers were very nice. I got to be very, very friendly with one elderly gentleman from Texas, Mr. Seay. He would bring his employees down when it was their turn to come for their visas, and I got to know him because he came regularly. And I don't think he cheated them. But they were terribly cheated. They were paid next to nothing. They lived in these horrible shacks, and they had to pay for living, they had to pay for where they lived to the person who was employing them. And Mr. Seay told me once that the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] would call him. He lived in Floresville, Texas. They would tell him that they were going to raid his ranch, and when they were going to raid it – what day and what time. And then he would hide the illegals. It was such a sham. It was just so awful. I mean, either we have an immigration law or we don't. And if we have a law it should be enforced properly and if we don't have a law then we shouldn't pretend that we have a law. I remember being upset a lot and angry a lot.

They were different from the Italians. They were much more beaten-down, much meeker. The Italian immigrants, you sort of knew that their children were going to be anything their children wanted to be when they were American. But these people, they didn't have the same push or the same concept, and so you feared that their children were also going to do stoop labor. You worried about that. Now you can get an education, now you can do this, now you can do that – they didn't take to it the way the Italians did.

Q: There still seems to be the problem. At least maybe not quite the same, but from my observation – I've never dealt with it personally – but not using education and property ownership as a way out. It seems to be it all gets poured back into the family; you stop education early in order to get a job. It seems to be the wrong formula for moving ahead.

RYAN: It's the wrong signal to send to people. And then it was very, very prevalent. And we had a lot of people that we had to delay giving them their visas for one reason or another. They didn't have proper forms or whatever. I remember one family saying that they had to go to the States because their baby was an American citizen. Their baby couldn't drink the water in Mexico. It was a little baby that's just like everybody else in the family, and here was this little child, but this was an American child, so this American child had to go back to the States. It was just so sweet. But they were very gentle people. Very good people.

Q: One of the problems with consular work is, young officers, vice consuls, for the first time in their lives, are up against people who are lying to them, or are giving them fraudulent documents. For some young Americans, they're just not used to this, and sometimes it affects them. They get overly legal and all. Did this make you cynical or your colleagues? Was this a problem you had to fight with?

RYAN: I think one of the problems in consular work, particularly doing it early in your career when you're young, as we used to be, is that you have so much power over people. And it should scare you, but it doesn't. Nobody should have that kind of power over people, when you don't really know what you're doing.

Q: You were seeming very…

RYAN: Not only do you get angry at the non-immigrants, the people who were lying about why they wanted to go to the States – because it was obvious that they wanted to go to the States because they wanted to get a job or they wanted to stay as long as they could. And with so many of them, every day we had that. I do remember being angry and annoyed. I don't remember my being so much, I mean you almost expected them to lie, because if they told you the truth, you'd never give them the visa. So they had to tell you a lie, but it was so transparent that it was annoying. Poor little souls would come in, dressed as campesinos, and tell you that they wanted to go to Disneyland. Well, good lord, they didn't have the money to go to Disneyland. They didn't have the money to get to the border, for heaven's sake. So, yes, I remember that.

And I also remember the pressure of, just the thought of the unrelenting numbers of them, and how full we were, even then. There were just two of us doing interviewing then. I was doing a couple of hundred interviews a day, at least. So you didn't have a lot of time to spend with them or be particularly nice to them. I think I said "Good morning" or "Good afternoon" but I don't think I said anything much else. And so you're soon just worn down. You're tired, you're under tremendous pressure. There are always

Congressional correspondence about how, "Why did you refuse this person?" or "My constituent's brother didn't get a visa" or whatever. And that was annoying because they were supposed to know their law, after all; they were the ones who created it! So they should know why we were refusing visas. But part of it, I think, was being young; part of it is having so much power. Because if you gave the visa, you'd change their lives, and if you refuse, you also change their lives.

Q: When you're up against a clientele almost 90% or more should probably be being refused in your heart of hearts, maybe even more, and what do you do? Do you make sort of a mental compromise, and say, "Well, I'll refuse 70% and allow…"

RYAN: I never did that. Not consciously. Other people had told me, since I was in CA [Bureau of Consular Affairs], that they thought, well, you know, if I give him a visa, is he going to be a good citizen in the future? Can I take a chance on him? I never thought like that. I just thought I would issue to the people I thought I should issue to, and refuse the people I thought I should refuse. And our boss, Mr. Stanfield – some consular sections, I understand, post your refusal rate and all of that – he never did that. He would talk to us about what it was like. He wanted us to be polite, certainly. He didn't want us to be fighting or shouting or yelling at people, or anything like that. It was still the old days, where we sat at a counter, and we had the waiting room right there in front of us, and we would call them up and they would come up and it was completely open and exposed.

But I don't remember that, I mean, trying to have a certain percentage that I issued to or refused. I just tried to make the best decision I could in the less than a minute that you have to make a decision. I don't know that I was as nice to them as I always preached to the consular officers to be, you know, to look at their documents even though they were fraudulent, because they probably spent some money on them, and be nice to them and all of that. I don't know that I was particularly nice to them. But I never made fun of them or anything like that. But it was very hard work, because in many cases you did feel sorry for them. They're just this side of the border and everything's changed. You're lucky that you're born on our side of the border, and they're born on the other side, and it's …

Q: Did you have any concern about your refusing cases that another officer might be accepting or not?

RYAN: No. We never thought like that. We didn't do that. I do remember once, the INS sent back one of those forms that they send when somebody that I had issued to [had cheated]. It was the only one I remember, but there must obviously have been others. But this one they said, when they took off his shoes, they found a Social Security card. And I remember thinking, "Wow, if I could have taken off his shoes, I would have found it too." So I didn't feel so bad, that I had issued to somebody who was obviously an intending immigrant.

I did have one man that I had refused, who come back to see me in my office. Not in the front of the waiting room. He was very angry, and he ripped off his belt, and I thought he

was going to hit me with his belt, and he opened it, and hundred dollar bills fell out on the desk, all folded because they fit in his belt. I remember that, and I fled out of the office. Left him in the office with his hundred dollar bills, and ran down the hall to Mr. Stanfield's. "Stan, Stan, this man is trying to bribe me!" And Stan came in, and yelled at him, and threw him out. But that was the only time that anyone tried to buy a visa from me.

Q: What about protection and welfare, the type of work you didn't really care for?

RYAN: It was very hard in Mexico because anybody could get to Mexico. And they all came to Mexico, God help them. No wonder the Mexicans look down and hate us. Because it's one of the worst types of people who could drive to Mexico, who would, if they were in an accident would whip out a twenty dollar bill and visibly, openly try to bribe the policeman, because they knew that in Mexico a policeman took bribes. "So here's twenty bucks buddy, let me go." That kind of person, who always ended up in jail. And then you'd have to go and calm everybody down and do that. Lots of kids smuggling marijuana.

Q: This was at the height of …

RYAN: Yes, it was awful. It was just awful. And I quite honestly always suspected that it was the same marijuana, bales of marijuana, that the Mexican police had somehow sold to these boys, and then arrested them for it. Because then they confiscated the marijuana, and then did it again. But it was awful, awful, all the time.

Once I had four people, young people, one young woman, arrested – they were flying, they had a plane – for smuggling marijuana. I had a long interview with them and the woman was very frightened of the Mexican police guards at the prison, as I think well she should be frightened of them, and I got their parents' names and everything. I called the parents and explained sort of what was going to happen. And of course it's always horrible. The parents are all upset, people crying and everything, yelling, all of that. And this one boy, young man, who was sort of the head of it, the pilot, was very relaxed about everything. And he said that none of what I was saying to him, and what I then subsequently told his parents, was going to happen. And sure enough, the next day they were gone. And so they had to have paid a tremendous amount of money to get out. Because they had them – they had the plane, they had the marijuana, they had everything. They were gone. One father called me back and denounced me for frightening them and lying about their son, and all sorts of things. But what I told them was true. They were smuggling dope, and they must have been making a great deal of money, because they did get out.

Most of them didn't. I remember going to Durango to visit one fellow, who was a very good-looking man, 26 years old, in prison for seven years, whose teeth were falling out because of the diet he had. His story, which could have been true, who knows, was that he had been hitchhiking, he was picked up by this car, the car was in an accident, marijuana

was found in the car, the driver had been killed, and he was arrested. He never told us where his family was. He didn't want his family notified, and so he had no money to buy food, and he had to eat what the prison food was, and his teeth were falling out. That was before EMDA, the Emergency Medical and Dietary Assistance that we have now, and so we used to buy him vitamins out of our own pockets. But it was very sad. It was awful.

Q: What was your impression of the Mexican police authorities and all?

RYAN: I was in a constant state of rage with the Mexican police authorities, because they were very corrupt, they were very venal, and if there were an accident, you had to fly – risk your life to get there. Because if you didn't get there ahead of them, everything was gone. We had one horrible accident where a car on a perfectly straight road – I have no idea what happened – went right into the side of a train. An elderly couple. That's what they do. They drove right into the train. It was horrible. And the FSNs saw that on television and they told me, so I went there. And when I got there, everything was looted from the car. I think their relatives probably thought I stole things. Their relatives said, "I know she had a fur coat with her. I know she had this with her, I know he had that with him." And it was just gone. Everything gone. It was awful, awful.

Q: Did you have much contact with Mexicans – I'm talking about social contacts – while you were in Monterrey?

RYAN: Well, no, because then, the married people in Monterrey loved Monterrey, and the single people all hated it, particularly the single women. And we were mostly women in the consular section, single women to boot. It was still early enough that they weren't sure of us, they didn't have women working and particularly living abroad, and going off without a man of any sort. And so they weren't really sure of us. So the people we were friendly with, of course, were the FSNs, and we were very friendly with them. I'm still in touch with them thirty years later. But getting to know Mexicans, other than Mexicans connected with the consulate, it was very difficult. At least it was for us, then.

Q: I'm trying to capture the period. As a single woman, was it almost a no-no that you didn't date nationals of the country you were in? I won't say that there was a rule against it, but was this sort of, "Gee, I don't want to get involved" or something like that? Was this a problem?

RYAN: No, I didn't run into that so much being a problem. Because some people did go out with Italians or with Mexicans. I don't remember that so much. For example, I went to Mass every day at the same church for the whole two years that I was there, and no one – other than nodding, and the kiss of peace and all of that – no one ever spoke to me. No one ever said, "Oh, you're a foreigner here. What are you doing here?" or anything like that. I guess it was, you know, they just didn't do it. And I don't know that we would do it either. I don't know that we would get so friendly with people that we meet in church either.

I didn't enjoy Monterrey as a place. I made some very lasting friendships with people I worked with. Diane Dillard, for example, I met in Monterrey. And we're friends to this minute. The FSNs I'm still in touch with. But there wasn't very much to do there if you were single. Fortunately we all liked each other. But, you know, if you work all day with people and then you go out and socialize with them all night, it gets a little boring. So, you know, going out to the movies, going to dinner, all of that, it was okay, but after a while, it was sort of boring. And you would have liked other people to meet you, to get to know, but you just couldn't. It wasn't like that.

Q: Well, did you have a problem with people trying to get to know you, but the ulterior motive was visas or something like that?

RYAN: That was always the concern. I do remember applicants coming to my apartment where I lived. I had this little townhouse, in this little complex of seven townhouses. Most of the others were kids who went to the technological university there. And people would come to it. That really enraged me. Don't come on my time for a visa! Come on your own. Come on the government's time if you want. I remember once our portero there saying to me …

Q: This would be the doorman.

RYAN: The doorman. The handyman of the complex. The man who helped you hang pictures and did the little gardening, and things like that. Lovely man. I remember him saying to me, "I told my granddaughter that she should ask you for a visa, because I knew that you would get her one." And I thought, "Merciful heavens!" Thank God she didn't ask me, because the granddaughter would be only going to the States to get a job, and so it would be horrible. But thank God she didn't, and so I was never tested like that, where somebody that I really, really liked, that I wanted to do something for, asked me for something. I never had that, thank God.

Q: Well, I think this is probably a good place to stop. In '73 where did you go?

RYAN: In '73 I went to a roving assignment in Africa. I was an AF [Bureau of African Affairs] rover, a roving admin officer. For two years I traveled around the continent of Africa, filling in for people at embassies – a wonderful, wonderful job that I absolutely adored.

Q: This is the 22nd of April, 2003. What was the origin of the roving consular officer?

RYAN: I was roving administrative officer.

Q: I mean roving administrative officer.

RYAN: AF had at that time roving administrative and roving consular officers, which were people who went and filled in for others when they were on home leave, or ill, or

transferred, or what have you. Because the posts in Africa were so small that any lengthy vacancy was very difficult for a post to take. So they created this assignment, and I had that job. Pat Kennedy and I, in fact, were roving at the same time, but we never met until we got back to Washington. But it was a great job. Everything I know about admin, I learned in that job. And it was nice, because when you went to the posts they were very glad to see you because you were really filling a need, and I always left before they found out I made any mistakes, so it was the perfect job. I mean, they always said nice things about me, and it was a wonderful, wonderful introduction to the continent. I had wanted to go to Africa ever since I joined the Foreign Service, so it was fantastic for me. It was wonderful.

Q: I would imagine doing this in many ways, both the roving admin and the roving consular officer, in a way, you were often bringing more expertise than the permanent person stationed there, because so often these were junior jobs that they were learning on – correct me if I'm wrong, but relatively junior officers – so they weren't bringing much with them.

RYAN: No, that's true. I don't know that I knew a lot about administration when I started the job. I went first to Bangui, and Irv Hicks was there. Irv was the admin officer, but it was the consular officer who was absent, so Irv moved over to consular and I went into admin. So that was very nice. It was a very nice introduction, because Irv Hicks was a wonderful officer and he knew everything. So it was good that way.

Everybody was very nice. And the bureau was very supportive. AF/EX [Bureau of African Affairs, Executive Office] was a wonderful executive office. They were very, very supportive, and I learned a great deal, tremendous amount on that job.

Q: You were doing this in '73 to '75. Where were you based?

RYAN: Well, the assignment was out of Washington, but you were very rarely there. I was brought back, I guess it was in early '74, when one of the staff assistants for the assistant secretary, Don Easum at the time, left to do something else. I don't know what the whole story was, but anyway, they brought me back and put me there for a while as a fill-in staff assistant. So I learned a little bit about how Washington and how the department worked at that time. But all the rest of the time I was overseas. I was in Africa.

Q: What were some of the places that you were hitting?

RYAN: Oh, Bangui. Monrovia. Dakar. What was then Lorenzo Marques, now Maputo. Mogadishu.

Q: So you weren't confined to west or east.

RYAN: No, it was the whole continent. It was wonderful.

Q: What was your impression of these small posts? I mean, did you feel that what they were doing was valuable?

RYAN: I thought so. I also thought that the people doing the work there knew a lot about Africa, and a lot about the continent, regardless of the agency. There were some very able CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] people at those posts. Very knowledgeable about Africa and very, very good about sharing their knowledge, I thought. It was one of the ways I learned a little bit about the continent, at least politically. Yes, I thought they were very valuable posts, and I thought they were doing important work. It was, as always, Africa is always a backwater, and it was certainly a backwater then. Secretary Kissinger was the Secretary of State, and he didn't like Don Easum, and so it certainly wasn't much fun being in the front office, or trying to do anything with the seventh floor as a staffer at that time. But, you know, I always thought Africa was important. I still think Africa is important. And I think that the people who serve in Africa love Africa, and really know the continent.

Q: Well let's go back. You mentioned while you were with Don Easum at the AF in Washington. What was it? You say it wasn't much fun trying to …

RYAN: No, because I thought at that time, and I still think, that seventh floor staff take the coloration of the secretary, and they are like the secretary. And so, because the secretary at that time didn't think much of Ambassador Easum or of the bureau, they were just very difficult to deal with. Things had to get up there at a certain time of the night, and if you were a couple of minutes late because, you know, the assistant secretary was off doing something and had just gotten back to the office and couldn't look at it, they didn't want to take it. I thought it was horrible. I thought they were horrible. I mean, they were people at my own grade. It wasn't like I was dealing with much higher-ranking people so they could be the way they wanted to be.

Q: Did you get a feeling was it a matter of snobbery, or a put down, or … ?

RYAN: It was a put down. No, it wasn't snobbery. It was definitely a put down.

Q: In many respects I've known people who served as ambassadors during this period, who felt that it was almost a plus that Kissinger didn't pay much attention to them. If you're in the field, you sort of did your thing and you didn't have to worry about any guidance.

RYAN: That's right. No, that was very good. But there was a lot of talent in the AF bureau. I mean, Hank Cohen was there. He was an office director. Bob Blake was one of the DASes [deputy assistant secretaries]. Tony Ross was the PDAS. There was tremendous talent in that bureau. They were very good at what they did, and they really knew the continent.

Q: Did you get a feel – you'd been sort of an ARA [WHA - Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, formerly ARA] person – did you get a feel for, was there a different personality to AF as opposed to the Latin American team?

RYAN: I thought so, but I had never served in ARA in Washington, so I only knew it from the field, and then from a very low level in the field. But I thought, and I still think, that everybody who serves in Africa, at least at that time and I think still, wants to serve in Africa – loves the continent. And so the bureau was very good about supporting people of consular and administrative cones for DCM and principal officer, and even ambassadorial assignments. They didn't care what cone you were, they just cared about whether you knew what you were doing. And I always have thought, even when I was EUR/EX [Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, Executive Office], even then I thought AF/EX was the best executive office. It was the most supportive, it did the most for the people in the field, by far.

Q: What was the sort of administrative problems you'd run into when you were going to these small posts?

RYAN: Oh, it was everything from a Peace Corps cashier in Freetown who helped to finance a coup with Peace Corps money – an attempted coup (it was unsuccessful) to wage surveys, to being in Kigali for an assistant secretary visit. Nat Davis came. All of that. It was everything. It was everything that you could imagine, and you just sort of did it all. It was wonderful. It was just terrific.

Q: How did you find the Foreign Service nationals in that period as you went around?

RYAN: Well some of them had worked for us for a very long time, and I thought, as I do about Foreign Service nationals, that they were very, very dedicated, and very committed to what they did. And very loyal. And then you would go sometimes to posts where people had worked there for years, and you would ask them to do something – you know, we have to do this, we have to get this form out, or we have to do this or that, I can't remember now – and they would look at you as if you were speaking some Italian, and they didn't know what you meant, even though they had done that particular thing before over and over again. And I always wondered whether it was malnutrition, or not having good nutrition as children, that they couldn't remember things. And I don't think they were sort of stringing me along, because you could go find the form and say "Fill this out, do it this way, we have to get this in", you know, replenishment vouchers and all of that. So it wasn't that. It was sometimes just bewildering trying to understand why they didn't know what you were talking about.

Q: Did you get involved in trying to get cooperation within the country itself? Contractors, governments...

RYAN: Well, yes, customs clearances and things. Yes, we did some of that, yes. And then it was how Africa is. Just sort of sitting down. One of the things I learned, how to be

diplomatic, how to be different from being an American, going in and, you know, "We don't have a lot of time for this, we have to do this right away", to going in and sitting down and talking and finding out how the children were. It was that, sort of, getting friendly with people to get them to do what you hoped they would do. Or what they should do, now being stroked. But we have to do that. I thought I learned a lot.

Q: Did you sort of go in, making a mental notebook about how one dealt with these things?

RYAN: Well, you'd talk to the FSNs about, you know, do you know the customs man? Do you know how we're doing to get this cleared? Have you dealt with him before? What's he like?

I was in Mozambique very shortly before independence, and so there were a lot of FRELIMO [Front for the Liberation of Mozambique] people in the streets and around and trying to get themselves into the government, and you have to know how to deal with them. I don't think we were all that keen on FRELIMO at the time.

Q: No, we weren't.

RYAN: I was also in Luanda right before, a couple of months before we closed, and I was doing a lot of destruction of files. And the principal officer – it was a consulate then, it wasn't an embassy – the principal officer said to me, "Why are you destroying all those files?" And I said, "Well aren't we going to close?" And he said, "Close? Why would we close?" Well, because Holden Roberto's losing, you know. Dos Santos is winning. And a couple of months later we did close.

Q: Did you find during this thing, were you seeing a sort of mindset that Africa is the center of the universe?

RYAN: Well, I would not say that. People took their jobs seriously. People took what they were doing seriously. But I don't think that anybody – I'm trying to think of some of the ambassadors that I served under at that time – I don't think any of them really thought that this was the most important thing going on for the U.S. government at that time, or for the department at that time. I never got that sense.

Q: How about the junior officers? Did you find that they took to Africa? I mean, first tour officers and all?

RYAN: Some did, some didn't. Some were very angry and bitter about being there. A couple were very unhappy and very demanding of admin. But others were fantastic. Others were just great people, great officers.

Q: Well, in a way it was a good testing ground, do you think? For weeding out those that probably wouldn't …

RYAN: Well, yes, I mean it was a good way of testing whether you were suited for the Foreign Service, because they were hardship posts, and they were hardship posts for a reason. You know, it was difficult. We often didn't have water, we often didn't have electricity. It took me quite a while after I returned to Washington to stop buying, you know, six and seven tubes of toothpaste at a time, because you bought what you saw because you might not see it again for months. And so, yes, it was difficult. It was a hardship in that way. And of course we didn't have email. Everything was very slow, it was pouches all over the place, and so it took forever to get anything. But it was for me a wonderful, wonderful experience.

Q: How did you find the families? This was before there was so much integration of the spouses into the...

RYAN: Right. Some of the spouses did work, because there was a need, very definitely a need. I thought they were terrific, the families. They were wonderful to me, the people that I served with. And there was a real feeling of pulling together kind of thing. It didn't matter, regardless of specialty or regardless of rank; I thought that that part of it was wonderful. I think that's what some people miss when they go to Europe as a reward for service in a very difficult post, like a Bangui, for example. Because it's not like that. It's more like Washington, and everybody goes their own way, because after all it's Paris or London or something. But there, we were all sort of thrown together, and we did things together. People did a lot of entertaining. People were wonderful, I thought. People were very good to me.

Q: Well then, in '75 where did you go?

RYAN: I came back to Washington in October of '75 to AF/EX, as a post management officer. Working for Jack Bryant, the legendary civil service officer, who was in AF for his whole career. Knew everything. Lovely, lovely man. And he had west and central Africa, and I had east and southern Africa. And then Pat Kennedy was back at the same time. He was the personnel officer for the bureau, so that was the first time that we had actually met, even though we had heard about each other all over the continent. It was a great bureau at the time I thought. It was just wonderful. Greg Kryza was the executive director, and it was a very nice, small EX [Executive Office]. It's much bigger now. There were just two post management officers. And we did everything that we could to support the posts and the people there.

Q: You were there from '75 until ...

RYAN: Until January of '77.

Q: Did you get involved in the struggles of AF with the other bureaus for money and supplies and things?

RYAN: No, not really. At least I didn't. I'm sure that Greg and his deputy did. But I didn't get involved in any of that. I was just post management and trying to take care of the ambassadors, take care of the posts, get them what they needed.

Q: Also, I take it, with the ambassadors – for the most part – these were pretty much professional people?

RYAN: Oh, they were all career people.

Q: Did that make it simpler? In other words, they knew the system.

RYAN: Yes. And they knew what they were going to, for the most part. Every now and then you had somebody difficult. But most of them were wonderful. John Loughran was an ambassador at that time. Phil Manhard, who had been a prisoner of war for a long time, he was there. He was in Mauritius at that time. Will De Pree was one of my ambassadors. So it was fine. Good people.

Q: Any particular incidents, or something that you can talk about during this period?

RYAN: Well, I remember Ambassador Manhard came in once with a cable about how there was going to be a cyclone or something. A typhoon or whatever they called it in that part of the world, in Mauritius, and we had better start paying attention to that. And everyone sort of just laughed him off, basically. "Oh no, out there in the middle of the ocean, what does he know?" And sure enough, there was some horrible storm that took the roofs off houses and everything like that. So he didn't do this, but he could have had the satisfaction of coming in and saying, "You know, I told you to do something about this and you didn't do it." So I remember that.

And I remember John Loughran saying once about Mogadishu, that if you didn't have any inner resources that you didn't belong in a place like that. Because you had to really depend on yourself. And I remembered that for a long time because that's really true. If you have to be entertained, then you probably don't want to go to Africa.

Q: At this point, did you consider yourself an African hand?

RYAN: I did, yes. I wanted to, and I certainly did. Yes.

Q: Did you get any changes in the front office of AF? It's still the Ford administration. Kissinger was still there?

RYAN: Well, yes, but then Dick Moose came as the assistant secretary. And I remember Dick Salazar, who was the executive director or the deputy, I guess, at that time, giving me money and telling me to find Dick in Africa and give him this money, because he hadn't taken enough for his travel advance or something like that. So I found him in the airport in Yaounde and gave him the money. It was so funny. Looking back on it, it was

perfectly normal. I didn't think anything of it, I didn't question it. That was the first time I had really ever met Dick Moose, because the assistant secretary was so far above the second post management officer in the executive office. But he was very nice, very nice.

Q: Is there anything else we should talk about, do you think, during this time?

RYAN: No, I think that sort of covers it. I wasn't there that long.

Q: Did you feel as a post management officer that you were getting enough resources to keep your posts going?

RYAN: To keep their heads above water. I mean nobody was fat. That's for sure. Nobody had a lot of money. They were still very thinly staffed. But, yes, I don't remember that we had a lot of complaints about not being able to do things, or not having things because there wasn't enough money.

Q: Did South Africa absorb a lot of attention at that time?

RYAN: Some. Not that I remember. Not that much. I can't think of who the ambassador was now. It wasn't that much, it was the horrible time in South Africa. Awful. I do remember once, though, being in a taxi, going through South Africa, because South Africa I had to go into to get a visa for, I don't know where, somewhere where I was going. And being in a taxi, and having this Afrikaner taxi driver talk to me about how being black was the mark of Cain. And being that young, which I would never do now, I said to him, "How do you know that being white isn't the mark of Cain?" And I really thought he was going to put me out of the taxi. He was so angry, he was beside himself with rage. And I started to think, "What if he puts me out of the taxi in the middle of God-knows-where South Africa?" But he didn't. But I would never have thought that I would live to see a free South Africa, or a democratic South Africa. Because that was 1975. I liked going to South Africa, because if you were white it was wonderful. Bookstores, great hotels, clean hotels. And I stayed at the Carlton Hotel, which was a lovely hotel. If you went down the hall, the Africans would sort of push themselves up against the side of the wall to let you walk by, and I wanted to say to them, "Don't do that!" And I thought they were so beaten down, at least it seemed like that to me, I didn't think they would ever be able to do what they did, thank God.

Q: How about the Congo? Zaire?

RYAN: Oh, that was Jack's part of the world. I had to go through Kinshasa a few times, which was an experience in and of itself. But I never served at the embassy as a rover, and I didn't have anything to do with it as a post management officer.

Q: Did you get into places where you had responsibility? You mentioned how well integrated the CIA was, but did you get a feel for CIA support versus State support for their people?

RYAN: Well, CIA always employed spouses, the wives, and it was always wives at that time. They always had jobs in the station, always, if they wanted them. And we were not able to do that 100%, and so there were some people there who might have wanted to work but couldn't. They always did that. The agency was way ahead of us on that.

Q: Did you get any feel for the AID [United States Agency for International Development] operations and the personnel and the support and all?

RYAN: Some, but AID was different. AID wanted to be different, and very much wanted to be separate. And they were. So I didn't get too friendly with too many of them. I didn't get to know too many of them. In most places at that time they had their own administrative people. There were a few what were called joint administrative offices, which on paper make tremendous sense, but in reality hardly ever worked the way they were supposed to. So when I finally got back into Africa, to be stationed there, I was in Abidjan as the administrative counselor. We had a joint administrative office, and I would have to say that that AID director was impossible to satisfy.

Q: In '77, what happened?

RYAN: In January of '77 a person I had met, an officer I had met in Conakry, when I filled in for him as rover, Joe Yodzis, who was the most wonderful man. He was the chief of what was then Foreign Service counseling and assignment. He was the head administrative CDO [career development officer], and his deputy was transferred, and then he asked for me to be the deputy's replacement, to work for him as the CDO. And AF was very good about letting me go, at an awkward time for replacement. So I went and worked for Joe in what was the FCA/A, as a CDO [Career Development Officer]. It was a wonderful job at a wonderful time in that particular division, or that branch. Karl Ackerman was there. Gif Malone was there. Andy Steigman. Really top-notch people, and I thought very good assignments officers, and very good career development officers.

Q: This is the old system?

RYAN: No, this is the new one.

Q: So we're talking about people, the new FS 1, which would be the equivalent to sort of colonel level.

RYAN: That's right. Yes. And Joe had those and part of the "2"s, and I had the other part of the "2"s and all of the "3"s. And we had some people who were "4"s, because we also had specialists. We had general services people and personnel people and all of that, that we were taking care of. And I found that the most satisfying job I ever had, because it was just so wonderful to get somebody into the right job, and then to see his or her career take off. I loved that.

Q: Well, how did the system work? I did this back in '67, '68, I worked with Lori Lawrence in personnel as career management officers.

RYAN: Oh, same thing.

Q: But how did it work? Somebody would come in and you'd, what?

RYAN: Well, they had the bids at that time but nothing was automated, and so I remember coming in all weekends during the bid season and doing the bid book by hand. Writing out, "Administrative counselor in Dakar", and then all of the people who wanted to go to Dakar. But then people would write in or telephone – no email – and they would tell you what they wanted to do – or cable – and then you would think about whether that made sense, or what about this job, or what about that job, and you would go back and forth like that, until you found something that made everybody happy – or most of the time tried to make everybody happy.

Q: Did you find that it was easy to talk practically, in realistic terms, to people? You know, you look at a career, and you can see if they're peaking, if they've got problems in the wrong thing. You know, it becomes rather apparent. Was this easy for you to do?

RYAN: It was easy for me to do. It was very hard for some people to accept that, you know, you weren't going to get that job because you basically didn't have the tickets for it. You didn't have the skill or you didn't have the experience. Everybody thought they should have the most popular job. Everybody thought that if they came in earliest with their bid, that they would have to get it. I used to tell them, earliest postmark doesn't win. But Joe had the most wonderful sense of humor, and it was just a great office, because we had a lot of fun. And, I think we did some very, very good things.

Q: You were saying Bill Jones…

RYAN: Bill Jones came. He was in INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research] and he came to personnel. He had been in personnel before and he couldn't believe how much we coddled people. Now looking back on it I think he would probably have a heart attack for sure if he saw what goes on today in terms of hand-holding and trying to get people to go places. But he thought it was much too much coddling. But he was a wonderful person. He was great to work for. And he was so proud of Beth [Jones], which was like 1979 then, 1978. She was a junior officer. And I think now he wouldn't be able to contain himself, you know. She's assistant secretary for European Affairs, you know, senior officer, ambassador. And wonderful things ahead of her. It's too bad he didn't live…he lived long enough, certainly, to see her as a senior officer, but I don't think he saw her…he might have seen her as an ambassador, maybe.

Q: Was this the beginning of being concerned about sex discrimination, racial discrimination and all this?

RYAN: Well certainly, the women's class action suit was going on. I was a part of that. Alison Palmer in 1975 filed that women's class action suit. And while I personally never experienced anything that I could identify as gender discrimination, it certainly did exist in the service for a long time. And I'm sure there was also racial discrimination, because you know, it was the idea that African-Americans would be happiest in Africa because everybody would look like them, and they would be fine, you know. Which is absurd. There were not that many Latinos at that time, but you know, they would all go to Latin America, because you know, they spoke Spanish, and they understood people. So there was that. I don't really know if the people who were doing it realized that they were guilty of discrimination. I think in many cases, they thought they were doing people a favor. I don't think that they would have seen themselves as sexists or racists. In fact, I know some of them most certainly did not see themselves as that, although that's what you could certainly think of them as.

And it was the time that we began to bring people in at mid-level. The mid-level program was well underway. And at first, I thought it was a very good program. We got some very talented people in through that program. But then, after a while, even while I was still in personnel, it simply was just a numbers game – you know, so many African-Americans, so many Native Americans, so many women, because women were still part of the mid-level program at that time. And I didn't think we got quite the talent that we got in the beginning. But we had that program for quite some time.

Q: I was with the Board of Examiners around this time. And my impression was that we're getting too many people sort of from the administrative apparatus – the OEO, the Office of Equal Opportunity and all. I mean, these are the ones that read the bulletins. And we think we're getting a leg up, but this is not the greatest place to go. You know, if you're looking for up-and-coming talent, this is not the office, that type of thing, where you normally find really good people.

RYAN: Yes, I don't remember how, obviously I never knew where they came from or what they did. I always thought it was a mistake to bring people in at the "1" level. Always. Because there's a certain assumption at that level that you know things, because you got to be a "1". You have to have been around for a while. And they were doing that. And I remember one case of a man who came from New York City where he had worked in the city government. He came in as a "1" and we dropped him into a post in Latin America as a supervisor of GSOs [general service officers] and he didn't have any experience doing that. And he had a terrible time. And I thought it was wrong that we took somebody like that, from what seemed to be a successful career before he came into the Foreign Service, and then just kept telling him over and over he just wasn't good enough. I thought it was a terrible mistake. And I argued for, if we were going to do it, to bring people in at the "03" level rather than anything higher, because I thought anything higher was too hard.

Q: Did you get involved in the dismissal of people "for cause"?

RYAN: No, not really. You heard about things, and you knew things (because you were in personnel) about what had happened at this post or that post, but that was done really by, at that time, by the executive director for personnel, who was then, in my time, Larry Russell. He did a lot of the interviewing of people like that and a lot of the determining of what had happened and what should happen to them.

Q: How did you feel you were being supported by the Board of Examiners?

RYAN: See, I didn't do junior officers, so I saw people after they had been in the service for a while. And I always, frankly, of course there are exceptions, but I've always been impressed with the talent in the Foreign Service. I think there's tremendous talent, I think unappreciated by the American people. I always thought how amusing it is that it seems to be okay to kill foreigners, you know because the people in uniform are so lionized, but it's sort of not okay to try to go over and try to persuade them of the justification of the American position. I guess it's easy to kill them. But I was always impressed with the talent in the Foreign Service.

Q: Did politics play its role where you were, you know, political placements and things like that?

RYAN: No, we didn't do that. But I do remember my counselees as we called them then, one in particular who wanted to go to a European post in a very, very desirable job, and he just didn't have the background for it; he didn't have the tickets, you know, he had not done anything like that. And I was telling him quite honestly that he was not going to get that job. I mean, there would be other jobs, that would be equally good for his career, but that particular one he was not going to get because that one was going to go to someone with a lot more experience, and frankly, talent. And he said, "Do you mind if I discuss this with my friends at the sub-Cabinet level?" And I said, "You can discuss it with the President himself, but I'm telling you that you're not going there." So there was that.

But, I mean, the "politicals" never interfered. And I learned a great deal from Ambassador Todman, Terry Todman, who would call me directly – and I was an "02" at that time, and the deputy in that office – about people that he had come across, administrative people, that he was concerned about and wanted to make sure that they got good jobs. And he was an assistant secretary then, I think he was in ARA. I remember being impressed by that, you know, that an assistant secretary would be that interested. And that's another thing that I liked about the Foreign Service – that the very senior people would be very interested in so much more junior people. Dick Viets, it was the first time I ever met him when he came to talk to me about his admin officer, or GSO maybe, and I had to reassure him that we knew about that man, and he was indeed a star, and we were going to take care of him. You know, I liked that very much, that kind of interest that the senior people had in the more junior people in the Foreign Service.

Q: Did you also have a problem of people who cause problems at posts, will probably continue to cause problems at posts, even if they're not very capable or if it were just a

personality or something like that, and what do you do with them?

RYAN: Yes, we had that. And, of course, their reputations preceded them and so it was sometimes very difficult to get them assigned because people would say, "I don't want him or I don't want her. I know about them. I don't want them." But yet, you have to do something with them. They have to go somewhere. And sometimes we'd tell them, particularly if it's an ability problem, it's sort of, what can you do, they're just not that bright. But if it's a personality problem because they're impossible to get along with, I would tell them that. You know, that's why you're having the trouble getting the assignment you want, because people say that you're very capable but you're very difficult. Nobody wants to serve with you. And people were shocked at that. They were very hurt and upset. But sometimes I think it did some good.

Q: How did you find the written record? Was this something you could really use or did you almost have to go by word-of-mouth?

RYAN: Well, as you know, there's the file. And the file's what gets you promoted. But it's your corridor reputation that gets you the jobs that get you promoted. And so I learned very early on in that job that it was corridor reputation and not file. Because almost everybody's file is good enough. I mean, some people's files are exceptional. Some people's files are pretty awful. But most people's files are okay. Really, I used to joke with people about that. I mean, the revelation to me was reading other people's files and finding out that they were as good as mine. What a shock! You know, and I knew they weren't as good as me [laughing]! How could this be? And people didn't realize that. People didn't understand that.

So the business about whether you're difficult to get along with or everybody likes you and, you know, what a great guy and yes, I want him at my post, that was important. You found out things about people who had, you know, marital problems or drinking problems or things like that, that there was no record of anywhere, but people knew about. And so, people in personnel would talk. I mean, you'd get into the panel – and that's another thing I was impressed with was how things that got into the panel, you know, stayed in the panel – and people would say, "Something really happened to him at his last post. He had some kind of a breakdown. Or he went off the deep end. Or he started drinking. Or he started running around." Or whatever it was. And, you know, you couldn't get people assigned because of that. And it was corridor reputation. And I found corridor reputation much more valuable in trying to make assignments than the written record.

Q: I noticed when I was doing consular work in the late '60s, every once in a while we would realize – it would be pointed out to us – that we were taking people with personality problems and sending them to London. Because we figured it was a big post, and London could take it. Well, pretty soon, we found a consular section loaded with problems.

RYAN: Indeed. That, I've always thought, was a mistake. When I was EUR/EX, we had that in Montreal. We had that in the consular section, something like 11 people, and seven of them had serious problems of one sort or another. So four people were doing the work of 11, who were soon going to develop their own problems because of overwork. But MED would say, you know, "He could go here. Or she can go there" because there were adequate medical facilities, and that would be the London, the Paris, the Montreal, Toronto. But it was a mistake, I always thought.

Q: I mean, this is sort of the easy way out, and it's only in retrospect that we realize, we weren't doing the service or the people…

RYAN: No, better they should stay in Washington, I thought.

Q: You did this from '77 to when?

RYAN: 'Til the summer of 1980.

Q: Then what happened?

RYAN: Well, April of 1980. Then I went to French language training and I went to Abidjan as the administrative counselor. Which was a job I wanted. I wanted to be administrative counselor, I wanted to learn French, and I knew about Abidjan. I knew how nice it was; I had been a rover there for a while. And so I went. Nancy Rawls was the ambassador. That was another drawing card for me. She had been a DAS [deputy assistant secretary] in the DG's [Director General of the Foreign Service] office, or Director General in the DG's office for part of the time that I was in personnel, and I really admired her. I thought she was wonderful. And so off I went to Abidjan.

Q: And you were in Abidjan from April of 1980 to…?

RYAN: Well, it must have been July, June or July, because I took some French, in '80 until was it October, September or October of '81.

Q: Nancy Rawls was the ambassador?

RYAN: Yes.

Q: She's no longer with us. But what was she like and what was her background?

RYAN: I don't know her background. She had been ambassador to Togo before she went into Personnel. And she was just the most lovely woman. Very gentle, very nice, very smart. Everybody wanted to work for her. She was just somebody that you wanted to be around. The unfortunate thing after I got to Abidjan was that she was desperately ill. She was ill with cancer, and she was almost never there. She was always back getting treatment. But she was a wonderful, wonderful person.

Q: Well, in this period of '80, '81, how would you describe the situation as you saw it in the Ivory Coast?

RYAN: Well, at that time the Ivory Coast was the richest country in West Africa. It was a tremendous drawing card for other Africans in West Africa, so that we had our choice of the best of West Africa who came to Cote d'Ivoire to work. We had all nationalities in the general services section, for example, because the Ivorians liked to wear white shirts and ties and work in offices. They didn't want to do general services work, and so we had Nigerians and Guineans. We had everybody – people from Burkina Faso, from Upper Volta, working for us. We did have a tremendous amount of talent in the embassy, in the administrative section, both Americans and Foreign Service nationals. It was a big operation. It was a joint administrative office. We tried to do a lot of work with AID. I thought the director was impossible. His deputy was okay, but the director was just – he was always looking for, you know, that we were slighting AID somehow, and we weren't, but he was always complaining about that. I think now they're finally building a new embassy, but we were looking for a new embassy at that time, and so I did a lot of that kind of work. A lot of talking to people who were rich, who had property, and who were interested in selling it to us. And nothing every worked. Nothing ever worked. Nothing ever worked for close to twenty years, you know. But that was very interesting. I liked that a lot.

Q: The Cote d'Ivoire, it's been a very nice place in Africa. Did we have much in the way of interests there?

RYAN: No, not really. We had some interest. But this was twenty years ago, and they were rich. They had coffee and cocoa. Houphouet was still the president. One of the really wise old men of Africa, and it was very stable, and so mostly we reported on what was going on in the region, that's what my sense was, more than anything going on in Cote d'Ivoire. Because it was fine. There was not much going on.

Q: There were other rather small post countries around the area. Did you get involved by having an efficient operation and supporting them?

RYAN: We did to a certain extent. We certainly did a lot of shipping things to them from the port inland. We did that. And I knew all the admin officers around me, because I knew them from personnel, or from AF. It was good. It was a very good assignment, but it was also a little boring.

Q: This is, of course, one of the problems.

RYAN: Yes. And then, Nancy wasn't there. I really went to work for Nancy, and Nancy was away a lot, and her deputy was very nervous. He didn't know anything about admin, and was very nervous about what we were doing, and so he, quite frankly, drove me insane. So, when AF said they needed somebody to go to Sudan, I leapt at the chance. I

had never been to Khartoum as a rover. Had I ever been to Khartoum as a rover I would never have gone back!

Q: Were people telling you, going from the Cote d'Ivoire to Sudan, wondered about your mental stability or anything like that?

RYAN: No, not really, seeing it was AF doing it, and AF needed it, and it was a challenge, certainly. God knows, it was a challenge. It was the hardest job I ever had in my life. The hardest job I ever had. And it only lasted three months. I got sick and had to come out. I had kidney stones. I had to have surgery. And then after the surgery, they wouldn't give me back my clearance. They wouldn't let me go back. Which was actually God's mercy, because I would have gone nuts, I think. It was impossible, that job.

Q: What was it?

RYAN: Because it was Khartoum, there wasn't a lot of talent. The DCM was fabulous – Jack Davidson was wonderful. But the admin staff was not that good. Nobody there wanted the job. And they were moving to a new embassy, so there was all of that. And the previous administrative counselor was leaving and there was nowhere to go. So I was sitting in Abidjan thinking, "What do I do next?" And AF/EX said they needed somebody, so I said "Send me, I'll go." And so I went.

It was the complete opposite of Cote d'Ivoire. There in Sudan, all the talent went across to the Gulf, and worked in Saudi Arabia or the Emirates or Bahrain, or someplace other than Sudan. And so except for a lot of talent, thank God, in the B&F ([Budget and Fiscal] Section in some overseas missions; newer name is Financial Management Office [FMO]) section, there wasn't a lot of talent among the FSNs in Sudan. It was also a joint administrative office, so I had a couple of AID long-time, long-in-the-tooth GSOs, who were very tired and who didn't want to do anything. And then I had a couple of first tour people, who were very eager and very willing, but who didn't know how to do things, and so you had to help them. But one of them was the hardest working man I ever knew in my life. He's just coming back to Washington after the whole 23 years abroad.

And so we had to move the embassy, and you have to pack things up, and there was nobody to pack them, and you have to bring trucks to move stuff, and there are no trucks to be rented. One of my visions that I will take to my grave is this truck that pulled up to the new embassy listing off to the side with all of the embassy possessions on it, and our young GSO, Sam Rubino, on his first tour – he's the one that's just coming back to Washington now – sort of carrying stuff upstairs, with ropes around his shoulders. He was wonderful, Sam, and I would never have been able to do the job without him. But it was a nightmare. It was just awful.

And the embassy itself – we had a very good expatriate working for us, a Brit. Very talented, knew how to do everything, fix the generators, knew how to do all those kinds of things. All of which we needed desperately, even in the new embassy. And we had no

RSOs [regional security officer – reports directly to the deputy chief of mission]. Our RSOs came on TDY [temporary duty]. We had the best, I thought, in DS [Bureau of Diplomatic Security], Gary Marvin and Fred Mecke, both of whom are now retired. And I remember Fred saying to me that the embassy was completely insecure. This was before any problems, this was 1980-81. He took me out of the new embassy and he took me to the side street, and he put his hand on the gate of the people who lived across the street from the embassy, and put his hand on the embassy wall. And he said to me, "Do you know what a car bomb could do to this embassy?" And that was the first time that anybody that I knew talked seriously about that kind of threat. But by then it was too late. We had leased this building, or built it, I don't remember now, and so we moved in, and we had our little ribbon cutting and we had all of that. Everything went wrong. There was sand everywhere. The ambassador's wife asked me once what I was going to do to keep the goats from eating the plants out of the planters, which I could tell you was like number 598 on my list of priorities. But it was like that.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

RYAN: Phil Kontos. And then I got sick. It was lucky I got medevaced, because I probably would have been psych-evaced. I mean, you just couldn't do it. I had this notepad where I would write down everything that had to be done, and I would write down twelve things and would have maybe crossed out one. So you were constantly adding things that had to be done. It was impossible, absolutely impossible.

Q: How about the Sudanese government?

RYAN: Well, it was Nimeiri at that time, so we were friendly with them, and they were friendly with us. That was not a problem. It was not sharia law. The Hilton Hotel was going strong. At the Ivory Bar you could get drinks. It was air-conditioned beyond any bearing, except when you first went in because it was so hot out. It must have been 40 degrees inside in the air conditioning. But it was wonderful. So it was before all of the really awful stuff that happened in Sudan. But there was nobody to deal with in the government. I remember trying to get things done through the government, and it was just hopeless. It really was hopeless. But we did have a wonderful DCM, just the kind of person who if you're in a post like that you hope you have as the DCM. An African hand, you know. And I said to him once, "I don't understand, Jack, why these people don't complain more." Because there was no water, there was nothing. It was just awful. And he said, "But this is really an NEA [Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs] post, and they're mostly NEA people, and NEA people like to suffer." So I said, "Good, thank God for that!" It was bad enough, but if they'd been complaining all the time!

Q: Were you under any threat, particularly?

RYAN: Well, there was one very serious threat to the American Club when I was there. I remember that very well. I don't know the details. Or I didn't even know the details at the time, but there was a very serious threat that Gary Marvin, who was our RSO at the time,

was very frightened about. And I know he spent the night in his car near the American Club to try to prevent whatever was going to happen. I don't know. It might have been a bomb, it might have been a grenade attack, it might have been shooting, it might have been anything. Nothing, thank God, did happen. But I do remember that.

Q: You got med-evaced. Where did they med-evac you to?

RYAN: They med-evaced me back here. They would have sent me to Frankfurt, but I didn't want to go to Frankfurt because it was a military hospital. I had experienced a military hospital in Naples, thank you very much; I didn't want that again. So I paid the difference to come to Washington. Then I had surgery at GW [George Washington University Hospital]. I was so run down, it was no wonder they didn't clear me. The surgery was fine. I recovered from that all right.

Q: Who took your place?

RYAN: Oh, it was a series of people. They had TDY people for a long time. Some of the rovers went there. Harry Geisel I think went there for a while. By that time they had what they called roving administrative teams, and Harry was the chief of the team. They had a personnel officer and GSO, and I think they went in after I left.

Q: When you came back, we're still talking about '81, aren't we?

RYAN: Yes, it was the end of '81. I came back in December of '81. And so by early '82 I was looking for a job.

Q: What happened then?

RYAN: Well, my replacement in FCA, Howard McGowan, was very good to me, and I told him – I had always been interested in the inspection staff, and if he could get me a job as an inspector, I would be happy. And he did. And so I went to the inspection staff.

Q: So from '82 to when?

RYAN: From '82 to the summer of '83, I was an inspector.

Q: What was the status of inspectors in this period of time?

RYAN: Well, I [indistinct] into the SIG at the time. After I got into IG's [inspector general's] office, my first senior inspector on my first trip told me that I would never get promoted out of the inspection staff. That was happy news. But I thought that it was a very good job. I always liked the idea of it. And then, fortunately, I was promoted. Nothing to do with being an inspector, but because of the Africa stuff and personnel, too, I think. So I didn't have to worry about that. I made senior then, and I was fine. And I loved being an inspector. I went for the first time to the Far East on two inspections, and I

thought that I both learned a lot and I also thought I contributed.

Q: What was the role of the inspectors? Because somewhere around this time it was beginning to change, wasn't it?

RYAN: It was beginning to change. The inspector general was Brown, Bob Brown, I think, but it was still not so-called independent IG. And I was the administrative inspector, with a couple of what were called at the time audit-qualified inspectors, who did the budget and fiscal work and looked at the books. I don't know, I suppose it was like any other inspection or [indistinct] even to this day. No one was happy to see you. You tried to see what they're doing and how they're doing it, and make recommendations on how they might do things better. And then, you know, you left. And whether they paid any attention to you or not, who knows?

Q: Did you run across any particular problems?

RYAN: No. Of course, they had morale problems at some of the posts, where the administrative people were difficult and not supportive and not what I thought admin officers or admin counselors should be like. Well, yes, at one post they had a very difficult ambassador, but it was, of course, our senior inspector who had to deal with him.

Q: Were you looking at all at various forms of discrimination that had risen to the surface?

RYAN: Well, we always looked at that to see if there was any of that, but I don't remember that we ever found that, at least at the posts that I inspected. I mean, we'd find, of course all the personnel officers would be women, because that's what women were supposed to do – personnel. Because women are good at personnel; that's what everybody thinks. So that was still the case then. But I don't remember running into discrimination, nor do I remember anybody alleging discrimination.

Q: After you'd reached senior rank, by '83, where'd you go after the inspection?

RYAN: EUR/EX, as the executive director.

Q: Now this is an extremely powerful job, isn't it?

RYAN: No, it was a wonderful job. We had money. The exchange rate was very strong, and we were able to keep the exchange rate earnings the whole time I was there. I never expected to get that job. Dick Bowers had been the executive director, and he was going off, I forget to do what. And one of my former counselees, one of the people I helped when I was at the admin counselor, the CDO, called. She was in EUR/EX, and she called me and she said, "Would you be interested?" And I said, "Well, of course I would be interested, but I'm not going to get a job like that. I'm much too junior and everything." And she said "Why don't you let Dick know that you're interested?" So, I did, and Dick

was interested in me, and so he just made it work. Rick Burt was the assistant secretary, a political appointee.

Q: I was interviewing him this morning.

RYAN: Oh really? How nice. I haven't seen him in a long time. He was very good to me, Rick. But he had a limited knowledge of what the executive office did and what we should do. And so I had an interview with him, and he was very nice, and then the next thing I know I had the job. It was astounding to me. I was just really surprised that I got it.

It was a wonderful job. Of course it was EUR [Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs], so it had all sorts of talented people. We had a wonderful EX. Eric Boswell was my deputy; that's the best there is. You can't get any better than Eric Boswell. And we really had a wonderful time. We had money. We had talent. We had an assistant secretary who thought if I got him his tickets, his travel advance and his orders before he got off a plane that I was the best management officer in the department. And then I had John Kelly as the PDAS [principal deputy assistant secretary], in case I needed to go to somebody for advice, or "What do you think of this, John? or "Should we do that?" He was also wonderful to me. It was a great two years. And I would have stayed, in fact I had already asked to extend – Rick was leaving, and Roz Ridgway was coming in, and I was very interested in working for her – but then Ron Spiers offered me executive assistant in M [Office of the Undersecretary for Management]. I had traveled with Ron, and with Sheldon Krys, who had been his executive assistant, all over Eastern Europe in 1984, and I leapt at the chance of working for him.

Q: Well now, this job has always been considered – the EUR bureau is always considered to be one of the tightest bureaus. It's got good jobs, it's got good people, it's got money, and once you get in, it's hard to get people out because they want to stay in there.

RYAN: It's hard to get in. We used to have a joke that you couldn't serve in EUR unless you had served in EUR.

Q: Well how did you find this? Coming from particularly your experience in AF, were you trying to break the mold a bit?

RYAN: I don't know. I didn't think like that. I don't know what they were thinking, either. But some of the office directors are insufferable, and some of them are wonderful. I got to know a lot of them. Bob Gelbard was the deputy in EUR/WE at the time. Marty Winnick was an office director. Just really outstanding people. Terrific people. Jim Dobbins was one of the DASes. I had the time of my life in that job. Everything was a plus. Everything was wonderful. I don't remember a single down moment of being the executive director of EUR.

Q: How about dealing with Eastern Europe? Was this a special case?

RYAN: Well, it was special, because it was the Soviet Union, it was the Soviet bloc, and it was very different from Western Europe, God knows. Much more difficult. But, you know, as I said, we had money, so we were able to do things for people. And we were able to staff the posts, too, because if the only way you get into EUR was serving in, you know, East Berlin, then that's where you served.

Q: Also these places were interesting per se, I think.

RYAN: Well, yes, and people thought that they were really making a difference, doing political or economic reporting out of posts like that was significant.

Q: Did you run across people who got themselves entrenched, and being unwilling to serve more than 100 miles from the center of Paris?

RYAN: Oh, sure. The German club, for heaven's sake. There was a lot of that. But then, they were very specialized, and they did know what they were doing. But it was joke for anybody who'd been in Africa, I mean, good heavens, Belgrade was the hardship post. Ridiculous! They could only serve in Germany. They had to go from one German post to another German post. Because, you know, dealing with the Germans was so different from dealing with anybody else.

Q: Did you find yourself trying to be a little bit of a rebel and trying to break it up?

RYAN: No, not really. We couldn't really do that. I did bring in people that EUR had never heard of, into administrative jobs. I helped to integrate the bureau. The bureau I don't think was ever integrated. I mean, I got Irv Hicks to Berlin. I got Johnny Young to The Hague, people I knew from my time in personnel that had not been in EUR, who were certainly competitive for the jobs that they got. So I did that. If that's being a rebel, that's what I did. But I mean, trying to get some of these people who were German hands or the French hands different posts, you couldn't do that. That was beyond my capability.

Q: Did you find that people were coming from outside, sort of staff assistants to important senators, all of a sudden wanted to be some sort of assistant in Paris or something like that?

RYAN: Well, those posts, they did let the ambassadors have special assistants that they would bring in with them. But most of the time it wasn't off the Hill. It was most of the time the businessman ambassador who had somebody who had worked for him before that he brought with him to the post. I don't remember – I was an inspector in Mexico when the worst example of that I ever saw was taking place – so I don't remember that any of the European ambassadors at that time was as bad as the situation in Mexico.

Q: This was when a movie star – I can't think of his name – but he was renowned for surrounding himself by the Temple Dogs they were called.

RYAN: All of them political appointees. Very young, very arrogant, absolutely insufferable. And dreadful for the post, absolutely dreadful.

Q: While you were doing EUR/EX, did you run across – Helsinki, or Switzerland seems to have a problem from time to time, but it could be Luxembourg or someplace else – where a political ambassador goes, and sort of gets beyond the bounds of respectability as far as how you comport yourself.

RYAN: Well, we had some good political ambassadors in Europe at that time. We had, for example, Charlie Price who was first in Brussels and then in London. He was as good as we were: the highest compliment I can pay the man. He was a very, very good ambassador. The most difficult one that I had to deal with I thought was Strausz-Hupé in Turkey, who was an autocrat. There was no other way to describe him. He just ran that post into the ground. He was terrible to his people. He wouldn't let them use the pool at the residence; for him it was his pool. It wasn't his pool, it was the pool for the community. It was that sort of petty despot things that he did. You couldn't talk to him. It was like talking to the wall. He never got it. I do remember him coming into my office – at the time we were not a smoke-free building – and lighting up a cigar. I always thought he did it deliberately, frankly. He was impossible. But the other ambassadors, I don't remember. We had one poor soul who was in Scandinavia who caused a bit of a problem, knocking on somebody's door at midnight.

Q: I've had people talk about that. Norway, I think, or something like that.

RYAN: But, that was contained. That was taken care of. We had one of our own in Scandinavia, a first tour admin officer, who risked his career to document some of the things he was doing with money, and we got him out, but he was career so it was very awkward. And the administrative officer I always thought was very brave. He was first tour, and it was very risky what he did. But he had integrity, and the ambassador did not.

Q: It's the 21st of April, 2004. I'm back with Mary Ryan. Mary. When did you go into management?

RYAN: Into the office of the undersecretary for management? In the summer of 1985.

Q: And who was the undersecretary?

RYAN: He was Ronald I. Spiers, Ambassador Spiers.

Q: You were there from when to when?

RYAN: I was there from the summer of '85 until the summer of '88.

Q: This is during the second Reagan administration. In the first place, how did Ron

Spiers operate?

RYAN: Ron Spiers is a brilliant man. George Shultz had asked him to be undersecretary for management. He was at that time ambassador to Pakistan. His real interest was not management. His real interest was policy. But he was very skilled at management, because he was a real leader. And he had tremendous leadership qualities. I don't think leadership and management are the same. I think that the Department was very blessed to have Ron at that time in management. It was a difficult time. It was after the attacks on our embassy in Beirut and the Marine barracks bombing. We had the whole Inman push.

Q: Could you explain what that was?

RYAN: Yes, that was the decision that we had to protect better our embassies and consulates around the world. So because we had been attacked by car bombs that had gotten through the perimeter and very close to our buildings before the people driving them blew themselves up and us along with them, there was a determination that there had to be a 100-foot setback for all of our buildings. And so there was this great push for construction, in keeping with these Inman Guidelines. Inman named, of course, after Admiral Bobby Inman, who had headed our task force looking at what had happened.

There was a tremendous amount of money involved for construction, money given to FBO for construction of new embassies and consulates around the world, and a tremendous, obviously, construction undertaking. And Mr. Spiers had to oversee all of that, as well as manage the Department at a time when, it's never a good time, but when other parts of the budget were very inadequate, as usual. I just thought we were very fortunate to have somebody as intelligent, as gifted really, and as committed to the service as he was.

Q: How did you find Spiers and Shultz? How did they work together?

RYAN: They had a very good relationship. The secretary met with the management team on at least a monthly basis, if I remember correctly. Mr. Spiers always thought that Secretary Shultz was probably the best secretary that we had for management, because he had been a businessman. Most of the secretaries in the past – I can remember Ron saying this – had either been academics or lawyers, and they had not really run anything. They didn't really understand that they were overseeing a huge bureaucracy as well as being the foreign policy leader in the government, but Mr. Shultz did understand that. And we met with him on a monthly basis. He was the one who gave us FSI [Foreign Service Institute, Department of State, located at the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center], the current Foreign Affairs Training Center, because he had walled off the money and protected the money at a time when there were all sorts of demands, competing demands, because he had a vision. And I think he came out here and looked. If you hadn't been a visionary, you would not have been able to see what we could make out of it. But he protected that money. And he and Mr. Spiers had a really excellent relationship. I think they trusted each other, and I think they admired each other, to be

perfectly frank.

Q: What role did you have, or what was your job?

RYAN: The title was executive assistant, which is really like chief of staff. And it was just trying to keep all the assistant secretaries and people who were in Mr. Spiers's chain-of-command working effectively together; try to determine what issues had to reach Mr. Spiers and what could really be decided at a lower level. Some of the assistant secretaries had a tendency to try to push us – well, not just assistant secretaries, but people in his chain-of-command – had a tendency to try to push things up to him and so my job was to push back – to push them down. Obviously, if there were irreconcilable differences, or a decision that he absolutely had to make, then it went to him, of course, to decide. But I thought all the memoranda that came to you – it was a wonderful job for an administrative cone officer, because all of the interesting issues in the management field ultimately went to Mr. Spiers for a decision. And so I had the opportunity of seeing everything, of seeing how people reasoned on the issues, and then how he made decisions.

And the other very fortunate thing about him, I sometimes would tease him about being a political officer who could make quick decisions, because our joke, of course, about political cone officers is that they can't make decisions. They're always weighing the options – on the one hand, on the other. But he could make decisions. And he made decisions.

The other wonderful part of the job, for me, was that I was able to sit in on just about every single meeting that he had, and watch him both with people visiting the department from outside and people from inside the department, who, as one of my old bosses used to say, were paying respects. They were coming in from home leave or they were going out and they were coming by to meet with him. He's just, I always thought he was just an exceptional person. I was very, very fortunate to have three years with him.

Q: Well, in good Foreign Service terms, let's talk about relationships. Could you talk a bit about the various bureaus and your perception of 1) their effectiveness and 2) maybe some of the problems that came up with personalities and all. I mean, from the management perspective. Because you must have had to go out and deal with every day, not only the assistant secretaries, but also with the executive directors and all that.

RYAN: Well, one of the unfortunate things, I thought, in the M area was that at one time, counterterrorism was under M. And the counterterrorism coordinator at that time was very uncomfortable – I thought, my own judgment, not anybody else's – very resentful of the fact that he had to report to the undersecretary for management. And Mr. Spiers had a meeting every day with him – with the assistant secretary for diplomatic security; it was the assistant secretary, but it was still under the A bureau as it was for part of that time…

Q: The A bureau being…

RYAN: The Bureau of Administration. And the person in charge of security was the deputy assistant secretary for, as it was then, SY and with one of the staff from INR to go over threats, threat information, what we might know, what we might not know about what was happening in the world. And the counterterrorism coordinator, as I said, was very resentful. He didn't like coming to the meetings. He would come late. He would not participate very much. And ultimately, the oversight responsibility was shifted from M to where it is now, which is in the secretary's office. So now counterterrorism reports directly to the secretary. I personally thought that was a mistake, because Mr. Spiers did meet with them all the time, and of course, the secretary – any secretary – is not going to be able to do that.

Q: No.

RYAN: So, I thought we had probably lost something in the efforts to protect our people around the world, which is how we were thinking there – certainly not really thinking about protection here.

Q: At that time, we're talking about '85 to '88, whence cometh the terrorism? I mean, who were they?

RYAN: They were again Islamic militants. Those were the people who blew us up in Beirut. They were the people who attacked the embassy in Pakistan, if you remember that. It was still – well, it was not still, it was then, as it still is today – mostly that sort of terrorism, but not as organized as it is today.

Q: Were we looking at, you know, the Japanese Red Army, the Red Brigade in Italy, and the Bader-Meinhof type things?

RYAN: Yes, and the IRA [Irish Republican Army]. But the Red Brigades and the Bader-Meinhof, if I remember correctly, were kind of winding down. I think the governments of those countries had pretty much infiltrated, and pretty much knew, and so we didn't have – I'm trying to think when Aldo Moro was killed…

Q: Oh, that was back some time. That was in the late '70s.

RYAN: Yes, so they had mostly broken them up. Well, and we knew that the IRA was not going to attack us. I mean, the IRA would have to be insane to attack us. And so it was mostly Islamic militants, but without the understanding that we have now of their grievances.

Q: There would be these meetings, but what were you talking about?

RYAN: Well, we were talking about what INR saw, what DS [Bureau of Diplomatic Security] had picked up from their regional security officers around the world, what

counterterrorism had seen in the work that they did, and where we were vulnerable, or where we were potentially vulnerable.

Q: This is a very hot topic today. I mean, we're having hearings and all this on the attacks on the World Trade Center. Was it your impression that terrorism, I mean to move the office of terrorism to the secretary's office was more a matter of, I don't want to say, prestige? I mean, it sounds like you were having as good as we get if you look at management and getting INR and meeting on a regular basis.

RYAN: I thought it was a matter of prestige, and I thought it was also a matter of personality.

Q: Who was the man?

RYAN: He was Ambassador Oakley (Robert Oakley). But, I mean, it did raise the prestige of the office obviously to have it under the secretary's direct supervision, but I just thought it was unfortunate, because I didn't think that the secretary could pay the type of attention to it that Mr. Spiers had paid. The other thing that I admired in Mr. Spiers very much was how well he worked with the chairman of our House Appropriations Subcommittee, who at that time was Neil Smith, a Democrat from Iowa. And frankly, two more dissimilar men you could never really imagine, but Mr. Spiers traveled with Chairman Smith on every trip that Chairman Smith made abroad, every CODEL [Congressional Delegation], and they worked out a very good relationship. I think they liked each other and respected each other, and that paid off for the department – at least, if not in additional money, in a reduction of cuts of our budget. They don't do that so much anymore, unfortunately – travel with CODELs. But Mr. Spiers did. And I went with them on all the trips, as did the executive director of the bureau in which we were traveling. And it was just enormously useful, because you also got to know the staff of the [indistinct] as well as the staff of the congressman's office. And it was just very, very useful for the Department, I thought.

Q: Well, let's sort of take a tour of the horizon. What about dealing with sort of the major bureaus on the geographic side? What about the European Bureau? This is always the major engine in the State Department.

RYAN: My successor in EUR/EX was Ken Peltier, a very able administrative cone officer, senior officer. The problem in Europe at that time was that the exchange rate went to Hell. And so everything became much more expensive, and we had to sort of prop up EUR because the exchange rate losses were so great. I wonder what it's like now, if they have the same kind of problem. When I was with EUR, thank God, we had a very strong exchange rate in the dollar's favor, and so I didn't really have to worry about money. But then Ken had to worry about money. The other issue that came up with the EUR was the whole Chernobyl disaster.

Q: Just briefly mention what that was.

RYAN: That was, what I guess was the meltdown of the nuclear reactor in Ukraine. As people used to say, this poison cloud floating over western Europe. And I think we didn't realize at the time how bad it was or how frightened people were – American staff was – about that. That was another really bad problem. I thought we had – I'm trying to remember who all of the executive directors were at that time – I thought we had a particularly strong group of executive directors. John Condayan was there; he was a very well known, famous M admin cone officer at that time. I've just gone blank now; I'm trying to remember who they all were. The other thing that Mr. Spiers did was to have kind of a monthly staff meeting with all of the M area players, including MED and CA. And so he had a chance to meet with all of them and hear concerns and complaints and issues that they were working on. He was very accessible to almost anybody who wanted to see him for almost any reason, which is something that I learned from him – how useful that is, because people sometimes surprise you with what they want to see you about. And so, for me, it was a wonderful three years of a very terrific learning experience.

Q: Did you have much of a problem with issues getting up to you and to Spiers, the care and feeding of political ambassadors?

RYAN: Yes, we had that in some cases. But he was not at all shy about confronting them and confronting them directly, not in the usual way that we deal with political ambassadors. And he was very up-front with them if there were a problem. A couple of times, or at least one time, I think he had to enlist the deputy secretary's help, that was John Whitehead, when an ambassador – a political ambassador – simply was refusing to leave a post even though his successor had been named, nominated, confirmed, and was ready to go. He just didn't want to leave. Another political ambassador advised the department that his successor, who was also a political appointee, simply didn't have the education and background to be ambassador to that country, and therefore, he wasn't going to go. And so we had those kinds of problems with them, which when you look back on them are rather amusing. But at the time, they were difficult, because you had ambassadors ready to go, waiting to go, and not that able to go because their predecessors were refusing to leave. And so he handled that very, very well.

Q: I have sort of the vision of telling the Marine security guard, "Pick up the ambassador and carry him out."

RYAN: Well, in the one case the man simply refused to listen to anybody but the deputy secretary. The deputy secretary gave him a date by which he had to be out of post, and in fact he was out of post, but it was that day. It wasn't like the day before or anything. He stayed until the very last minute. I'm trying to think of some of the other problems that we've had with some of the other ambassadors – not just political, but some of our own as well. As I said, he was very good about confronting people with problems. If there were morale problems, he had no hesitancy in telling the ambassador that there were morale problems, that he had heard about this and he was concerned.

Q: It's a security matter, but it also has impact on everyone else dealing with management: what about malfeasance and problems of this nature?

RYAN: Of course it would get to him if there were malfeasance cases. I'm trying to remember, I don't really remember many malfeasance cases…skip over that for a minute while I try to think. One of the issues that we were dealing with at that time, if you remember, was the first time that the window closed on people.

Q: Why don't you say what the window was?

RYAN: That was a decision made at some point earlier that officers at the "01" level would be given the opportunity to open their window, as we called it, for promotion competition. And they would have six years – six or seven years, if I remember – to be promoted to the senior rank, and if they were not promoted within that timeframe, they would have to leave the service. The first time that the window closed on people was during the time that I was in M. A problem which apparently nobody had really thought about was that it actually might happen, that people would not be promoted within that timeframe, and that they would have to retire from the service. And so there was this huge outcry about how we were losing all of these talented "01"s and how dreadful it was and all of that. And at the time we had a very talented staff assistant whose name is Rob Nolan, who is now director of performance evaluation. And Rob was really good with numbers, and he went and got the files and he read the files and he did statistical studies of these people's promotion records and how long they had been in grade as "01"s – it wasn't just six years in many cases; it was much longer than that – and he gave us this terrific report about how, in fact, they were not the most competitive officers. In fact, we were not losing such tremendous talent and how we were not losing people who had just missed being promoted in six years, but had been in grade 10, 12…you know, they were never going to be promoted. And so we had that to sort of damp down, and with Rob's help, Mr. Spiers was able to do that. The other serious issue that we had was, of course, the whole lie detector issue. Because we had the Marine, the Moscow Marine scandal.

Q: Sergeant Lonetree.

RYAN: Poor Sergeant Lonetree, who really paid a very heavy price for being extremely stupid – which is, I think, all he did. So we had that to confront as well. Fortunately for us, George Shultz was the Secretary of State. And George Shultz said that he would not take a lie detector test and that he would resign if he were forced to have his Department undergo lie detector tests. Without George Shultz we would all be hooked up to machines today, I think. We would have been and would be for the last 15 years. It was his prestige and his loyalty to us. But it was a very difficult time, because as we see now, how quickly hysteria gets built up in this town, about what Sergeant Lonetree may or may not have done and whether we were compromised or not in Moscow at that time. Nobody ever wants to listen, and nobody ever wants to stand up. And that was another of Ron Spiers' gifts, that he could ask the hard questions that nobody wanted to ask, because we were all

so whipped up into hysteria. And by asking the hard questions, he would demonstrate that the person to whom he was speaking had not thought through the whole issue, but was just caught up in all of the excitement and loving to tell bad news.

I remember once being in the hearing room with him when he was testifying, and one of the senators or congressmen – I don't remember where the hearing took place – maybe it was the Senate, said to him, "You don't sound like you come from the State Department. You sound too normal, too honest, too direct." And I took that as a terrific compliment to Mr. Spiers. But he had that talent of not allowing himself to be sort of dragged along with all of the people who were whipping themselves up into a frenzy.

Q: It happens. You know, we make our own crises.

RYAN: Indeed. And it's the town that does that. I don't know if the rest of the country pays that much attention. But in this town, it's unbelievable. And we're going through it now. But then, it was equally horrible.

Q: I was, at one point, an Eastern European hand. And after the so-called compromises in Moscow, we moved to getting rid of our local staff in Moscow and other places and all. And anybody who's served in these places knows that, "Sure. These are people who report to the local security agency, but they're also FSNs." They're capable people. You accept them for what they are. And the idea of putting a bunch of Americans in to do the cleaning or to do the…

RYAN: Or the customs clearances, and all of the things…

Q: And these are invariably, much more vulnerable than anybody else, because they're low-paid, they're easily seduced by one thing or another. And the work isn't well done.

RYAN: We knew that the FSNs were, in many cases, reporting to the KGB [Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti, the Russian Committee for State Security] or whomever they were reporting to. We knew that. But they also knew how to get things done. And so, you were careful. But, you know, Ambassador (Arthur) Hartman, who was the ambassador in Moscow at the time, was really vilified for saying things like that – for pointing that out, that yes we knew that they were not entirely loyal to us, but we could deal with that. We knew that the Russians were, the Soviets, were listening in to some of our conversations, but we want them to. I mean, we protected what we had to protect, but other things we wanted them to hear. But he was vilified for that.

Q: It's a very difficult time. I wonder if you could talk about a couple of other things. Talking about hysteria. I think that '85 to '88 was at the height – I'll be vilified for this – but the hysteria about sexual harassment. I mean, all of a sudden, you don't hear it anymore, but people were either being harassers or being harassed or something.

RYAN: Yes, there was that. And I remember meeting with some women when I was in M

– to try to spare Mr. Spiers that – who claimed that they were being harassed or had been harassed, and in one case, by someone that Mr. Spiers knew well. And when I listened to the complaints, it was not what I understood by sexual harassment. It was probably paternalism. You know, granted, there was discrimination against women in the Department of State. I was a named plaintiff, for heaven's sake, in Alison Palmer's suit against the department on that issue. But the sexual harassment part…it really wasn't, at least the cases where I met with women to try to hear them out to try to make recommendations to Mr. Spiers about what was going on. It was more that the boss, who was a man, let me see if I can get this right…he would call them by nicknames when they would say, "Don't call me that. Call me, you know, whatever my full name is." And they resented that. Or he was in fact trying to hold them back, but I'm sure the men didn't really see it like that. It was, "Oh, you don't want to do that kind of work. You don't want to go there. You don't want to do this." Much less than how I would understand sexual harassment, which is trying to make a pass at somebody, or trying to force them into a relationship with you because you had the power over them. You could say what you wanted about them in their evaluation, so the women felt like they had to go along. In my experience, of the cases that I knew about – and, of course, I didn't know about them all – it wasn't that. And I remember how amused everybody was about the memorandum that went out, the department notice that went out, on sexual harassment at the time. Because it was like, "Sexual harassment. Where have we been?" It has died down now. You don't hear about it much anymore. I think it's much more equal.

Q: I think it's much more equal. And, you know, people were hit over the head with a 2-by-4 and they got the message.

RYAN: Well, yes, it even happened when I was in consular affairs. There was a post, a big consular operation, where three women individually came to see me about this one man that they thought was harassing them. And when I called him and spoke to him, he was just an idiot. He wasn't really harassing them. He thought he was being nice. They were junior officers, and so he would put his arm around their shoulder when they were working on the line, on the visa line, and ask them how they were doing. He would compliment on their clothing. And he was horrified to find out that you're not supposed to that. But they were young, and they thought that was sexual harassment. But I had to say to him, you know, how can you be so stupid? How can you not be paying attention to what we're doing these days? And so, don't tell them that they look nice; they don't want to hear it.

Q: It's a very tricky place. I guess I was out of the service by that time, but I was watching it from the sidelines. There were classes and lectures. And, of course, the lecturers were almost always – I hate to say it – enraged women.

RYAN: Well, when we had diversity training, we had to go early. I was working at the time for Mr. Richard Moose, who was the undersecretary for management, and I was in CA. And to set an example, he made us all go as fast as possible to diversity training. So I was in one of the early classes, and the woman who was in charge of that – who presented

the diversity training – I thought was excellent. I thought it was kind of sensitivity training, to be perfectly frank. But it was okay, and it wasn't crazy. Later on, I heard that it got a little weird. But then, one of my staff assistants when I was in CA, who was a very attractive young woman – very tall, redhead, very, very attractive – was in diversity training with an area assistant secretary or assistant secretary equivalent, who put "the moves" on her right in the diversity training. So, there was a need for it obviously, but it didn't get to everybody. Some people did not understand.

Q: We are talking about some level of chemical reactions.

RYAN: In many cases, it was silly, but it was necessary. And now, I think that we don't hear so much about it, because there's sort of a critical mass of women and minorities in the service, and I think that people sort of caught on to it, what was trying to be taught.

Q: Well, what about, sort of the other side of this issue, diversity discrimination and this type of thing?

RYAN: You mean, like, reverse discrimination?

Q: I'm not thinking about reverse discrimination…well, the problem of minorities in the Foreign Service. Was this something you were having to deal with?

RYAN: Yes, we were dealing with that. It was a tricky time, because were getting a lot of, in the mid-to-late-'80s, a lot of women who were taking the exam and passing it. The problem was that we were not getting a lot of minorities. We were getting a lot of minorities who were taking the exam, but we were not getting a lot of minorities who were passing the exam. And that was a problem, because it looked as if we were discriminating against minorities when, in fact, I don't think we were, because it was a written exam. It wasn't so much the assessment center at that time. People were not getting through the written exam, which, of course, is horribly difficult, or certainly always has been horribly difficult. And as I look back at M, the M area at the time, with the exception of Joan Clark and the very notable exception of Ambassador George Moose – who was then, at that time the director of what was called M/MO, management operations – there weren't a lot of role models at the senior level, which means that we hadn't been bringing people in, minorities and women, for a very long time. And so it was just starting to get to the point. Now we have this very good idea of having fellows who come in and sort of learn the ropes. And I can't remember what they call them, the fellows. They're not Rangel Fellows, but they're some other…and so, that's why nurturing is important, which I think is a good thing, sort of bringing people along and sort of showing them what the service is like and giving them opportunities to be interns abroad and to know much more about the organization than walking into a room or taking an exam cold.

Q: Looking back on my time, as I recall, there was no push to mentor people who came in. I'm talking about particularly, at that time, African Americans, and to help them over

time. Because the feeling was that if you did that, you're discriminating against them. So, it was "sink or swim", which is really the wrong way to go about it.

RYAN: I think it was really very much the wrong way to go about it. I think mentoring is critically important. I mean, if you love the service – if you care about the service – then you want more junior people to be successful in it and to do well. And the only way to do that, I think, is through mentoring. And there's the official mentoring program that we have, but then there's also unofficial mentoring where you just sort of watch out for people on your staff and don't go beyond your immediate office. But you do watch out and you make sure they understand. I mean, Ambassador Davis, Ruth Davis, used to do a wonderful session on how to write evaluations and how to read evaluations – your own – and how to do your own statement. Because a lot of junior officers, and I'm not just talking minorities, but a lot of junior officers don't know what a good EER is. And they certainly don't know that they needn't go into excruciating detail in their own statement, and so Ruth used to do this wonderful session for anybody who wanted to come. She would just announce it; she would just do it one day, sort of a brown bag lunch and people would come and talk about their evaluations, and she would look at drafts and, you know, sort of advise them about, "This is not a good thing to say."

What I remember really, about African Americans particularly, is one of my very dearest friends, who is African American, told me that he could tell by reading evaluations on a board, when he was on boards, who was African American and who wasn't, because of the way they were written. And I remember being horrified by that. But then after he told me that, reading evaluations when I was on a board, and reading one where they talked about, I guess a low- or mid-level – so maybe a "3" – woman who, as they later described it, had been in food service before she entered the Foreign Service, which means she had been a waitress. And I remembered her name, and I checked it out later, and she was African American. And that was really discriminatory, I thought. She didn't realize it. I mean, he didn't mean it that way, but there was no reason to say that. So I think we learned a lot as time went on.

Q: From your own point of view, '85 to '88, where were women? Did you feel that you had gotten to the point where this was no longer an issue for you?

RYAN: I certainly felt like it was no longer an issue for me. I made MC in…

Q: That's minister counselor.

RYAN: Minister counselor in 1985, and so I was set. But I stopped, I used to worry about women in the service, but I really stopped worrying so much sort of towards the end of that period and then in the early '90s, because women were coming in in such numbers and they were so successful. And without getting too gender specific, and without repeating myself – I think I probably have said this before – I think women are particularly skilled at diplomacy. It's more, again, gender-specific, but I think we're more likely to want to talk about things, to negotiate, to look for points of agreement than to go

to war. So I think women are very good at this business, and so I really don't worry so much about women anymore, because there are so many now.

Q: I know when this oral history program used to really go out, because I was working the retirement ranks. And I was making a great effort to get women to be interviewed, because there weren't any. Now, it's over the hill. It's changed certainly in the 20 years we've been doing this. What about the various bureaus? What was your "take" on the bureaus? How about ARA, or the Latin American, bureau?

RYAN: I wish I could remember who were the executive directors at that time, because I did think…oh, Gene Scassa; Gene was there. We always thought, I always thought and a lot of my admin colleagues thought that ARA, as it was then, was not the strongest bureau. They controlled too much from Washington. And they didn't have sort of the administrative support network, mechanism, that other bureaus had. We were hard-pressed to get people to go to ARA, because they walked into that post unfurnished. And so people would have to buy their own furniture. In AF all of the posts were furnished, and so it was much easier to attract people to hardship posts in Africa than it was in Latin America. ARA was reluctant to give their administrative counselors and administrative officers the freedom to operate that some of the other bureaus gave. And I think Gene tried very hard to change that. Gene worked, traveled all the time, and he worked very hard. We traveled with him, Mr. Spiers and I, to Latin America, and he was trying then to push responsibility out from Washington and into the field. But that was always one of the weaknesses that admin people saw about, as it was then, ARA. I think we all thought that AF was the strongest EX in terms of service. There was a total commitment – because Jack Bryant was there. Jack Bryant was the civil service employee who was post-management officer, senior post-management officer, in AF for years and years. I even remember saying when I was sworn in as ambassador to Swaziland that I wouldn't go to Africa if he weren't in AF/EX, because you know, who's going to take care of me? So, it was just a very strong bureau with total commitment. And as one of my colleagues said who was in M at the time that I was in M, they owe Joe Sykes. Joe Sykes, I remember him saying that, when he was a young officer in Africa, if he made a mistake, AF/EX would tell him what he did wrong, they would fix the mistake, and then they would know he would never do that again. They would tell him never to do that again. But in other places, your career passed before your eyes if you made a mistake – that there was too much "gotcha." And AF was never like that. And so I spent a lot of time in the African Bureau in the field, and in AF/EX, and the commitment to the people in the field was 100%. It was absolutely total. I don't think any bureau, including my own time in EUR/EX, ever matched that.

Q: How about the Near East?

RYAN: The joke about the Near East Bureau was that they like to suffer, so they never really complained that much. So their admin people got away with murder. They were the desert people. But they did have good admin people in NEA. They had good admin people in EAP [Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs] too. There were just the five

bureaus at the time. Steven Solarz had not successfully managed to create the Bureau of South Asian Affairs yet, but he did ultimately succeed in doing that.

Q: How about the economic bureau?

RYAN: It didn't really play that much in Washington.

Q: I guess it wouldn't from an administrative point of view.

RYAN: The geographic, the regional bureaus had all the power. And they had strong administrative people in their EXs, and they wielded the power very effectively, I thought.

Q: Were there any other issues that were sort of bouncing around at that time?

RYAN: Well, there are always issues bouncing around. But the major ones were, of course, the window, the Moscow, the budget – always budget, always budget – lie detector tests, things like that. I can't remember right now – I probably will subsequently, but I don't remember now.

Q: Well then, in '88 wither?

RYAN: In '88 I was nominated to be ambassador to Swaziland. In fact, at that time, President Reagan called potential nominees himself to ask you, or to tell you, where you're going to go. So, I remember that – vividly – because 1) they don't do that anymore and my father was so conservative – politically conservative – that he would have been particularly thrilled to know that it was Ronald Reagan who called me to ask me if I would be his ambassador to Swaziland. And then we were able to go over to the White House. We went over to the White House, and had our picture taken with the president. I have this lovely picture with President Reagan. But all of that is sort of lost now. But it was much more personal.

And so, it was very nice because it was Africa. I love Africa. And I had visited Swaziland. I had never been stationed there, but I had visited Swaziland when I was a rover in Africa when I was in Mozambique. So, it was very nice. It was very nice. It was really Mr. Spiers who did that for me and got me the nomination. And so off I went to be the first woman ambassador of any country to Swaziland. And as I learned subsequently, there was tremendous consternation in Swaziland when a woman was nominated, because they didn't really know how to act, or how to behave, or what to do. And they knew they couldn't refuse agrement, because it was the United States after all. But now, of course, Swaziland has women ambassadors itself, but then it was 1988, and they just didn't know. And I found out well after my time there that they had decided to treat me as an honorary man, the way South Africa used to treat people as honorary whites. But I didn't know that at the time, and so it was all fine. And so off I went to Swaziland.

Q: You were in Swaziland from '88 to when?

RYAN: June of '90. It was 18 months.

Q: Can you describe Swaziland at that time?

RYAN: Well, Swaziland at that time was a beneficiary of the apartheid regime in South Africa, because companies that wanted a foothold in southern Africa would come to Swaziland because they were not allowed – American companies, that is – were not allowed to go to South Africa because of sanctions, economic sanctions that were in place at that time. Swaziland had a young population, a relatively well educated population, and an English-speaking population for the most part. And so we had, like a Coca-Cola bottling company and we had pineapple canning factories and we had interests in…I mean, we had a trade mission come. My DCM, Arma Jane Karaer, had spent a lot of time with the [indistinct] consulate and so she had done a lot of economic work and so she got us this group of people to come to explore Swaziland as a place for their operations, which was tremendous for the country. And so it was that way – more important than the very small size of the country would have led you to believe. The Swazis were completely oblivious to all of this in many ways, because I remember talking to some of the ministries and cautioning them about how if South Africa ever freed itself from the Afrikaner regime, that's where all of the trading and investment would go, and that Swaziland should be paying attention to this, paying much more attention to the investment that they had at that time. But then, of course, none of us imagined that the Afrikaner regime and the apartheid regime would disappear as quickly as it did from the scene. And so they didn't take it at all seriously. And so, of course, now it's very much, I'm afraid, a backwater. Well, it's always a backwater to South Africa; I'm not saying that. But the investment and everything has now gone to South Africa and has left Swaziland.

Q: What type of government did it have?

RYAN: Well, it's a monarchy. The king was very young at the time that I was there. He celebrated his 21st birthday while I was in the country. His father, King Sobhuza, had been the longest reigning monarch in the world, and was believed to be, and certainly had the reputation of being, a very wise leader. King Mswati had been sent to England to school, and had had no opportunity to observe his father's rule/reign. And so he came back when his father died, and he had a very tricky succession because King Sobhuza had 51 sons and innumerable daughters of many wives, but the rule of succession was that you could be the only son of your mother, so that you would not have full-blooded brothers competing with you. And so this young man was that, he was the only son of his mother. And so he was the one determined to be the successor, and brought back.

And he was very young and not well educated; he was still in high school or prep school in England when he was brought back. and surrounded by traditional leaders, old men, who had no experience of the world whatsoever, and who always talked about the Swazi

way of doing things. And so we basically had an absolute monarchy. I mean, he was not a tyrant, or not, as he was named recently in Parade magazine, the 10th worst tyrant in the world, which he's really not. But political parties were banned by King Sobhuza when a couple of people of his party were defeated. When you look back on it, you have to laugh. But political parties were banned then. They have a parliament, but it's, you know, under the control of the king. And it's getting increasingly restive now. It was not very restive then. They had unions and all. It's not an effective government. It was not an effective government, in my judgment, at the time. [Indistinct] had two women at the top of the American Embassy in Mbabane, Swaziland.

Q: Who was your DCM?

RYAN: My DCM was Arma Jane Karaer.

Q: I remember her.

RYAN: They had a debate in parliament about whether it was acceptable to beat your wife. I mean, they actually had a debate about that. I remember talking to the Speaker of the House, as they called it, and asked him, "Do you think this is the right kind of debate to be having in the 20th century?" And he was all shame-faced and embarrassed and everything, but they actually had a debate. And the conclusion was, only if she deserved it.

Q: Well, that sounds reasonable [laughing]!

RYAN: So Arma Jane and I were like, "to the barricades." It was absolutely incredible. A long time after I had left Swaziland and one of my colleagues was in Canada, and the Swazi high commissioner there was a woman, and Jim Walsh told me that she told him that men in government used to say that the American ambassador did that, and the American ambassador was a woman. And if the American ambassador can do that, then we can do it too. But I didn't realize that at the time. This was not "heavy lifting," this job, believe me. After you read the traffic that came in by 10 o'clock in the morning, I was sort of hard-pressed to know how I was going to occupy the other time of the day, without driving the staff completely insane.

And so what I did, I accepted every invitation I got. Every little women's sewing class graduations I went to, every single thing that went on. Everything that AID wanted me to do. Anything that anyone wanted me to do, I did. And so I did that deliberately in terms of women's activities; I wanted to show the chiefs of the area that women's work was valued by the American ambassador and 2) to show the women that, you know, there was more to what they were doing, which was to keep the country afloat, God knows.

The women of Africa do everything, and it was no different in Swaziland. They do all the work in the homesteads, and they somehow did the little sewing things that make money to get the children the school uniforms they need and the books they need to have an

education. The men used to sit around and drink beer. And the men thought that was perfectly acceptable. There was a missionary couple, an American missionary couple in the south – south as it was in Swaziland – who invited me to come to see their work, and this was a couple that belonged to some church (I can't remember which denomination it was now), but they had just decided that they should be missionaries, and they decided that they should come to Swaziland – husband and wife – very, very good people. And it was a little homestead, and the women had to go to the stream, which was like one-half mile or a mile away from where this little collection of houses was, and carry the water back to the homestead. And this couple wanted to run pipes from the stream to the homestead, because water is very heavy. And so they would walk with their empty containers of water to get the water from the stream, and then they would bring it back carrying it on their heads – little kids, little girls, older women – and it's heavy, and so this would relieve them of that burden. And the chiefs refused to allow it, because "what would the women do with all that free time?" And you just, you would just go insane with stuff like that. They would just get into trouble. And they had to work all day, so the men could sit around and get drunk. And I remember how good this couple was, and how frustrated they were at this, such primitive type of thinking.

Q: Were there movements within the Swazi, was it pretty much on a tribal or village basis? Was there somebody at the top trying to…

RYAN: No, but they had the government structure, which was probably from the British. So they had ministers and they had parliament secretaries. They had a number of ministries. But the king ruled. The ministers were selected, I never really understood how. And, it was very cohesive. It's all Swazi, I mean, that's all there is in Swaziland, is the Swazi nationality. And so there's a Swazi way of doing things. And at that time, when the king chose anyone to be his next wife, nobody could say anything. I mean, it's just recently last year, that a mother objected to her daughter being taken by the king as a consequence of the reed dance. And that was a big scandal in Swaziland that she dared to do that. And in the end, she gave way, and her daughter is, as I understand it, one of the king's many wives. But at that time, it was not like that. At that time, there was just no objection to anything.

Q: Did the hand of the South African, Afrikaner South African government, rest at all within Swaziland?

RYAN: What we had frequently was cross-border raids. We would have people fleeing South Africa for one reason or another, and then South African police – military – who would come across and try to grab them, and often did bring them back – grab them and bring them across the border. But the Swazis, it wasn't really the Swazi way to really object to that. So they would always downplay it. You would never read about it, but you would hear around that this would happen. And when you tried to investigate, you'd find out, "Well, yes, it happened, but well." They didn't want any trouble with South Africa. There was a man who went to my church who was a relative of Alan Boesak – he was later discredited, not the man who was at the church (he was a young man), but his

relative – who I helped him get refugee status in the United States, which took a very long time. And this fellow was in terrible fear that the South Africans were going to come and drag him back across the border. They didn't, fortunately, ever find out where he was. But that happened, that happened a lot. And, of course, at the same time we had the terrible problem in Mozambique with RENAMO [Mozambique National Resistance] faction, which was trying to overthrow the FRELIMO government, and horrible atrocities were taking place in Mozambique and people were fleeing Mozambique into Swaziland. And there was a refugee camp that I visited that a priest was running at that time, where the inhabitants were all Mozambican refugees fleeing a terrible, terrible problem in Mozambique at that time.

Q: Were there many Swazis who went to work in South Africa and came back?

RYAN: Not in the same number as, say, the people of Lesotho did. Some did, yes, of course. And there were some people who went to the mines. But Lesotho really staffed the mines in South Africa, much less so the Swazis.

Q: Were the ANC [African National Congress] or any of those organization playing a role in Swaziland?

RYAN: They were in Swaziland. They were there, but it wasn't like they had a headquarters there; they were there and people knew they were there, but it was all quiet, it was all very much under the radar, which is the way the Swazis wanted it. They didn't want to be in confrontation with the South Africa government.

Q: What is the history of the Swazis? One knows about the Zulus and some of the other tribes.

RYAN: As I understood it, as it was explained to me, the Swazis were a less militant part of the Zulu Nation, and had broken off from it – from the Zulu Nation – at some point, a long time ago, and were not as militant. They also said that the Swazis and the British got along so well because the Swazis were very conciliatory and that's the way the British were, too. Whereas the Zulus and the Afrikaners were always fighting, and that's the way both of them were.

Q: What was AID doing there?

RYAN: AID had various projects – some education, some water. But mostly education, and some water projects. It was small – $20 million is what I remember – but it was popular with Swazis. AID was very popular with Swazis, as was the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps had been there from the time of independence in 1968. And we had visits by two Peace Corps directors, heads of Peace Corps. Loret Ruppe came and so did Paul Coverdale during my time, and that was only 18 months. I have a hilarious story about, I wonder if I should tell it to you.

Q: Oh, please do.

RYAN: Paul Coverdale came, and he tried to get an appointment with the king. And in typical Swazi fashion, he never answered. And so Paul Coverdale, and the Peace Corps director, and a Peace Corps volunteer were out in the country touring around. And I had been with them. They dropped me off, and they were going back down the hill to stay at their hotel. And when I walked in the house, there was a phone call – almost timed, almost as if people were watching – that the king could see Peace Corps Director Coverdale. So, there was much consternation by me, by the Peace Corps director, rushing back down the hill, trying to make sure that, "Yes, he can see you. Yes, come." They had to get changed. We drove to one of the king's residences and so, there we are – this little delegation of Paul Coverdale, the Peace Corps director; Paul Coverdale's chief of staff; and myself – all four of us all dressed up. And so we knock at the door, and the door opens, and there's nobody at eye level.

We're looking at a door that just sort of swings open. And then you drop your eyes to see what's going on and there was a little boy. And they always had little boys around the king, because little boys, children, don't lie. And so if somebody did something that they weren't supposed to do, the children would see it, and if the children were asked, they would tell the truth. That was the story. And so, there was this very grubby little boy, who looked as if he only had on a rather dirty, ripped t-shirt and no other clothing. Okay, so that was fine. The carpet was very raised and so the door could not close properly, and so they had cut a piece out of the carpet. And rather than just leave it bare linoleum, they had put down a Black Label beer carton, which they had flattened. So, you can imagine our state of mind going into this, okay? So we go in, and of course the king is not on time. And we wait, and finally the king comes.

And the king and Mr. Coverdale – later, Senator Coverdale – sit down on this sofa. My only impression was that it swallowed them. I mean, the cushions were so deep. I remember legs going up in the air. And the king was in traditional dress, which is a Swazi cloth and a little leopard skin around his waist, like a little apron – but real leopard skin. And so, what I remember about the king was a lot of leg showing as the two of them, sort of, fought their way out of this all-encompassing sofa. And so the three women – Coverdale's chief of staff was a woman named Jodie, the Peace Corps director was Jeanette Robinson, and I – could not look at each other, because if we had looked at each other, all would have been lost. And so we just fixed our eyes on the coffee table in front of the sofa. On the coffee table was a rhinoceros horn which had simply been lopped off – not mounted in any way – and so there were all these little hairs that were coming off of it, all of these little curly hairs – so we were all staring at this rhinoceros horn as if we were fixated on it.

And Coverdale recovered himself and said to the king, you know, in a perfectly normal question, you know, after they exchanged pleasantries, "Are our volunteers doing what you need to have done in your country, your majesty?" And the king looked very embarrassed and had to speak to the chief of protocol in Siswati, their native language

because he had no idea what the Peace Corps did (can you imagine?), and the director of protocol knew because his daughter had been educated by the Peace Corps, and so he said something to the king. And then the king said, "Yes, that they were doing well." But the volunteers were really prized by the Swazis.

After I left and the Soviet Union collapsed and we were doing so much in the former Soviet Union, Peace Corps Washington closed the program unfortunately after 20-some years. It was such a terrible blow, because they taught math and science – the Peace Corps volunteers primarily – and I remember one man telling me that his daughter would never have been a scientist if she hadn't been taught by the Peace Corps. They had no discrimination about teaching women science. The Peace Corps just taught whoever came to them. And he was very happy with his daughter's career, because the Peace Corps had taught her.

And so, when we got out, finally after the audience, if you can call it an audience, was over and we got out into the parking lot, the Peace Corps driver in the van had fallen asleep, and he had locked all the doors. And we couldn't wake him up; we're knocking on the windows… and finally, all four of us lost it. And we were leaning against the car screaming with laughing. Finally the man woke up and we were able to get into the car and drive away. But I always wondered what the Swazi police and everybody around the palace – residence – thought with all these four Americans collapsing in the parking lot, laughing. And later, when I was in CA, Secretary Christopher had a reception for Congress one evening, early in the Clinton Administration, and Senator Coverdale was there. He was by then a senator.

Q: From where?

RYAN: From Georgia. And I went over and reintroduced myself, and I said, "I don't think you'll remember me, but I'm sure you'll remember the visit to the king." And he did, he called people up – other senators – "Come, let me tell you about this story." And he remembered it exactly as I told you. We both got such a kick out of it. So typical Swazi. But it was like that. I mean, it was hard to sort of take it all seriously. But I learned a lot again there, how to run a post and manage people of various agencies, you know, and hold a mission program plan effort – which I always thought was just nonsense. I thought there was a very good way of building cohesion, you know, where you got everyone together and talked about what your goals were and what objectives you had -- this thing called the "goals and objectives" exercise -- but it never meant anything, I mean, when it got back to Washington.

Q: It strikes me as you're talking about this that in a rational system this would be a very good place to take people that the system had identified as going-to-be-ambassadors, as a training post.

RYAN: Yes, exactly. That was what it was.

Q: And moving it up. But we don't see the hand of this. We sort of throw people at it and then say, "Well you made your ambassadorship" and then…

RYAN: Yes, it is exactly that. It is a good place to learn how to be an ambassador. And then, in an ideal world or in an ideal service, you would go on to a larger post, and then yet again a larger one. But now, it's like, okay, now you've had your one shot at it and now you should retire.

Q: Yes. Well, then '90 wither?

RYAN: I was called one day. I was home in the residence, and I was called by Barry Kefauver, who was the executive director of consular affairs – the Bureau of Consular Affairs at that time – and asked if I would be interested in being the principal deputy assistant secretary in that bureau, and I said, "Yes. Of course I was interested." So I came back to Washington in late 1989 to meet with the then assistant secretary.

Q: Who was that?

RYAN: Betty Tamposi. To see if we would be a fit. And we thought we would be a fit. And I met with her and we had a very cordial conversation, and she offered me the job and I accepted it. And so I came back to Washington in January of 1990, permanently, to the PDAS as we called it – the principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. It did not take me long to realize that I had made a very bad mistake, because she didn't – as much my fault as it was hers; I don't want to blame her exclusively for this – she really didn't know how to use staff at all, and I did not know how to work with somebody like her. And this is going to be my own judgment, I mean, obviously, talk to her, she'll have other things to say. As insecure and as unsure of herself as she was, she put a good face on it. She was a Sununu protégé.

Q: He's from New Hampshire, Sununu.

RYAN: She had been in the state legislature, an elected office. Her father and Sununu, I think, was the relationship. They had been very friendly. Her father was very wealthy and very successful. And so she got the job that way. But she was, I mean she thought, God help her, she thought that it was a much more important job than it was, because she wanted her staff to make appointments with, like, the attorney general and the secretary of defense. But assistant secretaries don't call on the attorney general or the secretary of…it was awful, it was a nightmare. And she didn't know how, she was very threatened. Well, I knew things, because I had been in the department by then well over 20 years, so I knew more than she did about how things worked, and that made her nervous. Anyway, it was a disaster.

Q: When you got there, how long had she been on the job?

RYAN: A very short time. In fact, Mr. Selin, who was the undersecretary for management

at the time, told me that he had asked Joan Clark, who was then the assistant secretary, to stay on another year after she was ready to retire, because there was nobody on the horizon and he liked her when he met her, and she had agreed. And then almost instantaneously this other person appeared on the scene, and he interviewed her, and he told me that he'd said that he didn't have any job for her. And he was told by the White House that they had not sent her over to be interviewed, they had sent her over for a job. And so he had to find a job for her. And so, the only thing he had was consular affairs. He thought that, I guess, that she couldn't really do any damage in consular affairs. This wasn't a good fit, CA and M, really. I don't know where it would fit, we can go into that later on when Pickering was undersecretary for political affairs. But Joan Clark was so able, that when I was in M, for example, with Mr. Spiers, she basically operated on her own. She came to all the staff meetings, of course, and if she needed anything she would go to him. But it was a very independent operation and she was just an amazing, amazing officer. So nobody paid any attention to CA. And so it was okay. Nobody knew very much what they did, I mean, that's what Joan liked, I'm sure. That's what I liked too, up until the time of all the trouble. And so nobody really knew what CA was doing and nobody really cared, and so it was okay to put her there, and so they put her there. Poor woman, she just wasn't a good fit. And we were not a good fit. And I lasted only ten months with her.

Q: What was happening with the staff? I'm thinking about the consular people, both the office staff and in the field?

RYAN: Well, she didn't know how to use staff in Washington, and she would get very angry if people couldn't do what she wanted to do. She wanted to completely redo the office, for example, redecorate and all of that, and spend way more money than you would be allowed to spend, and fly people around who were going to do all sorts of things in the office. Trying to explain to her that you do not … that was very, very difficult. I remember one time – and I had tremendous admiration for Ed Vasquez, who was her special assistant at the time – where we were collecting money for the Combined Federal Campaign. That's a voluntary contribution. It's a campaign. But she wanted CA to have 100% contributions representation, and some people weren't giving. Not the whole bureau, not everybody in the bureau. And so she told Ed to get the names of people who weren't contributing, and he refused. And she was livid. I thought she was going to fire him. She didn't, actually, in the end, because the rest of us rushed in to explain to her that you couldn't do that. You couldn't force people to make contributions. But she just didn't understand how the department operated. She was not receptive to learning how the department operated, and she was very fearful if she thought somebody knew more than she knew. She didn't take advantage of our knowledge. She didn't use staff the way you use staff, to sort of buck you up on the places where you're weak. So it was a very unhappy relationship.

When the poor hostage, Mr. Polhill, was released from Beirut, I went with the head of American Citizen Services, who was then Georgia Rogers, and people from the CIA, to Germany to meet with him, and to bring him home. And she was very angry that I was

doing it and not she doing it, even though it had always been the principal deputy who did that kind of thing. And I didn't realize at the time that she was going to be so upset, so when I was called by whoever it was that called me, I guess counterterrorism, that he was going to be released, I told them we were making all the arrangements. But then she was mad that she wasn't going, because she saw it as sort of an opportunity to be on television and all of that. And it wasn't that at all. It was just going over for this poor soul who had been held for God knows how many years. He was very ill. He had cancer of the throat by that time, poor soul. And it was awful. But she was very, very angry.

The whole thing of it was just like that. She misinterpreted things. She was insecure. She never read anything, so she would always be angry at me because I knew things, but I knew things because the memoranda would come in. I would read the memorandum, I would pass it to her, but she never read it. And I didn't realize that for such a long time, that she didn't read. She didn't learn through reading. She learned through people talking to her, and telling her, and I didn't know that for a long time. I'd never worked for anybody like that. And so, it was my fault as much as it was her fault. Because it was just sort of the blind leading the blind. It was a very unhappy time for me. It was an awful time. I thought very seriously about retiring.

But then in October of '90, when she told me, finally – she'd put up with me for ten months, too, and it was like that – when she told me she didn't want me to be the PDAS any more, that same day John Kelly, who was the assistant secretary for NEA, called me and asked me to replace Ryan Crocker as the director of the Kuwait task force. And since I had been spending a tremendous amount of time as the PDAS for CA in that task force area, because we were getting ready to go to war with Iraq, I leapt at that. I never had time to worry about what I really thought was the ruin of my career, because I went immediately into 90 hour work weeks, where you didn't think of anything but Iraq and Kuwait.

Q: While you were in the CA as PDAS, how receptive was Miss Tamposi to, you know, officers coming in from the field, and consuls general and people at posts coming in, you know, people coming in to pay their respects and that sort of thing?

RYAN: She would see some of the more senior people. I don't think she really understood why they were coming, but she was very gracious. That's why it took such a long time, I think, before people realized just how badly managed the bureau was, because on the outside she was just lovely and very, very gracious. And so she would be gracious to them, but she didn't know really what they did or why they were coming to see her, necessarily. And they were accustomed, because Joan Clark had been there for eight years, they were accustomed to that kind of assistant secretary. And so they didn't know how to really relate to her, either. So it was sort of talking past each other.

Q: What happened towards the end of your PDAS time? There was a surprise invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. This would be in, what, 1st of August of 1990?

RYAN: 1990, yes.

Q: What did this do to CA? Let's stick to the CA side.

RYAN: It put CA almost onto a war footing immediately, because we had so many American citizens who were caught up in that. A terrible, terrible time. We had American citizens in Kuwait who had been working – contractors, people like that, mostly men – who went into hiding, because they were at great risk of being taken by Iraqi forces and held. We had a planeload of many American citizens – their plane had simply been refueling in Kuwait on its way into India and Sri Lanka – Americans taken off the plane and held by Iraqi forces. We had Americans in, of course, Iraq, as well.

Of course there was a task force immediately set up, directed by NEA. The overall task force is always directed by the regional bureau in which the incident occurs, where whatever's gone wrong occurs. But CA had a task force, too, in the beginning, as it was called then. Another part of the task force area, which we staffed, which ultimately went to seven different task forces – all staffed by consular officers or retired consular officers, trying to, as best we could, protect Americans, to get information to Americans here whose loved ones were either on the compound in Kuwait, on the compound in Baghdad, or in hiding. And so we had this unbelievably difficult…because for one thing, we didn't know whether we were going to get our colleagues back alive. I remember talking to Barbara Bodine and Ambassador Howell in Kuwait, when we had contact with them, and what was for me a rather strained conversation. Because we didn't know whether they were going to be saved or not. And the same thing with Joe Wilson and Emil Skodon in Baghdad. Although it was less awful in Baghdad, because we had an open line to Baghdad. We did not have a perpetually open line to Kuwait.

And then, of course, we would have the relatives of the Americans caught up in this terrible time, on the phone with us, berating us because they were beside themselves with worry and fear. But berating us because we couldn't get them out, you know, "Get my husband out! Get my husband out! Tell my husband to come to the compound in Kuwait and just give himself up." At the same time, the Irish, the Australians, and – what other nationality? I think New Zealand, I can't remember now – were not considered detainable. In other words, the Iraqis didn't think of them as the enemy as they thought of us as the enemy. And so I got very friendly with the Irish DCM, and the Australian consul general, and a Canadian ... that was the other one, the Canadian consul general. Because their nationals were out in the community, in many cases hiding the American men, and so we would get reports from them, from their nationals to their embassies and then ultimately to us, so that we were able to explain to some of these poor spouses who were so horribly upset and worried, what was going on as best we knew it. But of course it was like third hand, not good enough for many of them. But that's what CA did and that was CA's involvement.

I worked on the Kuwait Task Force from the start of the process – from the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990 as the PDAS in consular affairs. And mercifully, the

assistant secretary was on a trip at that time, and she would call back periodically and ask if she should return. And I always lied and said, "No, you shouldn't return," because I could not possibly face what we were facing with the Task Force and the American citizens' relatives in the States so upset and the whole crisis of the moment – all the Americans in Iraq and Kuwait – and having to take care of the assistant secretary at the same time. And so I was, "Oh, no, Betty, better if you stay out and go wherever you were going and doing whatever you were doing." And then one day Mr. Selin called me and Mr. Selin told me that Betty had spoken to him and asked him if she should return. And he said, "She told me that you had said that no, she didn't need to." And I thought to myself, "It's all up now, because of course she should come back, and he's going to know that and he's going to have told her to come back." And he said, "I told her too that she didn't need to return." And we never spoke of it. I never went to him and said, "Thank you so much." We never spoke of it, but we both knew that we both couldn't deal with this if she were there, because it was just too awful. Well, it was always awful, but it was so awful in the beginning. Because we really did not know that people were going to be saved. Then, of course, when she did come back, I'm sure people told her that she should have come back earlier. And she was upset, and anyway, that was when she let me go, and John Kelly rescued me. And then I went to replace Ryan Crocker – a very sorry replacement, I always thought, because I never knew, or could never know, NEA the way Ryan Crocker knew NEA.

Q: Where is he now, do you know?

RYAN: Ryan is at the War College, I think, at NDU [National Defense University]. He would be a very good person to talk to; he's just a superb officer. I remember saying to Jock Covey, who was the PDAS in NEA at that time, and Jock came about something and I said, "This is a different Ryan that you're dealing with, Jock. This is not Ryan Crocker. I don't know all of these things."

We were totally consumed by what was going on. And then all of a sudden, in December of 1990, Saddam Hussein let them all go – from Kuwait. I mean, it was just unbelievable. And I don't know to this minute why he did that. And I wonder if he even knows why he did that. I always thought it was the power of prayer, because believe me, there were an awful lot of people praying for that embassy in Kuwait particularly, because they were trapped on a compound.

Q: Well, I've interviewed Joe Wilson, and he said that he and others (he didn't take full credit) were talking to the Arabic press who was around and all, and saying that taking hostages and all this, if you're a leader, it's a cowardly thing to do, and this is not the way Saladin would have done it, and this type of thing, which, you know, dealing with a megalomaniac like Saddam Hussein, this may have been the seed that had something to do with it.

RYAN: Yes, that's probably right, that's why he always got so involved with weapons of mass destruction, because he he'd look like a very strong leader, confronting the United

States, defying us to do our worst, when he didn't have them. He could have told us that, and everything would have been all right, but he couldn't do that.

So, then they were all released. It was like December 17th. It was like the most wonderful Christmas present that you could possibly have. And we, of course, went to meet with them. We knew these people so well from being on the phone with them all the time and their spouses, wives mostly. And we went to a number of reception areas where they were flown in, and we could finally put names and faces together of people that we had been speaking to deeply. And that was just tremendously rewarding for me. And I remember having that cell phone at the time and finally finding that I had been on the phone with this woman from Texas whose daughter was married to an Arab, and she was trapped – I can't remember if it was Iraq or Kuwait – and finally getting her, and finally finding her in this crowd of people, and putting her on the phone with her mother. I mean, it was just so rewarding. And even all of the people that we had spoken to so much…in fact, I'm still in touch with one couple; he's gone back to Kuwait, if you can believe that. He does oil, oil exploration or something. He's back there now, and his family is again here – not here, but in the States – the same way they were 10 years ago, 12 years ago. But that went on, that was for me as director, from October of 1990 until May of 1991.

I knew what I really wanted to do when the Task Force ended, or when it was winding down. The Seventh Floor liked having the Task Force far longer than it should have had the Task Force in operation. They used people up terribly, you know – three shifts, 24 hours-a-day; it was really awful. But Mr. Kimmitt the undersecretary for political affairs liked being able to call at 2:00 in the morning and get a status report on anything. Why he would do that, I don't know. So it went on longer than it really needed to. But it was very much winding down by May.

And what I wanted to do was go someplace dark and lie down for, like a year, because I was so tired. I mean, it was just grueling work. Because I thought it was important that I see, you know, every shift. I didn't want to miss a shift. I didn't stay 24 hours a day, I don't mean that, but being there when they came on or when they went off, I thought, was very important, because people were giving up their time. In many cases, they were doing 16 hours a day – certainly in the beginning they were – before we got things going, and a lot of evacuations of the post and I got to know a lot of the NEA hands through that.

But they were setting up the first UN special commission to eliminate the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, and I was asked to go to New York, to the UN, and help them set up their operations; that really was their administrative operation within the special commission. And my job was to find – it was so interesting, because I'd never done anything like this before – try to find people who did explosives – ordnance – demolition work to go to Iraq to explode the mines; to find the weapons of mass destruction then; to do all of that. And I even got a trip with the UN to Kuwait and to Baghdad; I was only there a few months – three, four, something like that. But it was just fascinating. Bob Gallucci was the deputy director of the special commission and Rolf Ekeus from Sweden was the director. It was just a whole new world to me, the way the UN operated. We were

in the Directorate for Disarmament, and I was very impressed with the international civil servants that I met in that directorate, and the people that we were able to recruit for the special commission – very talented, very committed, very dedicated people. Having been on the Task Force for so long, it was a great privilege to be able to travel with them to Kuwait and to Iraq.

And my memories of that trip – we stopped first in Bahrain; we had some meetings there with Bahraini leaders, and then we went to Kuwait – and really you would have thought that Kuwait had lost the war – the state of Kuwait city at that time, in May/June 1991. Fires were still burning, there was this terrible smell of gasoline all over – it made you sick, actually – and anything nice in that city had been defaced by the Iraqis or destroyed by the Iraqis. They set fires in the lobbies of hotels. They broke through the ceiling to let the smoke out. It was almost like the barbarians.

Q: It sounds almost like vandals, doesn't it?

RYAN: It really was like that. Everything, everything was defaced. Signs were ripped down or defaced. Roads were torn up. Hotels were destroyed. It was horrible, absolutely horrible. And then we went to Baghdad, where I had my first experience with precision bombing, or the results of precision bombing, which of course, we had heard about on the Task Force and had watched on CNN. But it was amazing. We flew into a military airport outside of Baghdad. And there were all these hangars, and inside the hangars were all destroyed planes. Somehow the bombs had gone through – they hadn't dropped on top of the hangars, they had gone through the hangars; it was like a giant had gone through just ripping up the planes. And then we got to Baghdad, and there would be buildings there with this hole in the middle; the buildings would be standing, and the communications center, or ministry, was gone. It was absolutely amazing. And we went to the UN headquarters in Baghdad, where we found – as we would have found had we gone, I'm sure, to the American Embassy, but we didn't – their FSNs who had stayed and protected and tried to work as best they could during this whole terrible experience when the United States, well the coalition, and Iraq were at war.

But what I remember one of the Iraqi FSNs telling us was that when people were asking – people knew him – people were asking how it was during the war, and he said that the thing that he couldn't stand about it all was the screaming of the children when the bombs dropped. It cut me to the heart, because it was our bombing that was making the children scream.

And we stayed at the, I guess it was the Rasheed Hotel, and we knew everything was bugged, and so we never…we always went outside – it was like Moscow in the old days – we went outside to talk about everything. I remember one time going back to my room, and when I traveled, I always had all of my cosmetics and lotions and things like that in plastic bags, and of course, when we got to the hotel, they had been taken out of the plastic bags. All of the plastic bags had disappeared. And so I was telling one of my colleagues about this afterwards that, you know, all of these bags had disappeared, isn't

that funny? And he said, "Well, why don't you go back to your room at the hotel and say that out loud", you know, "Gee, I wonder where all the bags went?" I felt like a fool, but I did, and the next day, back they were. And then I felt bad because probably the Iraqis needed these plastic bags more than I needed them, and I should have let them have them. But it was so funny, because everything was bugged. But the hotel was lovely; there was plenty of food. I remember telling one of NEA people back in the bureau that there was a lot of food that was really awful food, and he said, "That's Iraq. That's no different than before the war." But it was just a revelation to me, traveling with the UN.

We met with Nizar Hamdoun who is now dead. Of course, I remember talking about what the UN was going to do, what the special commission was going to do, and leaving him absolutely no room to object at all. And then the commission went in – well, we brought in a lot of people with us – but after we left, the UN went about their work of looking for the weapons of mass destruction.

Q: Well, and this, of course, is almost the issue today, we're talking about in 2004 whether weapons of mass destruction – this is before our war with Iraq last year. But at that time, what was the feeling from the UN side of what were weapons of mass destruction and what was the status?

RYAN: Well, we were very confident then that he certainly had biological and chemical weapons, because we knew he had those; he had used them on his own people. The Israelis had bombed their nuclear reactor – whatever they were doing to build nuclear weapons – so there was some question about whether they had been able to put that back together. That was well before the war. I don't remember when that happened, but I do remember that the Israelis did that, thank God. But there was tremendous confidence – well, almost certainty, it was certainty – that he did have weapons of mass destruction, at least in terms of chemical and biological weapons; that was then the responsibility for UNSCOM [the UN Special Commission on the Elimination of Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction] to find and destroy. And, in fact, they did find and destroy chemical stores, as I remember it, but I was gone from the UN by then, but that's what I remember.

Q: What was your impression of the UN operation that you saw?

RYAN: I was impressed with the UN operation as I saw it. The directorate for disarmament, I thought, was staffed by very professional international civil servants, and I thought that the people that were recruited from various countries – Sweden, Russia, U.S. – were very, very able. Bob Gallucci, I mean, you couldn't do much better than Bob Gallucci. I don't remember all the names of the others from all the countries. But there was an American of British origin who had been in the British army and then had been in the U.S. Marines, Alister Livingston, who was very knowledgeable about military operations and weapons. He was there; somehow somebody found him and recruited him. And then the people that we found to do the demolition work were really impressive. I didn't know anything about people like that, or how they worked, but they just went in and destroyed.

Q: How did you find – you were there shortly after the end of the war – how did you find the Iraqis you all were dealing with?

RYAN: Well, the Iraqis that we were dealing with officially – that we called on – were hostile and unfriendly, but the people who were doing the – it wasn't the negotiation, it was telling them what was going to happen – were extremely strong and didn't "pull any punches"; they didn't leave any room for the Iraqis to squirm around and get out of things. That's what I remember being impressed with, because I didn't know what the UN was like really and how they would behave. And then the Iraqis that we met in the hotel – like the staff of the hotel – were very friendly. The Iraqis who followed us around were very unfriendly and hostile, and I thought, looked like they had just come out of the basement, where they had tortured children. They were just the most horrible men – just very rough and hostile would be the only word that I can use, and very controlling. Because we were only allowed to go within the perimeter of the grounds of the hotel; we couldn't go outside of that. I didn't know if you would want to or not. I didn't know what the Iraqi population would be like towards us. And then when we went in cars places, we always had them as an escort, and so we couldn't deviate from the route that they let you have. They would take you. And they would always hang around the lobby of the hotel, so if you ever thought of trying to get out to see what Baghdad was like, you couldn't, because they would stop you.

Q: Well, you did this for how long?

RYAN: It was just a few months, from May until September, something like that.

Q: Who took your place as PDAS?

RYAN: Jim Ward, who was very, very much better.

Q: You should have warned him, you should have beeped him about how to deal with…

RYAN: He was in the bureau, as I remember it; I hadn't known him before. He knew better than I how to work with her. He told me once that the reason he lasted as long as he did was that when she was there he was traveling and when she was traveling he was there. So they didn't overlap too much together, which was very smart. And he had been in passports originally, before he converted to the Foreign Service, and so he knew the bureau better than I did. And he was just more effective as the PDAS, in working with her, than I was.

Q: Where did you go when you left the UN?

RYAN: When I came back from New York I went to the European Bureau thanks to the generosity of Tom Niles, who was the assistant secretary at the time, to be one of his DASes. I was deputy assistant secretary for northern and southern European affairs, and I

got that job thanks to Tom, because Tom had been a DAS in EUR when I was the EUR executive director. I was supposed to come here, to FSI, to be the dean of the language school. And Tom called me when I was still on the Task Force and told me that he was going to be the assistant secretary and asked me if I would be one of his DASes. And since I really adored Tom, and I always thought he was a wonderful man and a wonderful, wonderful officer, that I called Brandon…

Q: Brandon Grove…

RYAN: Brandon Grove, who was the director of FSI, and asked if I could get out of the appointment, and he said yes. And so I went to EUR to be a DAS for northern and southern European affairs.

Q: This is the 10th of May, 2004. Mary, in 1991 you did what?

RYAN: In 1991, Tom Niles asked me to be one of his deputy assistant secretaries in the European Bureau, and I was thrilled, I must say. One, because I like Tom Niles so much, and two, because it was a wonderful opportunity for me. So I came into EUR I guess in September or October of '91, and was the DAS with responsibilities for northern and southern Europe, as it was then: EUR/NE and EUR/SE – which meant I had the UK and Scandinavia and the Benelux countries, and Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, which EUR thinks of as the NEA part of the bureau, much to my amusement.

Northern Europe was a very well behaved portfolio. I mean, nothing really ever happened. It was very interesting for me, because I didn't know those issues, but it was very calm, very calm. Whereas Greece, Turkey and Cyprus were not calm. There was always something going on, some little thing under the current of things. Anyway, that was the part of the job that I really liked the best.

Q: You were there from '91 to when?

RYAN: From '91 until '93 – mid-'93. I was sworn into CA in May of 1993. Was that 1993? No, it couldn't be. Clinton was elected in '92? Yes, '93. Mid-'93.

Q: Okay. First, before we get to the Katzenjammer Kids, Turkey and Greece, during this period how did you find dealing with the UK?

RYAN: Oh, I loved dealing with the UK. They have such a professional diplomatic service. All of them terrific, very easy to work with, and of course an outstanding embassy, both our own and theirs here. So it was a great pleasure, a great joy, and I loved going to London. I'm trying to remember what issues we discussed at the time, but I don't really remember.

Q: Well, this was the period when the Soviet Union ceased to be and all that. I was wondering if this had any reverberations, or were we in lockstep.

RYAN: We were pretty much in lockstep with the Brits, I think. I do remember that we were surprised by the coup attempt and all the fighting that went on. And it was also right around that time that Yugoslavia was breaking up, and so there was a lot of attention paid to those issues, but I don't really remember how much we did with that.

Q: This was about the time, I'm not sure, maybe it was slightly later, but when you had two former secretaries of state, foreign ministers, Vance, Owen, dealing with Yugoslavia, and I was wondering whether that intruded on…

RYAN: Not that much on what I was doing. It certainly drove the people in what was then EEY, eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, into the ground. Because I was friendly with the deputy director of that office.

Q: Who was that?

RYAN: That was Laura Clerici, a consular officer who has done a lot of out-of-cone work, currently in Mexico.

Q: What's the name again?

RYAN: Laura Clerici.

Q: Is she around? Is she retired?

RYAN: She was the deputy director of EEY, and the director was an A-100 classmate of mine, Mike Habib. And they worked horrible hours. They just worked themselves into the ground trying to deal with those issues. But it didn't really affect us that much in the rest of the bureau.

Q: Was the issue of the United Kingdom and the European Union current at that time? You know, Britain has been sort of in and out of it. Did we play any role in trying to support or discourage their playing a role in the European Union?

RYAN: No, not that I remember. Certainly not that I did. What I remember about the European Union was going to Brussels to talk about Turkey's admission to the European Union. I remember how really shocked I was to be told by this group of Belgian international civil servants at the EU [European Union] that Turkey would never be admitted to the EU because it was neither European nor Christian. And they actually said that. And they said that to me! I mean, I'm a foreigner. I was absolutely astounded. I worked with Turkey on that issue, because I personally think Turkey should be part of the EU, but northern Europe was a much quieter part of my portfolio, and I really didn't have that much to do with it, in terms of work.

Q: Was there any effort on our part to dismantle the Pershing missiles and cruise missiles

that we had put in to counter the SS-20 during the '80s, now that the Soviet Union blew away, do you recall?

RYAN: I don't really remember much discussion about those issues, frankly. I'm trying to think in Tom's early morning staff meetings, but I really don't remember that.

Q: Well, it probably wasn't a major issue anymore. How did Tom Niles operate?

RYAN: He was a leader – somebody that I certainly admired, and I think everybody who worked for him admired. He is very easy to get along with. He had certain expectations of what he wanted, but he was not … you know, I had worked for Rick Burt in my earlier incarnation in EUR, which was a very different kind of front office. Tom's was much easier, where everybody was much more collegial, I thought. And certainly the DASes did terrific work. The only one I had known a little bit before, because he had been in EUR the first time I was there, was Ray Caldwell, who did regional political and military work, but Rich Kauzlarich and Ralph Johnson were – Ralph was the PDAS – they were exceptional officers, just top-notch. Tom could attract that quality of person because of the type of person that he was.

Q: Let's talk about Greeks, Turks and the Cypriots.

RYAN: That was a much more difficult portfolio, because 1) it was regarded pretty much as NEA by the real Europeanists and 2) because there were real issues there, and issues that I had not, of course, followed before I went into EUR, like Cyprus and reunification. I remember working very hard on that issue with – I can picture the man, and I loved working with him, but I can't think of who it is. He was like the Cyprus coordinator. I came away from working that issue thinking that until Denktash died there would be no possibility of reunification, but now, of course, it's the Greeks who've stopped reunification, not the Turkish side. But I visited Cyprus often, and met with both sides, talked as we did with both sides on those issues, and then of course went to Greece, and went to Turkey, to talk more about it. We talked and talked, but we didn't really get anywhere.

The other issue that I remember vividly is being in meetings with Greek parliamentarians in the department. They had been invited, and we were meeting with them to brief them on how the U.S. viewed various things, and Yugoslavia was breaking up, and the issue of Macedonia was raised. They asked what we were going to allow Macedonia to call itself, and the desk officer responded that we didn't decide what countries called themselves; countries decided what they would call themselves. And so we assumed that it was going to be Macedonia. And they all looked at each other with these very hostile kinds of looks, and I really didn't know what the problem was at the time, until the meeting had broken up and then a number of them came over to me and said that we couldn't possibly allow Macedonia to be called Macedonia. At a minimum it would have to be called the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I used to get letters all the time from Greece and Greek-Americans who were outraged over the fact that Macedonians were claiming

Philip and Alexander as theirs, and did I know that a group of them went to the statue of Philip or Alexander in Toronto and laid a wreath at the foot of the statue. I'm waiting for the punch line – that they had defaced it, or they had done something dreadful, but that was it – and how dare they honor him when he had nothing to do with them, and how would we feel if somebody did that in the United States. And I always wanted to write back to say, "We would be thrilled, we would be honored. It would be wonderful if a group of people came and laid a wreath at the statue of George Washington." But I guess I never really got it. Greece is a beautiful country, and there is so much history, but they are a very difficult people.

Q: You're talking to somebody who served five years in Yugoslavia and four years in Greece. And God, I know! I mean, Yugoslav history only goes back to 1359, but Greek history goes back to … to, I don't know. Far, far back. And they really live it.

RYAN: Yes, they do live it.

Q: I imagine, you must have gotten delegations from Greek-Americans?

RYAN: We had delegations of Greek-Americans, we had delegations of Turkish diplomats and government officials. I don't remember Cypriots. Well, yes, I guess they did come. But for me it was very interesting, because as I said the rest of my portfolio was very well behaved. You know, what is Norway going to do? Nothing, you know. Nothing happened. It was fine, they were great places to visit and I enjoyed getting to know their diplomats here and abroad, but it was calm. And it was certainly not my idea of work, having been an administrative cone officer most of my career. My idea of work is work. My idea of work is not reading the paper and waiting for someone to bring me a cable to clear. It's much different from that. So northern Europe was very much reading the paper, trying to keep up with what was going on, and waiting for people to bring cables to be cleared. Greece, Turkey and Cyprus were much more interesting, and frankly much more fun, and I enjoyed them much more.

Q: Well, what was your impression of Klarides and Denktash? These were two guys that had been playing this Cypriot ping-pong game for 30, 40 years.

RYAN: I actually thought that the Greeks were more sincere, at least the Greek Cypriots, in wanting to see, at least at that time, a reunification. And it was Denktash who would pretend to want it, until you got right up to the edge, ready to step across to sign, and then he would pull back somehow. I came away from that really believing that nothing was going to happen until he died.

Q: Wasn't there a special coordinator for Cypriot affairs? I always felt, looking at it from the outside, that this was sort of a political ploy to keep the Greeks and Turkish lobbies in the United States off our backs, more than anything else?

RYAN: Well, yes, except – I wish I could think of the man's name, if I think of it I'll call

you – but he was wonderful. And he knew those issues, and he worked them very hard. So, yes, it was probably a sop, primarily towards Greek-Americans, because there are so many more Greek-Americans than there are Turkish-Americans, but we did try. The United States did try to settle that issue and to solve that issue. And worked very hard and continued to work very hard. Probably still working very hard on it.

Q: How about the governments of Greece and the governments of Turkey at that time? Were we working with them to work on the Cypriots?

RYAN: Yes, we were. We were working with them to work on the Cypriot issue. And we'd got a certain amount of cooperation, or perhaps lip service, but nothing really happened. I thought that the Turks really couldn't pressure Denktash somehow or other, because of his position and his stature in that Turkish Cypriot community, because I really thought then, perhaps naively, perhaps because I didn't have that much political work experience, that had they really wanted to, they could have made him agree. But they didn't ever make him agree.

Q: Were the Europeans at all playing a game in this?

RYAN: My sense was no, frankly. The Greek part of the island was so prosperous, and I thought that the Europeans thought that if Greek Cyprus came into the Union that was fine. I mean, they really don't want the Turks, or they didn't want the Turks, at least in my time working on the issues. I didn't sense any effort on their part to do anything to resolve that.

The man's name was Nelson Ledsky. He knew those issues. He was a superb diplomat, and very, very able, and I liked him and I liked working with him.

Q: Did you sense in the rest of the European bureau that, okay, Mary, you've got this, don't bother us with these squabbles?

RYAN: Pretty much, although Ralph Johnson, who was a saint in my estimation, was always available for me to go talk to if I, you know, "Now what do I do, Ralph, how do I get out of this?" or "How do we deal with this problem?" He was always available. But there was so much else going on in Europe at the time, with the Soviet Union collapse and with Yugoslavia going to pieces, Bosnia, all of it. There was just too much. It wasn't important enough.

Q: Were you getting any feel – this is where you were, in the countries you represented, but also sitting in on the greater councils of the EUR – had the Europeans at that time basically said, "Stay out of this Yugoslav thing. This is a European issue, and we'll take care of it."

RYAN: No. The Europeans, they might have pretended that they wanted that, or that they'd said that, but that was a pretense. They didn't want to deal with Yugoslavia. It was

a horrible problem, and as always, in my judgment as always, everybody looked to the United States to fix it, to solve it. You know, for all the European Union and everything, and even NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation], my sense then was that the Europeans had no real stomach for intractable problems, or really, really difficult problems, and that they would always look to the United States, and that we would always do something, because we would have to.

Q: Did you pick up any feeling in dealing with Greece that there was much more of a latent anti-Americanism there?

RYAN: Yes, and not so latent in many cases. In one case, Papadopoulos's wife, who was an American citizen, born American, demonstrated with a crowd of God-knows-what, in front of our embassy once. I forget what issue they were upset about. It enraged me, I remember that. And the whole November 17 thing. They really didn't give a damn. They were killing us, and so, who cares?

Q: This is November 17. You might explain what this is.

RYAN: November 17 was a terrorist organization that began in 1975 with the murder of the CIA chief Welch, and continued – well, I mean, I was in the bureau in 1991-92, a little bit in '93, and they were still doing it. We lost a naval attaché. They would ride up on motorcycles and shoot people and then disappear into the crowd, and my sense was, really, that the Greeks didn't care at all. It was sort of like "serves us right". It's very hard to understand, because there are so many Greek-Americans, and Greek-Americans have such a – everybody loves the idea of Greece. But they don't like us, the Greeks. I left the bureau thinking that if you were planning a picnic one day, and it rained, and you were in Greece, you would blame the United States of America for the rain. I really did think that.

Q: Oh yeah, you were absolutely right.

RYAN: Everything that went wrong was our fault.

Q: Yes. Well, this is the thing I found, having served in Greece. I got so tired of it, that along with most of my colleagues, I felt it should have been wonderful there, but it wasn't. Mainly because of that attitude. I found it such a change when I went over to be consul general in Naples, because, you know, there were a lot of things that didn't work and the Italians would say, "Oh, we've got to do something about this." But it wasn't blaming the United States.

RYAN: No, it wasn't blaming the United States. But of course the Neapolitans are special people. It's a childish attitude. It's not a grownup country, somehow. It's childish to blame somebody else for everything that's wrong, I think. So then you don't have any responsibility for fixing anything. And see, I really didn't like going to Athens that much, whereas I adored going to Turkey. I loved Turkey. I loved going to Ankara and Istanbul, and I loved the Turks. They were so professional and so easy to deal with in comparison

with the Greeks. Which is not what we think of, at all, here in this country. There aren't that many Turkish-Americans, whereas there are a lot of Greek-Americans. But, I don't know. It was a much easier, much more professional relationship that I had with the Turks than I had with the Greeks.

Q: How about the Benelux types? I mean, in dealing with them one often thinks of these being the heart of bureaucracy.

RYAN: They are the heart of bureaucracy. And they're very formal and they're very correct. You must make sure that you don't do anything that they consider incorrect.

[First part of Tape 4, Side B is recorded at the wrong speed, and so is indecipherable. Tape picks up again about one-third of the way through side B.]

RYAN: … inspector general Sherman Funk, and the secretary, Larry Eagleburger, trying to explain how it happened that passport files were searched and all of that. Tamposi had to have left before the election, but I don't really remember.

Q: Yes, I think Larry Eagleburger called her in and fired her.

RYAN: Yes, that's my recollection too, because bad enough that there was this belief that there was a letter renouncing citizenship, or asking how one renounced citizenship in Clinton's passport file, but then right after that, when all of that commotion started, then apparently she was also looking in Perot's file, because that was in the paper as well, and Perot was also running at the time.

Q: This is Ross Perot.

RYAN: Ross Perot, yes. And so, I guess it was just too much in the paper. Despite the fact that we didn't get along, I actually felt sorry for her, because both the principal DAS, Jim Ward, and the executive director, Barry Kefauver, were out of the country at the time that she decided to search the files, and I believe had they been there, they would have stopped her. But she was in charge – of course, she was only assistant secretary – and people were afraid of her, and so people did what she wanted. Nobody could tell her no. I vividly remember that from my own experience of trying to tell her no. So it was just very bad timing. The bureau was demoralized, frankly, by that, because it was so unprofessional to look in a passport file for that kind of information, and everybody felt certainly sorry, and some people felt ashamed. And so I came into that as assistant secretary. But I knew how good they were, and I knew CA, and so I knew that I could fix that. I wasn't worried about that at all.

Q: Did you get a chance to pick your own team?

RYAN: Yes, I did. We had gone through this stupid exercise of eliminating DAS positions, if you remember that, right around that time. I don't remember whose idea it

was, whether it was the Democrats or the Republicans. So CA, which had had four DASes and desperately needed four DASes, only had three. So what I did was to take David Hobbes, who was the deputy assistant secretary for overseas citizen services, to also be the principal deputy. David and I didn't know each other at all at the time. I went to his office and talked to him, and we agreed that we'd try it. It was just sort of, we'll see how this works out, because we weren't really sure of each other. We didn't know each other at all. But for me it worked out beautifully. I loved David Hobbes, and he was fabulous for me. I got Diane Dillard to come back from Paris to be the visa DAS. Diane and I had been in Monterrey together twenty years before then, 1971-73, and we were good friends and I had tremendous respect for her.

Q: She was vice consul with me in Athens.

RYAN: Oh was she? Yes, I had tremendous respect and affection and even love for Diane. I decided that because the passport directorate was 100% civil service that it should have its own civil service deputy assistant secretary, not a foreign service officer, which had been the case always in the past. And so I asked Barry Kefauver, who was the executive director, if he would take on passports for me, and he did, thank God. Because Barry was a genius. Barry's the only person I know who I really think has a quadruple digit IQ. He and Frank Moss, I should say, I know two people like that. Frank is the current passport DAS. But just brilliant, and brilliant in practical ways, not just theoretical ways. And so I was very comfortable with the team I had. And then I asked Ted Strickler, who was a foreign service officer, admin cone, to come in and be the executive director for just a tour. Not permanently, I didn't want to switch it permanently to Foreign Service, because the bureau is primarily civil service. There are about 70-75 foreign service positions in the bureau. But I didn't know who in the civil service would be good enough that I could get.

Q: Had Ron Summerville left?

RYAN: Ron had left by then, yes.

Q: He had really been a Washington operator par excellence.

RYAN: Par excellence. Nobody like Ron Summerville. But then Barry replaced him. And then Ted moved in to replace Barry. And so I thought I had a first-rate team. I just had terrific, terrific people.

Q: You were there from …

RYAN: From '93 until 2002.

Q: Let's talk about some of the early years. What were some of the challenges and things that you had?

RYAN: Well, the first challenge was the World Trade Center I bombing. The first hearing I ever testified before, apart from the confirmation hearings – the two that I had had – was before Tom Lantos, on that very subject. And, really, Congressman Lantos, Chairman Lantos, was extremely difficult at that hearing. And Mike Cronin from INS, and Sherman Funk from the inspector general's office, and I testified, because, of course, we had issued a visa to the blind sheik before my time in the bureau, and he actually was in the lookout system. But he applied in Khartoum, and they decided that he was over 55, he was blind, and he was an imam, which is a Muslim religious person, and so it was decided by the people in the consular section at that time that he wasn't coming here to work. And we had microfiche, at that time, in places like Khartoum – we were just starting to automate, very preliminarily and very limited automation – and it was hard to look up people in microfiche. Readers were difficult, it was out of date, probably, by the time it got to post, often. And so the FSN decided he wouldn't bother, and the person doing consular work at the time there decided that it wasn't important, and they issued to him. And he, of course, was the intellectual force – one can hardly say spiritual force – but the intellectual force behind that bombing.

So the Congress was enraged, as only the Congress can get over having stupid bureaucrats. "How could you do this kind of thing?" But they did a very wise thing, and I have to give them a great deal of credit for that, and that was instead of going after the individual officer, the person who issued the visa to that man, they decided that the problem was a systemic one, and that until we automated the world, we would continue to have problems like that. And so what they did was to authorize us to charge a fee for machine-readable visa applications, and to keep the money. And it was the first time, I believe, that the department was ever authorized to keep money that it collected. And so that was what I did in my early time in CA, to figure out how we were going to collect MRV [machine-readable visa] fees, and account for them properly, and use them properly. And that was a huge job, a tremendous amount of work for us in the bureau, when we had no experience of it, and nothing to look at to see how we could do it. But the people in CA/EX [Bureau of Consular Affairs, Executive Office], Ted Strickler and Hol [Holcombe] Thomas, who was the management analyst, who had this as a primary responsibility, did a phenomenal job of figuring out how to do it. Barry helped us, Barry Kefauver, before he moved into passports; he was the one who figured out what we should charge, which in the beginning was $20. We had no real idea of what to charge, and we didn't want to gouge the applicants, but also we didn't want to undercharge, because we really needed the money. And so a sort of a back-of-the-envelope calculation was $20, and so that's what we started to charge. And that was for machine-readable visa applications, not for issuance.

So everybody who applied at a machine-readable post, which were very few at that time, paid. But as the money came in. Really, you should interview Travis Ferris at some point, who is the head of consular systems division, who was the one who did all the work of automating the world, he and his staff, and of course the contractors that we had. When we were using appropriated funds, we were automating about six posts a year. But when we were able to charge money for machine-readable visa applications and to keep it, we

automated the world in 18 months, something that I am very proud of. I'm very proud of the people who did it. I didn't do it, but I'm very, very proud of Travis and the contractors and his staff that did this work so well. When we did that, then what we started to do was to refine the system, to go to language algorithms. The first one we used was Arabic, obviously, so that no matter how a person transliterated his name or her name from Arabic to English, we would get it if they were in the system. That was one of the things that Chairman Lantos made great fun of us for at the hearing, because the sheik's name was Omar Ali Akmed Rahman, and at some point he said it was Omar Ali. But there's no one way of translating Arab names into English. "You didn't notice that his name was different when he was coming into the country?" Poor Mike Cronin having to deal with that particular question. One of these "you stupid bureaucrat" kind of questions, where all you can do is sort of a mea culpa, mea culpa. So Travis and his staff did this language algorithm. I can remember they showed us a page of how many ways the name Qadhaffi could be transliterated, and we would catch them all.

The other thing that we did in the early days in an effort to comply with what the Congress wanted, and to protect the country, was to create the visas viper program, because it came out subsequent to the bombing of the World Trade Center that the CIA stations in both Cairo and Khartoum had information about the sheik that was not shared fully with the consular section. Certainly it was not shared with the consular section in Cairo. And it was determined that we had to have that kind of information if we were going to protect the country. And so we created a new category of visas, called visas viper, which was to get at the information that was at post in the hands of the CIA and the FBI, that they would give us information about bad guys, about terrorists or criminals that they knew about that the consular section might not know about. One, because maybe they didn't read the local language or know the local language, or they didn't have time to read the papers. They were very reluctant, both agencies, to give us information at post, even though we set up the committees at post, and they met then quarterly. Now they meet monthly, after the second attack on the World Trade Center. But they agreed that they would give us information through INR, and through the Tip-Off program, which was another exceptional program created by the Department of State, by the INR staff, John Arrisa being the director of that office, and they said they were comfortable giving us the information that way, but they didn't want to give it to us at post because FSNs worked in our section, and FSNs might know that they knew somebody was a terrorist. My position at that time was I didn't care how they gave it to us, as long as we got it and we could put it into the system. And they did give us names through INR, and I believed they were giving us everything, only to learn some years later, of course, that they were not giving us everything.

But that was what occupied me in the very early days of my time in CA, trying to get the automation right and trying to get the information right that would arm us to be able to protect the country.

Q: What about the FBI? Were they involved in supplying information?

RYAN: Yes, they were involved, through their legal attaché offices around the world. And Louis Freeh was running around the world like mad creating legal attaché offices everywhere. One of the things that I did early on, and I don't remember when, 1994 maybe, I don't remember exactly, was to bring in Greg Bujac, who was a very senior security officer, DS officer. He had been a consul general in Sydney, and when he came back from Sydney, I got him to come to us, amazingly enough. One of his jobs was to help us with the security of all of these things, because he was a security officer, very senior, of course, security officer, but a man with a tremendous personality, and just very warm, and everybody just took to him. I thought he would be very good as a liaison with the FBI, for, you know, whatever we could get from the FBI. And he stayed with us for about six months, and then when he left us he moved to be the principal DAS – the principal deputy assistant secretary in the bureau of diplomatic security. So he was very highly regarded by diplomatic security as well as by everybody else in the department. But the FBI was just a very difficult agency to deal with. We never really got friendly with them at all.

Q: Was there a real bureaucratic attitude problem, would you say?

RYAN: I would say yes. They disdained us, quite honestly. But for all of that, I did think they were giving us the information that we needed. I mean, I really did believe that, until it came out that we didn't have information that they had on a couple of the terrorists of the World Trade Center attack in 2001. But I had not realized how primitive their systems are until the 9/11 Commission held hearings fairly recently, within the last month or so – two months, with them, with their director. Their own systems don't talk to each other within the FBI, let alone can communicate with anybody else. Now I knew they wouldn't communicate with us, but I thought they were giving us the information through INR that we needed.

It turned out, to jump ahead, that the agency told us, the director himself told us personally, in a meeting that we had, my senior staff and I had with George Tenet and his senior staff, that they had given the FBI information on a couple of these people who were in the planes in January of 2000, and the FBI came to us with that information in August of 2001, by which time two of them had already been issued visas. They came to us with four names. One we had no record of, one we had refused, and two we had issued to. And of course they were already here by then. But back in '94 when I brought Greg in to try to get friendly with them, that failed. Not Greg's fault, because Greg Bujac could get friendly with anybody, I would have thought. But I thought they were giving us names to put in the system.

Q: Did we have by say '94 or so an intact worldwide electronic system that pretty well could take anything that came to it?

RYAN: Yes, we did, by then. It's better now, of course, because the technology improves all of the time – but for then, it was state-of-the-art, it was real-time, and just about every post was online with Washington.

Q: Well, were we having any problems because of this new system, of turning down people and getting outraged calls from the United States, either Congress or businesses?

RYAN: Well, what we got, frankly – that was the other thing that I did early on in my time in CA – what we got were a lot of complaints about how applicants were treated, and having been a consular officer myself a long time before I went back to CA, I could understand that, because at very busy posts, the people who applied were the applicants. The applicants – that's how we thought of them. And very often they were lined up around the embassy or the consulate before you came to work in the morning, and there were hundreds of them, and many of them had slept there the night before, and it's an overwhelming task to face that many people every day, and that's your job. And what I preached, and what I really meant, and was very serious about, was that we couldn't issue to everybody, obviously – some people were coming here to work, clearly. They were very much intending immigrants. But there was no reason for any person who applied for a visa to visit the United States or to come to the United States for any purpose to be demeaned in the process, and I preached that very hard and I meant that. And when I got complaints about how people were treated, I did go back to the post and to the chief of the section or to the consul general and say, "What happened here? How could this have been? What did we do? Are their allegations true?"

We got a lot of complaints in North Africa about one particular post, which unfortunately were true, and I do understand how easy it is to slip into that, because you are being lied to, clearly. People are desperate to come here, and they're desperate to come here because once they're here, it's very easy for them to find work and to slip below the radar and to stay forever. And ultimately to be able to adjust statuses and sooner or later bring their whole family with them. So, yes, I did understand that people were being lied to or people were lying, and you do get annoyed at that after a while. But to insult them…I had one complaint from a man, actually he was Libyan; he was a professor at a university in the Midwest. And he called, and I actually called him back, although I didn't really like to deal with the public that much because they were always so angry. But I called him back and spoke to him, because his brother had gone to a post in North Africa to apply for a visa, and his brother had been horribly treated. And the man himself had been there, sort of to vouch for his brother, and so it wasn't just the brother's story, it was the man's story as well – a professor who had been in the United States for 25 years. He had come on a student visa; he had met an American woman in college; they had gotten married; he had adjusted his status; he was now an American citizen. And the officer told him not only was his brother not getting a visa, because his brother was clearly an intending immigrant just like the man himself had been, but he was going to look into how he had adjusted his status with an eye toward having him deported from the United States after having been here for 20 years and perfectly respectable – married to the same woman that he had met in college, and all of this. So I was just horrified.

So we had those kinds of complaints. And even complaints from people in the department whose relatives were refused visas. And so I remember that, and I used to tell the

ambassadorial seminar, when I spoke to the prospective ambassadors, that we were not going issue to everybody; some people should be refused. But if the officer could not tell the ambassador, should the ambassador ask, why was Joe Smith refused a visa, if all the officer could say was "It's a bad case", I thought that was probably a bad refusal. Because you should be able to say, "He has nine children and he makes $30 a month, and so he's not going to Disney World." When I got a lot of calls from the Congress too about that, from senators and congressmen, sometimes personally, sometimes by their staff, about people who had been refused, if I went back to the post, and the post was able to tell me that, then obviously the congressmen and senators and the staff dropped it immediately. They were not pressuring us to issue visas; they wanted to know why, so they could go back to the constituent and say, "This is why your brother was refused" or your sister was refused.

But sometimes you would talk to your officers, junior officers primarily, who would say "It's a bad case." "Okay, why is it a bad case?" "It's just a bad case." It drove me insane. "But it's a 2146", which is a section of the law that says they're intending immigrants. Well, we all know 2146. The Congress also knows 2146. I can't go back to the Congress and say "2146". I have to have a reason. They often didn't have a reason.

Q: We all know that when you put a young, or sometimes middle-aged, consular officer on the line from somewhere else, some people just aren't suited to making judgments. One, they're not going to make it, some will say anybody goes, others say no, we won't. Others get really huffy; they've never been lied to before. I mean, there are all sorts of reasons. Most people do their job. It's a difficult job, but they do it well and thoroughly and fairly. But there are some people who are just not suited to do this. Were you able to take a look at how the system can weed these people out? Get them into something else, or get rid of them, or something?

RYAN: It's very difficult. Many of them, of course, are not consular officers to begin with, thank God, so that was not so much of a problem. Well, but of course in the beginning it was, because they all came in unconed for a period of time, which is one of the stupidest decisions that was ever made in the Foreign Service, in my judgment, to bring these people in unconed. So you didn't know whether they were going to end up as consular officers or not, and you didn't know whether they would be the bane of your existence forever or the cone's existence forever or not. Once they'd started to bring people in coned, it became easier, although of course in some cases people were not suited to consular work, or were not suited to NIV [non-immigrant visa] work.

It was hard for new officers to be lied to all the time. I used to tell the A-100 classes, "They're really not lying to you as Joe Smith or Jane Jones, they're lying to officialdom, because officialdom is what they have to lie to in their own countries to get anything. They couldn't tell the truth, because they're poor. So they're lying to you, but it's not <u>you</u>, it's just that's what they think they have to do. In some cases, if they had told you the truth, you might have issued. But you caught them out in a lie, and then of course there's nothing to be done." I did try to get officers not to make these people all 6-C, which is a

section of the law that says material misrepresentation. Just refuse them under 2146. They don't go, but their circumstances may change in years to come, and they may have enough money, and maybe then they could come here for a visit. But if you make them 6-C, then it's impossible. But 6-C was often used as a punishment, a punitive way by officers to say, "Well, you'll never get to the United States. You lied to me, so you'll never be able to come."

We did weed out some. It's very difficult not to tenure officers, because we never – and I don't mean we at consular, I mean we the Foreign Service – never write the EERs correctly. We never counsel people properly, or when we're supposed to, and so they're always able to grieve, and get more time, and then ultimately get tenure. Very few people were not tenured, as I remember it in my time in watching over consular officers.

Q: Well, talking about officers, particularly young officers, I would imagine one of your big problems would be how to staff, say, posts in Africa and some other countries where they only need one consular officer and they don't have senior people on whom to rely. I mean, the first tour consular officer is stuck with all the consular problems.

RYAN: That's very true, and that was certainly a problem, and probably still is a problem, because frequently the DCM, who would be the rating officer, was not consular him- or herself, and of course, didn't know anything about consular work. In some cases, they didn't want any problems, so just issue, was the attitude. But then, you know, we had e-mail by then, and I did a lot of traveling, particularly in the beginning. The first few years I was in CA I traveled everywhere I could, a lot, and I got to know people, and officers got to trust me, so that people would e-mail me about problems that they were having. Then I would be able to get the regional consular officer – which we had to oversee posts like that, where the officer was perhaps a first-tour officer or a second-tour officer who had not done consular work before and had nobody to appeal to – to get that much more experienced officer who was the regional consular officer for that area to go to visit the post immediately, if not faster, and to see what the problem was and then to report on it. And so we did a lot of, it was probably no more than band-aid fixes, but we did fixes like that. But e-mail is a godsend now, and everybody e-mails. When I first got into the job, junior officers I didn't even know were telling me how to do the job. Which I thought was quite nice of them, if you think about it. But there's no hesitancy. I would never have e-mailed, if we had had e-mail in my junior days, I would never have e-mailed an assistant secretary, in a million years.

Q: What about, on the protection and welfare side, what were the issues? Were there still the kids getting out there, picking up hashish and all that or had that era passed?

RYAN: That era had pretty much passed – that kind of thing. What we faced every spring break was somebody's child drinking to really horrible excess and dying – accidentally falling off a balcony or all kinds of horrible things like that. But we were still dealing with the Pan Am 103 families.

Q: Can you explain what that was?

RYAN: The Pan Am 103, of course, was the bombing of that plane in 1988 – December 21st, 1988 – by, we all believe, the Libyan government – an act of terrorism. There were a number of American citizens on board that plane and a number of students from Syracuse University on that plane were coming home from their semester in Europe where they were studying. So there were a lot of young people on the plane. And it was widely reported that there had been information given to the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration], that the FAA had passed to the department, that a plane was going to be bombed. And some embassies put that information on the bulletin board. As I remember it, and I didn't know it at the time, the information was something along the lines of "an unnamed American airline out of an unnamed European city in roughly the timeframe December 1st to January 31st" – something awful was going to happen. When that information became public, many of the relatives of people who died in that plane bombing believed that the government knew, the U.S. government knew that it was going to be that plane that was going to be bombed, and did nothing about it – in their minds as a payback for the Vincennes shoot-down, which was a U.S. Navy ship that had shot down an Iranian passenger plane by mistake. And they believed that, that we allowed that to happen as recompense. It defeats me, that kind of thinking, but that's what they thought. And so we were still dealing with that – the aftermath of that.

When we dedicated the little memorial at Arlington Cemetery, I went to that. I went to the anniversary of the fifth year of the bombing, at Trinity Church in Georgetown. The families were very hostile, and still very, very angry five years after the fact. It was not known throughout the U.S. government that any such threat information had been received, because I, myself, was on Pan Am 107 on December 21st, 1988, escorting home the bodies of two of my Peace Corps volunteers who had been killed in an accident. So, clearly I didn't know anything about it. And a lot of people didn't know anything about it. And there were U.S. government employees on that plane and there was a brother of a diplomatic security officer who was killed on that plane. So, it was not widely known, but people believed that. It was perhaps easier to be angry at the U.S. government than it was to be angry at the Libyan government, I don't know. So we were dealing with that.

We were dealing with spring break every year. We would sent out letters to every college president, asking them to tell their students how dangerous it was to do all of these wild things; how the law of the country applied to them, even though they were American citizens, so that if they were caught with drugs, they would be punished according to the law of the country they were in and that no one could get them off by saying they were American citizens. So we did all the stuff that people don't see us deal with all the time.

What was emerging at the time that I went into CA – or, at least, was emerging to me; maybe it was always there – were adoption issues and abduction issues. And we created the Office of Children's Issues in 1993 to deal with those issues, because that portfolio was becoming so gigantic that we just couldn't farm it out the way we had done it with the officers who had been doing, you know. We had Africa, for example, or we had

western Europe or this part of western Europe. It was too much, so we had to have an office all to itself to deal with children's issues.

Q: Can you explain what the adoption and children's issues were and where the problems were and how we dealt with them?

RYAN: The adoption issues were certainly difficult issues, but easier to deal with than abduction issues. Adoption issues were people who had, who wanted to adopt a child and for whatever reason, weren't adopting in the United States. They would look abroad to adopt children. Once the Soviet Union collapsed, there was a lot of interest in adopting children in eastern Europe and Russia. There was a lot of interest in adopting children from China, a lot of interest in adopting from Latin America.

What made these issues difficult for us is that in some cases – and particularly in Latin America – there was a great deal of fraud involved in adoption. In some cases, the children had actually been stolen from poor women and just given as eligible for adoption, when really there was some poor woman somewhere mourning the loss of her child. And one post, in particular, in Guatemala at that time, there was tremendous fraud, and they were very, very careful about how they investigated it. In Paraguay at the time, the same thing.

And so, you would have American citizen parents who in all good faith went to those countries to adopt a child, found a child that they believed was adoptable, fell in love with that child, bonded with that child, and then came to the embassy to get the visa – that's the last hurdle that they had to get over before they got on the plane with their precious, little baby – and we were the ones saying, "Wait a minute. There's a problem here." They went crazy, I mean, people went crazy, as you can imagine. If you have a child that is really your child at this point, even though all of the paperwork hasn't been finalized, but this is your baby, and you have some consular officers – some bureaucrat – telling you that, "Wait a minute now. We have to be sure that this is all on the up-and-up." And so that was one of the problems. That was a terrible problem. And that was one of the reasons for creating the Office of Children's Issues – to be able to deal with these poor souls who, in may cases, had to leave the child there, because they couldn't stay any longer (because they were running out of money) until all of this could be finalized.

I actually had a U.S. senator, whom I will never name, but who is still in the Senate, curse me over the phone because it had taken such a long time issuing a visa to a child that one of his constituents wanted to adopt, at a time when the fraud – the adoption fraud – in that particular country was sky-high; it was probably every case had some fraud connected with it that had to be investigated. They just didn't care. It was, "Oh, the child would have a much better life in the United States." And that's the end of it, as far as they were concerned. Materially, yes. But, you know, the poor mother; I could always think about the poor, impoverished mother whose child had been taken, and then the child having to grow up and whether she would bond with the American parents. And if the American parents would be wonderful to them, and the American parents would be wonderful to

them – I knew that. But it was not your mother. So, I used to worry about that.

Abduction issues were much, much harder. This was the case where a marriage had broken up. Usually the non-American parent, although he could – it was almost always the father; he could be an American citizen by this point – would take the child who was a dual national in the eyes of the other country, abroad without permission of the mother, sometimes in violation of custody orders that the mother had (or the other parent had), and take that child abroad. They're horrible cases, because really it's just spiteful. They were not thinking of what was best for the child. They were thinking of how much they could hurt the other parent. And they were just dreadful cases to deal with. The Hague Convention on International Parental Child Abduction – if the country were a signatory to The Hague Convention, it was easier, although it didn't always work. It was easier to get the child returned to the United States if it was determined that the child's habitual residence was the United States. And in the case of very little children, of course, that is the case. I mean, if the child's two years old and taken, then the child's habitual residence is the United States. And sometimes we were able to get the child returned – never very quick, but we were able to do it. In some cases, even with countries like Germany and Austria, which are allies of ours and are signatories to The Hague Convention, and you would think that it would be very easy to get children returned, we still were not able to…as far as I know. In two cases, one in Germany and one in Austria, we still don't have that child.

Q: There's a horrible case where the father is out of the scene…

RYAN: The case in Germany, there's a case of very little children who were taken to Germany by their mother. The marriage had broken up. The mother took them to Germany. The mother then had a mental breakdown. The mother was placed in an institution in Germany and the children were placed in foster care when they were very small. And the foster care parents were very good to them. There's no abuse or anything like that. But when the father, or actually the grandmother, realized what had happened, some years had passed, and the father and the grandmother tried to get the children returned, and it was clear that their habitual residence before all of this had happened, the Germans said that their habitual residence now was Germany, and so they had to stay in Germany. The children, of course, didn't want to go to the United States, because the children were settled and I'm sure they felt abandoned. It's a horrible case. It's just horrible. I testified at hearings on abduction and adoption and lots of interesting comments on these cases. And an attorney for not this particular family, but for another family came up to me afterwards and said to me something that is really true – it's not so nice, but it's really true. He said, "With them (meaning Germans and Austrians), it's all blood." These children had German blood, and in the other case, the child had Austrian blood. So, blood determines – not habitual residence, not best interest of the child, nothing. Blood.

And that is true, because when I went to Austria to negotiate on the other case, I felt really as if I hit my head for three solid hours with these Austrian Hague officials. This is

a case where the American father had done everything right under The Hague Convention. Everything. Absolutely everything right. And he was not able to get his child. And as far as I know – to this week – he still does not have his child. And this is a case where the Austrian mother took the child to Austria, and when it was determined in the first instance by the Austrian court that indeed the child's habitual residence was the United States, when the child welfare people went to the home to get the child in Austria, the grandfather held them off with a rifle while the mother and child went out the back door to disappear for 18 months. At which point, when they were finally found again, the Austrians said the child's habitual residence was Austria. Now, that's just wrong. And nothing happened, I mean, I asked them, "Did you prosecute the grandfather for holding these people at gunpoint?" "No, no, no, we couldn't do that." That poor man does not have his child. He needs to go through a psychological evaluation every year before they let him see his child. And, of course, the child is growing up to be certainly very distant from the father and not American at all – very Austrian. She speaks German; she doesn't speak English. The other children in Germany – now they're older perhaps… The Austrians said to me, "When she's a teenager, she'll want to go to the United States." And I said, "Well, it's too late, by the time she's a teenager." But probably that's true. And maybe, we hope, that when those little children belonging to that other family become older that maybe they'll want to come here too. But it's not a father-child relationship at all. And these cases are horrible. And nobody understands. In fact, Joel Mowbray, who writes all of these terrible articles about the department in his book, doesn't understand either.

Q: What's the book?

RYAN: Dangerous Diplomacy: How the State Department Threatens America's Security. They want to know why we just can't go and grab the children, you know, just take the children back. We're the United States of America. Well, it can't be very good for the children to kidnap the children back. They've already been taken once and uprooted horribly. But people don't understand that and neither does the Congress. I mean, I remember having a conversation with a congresswoman who kept saying, "But he's an American citizen." Yes, but he's also Syrian. It's very difficult. And if they're taken to the Middle East by their Muslim father, it is just about impossible to have them returned to what they consider the "infidel mother". Canada was able to negotiate agreements with a couple of countries in the Middle East, and we, about the time that I was leaving CA, were trying very hard to copy the Canadian agreements so that we could get agreements with these countries so that the mothers, at least, would have visitation rights to the child. Even if it were in Egypt or Syria.

Q: Well, in the Middle East, again, the only real solution is a kidnap on the part of the legitimate, usually the mother, who somehow or another gets hold of her kid and heads across the border.

RYAN: Yes, but it's so dangerous. And the people who are hired to do that can, of course, be arrested if they are Americans and can be jailed. One of my arguments with the

Japanese when I went so often to Tokyo to try to get them to agree to sign The Hague Convention, was that a child is going to be hurt in a case like this if you don't sign. And they would never sign for me; I don't know if they've signed now. Because the American father – most of the time it was the Japanese mother who took the child back to Japan – the American father sometimes would threaten to try to kidnap, and in one case there was a horrible scene where people had the child…one group of people pulled the child one way – actually physically, not theoretically – and the other people – the mother's relatives – were pulling the child the other way. Now what is this for this child? This is awful. And I used to tell the Japanese government that this is terrible. But they always thought that we would side with the American father against the Japanese mother, in every case, and so they didn't want to sign. But I don't think we would have if the father were wrong.

There's this case in Germany that I've only read about, where the whole family was living in Germany and then went to the United States; the marriage broke up; and the father brought the children back to Germany. And the American mother is trying to claim them, but the habitual residence of the children is Germany. And so, under The Hague, they belong in Germany. As difficult as that is for Americans to understand.

Q: Well, did you get involved in this case locally which has been going on where two highly educated people, I think maybe both were doctors, and the wife was claiming that the husband was molesting her daughter or something. And she took her off to New Zealand.

RYAN: I didn't deal with that case. That case was already done when I got into CA. But what happened is that that mother, the doctor, now advises other women on how to grab their children, or how to take their children abroad – improperly, in our judgment – and was advising a very notorious case that involved one of our colleagues who shall go unnamed.

Q: She was in the paper.

RYAN: Yes.

Q: She – I can't think of her name – but she's a foreign service officer.

RYAN: Her mother, her best friend alleged that the father was abusing the two boys. And she went – I don't know, God help her, whether she intended to kill him or what – but there was some relationship that we don't understand. Because I remember talking to her when she was in London. She had a very difficult assignment. In fact, we had to curtail her tour and bring her back to Washington. And I remember talking to her and she said, "You were making my friend sound like Svengali." And I said, "That's what it appears to us to be – that kind of a relationship." And really what we were trying to do was to get her to 50. She was in OCS [Overseas Citizens Services] and she was 48, something like that, and we were trying to get her to 50 so that she could retire.

Q: How about, this type of case, there's no answer for these things. The allegations are becoming more and more frequent that it's sexual harassment or…

RYAN: Sexual abuse.

Q: Sexual abuse, you know, pedophilia or something like that, which may or may not be true. But one gets very dubious about it, because it seems to be the weapon of choice.

RYAN: It is the weapon of choice. Let me say this right at the outset; I am not a parent. I have no children. So it's easy for me to sit in judgment. But I really believe that if the parents, the two parents, were not so anxious to hurt each other and were concerned about the child and the child's welfare, or the children's welfare, we wouldn't have so many of these horrible cases. Because the father takes the child abroad – in most cases it's the father – takes the child abroad, not because he wants to raise the child necessarily. He doesn't know how to take care of the child in most cases. He takes the child because that's the way he can most hurt the mother. The mother makes allegations of sexual abuse – and I'm sure maybe it happens, but I just can't imagine it's that prevalent – against the father to prevent his seeing his child, because that will be what hurts him the most, and that's what she wants. Both of them want to hurt each other as badly as they possibly can. Nobody's thinking of the child.

Q: Another area of problems and that is of malfeasance – basically payment for visas or taking money improperly. Economic officers don't get hit with this, but administrative officers can in a different way. But visas are a real commodity. Anybody, all of us who served in a particularly busy consular section are really concerned about people paying. I remember as consul general in Seoul, the Koreans paid money for anything. I didn't have a case that I know of, but I was worried all the time. You must have had a lot of this.

RYAN: We had some. We had, thank God, fewer than you would think – or at least that we knew of, fewer than you would think. Because as you say, visas are a commodity, and people will pay a great deal of money to get a visa. I would tell the entry classes, the A-100 classes, that if they never accepted anything whatsoever when they were in the visa section, then they could never be accused of taking anything for issuing the visa. And that meant even silly things that you would never be tempted by. Just say, "No, I'm not allowed to accept." Because people will want to give you things, and you shouldn't take them.

Q: Sometimes it's just they feel like somebody was nice to them.

RYAN: In Naples when I was doing visa work, people would give me cigarettes, or try to give me cigarettes. We had a wonderful consul general, Margaret Fagan. That's what she said, "Don't take anything." And so I never took anything. But we did have a major scandal in the visa section in Naples ongoing while I was there, but I didn't think we knew. I didn't know about it. And it came to light later after the officer left and went on to another post. But I would also tell the A-100 classes that you can't just sell one visa,

because you put yourself then into the hands of the person to whom you sold. And frequently it's not just one person who's offering you money; it's a ring. And they're going to follow you around. That happened in the case of one officer who issued, was selling to the Iranians, not in my time, and then went to a western European post where the Iranians didn't visit except once he got there, then they visited. And that's how he was found out. We did have some of this. It was always heartbreaking when it happens.

But we also had officers who were very brave. I always found out afterwards – because I never would have allowed it, I would have fought with DS about it – where officers set themselves up to do sting operations. One case in India and another case in Seoul – I can't remember – Seoul, I think – where the officer reported the attempt to bribe him or her (it was a man and a woman, both – the man in India and the woman in Korea) and we brought it to the RSO, the Regional Security Officer. And then the Regional Security Officer, in the case of India, asked the officer to play along and to tell the woman who was attempting to bribe him that he would do what she wanted. And it was only $6,000 a visa. But he wouldn't be able to explain that type of money; how would he get it home? What would he do with it? So she would have to give it to him in the United States. And she fell for that and flew to Houston to pay him off and was arrested, and so, quickly prosecuted in the United States. And I found out afterwards, well afterwards. I was very worried because I thought how dangerous this was for the officer. I mean, they love that, but you know.

Q: Oh sure [laughing].

RYAN: This is real spy stuff. But I'm thinking what the mother would think: "I don't want my son in the hands of these people. What if her associates get really angry and come after him?" In Korea – I think it was Korea – it was another Far East post, and the officer was Korean-American and wore a wire into a basement to lure somebody into admitting that…I mean, just terrifying things. So we had that. We had very terrific people. I mean, when you're a junior officer you're not making very much money. Somebody offers you $6,000 a visa; you can justify it in your own mind [words indistinct]. But one case in Prague that astounded me and still astounds me is an officer I knew, I liked, and who, in fact, e-mailed me a long e-mail where he chose not to be a consular officer because I had been nice to him and he thought I would be upset. He didn't want to be a consular officer; he decided to be a political officer instead, meanwhile selling visas in the section. He went to jail. I think about it…somebody that we know, you know – people like us – in federal prison. It kind of threw me. I can't conceive of what would make them do that.

Q: There's also the problem of more senior officers – I'm talking about male officers – falling for what we commonly know as the "honey trap". Or, you know, getting involved for sexual favors and all this. Was this a problem?

RYAN: It was a problem when I first went into CA. We had two back-to-back cases at a Far Eastern post. One man was brought up on criminal charges but was acquitted. The

other one just left, and DS did not pursue him. It may continue to go on. Not that I was aware of. Those cases were very well publicized. Perhaps if people were thinking like that, it might have frightened them. Although I was told by somebody I know who is a consular officer in a Far Eastern post right now that she's grieved against because she and her boss, the chief of the section, recommended that this officer not be tenured. And he's grieving against them. But he propositioned a relative of somebody high up in that particular government – on the visa line he propositioned her. And so, of course, she told her relative and the relative, of course, told the two officers. Wouldn't you think he would just slink away, rather than grieve to stay?

Q: It's almost as if there's not a conscience.

RYAN: Exactly.

Q: How about your relationship with, Diplomatic Security DS?

RYAN: I've had a very good relationship with DS, although at the end another malfeasance, or alleged malfeasance case at a Middle Eastern post, coming right on the heels of all of the revelations about visas for the Saudis and the 19 highjackers, that had the secretary beside himself with rage. I mean, I was the only woman in the room when he was yelling his head off about this particular case, and I remember thinking…the poor man, he struggled so hard not to be profane.

This was Colin Powell. He struggled so hard not to be profane that it was actually painful for me to see him struggle that hard not to be profane so that he wouldn't, I don't know, embarrass me. Because my deputy, George Lannon, told me the next day when I wasn't there that he didn't struggle at all [laughing]. But there was a man picked up here in the United States, a Middle Easterner, picked up when we were rounding up all Arab men, it seemed to me. And his father alleged that he had paid $10,000 to get his son a visa at this particular post. And when we looked into it, it seemed as if there were cases where one would be hard pressed to understand how or why this particular person was issued a visa. The FSN was fired. The officer, who was first- or second-tour, was investigated up one side and down the other, and the DS was never able to show…I mean, if he took money, where did it go? There was nothing. They went through all of his household effects when he shipped back here. They went through every bank account. There was no money. And so they were not able to prove that he had done anything wrong. And senior officers supported him from the area, the regional consular officer, for example, told me that they did not believe that he did anything – that he took the money. It seems that what he must have done as a first-tour officer in a post without any senior consular leadership was to be too trusting of the FSN and perhaps gave her his log-on, who knows?

Q: When you say, "gave her his log-on" that would be…

RYAN: That would be the way that an FSN could get into the system to authorize the issuance of a visa, which they're not able to do unless you go away from your machine –

your monitor – and you have it on and you're logged onto it. They could get into it that way and go through it. Or [indistinct] all day, but something that you give her. I mean, I can see how you could do it. I was fortunate, if you can say fortunate, in Naples – my first post – because we were very, very friendly with the FSNs and they were just all like us – all young and everything. But we had a major scandal while I was there of five FSNs – in fact, one senior FSN and four of them were junior FSNs – who were selling visas, and they were found out and all of them fired. And it was a revelation to me that people that you liked, and whose home you were in, who came to your home, could do this kind of thing. So, I thought it was a good lesson for a first-tour officer to learn not to trust everybody so implicitly that you give away the store. But that's what we think must have happened in this case, because it did seem as if visas had been sold. But this person whose father said he had paid $10,000 for a visa, I don't think was a terrorist, but he was just [indistinct] when we were doing that. So, it happens. It breaks your heart, particularly if you know the officer, when it happens, but I don't think it's terribly prevalent. I mean, there are probably cases that we don't know about right now, but you know, people are prosecuted. I mean, there is not forgiveness for this kind of thing anymore.

Q: Well, was there real emphasis on the A-100 course, you know constant CONGEN advice on "watch out for this sort of thing"?

RYAN: Yes, there was in CONGEN. I mean, I talk to them in A-100, but it's not as good as having, you know, very talented consular officers who run CONGEN – which I really believe is the best functional training that we give – tell them these kinds of things. And yes, they are told. And they are told that they will be approached and that they might even be tempted. And you know, there's role-playing, there's games, there's things like that, yes. Nobody can say, "Gee I didn't think this would happen to me." or "I didn't know it was wrong to take the money." Nobody can say that.

Q: Is there anything else before we move up to 9/11 that you can think of? Any passport problems? Citizenship problems?

RYAN: Well, there was one horrible citizenship problem which predated, thank God, my time in CA. But we had documented the Bangladeshi ambassador's daughter as an American citizen with an American passport at a time when he was at the UN in diplomatic status. Somehow or other, going back to like 1978 or something like that, the passport agency had missed checking the blue book.

Q: The blue book being the diplomats list.

RYAN: And a diplomat's child born in the United States is not an American citizen.

Q: However, consular officers…

RYAN: Consular officers, yes.

Q: My daughter was born in Saudi Arabia and at one point, up to the age of 18, had claimed a Saudi citizenship.

RYAN: We had documented her as an American citizen, with a passport. And, in fact, I think she had had two passports and when she applied for the third one, somebody did check – and this happened while I was there – that she was not an American and should not have been documented, and we explained all of this to her father, who was very upset. And he went to a very senior Republican congressman – somebody I had very good relationships with, I like very much; he's no longer in Congress, but I never had any trouble with the man when he called about visas; he was never unpleasant, he never pressured me. I mean, I really liked him, testified before his committees and everything. But he was really upset that we had done this. The father told the congressman that the child was now – well, she was a grown-up child, 20, 21 – she was now stateless. Well, you know, for pity's sake. She had a Bangladeshi passport, in which we had issued her an A (diplomatic) visa. So she was hardly stateless.

But Doris Meissner, who was then the INS commissioner, and I had to go up to the congressman's office and explain all of this to the congressman and to the ambassador and to this daughter, and I, of course, apologized all over the place. I practically got down on my knees and begged their forgiveness for this. And Doris figured out some way that we could put her on a fast track to a green card, which is really what they wanted. She wanted to stay in the United States. She had been educated here, and she didn't want to go back to Bangladesh, and so Doris figured out some way of doing that, and promised to do that, and then that was fine. The father was still annoyed that she wasn't an American citizen, but it was fixed. And the congressman was gracious about it in the end; he was very upset about it at first. So, there was that.

When I would travel to the passport agencies around our country, I would always visit the fraud operation, or anti-fraud operation I should say, and I was so impressed with what they caught at fraud. Just amazing, amazing work by, you know, just passport processors. Once in Philadelphia, the anti-fraud officer showed me a case where the passport officer on the window just had a funny feeling about this man – nothing more than a funny feeling. You know, the volume of people that come in, you know. And so she had given it to the anti-fraud officer and he had investigated it, and it took...he was an American citizen; it wasn't that he was non-American, but he was an American citizen who was trying to get a passport in a deceased identity. You know, having gone to a cemetery and found a name of somebody who was around his age, and using that to try to document himself. He was a criminal. But this woman on the window, just something was wrong with the case. She couldn't tell you what was wrong, she just had a funny feeling about this. This happens all the time, all over the place. They have Nigerians pretending to be born in Alabama; that's a little bit easier to figure out.

DS. When you asked me about our relationship with DS, and I got off onto the story about the secretary. DS was – is, as far as I know – the only law enforcement agency which takes visa fraud and passport fraud seriously. They will always try to get the U.S.

attorney – this is before 9/11 – to prosecute those cases. And the U.S. attorneys at that time, before 9/11, were not at all interested; it wasn't a big enough case. If they had done something else wrong, they would add it, but it wasn't important enough. What I started to tell you about the relationship with DS that I thought was so good was that my senior DAS would meet with DS and OIG [Office of the Inspector General] regularly to be briefed on cases that they believed to be malfeasance, so that we would have a heads-up that something horrible was going on in Prague.

But in this case of the Middle East post, where the secretary was so furious, and I was stunned because I didn't know anything about it – it was after 9/11, it was July; maybe it's what decided them to get rid of me, I don't know – I didn't know anything about this case. And DS had sent us a memorandum that, had sent the visa DAS a memorandum in December, I think, and this was like June or July – this was after September 11th – and the visa DAS had not told either George Lannon, my senior deputy, or me about it, because he didn't think it was important. And so, here we have this allegation of more Middle Eastern people, they issued visas, in this case having paid $10,000 a visa, and lots of visas – that was the allegation at the time – lots of visas being issued, and I was sitting in the secretary's office feeling sorry for him, trying to…trying not to be profane, and feeling sorry for myself. I thought, "How is it possible I don't know about this?" You know, I must have looked like a moron. But there were allegations. I don't know what ever came of that case, except that I do know that they were not able to bring charges against the American officer, because there was no proof that he had done anything wrong. But they were going to do this [indistinct], poor soul, and he probably didn't do anything wrong except maybe trust the FSN too much.

Q: Well then, you ran into a buzz saw in the 9/11 – this is the World Trade Center – about visas issued to most of the perpetrators.

RYAN: Every one of them had a visa – a validly issued visa to enter the United States. Some of them had overstayed their visa. But, in every case, there was no fraud involved, well, no fraud except they were lying to us. But, they didn't pretend to have a visa or they didn't create a visa wash – a machine that you could use to put a visa in.

Q: No, these were straightforward cases.

RYAN: These were straightforward cases, where the people came in – in some cases actually appeared before us, were interviewed (third country cases, like the ones in Berlin), and were issued. In the case of Saudi Arabia, one of them, at least one of them was interviewed, but most of them were not, because we were not interviewing Saudis at that time, because Saudis respected our immigration laws and they were not intending immigrants, and we, I certainly, placed all my confidence in our automated system, our class system, believing right up until the time that George Tenet himself told us, that they had had some information about some of them, a couple of them, that they had and that the FBI had, there was nothing to us. I believed we were getting everything that anybody had on anyone who shouldn't get a visa. We had at that time a consolidated consular

database, where we were able to call up the actual visa that had been issued, and look at the picture, and look at the visa notes that the officer may have made on the – oh God, I can't even think of the name of it, the number of the form now – but we were able to do that. And actually I think it was our pictures that the FBI went with when they put the pictures into the paper. What I knew, what I fortunately knew almost immediately, when there was so much information in the newspapers and the media about these men, was that some part of our government had information on them that was not given to us. And that was, to me, easily apparent. Because how else would you know who would have done this? How would you know who did it? And I actually thought that perhaps it was an FBI agent on planes following them. But then I thought, "Well, no, they probably would be at the destination points to pick them up to follow them." And what I believe, still, to my dying day, is that we were not told about the ones they knew about, because they wanted them in the country, because they wanted to follow them, they wanted to build a case, they wanted to prosecute them here. I will always believe that. I mean, I have no proof of that, and the FBI will deny that, and I'm sure the CIA will deny it, but that's what I believe based on my experience of building cases of visa fixes, in which I have experience with them wanting them to come here so they could be arrested here and be prosecuted here so we could be sure we could punish them here – not let them walk away from it in some foreign country. I will always believe that, because the FBI, as usual, overestimated its ability to protect the country.

Q: What was your immediate reaction in CA after this happened?

RYAN: Well, the immediate reaction was that we went out and told everybody not to destroy any visa applications; routinely they're destroyed after a year. We told them to keep all the NIV applications; we told them to review their procedures. We didn't tell them to change their procedures, because I didn't think there was really anything wrong with the procedures. But I wanted to make sure that we were – you know, that consuls general – were paying attention to what was going on. We then created the first visas condor, where there would be a delay in issuing to people deemed issuable, because the FBI wanted to look up their names in their database. I had argued that it would have been simpler if the FBI gave us the names, and we put them into our database so that then we would know, right at the post, if we had a terrorist in front of us, coming into our section. I thought it would be very useful to know that, given what happened with the 1998 bombings of our embassies in Africa. But the FBI wanted us to delay people. I came to believe, perhaps mistakenly, that they don't have anything – that they just want names of people – that they don't have a database that they're checking them against. That's why they wouldn't give them to us. They just wanted to build a database. The same thing with a U.S. visit; why are we fingerprinting and photographing everyone who comes to this country but to build databases, not to have them already. I'm angry now still that we, I at least, was so misled by the whole visa viper program.

Q: I think you'd better explain when you say visas viper and visas condor, what do you mean by these?

RYAN: Well, the visas viper program, which I talked about a little bit earlier, was the program that we instituted right after the first attack on the World Trade Center, where the CIA and the FBI, who would develop information about bad guys at post, would give us that information, either through the, at the time, quarterly – now monthly – meetings of the visa viper committee, or through INR if they were uncomfortable with giving us the information at post. So, that was visas viper, where we believed that we were getting everything that they had on people who should not be issued visas. Visas condor was what we did right after 9/11, which was to delay people who we deemed issuable, where we sent their names back to the FBI for the FBI to check their names against their own database.

Q: Were allegations coming out, were you getting within the department, outside the department, "Wow. These State Department visa officers issued these visas and they should have known better or something?"

RYAN: That built. That was not what happened immediately. In fact, that really didn't happen until Joel Mowbray was leaked a lot of information from somebody in CA.

Q: Who was he?

RYAN: Joel Mowbray was a writer for National Review online at the time – conservative, anti-Arab – and was given information, incorrect information, about what was unfortunately called in Saudi Arabia Visas Express. That was created about a year before 9/11, a year-and-a-half perhaps, where we didn't interview every Saudi who applied for a visa. We interviewed student visa applicants; we interviewed some other people. But people who were applying for B-2 visas…

Q: This is…

RYAN: Tourist visas, were not routinely interviewed. This was done as a security measure for the embassy and the consulates, because the RSOs were concerned that we had so many people waiting in these rooms, or thinking about people who were on the street, who were milling around. There was potential for danger to them, being on the street. Potential for danger to us if they got too mad about standing in 110 degree weather. So we worked out this procedure where we would not interview them. What happened was, through travel agents, they would apply for a visa. The travel agents would be carefully vetted by both us and by the regional security officer, and if deemed worthy would be enrolled in this program. Their clients would not necessarily be interviewed, but could be interviewed if we had wanted to interview them. And all things being equal, we would issue to them. It was alleged that the travel agents were making our visa decisions. It was alleged that there was no check whatsoever. Every name of every one of those 19 terrorists was run through CLASS, which is the consolidated lookout system; the class lookout system. And we had no information on any of them. That's the truth of it, but that didn't matter, because Mowbray went with this story that we were letting travel agents issue visas, that we didn't check anything, that we didn't want to hurt the Saudis' feelings

so that every Saudi was believed to be "a good bet" – just all sorts of very, very inaccurate allegations made by him, with no regard whatsoever to the truth. He never asked to talk to me or anybody in the visa office, that I know of, who could have set him straight on this very disgruntled and very unsuccessful and very unhappy person in the bureau, having nothing to do with visas.

Q: Did you know who it was?

RYAN: No, not who it was. In my own mind, I'm 100% sure. He had not told me that he did it, but one of the front office staff, one of the secretaries heard him boasting about bringing us down, bringing me down, outside the D Street entrance one day. And she came back…and it fit with what I believed, so I believed it for sure. Not even a foreign service officer – nothing to do with visas. In a completely different division of CA. And the allegation was made that I created a culture of courtesy around the world, as if this was something reprehensible. And I intend to use that at the particular judgment, just in case God has forgotten that I did one thing right in my life, which was to make sure that visa applicants were not demeaned in the process of applying for a visa. I wouldn't have called it a culture of courtesy necessarily, but that's fine with me, because I did do that. And I am proud of that, because I don't think anybody should be demeaned in the process of trying to come to our country. They're complimenting us by applying really.

Q: Well, after the 9/11 did the secretary talk to you, I mean, meet with you thereafter?

RYAN: There were a lot of meetings. I talked to Grant a lot about it.

Q: Grant being?

RYAN: Grant being Grant Green, the undersecretary for management. They were all great supporters until the articles just got so many and human pride became so great. I mean, they could have told me to go right away, and they didn't. And to be very honest, since this is all history, I was trying to decide in my own mind whether to go or to stay, and not to resign because of the visas that were issued, but to resign, or to retire, because of the way that we were treating people in the Middle East. I just deplored what we were doing to people that we believed were issuable – people that we had known, people who had had previous visas, people who came in to renew their expiring 10-year visa. I disagreed with the policy completely. And I spent all of July 5th in church. I took July 5th off, the day after the fourth; it was a Friday. I spent just about all day in church, praying for guidance about what to do – whether to go because I was in such disagreement with this policy, or whether to stay and to try to protect consular officers from this, all of these outrageous allegations that were being made. And July 9th was when Grant told me that they wanted me to retire. And so I took that as an answer to prayer.

Q: Well, had the secretary talked to you at all about this?

RYAN: No. The secretary never talked to me about it.

Q: Because I always felt that this was a real dereliction of duty on his part, to when the heat got too tough not to stand up for his people. There's something that rankles, I might add, with most of my foreign service colleagues.

RYAN: What I thought was that he should have told me he wanted me to go. I was at the time the highest ranking officer, career officer, in the State Department – the equivalent of a four-star. And I thought we had a very good relationship. We had worked very closely on the Mexico migration issues. You know, I saw more of him than I saw of any secretary. And I thought he should have told me that he wanted me to go – that it was just too much heat for him to take. And fair enough, it was just horrible. There was an awful lot of heat. It was just awful. But then…and I think it was Ruth Davis – I mean, Ruth Davis was the one who asked me to do it.

Q: She was the director general.

RYAN: Ruth Davis was the director general. And she had been my principal DAS, deputy assistant secretary, at one point during my time in CA, and I loved Ruth Davis. And I would do just about anything Ruth Davis asked. And I think, looking back on it, she probably asked the secretary too, and he probably felt the same way. She asked me to participate in this ceremony in the secretary's office where he would give me the distinguished honor award, or whatever he gave me, you know, and say nice things, and my friends could be there. You know, so it wasn't like sneaking out of the department. I wanted to say no, and I probably would have said no to anybody else who asked, but I said yes. And I think probably the secretary didn't want to do it either, but he said yes because Ruth asked him. And it was a very nice ceremony. It was October 2nd; it was the day after I retired. Or two days. Day after my birthday. Two days after I retired, September 30th. And it was lovely. They had people I knew, people I was very friendly with. They didn't ask people from outside to come, but they did ask people inside to come. And the secretary said lovely things about me, and I said lovely things about my career. I think he must have too. I felt like a hypocrite.

Q: Well, did you feel at the time that you were the "fall guy"?

RYAN: Yes, I did feel that I was the "fall guy". And fair enough. It's like what poor Rumsfeld is going through right now. Maybe I should have resigned right away after September 11th. I just didn't feel that it was our fault – my fault, or the fault of anybody in the Bureau of Consular Affairs, or by extension, any consular officer. I really felt the fault was with intelligence and law enforcement communities, agencies, that should have given us information.

Q: Was anybody putting forward the case that, if you have as we do, maybe a 30-second up to a four-minute interview with somebody, that somehow you'll understand that they're a terrorist or not?

RYAN: We tried to make that clear in all the meetings that took place in the immediate aftermath of September 11th – the homeland security meetings when Governor Ridge was not, of course, the secretary; he was just the advisor for homeland security, and I have the highest regard for him; he's a very good man, probably too good for Washington. But General Downing, who was the number two at the time said that he didn't understand how we just couldn't "suss" them out in the interview. And we tried to explain to them what a visa interview was like, when you have hundreds of people waiting in line, or hundreds of applications in front of you, that you would never – I mean, unless the person breaks down and tells you, because they're not very good terrorists. We ask them on the form, "Do you belong to a terrorist organization?" And everybody says no if they understand the question. When they say yes, you know that they don't understand the question. And so that let the FBI prosecute people for lying to us if they couldn't get them on any other grounds. But we can't possibly, nobody could possibly uncover a terrorist – not these kinds of terrorists, who were very sophisticated and very committed – in a visa interview. And to my knowledge, to my knowledge, to this minute, no one has been uncovered as a terrorist either by an officer interviewing them or by sending their names back to the FBI. The FBI sometimes never answers about these people, so they're never issued to, but they have never refused anyone on terrorism grounds.

Q: Were there any particular people who were picking on you during the time you were in there – either in Congress or in the press, going after you?

RYAN: Mostly Mowbray. I testified in the immediate aftermath of September 11th, in October of 2001, frequently. Maybe it was October, November. It seemed to me like I was up there all the time – first with the Senate and then with the House. People were critical, and people in some cases were very sarcastic, but nobody attacked me, or even us, particularly the House side, I mean. The Senate side was Senator Brownback and Senator Kennedy, who did understand everything, and whose hearings were in comparison to the House, very nice. There were no attacks. There were efforts to get at information, or to get information.

And it was at that hearing, the first hearing with Senator Brownback and Senator Kennedy, where I said that this was either a colossal intelligence failure or a failure to share information – which is what it was, in my mind, even now. And that was in a 9/11 hearing what the former commissioner of customs, Rob Bonner, who's now in homeland security, what he said when one of the commissioners said, "Nobody had lost their jobs." and Bonner said, "All except for Mary Ryan, but she lost it because she said it was a colossal intelligence failure." Which I thought was interesting, because I didn't know that.

At the time it was alleged that they all came in on student visas, and they hadn't. Only one had been admitted as a student. He should have had a student visa; the post made a mistake and issued him a B-2. But INS recognized that we had made a mistake and admitted him as a student. But that was before there were hearings before the House Education Committee. People really didn't understand anything.

And that's when it became obvious that they were very upset that there were so many schools accredited by the INS to issue I-20s, and they were very angry about that. But they forgot that they wanted those schools in those districts. And they also forgot that it was their law that said that INS had to clear planeloads in 45 minutes. And Commissioner Ziegler had that great satisfaction of, when the congresswoman said, "Well, whose idea was that?" of saying, "Yours." Which was one of the moments of tremendous satisfaction to me at a hearing before Congress, because your role is always to look stupid and apologetic – like you don't know what you're doing. And they were very angry about that: "Forty-five minutes? That's ridiculous. You couldn't possibly clear them properly." Well, change the law then.

But no, I didn't feel that anybody was attacking me personally or even attacking me as the assistant secretary for consular affairs. Of course they were angry that these people had been issued visas; they were angry that we didn't figure it out that they were all terrorists; they were angry that they had overstayed and that INS hadn't found them; those kinds of things. But they were more angry at the system than they were at individual people.

Q: Well, for many of us who have been in the trade, looking at this, retired foreign service and all, we can't help coming up with, one person was asked to resign out of the entire bloody government, when very obviously, the real problem for anybody who knows this was, as you said, somehow or another, the intelligence. Maybe we didn't have the intelligence, maybe it wasn't "gettable", but intelligence didn't get it and intelligence wasn't shared. And nobody from the CIA, nobody from the FBI, nobody from the National Security Council left. Only you were asked. This rankles.

RYAN: It's always easy to go after the State Department. They'll never go after the intelligence or law enforcement – particularly not the FBI. One of my colleagues said that's because the FBI has photographs. I mean, I thought that was hilarious. But it's always easier to go after us than it is to go after anybody else, because everybody else has protection and we have no constituency.

Q: Well, moving ahead to just recently. We've had a commission that was working on the September 11th events and what happened to it, led by Lee Hamilton. It's actually an independent investigation; it's still ongoing. But how were you treated on this?

RYAN: Chris Kojm, who was a colleague from INR, who is now the deputy executive director of the commission, called me one day to say that they wanted to interview me. The staff wanted to interview me. And he told me that I would be expected to testify publicly. And I, quite frankly, begged him not to have to testify publicly. And he said that basically there was just no choice – that I would have to do that. And I was very worried about it, because of the experience that I had in leaving the department – and granted, the secretary was very gracious when he gave me the award and everything – but it was really awful. It was really horrible. And I was afraid again. I mean, I was not afraid testifying in the aftermath of September 11th, when I was still at the department. But I was very afraid

of testifying not being in the department, you know, not sort of having the protection of the department around me. And I didn't want to testify. I mean, I didn't mind being interviewed, but I didn't want to testify. But Chris said that I had to testify.

I talked to Catherine Brown first, who was the L/CA [in the Legal Advisor's Office, responsible to CA issues] attorney in the legal advisor's office, and Catherine referred me to Jamie Borek, who is another colleague and friend who was handling all of this. And so I spoke to Jamie, and Jamie came with me when I was interviewed by the staff. And I was interviewed for five hours on two separate occasions by staff who were, I would have to say, extremely professional and very, very correct. They were not at all sarcastic. If I didn't remember, they didn't say, "Oh, you don't remember very much." or "How could you have forgotten that?" or "Didn't this." They were very good. They asked a lot of probing questions. In some cases, it was obvious that they weren't really satisfied with the way we did things, or how we handled things – but they were not sarcastic, not like congressional staff at all. They were very, very professional and very correct. I did get my own attorney.

Q: Why would you need an attorney?

RYAN: I thought I needed an attorney because I wasn't sure what was going to happen to me, and if I was going to be blamed. I trust Jamie, but Jamie is the Department's attorney, and if there's a choice between her loyalty to the Department or her loyalty to me, her loyalty's going rightfully to the Department. And so I thought I needed an attorney to advise me about what to do, how to do it. And I got this wonderful attorney, who was very helpful. He didn't come with me to any of the interviews, but he was there at the hearing – just for moral support.

At the hearing Doris Meissner and I testified together.

Q: She was the head of INS.

RYAN: She was head of INS. Doris and I had similar remembrances, similar memories of things, which was very handy. And we had often testified in the past together, so I was grateful that both of us were being examined at the same time. I expected the commissioners to be as professional and as correct as the staff were, because usually the staff takes its cue from its principals. And if the principals are professional, then the staff is. But if the principals are going to be horrible, usually the staff is horrible. That is my experience always with congressional committees. You know, Senator Kennedy's staff was always professional, and so was Senator Kennedy. Senator Brownback's staff was always professional. Senator Simpson's staff was always professional. But other people's staffs were not, and so, neither were they. And so, that's what I expected. I did not expect the grandstanding that went on by all the commissioners.

But as I said, it was very bipartisan. Both Democrats and Republicans beat me up terribly at that hearing: that we should have known that all Saudis were security risks to the

United States, threats to the United States; how could we have been so stupid as to issue to these people? How come we didn't know that they were bad? Mr. Lehman, who thinks he knows a great deal more about consular work and consular offices than he really does know, went into a big discussion about how consular offices are looked down on and they're not as good as other people in the department. And I told him that I think consular officers are the best people in the U.S. government. I said that to Mr. Fielding when he said, "Maybe we should move visas to homeland security." Well, that's absurd. I didn't say that to him. But I said, "Consular officers, State Department officers, consular officers are the best in the Department. Why would you do that?"

Senator Kerrey…I never understood the question that Senator Kerrey was trying to ask me. And my lawyer said afterwards that that was because I had a logical mind, which I was actually thrilled about, because nobody had ever said that to me before. But what I understood from…he kept saying, "Did the President tell you?" Well, the President doesn't talk to an assistant secretary. I mean, the President? The President? I'm lucky if the secretary talks to me. And I said to him, "What do you mean Senator – commissioner, whatever we called him – that we shouldn't have issued to any Muslims?" And then he got angry, because that, of course, is what he did mean, but he didn't want that out. But there's this very anti-Muslim, anti-Arab attitude in this country and in this government – in parts of this government now – which I really think is un-American and which I really deplore.

Q: Well, we've had a real problem in that we're destroying what has been our greatest asset.

RYAN: Yes.

Q: And it comes right through the visa process and that is, visitors to the United States, exchange and students. And we have a tremendous asset in the Middle East, and we've destroyed it. And we're going to be feeling the repercussions.

RYAN: It will be a generation. One of my colleagues was the consul general in Paris and is now retired. Her husband is a diplomat-in-residence at the University of Oklahoma and they have a course of study called petroleum studies, which was primarily filled by people from the Middle East studying petroleum. They don't have that program now; it's dropped to practically nothing, because people are not coming. They're either deciding that it's too much trouble to try to get a visa to come here and then be exposed to what they think they'll be exposed to in this country, or we are delaying them so much that they lose their course of study. It's too late for them to come. That, coupled with the revelations about the mistreatment and abuse of Iraqi prisoners by our own people, I don't know what we're doing. We're not creating good will, or certainly we're not creating a democracy.

Q: Well, we're going through a disastrous period of American foreign relations.

RYAN: Avery Dulles, who is a Jesuit and son of the former secretary of state, wrote in a recent issue of America magazine about the 20th century, the extraordinary brutality of the 20th century was caused in large part, in his judgment, by the lack of recognition of the inherent value of every human being. And I would say, not just the 20th century. I would say that that's, frankly, what we're doing today by demonizing a whole group of people – either all Muslims or all Arabs – because of what 19 people did to us. Or what other people of that persuasion may want to do to us, or may be planning to do to us. But we can't judge, we shouldn't judge, all people by the crimes and sins of a few, and that's what we're doing.

Q: Well did you feel from listening and hearing and receiving the attacks or whatever it is from the 9/11 Commission that the demonizing of the Arab or Muslim world was in full swing?

RYAN: Oh yes. It's in full swing. Yes. Even the Democrats. Yes, yes. We'll just keep all of them out, and hold in some way, everybody who's here. It's so un-American. It's painful to me.

Q: Were you ever tempted during the hearing, "I kind of resented being the one person picked out when we had this intelligence failure and all. I was doing my job. And all of a sudden, I was the one person who essentially was asked to leave – out of the entire government."

RYAN: No, I didn't think that. I'll tell you truth. I prayed a lot when they first told me they wanted me to go, that I wouldn't go crazy because of it. Because you could go crazy thinking, "It's not my fault. Why am I being blamed? Why am I taking the fall for the whole U.S. government?" which is what I thought. And I did pray that I wouldn't go crazy – that I wouldn't spend the rest of my life reliving all of this. And thank God, that prayer was answered. The prayer to win the lottery was not answered. But the prayer not to go crazy was answered.

Q: All of us have seen too many people who have often a just grievance. They've been picked on in a system that didn't treat them well, and this becomes an obsession. How have you kind of de-obsessionized yourself?

RYAN: Well, as I said, I did pray really hard that I would not go crazy – that I would not let this become an obsession with me. I joined the Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps, which is a Jesuit-run organization for people over 50 who want to work with the poor, and so I tutor children they call "at risk" – they're "at risk" because they're poor – twice a week. And then I enrolled in a program at Trinity College to study theology and scripture. So I'm keeping busy that way. The Department of State and the Foreign Service, and particularly CA, were my life for so long – that was all I did was work; I didn't do anything else; I didn't know anybody else except for people in the Department. But I never looked back. I miss people. I don't miss the work. I don't miss going into CA every day. I'm getting a chance to live the second half of my life.

When I was in college, I majored in theology, as well as in political science, and of course, went for the political science route. Got my masters in international relations. Came into the department. Adored the department, loved the Foreign Service, had a wonderful career. Now I'm able to go back and do the other thing that I didn't do, which is to study theology. I mean, I'm so blessed; I'm so grateful that I have this chance to do this while I still have my mind and enough money and enough, you know, health to be able to do it. It's just a great gift.

Q: How have you found…did you receive much support from your friends and your colleagues in the Foreign Service after this or did you find yourself…

RYAN: No, the support was overwhelming. I answered over 900 e-mails in the time that I was in that sort of limbo period where they told me to go and I was in the process of going. I heard from seventh floor colleagues, I heard from people who had retired whom I had admired – George Vest, Ron Spiers, people like that. I thought the support was overwhelming. It was everybody from first-tour officers that I had met on trips that I had made and really didn't know, to people I had worked with for the better part of 30 years, or 35 years. The service was fabulous to me.

Q: Great. Well, I think we'll end on that note.

RYAN: Good. That's a high note.

Q: This is an addition to the interviews we've been having with Mary Ryan regarding her experiences, since something didn't come out too well on that last tape – I don't think it recorded well. And so Mary, I'm going to turn it over to you to explain what you want to explain.

RYAN: Thank you, Stu, I appreciate the extra time that you're giving me. I wanted to talk to you about the efforts that we made at the beginning of 2001 to develop a guest worker program for Mexico and to regularize those undocumented Mexican workers who are in this country.

Q. When did you start this?

RYAN: This was right after the beginning of the year.

Q. What year?

RYAN: 2001. Secretary Powell invited the President who was making his first trip abroad out of the country, President Bush, as President of the United States. He was going to Mexico and Secretary Powell invited him to come to be briefed by Mexican desk officers of the Desk Offices for Mexico. I was in that meeting. The President was very knowledgeable about Mexico and I thought very sympathetic to the problems that

Mexican undocumented workers have in this country. And when he went to Mexico and met with President Fox they decided that they were going to have a guest worker program for Mexico and that the undocumented Mexican workers in this country would be regularized and that they would be given documentation.

And so CA had the lead role along with WHA in developing both the guest worker program and some means of regularizing the Mexicans who were here. We use the word undocumented because that was the word the Mexicans preferred other than illegal because they said people can't be illegal. People might do illegal things but to describe them as illegal was pejorative. George Lannon was my PDAS, my principal deputy assistant secretary at the time and Steve Fischel who was a lawyer in the visa office, together with their Mexican counterparts really worked very, very hard on this program.

We thought we had come up with a very workable solution to the problem. It didn't work out the way I expected because, unfortunately, at the White house – I always thought if we could get to the President he would have liked what we were doing, but we never could get to him. We had to deal through the Domestic Policy Council and, of course, we had been working with the Department of Justice and with the then Immigration and Naturalization Service on these issues. But we had developed a guest worker program which had the President's word, which was going to match willing workers with willing employers and we had come up with a theme we thought that was useful to document those undocumented Mexicans who were here in this country.

Whenever I said we had to work through the Domestic Policy Council – it was headed at that time by Margaret Spellings, who is now the Secretary for Education. They saw it obviously, being a domestic policy council, as a strictly domestic issue, where we thought of it as a foreign policy issue. And in fact, I thought that the reasons all the past efforts had failed was because it was thought of as a domestic U.S. issue as opposed to a foreign policy issue.

We have a need for workers in this country who are willing to do jobs that legal permanent residents and American citizens cannot do or will not do because it's labor in the fields or because it doesn't pay sufficiently or because for many reasons. There are any number of reasons why legal people don't want to do this work. We have been very ambivalent about this issue for a very, very long time, certainly since 1986 when President Ronald Reagan called it an amnesty program but it was not an amnesty program. When he documented those illegals who were in the country at that time.

There were very severe employer sanctions built into law that President Reagan oversaw. But they were never enforced, so the whole thing collapsed. And so it appears to people who criticized it as an amnesty program – but it should have worked better than it did. Our program was similar in that we would require those Mexicans who were here without documentation, who had crossed the border or who had overstayed their visas, to come forward to identify themselves and we would then put them on a track toward regularization towards naturalization.

Secretary Powell chaired any number of meetings with his counterpart, the Attorney General, and with his Mexican counterpart, who was at that time Foreign Secretary Pastimeiga, to develop these programs. I was in those meetings. In fact I was in a meeting the night before one of the meetings when we were just meeting with ourselves with State and Justice and the Secretary was talking about this plan to regularize Mexican citizens. He talked about how it would lead to a Green Card and then ultimately to citizenship and the Attorney General said to him, "Colin, don't talk about citizenship, you shouldn't raise that with them." And the Secretary really, he slammed his fists down on the desk and said, "That's the way my parents came. My parents came on, in his words 'on banana boats'," as he put it. "And they came here and they were naturalized and they became citizens." He left unsaid, 'And their son became Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff and ultimately Secretary of State.' And then the Attorney General backed off. "Oh, that's just, I don't mean it like that," and it was clear that a lot of people in the Republican party in positions of power in the Republican party did not want to see Mexican citizens naturalized.

And the next day when we met with the Mexicans the Secretary said the same thing – and even described to, I thought a very delighted Secretary Pastimeiga, how he had his parents naturalization certificates framed on his wall, how proud he was of that and how proud he was of how they became citizens and what this country means to people like that. So we had this plan that was going ultimately to lead to citizenship. But we could never get it through the White House. We couldn't even get the guest worker program through the White House because at that time in 2001 they were, of course, looking at off-year elections the next year and were very nervous about what the Republican base might think of this program. In addition Condoleezza Rice, who is now Secretary, was at the NSC – and she also saw it as a domestic policy issue as opposed to a foreign policy issue, so we didn't get any traction there at all either.

And then, of course, we had worked from February until September and the first state visit of the new, then new, President Bush administration was President Fox. President Fox came on September 4, if I remember it correctly, and stood on the lawn of the White House and challenged us all to get this program going by the end of 2001. The state dinner for him was September 5 and all of us who had worked on this program were invited to a dessert and fireworks part of this evening. Of course, we all went and it was for me a very exciting time because we were very hopeful that despite all the setbacks we would be able to do something – obviously not by the end of 2001, because that was far too ambitious. But I really thought that we would be able to get through some sort of, at least, a guest worker program which would allow Mexican citizens to come to this country legally to work instead of crossing the border illegally being victimized by [indistinct], the environment in trying to cross in the desert, which most of them were doing then, into Arizona.

That was September 5 and September 11 happened and then everything stopped and more of the attention of the government, certainly CA, was on the terrorist attacks on our

country and how did they get in and what kind of visas did they have, who issued. All of those issues put the whole guest worker program and the regularization idea totally off the screen. It's just now, I think, with the little that I know anymore, coming back.

I think there at the beginning the President was very sincere in wanting to do something, but I'm not sure that even with his push that he can get it through this Congress. He has very powerful Congressmen in Congressman Tancredo and Congressman Sensenbrenner, who are completely opposed to this idea, who fear that an amnesty program, who think that people who violate our laws shouldn't be rewarded in any way. But they are being, I think, somewhat – I don't want to be too pejorative in my words. The Mexicans and numerous other nationalities are here and working illegally, granted. But they have not taken jobs away from Americans. They are doing jobs that no one else wants to do and that obviously need to be done.

And so, my feeling is that if we want to have kind of a national debate on immigration that would be a good thing. Not just with people who want to keep the borders closed but with people who want to see more of an outreach. But to continue the way we are is to be really duplicitous and to be on our own side violating our laws, because we make it as hard as possible for these people to get here. And many die in the effort. But once they're here they immediately go to work and some of them have two and three jobs. They're not on welfare, they're working at jobs that basically no one else wants to do. And they are sending a tremendous amount of money back to Mexico, or to Salvador, or to Guatemala or wherever they are from.

I always thought that these are the people that we in the United States of America would want because, yes, they violated our laws but if you have a hungry family and you sit back and you wait for the United States of America to change its laws to make them more receptive to your going legally, I think that's a problem with you. I think we want the people who have the get up and go, to get up and come here, and not the people who are sitting back with their hands folded watching their children starve, waiting for us to change our law or waiting for their turn to come up for their immigrant visa. I frankly admire the people who risk everything to get here to take the jobs that no one else will take, to live so meanly, to struggle with the language, all to give their children a better future. I think it's very moving and in its own way it's very American or at least very American as I like to think of the United States of America.

My judgment is perhaps colored by the fact that I served two years in Monterrey, Mexico in the early '70's, where I saw how these people were victimized by us. It was a revelation to me and I think it is something that the country should not be proud of. I think we should figure out a way to bring guest workers to this country and to put them on a track – not all of them want this, but those few who may want to get green cards and want to become citizens - to allow them that privilege. And that's my soap box for today.

Q: Well then, to go back, you're saying that this is viewed as a domestic issue, by those who sort of control the power levers in the White House, but isn't there a domestic issue

of people, you know, business people and cultural interests who want these people?

RYAN: Oh, absolutely! It is a very domestic issue. I'm not saying it is exclusively a foreign policy, but when we started to do this back in the beginning of 2001, B. J. Harper whom you may know, was a legend in the visa office, and put together for me sort of a little history of all the previous guest worker efforts. And when I read that effort that she put together that's when I thought that the reason all of these efforts the United States made in the past failed was because we saw it through our own prism, through our own eyes only, without any consideration for what Mexico was going through. And so the vaquero program for example, when we didn't need them any more we –

Q: That was under Eisenhower wasn't it?

RYAN: Yes, we just put them out of the country, the Mexicans, without any thought to what this was doing to the Mexican economy or Mexican family life or anything like that. So I thought we had to take Mexican concerns into account. Mexico's economy was not doing that well at the time. This time we were working on it in 2001. Although the Mexican side told us that they will not need us in 15 to 20 years because the birthrate is so declining and their economy is improving, that they will, they believe, have jobs for everybody in 15 to 20 years. I don't know if that is accurate but they said that repeatedly all the time, including the foreign secretary. So it's a fiction that we have that they should not come because they are illegal. They get jobs; they don't go on welfare, whatever we think. There was a time when we were talking about how they took our jobs and they went on welfare simultaneously, which I always thought was a [indistinct].

But, I would love to see a national debate on immigration and what we need and what we don't need anymore. When we were building the nation we welcomed everybody. Our policy on immigrant visas seems to me to be very skewed to that kind of thing still, even though we are not still building a nation. Do we want family based immigration or do we want skills based immigration? What do we need in the twenty-first century? If we bring in guest workers does that mean that the agricultural people in this country don't figure out how to mechanize their farms and their ranches and so continue to use stoop labor when they possibly could develop some machinery that could do this?

Those are the kinds of things I would love to see discussed, that you could discuss in a rational way, not in a knee jerk way either because the conservatives don't want the foreign workers in at all and want to close our borders to everybody, and the liberals want sort of, the bleeding hearts, to let them all in. It will all figure itself out in time. A national debate led by somebody like former Senator Simpson I would love to see, but I don't think we're going to see it. I think we are going to continue to see the Sensenbrenners and Tancredos saying no to this kind of policy, and the President not wanting to use up the political capital that he talked about after the second election.

Q: Agricultural construction interests using these alien workers, the people who run these businesses would seem to be naturally Republicans. You know, that come from the

sun belt and all that, were they much of an ally for you?

RYAN: To a certain extent they were but, we're probably looking back on it, we didn't engage them as much as we should have. But it was so trying to get the policy through this government that it seemed not wise to go outside of the government to get allies because we have, what is it – the H2A program – for agricultural workers which allows a very small number, in my judgment, to come in legally and that works quite well, or I understood it to work quite well back in the early part of this century, the 2001 period. We did have support from the unions, particularly the service unions, which saw the efforts of guest workers as helping them and they of course are not Republicans for the most part. And the kinds of jobs that we foresaw for the guest workers were not strictly or exclusively agricultural; it was also in the hotel industry and the restaurant industry, which also has jobs that nobody really wants to take, who are legally here or who are American citizens.

Q: You mention Mexicans but you know there's the Chinese who are always being smuggled in and Jamaicans, you know, on and on. Was this limited to Mexico?

RYAN: Well, we in the CA couldn't possibly limit it just to Mexico but when the President and President Fox met it was an exclusively Mexican effort, just looking at the country of Mexico. But we thought that if we could develop a program that was successful for Mexico that it would naturally lead to being expanded to other countries, sort of whatever the traffic would bear, however many jobs the service industry had or the agricultural industry had. But we didn't get far enough because we didn't have enough time, although God knows we worked very, very hard on it. But from February to September is not that long a period of time in the history of trying to get things done in the United States government. Then, of course, when September 11 happened the government sort of basically shut down on everything but anti-terrorism.

Q: Was there a mechanism that you were putting in that talked about demand, in other words, is there a way of saying, well, we figure that the service industries and the restaurant business need so many people, or this or that? Was there a way of adjusting?

RYAN: We were going to engage them in telling us what they thought they needed and how many people they could employ, and then, as the President has said, we were going to match those willing employers with the willing workers. Now, obviously, there would be some willing workers who were already employed by them, who are already in this country undocumented, illegally. So that would be one number and any additional number would be, of course, on top of that. George Lannon and Steve Fischell, who I mentioned earlier, had thought about this for years, way before President Bush came into office and made his agreement with President Fox. So they were ready with a lot of plans, ideas, to try out with the Mexicans, to try out with willing employers, to try out with the Congress, although we didn't get too far with the Congress.

But we got basically nowhere with the Domestic Policy Council because they were very

worried about the reaction of the base. I was sorry about that because I was in a meeting with the President on Mexico before he went to Mexico and I was very impressed with the depth of his knowledge about Mexico and Mexican issues and, how they impacted, of course, on Texas when he was governor of Texas, and his sympathy for the Mexican undocumented. And I believed that and I still do and that's why I was always sorry that they wouldn't put our ideas in front of him so we would know if we were on track or not, but they wouldn't; we never got the chance.

Q: Well, I mean, the normal way of doing that is to get Secretary Powell to see him on a one on one thing.

RYAN: Yes, but the Secretary was busy on any number of other issues. And then as soon as September 11 happened, we did have a meeting with the Mexican [indistinct]. Secretary Powell had a meeting with his counterpart, Secretary Kasteneiga, and Jeff Davidow, who was ambassador to Mexico at that time and was at that meeting, says in his book that he knew that it was all over when the Secretary turned to me and said, "You know, Mary, would you sum up where we are on all of this." This was after September 11 and Jeff knew as I did not then that we weren't going to go anywhere with this. That it was too insignificant an issue in the face of what we had just suffered. And he was right.

Q. OK. Well, is there anything else you would like to say?

RYAN: No, but thank you very much for doing this – it was very dear to my heart, this issue, and I wish, obviously, that September 11 had never happened, but I wish that we had succeeded in developing something that would have helped those undocumented people in this country.

Q: Well, thank you very much.

End of interview