

Soundbite/Transcript Master List

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Brady..... | 2 |
| Brickham | |
| Feb 9..... | 28 |
| Nov 3..... | 39 |
| Residual Brickham..... | 54 |
| Carver..... | 62 |
| Colby..... | 67 |
| Coughlin..... | 78 |
| Dillard..... | 84 |
| Donahue..... | 102 |
| Hunt..... | 114 |
| Lawlor..... | 131 |
| Milberg..... | 149 |
| Muldoon..... | 168 |
| Murphy..... | 180 |
| O'Shea..... | 212 |
| Parker..... | 225 |
| Polgar..... | 240 |
| Sauvegeot..... | 260 |
| Simmons | |
| Aby Excerpts..... | 271 |
| Dori Excerpts..... | 280 |
| Timmes..... | 282 |
| Tilton..... | 297 |
| Ward..... | 307 |
| Wilbur..... | 321 |

Brady

Tape One Side One

Sound bite One: 039-070

DV: and was your idea to lead a rifle company in combat, was that what you wanted to do?

EB: no my main objective was that...um...by the time I was, you know, two thirds or three quarters the way through the Naval Academy I had done an extensive amount reading about what we then called insurgency and counterinsurgency

DV: why not the SEALs?

EB: well the SEALs were very, very small then and, in fact—if I remember correctly, they would not allow graduates to be assigned to the SEALs in those days. This was still the pre-Vietnam era and...uh...Special Forces operations in all the services were looked down upon, were not things that regular officers and certainly not academy graduates went to. So...uh...my, you know, wanted to be involved in that kind of warfare. I thought that was the big thing...uh...I studied Spanish and I had been to...uh...several international conferences with Latin American students. It was clear to me, you know, that many of them had a communist orientation and an interest in nationalism and free of economic imperialism and political imperialism and all those kinds of terminologies. There was a general feeling at the time that communists were making advances in third world countries, conferences in India, you know, non-aligned nations and all that kind of...uh...feeling. So it seemed to me that if we are going to go to war and if we are going to fight that would surely be the place we are going to fight and that Europe was not ever going to be the battleground. So...uh...I had that kind of orientation and my first thought was actually going into the Marine Corps.

DV: well that would've seemed...

EB: because they are frequently the first to go they have the highest *spirit de corps* and that was another thing I was looking for I thought the services in general had poor morale, poor discipline, not very capable and then the elite special kinds of forces, like the Marines or the SEALs and people like that were better.

Sound bite 2: 093-105

DV: so where did you go?

EB: So I wanted to go to the 82nd Airborne Division. They...uh...thought I was crazy. They wanted me to go to a tank division in Germany or maybe go to Korea, some exotic assignment. They thought going to North Carolina was totally foolish but the reason I wanted to go there was I thought the 82nd Airborne Division from a training, moral, *spirit de corps*, and specialty kind of orientation was the closest thing to Force Recon in the Marine Corp which is what I wanted to do. So I told I thought the 82nd division was the best division in the Army, that it was special, that it thought it was special, that it acted like it was special, treated its people like they were special. It had good discipline and that was the kind of unit I wanted to be in and they said ok.

Sound bite 3: 218-270

DV: lets skip along to Vietnam

EB: Alright, so I left Santa Domingo and came back to Fort Bragg, went through the military advisors school and went to Vietnam. I had spent well over a year arranging my assignment to Vietnam. Almost every Monday morning I was calling the Pentagon and lining up what I wanted as an assignment.

DV: and you to be an advisor to Ranger...

EB: I wanted to be a Ranger advisor and...uh...I ended up doing that. I went to the 22nd Ranger Battalion which was based in Lake Queitcaton.

DV: and when did you get there?

EB: August of '65, which was just when the first units were arriving when they decided to have build up and I think, if I remember correctly, the 1073rd Airborne Brigade moved into that area from Okinawa, either just before I got there or right after I got there and that was the first major Army unit.

DV: so you were part, then, of MACV as an advisor and was there a province system?

EB: I was with MACV the entire time I was there

DV: was there...was there a province setup there you were in, at that point?

EB: no, the provinces were part of MACV but they were separate. There were advisors to the Vietnamese Army and there were advisors to the districts and the regions

DV: right

EB: districts, provinces, regions

DV: ok

EB: and I was on the military side so...um...this battalion and there were three battalions up there and they were all assigned to these coordinates (not sure?) to keep it preserved and that was their mission and I was assigned to them and we saw a lot of combat and did a lot of things because during '65 in the Highlands the NVA was building up rapidly G2 (not sure?) was reporting there were not NVA there...uh...all kinds of things that were problems but the classic kind of thing you hear was we had one of three mission you either had for us what was a relatively dull mission which was to upon up a road somewhere and let the take convoys threw for two or three days to resupply the province capitals and things like that, where the VC had cut them off. They had the roads controlled because they were insecure or...uh...they...uh...had regular army units in trouble somewhere and they would throw us in as reinforcements and those were usually where we took heavy casualties so it was some kind of tactical emergency in the Corp area and the regular army was suffering and not winning and they'd move us in as reinforcements or the other thing that went on a lot in those days were special forces camps were constantly getting surrounded by these NVA units and literally being laid siege to and so a few weeks went by and special forces couldn't solve this problem they would ask for reinforcements to break the siege and they would send the Rangers in and depending on where it was, if they could get their by road, a couple of APC companies, which were also in the Corps reserve, sort of break through from behind, break through the NVA units and get into the camp and let the camp pull out and so we did that a lot

Sound bite 3: 280-319

DV: did you have any anti-infrastructure kind of mission at all?

EB: these were regular operations

DV: was there any awareness back then that there was an infrastructure that should be targeted or moved against?

EB: well, you know, I think people like myself certainly who had read, you know, about insurgency or people like...uh...Komer who I didn't know then, Bob Komer...uh...who were working with the White House or Douglas Pike who was writing books, you know, people like that knew that there was a communist party and that...uh...this is what the real problem was that...uh...you know, the problem was by '65 Vietnam was in many areas not a guerilla war and so you know the insurgency theory that everyone was operating under was not a practical thing to be talking about. We were having NVA battalions and NVA regiments to contend with in Two-Corps and certainly the same thing was true in Eye-Corps. I don't remember when they appeared in three and four Corps but it was shortly thereafter or about the same time.

DV: I don't think they were ever really in four corps, not to my knowledge, however, was there every really a main four corps war.

EB: I guess that's probably true

DV: but everywhere else

EB: so, you know, had the main force war, if you gonna call it, you had the VC guerillas and then you had the communist party. So you had three different problems and lots of the guerillas or at least the guerilla leaders belonged to the communist party but then there was another whole set of people in the communist party who were district chiefs, you know a shadow government, in effect, tax collectors, administrators, districts chiefs, the whole nine yards who were not guerilla leaders.

DV: you're awareness of that at the time—

EB: I knew about that

DV: you knew, you did know. This something you were aware of.

EB: I had read about it...uh...I didn't have any first hand experience besides talking to Vietnamese officers who were in the battalion about, you know, how is really this organized, what really goes on what are the real problems. Other than that all I had was some knowledge with what I had read about other countries, the Malaysian insurgency, Latin American things, Che Guevara. I had read all those things before I went there.

Sound bite 3: 410-460

DV: but as...inevitably you had to leave the ranger battalion and what was your next assignment?

EB: I went to Da Lot—which was considered to be one of the garden spots of Vietnam—as a province advisor, which I looked upon as vacation. By the time I had fifteen months in a battalion people were insisting that I be reassigned and that I needed a vacation and I thought a vacation was go being in a province advisory team.

DV: now is this also...is this the MACV province advisor, this is not the civilian again.

EB: well the thing is in the provinces...uh...there was technically to separate organizations a civilian province and military sector. These geographically coincided and the same person headed both of them, a Vietnamese Colonel. So the Colonel who was the sector commander was also the province chief. There were no civilian province chiefs. The military had total control of the country. So it would be in the United States like all the state governors being Major Generals.

DV: I understand

EB: and they had two parts to their staff they had some civilian staff, who were province people and they had a military staff who were their military sector advisors. So we assigned to support the sector team and I was assigned to be the operations advisor. So there was an operations officer who supported the colonel and I was there to help them.

DV: was this mostly rough puff kinda stuff?

EB: in this were province there were no ARVN forces so all regional force/popular force

DV: not one of those generals didn't have a division their or something like that?

EB: no, both the VC and...uh...ARVN tried to...uh...avoid military operations a lot.

DV: gentleman's agreement?

EB: it was a sorta formal accommodation that was kept as a vacation spot, a neutral city where you could have meetings where lots of financial transactions could take place...uh...illegal and legal it was a place where the VC could raise money and change money and wash money because of its neutral status. It was sort like what I thought Geneva was like during World War II.

DV: they province chief—

EB: they new about it

DV:...prosper as a result of this accommodation?

EB: oh yeah, oh yeah

DV: who was his counterpart—

EB: there was a lot of...uh...things in the province, you know, like wood cutting, rubber plantations and tea plantations, things like that there were a lot of sources of money both for the VC and the South Vietnamese.

DV: Economic opportunities

EB: and neither side wanted to upset that

Sound bite 4: 482-490

DV: and that's the big OCO reorganization also

EB: right when you look at, you know, senior civilians in each province and everything that started to come a little bit later. [clock dings] There was no real CORDs organization then

DV: Right there was the experimental office civilian operations and uh....

EB: They had people in a few places but not in this province

Sound bite 5: 490-502

EB: the other unusual feature about this province, though, they had a National Police training center there that was brand new and they had a...uh...USIAD advisory that was headed by an Australian Brigadier General who was retired.

DV: Brigadier Serong

EB: Serong

DV: I Know a lot about him. I interviewed the guy who was head of the field forces, Colonel Grieves, who was...became Serong's adversary for control of that organization

EB: Serong's the best guy who ever worked there, problem maker and they didn't respond.

Sound bite 6: 515-582

EB: One night Serong and I got into a discussion and he told me that...uh...you know, the Americans didn't understand guerilla warfare and they didn't understand what this was all about and they didn't understand how to train and they didn't fight. They didn't know how to deal with the Vietnamese and he gave as one example of how, you know, if he were doing things, it would be better...uh...that he had these Nung guard that he hired himself and they guarded his villa and things and how well trained they were, etc. So I said "Well, I don't know that maybe true in general but I don't think that applies to all Americans.

DV: really

EB: and so he said "well, you maybe the exception but I don't know." So that night about three o' clock in the morning I climbed over the wall of his villa, went through his Nung guards and snuck into his house and I woke him up in his bedroom with a .45 against his temple.

DV: my father was...uh...

EB: and it changed his whole view

DV: my father was in a prison camp in World War II with Aussies and...uh...British and he was the only American, so I've learned a lot about Austrialians.

EB: I don't know what they told you about Serong. Serong has a fantastic background. Serong was a...uh....

DV: what I know about him—

EB: on these desert rat patrols in the Middle East during World War II, you know, these machine gun mounted jeep things that roamed all over and harried the German forces from the rear and the side and the flaks. He commanded on of those and then...uh...when that phase of the action died down he went, I believe it was, to Borneo and he commanded a...uh...Australian commando battalion in the rear of the Japanese in Borneo and...uh...then he went to Australia and built their jungle warfare training center and led that. He may have had other assignments in between this is the pertinent stuff I know about and then when the Malaysian insurgency broke out he was seconded to the British and went to Malaysia and he built the training center for the jungle constabulary, which was a key part of how the British dealt with the insurgency in Malaysia and he was key to the training of the jungle constabulary and he and...uh...Sir Robert Thompson and, I think the other guy's name was Palmer but I think I've forgotten—George Palmer I believe, three of the key guys over there for a long time and that went on for twelve years.

DV: Desmond Palmer

EB: Desmond Palmer, right and...uh...that was the background that USAID hired him for...

DV: yepp, for that field police field force

EB: to setup the field force and then setup the training center and to run it.

DV: so, then, you...

EB: So I was there in sector. I knew him well and...uh...there was a CIA guy there, province officer, who I got to know well

Sound bite 7: 587-594

EB: I was learning a lot of Vietnamese from the officers I was working with, you know, I was learning all the words about money and corruption. I was learning a lot of politics and economic terms and stuff like that so...

DV: a whole new world opened up.

EB: my language ability was vastly expanding and my knowledge about Vietnam and how it really operated was vastly expanding.

Sound bite 8: 595-652

EB: and...um...Serong asked me one time...um...would I be willing to go on loan to his team that they had a new kind of platoon that they were bringing up to the training center that they wanted trained in...uh...small squad tactics and...uh...ambushes more like guerilla warfare kind of things that what the police did and would I be willing to train this platoon because he didn't think the Australian warrant officers that he had we were the right people. They were more into police kinds of things. So I said "Sure." So he talked...uh...some general in Saigon into making my colonel, US colonel, let me do this instead of my job and so I spent...uh...a couple of months, full time, at the training center. Training this platoon and it turns out this platoon was the first experimental PRU unit, Provincial Reconnaissance Unit, that was recruited by the CIA and ultimately ever province had one and they were the action arm of the province office. This was the first one and this thing was really the strangest thing you ever saw in your life..

DV: let me...let's back track for a sec, this is sorta very interesting to me, ok...um...understood Serong was on contract to the Agency so was this...was this, then, were you actually, then, contracted to them?

EB: I was in the US Army, assigned to MACV, loaned by some arrangement in Saigon. I mean I was just a low level guy who was, you know, interested, heard a lot of rumors that Serong was not really a USAID employee, was really a CIA employee.

DV: that's how I understand it, that he had a contract with them.

EB: I don't know...I don't know what he really was. I don't know whether USIAD public safety program was running this training for field police, that was their job. It was the public safety director's job to do that and so it was very hard to tell if you were down on the bottom in those days who was who and where they get their money from and whether that was a cover story and was really a CIA operation...uh....

DV: that's the way it was explained to me by...

EB: very hard to know. I mean Serong's story was that he was a USIAD employee and it fight. I mean that was USIAD responsibility, to train the public police.

DV: that's right.

Sound bite 9: 660-745

DV: but, now, where does the name PRU come from? Do you know who thought of that name? do you have any idea about that?

EB: when I started training these guys, they didn't have any names.

DV: were they being referred to as counterterror units?

EB: nothing I mean they just said they this new platoon and they wanted to train them and it was an experiment to see how it would go and they wanted me to be the trainer. That's how I got into the story. I didn't know anything else about it than that. I don't know who planned it, who got the idea where it came from. My suspicion is that Bob Komer knows and Bob Komer was probably involved in it. I hadn't met Komer yet and this platoon had three squads in it...four squads two of them were Nungs, and two of them Montagnards. They couldn't speak to each other. There was a squad leader and a platoon commander all of whom were officers who were Vietnamese from the Vietnamese Special Forces, who could not speak Montagnard or Nung. So in this platoon of forty-three people, or whatever it was, there were three different languages spoken. None of them spoke English and none of them spoke to each other and so the first day was really a revelation to me, when they said, "here's your group, train them."

DV: talk about your mixed commando units.

EB: I was fluent in Vietnamese by then so I could talk to the officers and so the fact they couldn't speak English didn't bother me...uh...but that was obviously one of the reasons, in retrospect, that I was picked to be the training officer because nobody else in the command could speak to them. So I taught them basic small unit tactics mostly through demonstrations and hand and arm signals. They all had been trained in Army hand and arm signals and so by communicating by hand and arm signals they got the basic idea. We'd run through it a few of times. We'd tell them no. We would move them around. They walk through it we all began to get the idea and it was kinda interesting because...uh...this was one my first hand...first...first experiences with the guerillas and the infrastructure

DV: were you also reporting the CIA province officer on progress or any of that?

EB: well he used to come to diner but I didn't think I was reporting to him I didn't even know he was involved I just thought we were friends.

DV: because ultimately, I mean, it was going to his outfit

EB: yeah...but you know they did strange things and sometimes I went a long with them but it was all like a group of friends who were helping each other out. There was never any arrangements. There was never anything explicit said. There was never anything, you know, "would work for us" or "would you be on our payroll" or anything that was like that. It was group that had dinner together almost every night and it was me....**end of tape**

Brady Tape 1 side 2

Sound bite 1: 015-027

EB: and...uh...lo and behold one the squads of this platoon ambushed and killed a courier who was traveling from one communist committee to another and had all this mail, records of tax receipts and all that kind of stuff in his pouch. Well that would have been pretty interesting but what really got my attention was he had an order in his pouch from the province...um...military committee to some unit out in the jungle that he was traveling to that said they were blow up the house of a lieutenant who was training a suspicious new platoon at the national training center and get rid of this guy because he was too dangerous to have around and so I moved.

DV: out of Da Lot?

EB: No I just changed houses. I moved to another place in town

Sound bite 2: 032-050

EB: I also spent almost all my off time with Vietnamese officer...uh...in their homes, in bars drinking with them doing things they did. I lived their life.

DV: these are special forces of the LLDB officers.

EB: there were some of those there were also a lot of the RF/PF officers who were regular officers who assigned to the province to those jobs, you know, who hated it, who had come from other parts of the army, had been in combat units, and wounded and were assigned there convalesce or who had political connections and used them to this plush assignment were there was seldom any combat and so I learned about how you buy your jobs and...uh...how the corruption system works and who was who's uncle and...uh...I met a lot of general officers mistresses who...uh...liked to come to Da Lot for the weather and then I met the general's threw the mistress and I lived a different kind of life

and...uh...the American Colonel I worked for thought all of this was, you know, atrocious, very lacking in...uh...appropriateness, etc.

DV: you're going native not just doing the straight military service.

EB: he gave me a zero on my performance review it's the only time I ever got—in fact I am the only person I ever heard of who got an absolute zero for a score.

Sound bite 3: 055-100

EB: but then I decided to go to Saigon and so my first assignment in Saigon...uh...I looked at a lot of different jobs and...uh...where I went was to the Vietnamese command center and what the Vietnamese called the Joint General Staff, was a part of their J3. So I worked in their headquarters which was a block or two away from MACV headquarters in their command center with them and we were part of the MACV, what was called COC, Combat Operations Center. We were a division of that but we were located over in the Vietnamese headquarters and the main purpose of this group over their was collect data about Vietnamese operations, feed it to the US MACV so it could become part of the reports that went weekly back to Washington that was mainly what we doing but, because I spoke Vietnamese and I sat next to the Vietnamese division chief's desk and overheard all his telephone conversation and everything else that was going on, I got involved in a lot of things beyond what was expected.

DV: for instance?

EB: well...uh...you know...uh...he would get involved in a conversation with some friend about this slot was open but you'd have to pay this much money to get the job and things and so when he hung up and things I would say "Gee, is that job worth that? Why would anybody pay money for some job like

that?” and he’d say “Well, you’ll get this out of a job and you can keep this portion of the money or you can sell the rights to log timber, you could do this or you could patrol the restaurants or whatever it was in area...and the Vietnamese...uh...General Vinh was the commander of the Joint General of the Armed forces and these guys were his operations staff and...uh...they traveled to every major Vietnamese battle as soon as, you know, they got it—came in the morning and there was a report that there was big battle during the night they would dispatch a team of two or three people out there to find out, first hand, what happened and come back and tell General Vinh. They placed no reliance on any official message so they had to personally—some trusted person had to personally go out there, talk to the commander and see what had happened, make an assessment, go back and tell General Vinh. I went on everyone of those trips with them. I was their American guy to go with so I went all over the country. I went to every unit. I met all the key commanders plus socially...uh...I was living on the economy. I was moving in Vietnamese social circles.

DV: does this mean you had an economy apart from you military income?

EB: no I just spent all my money.

DV: living on the economy seems to connote some sort of...as...as if that you were investing in the economy but it

EB: I mean instead of living in a VOQ and eating in US officer’s clubs I lived in a—I rented a house in the Vietnamese economy and eat Vietnamese food and had Vietnamese servants and went to dinner with Vietnamese people all the time.

DV: that’s how...more than one person I interviewed who’s on the Phoenix has described it the guy who lived on the economy

Sound bite 4: 130-160

EB: during this time I was in the JGS, though, the CIA came to me, once or twice and said...uh...you know, “we’re thinking about running an operation up in Thailand or we want to setup a secret agent net or we want to do this or we want to do that, would you be interested?” the first time this happened for us I said “God, who are these guys? How do you know who I am? Why are you coming to talk to me?” They said “well Peter Scooge (not sure on that last name) recommended you,” and so I said “well, I’d be willing to find out about it.” I remember the first one well they told me to come to this building in downtown Saigon. I thought this was all very exotic here I was a twenty four/twenty five year old infantry captain spent all his life out in troop units in the field and I went into this civilian building. They were all wearing civilian clothes. They had women in their working as secretaries. I thought it was different world and here I was in fatigues in parachoot boots. Anyway, they wanted to do something with the Vietnamese refugees up in Thailand, North Thailand. I agreed to do it. I agreed to go but I don’t know what happened somehow or other it got squelched as an operation or something, never got approved and so I never went but, I guess from their perspective, they know had me on the hook. I had agreed to go. I had agreed to do things with them. I was someone who was interesting from their perspective.

DV: can you be a little more specific about who the “they” are?

EB: no I don’t remember. I don’t think they ever told me who it was

DV: were they intelligence people or paramilitary people, do you know?

EB: oh no, it was intelligence people they wanted to setup a clandestine intelligence network in the...in the Vietnamese refugee camps in North Thailand. So they were, you know, agent handlers. This was down in the embassy proper. This wasn’t in any of their cover offices in USAID or that kinda stuff. This

is where the station was.

Sound bite 5: 197-220

EB: Somebody called me up one day and I don't know who it was anymore and said we are starting a new organization and we'd like you to consider coming and joining it and...uh...what the hell was the name...

DV: ICEX

EB: ICEX and so I went over there and Evan J. Parker Jr was the head of it. There was only maybe four-five people assigned to the office so far and so I spent a couple hours talking to Evan J. Parker about what the hell they were trying to do and...uh...

DV: he explained about the infrastructure?

EB: yeah, he said we are interested in targeted operations against the civilian part of the communist party. All these search and destroy operations and this main force warfare that's going on doesn't address the real problem. The real problem is the shadow government and I was ready for that, psychologically, emotionally. Everything I knew said that's exactly right. That's what we are not doing that needs to be done. I've had enough basic combat that sort of had that...uh...under my belt, going back to a regular battalion didn't have any particular thrill to it and here was something that I thought was really important that wasn't being done and would be interesting

Sound bite 6: 283-310

EB: these two colonels and I met with Ky's people...uh...on the corner and I had a couple cups of coffee and three or four of these pate chouds (?) for breakfast and as we walked away from them is when the strafing began and they were all killed and so I was like three hundred feet from them and had just spent an hour and a half with them before they were killed.

DV: you didn't see the incident itself?

EB: yeah I did.

DV: did it look accidental to you?

EB: I thought it was out of malice. You know I have personally been bombarded by US artillery. I have personally be on the receiving end of three US air strikes...uh...I have been with Vietnamese units that US pilots misidentified as VC and attacked...uh...so for me, at that point, it was easy to believe it was an accident and that they got confused about where the front lines were and...uh...who was the enemy and strafed in the wrong place. The problem with these things is its possible that someone could direct that to happen and direct that it be made to look that. So if you're on the receiving end, how can you know what the truth of it is?

DV: yep, now this...so many things...

EB: but you know from any outward circumstantial things there was no reason to run the ground to believe it wasn't the accident.

DV: does that have anything—

EB: now, if you were very political and thought the US would prefer not to have those guys around anymore and they wanted to undercut and eliminate Ky's key supporters that was the logical thing to do

kill them.

Sound bite 7: 493-503

EB: ...why don't you organize...uh...what they call dossiers or files, one each VC and file each intelligence report in it and...uh...each district operations should do that and there should be a province operation center, as well to coordinate the districts, you know, the basic structure of the program is what those guys brought to bear on the problem, to get it organized and try to manage it, not so much the tradecraft and the clandestine aspect which had been their life before.

Sound bite 8: 504-600

DV: Here's a question for you...um...I have interviewed Evan Parker and he said, when he started up ICEX back there in '67, one of his jobs was to sell to the...uh...the chief CIA guy who was liaison to the Special Branch...um...field operations, right out USIAD I guy name Dave West and West wasn't going to buy because he said Special Branch was already doing what Phoenix was going to go out to do and for as long as Special Branch had been around their job had been going after the VCI. He couldn't see the need for another organization to do it, was there that conflict going?

EB: there certainly was conflict. West didn't want to share of his...uh...you know, prerogatives with yet another powerful CIA guy.

DV: be it Parker

EB: or anybody else who came by...he had his thing why should it be...why should there be two things working with the Special Branch. It wasn't proposed that this be under his control it was proposed that this be separate and that it interact with the Special Branch on a separate basis and separate Special Branch officers would be assigned over there to do that and he wouldn't have any control or influence over it.

DV: was it something that was...that became a flaw in the program because...did there become a split of...

EB: I don't think so

DV: ...of Phoenix Special Branch people and CIA Special Branch people.

EB: oh there did there certainly became a split but I don't think it was a flaw in the program. What I think is first of all about his argument that it wasn't necessary that's just pure bullshit the problem was from my perspective sure the Special Branch was supposed to be doing that. Special Branch was supposed be carrying out internal surveillance and operations against subversives, that's the purpose of a Special Branch anywhere. There's lots of Police Forces in Europe that have Special Branches and that's their basic role. The problem was, I would say from my perspective, you know, over the years of working with them and knowing what was going on. The vast majority of the Special Branch energy went into...uh...surveiling and reporting upon and thwarting...um...opposition political parties, non-communist, let me put that way.

DV: and let the military handle the enemy was that the flaw?

EB: every now and then they would do something about a VC particularly if he was in Saigon but they didn't have any systematic program against the communist. Everyone now and then they arrested one but their main activity was to keep the existing regime in power and the political threat to the existing regime was not the communist party because the communist party was outlawed. It couldn't vote, etc. What the

police were doing was keeping under control was the loyal—so-called loyal opposition. So, you know, keeping track of what Trun Van Long was doing or what the...uh...Komintang was doing or what the Vietnam Huc Ton was doing was what they were really spending their time and effort on.

DV: so could it be, then, that Phoenix becomes an anti-communist element of the Special Branch or does Phoenix simply start doing the same thing?

EB: at an absolute...an absolute minimum Phoenix caused a focus to be brought to bear on anti-communist activities. The other thing, of course, was Special Branch was very involved in corruption, which also occupied a lot of their time. Here you have a very corrupt environment, a very corrupt...uh...a culture that tolerates corruption on vast scale...

DV: ...I understand about prebendalism and how...

EB: ...and now you're going to run you're going to run cover activities in it. So, you know, its ready made for that kind of problem and the Special Branch also, you know, very active...uh...in the sect kinds of things, you know...uh...the Hoa Hoa and the Cao Dai, all those people as well the formal political parties that were opposition so when we come on the scene, Thieu in power later, they're part of his operation...

DV: ok now...

EB: so they are not mainly focused on the communist party

Tape two ends at 764

Tape 2 Side 1

Sound bite 1: 006-030

DV: theoretically...uh...in the big reorg—the CIA has a big organ—reorganization in '66...um...the fall, the same time as OCO, and they created those region officers and province officers, now they were supposed to report through the Special Branch person to Drain (not sure) in reality it didn't work out that way. What happened was that they're Drain all the Special Branch people finding themselves cut out because the region officer would go directly to Drain.

EB: Those guys, you know, did a lot of unilateral things not just the kind of unilateral things I'm taking about but US sanctioned and approved unilateral things, separate intelligence activities from the Vietnamese and so that was, you know, separate, and not part of the Special Branch advisory team so they had a reason to go talk separately to Drain so it was natural that they would go to talk to him about the other stuff at the same time, you know, one things leads to another.

DV: so its not coordinated...it's...it's...uh...theoretically coordinated

EB: now there were, you know, different who...uh...in different districts and provinces who really tried to use the district operations center or the PIOCCs and really did run some operations and had good results. Its not all a black and white picture.

DV: no I understand right and it really depends on the personalities in the provinces and how they get along.

EB: maybe...maybe the province officer on the CIA side was a little weak, and he wasn't aggressive, and he wasn't running his own operations, so more scope for the Vietnamese, and they had a good

Vietnamese there so he seizes the initiative and actually did what he is supposed to be doing. There were a lot...every area, every area, every province was somewhat different in terms of these nuances about how did they really operate and what did they really do and who really ran it the Americans or the Vietnamese and...uh...how aggressive were they or how passive were they. Everyplace was different.

Sound bite 2: 046-086

DV: my question to you, then, on this translation the word infrastructure...um...I know it means many things to many people...and...and

EB: but its very clear what the problem was about that I don't care what anybody tells you the view is simple

DV: ok, what is it...what is it...

EB: the first Vietnamese translator who dealt with that word which was probably, but I can't swear to this, in a conversation between...uh...Phong and Komer. Komer used the word infrastructure. He was a great one for these kinds of terms and things.

DV: according to Evan Parker, Komer thought attack on the infrastructure sound sexy

EB: the first interpreted used the first definition, which was in the Webster's dictionary at the time like a collegiate dictionary, you know, a small hand held one not the big huge one but something that was small. The first definition there 'cause I went and looked in the book myself after this happened. I went and looked in the dictionary to see how this could have occurred and, sure enough, I mean the guy didn't look in hit he was doing it ad hoc speaking in a conversation and...uh...he translated as "the underlying foundation" and if you looked in the dictionary of that era, I don't know what it was say today, but that was definition number one.

DV: yep

EB: so in Vietnamese it always sounded weird ever after because to the Vietnamese when we would go and we would beat up on them and we would say "you guys are arresting too many low level people and focusing your activity on tax collectors, and couriers and all that shit and what we want you to get is the district chiefs and province chiefs." We didn't usually say that we used the jargon of the time, not me I spoke in Vietnamese, but the Americans and so they would have this talk with high level Vietnamese officials and reinforce to 'em what we thought they should be doing and what the goals of the program. So they would say to them in English "we want you to focus on the high level infrastructure." Now many of the Vietnamese understood English so they knew what that was but in Vietnamese, if it was somebody who was a little weak in Vietnamese, or who preferred to deal in Vietnamese, even though they spoke English, which is a cultural thing some people do, the interpreters would say something that if you reinterpreted it into English it would come out as "We want you to focus on the high level, underlying foundation."

DV: [laughing] the high level, low level

EB: and it was always a problem and it was always a problem and a joke among the Vietnamese who were fluent in both languages.

Sound bite 3: 090-146

EB: the other thing was, to me, it really missed the boat. Komer made a fundamental error in this choice of words. What we needed to do was seize the initiative from the VC cadre who were working with the

villages.

DV: you're talking about our propaganda teams

EB: they were the revolutionaries. What we needed was to be the revolutionaries. What we needed was to be the nationalists and not the imperial oppressors and that was a big problem in the basic underlying themes in politics and culture of the day. Who were we? We were the Western imperialists who replaced the French colonialists so what's the difference. Another white man comes along he speaks English instead of French but were still oppressed we're still taking orders from the Westerners. We're still not a nation. So what the Vietnamese government had to do was establish an identity and as nationalist organization and the communists played on this very successfully all the time. What do you want to take orders from these puppets who come in here and are directed by the white men.

DV: we gave the issue of nationalism to the Viet Cong

EB: so we had to capture that some how and the term infrastructure didn't contribute anything to that struggle, ok? Later the Vietnamese changed the words when the Americans really left and for a brief time they were called agricultural reform cadre or something like that but that got closer to the mark. It was about reform. It was about agrarian things in the villages, you know, what we needed was a term that...that got at this issue and VC infrastructure was a Western concoction that didn't have any meaning in the Vietnamese language and we have this tendency, you know, to sort of use high tech words all the time, which when translated into some Asian or Arabic or, you know, some underdeveloped nation's language doesn't mean anything. So instead of getting a set of words that was helpful in conveying to the people that this was a dynamic revolutionary nation building activity, it lacked all that. Even Phoung Houg was kinda of an abstract concept. You know, what the Vietnamese concocted as a way...we chose the word Phoenix, so they were stuck with Phoung Houg as a translation, you know what Phoung Houg is?

DV: I...

EB: it's a symbol of conjugal love, you know, at weddings you give, in Chinese culture, which the Vietnamese are heavily oriented toward, you give people things with Phoung Hongs embroidered on them for...for conjugal happiness. So to name a program that was designed to eliminate someone a...and symbolize it with conjugal familiarity was another joke.

DV: I...I've laughed at that every time I find myself writing this

EB: but the American concept of the Phoenix is something else. The Western concept is a bird that rises from its ashes and lives forever and that was the concept that we were trying to capture.

DV: the omnipotence...

EB: the omnipotence

DV which reinforce this whole issue...

EB: living forever, something you couldn't eliminate that the Special Branch activity against the communists was of that nature but that was a Western concept that we were trying to translate into Vietnamese, which when translated was a joke. Instead of looking at the Vietnamese culture and choosing something that symbolized to them something and then having an American word for it. We didn't approach it that way.

DV: what I—

EB: it was very fundamental mistake on Komer's part

DV: when I—

EB: he should've known better.

Sound bite 4: 200-213

EB: I felt that if you going to do something undercover the best thing to do was go establish you own cover. I mean you gotta understand a lot of these things are farces. Everybody and their brother knows that these cover stories are...are made up. I mean the locals all know.

DV: I understand yeah

EB: the locals all tell you this guy is a CIA agent or this guy is in military intelligence one place where I was living...uh...the came and told me some day...one day "you know, those some...uh...Navy Intelligence people moved in the next block." I said "how do you know they're Navy Intelligence people?" He said "Who else would have air conditioners and a generator that says US Navy to keep them running when the electricity goes off?" You know, so these things are jokes and...uh...I didn't want any part of a joke. So I made all my own arrangements, did all my own things, got my own job.

Sound bite 5: 248-435

EB: well, some of it was, you know, just Americans don't have the facts and others were deliberate attempts by the Vietnamese to misled the Americans.

DV: can you give me an example

EB: I've been...I've been to offices of Vietnamese generals, you know, and they would have a couple of their aides in knew and we would have a comfortable hour or two in the afternoon drinking tea and reminiscing and talking about what is going on and I would say "well, so what are you doing in this? What are you doing in that? What's really happening here? What's really happening there?" in the course of that maybe they would say "oh so and so was in this morning to get an official report on that," and they'd all have a big laugh, you know, "boy fed him a line, we told him this, we told him that." I mean they'd tell me what they told him as an official report. When they just told me something fundamentally different.

DV: in other words, the Vietnamese were telling the Americans what they wanted to hear or what they thought they wanted to hear

EB: yeah...and they were very open to me that they had done that.

DV: can you give me an example, something that would be particularly significant if there was an incident or a particular instance.

EB: well...um...when they were running, I've forgotten the name of it, Lam Son's seven-sixteen

DV: seven-nineteen

EB: seven-nineteen up on...across the Laotian border.

DV: big mistake

EB: when that operation was being executed...um...the Vietnamese who were going up to...uh...I never

went there but the Vietnamese who were traveling up there routinely or were assigned by the JGS to be liaison to the operation...uh...would come back and would see them I would have meetings with them they would spend hours telling me what was going on. They would talk about things like, you know, the Vietnamese units weren't advancing when they were ordered to...uh...the casualties were X or Y or so and so commander was...uh...you know, too cautious or was afraid he never commanded large units in the field before and he didn't understand how to do it well, all these problems with the operation and then I would say "so what's being reported," and they would say "we are reporting continued success, we are reporting that they were aggressively attacking, we are reporting casualties at fifty percent of what they really are."

DV: ok, I get it

EB: the Americans did the same thing in that operation...uh...one thing that I was told in the course of that was that...uh...the United States was not flying airstrikes the way they that were supposed to be and...uh...I happened to be friends with the guy who was, then, the head of the office I had worked in and American at JGS and I went by his office and I said "gee, you know, I wonder how operation Lam Son Seven Nineteen is going and, this is an American colonel I am talking to, he says well X and Y is happening and its happening and that's going on" and I said "well, what about the airstrikes?" and he said "well that's really going well. Such and such is happening and such and such is happening," and I said "well, if I were you, I would look into it such and such because I don't really thing that is going on. I am suspicious that, you know, given my background and experience in things...uh...I don't think that's really happening," and he would swear, you know, and that particular incident...um...MACV had an arrangement with the Agency, in which the Agency could not disseminate any military intelligence without the J2's approval. They could disseminate political intelligence but not military intelligence. They took my report, fed it through the MACV J2 and said "it's erroneous. It's not factual we've checked it out. It cannot be disseminated." The MACV immediately turned around and took a remedial action on this issue and sent out a whole team of people to fix it but it was never reported that it was a problem. Now I think that is symptomatic of how Washington ended up with a misperception of what was happening, what was really going on, what was right and what was wrong.

DV: right and then policy decisions are made in correctly because the facts aren't there, ok. I'd like to ask you a few more questions—

EB: and in the case of General Phong, for example, he was in serious trouble with the Prime Minister, although, he was his chosen, with the President, although he was the Prime Minister's chosen man over...uh...whether he would order the police to stuff the ballot boxes in the election in favor of Theiu and he refused, dumbly and insistently but maybe good for him from a moral point of view. He said "that's not the role of the police if you want to hire people or if you want to send your political party out to stuff 'em maybe I could find away to look the other way but I can't have policemen literally do it for you. I mean that's just too much and they had huge battles over this. Now...

DV: Theiu said "that's the way it's always been

EB: now simultaneously, you have to understand, Vietnamese culture, simultaneously...um...there was a to do going on between the women. Women are very powerful in oriental societies and Westerners don't think so and fail to take account of it and it's a big mistake I personally knew one of General Phong's mistress's his favorite mistress and I knew General Kim's Chef de Cabernet

DV: who is?

EB: General...Colonel...but Phong came to a reception and brought his mistress instead of his first wife this caused a uproar among several of the first wives (sic) of key Generals including Thieu and the Prime

Minister because, of course, each of them had mistresses and their first wives didn't want them to somehow get the idea that this behavior was ok

DV: acceptable

EB: I mean you could have a mistress and spend time with her you could have a second wife, third wife but you didn't bring her, on New Year's day to an official function

DV: As it is in Greece the last couple weeks with...uh—

EB: that was just intolerable. Phong did that. The guy was insane. The girl was the next wack sergeant (no idea what he means here) I mean I had know here when we are in the Army, very beautiful girl. So Mrs. Kim was prevailing on Mr. Kim and Mrs. Thieu was prevailing on Mr. Thieu do something about that son of a bitch Phong in the middle of this Phong says to Thieu I'm not going to do this in the election. They had a lot going against him.

DV: and so he was removed as director general of the National Police

EB: it dragged on for months

DV: but eventually he was removed

EB: he was removed

DV: and replaced by...

EB: threw this whole time Phong was talking to me three, four, five times a week that this was going on, called into the palace at two am. He was lectured for two hours about his behavior he was told he had to get the police to support the election. He was never told he had to stuff the ballot box but they said "the police have to do their share. The police have to be supportive. The police have to be participating. They cannot be passive. It isn't acceptable in a war against a mortal enemy for a force as important as the police to be passive. They have to do things." He would call me up at four o'clock in the morning and sit and cry. We'd drink in his mistress's house while he'd cry about "oh Christ, I just had this meeting, my life is going to be ruined. I'll be lucky if they don't kill me in the morning. I'll have accident. I'll get run of the road or they'll gun down my plane." You know, all these things that he'd imagine that could happen or at least I'll loose my job and my career will be over and, you know, but I love her. So I was reporting all these things. So when he finally was removed. You know, he was handed picked by Komer for this job. This was not a simple thing to decide you were going to remove the handpicked chosen one of the Americans and certainly not someone as powerful as Komer so Thieu debated for a long time and agonized over this. He didn't want to do it. He didn't want get in trouble with the Americans but in the end he felt he had to. He was pressured by his wife. He was pressured by the Prime Minister. He was pressured by his wife. He couldn't get Phong to give in on anything. You know, it got to be a real difficult issue. So ultimately in the end he had to fire him. Now the reason I bring this up is then I was contacted and I was asked if I would prepare a back channel message to the White House to Kissinger as to why we didn't know this was going to happen and I said "what are you talking about? What do you mean we didn't know this was going to happen? I just spent, you know, a major portion of the last four months doing nothing but telling step by step how this is evolving and happening in enormous detail, how, you know, you say what do you mean we didn't know this was going to happen? I just don't understand what you are saying? So after a lot of disassembly they said "well we never disseminated any of those reports, so in Washington it looks like we didn't know that we were surprised since there was no preliminary reporting and now all of a suddenly we tell them he was fired it looks like we didn't do are job that we weren't on top of the intelligence that we didn't know and...uh...they said since you were so intimately involved we figured no one better than you could write an explanation about why we didn't know.

DV: that would have been a work of fiction if you had written what they wanted

EB: which of course I didn't write

DV: did that bring your—

EB: that was the beginning of the end. I mean that was such a startling omission or broach on their part that, you know, I lost any faith as to what of any of things that I was doing was disseminated or reported or dealt with

Sound bite 6: 492-570

EB: and for a while I was in a group of people, in addition to these guys, who were...uh...the coup people. They were the people who...uh...you know, in the early 1960s when there was lots of turbulence, they were frequently in the middle of all these coups

DV: Tran Van Dong?

EB: Lieutenant Colonels and that ilk who actually carried them out. Not the plotter, not the key guy who is, you know, at the top but their Lieutenants, Guys who were the implementers of these things. So, you know, these guys were all anti Americans and most of the people that I dealt with in these key military positions were also anti-Americans and they...they were schizophrenic in the sense that on one hand they were extreme nationalists who wanted nothing to do with foreigners. Many of them didn't speak English, have never learned French...uh...and, you know, were in the Viet Minh or their fathers were in the Viet Minh they were true, in my view, true Vietnamese nationalists it was a part of the community most Americans never dealt with, never tapped into because the Vietnamese wanted nothing to with it.

DV: can you name some of them, if you remember?

EB: but on the other hand these guys knew if they were to be in power, if they to do anything they had to take largess of the Americans so they needed a conduit and channel and communications with the Americans, which, you know, is inconsistent and illogical given their philosophical beliefs and everything but they were always turn between their idealism and their pragmatic view of the situation. So, in...I'm sure to many of them I fit the bill ideally of what they needed. I understood them. I was not sympathetic to American policies, myself and I was vocal about that. I understood much of what were doing wrong. I could easily agree with them when they said "this is dumb and that's dumb and we shouldn't do this" and I would say "boy you sure got that," sincerely. I spoke their language they didn't have to deal in a foreign language. I understood their culture they could speak to me in the symbolism and nuances of that they wanted to in their culture and yet they knew or suspected that this would flow to the right place and they would have their channel of communication to the Americans so for them it was an easy way out. They didn't have to deal with somebody they didn't like. They didn't have to deal with somebody who didn't understand them. They didn't have to deal with someone in a foreign language and yet they achieved a connection to Americans they thought was essential.

DV: so you served a lot of purposes for a lot of people, I understand. It seems to me that the CIA could not of had one of its people in your position. It would not have...

EB: yes but you have to understand the CIA didn't create this, I created this. I did this all by myself and I went to a guy in the Agency one day and I said "you know, you guys are really dumb. You don't have this. You don't have that. Your flow of information is threw Sorteeaneo (sp?) and Phu Down. (sp?) What the hell do you think Phu tells Sorteeaneo? What do you think Khan tells them," you know, or "what do you think West finds out from the chief of police. What do you think Minh tells West. Wha...what do you think goes on in these PICs and things. They guy isn't there in the interrogation and he doesn't

understand Vietnamese. What the hell do you think he'll be able to tell him from the interrogation? They tell him what they want to know. What do you think happens over in the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of R&D, or the Joint General Staff? "

Silence from 590 to end of tape is

Tape 2 Side 2

Sound bite 1: 094-132

EB: the desire and I believe it was a sincere desire of the Program...Komer and Colby, especially Colby I knew Colby much better than I knew Komer. I knew more about...I learned more about Komer after came to the United States than I knew in Vietnam. He left shortly after I was with the Program. Colby was there most of the time...um...I dealt with him a lot

DV: just a little, a very important question here...

EB: um...I believe the Program was sincere first they desired to arrest you. I should say first they desire to Chieu Hoi you. Secondly they desire to arrest people. Third, kill people but third was a distant third. Now people have argued with me that that's not true. I believe if you spend thirty microseconds thinking about these guys are intelligence people. What do you they want?

DV: information

EB: they want information and you don't get information from dead people.

DV: but then again the guys on the ground who carried out these arrest operations wanted to kill their mortal enemies they didn't want to capture them.

EB: well, yes and no but there is another factor at stake which I think is more important. I never saw a VC or a communist party member willing submit to arrest.

DV: [laughing] yeah right, Colby interviewed said to me "what are you going to do tell him 'hands up! You're arrest!'"

EB: I mean they all turned into firefights not so much that we wanted to kill them as they wanted to escape

DV: but at least go down fighting because I think a lot realized if they gave up it was prison or just endless Con Son

EB: but you don't think like that your first thought is to escape, blast them and run like hell. Lots of them were shot in the back, while they were trying to escape. They were killed in fire fights...

DV: but my...

EB: and many of those were not targeted operations

DV: but I mean at the national level, the level you were at, were you conceiving and then saying "we want to get this guy. This guy...we know that...uh...its like I was saying with this Special Operations Group that went and got the best penetration agents at that penetration agent become a liability.

EB: the...the...there...the...the Special Police and their CIA advisor may have did run some high level operations we ran no operations out of the central office, none.

Sound bite 2: 182-209

EB: Phoenix also, you know, provided another very important function, sounds ridiculous in a way but it was important...uh...it provided an accounting and data collection function. It kept tally.

DV: it...it...those

EB: goes from the bottom all the way up through the structure. So who's been killed. Who was VC

DV: those records are all available now through the national archives. They've saved them.

EB: and many of them were not killed through Phoenix operations. There was no requirement for it to be a Phoenix operation. It was a requirement for Phoenix to account for them if they were VCI. So if, you know...uh...the first air cavalry was conducting a sweep operation and then later in the body count there were five guys there who happened to be traveling with the NVA unit who were VC tax collectors because we were responsible for keeping tally of who in the VCI was eliminated and who was still a threat. It had nothing to do with who conducting the operation. It was a coordination clearinghouse.

DV: I got that

EB: so people who say, you know, "Phoenix killed X VCI by looking at the statistics don't understand what's going on." They killed some of them. They killed some of them accidentally. They killed some through arrests. They killed some threw blunders but there were very few, in my opinion, targeted operations run by PRU or anybody else, especially against high level people. What targeted operations there were were against tax collectors, couriers, they'd interrogate some guy "say what path ways do you use." Go out set up PRU ambush; ambush the next guy who comes down the trail. He's the replacement for the guy you interrogated and he's another courier or he's a tax collector. We were lucky if they guy who came down the trail was someone of significance

Sound bite 3: 215-268

EB: now my classic story, which I think I told in Al Stantoli's book, I don't remember whether he used it.

DV: you said "if we go out and bump him off..."

EB: we sat in the marketplace

DV: yeah...yeah

DV: Colonel Ton, Mr. Who, and I and I don't even remember which province it was but it was up near the border in the third Corps, a hotbed of VCI infrastructure support for NVA units, lots money flowing there donated by there by the French rubber plantation...uh...with out much coercion, in any case, they didn't like the Vietnamese, though...um...this women comes in, she's got a couple of three, four small kids, the youngest is about two ranges up to seven or eight and then Ton says to me "see this women over there?" You know, we're sitting eating soup, drinking Vietnamese coffee. She's sitting over their feeding her kids at another table in the market stall and I say "yeah." He said "you know who she is? She's the province chief's wife." So I looked around I say "I don't see the province chief, you're telling me there's a honest province chief." Now there would be some reason they pointed her out to me. "you're telling me there's an honest province chief and his wife doesn't own his jeep and go around collecting money all day or what are you telling me?" He said "no, no the VC province chief." So being young and naive I say "well, Jesus Christ look how many small kids she has. She either goes to see him, she's got another lover or he goes to see her." They say "right but there all his kids. They look like him." I said "well she must travel out to where she is or he must come and visit her. I mean this is something we can really work

with.”

DV: [laughing] you're just putting the pieces together

EB: “no, no you don't understand. You don't live the way we do. You don't have any family here. You going to home when this operation is over, maybe not you, maybe you stay for others but Americans and general but you don't think like we do. We are going live here forever. I have a home. I have a family. I have children who have to travel to school. I have a wife that has to go to market. You want me to go kill his wife? You want me to set a trap for him and kill him when he comes in to visit his wife. What do you think they are going to do with our wives!” “How many wives whatever it takes.” Zero except...

DV: how many province chief's were ever captured? Probably zero also.

EB: unless they happened to drive or a land mine that was put there and was a random death. The VC didn't run targeted operations against them either.

DV: that's...that's the whole thing its just...

EB: they were...

DV: I remember reading that when...when you said that

EB: there were certain rules...there were certain rules you played by...

DV: so many lights when off in head

EB: you know, if you went out and conducting a military operation and you chased them down, fair and square in the jungle and you had a fight that was ok. If they ambushed you on the way back from a military operation that was fair but to conduct these clandestine police operations and really get at the heart of things that was kinda immoral, illegitimate in some way to them. That was not cricket and the Vietnamese were very, very leery of upsetting that.

Sound bite 4: 268-312

DV: I hear some horror stories about Phoenix of...uh...counterterror kind of stuff, of atrocities for the sake of atrocity to scare people.

EB: those things happened by individual POs or people who work for the Pos, you know, in the PRUs. Atrocities happen, they happened in the US units. My Lai happened. No matter what anybody says about I didn't happen, it did happen. I've watched people torch Montagnard villages for no real reason except they were frustrated by not being able to catch the VC and the Montagnards must of known about them, which I believe they did but we didn't have to burn the houses.

DV: regarding Phoenix

EB: because you're frustrated.

DV: dif Phoenix...uh...provide...uh...avenues for people who wanted to abuse it

EB: look, it depends on whether you want to call like the PICs, Phoenix facilities or Phoenix operations or not. If you want to say all the intelligence activities that were supposed to be coordinated by Phoenix are part of Phoenix, then yes but you want to say did that Phoenix go do these things my belief is the answer is no because Phoenix was too inactive, too incompetent and too passive.

DV: I understand

EB: now Phoenix should have been doing many more things directly and if they had then my belief that Phoenix would have perpetrated some atrocities because they would have been in the position that these other people were in. Were they were frustrated. They were angry. They would have done some things.

DV: but as it stands they never had a chance to be frustrated

EB: but...but they do too little to be that way but if you look at, you know, all the greater Phoenix and say the PRUs, the PICs, all the Special Branch activities whether they were coordinated with Phoenix or not are a part of Phoenix than undoubtedly the answer to that has to be yes. Furthermore, you could make the case that Phoenix was helping to repress the loyal opposition political parties and prevented a neutral Vietnam from occurring and Vietnamese said that. Why? Because the Special Branch guy was planned the operation to nullify their political operation was also running Phoenix operations.

DV: right

EB: so it depends on how you want to interpret the data and how you want to say things were connected together.

Tape ends at 765 for rest of tape Brady talks about fighting bureaucracy to stay in Vietnam, his wife, and his post-Army career in Computer sciences. Some interesting stuff that I imagine might have been useful context for the Phoenix book but I didn't think it had a place in the CIA Speaks.

Brady Tape 3 Side 1

Sound bite 1: 033-120

EB: Phoenix did a number of other things it worked with the Department of Interior on, you know...uh...the administrative judicial aspects. That's James Matthew (not sure on that name) used to run.

DV: Quang Tre

EB: of the laws, you know, the status of people who were arrested, of being able to incarcerate them indefinitely and having periodic reviews...um...I went down to prison at Con Son Island a number of times, and wondered around the cell blocks and talk to the VC prisoners. You know we had a lot of that kind of judicial, the other side of things. So what did you do when you got them and...uh...are you going to let the say they were Chieu Hois after they were arrested or not. How would you know whether the Cheiu Hoi really did or if you arrested them...uh...on and on. You know, I...I was one the people who wrote a lot about how in prisons if they weren't VC before they got there they damn sure were when they came out and this was the greatest training center we ever created.

DV: Ho Chi Minh University

EB: we kept hardcore VCI down there and then put these guys that we weren't really sure were VCI or not but some how or another we arrested them we sent them down to get indoctrinated and trained and they came back, you know, and then they released into society because they were had been low-level tax collectors and by then were big political cadres with VC

DV: with status because they had been Con Son

EB: you know, and they trained them and recruited them and everything else while they were there and

really trained...got them to be big wheels and then released these big wheels but they were really just peons when we made them into somebody. There were a lot of perverse effects.

DV: that's an aspect I want to deal with certainly and the whole detainee problem is a theme, which, to a great extent...

EB: it's a serious problem here

DV: emerges from PICs, in a sense, because it's the status of the people put into PIC that becomes very much the problem

EB: we talk about the interrogation but, you know, what you do with them afterwards is the real problem

DV: one guy put it to me this way. He said "nobody wanted to be the jailer of Vietnam" and so that for many, many years people giving the problems giving the problem, you know, everybody kept to the military.

EB: you know, send them all to something. Send them all to Con Son and then you have this problem. Con Son they were all mixed together who the hardcore cadre but walking around the cell block talking to them I pretty well figured out what was going on in few days and they were very frank about it.

DV: the prisoners?

EB: yeah

DV: yeah

EB: you know, I visited a guy in solitary confinement, chained to the floor and I spent a couple hours in the cell with him. You know "what the hell do you want to do this for?" He said "because I'm patriotic." He said every morning when they line us up they want us to salute the flag of Vietnam. I'm not a South Vietnamese. I'm a communist. I'm not going to salute the flag of South Vietnam so here they call that breach of discipline. So they locked me up. They put me in solitary confinement. Every morning they come and say to me 'are you going to salute the flag?' I could get out of here anytime I wanted to all I have to do is say 'yes' but they can keep here until the war is over I am never going to say 'yes.'

DV: did you respect him, I sense that you felt some respect for the guy,

EB: yeah sure, the guy had his principles. He knew what he was. He knew what he believed in a...and when you looked around and say he was chained up you got the message, the message was out. He was well fed. So he had a little social deprivation what else did they do? Nothing. Is that a big cost for his principles Everybody in the camp knew about him. Everybody in the camp knew he was chained up because he was a real communist and he wouldn't salute the flag so it was very important symbolic thing to the prisoners.

DV: are you suggesting that the prison officials would have done well just put this guy and not and just let him circulate so as to remove that symbol for the—

EB: just disregard it. Just disregard that he wouldn't salute the flag. What the hell were you going to get. It was a power struggle, you going to submit to us, like you'd have with your children. You're going to do what I want because I say so. That's what its about and the grand effect of the propaganda value and the lessons that the other cadre who were free teaching to the other people, "see how we believe in principles and remember those GVN officials who had no principals and ripped off your family, corrupt, look what we're like." That was all lost, not understood, not cared about. There's thousands of those guys. There was that whole aspect, the judicial aspect, it's legality, you know, we had the constitution changed to

make communism a crime under the constitution so that we could sentence them for a violation of the constitution if we could prove they were a communist and it took three independent reports to say they were a communist and then that was an automatic crime because we said in the constitution it was unconstitutional to be a communist.

DV: that's thought control, censorship

EV: so we worked out all the legalities of that, made sure all the legal things were in place.

DV: how did you feel about doing that?

EB: well, I thought it was important that what we did was legal.

DV: but isn't that putting the horse before the—

EB: they went through the...whatever the constitutional requirements. I forget whether it was a national referendum or...or the province...the national legislature, you know, it was put before them as a bill to amend the constitution and I forgot what article it was, article four or article six, in a certain constitution that it was illegal to be a communist and then that gave us the legal basis to pursue them and...uh...

DV: to do what had been done all along.

EB: right but now there were judicial committees formed in each province who were chaired by the province chief and they had the administrative/judicial right under the law to decide whether someone was a communist or not with no juries or...uh...no lawyers .

DV: central security committee.

EB: well this was at the province level

DV: well yes and then there was—

EB: and they sentenced them and this was reviewed by the central security amendment...uh...committee, which the Special Police were administers and jurors and people like that were involved and then the sentence was upheld they were transported to Con Son Island and sent to school

DV: yes I am definitely going to be dealing with that

EB: and all that was legal...

Sound bite 2: 120-184

uh...I think it was Desmond Palmer, but I'm not sure, who was the legal guy in Malaysia and you know they made a big point to us in setting up Phoenix...uh...they brought...uh...Sir Robert Thompson and several of these other people, the commissioner of the police and the director

DV: Duncan or something

EB: David Duncan, yes...uh...several times talk to us about the importance of doing things legally and to uphold democratic kinds of things despite the nature of what was going on and everything and be able to point to the legality of things and so we incorporated all these things into the program and got the laws changed and things so this could be done administratively and by review and that's what the British did. The British did exactly the same thing in Malaysia, no difference. We set it up along that model and...uh...there was a committee of three people that decided whether a person could be resentenced for

one year, two years, for three years at a time but, I think, it was no more than three and then they had to be reviewed again but if the three of them continued agree forever the person would stay in jail forever.

DV: administrative detention, an tri

EB: and that was all taken from Malaysia

DV: and Ireland

EB: I didn't know about that...uh...the jungle constabulary was brought from Malaysia but there was a big flaw in this. In Malaysia the communists were Chinese

DV: they could be distinguished

EB: they were ethnically, visibly distinguished from the population and you could use...uh...ethnic prejudice in the villages to help you isolating the villages. When you punished Malays and Indians for something the Chinese had done you could get a certain amount...number of Malays and Chinese to rally to your side to provide you information to sever this link to the people. You couldn't do that in Vietnam.

DV: a lot of people said have said to me that the Malayan model didn't work.

EB: and this is why. We could not visibly distinguish them. They had family ties. They were not ethnically different. They were intermingled in the general population there was no easy way to separate when them in a propaganda/political way. You had to physically enforce it always. The British didn't have to. The British had to turn the tide psychologically against them and it was a much easier thing since they were Chinese.

DV: what about that...a...and they also made good use of that High Value Reward Program in Malaya were they gave fantastic rewards and then resettled people.

EB: but they weren't Chinese who were ratting on 'em

DV: that's right

EB: they were the Malays and the Indians. They said "what the hell are the Chinese who (a couple words I can't make out) and they exploited that very smoothly and we couldn't do that. I mean Sir Robert Thompson told me himself on one of his trips "I don't know how we're going to solve this problem in Vietnam. I don't understand it and I'm glad its you and not me who has to deal with it." Now he was a little snokkerned like he usually was but I think that was fundamentally what he thought. He was trying to give us advice. He knew there were very, very important differences and he didn't knew how to deal with it.

DV: it's certainly reassuring to me to know that Thompson at least recognized the difference. I mean I can't imagine trying to perpetrate an idea they were the same thing.

EB: I mean you know he said "here's all my notes from the twelve years I spent their written in hand." He gave me a folder like this said "you know, you're welcome to extract anything you might find useful but you understand the problem one whole hell of a lot better than I do. I never lived here. I don't understand this culture. I don't understand this people and you want me to tell you something about Malaysia. Ask me but I can't directly tell you want the answers or help you with this problem. I don't understand it, what I know of it. I don't know how to solve."

DV: At least he's honest

EB: I liked him. I liked him a lot

DV: I know Colby liked him

EB: I liked him a lot. He's a very open engaging person, who spoke frankly and told you what he thought. I can always deal with someone like that.

Sound bite 3: 224-243

EB: and how the program was conceived and executed in different regions varied greatly. You know, in I-Corp there were hardly any police operations cities because there wasn't anything outside the cities except VC contested and enemy controlled areas. So it was a massive military thing and in order for people not to get blame for not doing what they were supposed to be doing in Phoenix, they had...uh...what do you call it, Kit Carson Scouts and they would have twenty Kit Carson Scouts who belonged in US divisions so they would run a search operation threw a village and let the Kit Carson Scout talk to the local inhabitants and call it a Phoenix operation, tally one.

DV: like Evan Parker said to me "a lot of things were done in the name of Phoenix."

EB: well that's an example and there wasn't a single a Vietnamese governmental official, military, police, or civilian, even there but it was turned in as a Phoenix operation. They did nothing to help establish a VC, I mean GVN, presence. They didn't even think there was anything important about asking the police to come.

Sound bite 4: 243-251

DV: what about the role of Special Forces in Phoenix?

EB: SOG?

DV: yeah

EB: well, I mean SOG people were...uh...at the top and they knew what Phoenix was doing and they knew what the Phoenix objectives were and if they killed a VCI in the course of their operations. They turned their name and information to us and we tallied another one but, you know, in general the...

DV: but it wasn't...

EB: operated...uh...in a different arena, you know, in Laos, or in Cambodia, a lot of it was out of country.

Sound bite 5: 344-389

DV: but none the less the person who is a nationalist and sincerely believes in communism in my book is better than the totem who is personally enriching himself through cooperation with foreigners who are trying to muck around in his country and the failure of most US policy in most areas of the world is we seem to lack an ability to find a promote and support democratic nationalists among the population as opposed to those who want to use us for something in an obscene way against their own people. I would put people like Marcus...Marcos, the Shah, people like that in that category. I mean sure they have supported US interests in many important ways and are national security leads on global basis but they have done next to nothing for their own people and in fact they have impoverished their own people in many different ways, through oppression of the press, through economic control, through personal enrichment, you know, in some gross obscene way. I would rather have a communist than that but I believe in every country there are nationalist who are democratically inclined and so the trick is to find

them and support them in ways that are not intrusive and don't turn them into the corrupt people that you don't want to support and I think the part and parcel of how you going about doing that is encourage operations against the communist party. I mean you can't let communist operate freely using terrorist methods against the democrats.

DV: because the democrats are ultimately the target of the communists. It's those people who are the strong nationalist.

EB: so I don't believe, although I would listen to an argument along these lines, I don't believe that in order to preserve democratic freedoms you have to eschew operations like Phoenix. I think they can be a part of your bag of tools that you bring to bear against the problem but it has to be done in a sensible kind of way.

Tape ends at 440

Brickham February 9th Excerpts

TRACK ONE

Track 1 Sound Bite1

DV: Can you give me a little historical background of CIA involvement with special branch, do you know what proceeded you when the CIA assumed that role.

NB: No I can't—not really at all. I would assume—this is sheer guesswork—that this developed in the early 60s...maybe late 50s. The original model for counterinsurgency in Vietnam I think came from the British through the Malaysian experience...Sir Robert Thompson and I am sure its...well of course French also always had a Special Branch of police.

DV: Yeah Sûreté

NB: Uh well that's...uh...no as a matter fact the French don't. It's the British that have a Police...a...uh...Special Branch as part of the police and not the French. So the model in Vietnam is a British model and with the Special Branch being concerned with intelligence was the natural civilian agency toward which we would gravitate if and when the CIA got interested in the Vietnam problem so there I think it would be late 1950s or early 1960s, probably under Colby, that the Special Branch liaison become significant. No basically the CIA staked out even in military intelligence around the world...unless there was an active military presence...the CIA staked out clandestine operations as their purview whether they were run by an army or a civilian agency so that the spy operations lets say of the Iranian army technically were the purview of the CIA, no this is resulted in continuing conflict between the US military and the CIA which continues to exist today.

DV: well that would be something that would be interested to discuss, that's certainty one of my questions.

NB: and what it boils down to is the so called agreed activities charter where the US military are permitted to run clandestine operations but its...there subject to review and subject veto by the CIA, so this is the basic relationship of military intelligence but civilian intelligence was always claimed exclusively by the CIA.

DV: when you arrived in Vietnam was the Special Branch headquarters in the National Police Interrogation Center?

NB: I think it was but I'm...I am not sure.

DV: you were not going down there?

NB: No, I had no liaison responsibilities at the Saigon level with the National Police or the Special Branch. My boss did, Red Stent, Jack Stent, and his predecessor was a man by the name of Paul Hodgenson. These people as well as liaison as well as with CIO...um...I'd been down to the places for conferences and we also ran some training programs in agent operations and in supervision and management of intelligence operations for the police but I cannot say exactly where these things were held. I've been to this places but I cannot affirm. I can't answer you question.

DV: that's fine.

Sound Bite 2

NB: This offer or suggestion was made in terms of John Hart's dissatisfaction with the PRU operation. Lets say...lets call them what they were at that time the CTs—Counterterror units because it was of this...these deliberations that the name PRU was generated, they were not called PRU before them.

Sound Bite 3

NB: Ok John hart was dissatisfied with the PRU, with the image...uh the reputation that the Counterterror teams had acquired. He wanted to turn the PRU—the CTs into an intelligence arm and not a paramilitary service he wanted them for the purpose of capturing prisoners, capturing documents and going after particular sources of intelligence.

Sound bite 4

NB [mumbles about two elements and not being able to remember both of them]...there was the intelligence arm, the intelligence liaison.

DV: this was a part I was unclear of

NB: ok there was the intelligence liaison under the so called liaison branch that dealt with the Vietnamese the CIO, and the police Special Branch on questions of intelligence and counterintelligence, counter espionage.

Sound bite 5

NB: Across the hall from us were the—we just called them PM people but these were all the other programs that the station was involved in the provinces these involved so called Revolution Development, Propaganda...uh

DV: PRU

RB: the...uh...counter terror teams, the uh census grievance teams.

Doug, in the file you sent me outlining what pieces to transcribe you wrote this about sound bite five, “PM people, RD, propaganda, CT, CG etc... (to Brickham on PICs and PRU as foundation stones of PHX, how PHX created by Saigon station).” That last part in the brackets I don’t understand what you mean but this where my soundbit five ended. Just to let you know.

Sound Bite 8

NB: [mumbles about that guy who Doug interviewed and how he can’t remember his name but he bumped into him recently after Doug had interviewed him.] ...Tom Donahue was a Branch chief there running this organizational [not sure “abortion” “bullshit” “borscht” maybe?] this mishmash that they called a PM shop and it was this kind of situation that Hart wanted to straighten out.

Sound Bite 9

... and it was this kind of situation that Hart wanted to straighten out. The first move was to adopt this Regional Officer concept from our...from the liaison branch experience... he liked that and then the second was establish Province Officers. So early the CIA, in province came under one coordinated mind. This was all fall 1966 it was a major, major step.

Sound Bite Ten

DV: PIC Training Teams

NB: yeah ok this was John Muldoon.

Like sound bite five, what Doug’s guide leads me to believe that there was more to sound bite ten. “SB 10 re: PIC training teams, Muldoon, etc... (to Brickham on Muldoon, Special Branch and PICs).”

Sound bite 12

DV: You said you would have more information on that, on the PIC training team...was this something you put together.

RB: oh...no no I...uh...what I did was remembered

DV: you remembered

RB: remembered John Muldoon’s name that fact that he did have a team of people.

DV: And was his team...did it include an Air Force Major, a state trooper from New Orleans...was it basically three people who went around to different the PICs.

RB: I have no absolutely idea who these people where. There were two or three people

DV: two or there people who went around to the different PICs and would then train the PIC advisor in operation

RB: well the PIC advisor was the province officer and maybe later after a left country maybe they brought in another round eyes to run the PICs...Although my own directive to the Province officer was you run

PICs at a distance. They are Special Branch property and a Special Branch operation and the Americans are not to be identified in the public mind with the operation of the PIC. Now, that may have gone overboard later but while I was there these guys were not to go near the PICs, on a day to day—they certainly weren't participating in interrogations there.

Sound Bite 13

RB: When they were talking about Presidentially directed program in the spring of 1967 this Bob Komer and this is ICEX-slash-Phoenix. And yes, at this time they did go over to a massive recruitment of military and other people and not CIA staffers for these various positions.

Sound Bite 14

DV: what about John Muldoon

RB: Ok back to the PIC training, John Muldoon was the chief of this little group. They would—

DV: was here there when you arrived.

RB: Yes he was there when I arrived, and I think he was there when I left. I'm not sure. He may have been gone at the time. He suffered from high blood pressure. He drank like a fish. He his face would turn scarlet. He was overweight. And he came back after he retired from the Agency and he step his own private detective agency in Northern Virginia there.

Sound Bite 15

RB: in any event these fellas would monitor the PIC construction and they would also work with the province officer on establishing with the training programs for the translators at the PICs, for the files and collation work and for the...training...to provide for the to Police Special Branch personnel assigned to be the PICs as interrogators.

Sound Bite 16

DV: John Muldoon Security Consultants International

RB: Probably. You already talk to him.

DV: No but I was told he was one of Lucy and Conein's best friends.

RB: Could very well be

Sound Bite 17

DV: Question about PICs, why do they look like they look? Why are they designed in that regard is that something that is standard? Is there some model that PIC buildings were built upon? Do you have anything to do with that?

RB: I didn't have anything to do with that. That started before I was here.

DV: that would be a question for Muldoon ben?

RB: well no—Muldoon might know the answer to it, I don't know—that would be Paul Hodges or Tucker Gogleman.

Sound Bite 24

DV: Well without getting it to the exact wording it said Special Branch would take over the role of the attack against the VCI. MACV there were eighty proposals, sixty-seven of them were accepted, six were hassled over. The six were—this was one of the six and according to the Pentagon Papers its ICEX that resolves the conflict between the military and CIA over who would have responsibility on the attack on the VCI. CIA recommend that Special Branch would have...as its primary responsibility would be its sole agency to carry out the attack on the VCI.

Sound Bite 26

NB: but the basic proposition involved in all of this was that some day, I mean we all were maybe being optimistic or something, I don't know. Someday we foresaw an end to the war when the army would not be there or there would be a treaty relationship with North Vietnam where the military would be restricted in its roles and therefore we could not wait for an armistice to turn over the something like a Police Field Forces to the civilians after the army had been running them all these years.

Sound Bite 27

NB: This was, again, a lesson from the British experience, that the...it ultimately was going to be a civilian police problem, and army problem it terms of armed units and this and that but a police problem therefore we should we should not wait until the end of the war, letting the military running everything before then and everything fall into chaos when the military was pulled out.

TRACK TWO

Sound Bite 1

DV: Montigue was working for Coleman on the military—you know the RD— but he is often credited with creating the—or him and Richard Holbroke being the force behind the reorganization of 1966.

NB: Well that's a bunch of malarkey—but wait, I shouldn't say that those guys did came out. Komer himself came out. He was a frequent visitor... You come right down to it, I can't say were the real pressure for the OCO reorganization in 1966 came but it very well may have been from the Coleberg, Holbrook, Montigue

Sound Bite 3

DV: what about your relations with Tom Donuhue?

NB: we have very little to do together. We had our separate programs. We knew each other. We were friends. We drank beer together. We had this in the old embassy, Anex (not sure ?) this was the embassy that was blown up in February of '65.

Sound Bite 4

DV: what about your relations with Donahue when you both were on the staff at special [not sure Doug and Brickham talk over each other]

NB: well ok that's what happened was there. In the reorganizations ROIC were established and the PM people were brought under the roof organization. I don't remember if Donahue was out there very long after that.. But what happened was we were moved over to another building and my staff and my operation was called RDC-slash-p and the other operation was RDC/O. Donahue went home or went someplace and a guy by the name of Renz Hoeksema (spells it out)...came out from Washington and took over the shop.

Sound Bite 7

DV: Deliberate compartmentalization before OCO was formalized...

NB: and it remained after OCO too

DV: my that is point [talking over each other Doug says this suggest it isn't [compartmentalized]

NB: Yeah well there was. There never was any real need for lower level liaison—the liaison on province level was almost automatic and I suppose there was problems that arose out there had to be resolved, time to time, by the chief of police—public safety advisor in Saigon and the deputy chief of station. But by and large there wasn't a whole we necessary had to do together. We financed the special branch and they financed the rest of the police. We trained the special branch. We maintained liaison with the special branch. Any problems between chief of special branch and chief of local police in province was a problem that they had to resolve, by in large. But yes the, intelligence operation, for all being integrated into all these different things, still retained its separate identity and it retained its own privacy, if you will.

Sound Bite 8

DV: my next questions was the one we discussed earlier about these officers—44 officers in April who become ICEX officers

Sound Bite 9

NB: What it was, the whole was the Agency had been getting more and more leery about becoming as deeply involved in these interagency programs. This goes back to the big battle of Fall of 1966. Which one of the options? When we talk about ICEX and when we talk about OCO, we have to recall that one of the options was complete agency withdrawal from these operations and activities.

Sound Bite 10

NB: oh no what it was, was once the decision was made that we would become more deeply committed to these programs and we will come deeper involved rather than withdraw. Then the Agency, which itself was running to manpower problems, began to turn more and more to recruitment of ex-military and ex-police people. Now I already had a lot of contract people but after the Komer thing, which was later than this...the Komer thing, they were actually seconding military officers to the agency for these programs. That didn't happen as an outcome of 1966 decision but that was an outcome of Komer...of the

reorganization, if you will, other organization, I should say, of ICEX and Phoenix in 1967. Here we're going after and we have military officers assigned to us and this is what happened with your presidential program you referred to earlier.

DV: Presidential meaning in effect Komer 10

NB: meaning in effect Komer

Sound Bite 11

DV: Census Grievance and John Woodsman I don't suppose there's nothing more to add to that.

NB: No...well we were very interested in that program. We wanted access to its intelligence...

Sound Bite 12

NB: the police could not necessarily absorb this stuff, and of course the basic contract with the Vietnamese peasant was that anything that was learned in Census Grievance would not be turned over to the authorities, to the police authorities.

DV: any reason for that?

NB: well to gain the confidence of—to get the peasantry to cooperate.

DV: so there must have been conflict between the two

NB: there was certainly—well not really conflict we almost had nothing to do with each other, lets put it that way. But it was still something we would very much like to tap into because they could get intelligence we couldn't get to.

DV: So this part of the ICEX formula is to bring all these things together?

NB: The Census Grievance thing was a very clever type of informant program

DV: that's the thrust of what discussed with Donahue

NB: it's a very good to way to go about organizing informant networks. The difficult was caused by the fact that the tacit contract with the Vietnamese source—informants, clients, if you will, whatever—was that the police wouldn't have anything to do with this stuff it was for the province chiefs advice and guidance. They took the Census Grievance and they turned around and used for the CTs, the PRUs and whatever else they had going on.

Sound Bite 13

NB: when you had a base like that with all that elaborate camo gear and everything, you've got files and records. These are what are almost never destroyed when they should be and are captured by the enemy when the base is overrun.

DV: I interviewed Tom Polgar and he told me that [Doug and Brickham talk over each other] he said that no American files or records were left behind, that they all were destroyed.

NB: I don't believe it. I simply don't believe it.

Sound Bite 14

NB: My motto and I am not sure—this is off the record—and I am not sure if I want you to use because its appeared in print and I don't like to see it. But my motto was to recruit 'em, if you can't recruit 'em capture them—if you can't recruit them, defect them—Chieu Hoi—if you can't defect them, capture them if you can't capture them, kill 'em. That was my attitude toward high level VCI. Now we go back on the record. But you have seen that in print some where I know I have.

DV: well I have heard Colby say it, the same thing

NB: Ok he got it from me then, because I am the one who coined that particular expression.

Sound Bite 15

DV: this guy Ogden Williams who was an Agency for International Development person that supposedly set up Chieu Hoi said there was no relations between Chieu Hoi and police operations and no relation between Chieu Hoi and Phoenix later on, which is, from the evidence, I have been able to uncover, its clearly true that they are, especially with the detention centers.

NB: yeah the screening... when the guys were interrogated that's were we would get into it and occasionally the police—I don't care what the Americans said on this—the police had their—police special branch had their knickers in there as deep as they could get them.

Sound Bite 16

NB: there was something else... another change took place in the OCO reorganization, the previous fall. And that was that whereas prior to the reorganization Tom Donohue and Nelson Brickham were supervisors line of command to the field operations as of the reorganization we lost that status we became staff officers to chief of RDC, who was Lou Lapham (?) Deputy Chief of Station for Revolutionary Development.

Sound Bite 17

NB: The line of command now went to chief of station to deputy chief of station for RD to the ROIC to the province officer and you see previously it had been me to the regional officer to the province or the Tom Donahue's side from ton Donahue to the province officer. Now all that has changed.

TRACK THREE

Sound Bite 1

NB: Part of our training program at the station, which I denied existed the last time you asked about training I said "well there wasn't any." Well there was a lot of training. Went on in Washington, a little went on in the station.

Sound Bite 2

DV: I know the CIA always trained its people. The training is something they are fantastically famous for, the best training in the world for everything...

NB: As it turns out, of course, and particularly at the end there, when they were pulling in so many contract people, they had a six month or a two week training program.

DV: Right in Vietnam

NB: No. No. Right here in Washington and quite comprehensive

Sound Bite 3

DV: You once mentioned there was a legislative mandate for...was that for the reorganization?

NB: No, what I said was each agency has its own legislative mandate and any formula in terms of an ICEX kind of thing had to be something that respected the independent legislative mandate.

Sound Bite 4

NB: Those legislative givens have to be respected I, as a member of CIA, can't set up an organizational arrangement where I am going to spend Pentagon money unless the Pentagon gives it to me and if it gives it to me it has to be within the frameworks of congressional appropriations because if its not its an illegal transfer of funds. So we when set this thing up we had to, as a matter a fact we put the proviso on this thing...how does it say...lets see...recommendation oh no...well what we did was write in such away that the agencies would still provide their own money, own personnel and own direction but we would creating a machinery by which they would be directed to a specific purpose.

Sound Bite 5

DV: just as a side note, how were you're—can we talk about how the reports were self-correcting and self-improving

NB: we talking about...self improving performance or a report system as fostering self improvement.

Sound Bite 6

NB: The basic idea is that if a person knows what is expected of them and if he is provided some kind of objective measure of his performance in terms of that expectation then he is going to strive to do better. It's that simple. Basically, ultimately it's that simple. So that they report system was structured, and I talk about that in these documents by the way...the report system was structured to focus on what is—what's expected of them and to ask him questions. The answers to which reflect on how he is doing on them. And this has a...self improvement, if you will, orientation to it.

Sound Bite 7

NB: the next step beyond the individual focusing on his own performance and performance measurement, is the...that if you have objective system of measurement when you can circulate openly the performance

results for various groups, which are...are or could be competitive. In any event, when people see their own performance reflected against the scale they try to do better.

Sound Bite 8

NB: I was asked to create, by John Hart originally, to create a general staff for pacification or counterinsurgency; I forget which word I used. I actually created a not a general staff planning body but an executive action organization.

Sound Bite 9

NB: what the purpose of this whole thing was to create a structure

DV: just repeat that again for me.

NB: Instead of creating a general staff planning staff for pacification we actually created an executive action agency.

Sound Bite 10 (This was not one of the sound bites Doug wanted to be transcribed but I thought it was good in that it shows how policy is crafted in the field through practice and only organized and rearranged by so called policymakers.)

NB: What we focused on was getting the job done rather than planning and thinking about it. My point, as reflected in the paper, is that...we have done all the thinking necessary. We have all the pieces here. We have to make it work together and we have do it well. Whatever you do you have to do it well.

Sound Bite 11

NB: They brought in all these brains from Rand Corporation, and that kind of thinking— program evaluation, upscaling and all that. They had these people—I think Danny Gram was one of them

DV: Yeah defense intelligence agency...

NB: What happened was Danny Gram came back and headed that same shop in up hear in the agency because Bill Colby we out to Vietnam and looked at this thing and decided he liked it...it was a mess...

DV: he also testified at Westmoreland's trial

NB: Danny Gram, I don't remember how he testified.

DV: He backed up Westmoreland [talking over each other]

NB: Well I am not surprised he is one of the ultra right wingers. One of the star wars people and I know some people who are connected to him. I am afraid of these people they scare me.

Sound Bite 15

NB: one the major question involved in all of this...and one of the points I would like to make was that is we chose a certain solution, as I mentioned last time, that we did this over the objections—or with out

regard to Headquarters' views and as a matter of fact, in direct opposition to one of their instructions, Colby's cables from Washington. But the effort still was to make a viable structure using Komer's dynamism as the means by which to hold the feet to the fire of these various agency directed, USAID, public safety...[Doug and Nelson ponder the actual name]...public safety division chief, the military people, and the CIA and so on. SO that is what was behind ICEX. The important thing that I wanted to bring up is there were other options, which we very briefly touched upon last time. The signif...significant thing here is that most of these options—most of these decisions were made in respect to OCO in the Fall of 1966 so that by the time the formation of ICEX came about you might look on ICEX as a logical evolution of affairs. But some of the other options that did exist in the fall of 66—and we had conversations with McChristian with a lot of other people...but...uh...also with headquarters. And what we're talking about is basically the extent to which the Agency is going to be involved in counterinsurgency and what is going to with the liaison branch field operations and the paramilitary operations and so on. And so one of the major options was simply to withdraw from these activities and turn them over to the South Vietnamese government and/or the US Military and that was a major option given serious consideration. Another option was to limit the participation in these activities and to reduce the level of commitment, even though we did not withdraw completely to, at any event, to return to the more classical vision.

Sound Bite 16

NB: the decision was made to go for deeper rather than lesser involvement.

Sound Bite 17

NB: This is one of the corrections I wanted to make on the previous record the fact that I was opposed to the DIOCC in the beginning. After I visited the to or three places up there—up north—and came back...by the time I wrote this report here the early June paper I wrote the annexes for that I had converted my self into believing the DIOCCs as important.

Sound Bite 18

NB: [talks about not disclosing all info to Doug] there was in fact, as the program developed Washington set up an intensive training program six, or eight or twelve weeks in duration. For CIA officers but more importantly for ex-military or ex-police officer who were being brought in on contract or military officers assigned to the Agency for Vietnam.

TRACK FOUR

Sound Bite 1

NB: I mentioned that I had been distrustful of the DIOCC idea initially but did become convinced of their value and as of this day would say that they were the essentially ingredient in the whole stew.

Sound Bite 2

NB: The thrust of the material as you read in the memorandum will be the system designed to make possible to make the agency accountable for what they do and how they do it. That means feedback and it means problem visibility and the reporting system is designed provide both of those.

Sound Bite 3

NB: And as George Carver's deputy he was sent out to Saigon after Tet to make anonymous spot evaluation of the situation. And it was his report, I am convinced, is what convinced Lyndon Johnson not to run for re-election. It was extremely defeatist report.

Sound Bite 4

NB: Course the military and a lot of the CI people regarded Tet as an American victory regardless—militarily disaster—political. It was shame you have to destroy that which you trying to protect which we did in the case of most of the cities.

Sound Bite 5

NB: the agency developed a methodology back in 1950 to predict military actions of various type which we refined down to a fine art in Korea and we were fairly good at in Vietnam but it was a bit half assed you know.

Brickham Nov 3

Excerpt One:

DV: Today is November 3rd and I am at the home of Mr. Nelson Brickham... All source intelligence meaning...

NB: special intelligence, communications intelligence

DV: what could, what could something else be besides... what could special intelligence be besides apart from communications that would be, you know, esoteric.

NB: oh um well, there are a variety of things, you have a certain body of techniques, for example there was TV..uh...action story just in last week time in which a laser beam is reflected off a window pane in order to pick up..

VG: I think I saw it. Yeah I did. The voice vibrates on the window so it magnifies...ok

NB: taking notes of the record this was developed by us about twenty years ago [goes off and comes back] ...Casey's new policy of persecuting people for things they already published in the public domain, which is unconstitutional which in time would be thrown out... [cuts out]

DV: Well in your job as doing—at the...in special intelligence, you become aware to all of these... these things...

NB: not all—highly compromised...well I am coming from...special intelligence that is a highly compartmented area or at least it was in those days. [cuts out]...as I was saying before while the tape was off, Casey was recovering, he was this uh young, thirty-two-year-old wall street lawyer, uh ...in war, at wartime and went into the OSS, wound up as the chief of European operations for the OSS in London. And it was under his direction and supervision that OSS undertook what allies the services including the Brits included to be impossible that was agent penetration of the German heartland. [cuts out] ... Um...Casey's attitudes ever since—after the war, he left the service just like Allen Dulles did in the First World War and uh and stayed and made his money and so forth in private business. Fair enough.

Uh...although I gather perhaps not as ethical as Allen Dulles in his Wall Street adventures. In any event, Casey I think brought the CIA when he was appointed director by Reagan attitudes that were pervasive in the OSS during the uh, during the wartime setting [cuts out] ...He certainly has brought to the agency—he's brought several things to the agency: one, an almost unlimited budget, which...uh from the uh, from the administration, which no of our previous administration have had luxury of having...Um

DV: Do you think that, because of his close ties to Reagan...

NB: Oh no question, plus the, plus the general attitude of the Reagan administration, in the...uh... in the anticommunist crusade. I have to... [cuts out]

DV: I think that...that policy makers must be thinking differently and just publicizing their views in that way that really behind the scenes they must be more sophisticated.

NB: No they no don't. No they aren't. They're...they're incredible; I didn't believe that people like this still existed!

DV: That's what I am saying, I mean, facing the outside, I look in and I think, well this must...they must be appealing to the public by going back to those old views, simplistic views, but inside, in the inner circle they must actually think differently and just have their information managers present the thinking in that way.

NB: No not really, they believe, they are...they are true believers. And its true they present to the public also in these simplistic terms because they know that works. [cuts out] uh the...the events that we have seen in recent years, all of these...which are a reflection or a reaction to the...uh...physic uh trauma of the country following Vietnam. Very similar, although on a far more modest scale obviously, but similar in character, and this is where it is dangerous, similar in character to the...to the frustration of and bitterness of the German nation following the First World War.

DV: stabbed in the back, the stab in the back.

NB: the stab in the back...including, including stab in the back...so that uh...and it's the same kind of people that finance uh, that finance Reagan that finance Hitler but lets not get to far into that...

DV: ok well, lets, lets go back to...um...during Korea and your experience there

NB: yeah so...uh...so anyway Casey enjoyed the support of the administration financially, enjoyed support of the, of the cowboys who wanted to give the Agency far greater latitude of action and get back into activity which for reason or another had phased out over the years and uh...uh that's where his at [cuts out and comes back with same chunk as before]

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Excerpt 2

NB: We dreamed up the massive research project that would keep these fellas so busy that they couldn't bother anybody. As it turned out, it was an enormously successful project. It was the first time in any government—governmental agency that a...um...target approach was taken towards the Soviet target—I should say the system approach was taken to a Soviet target.

DV: Do you want to explain that a little bit?

NB: Yes, we wanted to pull together all information, from whatever source, whatever degree of reliably, and collate that information in terms of geographical location and from that effort a series of...series of natural charts sprang out. [cuts out] part of my, part of my willing to go threw this some X number of years later, is that fact that, I will be quite frank, it's a matter of vanity, I feel that I, as well as a number of people, never really got recognition for what we did. [cuts out] I mentioned eelie the laser audio operation. The cam-coders, the...today's video camera uses what they call charge couples device...cascade discharge...

DV: cascade discharge?

NB: discharge, yeah...um...that—off the record, was developed for the agency twenty years ago for the optical systems for the satellites back when they were... [cuts out] I had told my division chief when I came back “ok I'll take this job. I'll do my best, but I do want reassignment overseas as soon as possible and in about a year's time, after you have satisfied yourself that I'm ok for this, I'll come in and ask you about an overseas assignment. So it was in the summer of 1965 that I went in and said “I am in interested in an overseas assignment.” [cuts out] SO since I had been working on the Vietnamese problem I knew that they Agency had a call out for Vietnamese officers and that anyone who volunteered to go to Vietnam would go, period and that they could not be held back by their parent division, so I volunteered for Vietnam.

DV: What was the—your introduction to getting involved in the Vietnamese affairs, how did that come about

NB: My work in Sino-Soviet affairs and the far-East generally [cuts out and comes back] so I went over to Vietnam as chief of field operation—I was not directly but the guy was replacing left and became chief of field of operation that was Tucker Willum (?) [cuts out]

DV: yeah I have heard some stories about him

NB: he was one of the legends in the Agency, anyway he was my boss when first arrived....

DV: ok so you were his deputy?

NB: I was his deputy and then I organized [unintelligible] well actually we went out over the delta (?), he didn't come home [unintelligible].... So, then, it was in that capacity that I stayed through in June of 1967, came home assigned to SAVA, which was George Carver's Staff Special Assistant for Vietnam Affairs to the VCI. There two months, went back out to Vietnam to work with Ed Parker, who is now insight as first director for ICEX Staff [cuts out] remained with SAVA until the end of the year and which

time, about the end of the year, at which time I returned to the Soviet Division [cuts out] 1970 I guess I became chief of plans for soviet Division

DV: it sounds like that was a good career move

NB: Yes, and in 1972 I moved to the plans and programs staff of the DCI, the executive service

DV: Which means?

NB: well in changing career designations from, from the operations director to the executive service

DV: more like a staff level position?

NB: it's a personal classification...

DV: overall manager rather than, rather an in a pro—

NB: its agency level, plans, programs, and budget, PPB, plans, programs and budget and up there I was in plans branch, planning branch of the...uh...of the Agency—of the PPB, which was the planning unit of the director [cuts out] so then I retired in probably June of 74 and worked for a consultant corporation for two years.

DV: did you do consulting for the CIA?

NB: No—yeah, I did a little but not much. I was on contract [cuts out and comes back] but I decided that although the money in consulting in good but life is too short and that's a rat race [cuts out] stopped that went back, went to American University got a master degree in religious study and everyone raises always raises their eyebrows, why religion of all things? Well when you sat to think about religion is the of mans deepest goals, and aspirations and value systems and...[cuts out]

Excerpt 3

DV: to consider yourself to—are you a churchgoer? do you consider yourself to a strong uh...

NB: I'm a churchgoer I have a strong faith [cuts out] one of my primary interests is the relationship of early Christianity to the...uh...classical history and religions, in particular the great [or greek?] mysterious

DV: Demeter, Decornrites [?]

NB: and Isis and Osiris. [cuts out]

DV: Did you have a cover?

NB: uh a cover was just police advisory US...

DV: to the Special Branch

NB: to the Special Branch, I was...uh...guess it was USAID cover of a sort, it was very light cover it was not backstock it was a nominal thing.

DV: What does backstock mean?

NB: Backstock means..uh...thoroughly...well lets call this way when I was in Tehran I was second secretary of embassy, very privileged position I had fully backstocked diplomatic cover,

DV: Ok

NB: Ok, what back stock means is I was put into is I was put into personnel files as a department of state. I was a legitimate department of state form service officer—form service reserve office—uh...throughout all department of state records—payrolls, insurance funds, everything. No matter how anybody tried to check me out they would discover nothing about CIA only department of state. Now that is backstocking.

DV: Alright then impressions of how Tucker Gogleman and uh and uh how he briefed you and oriented you to what your assignment would be

NB: Oh there is nothing, nothing, big deal here [cuts out] very few places is there any formal indoctrination and orientation. I sent up an orientation program for newly arriving officers because I was on the first wave of the big expansion. I was on it—I was on the front edge of the wave of the big expansion. So we had a lot of officers coming from all over the world and I did set up an orientation program for them to involve some reading material and a lot talking, discussion [cuts out].

DV: Well in terms of—your position in the station are you like the number three person?

NB: No I'm...uh...um...lets see there Chief of Station, Deputy of Chief of Station, no there, then there's...uh..... then there be a CFI, Chief of Foreign Intelligence and Chief of Covert Action. I forget what the structure was. Then there be the branches and...uh...and I was part of—my unit was part of the liaison branch [cuts out]. But then there would be a lot of branches. There would be a unilateral operations branch, this branch, that branch...but we were liaison branch because we worked with local nationals.

DV: well—and how many branches might there have been?

NB: in the station? I think as many as 12 or 14

DV: Oh ok...

NB: Cuase there gonna be a Communications, there's gonna be Special Intelligence branch...there going to be a DDI unit out there. It was big station. There was hundreds of officers in that station [cuts out] I had field operations, which meant province officers so I say we had 14 there when I got there maybe 12 we must have 50, the strength of 50 [cuts out] several branches actually, I guess, concerned with covert operations of various types. No they were all—some of them were paramilitary some of them were pacification or development, village development. Each one of those was run separately out Saigon [cuts out] the cover action people they were mostly from—they're a breed apart, especially the paramilitary types. They have always have sort of a checkered history with the agency [cuts out] most of the PM people some the FI people...oh you might call them refugees of the Cuban affair and there's more than one of them who said they were on the losing end of the Cuban operation and they'd be damned if they'd be on the losing end of the Vietnam operation. [cuts out] Which was back 1960, 1960—1964-65 and you know John Kennedy got his bug up his tail about Castro and after the Bay of Pigs, the CIA was sort of turned loose to do all the—anything we could down there. [cuts out]

DV: What about his friend Lucienne Coney?

NB: Uh...it was something else [cut out] he was the original soldier of fortune, not crazy like a bunch of those guys...the green berets are the craziest [cuts out] I would put a bunch of those people in the category of psychopaths [cuts out] there's a fella you would say has street smarts. When we are talking about streets we are talking about dark back alleys of a place like Istanbul or the dark shadows down by the river docks of Saigon.

DV: Yeah well he seems like the kind of person that—

NB: right, right those places were night lifes that hung out

DV: and that's were Luigi hung out [cut out]

NB: Ok Luigi was in Saigon in '62 during the coup and he came out to, he came out to Tehran after the coup business

DV: oh did he? Oh Ok

NB: as I recall I'm pretty although maybe he went from Tehran to run the coup in Saigon, I don't know.

DV: Well he certainly did run the coup, that's the word.

NB: He did . And...uh...this shock Jack Kennedy up a bit too. Jack Kennedy really didn't realize that...uh...that these things...these things were going to kill people.

DV: he didn't?

NB: I don't think so. And it was only...only when Diem was killed...uh...as I understand it, Kennedy was really shock up and suddenly realized that this something basically and, in the final analysis, something that he brought about...

DV: well you have to imagine—

NB: And, and he was...he suddenly realized this is a high stakes ball game. This is not been an inning (?) and he ran into this with Khrushchev and Diem

DV: so you might have been a little naïve

NB: Who, Kennedy?

DV: yeah

NB: Well every president is. [cuts away]

DV: Weren't the Special Branch advisors...weren't a lot of them policemen from the United—from America?

NB: oh we had—some of them. I had forgotten all about that, as a matter of a fact until you reminded me. We had a bunch of guys on contract and a number of them were ex-policemen. Yes. As province officer. They were not CIA staffers [cuts out]

Excerpt 3

NB: A case which never came into existence, if it had it would have been taken care of very quickly. We had—I had an absolute prohibition in field operations activities towards conducting or sanctioning or witnessing without intervention any acts of torture and if anyway an officer that had come to my attention that was involved in such an activity he would have been sent home in less than 24 hours.

DV: what about trying the blind eye? Was there any case in which it happened?

NB: There was no such case. Possibly because the reports never got to however just as an aside at this point torture of Vietcong prisoners was entirely unnecessary two reasons: one the hardcore would never talk not matter what they did, the French found this out and the French are given to torture. *The Day of the Jackal* is only fiction in certain respects

DV: well I've read about Algiers

NB: yeah Algiers, Vietnam. Secondly, you get all the information you want from the people as soon that as... as soon as they realize you're not going to kick their teeth in they just pluck—just sing like birds, which means most of them [cuts out] Now in the field operations we ran three major activities which I did not organize. The activities were all in existence but I will...but what I did do was, if you will, clean up the act, to sharpen the targets, to bureaucratize, if you will. The three programs were: first of all...uh...the information program, the special branch informants. All counterinsurgency depends, in the first instance, on informants. And without them you dead and with them you can do all sorts of marvelous things. This is something that you can only be a local operation—it's a family affair, it's...uh...few piasters change hands, it's...uh...a gift its that. The second major program is the so-called PICs, province interrogation centers. We built...

DV: Beginning in 65?

NB: Beginning in 65, Tucker had about, I would say, maybe as many as ten built by the time I got there, maybe 8. We had 44 out by the time I left. We built those as quickly as we could.

DV: We'll go back and go over each of the three a little more but...

NB: yeah and the third, the third major program was the...under the PICs the is a subcategory called Chieu Hoi, the defectors. Not only prisoners but the defectors—the interrogation program, lets call it that. First is the informant program, second is the interrogation program, and the third is the penetration—agent penetration. [cuts out]

DV: that would not have been, the PRU I take it were not

NB: they were part of your covert action paramilitary element no actually the PRU was a late development. We had pacification teams, over on the covert action side now were talking no the FI side. And cover action teams, village construction teams, these were people who worked out the villages and taught them how to defend themselves and how to, how to...uh...political development. We were very strong on trying to develop grassroots, grassroots political emergencies (?) in the country and its very...Vietnam is very civil for approach. Then they had the so called counterterror teams...and what are you writing now?

DV: uh its something I want to get into more, I know what they did.

NB: basically the PRUs, Provisional Reconnaissance Units, were a—

DV: an outgrowth of the counterterror teams...

NB: an outgrowth and a sterilization, if you will. Cleaning up the name of the counterterror units.

DV: if not the methods?

NB: No. Uh...hopefully the methods. Counterterror unit—units were originally intended to do to the VC what they were doing to us and that meant getting in there and assassinate their village chiefs, hamlet chiefs, tax collector, whatever. Leave propaganda behind and if the occasion arises bring back prisoners. They also got out, and its very much like the military people...uh...as in military people would learn and

evolve that to nighttime ambushes and so on. And some of our guys working with these CT units were real nuts too. There was one man who had to be sent home because he was putting blackface on and going out just about every night to...uh...he was very close to another breakdown himself.

DV: that wouldn't happen—you mean, you mean a PRU advisor?

NB: No CT

DV: Yeah, a CT advisor?

NB: No this is not an advisor the CT units were a unilateral American operation. We hired these peoples and we trained them and we ran them. And the same with the PRUs, those were unilateral American operations. Had nothing to do with the Vietnamese police or Vietnamese military or the Vietnamese whatever. They, the Vietnamese had counterpart units but, the South Vietnamese did, but these were unilateral American operations as were the PRUs. [cut out] it was it late 65, as a matter of fact, that the CTs became the PRUs. I was offered the PRUs at that time but I didn't want it. [cuts out] If I had been interested in power and so forth I would have taken those CT units and so forth. I didn't want them mainly because I didn't think we could handle them, could manage them properly. In any event, when they were renamed Province Reconnaissance Units their mission was changed from assassination to sabotage

DV: really?

NB: to capture and return. If we could get a VC district level cadre or province level cadre, if we could catch one of those and in hunts overnight. We don't want him dead and, this the difference between your police mentality or your terrorist mentality vs. your—or military...police and military mentality vs. intelligence mentality. The intelligence guy wants that guy back to question him, to interrogate him. Police wants to put him on trial and never hear from him again.

DV: so PRU becomes intelligence?

NB: PRU becomes intelligence rather than terrorism [cuts out]

DV: sounds that it sounds like you like your job, that you liked what you were doing despite the danger

NB: oh yes, don't forget 50% hazard pay

DV: oh ok

NB: [laughter] 50% percent! that bought a house for us back in the states. Put that in parentheses. Don't let it show. That's off the record [cuts out]

DV: there's nothing secret about people having to earn a living.

NB: Well the fact of the matter is, is we did. The Vietnam assignment carried with it 50% premium pay and that made a big difference [cuts out] here we get to the Phoenix business. In the Fall of 1966 there began this big reorganization, trying to clean up the revolutionary development programs, clean up the act, and streamline the war effort. This and that. So the reorganized the station into the RDC unit which took over the paramilitary activities of the station and the so-called revolutionary development aspects of the station—propaganda, indoctrination, political education, political grassroots development out in the villages and hamlets. Took over all that into one branch and took over the field operations—police field operations from the other branch [cuts out]

Excerpt 5

NB: well there was a lot opposition in the station to the extent of exposure we had in the police special branch field operations. And one our new bosses had come in and try to reduce that operation in favor of unilateral espionage into the VC, which I resisted [cuts out] my feelings were simple were in a war; this is an intelligence war. It's being fought on the basis of intelligence and it's either going to succeed or fail on intelligence. Police special branch field operations is a crucial element to this whole thing [cuts out] we don't have time to worry about bureaucratic niceties, we don't have time to worry about reputations. We got to win this goddamn this thing. So I was all gung ho for continuing and expansion—or improvement I should say not seriously expansion—of the field operations. [cuts out] So I was turned over to this new Revolutionary Development Unit, [cuts out]

DV: the RD cadre, right?

NB: the RD cadre were the PM and political action people. When you talk about RD cadre you talk about those guys out the villages working for the Revolutionary Development people.[cuts out]

DV: but that's what you say when your turned over to RDC, that's revolutionary development cadre?

NB: yes right [cuts out] in any event we were all moved over to the USAID building, along with the police liaison people—the over police liaison people, not special branch regular police. [Cuts out]

DV: this is fall 66

NB: Around November 66. Between October and December 66 [cuts out] John Hart called me into the office one day and said, “I want you to forget about your other duties your going home in June. I want to take your assignment and I want you to draw me up a plan for the general staff for counterinsurgency [cuts out] one of the biggest problems that we had throughout this entire period of time was to keep John Hart and some of these other people away from trying to develop fancy computer systems. [cut out]

DV: where you computer literate

NB: I was, I was computer literate. I'd been working with them since 1958. But I didn't want anything to do with them there in Vietnam there you'd would fall into the military mentality [cuts out]. Well when John Hart talks about general staff for pacification...uh...I had to review three things a is strategy for pacification b is structure and c is management [cuts out] and we've been over the strategy many times. I'd been, I'd been the...one of the agency...well the principle agency representative on the annual country plan. Now its important, an important distinction here is we were never in war with Vietnam. The ambassador was the commander in chief in the country and [unintelligible] commanded US forces for Military Advisor Command Vietnam, was under the direction of the ambassador. So that the annual—all the annual military operations and everything were focused in the country plan rather than into the military plan. [cuts out] So we've been all through this strategy—up one side down another, you know—time and time again, it's tiresome. We've tired strategic hamlets we've tired this, we've tired that and here's were we are today. So the country plan would set the what the military operations and pacification [unintelligible] for the next year [cuts out] so review strategy and what with this and that you have to say that major comment, which you see in writing a few pages, is later is not that we should do new things but we should do what we know how to do well. And this is one of the faults of the American pacification efforts in Vietnam that Americans were impatient for results.

DV: that was the Vietnamese criticism

NB: and if they don't see them quickly, they're attempting to abandon the program and start a new program. And so we reviewed each program one by one and said "well now does this fit and doesn't it and this that and the next thing what's the basic pacification strategy of this this this this this... and we came out—I came out with the judgment in my own mind that strategy wise were ok. Basic operation: you got an army over there at 2 to protect the North Vietnamese field units, to go after the major VC units to clean out areas from time to time, to engage in military sweeps, to provide a shield. And the Vietnamese army was basically to do the same thing. Pacification efforts of various types, revolutionary development to operate behind this shield to stabilize and secure this situation [cut out]. Off the record again, it's like this hullabaloo about Casey the publication of this stuff on the landline intercepts on the Soviets underwater.

DV: sub?

NB: the submarines. The fact of the matter being that was published about oh, ten years ago [cuts out]

DV: was this roles and missions study?

NB: well there was a roles and mission study but that was not the annual country plan but there was in 1966, I think, a roles and mission study [cuts out] one of the points made in the roles and missions was a section on intelligence it was saying we don't need more intelligence we need better intelligence [cuts out] this harks about to an old German intelligence maxim that the quantity of the information is important it's the quality of information and the quality of analysis given to the information, which is key. And I believe that and I believed it then and I believe it even more now.

DV: logically it makes perfect sense

NB: And the where Germans went wrong was when Hitler overrode the conclusions of the [unintelligible] or the intelligence service. [cuts out]

DV: So the strategy is not to change anything but to it better, so we move to

NB: structure. Ok here is the second stroke of genius, with Komer coming out there and he had already acquired the nickname Blowtorch Komer... basically the structure was something that would be developed around him and the fundamental idea was I suppose, and will get into more detail later, is... well lets put it this way I've been impressed by this article in *Harvard Business Review*. I don't know when it was, I still have it out in a trunk locker out in the garage or some place that's moldy... *Harvard Business Review* article dealing with management reorganization of Ford Motor Company after they got ride of McNamara and Ford basically set up what the military, well the military wouldn't call a CPX—I'd call a CPX, a command post exercise. They set up a command post to run their operation. And this command post was, well as I recall, because I had dealt with this thing almost by starting early, the policy of the corporation would come out of the CEO and Board of Directors...uh... you had the command post operating underneath the CEO which was basically support for the CEO and Board of Directors. Three areas...I'm wondering if I adopted all three of them. Well I know I set up three areas of our own...um...yeah...well this is all in writing can dig it out later, its no problem. As I recall though, it was plans and programs, the new section—plans and programs, a section on statistical recording and analysis and a section on special investigations [cuts out] that's what set up for the staff which John Hart was calling ICEX...oh right Intelligence Coordination Exploitation. The whole theory of this thing was to sharpen up the intelligence collection—better intelligence, better handling—to speed up the reaction time and responding to intelligence whether on a military level or police level or whether on a PRU level [cuts out] so we had the.... uh....we had the ICED structure and then the ICEX management [cuts out] during the reorganization that involved the setting up of the RDC the station also adopted the police field

operations organization structure involving six regions. For the first time all of the CIA activities in a region were brought under one regional officer [cuts out]

Excerpt 6

NB: back to the general staff for pacification [cuts out]

DV: what does is general staff encompass? [cuts out]

NB: but any general staff, of course I've been through the history with the German generals, and the American General staff

DV: well that's what immediately comes to mind; well the American military is based off...

NB: The American military never really adopted the German general staff concept or even the British and...but regardless we encompassed all functions evolved here. Talk about G1, G2, G3 and G4 and so forth, they're all involved one way or another in any kind of organizational structure you set up. So in any event we had the three pronged ICEX proposal which involved plans and programs and statistical reporting and the investigations units [cuts out] but yet you have all these different activities run by different agencies—military, civilian, intelligence, police—and somehow or another you have to time them all together. So the basic idea of this thing was to set up a board of directors, in which the agency head or his deputy and none other would be the member and a reporting system would be established to make it possible for a guy like Komer and this is were its built around personality, to hold their feet to the fire. In other words, to make each agency respond. To make it responsive, make respond and to be able to give it goals and targets and be able to criticize failures in performance. So this was the basic concept of the whole thing and this command post structure from Ford Motor Company as a model seemed ideal as a supporting structure for the board of directors and Komer

DV: as chief executive officer?

NB: as chairman of the board and [cuts out] Komer was an ambassador reporting to the ambassador. He had the title of ambassador but actually he was reporting to Lyndon Johnson in the White House. Everybody knew that [cuts out] and so the basic...this is the idea, you set a structure in which these agencies have to participate, have to bring their own resources to bear, utilizing their own fund without any interferer with legislative mandate or enabling legislation, without any interference with their financing procedures or anything like that [cuts out] we'd gone back to Washington on a cable. Outlining the problem, what Komer's wishes were and what station had vaguely in mind and we got this cable back from Colby which basically says "well we don't know what you going to do with it basically...as I recall, it suggested that we sort of pull our horns in, here's one side of that ongoing debate throughout the agency's history, not get too deeply involved in this thing and, in the event, no matter what you guys out there figure out, we don't you to even suggest anything involving a committee structure [cuts out] so...uh...we said "well this is the only way to do it so we going to go ahead a do it." and...uh...came up with our final proposal and had the ambassadors approval out there in the field and Komer came out and he approved the basic ideas so back in Washington they were left with more or less a fait accompli [cuts out]

DV: ok that's very interesting in the sense that Colby's always designated as the creator, you know...of...the person who brought everything together when it sounds like, in effect, he was hesitate to go ahead and do...

NB: Well this has very much...two things...uh...well actually three things...first of all [cuts out] I've mentioned earlier a certain amount of vanity and people getting credit were credit is due. As far as I am concerned Colby had nothing to do with Phoenix—or ICEX [cuts out] he got stock with it when Komer was transferred to the SO in Turkey and Colby was coming in as chief of SR division in Washington and the week before he was to come in as division chief he was reassigned by the White House to go and replace Komer. So that would have been December—that would have been Christmas 1967 [cuts out]. One reason I was...I was anxious to talk to Ralph Johnson and the reason I am very happy to talk to you: maybe if I windup as footnote in history that's all I'd want [cuts out]. Lets get back to our ICEX staff, we talked about Plans and Programs section, statistical reporting section and investigation section, the third element in all of this, going one step beyond—behind all that, was (a) strategy, (b) structure and (c) management that once again, another stroke of genius, that I picked up a ideas from a little book...uh...number of years previously and the name of that book was reporting *Financial Data to Management* [cuts out] there were two things that impressed me about this first of all how the focus on the bottom line. Management does usually not need anywhere near the amount of information they get.

DV: Detail, detail, they don't need detail.

NB: What you have to do is you always have to ask the question information for what when your talking about executive management [cuts out] the second idea [cuts out] which...uh...conveyed the point of view which impressed me very much, which, as a matter of fact, it effected the entire balance of my career at the Agency. The use of reporting tool to shape behavior [cuts out] and so we designed the reporting structure of this thing not only to provide critical types of information to this ICEX board of directors and Komer but also to, by focusing attention out their in region and province on things were thought were important, to guarantee that those things were [cuts out] I had already introduced this approach into the police field operations.

DV: want to tell me how?

NB: Well by design of a reporting format, which would have things in there that would seem trivial from the standpoint of what's going on [cuts out] ok...uh...the statistical reporting unit was the unit that was supposed to pull all this together and analyze what was going on for the boss. [cuts out] but the basic ideas was these guys could drop out the sky and go look at your files [cuts out] ok so...ok so...Komer's approved this and Washington flip flopped. Once Komer approved it and the White House approved it, CIA headquarters—Colby—had to go along with it, they had no choice and so...so...that was [cuts out] so...um...

DV: So ICEX comes to be?

NB: So ICEX...we...uh...we put this together and presented it to the Vietnamese [cuts out]

DV: you presented it to...

NB: This is all...this is all was all presented by—now wait a minute, did this happen while I was there? No it was after I left that it was presented...uh...Ed Parker was telling me about this. As a matter of fact, I was there at the time, actually. I had come back and it was presented...

DV: so it was in that two month period were you came back?

NB: yeah...so it was presented to the Vietnamese and the Vietnamese they didn't take very well to well and turned the thing down...uh...mainly because they looked on it as an infringement of their sovereignty and various other...when I saw Loan is a patriot, he was. He was looking out for the Vietnamese. And he recognized the fact that Vietnamese and American interests were not always identical which is a very true statement. Well anyway...that was the dregs of that program...they turned down flat but we said "that ok

cause were going to do it anyway” [cuts out] and so regardless of what the Vietnamese say were going to do, we will do this anyway and if nothing else try to serve as a model, as an example of what might be possible [cuts out] there was no necessity that the Vietnamese string them along like this so they didn’t [cuts out] the military mentality—I mentioned the police mentality is arrest convict and send them away to jail, intelligence mentality is to capture and interrogate or defect, you know turn around and replace

DV: which to me is the most fascinating

NB: the military mentality is to setup a battle. Ok here we have some very specialized reconnaissance and intelligence units—air units—well trained. If the CIA did anything out there in Vietnam it was to demonstrate that small unit leadership is a critical factor in guerilla warfare situation. The army never learned this. The Army would train officers until they were blue in the face but, as far as I am concerned, they didn’t spend diddly damn on the corporals and sergeants, and they’re the cement that holds a military force together. So small unit leadership is something the military had lost sight of but we didn’t. Anyway this military guy in III Corps although with Ball Wall as the ROIC, they were using PRUs and everything else as blocking forces for military sweep operations. Ok that’s your military mentality—military is fight a battle, police is this, intelligence that, so on [cuts out]

Excerpt 7

NB: There is one major element that we left out of all this that is the detainee problem.

DV: is going to involve the PICs?

NB: Well it starts out with the PICs, the Province Interrogation Centers were places that defectors, shoeorns (?) or prisoners could be taken for questioning under controlled situations and circumstances and so on and so forth.

DV: I understand there was a PIC program, a Province Interrogation Center Program, for developing it and constructing it and that was headed by Tucker Gougelman?

NB: you remember I said it had been started and Tucker continued and he had 8 or 10 of these things built when got there and built the other 34 but we also had training programs to do along with that. We would train police interrogators. WE ran training schools [cuts out] we would hire...uh...we would hire women teach them how to type, so they could work in these places. The whole thing from start to finish and we paid a bunch of the payrolls in these places too.

DV: so what you’re training is Vietnamese. You have Americans training.

NB: Americans didn’t do any of this. They didn’t do any interrogation [cuts out] in Saigon we had special instructors, we had some of them we would bring out from Washington to teach interrogation [cuts out]

DV: I am just wondering were the interrogators themselves get their training in training interrogation.

NB: well we did get CIA training in interrogation and a lot of the interrogation trainees were people who worked with Russian defectors, who developed interrogation skills over the years [cuts out] this is only on the periphery the larger problem of how do you screen and what do you do with identified VC. Once you go them what are you going to do with them?

DV: well as I understand they filled up the ranks of the PRU

NB: when you go threw some of these villages sweeps you would have whole compounds, I should say, corrals barbed wire enclosures just filed with Vietnamese just sitting looking at you all day long packed fill you know.

DV: I heard there was a project corral.

NB: Men, woman and children. I think there was an operation corral one of the [unintelligible (?regional ?)] [cuts out] there were legal questions. What do we do? Do we reindoctrinate them? Do we shoot them? Do we do this? Do we do that? Do we put them back on the farm? How do we control them? This. This. This. This. So one of John Hart's tasks in the original ICEX charge—original general staff for pacification—is what do we do with these prisoners. Do they have prisoner of war status or don't they. There is no war going on and yet the Americans were saying "we're treating these people like prisoners of war." In Geneva, the Swiss were saying "well ok let us in there. We want into those prison camps." So it went around and around. The long and short of it was no one wanted to get the name of the chair of Vietnam attached to them. The US didn't want to touch the prison problem with a ten-foot pole; military wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole. These were POWs forget about it. When the war is over we will ship them back in flocks. Things like that. Facetious. So one of our tasks was to investigate this problem and recommend so some solutions for that. We never did, what we did was beg the question. We tasked that over to the new ICEX staff, the plans and programs element of the ICEX staff what they did with it I don't know. But I was a major problem. Basically [cuts out] but in a lot of these sweep all you would get would be old men, women and kids. Ok there's VC in there too, probably some of the women, probably some of the old men, but nobody knows really who they were. The younger me, they were...they'd be off in the boonies. [cuts out] the other thing had to do with that Ford Corporation business, I checked the paperwork really it wasn't all that great. All that Ford had was the, what you might call, operating committee on the top supported by a very small statistical reporting unit that put everything together for these guys to consider and make decisions on. The other material that I discussed yesterday about the breakdown of the original ICEX staff of the plans and programs section of the statistical reporting section and the investigation section that was two units that I simply added on to the statistical unit core, so to speak in terms of our particular situation there in Saigon. [cuts out] the other subject I talked about, which may not be on the tape, about the ability to operate in the gaps of large organizations. That goes back to an even more classic book, *Administrative Behavior* by a fella by the name of Herbert Simon. [cuts out]

DV: In developing ICEX, and you were putting in place province officers in charge who were working in the field operations branch or are apart...arethey in ICEX and apart from field operations

NB: no, no, they were field op—we when came to the regional and province officers in charge, the ROICS and POICs, that was strictly CIA field operations. Now later on some of those guys, or most of them actually, became Phoenix coordinators [cuts out]

DV: How would they, then, go about sharing their relationship to the Special Branch or would this simply...

NB: Well there was a committee structure established at each of these levels. Once again, we hoped that the committee structure per se would not be a nonoperative kind of thing but we needed some machinery of coordination of bringing together everyone involved in these programs. So the province officer would be a member of the Phoenix committee whether or not he was the coordinator, same with the regional officer. Now most the regional officers became Phoenix coordinators as I recall.

Excerpt 8

DV: ...Officer in charge. Lets talk about

NB: he's in charge of all CIA operations

DV: all CIA operations including covert operations?

NB: Yes he's supervisor of everything in that province having to do with the CIA activities [cuts out]

DV: there is foreign intelligence, covert ops and is there also counterespionage are those three separate division within a station. I guess my question is does counterespionage fall under one of the two: covert ops or foreign intelligence.

NB: no it doesn't counterespionage is separate sometimes its merged in with FI. Now in our particular case field operations was...you see Saigon was analogs. There is no other station in the world like. In our particular case if you working with the Police Special Branch, you're working both positive intelligence programs, FI, but your also working counterespionage, counterterrorism whatever because the police they don't have that distinction and when you're just working with police and you have to cover all of those [cuts out] the National Police was a civilian counterintelligence service as well as intelligence

DV: and would it have been special branch that would have....

NB: special branch that's what I mean. As a matter fact, special branch was I think was British term to start.

DV: and as I understand it is roughly equivalent to the American FBI [cuts out]

NB: something we didn't even touch on yesterday, in fact, that some of this stuff derived from, as a matter of fact, derived from the British experience in Malaysia. Where the British had run a successful counterinsurgency operation.

DV: well I imagine [cuts out] how were funds distributed in, did you play a role distributing funds to your province officers to your region officers?

NB: No I didn't hand them any money, we were. Every branch throughout the Agency, when it comes budget time, has to prepare a budget proposal. And which I did, which would include operating funds for the regions and provinces, that would include funds for the construction of these PICs and everything else [cuts out] but back to the budget question, I would have to request a budget every year—develop a budget every year for my need and that budget would be approved or amended, as the case may be, through the budgetary process [cuts out] I'd get my appropriations and then the guys would get there—the region and province officers—would get their allocations of money, and they would get the authorization to draw that money from the finance officer [cuts out]

DV: I was wondering if the system by which you built the PICs was the same system that which you built the PIOCCs and DIOCCs

NB: I don't...uh...what's a PIOCC?

DV: Province Intelligence Operations Coordination Center

NB: Ok I don't know where that money came from. Probably most of it came from...CORDs probably had its own appropriation. Something like that probably would come from USAID and if it didn't come from USAID it came from the military. The Military was throwing lots of money. Or it may be that the military or USAID might share it. But I have no knowledge what so ever how of those things were funding

DV: of the POICCs and DIOCCs...but the PICs were right from the CIA

NB: PICs were special branch facilities, as a matter fact, as I recall, they'd buy the property out or we would pick the property out and buy and give it to them or whatever. But in any event, it became a facility of the national police under the direction of the special branch in the province [cuts out]

DV: in terms of funding of money coming to the Vietnamese in special branch

NB: no there...special branch salaries and all that would just be part of general police budget which would be USAID's problem but they had...that's had nothing to do with anything. That's a Vietnamese problem. And whatever subsidies USIAD provided that was that. We provided our own subsidies in different ways: we built the PICs, we paid for them, and we paid for special training for particular police. We did not pay the salary of a PSP man.

DV: I see that's—

NB: The national police would pay his salary and the US may or may have not subsidized his salary through normal police channel [cuts out] but once again...this is...in one obscure way or another, this is all in the public domain but still it has never but together in terms of the scandal it really way [cuts out] for the record, I want to make clear what a truly remarkable group of people the Air American pilots were, the entire Air American operation [cuts out] these guys were bush pilots a lot of them, some of them were mercenaries, some of them were old crop dusters, some them came from Alaska. As pilots they in light aircraft and in stall (?) aircraft they were absolutely magnificent.

Residual Brickham

Track one Sound bite 1

NB: New subject, the prison detention problem. USAID wouldn't touch it—they were legally responsible for this thing and they had money this that and the next. They wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pool. They didn't want to be known as the jailers of Vietnam or whatever I don't know. But they would do nothing regardless of...uh...recommendations made by, I gu—I guess, Ambassador Porter.

DV: What about the problem of regular police facilities for criminals

NB: Totally inadequate, totally inadequate, I mean it couldn't handle it and of course out in the countryside and in most of the rural provinces you didn't have that at all. You'd wind up with barbwire cages with...uh...tin-roofed shelters on 'em

DV: and this for civilians—

NB: packed with people....ok...so anyway USIAD wouldn't touch this problem and Hart became very—John Hart became very concerned about late 1966 and the reason it shows up in the ICEX program the Phoenix program the way it does is because John Hart's interest and insistence.

Sound bite 2

NB: Ok I have here a note that Ralph Johnson rightly focuses on a decentralization as a major thrust of the uh...the uh...ICEX proposal and program and the fact that this what, to the extent it was successful, this is the reason it was successful. I believe that then and I believe that now.

Sound Bite 3

NB: When I say the Army never understands, they had these enormous translation facilities and interrogation facilities there in Saigon and they produced report after report after report—tremendously valuable stuff—but then it was just going to sit in a file in Saigon or in Washington. And so I took it upon myself, as chief of field operations, to screen this stuff and send it back to our province officers so they could incorporate it into their files so they could know what’s going on from these others sources because we did have a lot capture documents. But in organizational terms, though, the major thrust was to prevent over centralization and prevent people from being burdened down like USAID has the tendency to do with reports and numbers. You want to make the decisions were the information is or send the information to where the decision is—should be made.

Sound Bite 4

NB: Tet, Ralph, in his book, quotes extensively from Westmoreland about the information they had prior to Tet, which in fact is...uh...is perfectly reasonable I believe. I mean they had the information and, as a matter of fact, US forces were on alert.

DV: where you in SAVA?

NB: No, I was...No, I was back in the Soviet division but I do know because I kept...I kept visiting SAVA and the FE branch, just to stay in touch with things. I do know about a week before the Tet offensive struck there was a major warning message that was sent out from Washington to [unintelligible Thomas?] MACV from I assume DIA that a major offensive was pending. Tet was not a surprise to anyone but the Vietnamese army and the American people. The American bureaucracy knew it and the American military in Vietnam knew and the station, of course, knew it.

Sound bite 5

NB: new subject, political intelligence...um...intelligence in an academic exercise and when I talk about coordination problems in Vietnam the fact of the matter is we could not even coordinate the station programs in province. We did not, until...um...until ICEX came along, assign province officers and charge because the rivalry and lack of trust from the FI people

DV: it sounds so petty

NB: yeah well, and the PM people was so great that, you know, who are you going to put in charge and experience my FI guys were in no way, in terms of experience, were able to control or direct PRU teams, for example, which is a reason why I turned them down when they were offered to me

Sound bite 6

NB: Yeah this is just personal note here, that from early on I was going counter agency philosophy. I was telling province officer and regional officers to use this intelligence, if they got some good, to go ahead and generate an action response to it and that meant artillery strikes. It meant military raids. It meant police raids. It meant all sorts—PRU business

Sound bite 7

NB: and at some—I meant to mention last time and didn’t but, in terms of roles and mission study, what it said about intelligence was we need better not more intelligence. We have more intelligence than we know what to do with. We got to improve its quality and we’ve got to improve its handling and we’ve got our reaction to. That’s what roles and missions about it

Sound bite 8

NB: regular committee meeting—listen, I am great advocate of committee meetings provided its properly run

DV: well that's just curious to know, how they were run?

NB: well George Jacobs, you know, he's a good committee chairman, you know, and that's why Phoenix ended up with a basic committee structure from nation, region, province.

Track Two**Sound Bite 1**

DV: The Roles and Missions Study that there had been 80 proposals or 64 proposals and approxim—all but 8 of 'em were accepted and the rea— those that weren't accepted were those that dealt Special Branch taking over the anti-infrastructure...uh...role as its primary and sole res—as the organization that would have the sole responsibility for the anti infrastructure operations

Sound bite 2:

NB: There wasn't really any particular emphasis on infrastructure other than in the CIA itself so and...but when the issue was raised I would...um...I would gather...I would reconstruct from what you just said the Pentagon Papers said that...um...MACV opposed and exclusively jurisdiction for the National Police with which we would have agreed. I don't...uh...I participated in the Roles and Missions study. We would not have claimed for the Special Branch exclusive jurisdiction. We didn't want it. The Special Branch wasn't strong enough the National Police weren't strong enough. We did claim that um... the police should have a major...um...civilian role so to speak be the spearhead...be the spearhead of the effort because it was the police...um...over the long haul and, in terms of climate victory, it was the police that would have to have settle the problem.

Sound bite 3

NB: In terms of the MACV opposition to Special Branch, it should be more properly should be said that until late 1966 MACV wasn't really aware of Special Branch. They didn't know anything about it! And they were not aware of the intelligence potential or intelligence capability of the police, by and large.

Sound Bite 4

NB: They were not aware of the enormous capability residing in the special police, so a big part of our problem throughout this whole effort was promoting the National Police and in particular the special branch as the Counterinsurgency arm of the civilian government.

Sound bite 5

NB: And as a matter of fact, we finally did write into the...into the...ICEX charter the necessity for full coordination at the province level of the military, for example, with National Police as well as with these other people and bringing the National Police in as supporting adjuncts to the military sweep.

Sound bite 6

NB: There was unquestionably contempt held by ARVN for the National Police...the Vietnamese military had no use for the National Police. That's a true statement.

Sound bite 7

DV: So in sense then, American advisors are the ones bring these two organizations together.

NB: Yes, Yes

DV: It's a cooperation of Americans advisors that ultimately brings ARVN and the police together

NB: Basically. And the whole ICEX-slash-Phoenix thing was an effort to institutionalize.

DV: I think that conceptually that's the biggest point of the whole thing

NB: yeah

Sound Bite 8

NB: The Americans went in to a fight a classical land war and that just wasn't what it was.

Sound Bite 9

NB: Of course the question of civilian versus military dominance of what's going on...um...was a chronic problem through...uh... and this came up of course in the...uh...the Phoenix organization and it can be send the operation of the Phoenix Program afterward. The Military was in no way were going to submit themselves—American or ARVN— were going to submit themselves to a civilian direction. Conversely, any time that the military took over an operation or an activity 9 times out of 10 it would be...uh...a perversion of the civilian capabilities into a military support arm. By which I mean we saw many cases were the military became predominate in the operation of...uh... province intelligence, for example, and we would almost invariably, not always, but almost invariably find that the so called civilian intelligence operation was quickly perverted to provide tactical combat intelligence for US forces or for ARVN forces

Sound Bite 10

NB: Ed Parker has a Chinese mind and he, as I was talking about the other day...[cuts out] I would rock the boat and sometimes sink it, Ed Parker would perhaps steer it a different direction so perhaps it wouldn't take the same waves.

DV: I like the image

NB: [laughter]

Sound bite 11

NB: Going to Ralph's dissertation here there are several things where I find he's...um...missed the boat and I think...uh [cuts out] Ralph really does not talk about special branch [cuts out] and this the unit of the National Police that the CIA was working with and supporting.

Sound Bite 12

NB: Now special branch should not be compared with FBI in this country it does have to be looked at in the European police context. It is most comparable with...uh...an...the intelligence division of a modern city police force and then...uh...barring in mind that it is a National Police, they do have national, regional, province, and district police officers and there is a vertical hierarchy, a vertical chain of command. Same way with the Special branch each one of these levels would have a Special Branch operation

Sound Bite 13

NB: Howard Stone had come into country at that time and was putting pressure for VCI...VCI penetrations already yet. SO what I did—what we did, Tucker and I, to respond to Stone [cuts out] And so we created a VCI penetration unit—high level penetration unit and...Uh...switched dragolich from region three officer in charge—regional three field officer to run this VCI penetration unit now he was to do exactly what was later taken way from us by Howard Stone. That's o review penetration cases generated anywhere in country, go out in interview people, evaluate the cases and, if they looked any good, to set up special arrangements, special prior for those—

DV: would you just repeat that a little bit slower?

NB: yeah, starting where

DV: uh...with the...um...um...requirements of that group were

NB: yeah, their purpose being to...uh...uh...review all of the cases...so called penetration cases

DV: nation wide?

NB: nation wide, to visit the provinces to do this also, to go on out to the province, to talk to the officers and visit...and...and asses the cases, determine whether they probably were good or probably weren't

DB: by reading the dossiers?

NB: by reading the dossiers, by talking to officers, by reviewing the communications procedures in same cases in meeting with the agent, whatever. And them come back and...uh...we would apply special care to the development and nurturance of the particular case.

Sound Bite 14

NB: Muldoon...um...was in on the PIC program from the beginning. This PIC program started in summer of '65. There were about 7 of 'em built by the time I got there and then I supervised or was toured or whatever you want to call it for the construction of the about 30 more. I think the totally number of PICs built, in total, were about 37.

Sound bite 15

NB: The PIC program had absolutely no relation whatsoever to Phoenix. You might call it a foundation stone upon which Phoenix...it was later possible to construct an ICEX-slash-Phoenix program. So that you might...you might look at it from the time US forces went in 1965, actually from the...from the...earlier than that even, that the CIA was putting in place...uh...foundation stones and it was in...for counterinsurgency and it was only late 1966-67 with ICEX that we were able to integrate these into a comprehensive counterinsurgency plan

Sound bite 16

DV: can you tell me anymore on the creation of the Counterterror Teams?

NB: now I can't, because that's something Donovan and these people but basically...

DV: to discuss with Methven or someone

NB: Yeah Stu Methven would be one...uh... but basically there were...initially they were exactly what the later leftist propaganda described them they were teams that would

Sound bite 17

NB: In sort of miscellaneous thought something that has to be touched on and that is one of problems in Vietnam, as it was in Laos, as it was in the Far East generally is that that part of the world seems to generate the warlord—the warlord and the warlord psychology its just...you just can't get away from it. And this is something that poisoned the Americans and as well as it would Vietnamese. So the upshot of this is you—in Vietnam in particular before—when someone comes in with a sledgehammer to make—to knock heads together—that you've...if you got 44 for different provinces you've got 44 different wars and 44 different warlords. And then on the regional basis same thing on the higher scale, and especially in terms of division in [unintelligible] these guys...these guys were...its the intoxication of power. That's what it is.

Sound bite 18

NB: There was a point I wanted to mention the other day and somehow I managed to skip over it and that is throughout the war and right down to this day there is a major psychological and policy split on the Americanization on the one hand, which can conveniently can be slumped up in the word slopes and an expression of attitude versus the national blinding approach, on the other hand, which recognizes that Americans don't know all the answers and that ...uh...we need to work in a fairly sophisticated manner with a local culture.

Sound bite 19

NB: and this is what mad eth development of a comprehensive counterinsurgency doctrine almost impossible. [cuts out] The CIA has traditionally and I in particular put our money on the nation building approach [cuts out] but the Americanization approach is...uh...primarily exemplified but not exclusively by the US Army. We'll come in, We'll wipe this thing up very quickly.

Sound bite 20

NB: So in terms of a overall counterinsurgency doctrine I [cuts out]

DV: Can you state that doctrine simply?

NB: well its...uh...I would...I would summarize it in terms of major military forces to provide—to cope with main force units in the enemy and to provide a shield behind which nation building—counterinsurgency and nation building can take place.

Track 3

Sound bite 1

NB: Johnson doesn't go into any of the...any of the...uh...important things about the...uh...evolution of either the Diem government or the communist insurgency or anything. He talks about it a lot. Once that talked about on the telephone that finger sphitzing geffew is missing. I don't know what it is. Its just missing.

Sound bite 2

NB: I have a comment on page 35, noted is the great expansion of VCI control in the disorganization, which followed the assassination of Diem. Now Johnson talks about that later but he doesn't talk about where he should talk about it and he never really talks about it as an important factor. Now Roger Hilsman was the basic architect, I suppose, spiritually if not by direct order, of the Diem overthrow. Now I don't want to second guess history on whether there was any better way of dealing with Diem than the US government adopted. Diem was a major frustration probably he had to be replace but this had to be done in a much more [Russian word] as a Russian would say manner without an assassination or whatever.

Sound bite 3

NB: And...uh...don't...this...when we talk about comment traffic analysis that's off the record but the radio links...uh...are a definite...definite...they gave us a definite picture of what the organizational structure of this whole insurgency was. Now I fortunately I found out in footnotes later in Johnson book that there was some guy who wrote a book about that so maybe its not as classified as it could be especially since Casey is no longer running the CIA. Maybe I won't be persecuted for mentioning something that's classified.

Sound bite 4

NB: Nobody knew what these fucking figures were. You could make estimates. I made estimates and came up with stuff that was basically within the MACV order of battle number and if you go down province by province how many guys you think here and how many guys you think there and so forth and so forth. But its always work and nobody knows

Sound bite 5

NB: we have to remember that CBS is the news service that financed a revolution someplace I forget where so they would be able to be there when it took place and be able to have the scoop on the news

Sound bite 6

NB: I'm just astounded that...uh...Ralph would make this kind of statement: "the formation of the people's revolutionary government that was recognized by the bloc countries-hyphen-India, Burma and Indonesia-hyphen-was the key to Viet Cont Infrastructure's efforts to gain" blah blah blah...No India, Burma and Indonesia never have been and are not regarded as bloc countries

DV: they're nonaligned

NB: they're nonaligned countries and this is a bunch of horseshit,

Sound bite 7

NB: this is the thought here of the contrast of the between American expectations of a quick win versus the fact that, in truth, the Vietnam war was a war of attrition, which...uh

Sound bite 8

NB: ok new subject page 125, um...McNamara alternative strategy of attrition 17 November 1966...uh...I simply note this as a recognition of the fact it was—that the Americans were beginning to realize this was a war of attrition.

DV: Bad word...I always thought that psychologically that word attrition really turned off the American public

NB: Oh sure, it goes back to the slaughter in the trenches of World War I

DV: that's right. It's a bad, bad word

NB: but that's what you doing just wearing them down. That's what General Grant did against the South. He just ground them down at whatever the cost.

DV: Its bad word but still if Americans fast facts than they've got a problem, which they obviously can't

Sound bite 9

NB: Robert Komer and his background a little bit we touched on that. that's page 132. I do think Ralph Johnson does him justice. I might also just say that an ICEX-slash-Phoenix thing would not work without a blowtorch personality such as Komer, anyway. This was built around him.

Sound Bite 10

NB: FI means provide intelligence but it has no concept within the CIA, for example, of doing anything about it. On the FI side of life, they'll have their PM operation that's all over here though and its something separate but you might say its...uh...its...uh...an academic exercise...it's a...uh...a exercise in art for arts sake, its masturbation if you want to call it that, simply to produce intelligence. But yet that's the FI role in the world and when we went against that there was a lot of opposition.

Sound bite 11

NB: we see that in the Vietnamese documents that the...uh...National Police were getting a leadership role in all of this that was really quite good. Because, as I said before, everyone—everybody including Vietnamese political leaders had nothing but contempt for the National Police. otherwise it's the CIA sales effort that put the National Police into the forefront of this thing.

Sound bite 12

NB: page 309, reference to the voluntary informant program, rewards for information leading to the arrest of VC, a ten most wanted list on key communist officials—this is vintage John Hart proposed by him in the summer of 1966. There was a long history of ...uh...bounty programs, of course ,so there was a long

argument and discussion about this kind of approach but John Hart said he wanted it and it was later incorporated into Phoenix.

DV: Could you something—elaborate something on the history of the bounty program

NB: not really sorry, but they had them in Malaya, they had them in the Mau Mau in South Africa or in Africa and various...

DV: so its not necessarily a history that...um...Vietnamese

NB: oh...um...I think they did try in Vietnam once too.

Carver

George Carver Transcript

DV: I understand that's you, you are the Special Assistant

GC: I was the second one, I wasn't the first one. It developed in the Spring and Summer of 1965 and Ed Mow-wib and Hawk-ley (not sure on those names) to set up a small staff in the director's office to...uh...supervise what the Agency was doing...[some noise I can't hear him talking over]...China related responsibilities. The first head of it, this guy named Peer De Silva, who had been station chief in Saigon and had been badly wounded in the bombing...uh...embassy bombing in March, that year '65 and Peer...I was asked to join the staff shortly after Peer, of the ground and...uh...I've been helping out, really trying to...assessments in the Office of Management and Estimates and...uh...and I became the Deputy Chief of Staff and then...then De Silva left a year later to go back out to Thailand to assist Graham Martin and some off Ambassador Martin's guys...programs in that country, while Dick Helms, who became Reagan's selection of Director, asked me to head the staff and be his Special Assistant for Vietnamese affairs, which I was for the balance of his term as Director and Jim Schlesinger's term as director and part of Colby's term as director.

DV: is that up until '72 then?

GC: no I was there...ahem...head of the staff until September '73 or October of '73 I can't remember exactly which.

DV: OK...um...Robert Komer comes out to...uh...Vietnam several times...uh...in late 1966. OCO has been formed but its not worked out. CORDS is going to be formed and Robert Komer wants a General staff for pacification which is going to become ICEX. I believe John Hart ter—coins the term...um...when is it decided that the...uh...that SAVA is going to handle the...um...uh...training and organization of those first forty-four men who are drawn from the military to staff out the region and province officers in ICEX?

GC: well we didn't organize the training so much as were the ones who wrote out what we thought that training ought to be and what it ought to include and it was more or less as it is. Our responsibility was to the director to be sure that things connected within the training that need doing were done and things that were unusual or hadn't been done before we usually took a look at how we thought they ought to be essayed. It might have been first instance, so the notion of recommending how the training should be done, fell upon us but I don't believe we did the actual training. In fact, I'm pretty sure we didn't because

we had a very small staff, not more than a dozen or so people, and US AID Public Safety set up a large training program.

DV: I understand from one of the guys who was in that class of forty-four people that he got a notice in...um...he was at a military base in the United States, had done a tour in Vietnam in '65-'66. His base commander got a message that this guy was going to be called to the Pentagon.

GC: of '65?

DV: of '67, when...alright...just prior to the formation of ICEX, did...and the he went to Washington and...um...met with you and Roof Robertson. Was Roof Robertson someone who played a role in the actual training program from the office of SAVA?

GC: well, from the best of my recollection Robertson was in the Agency's office of training at the time and I did think he did play a role in training the people who were then posted out to what became ICEX and I may well have met with him and with some of the people who were going to be trained I just simply don't recall...uh...he would have been a natural guy to take part in the training if not actually run it because, as I said, at the time as I recall, he was a very senior officer in the office of training...uh...so its perfectly possible. I don't happen to remember the actual meeting in question but its certainly possible that it took place but...ahem...basically I was doing was...looking from...to see if the concept was adhered to and to then over its implementation to a guy a that wall equipped, had more time and had a college degree.

DV: did Robert Komer come to you at some point and talk to you about the formation of ICEX?

GC: well, I'm sure he did. Bob and I dealt with each other quite frequently by memorandum but usually by phone or pass him crossing when he was in Washington and, then after he was in Vietnam, I used to go out there fairly often on visits and he would be back and Washington, we saw each other so I'm sure he did but I don't remember any particular meeting at which this subject kept up.

DV: you couldn't help with the chronology, then, from late '66 to March/April of '67 when this thing gets together?

GC: I'm...I'm sorry, I'm afraid I can't simply because we are going off of a memory and I haven't thought of that subject in a very long time and my memory is just hazy.

DV: ok...but...uh....Robert Komer would have dealt directly in the form...in the setting up of the program?

GC: yeah...yeah...that's right

DV: and you would've....

GC: when Bob went to Saigon, I can't recall. He went out to be the head of CORDS some point in this period because he was out there in '67 but then when it was...I believe he went over in that capacity 'til well into 1968. I think...I think it was '68 that Bill Colby went out to replace him, but I'm not sure. Again, I just don't have total recall. I just don't remember

DV: uh...can you tell me a little about the relationship between the Saigon station and your office as Special Assistant for Vietnam Affairs.

GC: well it was an interesting relationship which on the whole was pretty cordial but the Saigon station, in terms of command line, reported to the Chief of the Far East division, which in turn reported...who in

turn reported to the Deputy Director for Operations, who in turn reported to the Director. I was the head of staff in the director's office that had a supervisory function for the director and basically I looked after his Indochina account for him but I had not command jurisdiction over the Saigon station per se except that, when I went on visits or if I would send them messages, they used to pay a moderately respectful attention because they were well aware of the fact...uh...I would, then, sit down and discuss my findings with the Division Chief, the DDO...a...at the Agency management committees. There was no point in getting more cross with me than necessary but I...my relationship with relationship with the succession of station chiefs, John Hart in particular, was very cordial indeed except that our responsibilities were lacking...some extent complementary but by no means identical and therefore I tried not to interfere his discharge of his and, to a point, he tried not to interfere with my discharge with mine. I was...I was responsible for satisfying myself, and, of course, assure the directorate that the Saigon Station was performing about as it should and making the kind of contribution that to the over all US effort in Indochina and, in that sense, I had something of an Inspector General function but I tried not to push that too hard.

DV: when...in late 1966, I understand a decision was made to expand the CIA role in...um...uh...pacification. There had been a debate whether to CIA should pull out of it...uh...maintain the same policy or get more involved and the decision to get more involved sort of was what...uh...led to ICEX

GC: well...it didn't exactly lead it...it was thought by a number of people, myself included, that bashing away at North Vietnamese divisions was all very well but that wasn't going to...the North Vietnamese could always put more divisions in so that wasn't really not going to get at the heart of the problem and what you really needed to do was assist the GVN in consolidating its control over the countryside with the bulk of the people left and that that was a task to which all elements of the all US mission, that could make a contribution, really ought to do so. The...the...the military ought to construct some of their operations, as the Marines did notably up in I Corp...uh...to assist that function which was kinda a long range win the war function. You had bash the North Vietnamese to prevent defeat but you had to consolidate government hold in the countryside if you wanted to win the war and...uh...so I think that the expanded the CIA role was part and parcel of an expanded embassy role, expanded AID role and even an expanded military role and there was nothing that any individual mission component went out and did on its own.

DV: ok...it was just that...that the shift to pacification

GC: yeah

DV: ok, Ralph Johnson wrote a dissertation in...uh...1981-1982, just before he passed away, on Phoenix, I don't know if you're aware of that?

GC: I am aware of that. I've never read it and I've wanted it to.

DV: uh...in it he mentions that he was deeply involved, in his abstract to the dissertation, that he was deeply involved in Phoenix but in the text he didn't explain how, what kind of involvement would the CIA and Ralph Johnson have had in the Phoenix Program after 1969 when the Program was theoretically turned over the military and the CIA had withdrawn from it?

GC: well Ralph...I don't know exactly what periods Ralph was figure, I said I have never read his dissertation or its abstract but I'd like to read it. Where did he do it, do you know?

DV: American University

GC: uh...the...um...Ralph was very heavily involved in training activities in Vietnam, down at the training center at Vung Tau and it may very well have been that capacity that he may have well been kept on after the military took the program over. I don't recall this for a fact but it would certainly be logical...uh...because he was very good. He had a lot of experience in sorta personal institutional memory...uh...I remember him...recall his being more involved with the training of cadre and personnel than the actual management of operations in the field but again I could be mistake.

DV: that would be Revolutionary Development?

GC: that's right

DV: yeah ok...likewise would Phil Potter and Rod Landrette have had a role in the Phoenix Program. Would you know...have known what their responsibilities were.

GC: well Rod had some sorta of special assistant function in the station. He could of have Phoenix related responsibilities. I'm not saying that he didn't, I just don't...I mean I just don't remember precisely what things that he was involved in. I know he was responsible for one of the things the various dealing with senior levels of the GVN but I forget precisely on what substantive matters and I don't really remember. Phil Potter was out there. I think he was up in III Corps...uh...but precisely what he was doing I just simply don't recall. I mean I knew Phil, in fact Phil had been branch chief when I first went to Vietnam in 1958 but I don't have a vivid recollection about precisely were he fit in the overall scheme of things.

DV: which branch?

GC: uh...the FE branch IV, which was the Indochina branch. See Phil served in Vietnam. I think he was stationed in Hanoi during '52-54 period.

DV: OK, I believe Evan Parker was there at the same time...um...the...this one province guy I had talked with who had been...was one of the original forty-four who...uh...went over in...uh...as part of ICEX province officer said his mailbox was the Combined Studies Group, can you tell you me what this Combined Studies Group is?

GC: I think it was an administrative name used for people who were operating as sort of an umbrella to...that covered people operating the ICEX program, to the best of my recollection.

DV: OK...but...um...it wouldn't...would it be an office itself perhaps in the CORDS building, handling reports or something like that?

GC: It may well have been although...although all offices that were handling reports might have been combined under than banner. I simply don't remember. It was probably the name...the name administratively and organizationally was used for people who were assigned this particular program.

DV: ok...do you know anyone who would've been involved in that who I can go do for information about the Combined Studies Group?

GC: well, there's Parker if he's still alive.

DV: he is...OK, if there's a Combined Studies Group what would be...um...how would it relate to the Phoenix directorate? Would they be...wouldn't that be sorta a duplication of effort?

GC: Well, again and I don't wh...don't remember who was doing what under name and in what time period. It could have been a component of the Phoenix directorate or it could have been a US administrative entity to which people working under Phoenix were assigned. I just simply don't recall. I

think it was an administrative umbrella term...uh...but...uh...at least I'm pretty sure it was...uh...but...I forget the years in which it was used and I forget just exactly how broad of an ambit...uh...it had.

DV: would you be aware of any kind of...um...CIA role in Phoenix after se...after the ceasefire?

GC: after the ceasefire, you mean after '75?

DV: after '73? '73 is the ceasefire and then...uh...from...and at point American troops had been withdrawn

GC: yeah and didn't the Phoenix Program pretty much phased down by then?

DV: that...there's some debate as to whether or not I did. There's actually...supposedly it was handed over totally to the Vietnamese National Police.

GC: yeah it was

DV: would it have been monitored by the Station?

GV: well, there were a couple Station officers that had advisory liaison functions to the National Police and to that extent they would get their eyes and ears open as to what the police were doing with...with formerly, partially a large US account but there was no active US involvement, as I recall, in Phoenix after it was turned over.

DV: OK...no more staffing of DIOCCs and PIOCCs and all that kind of stuff but just kind of a monitoring and...uh...awareness of the program.

GC: to the my best recollection because, although this was turned over, the District and the Provincial Operating Center were [something mumble] with the news that [another mumble] US personnel.

DV: Last question, what's your assessment of ICEX and Phoenix, its impact on the war and its success or lack of success?

GC: well I think it was, basically, a very good concept. It had...it related to something that had to be done and I think on the whole, how much you can attribute to any single program, no one knows. I think on the whole the government was, by and large, reasonably successful, a lot more than was given credit at the time or since has been given since, particularly true believers who didn't like it, in winning, if not the affection of people, their allegiance if any, in a very pragmatic way. I have friend you ought to go out and talk to by the name of Sam Popkin. Who now works for the Bank of...holding organization and is a professor at some component of the University of California system I think at Irvine or Santa Carla. I forget which. I don't think Sam's on the Berkley campus. Sam, in the late 1960s, was a rising star, either Harvard or MIT. I think Harvard and Sam has a great cross to bear in life. He's an intellectually honest Marxist and that is not an easy thing for a man to be and...uh...Sam got himself and went out to Vietnam to study popular attitudes toward the war and government and...uh...when he left he was going to be send off by the best people because...uh...they just knew Sam was going to come back and tell them how the Vietnamese peasants were thirsting for revolution and couldn't wait to dispose the vicious Saigon government. Sam's a very gutsy guy and his mode of conducting research was both thorough and courageous. He would go out and live for weeks and months on end in villages down in the delta where he would be the only non-Vietnamese for dozens of miles around and there was no one to protect him a bit and not if he got in any amount of trouble and after spending twelve, eighteen, twenty four, I don't know how many months he spent doing his research, collecting opinions in notes and stuff. He came back. He was welcomed back initially with open arms...uh...they said "tell us what was one of the things you found out about how everybody, the peasantry, supports the NFL" and he said "oh, it's a bit more

complicated than that. That's what I thought I was going to find but I found that isn't the way it works. I found...I found the peasants tended to be more conservative and the thing they liked least is paying taxes and the only thing they like less than paying one set of taxes, was paying to sets of taxes and they tended to believe the war was a struggle between two sets of armed tax collectors and, by in large if they had their druthers, many if not most of them would rather give their support to the tax collectors from whom they derive some benefit [cuts out] tended to be immediate and the NLF benefits often tended to be off in the indeterminate future...uh...by and large, most people he talked to would just as soon pay their taxes to the government and wish the NLF would get off their backs not because they had any great ideological feeling for or against communism but...uh...simply because in their perspective, well...uh...they like to be able...uh...throw their transistor radio in the back of their kee-awe-g and slap on their little out board motor and scoot into the district town for...to get themselves a little ice and listen to a little gossip and...generally enjoy themselves.

DV: enjoy life.

GC: that's right and when South Vietnam finally fell, it did not fall to any sort of popular rising. It fell to eighteen line divisions of the North Vietnamese Army and a series of battles in which the NLF and the indigenous...the southern elements of the force structure played no consequence whatsoever...so...so...uh...if that was the end result more or less produced...I'm not saying that Phoenix necessarily produced but government programs working toward achieving that kind of end can't have been all bad or entirely misconceived. Now this is not the kind of thing that is susceptible to sorta quantified analysis. You can't say this program was responsible for 72.3% of...of...of this shift in sorta hamlet statistics or I think like that...but I do...I think...I think the job that Phoenix tried to do was necessary to do and I think that the overall attitudes that were prevailing, by 1975, prevailing in the whole countryside, exceptions in certain areas and regions, of course, by and large indicated that the government's efforts to sell its message to the bulk of its rural population had, on the whole, been successful or at least hadn't been miserable failures.

DV: and...um...I'd also like to get your opinion on one of your fellow workers, a man named Nelson Brickham?

GC: don't remember him, except that name

DV: well I tried to make it...I know how busy you are...so I tried to keep it to a precious few

GC: I'm afraid I wasn't too helpful.

William Colby

Track 1 Sound Bite One

DV: Phoenix not being actually a particular CIA project, at least I understand in the beginning it was and but then later it became the Military

WC: In beginning we had the ICEX but then later we turned into Phoenix, which was basically a Vietnamese program and we had some advisors with it. Fundamentally the element of the program was attempt to identify the secret apparatus of the communist effort in...uh...South Vietnam, the command of control if you will...the political command and control, the political order of battle.

Sound bite 2

DV: Can you tell me when your involvement with Phoenix begins was it Robert Komer who asked you to work up a program

WC: If you ask about the real genesis, the CIA had urged the Vietnamese government to set up a central intelligence organization and they did in the early 1960s, '61 I think. Then we had the Diem coup and the collapse of much of the order of the place and in roughly '65 we began to talk about the need to get the different intelligence agencies working together again...um...and to exchange their information and improve their coverage of the communist effort, not just the military the whole of the communist effort.

Sound Bite 3

DV: what is the problem—what is the cause of the disunity between, what I assume, the military intelligence and civilian intelligence.

WC: the military believes that their function was to find out who the—who the enemy units were that they were going to attack. They're going to attack them. It's a traditional military order of battle to determine was the military enemy is. They normally don't think it terms of a party, focusing on building up structure for understanding a party. The CIA does understand that and the need to conduct much more...uh...politically oriented intelligence efforts. To identify the political forces of the apparatus we faced: the organizers, the activists, the proselytizers, all the rest of it

Sound Bite 4

WC: Uh and Phoenix didn't really originate anything other than the idea of a coordinating center. D-I-O-C-C

DV: right, and the PIOCCs

WC: whatever it works out to...and...uh...developed a center at which all the information could be brought together and compared and gradually builds up this political order of battle. So you knew what the enemies was the neighborhood not just the military unit but the whole of the enemy structure. We began to talk about that and the need for the different intelligence services to work together and not try to recruit the same agents and things of that nature. Um...I think in '65 we talked about in the rubric of ICEX, I-C-E-X

DV: I familiar with ICEX

WC: Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation...and that was an attempt that, which went on from there in '67 Komer sent up the CORDS...uh...which was designed to centralize the pacification program generally and as one of the elements to understand the communist counter organization and we developed the concept of the Phoenix program in late '67.

Sound bite 6

WC: The Station, I think, was doing a lot of it. The CIA Station was taking the lead on the need for sort of thing and I was supporting it, pushing it and so forth. They develo—the government announced it 67 I think but nothing happened really and then Tet came along and by that time I was there and in the spring of 1968 Komer and I—both of us—um...said we need to revise this, after the initial shock of Tet and the refugee handling and so forth...we need to revise this and revive this effort. So we rewrote the...the...uh...different documents to get launched, worked with the different Vietnamese authorities, the president, the prime minister and so forth to get a program launched. And this was announced by

presidential decree in early July '68 and the Prime Minister led a parade, which kicked it off. One of the points I made, in discussions with the Vietnamese, was that it should not be a secret program. It should be an open program. It should be a program that made it self obvious that this was an attempt to understand and to combat the secret communist apparatus and we wanted support of the population in the process.

Sound bite 7

DV: Can you tell me a little about the genesis of PRU, Provincial Reconnaissance Units, which I understand are an integral part of the Phoenix?

WC: Well they were one of the elements of Phoenix. There were... Well, lets put it this way they were one of the elements, which participated in Phoenix

DV: Right, like police special branch

WC: like the police, like uh...

DV: National police field forces...

WC: ...like everything else. In the mid '60s the provinces in Vietnam were pretty wild places. The enemy was at the gates...and there was the gates you wrapped the barbed wire around the in the evening, fended up the motors, that sort of thing. And the Agency had experience in paramilitary activity and one of the things they came up with was a lot of province chiefs said "look, I gotta have some force around that I can use. I can't depend on the regular military. I gotta have something that will respond...that will do a good job."

DV: Because the regular military was not responding?

WC: It wasn't responding to them. They were responding to their own desires and so forth. And at the time the paramilitary forces—the territorial forces, you should say...uh...the regular...the regional forces, the popular forces—were very weak, very poorly equipped and the rest of it. So various at the CIA...province officers would conceive of the idea of developing a small unit at the province level which would be under the direct authority of the province chief and would act in the province against the enemy they had there. And so we cleared that with, you know, the necessarily political clearances at the various levels, Vietnamese, American. And began a program of supporting these and there'd be oh 50-100 men in a province and they'd be given very good training, have some good leadership, and be very aggressive types. And they wracked up a good record of being aggressive and going up against a secret enemy.

Sound bite 8

DV: What is the role, then, of the Phoenix directorate?

WC: It was just the national staff, you know, the staff level. What it's function was to be a staff at the national level, to advise the appropriate Vietnamese authorities involved in Phoenix, particularly the Special Branch but also...see the Vietnamese put a special office for Phoenix. [cuts out] I mean they had special office that which out of the Prime Minister I believe, as I recall...reported to the prime minister and it was a national staff program to direct the program at Vietnamese channels and to make sure one was organized in each region, in each province and keep the statistics and all that sort of thing. And the Phoniex directorate of CORDs was established as a counterpart to work with that Vietnamese staff a national level to help them articulate all sorts of ideas we had, such as booklets to describe the normal structure of a province committee and the normal kinds of people who would be on it and we categorized—one of the early things we did was conceived of and then get the Vietnamese to agree to

categorize the different members of the communist apparatus so that we could distinguish between the ones—not just call them all communist but to distinguish the leadership, the A category

DV: From the B and C

WC: From the B, which is the cadre level, and the C, which is the followers and forget about the followers were not interested.

Sound bite 9

WC: ...the kind of thing we would work on, articulating ideas like that and then discussing it with the Vietnamese, seeing whether they agree, and then they'd produce—try to get the Vietnamese write a draft of whatever it was and then we'd critique it for them and, you know, comment on it and finally they'd issue it as Phoenix directive and then we'd translate into English and send it down the American chain so the Americans would know what kind of ideas were being promoted.

Sound bite 10

DV: it would be interesting to know if you had a hand in the staff of the Phoenix directorate?

WC: the choosing of the people?

DV: the choosing of the people

WC: I am sure—yeah—well certainty on the choice of the senior American

DV: so you would have chosen—

WC: they would send me a name, the agent, you know we ask...

DV: ...personnel department...

WC: ...so and so is going home we need a replacement and they said “well we recommend this one to you.” And if I thought he was alright I accepted him and if I didn't I rejected it. You know, that's what I did with all the other agencies.

Sound bite 11

DV: what is the difference between CIA station agent operations and CIA agents in Phoenix, what they were doing?

WC: Well the CIA agents in station were doing two major things by then, they had done a lot of other things before. It was working with the police special branch, very directly, and it was the advisory group for the special branch just as the public safety people were the advisory group for the regular police. Uh...they were also developing their own independent agents.

DV: the unilateral agents

WC: Yeah the unilateral agents

Sound bite 12

DV: I know that each province had an advisory team and number but I understand the Phoung Houng advisory groups are different than the province advisory teams.

WC: CORDs had a refugee directorate, a territorial forces directorate, a Phoenix directorate, a development directorate, it had.... I don't know all the other directorates. They're in all those reports. Now at the regional level you would have a refugee officer with an office and development office a so forth, so forth, so forth. At the province level you would have the same thing. Now they didn't have a full fledged one below the province but at the district level you would have Phoung Houng Advisor at the district. So the Phoung Houng advisory team would be a member of the province advisory team.

Sound bite 13

[Colby's wife enters small talk I didn't transcribe]

Sound bite 14

WC: Here's the President and here's the American Ambassador and under the President is the Prime Minister and he has the national Phoenix directorate working for him. Under the Ambassador is me, I have a Phoenix directorate working for me. Go down one you get the Corps or region commander on the Vietnamese side and he was a Vietnamese staff and he has regional advisor on the American side with a staff of Phoenix as well as all the other subject he was worried about territorial forces, and ...uh...economic development all that all those things. Then you go to the province and the province chief has a staff and the province senior advisor has a staff.

DV: ok so I understand...

WC: So on the two sides, here's the American side here's the Vietnamese side, there's a counterpart relationship all the way down.

Sound bite 15

DV: What is the pacification security coordination division? Do you recall that?

WC: as I remember it was a...[cuts out] oh wait a minute oh yeah...yeah that was kind of a cover name for the CIA station[cuts out]

DV: I am not throwing anything...

WC: I know...what that was a staff...I don't know whether it covered all the CIA people or just the ones that were working with CORDs we have...

DV: its part of CORDs one of the 12 directorates in CORDs

WC: then it was the group that was running the...uh...the...uh...RD Cadres

Track 2

Sound bite 1

DV: I wrote a letter to L. Wave Latham (???) asking him about his relationship knowledge of Phoenix and he said to me "I was in charge of MACV staff level—at MACV staff level aspects of pacification

expect for Phoenix for reasons I won't go into but which you might be aware. Is there—I am reading something into that or...

WC: I think what he is say is essentially the CIA, while he was there—remember I replaced him,

DV: as acting chief of staff?

WC: or yeah...as assistant chief of staff...um...and Phoenix was barely getting going by then it was pretty much a CIA project and the CIA was pretty much, you know, trying to get it off the ground and going. When I came, we turned it over to CORDS away from the station.

Sound Bite 2

DV: I got some documents from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, believe me, it was like pulling teeth and they came from the Office of the SACSA, Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Operat—Activities, their RD division, Revolutionary Development Division...um...which when the military takes over Phoenix becomes the overseer at the level of the Phoenix Program

WC: The Washington level?

DV: Yes, and subsequently...an interesting thing today when I was reading the province senior advisor reports they were all...the imperative to do the reports had come from SACSA, RD and...uh...I was wondering if you knew of any relationship between SACSA, RD and Phoenix. If they would be...if people at the level a, the Joint Chief of Staff, the RD Division would be giving direction, for instance to the Phoenix directorate.

WC: Well they would be passing out requests and so forth but the chain of command would go through me.

DV: I see, so were you, then, in touch with the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

WC: Oh yeah, we had bushels of report going back and forth all the time?

DV: about Phoenix?

WC: about anything. I mean like those province senior advisor reports we would send those out every month.

Sound bite 3

DV: Do you know anything more about the people that were in SACSA, Revolutionary Development who would be taking an interest in Phoenix who I could go and talk to about [cuts out]

WC: It was faceless pentagon bureaucracy

DV: ok it was just as faceless to you as everyone else

WC: when I would come home and report, I would report to the Secretary of Defense, probably somebody under him, the Assistant Secretary for International Security affairs, people like that. I would talk to people in the service, you know, the Joint Chiefs. I probably talked to whoever ran SACSA at the time.

DV: but without it registering or making a strong impression on you as having been...

WC: yeah...yeah...they're so interchangeable and they change so often

DV: Ok that's the...from the memos I've seen they change very few months, very much so...

WC: you're dealing with offices rather than people

Sound Bite 4

DV: What about the role, if there is a role, of SOG in Phoenix.

WC: I am sure they took out of Phoenix such intelligence as they...would be useful for SOG...[gets really quiet I can't make it out]...so they wouldn't have much do with Phoenix.

Sound bite 5

DV: I understand that staffing and...uh...of...um...at the district level in particular, of the Phuong Houg Advisors were Special Forces people and uh...

WC: No, normally they were...most of them were given a course out of [Hollibert ???]. The military intelligence was sent out to us and most of them weren't Special Forces.

DV: 'cause I have talked to a few Special Forces people who were running PRUs

WC: That may be but that's different from the Phoenix Advisor. See the Phoenix advisor is this guy down at the bottom here at the district, D-I-O-C-C. He was the advisor at that place. Now if there was, in the early days I think we did borrow some Special Forces types—CIA borrowed some Special Forces type to manage PRUs...uh...later the military were folded out of that program and the advising was picked up CIA and finally we moved the teams to the police and the police picked up the advising.

Sound bite 6

DV: There were...there was...um...a PRU national commander on the Vietnamese side...uh...his name was Phoc, P-H-O-C. Now obviously if there is a PRU national commander, I read this in...uh...um...a paper that Mr. Komer wrote called "The Fiasco of Phoung Houg" which was very critical of everything that was going on, but he mentioned the man's name as being PRU national commander. I was wondering if there was a...certainly the PRU must have had an office itself at this central Phoung Houg permanent office [cuts out].

WC: Certainly in the earlier days, there was no national office. The CIA station stirred up the PRU at the difference provinces and there was no central Vietnamese authority. Then, as we and the CIA both, wanted to regularized the PRUs then I probably we did set up a central office and ask the Vietnamese to appoint a commander.

DV: Do you have any recollections about those people cause I thought certainly if there was an advisor to the Police Special Branch...

WC: That was a CIA guy, the advisor not the... the Phoung Houg guy didn't advise the PRU it was CIA. Um...and they asked if the Vietnamese would appoint a commander for the national organization and some how ...[statics out and gets real low I can't make out anything but isolated words for rest of bit]

Sound bite 7

Humming and static 8:25-9:00

Sound bite 8

DV: its very helpful...

WC: after you get your all research done you'll have more questions. You can't help it and I'd be glad to help you out. I am interested in having the story well told, properly told, honestly told and if you're confused on something, I am sorry for that. I am not going to tell you something isn't true but you're not going to believe me even if I tried to, so that's alright and your free to write whatever you what, of course. But the fact is and sometimes, it can be very help to then be able to check something out a little and I would be glad to help.

DV: I appreciate that and certainly one of the things that is of most service to me....

WC: I know enough about the world to know if the wrong story gets out its hell on wheels to get ride of it. Therefore you should do all you can to make it correct no necessarily favorable but correct.

Sound bite 9

DV: The idea of a coordinator as opposed to an advisor...is it that coordinator more of a generic term than specific person...

WC: don't hung up in the difference in the names. I don't think they're significant. I mean somebody would call them and advisor and somebody might call them a coordinator and it would be the same guy. Yeah I tried to make...when you made it

Sound bite 10

DV: The Phoenix Coordinator and the Province...

WC: ...maybe they're both Americans...

DV: and coordinators was perhaps the district level and advisors the province level.

WC: Those kinds of names, you know, and the gibberish of thing can drive you crazy I wouldn't get hung up on it.

Sound bite 11

DV: Did Ambassador McManaway have a role in Phoenix?

WC: Well he was one of the directorates at the national level, you know, there was Phoenix and refugees and development and one of them was planning or policy planning or something directorate and that was a kind of a general staff for writing policy documents that were broader than any one directorate. So, in a sense, he would have helped supervised what the Phoenix directorate was doing just as he would with the Refugees and everybody else.

DV: So it almost at a level higher than Phoenix and everybody else

WC: it was the generalist staff it wasn't a specialist staff...

Sound bite 12

DV: Does the name Alien Anthovan mean anything to you?

WC: Sure he was one of McNamara's wiz kids. He ran...I don't know whatever the name of the office was that ran systems analysis in Washington. And they used to take all the statistics and grind them around in different ways and come out with....

DV: Was he, perhaps, one of the people involved in the computerization of the Phoenix files.

WC: No he was...[trials off...this tape is really quiet]

DV: What about Colonel Sanely Kanerowksi

WC: No that doesn't ring a bell at all. Now, I think we did the computerization ourselves out in Vietnam. We tried to get...

Sound bite 13

DV: Who was your computer person that helped you or actually was in charge of the computer system? Was it Big Mac was that the name of the Phoenix Computer system.

WC: [crazy static] there were whole bunch of them...um...I probably can't name the precise one who worked on Big Mac but Jim Green was [crazy static I cant make out much..."computer in the field...information in the field"] I encouraged a great deal of that because we were getting all the statistics and if you could get them on the computers you can play them back and forth a little better and see things that you couldn't see with the raw data

DV: that's what Frank Scott would say too

WC: it was really quite interesting some, of it. I never really believed the numbers cause that's so spurious but they really helped you think about the problems.

Sound bite 14

DV: I know its one...computer doesn't seem to...systems analysis doesn't mean much to your average reader but in writing about Phoenix I think it is important that I have to address that and how that came about so its important to me to talk to a person...

WC: we would use it for control of how the local people were doing. You know, if one province was reporting that they captured a lot of category Cs, and no category As and another was saying they captured 15 category As. First you check if there's any truth to the second story and but then if it turns about to basically true then obviously the second province is doing a hell of a lot better than the first one.

DV: So, in this way, you could judge if whether people were doing their jobs or not.

WC: like I said, I don't believe numbers right of hand but you use them as a basis for questions.

Sound bite 15

DV: Was the American advisor to the National Police Field Forces, would that seem likely, would you have known who that person was.

WC: I probably would have known. He would have been subordinate to the chief Public Safety advisor

DV: and that's the way I understand it, I have talked to Michael McCann and um...

WC: Then...then...the Field fella would have been under him because the Field Forces was under public safety.

DV: And but the Field Force wasn't an action arm of Phoniex

WC: Well in the same sense anything else was.

DV: Ok, right because anything could be called in do what was necessary

WC: sure if you had a chore than needed a Field Force mission you'd try to get the Field Force to go do it.

Track 3

Sound bite 1

DV: I wondered if you had actually played a role in...um...developing the names Phoung Houng Advisory groups or any of that sort

WC: Phoung Houng, I've forgotten were the hell Phoung Houng came from...Phoenix was a rough translation...um...and we just used Phoenix as the name. You know, could think of any other name it was as good as any...and...uh...I had a lot to do with Phoenix I spent a lot of time on it. I didn't...not exclusively, of course...but I did have a lot to do with the general policy.

Sound bite 2

DV: could you describe your relationship with Mr. Shakley?

WC: He was Chief of Station, I had been Chief of Division

DV: so you had been his superior

WC: his boss, yeah. And then saw him a number of times in Laos. [cuts out] now I remember what happened, he worked on the Cuban thing for a while and then he went to Berlin. I got him out of that...Ed Fitzgerald and I got him out of that after only a very short time in Berlin and the same amount in Laos, he was there for 3 or 4 years so I guess '67 something like that. I think he was there when I go there and our relationships...he had his chores and I had mine. WE obviously had to keep our people from getting tangled up with each other. The CIA station, quite properly, wanted to keep its operations to itself and I, quite properly, wanted to make that any CIA operations involved in pacification were integrated properly into the overall pacification program. And this...we turned programs over from him to me. The Cadre program was turned over from CIA to CORDS. Phoenix Program was turned over from CIA to CORDS. The direction of it became [mono? mine? monitored? I have no clue] and, you know, we worked together on how to do that stuff.

Sound bite 3

DV: I the any relationship between Cambodia, and Vietnam, and Laos and Vietnam that affects Phoenix in at all any way.

WC: the only thing was is we would find that the Province Committee was living over in Cambodia or something like that. But there was no coordination

DV: Would Phoenix or Phoung Houng teams go into Laos or Cambodia after people if they had be identified as being in Laos of Cambodia,

WC: yeah some of the border special forces types

DV: so maybe in that sense SOG could have been involved in Phoenix if SOG people were...

WC: if they might have used Phoenix intelligence and gone after someone

DV: I often hear, and this might the case,

WC: IF we knew, you know, that the province committee was sitting at the corner of Hollywood and vine then we would make that available. The Vietnamese weren't allowed to go into Cambodia. The American's weren't allowed to go into Cambodia. The Special Forces were.

Sound bite 4

DV: but...um...weren't at different times, especially Military Assistance Advisory Command people, CIA people, Embassy People, in Laos and Cambodia already. They couldn't go into Laos or Cambodia but they were already there!

WC: But they weren't involved in that kind of border problem. I mean they were working in the center

DV: with politicians or generals or whatever

WC: They had their own programs. I mean we were running a major war in Laos. The CIA Station was running a major war in Laos but they weren't interested in sort of the border things about Vietnam

DV: What was your role in the war in Laos

WC: as division chief

DV: so you oversaw

WC: I had a general responsibility

DVC: was one of your areas then Thailand also

WC: East Asia yeah

Paul Coughlin

PC: pretty much what we were concerned with in the directorate there was the...uh...personal and training side of the...uh...of the...uh...tip-dit (not sure) we just...we had a program there that was spread out all over Vietnam in every region, in every province in every district and what we had to was be sure we had the necessary resources to...uh...to...uh...fulfill what are responsibilities were and...uh...that those resources were properly trained or at least oriented as to what their responsibilities were and that they were properly supported logistically and that's essentially what we did.

DV: was the military providing the logistical support?

PC: yes...yes because, you see it was always the Phoung Houng directorate was concerned with the military side of the operation, the Phoung Houng directorate of CORDS

DV: and yet...

PC: this was under MACV, you know under General Abrams and we had our own, you know, chief there who was one point Colby and then George Jacobson replaced him and their own dir...we were under further director, a couple general officers took their turns Forester and O'Mally, Gene Forester and them...um...came our director but our director didn't really...he reported to two places

DV: you mean either Mason or Titlon?

PC: Mason or Titlon, yeah they had...two...two places to report because...um...they came to the Agency and they...uh...were also responsible through the CORDS structure up to MACV.

DV: were there other CIA officers on the Phoenix staff?

PC: not in the directorate I worked in and I don't know of any other place were they might have been. This was a military program.

DV: I had heard there was a fella who was Lieutenant Colonel in logistics, which I think is the S-4, a man with a French accent, does that ring any bells you?

PC: uh...no

DV: who...supposedly the other military officers new that he was not a regular army officer.

PC: maybe if there was a name attached to that guy I might be able to remember.

DV: I don't have a name just...uh

PC: he might have been a reserve officer, contacted duty or he might have been...from time to time...See a number of Agency officers did reserve commissions and actually did come on active duty for short periods, as all reservists do. I don't know maybe that guy was in the category.

DV: I was...one of the things I was trying to determine was what kind of monitoring of the program the CIA did. They started the program, staffed it original and...um...then gradually withdrew from it

PC: as I understand, I wasn't even there, but they had to pull back when they got so much publicity in '69-70 when they had some allegations of assassinations and things. Colonel Roves was involved in. I don't know much about that. I never really read the newspaper much at the time. I do know that changed the whole program, they decided to public with this program.

DV: can you tell me a little about how the staff was organized...um...was...was there...were there several departments? Was there a reports department? You know, a computer department? You know, that kind of organizational structure?

PC:...uh, Its very...I really can't remember exactly how it that was organized...we had...uh...a logistic...uh...department, there, that was operations and...uh...we didn't really, as I recall, have anything that had to do with intelligence because we weren't operational, when it came to intelligence. We didn't process any intelligence in anyway. We were strictly administrative, logistical.

FV: Did you...um...participate in planning any operations in the field?

GV: No [cuts out...]

DV: OK

GV: see that's why its sort of a misnomer when they call it chief of operations because operations...

DV: seems to suggest...

GV: that its operations but its operations keeping...um...the program functional that's what gave the directorate, one senior man on his staff that he could go to to do a number of different tasks that might need to be done, he had requirements coming down from CORDS.

DV: OK

CUTS OUT

PC: that's in anyway. We were strictly administrative and logistical.

DV: did you...um...participate in planning operations in the field?

PC: no, see that's why its sort of a misnomer when they call it chief of operations because operations...

DV: seems to suggest...

GV: that its operations but its operations keeping...um...the program functional that's what gave the directorate, one senior man on his staff that he could go to to do a number of different tasks that might need to be done, he had requirements coming down from his...from...from CORDS. We had a lot of reporting requirements but most of them had to do with the types of people we had, our requirements, you know, maybe for different spaces for people and...uh...the types of training and the types of military occupation specialties we needed.

DV: and was...um...Carl Mawler a Deputy for you?

PC: yeah

DV: and he...he later become chief of operations

PC: um...I'm not sure if he did that after I left but I know...I think he was my senior deputy. See I had a lot deputies, I had about three or four them, during that period. There was this one guy named Hud....

DV: Hudman, George Hudman

PC: yeah...yeah...George was a very colorful

DV: I saw a picture, John Titlton had a picture that had been taken with the whole staff

PC: yeah, Hudman even had his wife over there for a little while which was kinda unusual in Vietnam. You just didn't normally see that.

DV: did you know the region coordinators?

PC: yeah, I got to know them fairly well

DV: did you know John Johnson? Was he one of your...

PC: I don't recall.

DV: OK...um...George Carey, who I believe is a black man

PC: No

DV: OK

PC: we had...I don't know the names of these guys...

DV: was one of them Dave Muckett?

PC: No...well, we had...uh...we had...uh...up in the Northern region, a guy who...uh...first region, a guy who had going up to, later on, he was foreign area specialists. See most of these guys were career military intelligence and this guy was also a Japanese area specialist, a linguist and when he left, he went there and spent some time in the shade for years.

DV: was he Japanese?

PC: yep...he was very good...he spent many years...see, I was also a foreign area specialist but I was not a military officer.

DV: is that...um...MOS47 PBM, I believe that is?

PC: um...no...no the military intelligence specialist th...that is what you were talking about

DV: yeah

PC: uh...foreign area specialist have different...48 different number after the 48, depending on the area they are a specialist in. A lot of military officers are also foreign area specialists like for instance Carl Mawler was a Latin American specialist and we might have had a couple of others who were cycling through there because everybody had to do their time in Vietnam no matter were you specialty was wherever else in the world, when came your turn you had to go. See I was on of the last Artillery officers to go to Vietnam, because in the first stages of Vietnam they sent me to Korea to be a battalion commander.

DV: do you...can you tell me the name of the fella who was the Japanese area specialist who went to...um...Japan.

PC: no I wish I could I just can't...that name is so vague. I just remember I was very impressed with him and later on as a defense attaché I would read some of his reports...um...and I know he was very highly regarded by the Defense Intelligence Agency. We had a bald headed Lieutenant Colonel, kind of an outgoing type in Region two.

DV: that...um...Mullet?

PC: No, I know Mullet. It wasn't Mullet. Mullet was not...well yeah, Mullet was in our program that's right. He came into that, he replaced this other guy.

DV: do you remember his name

PC: that was a very senior Colonel. The was senior to me.

DV: I asked John Tilton who gave Mullet order and he said God

PC: that's about right...he was a free spirit, Mullet was. I think he was a straight as he could be. He was really and infantry Colonel out of the water. He really should've been out in front of a battalion or regiment.

DV: do you remember the name of the bald-headed Lieutenant guy ?

PC: um...I sure don't

DV: did you deal with any Vietnamese?

PC:...uh...no, not on a regular basis from time to time...uh...I in visiting, however, all throughout the regions I would, of course, be hosted by local, either national police or in some cases special police officers, who were the senior people in the districts of the provinces. We did get to know the national police chief pretty well, part of representational type responsibilities, you know, receptions and things like that. We would be in contact with the chief of national police.

DV: Bin, General Bin?

PC: um...I don't think that was his name...I can't...this guy, Titlon knew pretty well

DV: was it Hang? With glasses...

GV: yeah, it was. Titlon knew him pretty well it was part of his job to know him. This guy...he was kinda...

DV: was there a person on the staff who was the liaison to the Special Branch?

PC: um...I...uh...don't recall anybody on that staff liaison to the Special Branch. We had...uh...there were... that function was done by...uh...by the chief, as far as I could recall.

DV: how long were there 'til

PC: I left there in February of eighty—of '74

DV: of '72?

PC: of '72. I got here in '70. I left in '72.

DV: and were you replaced by someone?

PC: uh...I don't think my replacement was there when I left. If he was he didn't impress me very much.

DV: how big is the staff, how many people in the Phoenix directorate perhaps?

PC: I think we had about 15 people there, seemed like, including the enlisted assists we had. There was a couple of...that includes the interpreters or translators. They were Vietnamese women, had a couple of US secretaries. Females over there working for the government, US government, about fifteen people was it all it was. Some guys might still have charts and things

DV: I would really like to see an organizational chart. I suppose there must be some that...that...table of organization

PC: somebody must have some but, you know, most of us tossed that stuff, especially Vietnam that something when came back you said "well I've done my job..."

DV: did you, then, get reassigned to Latin America?

PC: well I got assigned to the Department Army Staff operations again, back into the Latin American field. After two more years attending the War College—the Inter-American Defense College—for a year I did go down to Latin America.

DV: do you see any...uh...lessons to be learned from Phoenix to be applied to Latin America or elsewhere around the world?

PC: um...well, not necessarily...well yeah, Phoenix...uh...the way we were operating Phoenix, this was strictly an intelligence program. We were...and intelligence is probably the most important thing when you're trying to deal with a subversive movement a...and subversion type warfare, you've got...you've got...um...people who are moving around you everyday and you don't know you they are. So you've got to know. You've got to get a handle on it and that's what were trying to do. What we... our target was what they called the VCI, the Viet Cong Infrastructure and we were trying to set up a sort of systemized organized where we could collect, collate, analyze and organize matters of intelligence on VCI.

DV: and so would describe the Phoenix directorate as administratively mostly handling paperwork that came in the from the provinces.

PC: yeah administrative and logistical. the operational areas, as far as intelligence operations, were are the province or the district level or even at the region level. There was really no operations. In every district, almost every district, there was two hundred and seventy some odd districts, and in every province there was something like twenty-eight

DV: forty-four

PC: what is it?

DV: forty four

PC: forty-four provinces and then some other regions that weren't really considered provinces, everyone of those had a...ahem...intelligence center.

DV: right, DIOCCs and PIOCCS

PC: that's right that's what we were concerned with and our people who went out in the field, it was their job to make sure they were established and properly supervised.

DV: did you...did the Phoenix directorate handle the financing of the program

PC: we had the financing as far as our people were concerned.

DV: staff, yeah

PC: now I really don't know I can't recall but I think our people out in the districts and provinces had limited funds that they could use in setting up the structures, the actual centers, that were operating and able to get supplies for them, such as file cabinets and maybe communications and that sort of thing.

DV: what about money for operations?

PC: that operations that they would then conduct?

DV: yeah, for instance, if they were running agents in the field or stuff like that

PC: that did not come from our side because we were...we were concerned with the intelligence side. We would produce the intelligence in the field we would and see the district chief, they were reporting to the district chief and province chief. They had their own assets as far as what they did with that intelligence and how they exploited the intelligence. See our guys in the field were working on the staff of the senior district advisor and the senior province advisor.

DV: right, the...um...district Phoenix guy was an advisor to the district senior advisor

PC: that's right who was advising the district chief.

DV: the district chief, right

PC: They each had their counterparts, all of them.

DV: did you do a lot of traveling around the country

PC: I wouldn't say a lot but I did...uh...periodically I would travel. I went to every...uh...region...uh...two or three times and various districts within the regions a lot. We really didn't have a lot of business going in and trying...uh...guess what they were doing operationally. What we were concerned about was that our people on the ground...th...that the province senior advisors, the district senior advisors were getting out of 'em what they expected. You know, its really if a people sort of thing. If they...if a guys out there goofing off we want to know about it.

DV: and that you learned through the reporting systems?

PC: we learned yeah...through the reporting system, through our contacts in the...uh...in the...uh...advisors. Course we could also, sometimes in our visits out there we could see if they might not be...they might be using them improperly. For instance the province senior advisor might be having our highly trained intelligence guy doing something on his staff that really wasn't what he was sent out there to do, not have him writing reports for him or having to do with the business of being his supply officer or anything like that.

DV: so you are actually a CORDS employee while you're on the Phoenix directorate

PC: that's right

DV: OK

PC: that's right, we're

DV: everybody on the Phoenix directorate, then, was working for CORDS.

PC: that's right, we were all...and that's our reporting chamber as far as a our efficiently reports I mean we were right up that chain.

DV: how long...did you get know John Mason at all?

PC: only for about six weeks when I first arrived there and he was already winding down. He knew he was leaving and...uh....

DV: how would you describe his management style as opposed to John Titlon's? Did you make a comparison?

PC: No I really wasn't with him that long...uh...he was a...a more of an informal type of manager, you know, sort of... I didn't know that guy but if had to draw conclusions on the basis I can

DV: did you get a long well with John Tilton?

PC: yeah I got along well with John. I got to know him pretty well.

DV: he, of course, spent most of his career in Latin America

PC: yeah a...although I didn't know that initially but later on we did...you see, guys from his Agency don't talk much about what they do and I did ask him a few questions when I found out he had been Bolivia because I was also in Argentina when I was going...I had some good friends who were involved in that up there.

DV: had you been Bolivia

PC: yeah, I visited Bolivia a couple of times, one of my good friends had been there. Infantry, senior infantry advisor in Coachambomba which is where these operations emanated from.

DV: John Tilton is rumored to be the man who organized the capture of Che Guevara.

PC: yeah...um...he was there and he was in charge of what was going on but the...uh...guy a Green Beret guy was named Patty Shelton

DV: Shelton, yeah,

PC: who was down there and they work in a country team type basis. They come in and, of course, the ambassador has a lot to say about what they do or don't do and the station chief does...

DV: did you know Pat Shelton? I've lived pretty close for Fort Devins, about ten miles away, so I've had a lot of friends who are Special Forces, who are writing or have ambitious to write so we get together to talk.

PC: there are some very colorful people in that business.

DV: well I think that pretty much covers the questions I had. I was hoping you might remember some of the region people because I would like to get in touch with them.

GV: well we lost a few in helicopter crashes and things like that

Dillard

Track One

Sound Bite 1

DD: during my last year of school, I just couldn't wait to join the army because my father—my step-father—was already in North Africa with the army so my mother reluctantly agreed to let me enlist and the airborne at that time was the newest thing on the block so I...became a paratrooper. I went to Fort Veen (?) and ended up being assigned to the 5-51st paratroop infantry battalion

Sound bite 2

DV: exotic stuff for World War II

DD: sixteen year old

DV: sixteen, huh, did you lie about you age?

DD: yeah

Sound bite 3

DD: then the Korean War broke out and...and arriving in the port of embarkation...uh...they had every former World War II combat infantry ear marked to fly to Korea. The non-combat experience went by boat the rest of us were flown over.

DV: Where you with the 82nd

DD: no as an individual replacement and by that time I had been commissioned second lieutenant

Sound bite 4

DD: again, kinda like the Phoenix Program, they were fleshing out a partisan infantry organization to operate behind the lines in North Korea.

DV: who...who is...just the...Macarthur's staff?

DD: General Macarthur's headquarters and...uh...I was...ended up assigned to that and I was trained and delivered partisan infantry types in rear of the...uh...the front line as far north as the Elue River

DV: so and these are Koreans you're training?

DD: Koreans yeah.

Sound bite 5

DD: and as result of having been in the 82-40th Army unit in Korea, I received a letter from the...uh...assistant chief of staff for intelligence office, army asking if I would like to join an army sensitive intelligence program and I did and I spent...uh...two tours in Germany...uh...in that activity.

Sound bite 6

DD: I came back to Fort Bragg and...uh...became the deputy commander of the continental army command intelligence and our main mission at that time was to support the 18th airborne corps on their worldwide immediate response mission and I also trained and organized...trained and deployed...uh...army intelligence units to Vietnam...and during the period I was there, we activated and deployed practically every army intelligence unit in Vietnam.

Sound bite 7

DD: while I was there, I also activated and commanded the 14th MI battalion and the 48th military intelligence group. They essentially reconstituted the STRAC forces in the United States

DV: and that stands for, STRAC?

DD: Strategic Army Reserve Corps

Sound bite 8

DD: and...um...from there I went to Vietnam...um...uh...and I was assigned as the...uh...well, Phoenix coordinator for 4th Corps...uh...reporting the CIA's R-O-I-C, regional officer in charge.

Sound bite 9

DD: um...MI branch called me and Fort Bragg and said "we've alerted you to Vietnam as the chief to the 101st airborne division...[cuts out]...the branch then called me and then said you're not going with the 101st but we got...what we consider critical requirements...um...and we can't discuss it over the phone, its classified and you'll find out when you get there but we are giving you very short notice.

Sound bite 10

DD: the...hose were very high requirements. They had specifically brought in four very experienced...uh...intel...intelligence...experienced officers of the Lieutenant Colonel level to go into each of the regions and...uh...

Sound bite 11

DD: but having already been in two major conflicts my own feeling was that the year is going to pass a hell of a lot faster if you're out daily pursuing the war instead of back in Saigon writing about it.

Sound bite 12

DD: I was briefed by the staff that I would essentially be the RIOC's senior advisor and coordinator of the Phoenix program in the Delta and at that point in time, I was given a very brief outline of what the program was about, which was really an intensified coordinated effort get very US and allied and South Vietnamese enemy coordinated and directed toward the infrastructure.

Sound bite 13

DD: I felt that at that point in time the staff that they had was really not that field experienced to understand to how the program was going to develop or evolve.

Sound bite 14

DV: you had three days of processing, in which this briefing was part of that and you didn't really learn a lot from it because people weren't really familiar themselves...uh...they just told you, you'd be working with Ward collecting and...um...coordinating intelligence in the Delta.

DD: that's right and they didn't really have a good grasp for how it was going to evolve because...I think...uh...the ICEX program, which was the forerunner to Phoenix—think it must have been run pretty directly...uh... at the province level principally with the agency running—but this...

DV: that's exactly what happened, yeah

DD: see a lot of people do not understand when...when MACV took over and fleshed out the Phoenix Program with hundreds of military and money, it really was a joint effort then and actually CIA was...was a supporter and a partial sponsor of it but MACV really had the con for it.

DV: mmmhmmm but that doesn't happen until later?

DD: it evolves

Sound bite 15

DD: they had come up with their conception of the region and the...um...province and the district staff. Where you would put in an intelligence officer to do nothing but focus on the Phoenix Program and that those people would be provided by the military and...uh...uh...and I don't really remember the percentage but there would be a percentage and, for all intents and purposes, it could have been 50 percent funding of the operational expense by MACV to reimburse CIA. As a remember I got caught along the carpet in Sai—in the Delta because I got spent and awful lot of money reimbursing CA (*maybe he meant CIA*) for aircraft support which up until that time I didn't know we had to do that.

Sound bite 16

DD: in the protocol between the Agency and MACV there was certain amount of financial reimbursement that MACV assumed to support operations.

Sound bite 17

DD: the Phoenix staff was located in CA compound in Cam Da.

Sound bite 18

DD: there were, as I said, there were a lot of people that I think had come in from administrative position in the building up in this program that had not been out on the ground, running operations and realized that you cannot become so secretive that you...you can't even run an operation. So I think we did a tremendous amount of...of breakthrough in the Delta because, yes were always aware of the need for secrecy...uh...we were suspected there was a leak we would try to hold everything as close as possible but sometimes you just couldn't do it and you had to plan and coordinate and run the operation.

Sound bite 19

DD: that was Chau Duc Province I went out there on Sunday morning. It was my first introduction to the real war and we landed there in the province town and...uh...

DV: and this was right after Tet so there must have still been stuff going on

DD: oh yeah...oh yeah there was a lot of activity and the young sergeant there Drew Dick

DV: he's in that article

DD: um...there had just been early that morning, in of one the little villages, the VC had come in and taken a couple out accused of collaborating with the government and they shot them in the ears and their bodies were lying out on the cart where the villagers had put them up and we had the jeep sandbagged because they may have put mines in those dirt road so we drove out there was only a few minutes. I

looked at that and all the maybes natives standing around and first awareness of what those natives were up against because during the night that damn VC team had come in,. They had gotten all the villagers together and warned them about cooperating and so, you know, we going to present an example of what we do to collaborators and they shot them in the ear right on the spot. So I knew then what my job was.

Sound bite 20

DV: what was your job, what did you then see at that moment that was your job

DD: I realized that there was a tremendous psychological problem to try and overcome in...uh...developing specifically that group of villagers to cooperate in program because to me the Phoenix Program was one of the...the...acquiring...uh...adequate and timely and detailed information so that we could intercept either defect, kill, maim or capture the Viet Cong and the guerilla forces operating in our area.

Sound bite 21

DD: Phoenix people, army military intelligence officers, had begun to arrive in the staff position. One at district level and one and province so

Sound bite 22

DD: And Konger gave me a few tips about the...this same problem, number one trying to get these same agencies to cooperate and trying to overcome the terrorist psychological problem that existed in the villages and hamlets.

Sound bite 23

DD: some that did surface at that point at time is that there were many people around that felt although they didn't know all that much about what the Phoenix Program was about that thought it was a threat to them somehow.

DV: who?

DD: a threat to their power base

DV: are you talking about mostly Vietnamese or Americans?

DD: uh...both

Sound bite 24

DD: if you think about it...its...its kinda in direct conflict to our culture and I guess our experience over the years where we take a US army, military element, whatever it may be and direct towards, not only the... the military and the paramilitary enemy forces but the civilians that cooperated with them and really we're out to surface, destroy or defect that infrastructure as opposed to fighting the main force battle. And I think most of us had been around a while that that was in the back of mind that a great amount of what were doing was pursuing a campaign to destroy this illegal political apparatus that existed—the VC infrastructure.

Sound bite 25

DV: but do you think that Phoenix might be some what responsible for changing military thinking.?

Sound bite 27

DD: I think if anything exacerbated the problem we were facing here in the United States, where the...um...there was a basic conflict. What we were charged to do in Vietnam...uh...when it was discovered—I mean your not killing...um...uh...doing anything of that sorts in the United States there was a domestic intelligence that army intelligence was involved in that the Church Committee got a lot of publicity in surfacing and I think if anything it had a very bad effect on the...uh...army's capability in providing...uh...counter intelligence support and were confronted with a problem today on terrorism and...uh..what evolved out of this big expose in Church...uh...Committee was that military were prohibited from going after any targets that were no DOD or DOD affiliated and essentially it...it shot the military out of any domestic intelligence activity and led to the activation of the Defense Investigative Service which is a civilian oriented services which is questionable in my mind that they are as effective as they could be and I don't think they have the capacity to be effective at all...uh...in the event of a wartime situation developing.

Sound bite 28

DV: I thought the Defense Investigative Service did background checks on people who worked for military contractors and that kind of stuff?

DD: ok well that's analogous to what we were doing in Vietnam in trying to investigate and identify the infrastructure and in that case we would get the Vietnamese to go get them in those areas where they were inhibited we would go get them. In the United States, you're doing the same thing except that if it looked like a case of treason or subversion they could be immediately referred to FBI because the Army was empowered to arrest someone unless it was on military post.

Track 2**Sound bite 1**

DD: it as not fattening, immoral or corrupting that I could do what I wanted to do and within the guidelines of the Phoenix Program which is, again to me, the overall coordination of the units that existed in the Delta that destroy the infrastructure.

Sound bite 2

DV: so their isn't any guidelines that are articulated...was Parker's staff working up something?

DD: well, they were constantly working on things. One was to get a...uh...program of instruction developed to...to train Phoenix coordinators at Vung Tau, which I was instrumental with Jim's blessing and help and...uh...making some significant recommendations and was their guest speaker at several of their first classes that they taught. See what happened, this was moving so fast in early '68, that people began arriving in country and being assigned out and then they pulled back and sent to Vung Tau for the training.

Sound bite 3

DV: where was the Phoenix training facility in Vung Tau?

DD: there...there was a compound there...

DV: and it just had a classroom in the compound.

DD: yeah there was classrooms...different type of training facilities out on the grounds because...

Sound bite 4

DV: where the RD cadres and the Phoenix people mixed in together?

DD: no because...

DV: just Americans is Phoenix and...ok

DD: they tried to keep the separate and, of course, the group I was involved with were the American personnel and...

Sound bite 5

DV: who was training them?

DD: there was a US cadre down there.

DV: just of...would it have been Agency people?

DD: it was Agency people and then they began to get some Army personnel in.

Sound bite 6

DD: what I...one of the first thing I established, where could do it, was we had these people come through Camda (?) so that we gave them an orientation...um...that what we expected of them as Phoenix coordinators.

DV: and what was that, what were your expectations?

DD: well you outline your...uh...the mission which was at whatever level you were working at

DV: district or province

DD: yeah...uh...you know, be aware of the entities operating in your area of responsibility and establish a rapport and contact with the personalities and try to develop a rapport so they trusted you and didn't regard you as a threat.

DV: in other words, if you're in a province go over meet the Special Branch guy, meet the MSS guy, meet the CIO guy, meet all those people and introduce yourself

DD: and if there are any US army elements or SEAL elements or Air Force Intelligence or Army Intelligence and establish a good rapport and relationship with them and...uh...you know try to convince that the only thing that we were trying to do with Phoenix was to focus all of our resources on the VCI.

Sound bite 7

DD: it seemed that the PSA advisor was never there. He was either in route to Saigon or coming back from Saigon and, when I talked to the...the US and...um...well and I would have to say principally the US people there in the province, they'd say "this guy is either drunk or shacked up with his girlfriend anyway and we...we got very little...we've just written that off."

DV: and that is because the Public Safety advisors were not professional people...

DD: That's right...many of them were former policemen, policemen on leave or they had...they come from some...uh...law enforcement activity and they were plunged into that environment and I am not really cognizant of the training they received but based on my own experience there was an almost total incompetence, which...uh...eventually caused trouble.

Sound bite 8

DD: our concept was we had 84 or 100 PRUs in most provinces, we could use them but if you need to seal off an area you need at least maybe a couple hundred troops. You could put the NPFF or the Russ and Puss (*I think that is what he said*) in a location as blocking force and the PRUs do the dirty work. We could get the PRUs but not necessary the other forces.

Sound bite 9

DV: they were not necessarily interested in combat operations, is that the way it is?

DD: I think...I would try and put in another way, maybe more delicately. I don't think they were...um...their proclivity was to support...um...the National Police force down there as supposed to training to see that force in engaged in operation. Now they had to do, principally with their lack of background, ok so.

Sound bite 10

DD: and I complained about the lack of use of about eighteen hundred men in PFF in the Delta and I said, "you know, that's if you think about that could be an extremely effective light infantry strike force and where not just getting the use out of them" and then I complained about it and he said "well, how do you visualize this?" And I said, "Well the first thing you are going to say is that I am trying to expand my power base and it ain't that at all. What I am proposing is that thereby some kind of central control set up that would give us the capability of utilizing that up to eighteen hundred police in the Delta to support these operations and with the kind of people that you have out...um...advising at the province level you just ain't ever going to get it done." And one thing that occurred after Tet, they did bring a group of enlisted me our of military police and many of them were totally inept and, I know from talking to some of them that they had never been in combat and there experience was analogous to short patrol duty.

DV: what capacity where they brought in?

DD: they were going to be advisors, actually working with the NPFF.

Sound bite 11

DV: I assume that was probably the first thing you did, was you wanted to get a province—a Phoenix guy into each province, is that...is that sort how you...

DD: yeah...the Phoenix Program had one of the highest priorities in MACV for personnel to flesh it out and as fast as they came in country they were assigned out, directed to the provinces and districts except that...

Sound bite 12

DD: it was around January or February of '69 that...uh...we got a message that briefing team was coming down from MACV and that we wanted to...they wanted all the Phoenix coordinators brought in from the districts and provinces to attend a half a day briefing on the new Big Mac reporting department, has any one mentioned that to you.

DV: yeah Big Mac certainty, combined document exploitation center.

DD: well let me give you my version, my reaction...uh...in the meantime a copy of the paper would be sent so it could be reviewed. Being a good soldier, we coordinated with MACV and with Air Merc (?) to bring in—I think I was able to bring every coordinator I had that was either out on R&R or sick or something.

DV: and this is at district and Camda

DD: yeah...in the meantime we got this paper in and it was reporting requirement that would choke the mule and it was to the point of...uh...designing data entry sheets so it could go into the computer in Saigon.

DV: So it must have been that thick or something...yeah

DD: it must have been that thick, it had god knows how many annexes to it and...uh...

DV: it must have been that SOP Three or something

DD: it may have been but...um...I looked at and my first reaction was disgust. I...I met with Ted Grimen, who was the MACV G2 down there, and we coordinated with the other staff members and we came to the conclusion that, in this later period in message it went to General Abrams, if we implemented Big Mack we would stop perusing the war and begin reporting it, that was the bottom line.

Sound bite 13

DD: General Davidson's staff sent a letter, a memo, to Ted Shakley that essentially said if you people oppose submitting vital statistics in the form of information data to MACV, we will be unable to support your requirements. So they, as I understand, that memo hit Evan Parker and he went over to talk to Ted about it and...uh...I think the opinion was Ted acknowledged the existence of the memo he would have to challenge Davidson and essentially ask for his relief. I mean...I mean we are talking about the movers and the shakers. So the request that I got, and hear I am for some reason over my lifetime I've ended up caught in the middle of a lot of things and I don't resent because I think I have been able to influence some good things but the question was put to us in the Delta would you be agreeable to implementing a portion of Big Mack with the understanding that when you get to those big annexes they will be deferred to until a later day and again...this is...this is verbal

DV: from Eccard I suppose

DD: no, from Evan...

DV: from Evan ok

DD: that this would be policy not to cause a great furor over and above what already existed at the MACV level. So I guess essentially what they were asking Eccard and Jim Ward, would you agree to this. So we agonized over this and, you know, being a political scientist major...um...and have been in the intelligence business for a long time I realized the necessity of being prudent at times. You always have you day

DV: compromise is the heart of politics...

DD: so we recommended yes we could live with that and I guess the subsequent message or discussion between Eccard Abram—Abrams ensued and we, then, began to implement portions of Big Mack but that came on just about the time I was getting ready to leave.

Sound bite 14

DV: Who was...who was making the assignments at that point? Who was...was Abrams making the assignments at that point?

DD: The G1 or the J1 in MACV still made the principle assignments but in many cases they would coordinate them and I would presume that if he had a...like Escola (?) was a Full Colonel and I would imagine that...uh...that was coordinated through Evan's staff down there, do you want to see Full Colonel or another Lieutenant Colonel

Sound bite 15

DV: and how early on did you meet him, did you meet him...

DD: It was within the first week I was down there because...um...I wanted to start running with the program not just let it languish and we have a program in name only and...um...Jim agreed with me that we would try to be out every day and if we couldn't get MACV helicopter support we would use Air America.

Sound bite 16

DD: it was...uh...actually the draw down; I had still had teams in other countries. In Cambodia I would have an interrogation team in the middle of an interrogation and the state would call and say we have two guys coming back from R&R in Bangkok so you people have to leave. And they would have to leave until the...uh...numbers were down and they could come back in two or three days and finishing the debriefing.

Sound bite 17

DD: Quite often there was a lot of clumsy heavy-handed type activity and I had good and bad feelings about Special Forces because...um...on the one hand they were very courageous and it cost a lot of lives and other hand I don't think...uh...uh... that appreciative of the nuances of being super cautious in collecting and evaluating your intelligence before you run and operation and up in the...uh...along the...it was in King Faun, along the border, they...uh...you know, the sun rose one morning and everyman in position had been shot in the back of the head

DV: Special Forces

DD: It was not the US it was...

DV: the LLDB yeah

DD: yeah it was working with them.

Track 3

Sound bite 1

DV: could a Phoenix district advisor, did he have the authority to call in support or would he ask the district...the district senior to get him support? Let say he wanted to man an operation, a Phoenix district guy said that we have intelligence on...that we know this Cong (?) Liaison guy is over there, did he have the authority to say put to—to call, lets say, a PRU team together and say you guys go out there and do it on his own.

DD: Um...I would say generally not they could not do it that directly. They...they get their good information together and get it back to province and they sort out the priority based on an evaluation of the information and if they had the resources at their dis...disposition without calling us they could go ahead and do it.

DV: it did work the same way with a Phoenix coordinator at the province did he have to coordinate everything with his...um...with the province senior advisor?

DD: I would say yes in most cases because province chief had, each one was different and he had...um...different...

Sound bite 2

DD: I'll tell ya, since you mentioned the PIC program, I became a construction tycoon in the Delta. There's a sideline to my Phoenix days and again it had to do with...with total involvement. I figured I was there for 12 months and my mission in life was to give them 12 months of 24 hour a day service. Whatever was required I did as long as, again, it wasn't immoral, fattening, or corrupt and the...uh...

Sound bite 3

DD: And we had a requirement, I mean we didn't, but the system had a requirement to the...um...not only the interrogation center but jails built.

DV: Where the PICs already built in the Delta when you got there?

DD: No there weren't any...

DV: oh...there weren't any!

DD: we...we had to create land to built the jails on or the PIC and...uh...the ...uh...Agency sent down an elderly gentlemen from Maryland who is a contractor and his job in the Delta...uh...one of many is to get the PICs constructed.

Sound bite 4

DD: there were two things that were problems: one was a...uh...a little shelter to have on the site and the other was to get some kind of material that could be used to...uh...to protect the wet concrete from the high water table when they were pouring foundations and the support.

DV: this is just a shelter for when they are under construction and to protect the materials and people because the conditions in the Delta...

DD: well the water table...you could kick the ground and hit water so...uh...this guy and I were just chatting over the little CORDS club they had there and I said “just might be able to help you.” You know after two wars you learn few things. So what I was able to do was...um...um...to coordinate with—well first the Navy SEALs helped, we were able to get cases of steaks from the Navy at Bien Tua [cuts out] were able to get steaks from the Navy to...we gave the Air Force People down there. We got stainless steel sheets from them, which I was able to get to the contractor to use to build...uh...models that you’d sink ‘em in the ground, pump the water our and pour a concrete base.

Sound bite 5

DV: was it a Vietnamese contractor?

DD: No, we’ll I think PAE did the work down there but this guy was an Agency employee that was supervised

DV: I am sure he was

DD: they used a lot of local talent

DV: what’s PAE?

DD: Pacific Architects and Engineers...they had the contract there in Vietnam I think throughout the whole period

Sound bite 6

DD: see what was needed...uh...there was...in a lot of these little derelict like districts in the Delta they didn’t really have any facilities and those little jails as I called them, which really were interrogation centers, were constructed so that for the first time they had a place to secure prisoners as well as interrogate them.

DV: and that was for the Special Branch...or for strictly for Phoenix or...for everybody?

DD: It was for anyone. I remember going into one we built up in Chau Duc that had several monks in there and they had a big chain—a steel chain—chained their legs so they wouldn’t run off.

Sound bite 7

DV: so during you year, by the end of your year, did you have a PIC in every province?

DD: we had...had pretty much constructed them throughout. One thing we did in the Delta, and will never forget Colby’s admiration to us in one of his visits down in the Delta. We’d have a monthly meeting and...uh... up in the three corps no in two corps the uh...RIOC up there who was an Agency guy had built a magnificent building with a helicopter pad on the roof and Colby said “there ain’t gonna be no more monuments built in Vietnam.” And he said “I am glad to see you guys have a conservative program to just get the job done.”

Sound bite 8

DV: did you like some of your province Phoenix people better than others, did you, you know, how would you rate your people from good to bad, all real good, did you have high quality people, where most of them military intelligence people.

DD: well number one they were all MI officers

DV: would that have been the same nationwide

DD: yeah it was supposed to be and...uh...I think that they were all very very good, highly motivated and they were limited only by their inexperience

Sound bite 9

DD: ...been out on an operation that morning and they'd gone on leave to...uh...zap some VCI. As I recall the...one of the VCI, either the local leader or he was there...uh...communication...um...cadre and they ran into the Moment (?) Canal and they had a firefight and they captured this guy and...uh...they tried to subdue him and he kept resisting valiantly and I think it was the Di We (?). the captain from the S-2 section pulled out his pistol and shot him

DV: that's a Vietnamese?

DD: a Vietnamese and this captain he almost—I mean my captain almost went out of his mind he said “For Christ's sake, you just killed a source of information for activity in this district. Why did you do that?”

Sound bite 10

DV: the Phoenix advisor or coordinator at the district had and, as his counterpart, the S-2.

DD: yes

DV: ok, not the somebody from Special Branch, not somebody from MSS?

DD: no he worked with all of them but normally he would work with the S-2.

DV: ok, and the...uh...district senior advisor's counterpart would be the district chief.

Sound bite 11

DV: I thought it was Lieutenant Colonels and Majors who were the province Phoenix people and Captains and Lieutenants who were the district?

DD: no, the way it started at the region or the corps was a Lieutenant Colonels; at the province, a major, and at district a Captain or Lieutenant.

DV: but there's some flexibility

DD: yeah, and it's always been that way. Now later at the region level, the year left which was '69, the region coordinator became Colonel's positions and his deputy, a Lieutenant Colonel and it was just the other way when I was there: with a Lieutenant and a Major.

DV: what was the role you saw the Saigon Staff as?

DD: uh...representing the program at the national level and ensuring that we did get the kind of personnel and logistic support that we...we felt we needed.

Sound bite 12

DV: and the M-O-S for your people was triple 666 was that in counterintelligence

DD: well we...I had mixed emotions on whether it would be that or whether it should be a combat intelligence staff officer and I felt that I'd rather them serve in that capacity because many of them got the combat infantry badge because they were out under fire.

DV: although technically, the way I understand they weren't supposed to and because they were advisors they weren't supposed to be.

DD: well how do you make an omelet with out breaking eggs

DV: well no, I understand, I understand

Sound bite 13

DV: that whole Cambodian border area there

DD: In Cam Don, those were toughies because there was all kinds of stuff going on there all the time and you had special forces up working the border and sure

DV: they had a there had their camp, special forces camps along there

DD: yeah

Sound bite 14

DV: was special forces feeding information into Phoenix channels [cuts out] running his LLDBs into Cambodia or whatever special forces do when they're getting intelligence, they feeding into the DIOCC and the PIOCC or are they really keeping or is that unilateral operation.

DD: they were supposed to occur but again, with some of the jealousies that existed, the special forces people unfortunately kinda considered themselves a separate entity like the...the SOG operation and...uh...I guess it was hit or miss at times and also a lot of the information that came from them was very questionable

Sound bite 15

DD: that's the...one of the problems Phoenix was trying to grip with and you can see some progress being made but, again, when someone had their own axe to grind [cuts out] and when it back—it's just like this thing with Iran had the Republicans gotten all five guys out the week of election they probably would have not turned over congress...I am sure that was the ultimate objective behind all that.

Sound bite 16

DD: and interesting observation that I have on the fact that you have McFarlane and North and Secord and Cabe or Cob, however you pronounce his name, in which the three principles were very knowledgeable at the national level of activities and...uh...you if...if you on active duty or your working

with the Agency with an active clearance you prohibited going into those kinds of areas and there is a period of time after that, up to five years or so, that you cannot go in an area like.

DV: because you no so much information that if you get captured you're a liability

DD: now here's a case of almost two thirds of the principles of the National Security Council going right into hostile

DV: MacFarlane and North should not have been in there

DD: absolutely

DD: and Secord because of his reputation shouldn't have been there because some people consider him to be borderline...uh...illegal operations

DD: I am surprised they didn't barbeque those guys.

Sound bite 17

DD: they were trying to interdict those and capture...um...they'd get a lead on a VIC cadre and...um...through friends or relatives try to get word to them to defect and that was very successful in the Delta we had a considerable number of defectors.

DV: is the Chieu Hoi program?

DD: yep, mmmhmmmm

Sound bite 18

DV: did you have somebody at the region who was the Chieu Hoi person

DD: yeah they had a someone designated but Phoenix personnel got involved in an awful lot because that was one of our main...uh...well our primary efforts is to defect because you can exploit the information. I mean you can always go out and shoot someone or blow them up. Its kinda like that case aside where the Di We killed that guy in the struggle.

DV: what good did it do really?

Sound bite 19

DV: how did you work it with the Chieu Hoi program, I understand they had there own facilities?

DD: they did....

DV: and that was through Agency for International Development or something and then they would be adverting come to Chieu Hoi and when they...when some...after they had...would they do there own debriefing or would a Phoenix person come in?

DD: Well they...they would scream for pertinent information and if someone had good information than they would be thoroughly debriefed either by Phoenix people for immediate exploitation or by the MACV interrogations.

DV: would this happen at region level?

DD: it could happen at any level

DV: district, region or

DD: yeah because if...if your out on mission and you capture a bunch of people, right now and you find out that...that...uh...or that one of the defects and he says “well the cadre is having a meeting a mile over here and there in that Sampan with whatever on it.” And you try to immediately exploit it.

Track 4

Sound bite 1

DD: um...and there was a limit on all the facilities down there I don't know why in the world we want to...to triple the Phoenix stuff.

DV: where did they want the...what were the twelve new positions kinda things

DD: I think what happened is they had such a stream of people coming in that they had to—and also the planners are thinking of greater wiring diagrams and more people.

DV: is this planners in the Phoenix?

DD: so Jim agreed with me and I don't know whether or not you talked to Evan but he just told them “you tell those turkeys up there not to send anymore people down here. Send them to the other areas.”

Sound bite 2

DV: what kind of involvement did you have with...um...John Wilbur and his PRU people?

DD: Well at...at the province we almost had daily involvement with the...uh...the province Agency advisor and the SEAL team leader.

DV: that would be the province officer and his PRU advisor?

DD: yeah and...uh...this was either trying to help them get stuff or they getting stuff for us for another area...uh...or going over the potential operations.

Sound bite 3

DV: you said that sometimes you called in B-52s can you give me example of that?

DD: yeah well, what I was alluding to there was in working with the G-2, Ted Grimin and the Cam To advisory group, we were trying to piece together the patterns of the movements of those main force guerillas cause that constituted the single greatest danger to the district or the province so...um... the idea if we could put the fear of god in them we knew their pattern and we could influence them but we should never assemble as a battalion then our forces could resist a company size attack and that would, you know, pretty much cut back their combat capability. As opposed to being able to operate at a battalion level force

Sound bite 4

DD: and when those facts came together...uh...he would coordinate a 52 or an airstrike in that area and you could do a 52 strike...uh...you know, pretty easily and...uh...if I remember correctly one of them occurred up in Kien Hoa...it was either right in between Kien Hoa and Dien Tung Province that there was pretty good evidence that one of the VC one of the guerilla battalions had assembled in that area and Ted put a 52 strike in and they went in later to do damage assessment and they say it looked like a butcher shop and thereafter we had pretty good evidence that battalions were doing exactly what we wanted them to do, they were not assembling in larger than company sized forces.

Sound bite 5

DD: we continued to try and do that...uh...in the...from the summer on in '68 and...uh...we started getting some pretty good defectors because of that pressure and the overall coordination was working.

DV: so your probably did not have to do that very often...

DD: no...and every now and then Alex's [not sure] people would schedule 52s anyway.

DV: right just bec...apart from anything that has to do with Phoenix, right ok

Sound bite 6

DV: I had always heard that the most successful Phoenix operations were the Delta.

DD: well we think they were. We do...uh...and there were a number a reasons why: one is even at our level we were a cohesive team, we worked together.

DV: you and Ward?

DD: well Ward and the guys over...you see, I think our area was unique in, expect the 9th division which was over Kien Hoa we didn't have any US troops in the Delta. [Someone else calls Dillard, cuts out]

Sound bite 7

DD: and I think the...the...that its an indication of, at one point in time there were a group of people that came together that recognized the common purpose and were just determined to work together to produce some results.

Sound bite 8

DD: the province chiefs were appointed by the President and the...there's all kinda of rumors about some bought the jobs and were other kinds of arrangements made, there were businesses and activities that flourished having never been bothered in the province. So it was obvious that someone was being paid off.

Sound bite 9

DV: did you have anything do with...um...uh...with military security service MSS people on the Vietnamese or would that...did you just deal exclusively with...

DD: we tired to deal with everyone of 'em and...um...in the case of MSS if I was able to get to the guy through Phu or through the Army security unit in the Delta, which a friend of mine commanded, I would

try and do that to try to push an operation or to try to find out what they knew that we were not being informed of and the whole time I was there I was convinced that there was a lot of unilateral reporting that did not get into the US system whether it was Phoenix or the US system at all and it probably had to do with the different axes people had to grind.

Sound bite 10

DV: um...what about Special Branch did you have anything to do with them?

DD: well through the Agency because Agency kept tabs.

DV: right, Ward had a deputy who did Special Branch and then...so on down the line province and stuff.

DD: well, you see, it was a little...a little different situation that prevailed in the Delta when...that made my job easier vis-à-vis the CA people. The Chief of Station in Saigon I had worked with in Europe.

DV: Shakley?

DD: yeah...and...uh...after I had been down there about three months Jim and Andy came back from the meeting and I went up to talk to them about this or that and, I think it was Andy, looked at me and he said, "you know Doug you can get anything you want out of this outfit." And I said "how's that Andy?" and he said "well, Ted Shakley said that you were probably the best agent handler he had ever known." So said kinda indirectly established my bona findas with the Company.

Sound bite 11

DV: alright what about Special Branch were they giving good information? Weren't they the people who were staffing the PIOCCs and DIOCCs, weren't they Special Branch people?

DD: well...uh...it was kinda hard at times to determine just who was...uh...operating in that environment because it seemed to me that in each district, although they had a similar organizational structure, depending on the personality of the district chief and quite often the main mission of the Special Branch guy there may have been to keep tabs on the other ARVN people.

Sound bite 12

DD: it goes back to, you know, the question you asked earlier about the effectiveness of our people...um...without a fairly decent background in intelligence business one does very quickly develop a healthy degree of skepticism of a person or the information that person is giving to the [inmates, invaders? Not sure what he says here] and this is one of the faults that I...uh...always thought existed within Special Forces is that there was a perpetual immaturity on the part of their people because they were so fired up to get the job done and I ta...don't want to take any credit away from them in that regard but it's the same way in the police business. Its that old cynical detective or investigator that's been in there for a long time and he can smell a deal before it goes down.

Sound bite 13

DD: that's typical of our culture. We're raised not really to question a persons motive or be suspect

DV: to be polite and respectful

Sound bite 14

DV: is there anymore you want to add about the training program at Vung Tau, when did you get around to working on that, I would have thought would have come around with Parker's staff.

DD: well of course they finalized a put the program together. We...based on my own background and after a month down in the Delta there are things that seem to me that definitely needed to be covered in the curriculums. So I drafted up some notes and send up and...uh...and then was...I think Jim volunteered me to make guest appearances at the training sessions and I think that I went over there for two or three of their classes.

Sound bite 15

DD: and I knew that in '62 I was teaching Fort Holabird and we had a crash requirement to train intelligence advisors and I don't know if that's what the...

Sound bite 16

DD: at the time that I left, I had the comfortable feeling that we had done a tremendously improved job in the Delta, that there was a potential for more of that...um...in spite of MACV getting more directly involved in the program and my one concern was that now that MACV...the main battalion war had disappeared they had nothing really to report on and they now turned their attention to the Phoenix Program and they were going to bury it with paper and other directives and restraints

Tom Donahue Experts

TRACK ONE**Sound Bite one**

TD: It seems to me that Phoenix constantly was victim of its own syntax [Doug comes in for a moment but doesn't really say anything] I...uh...the tune that they used for all the...other word—eliminated was that it?

DV: neutralizations. They started out with eliminations and then it became neutralizations

TD: well I had more [clears throat] ...more trouble with people who could only interpret that word to mean one thing, which really doesn't matter, I thought. [?] We were sitting around drawing up death lists and executing people. Clearly at that point anybody in the United States wouldn't believe the enormity [?] about what was going on in Vietnam. There was just no question.

Sound bite 2

TD: If you had been around in 52, it was a pretty sinister time—I was telling my wife the other day, I thought it was rather interesting, summer session 1950 Colombia. You may or may recall that a thing called the Korean War started up in June. The numbers of cancellations of people around the country, this is particularly true of their teachers college of course, that cancelled, that were not going to show up in New York because New York was obviously ground zero for the bomb. Now these are educated people. These are people doing their...doing their doctoral and master's work at place like Colombia that obviously just must have thought they wouldn't make it through the summer.

Sound Bite 3

TD: I think there was a great, great feeling amongst a lot people that we were in for a thing that did become the cold war, which was, thank god, contained. But at that point no one could really tell what the outcome—I thought...it just seemed to me that for the foreseeable future, like it or not, the problems in Europe, in Asia the problems were having and would have with the Soviets because you know the Chinese had just in 49. The GMO just moved to Taiwan. So it looked like, it was a growth industry.

Sound Bite 4

DV: Can you tell me when it is you get to Vietnam and in what capacity

TD: Yeah I went to Vietnam in summer of 64.

DV: and where you part of the station?

TD: yep I took over...amongst other things a lot of responsibilities that I had and included a small training camp down in Vaung Tau, which had, I suppose, maybe one hundred students, run by a very dynamic guy.

DV: Was Bob Esboch [?]

TD: No, no, no...no Americans down there. This was...I am talking about Vietnamese.

DV: Oh ok would that have been Chow

TD: no, no, no...Chow as much later this was Lezwon Mai [?]

Sound Bite 5

TD: What it had been, it was a cabin that had been owned by...what the devil was his name... it doesn't matter.

DV: was he Vietnamese...

TD: yep. He was a politician. He was...What he had done, was he had interest in Vaung Tau and they had—what the hell do you call the thing the worker's something or other—that kept the rooms at Vaung Tau on the...with the troops on the weekends so that the French could come down and people could use the Vaung Tau resort facility. So this was his camp just outside Vaung Tau.

Sound Bite 6

TD: The camp was sort of up for grabs and we got it, we the station. In a deal and it had Mai there on loan from the Army he was Captain and another Captain, what the hell was he name Phac

DV: Phouc "P-H-O-U-C"

TD: Phac "P-H-A-C" ...later on and we had an Australian army captain who was seconded to the station. He was running it, as a Western presence. And I went down to take a look at what they were doing and I was impressed

Sound Bite 7

DV: How big a facility was Vaung Tau at that time

TD: oh it was small; we probably had...maybe 100 students.

DV: and these are people from rev/dev, revolutionary development?

TD: this is an early program called the Armed Propaganda Teams and these are small. These were 12-14 men teams. They were trained in small unit tactics, mostly evasive tactics but there basic thrust was in propaganda.

Sound bite 8

DV: is it ok to give me example of what these people were trained in? what a particular tactic would be?

TD: basically the were trained in light weapons. They had men and women and there military side was really pretty minimal it really was just how to defend yourself before you get the hell out of there.

DV: and that would be what the Aussie would be teaching would the weapons and but Mai would be teaching the political, what about the political?

TD: We had political stuff, we had medical we had... we had...

Sound Bite 9

TD: It was pretty much an armed social working element, which was pretty much the basic thrust of the whole thing.

Sound Bite 10

TD: I began to... I'd concentrate all my efforts and got ride all most all the stuff I had responsibilities for and we began to move very, very rapidly and we began to build up a program with more officers coming in from Washington PCS...

DV: permanent change of station?

TD: yeah...and I began working for a means of expanding....

Sound Bite 11

TD: My office at [unintelligible?] in the government was minister of.... minster of security I guess. Is that?

DV: there's interior, justice....

TD: Minister of interior

DV: cause minister of interior handles security, do you remember who it was

TD: 13 governments in 18 months how the hell could I...

DV: forgive me for asking...

TD: my official act was to make a call on the minister who ever he was that week, introduce myself, brief him and we he found out there was nothing he could steal from me or any [hashish in it???? unintelligible] and I was dismissed and that was the end of that it was a very nice arrangement.

Sound bite 12

TD: he hung around long enough to see if there wasn't something he could get out of me and I said...I worked out a deal with him that I wanted space at Vaung Tau and he said fine. I worked out a deal of getting a huge chunk of the peninsula ceded to me, you know, with the official chops and the whole smear.

Sound Bite 13

TD: so we began to develop the concept of putting the training program together, expanding it. During that summer we, had some units up North, not many but we had some up....

Sound Bite 14

DV: was Tucker Gougleman one of the people?

TD: No Tucker was there that early. Tucker was in another program. He was in the police side of thing. There were to major programs in the station one was the police and one was the cadre program. I had the cadre program and later tucker took over that program but at that point he was up in Da Nang

Sound Bite 15

DV: You got maybe 2 dozen instructors and they are also...and now instead of having hundred students you'll have maybe 1000 students.

TD: We bought the seminary. The seminary was really just a stopgap. I had a huge piece of property. So then we started building a camp so we built a camp for 5,000.

Sound bite 16

TD: I'll tell you we built that...I think we opened that the 15th of January '65...we [unintelligible] building spectacularly.

Sound Bite 17

TD: Now what we were doing...you, see the whole point of this was to use these people. So my job...I was also traveling the country selling the program to the province chiefs.

Sound Bite 18

TD: I would get up to...I would go in sit down talk the province chief. I worked the whole country [tape cutes out] so when I would go into see a province chief I would see a military office, who was product of the Mandarin system who didn't have a political bone in his body but had political responsibilities that were beginning to become apparent, even to the untutored. So may due was to going in to say "I have I got a deal for you...no I really did go in and say "look, this is the problem as we see that your facing." The next line down is district. Under the Mandarinal system, which everyone accepted, it was nobody's

business what was done. It was the province chief, when they had been civilians, and the district chiefs, when they had been civilians, were surrounded by military. But for generations and generations, centuries and centuries, what was done was put whatever funds that were around were expended however the leader thought they should be expended and he could really care less what some grubby little old peasant lady in black pajamas had to say.

Sound Bite 19

DV: It was the king's influence ends at the village gate, that system and your trying to get them over that system to say that you got to get inside that village gate because that is where the Viet Cong are and they way to do that is have these RD cadres to go in.

Sound Bite 20

TD: So my deal was this we do this on a handshake, old boy, if you're willing to enter in a program whereby you use these people and the way they have been trained and the way we have designed the program, we will feed them, pay them, equip them just as long as they use properly. If you decide at any time that they're a hindrance rather than help, you give me a call 30 days will get them out of here. If I decide that you're not using them properly or that they are being misused that they are used as palace guard here in the province or whatever I will give you 30 days notice and pull them out. And that was the agreement it was that simple, nothing in writing nothing went through the central government. I had the central government approval of this period. Go and do this as you see fit.

Sound Bite 21

TD: So what I would then do is I would take an agency officer and stick him in the province and tell him to find a place to live, get some sandbags, we'll try to get you some Nung Guards, stay alive and then he was responsible for the direction to the teams, payroll, logistics, the whole shebang.

Sound Bite 22

DV: Can you tell me a little about what these particular programs were?

TD: In Kien Hoa we had small teams we later beefed them up as the training became a possibility. Oh god...Census Grievance for example started in Kinwai. Census Grievance was probably the most sophisticated program in the whole goddamn country. I think it was spectacular.

DV: I would love to hear about it

Sound Bite 23

DV: How do you set up...what's your model for Census Grievance that's developed in Kien Hoa?

TD: Everybody knows the governments always takes the Census. You go back to Bethlehem. What is better to set up a Census. You would have a guy do a map of every house, hut in the village, put everything into perspective and then the edict was put out that once a month every head of household had to talk to the Census Grievance officer.

DV: Now that's a member of your armed propaganda team?

TD: basically what we did in Kien Hoa was had a special group that ran Census grievance. What we tried to do was get somebody that was from the village someone that was older. We were looking for retired teachers. We were looking for retired civil servants. We were getting older people, which made them all the more harmless in the eyes of anybody. Their teeth were gone.

Sound Bite 24

TD: The session scaled down had three questions, number one what would you like the government of Vietnam to do for you. [cuts out] Here you get the simplest of things. You get a bridge, you get a road, you get whatever.

Sound Bite 25

TD: But at any rate, the second question of Census grievance one would ask “is there anybody in the GVN giving you a hard time?”

DV: Is the policeman taking money from you when you go to market?

TD: that’s right...are you being...that’s exactly...are you paying a toll everytime you take your rutabagas in. Ok so you’ve asked the first question, if this guy listens and he finds that X number of people say “Jesus, we really do need a bridge or this” you begin to get a consensus. There is money allocated. There is no question that the US government was pouring money into that place but as long as it went to the wrong things you might just as well keep it back here. So the point we would make with the Province Chief with the District Chief is that ok this is what is actually needed this a political need if you are responsive to it people will look at you in a different light. So we were running a coaching school for army officers for District Chiefs and Province Chiefs.

Sound Bite 26

DV: Budget, how big?

TD: oh I suppose somewhere between ...[long pause]...we’ll I have never told anyone this figure before when I left Vietnam my budget was about 28 million dollars a year.

TRACK 2

Sound Bite 1

DV: Number three, I suppose, was who is the Viet Cong in the village?

TD: The question was the simpler than that, it was “is there anything you want to tell me about the Viet Cong.” If the answer was no, it wasn’t pursued. You see once a month the head of household had to touch base...

DV: With this person either the schoolteacher or whoever...its not touching base with an American, its touching base with the schoolteacher or whoever and there is generally only one person in a village.

TD: Generally...what we did was we would put together a little two by four shack so there ain’t nobody else around. And when you would go over and touch base and after you see this gent, he begins to chat a little bit and he is usually a Scattergood Baines type: he is an elder in the village, able to discuss a variety of things, and, if you do get some response out the government, you begin to look at it in a different light. So

if at some point you begin to realize that the government is really not alien and that the government does have a sense of responsibility that they are trying to do things; if at the same time you do see that there is a team of people being supported from the provincial level that are trying to set up defensives in the village that are trying to do good works of a variety of sort, helping harvest rice, providing protection when the rice is being—cuase that is a big deal that they used to do, to steal the goddamn rice after its been harvested—you start to think maybe this leopard is beginning to change its spots. Vietnamese were very suspicious and with great, great reason. Census Grievance was, I felt, one of the really great points to short circuit the fact that there was not a political system. That's really what it was. It was an ersatz system imposed to allow us to say we accept the fact there are not normal political lines of influence so we will put this down and hope to god that we can jump start this body politic.

Sound bite 2

DV: And then from Kien Hoa, you move it around?

TD: Well you see what happened is—we did this with a lot of stuff—in Kien Hoa we could refine the thing, we knew what was going on. [cuts out] but as such this was...then we could check a program such as this and we took up to—I got a...a villa out in Ja Din, which is a suburb of Saigon, as you probably know and setup a training school in Ja Din for Census Grievance people. So then we would go out and to the same thing, bring the people in from...that had been spotted in different villages, bring them in, run them through the training.

Sound Bite 4

DV: and they would be... when you say, “spotted in a village” what it just be like through Census Grievance also through an informal just people being their saying this guy seems motivated, he seems intelligent would you like to work in this program. Is that how it would worked very informally?

TD: Very much so.

Sound Bite 4

TD: But what we would do, you see, we would have an officer or officers, in a big province, who would be responsible working with...the province chief then would assign one of this staff to be the RD liaison. So we would have a guy day that we could work with day in day out. I also had a deal with the province chief that if my guy had any problem he could see him with due notice. ...Then they would work down to the district level, where we would have a similar arrangement and then go into the village and say “ok lets get the distinct chief and whoever can account for these kiddos.” We would recruit the RD cadre, put them on airplanes, send them down Vaung Tau. That's one of the things about...these guys had never been out of their villages before. This is pretty heavy, heady stuff. So we would take them down and the food was spectacular, I think the...I forget what the budget was...but.... suddenly these guys are eating they have more protein than they have ever had in their system before, and they can stay awake in class. It...So our training program was diverse as hell but they all put on weight. They all were better. We treated them...as soon as they came in the door, we treated them for worms, you figured that was...had to be the case and it was in most instances.

Sound Bite 5

TD: What happened to this program—we can skip around a little bit—we get to the point where here I am...the CIA is running a political program in sovereign country where they don't even know what the

hell they are teaching. I had Tu...I took Tu down I took Ky down; I did all the right things. But what kind of program could be that had only one sponsor—the Central Intelligence Agency that said it was doing good—it had to be sinister! Any red-blooded American could understand that. What the hell is the CIA doing running a program on political action?

Sound Bite 6

TD: My point was the impression that we were facing. So I sat down with my boss, and said I think that we are going to find ourselves—we have a lot of interest. Charles Collingsworth came in from CBS and he thought it was terrific. And I said ok. So we worked out a deal. I signed a guy—Charles Collingsworth—and he did a CBS ploy, piece on this. You may want to take a look at it. You can find it in the archive.

Sound Bite 7

TD: [mumbles about dad] so I said, I thought that we should, you know, find ourselves in a positions that was venerable if we were supporting the thing all by our lonesome. So I went out to try to get some co-sponsors at least for the record so they were easy to come by

Sound Bite 8

TD: What happened is this, I explained to Ky and Thieu, I said look are problem is we need somebody on your side, where I can touch base

DV: So they created the Ministry of Revolutionary Development

TD: Precisely

Sound Bite 9

TD: Well, The graduation ceremonies at Vaung Tua were something else.

DV: Pomp and circumstance?

TD: [gasp or something] at night, total darkness and then one the candle light the other candles and oh this is the schmaltz. Remember these are peasant kids who have never seen anything quite like this.

Sound Bite 10

TD: lets back up ... basically, I said we cannot have the CIA as the sole sponsor of this thing. I went to Barry Vorthee (sp?) I said Barry, "How bout...acting...give us some...fine I talked to MACV about getting an officer assigned. They said "Fine they would do that." I had AID give me a guy and this...much it was really, obviously ludicrous simply because you have an ongoing, facing breaking program—we had the funds, we that logistics and the equipment and everything else...in terms of...we had the transportation so what we....what we were trying to was say "so everyone in this mission by this time..."

Sound Bite 11

TD: For the Record it looked pretty good we had a MACV guy and then an AID guy, a USAID guy down at Vaung Tau. SO all the bases had been touched.

Sound Bite 12

TD: But you see at this point all we were trying to do was to expand this thing and you know say there is at least plausible deniability that the agency...

Sound Bite 13

TD: I got ready to get the hell of there in the summer of 66 and we had a pretty well established programs operating in just about every province and I'm doing well

Sound Bite 14

TD: And then you assignment completed, you return to Washington? And I understand, is that we you became—started working with George Carver

TD: Yeah on Helms' staff [cuts out] So I was the deputy we had the situation room, all source information, order of battle statistics...it was an impressive deal. We had an electric group we had people with all sorts of backgrounds that we had on our staff.

Sound Bite 15

TD: And we were really were responsible—Helms was smart...a smart chap... why get in the quagmire when you can find some to get into the quagmire.

Sound Bite 16

TD: We have Non Group, which was built by me, followed by Bill Sullivan, which really was responsible for the day-to-day US involvement in Vietnam

Sound bite 17

TD: Most of the stuff that had to handled and all the sensitive and back channel stuff went through us

Sound Bite 18

DV: Do you have involvement in the PRU program? I understand there was a training facility for PRU in Vaung Tau, were you around for institutional that?

TD: I started that one that too

DV: Through Bill Redell?

TD: No he was later

DV: can you tell me more about that development of that program?

TD: Yeah, basically Census Grievance produced a good bit of intelligence, so did the Cadre program. There were areas that were so tough, so inaccessible that there were just no intelligence coming out it—

some of the Chieu Hoi, some of the basic defectors—but we never really had what we thought was a good enough handle on continuing intelligence, which was terrible, terrible blind spot if your trying to fight a war that's got all the other built in problems that that one did. So that object of this game really was just to train people in a variety of tactics. It was a highly selective program: A you need a good leader. Normally if you can find a lieutenant, somebody...young, vigorous, young infantry officer that was assigned to province chief's staff. And that was the problem, was trying to get a good...to spot a guy and somehow use somehow use a little body English. What we used to do was try to get our officer in province and took around and see and then go to the province chief and try to sell him on a program. "Well this a program...they understood, they understood this as well. The [unintelligible] was very simple. Small unit tactics. The ability to get in and really to abduct, to get in and try to get prisoners and get the hell out with some good sources for interrogation.

Sound Bite 19

DV: Is something that you began or this something...I was talking to Stu Methven

Sound Bite 20

DV: he said that hes' the one who started the program...that he brought it from Laos that's a direct quote

TD: I think that's about right, Stu worked for me

Sound Bite 21

TD: Then Stu became sort of a roaming Montagnard specialist because he knew the Montagnard very well...he knew the people.... We had training camp in Peliku for Montagnards as well as the one in Vaung Tua

DV: In Peliku because Montagnards wouldn't react will in Peliku, with the Vietnamese because of the ethnic differences?

TD: World War I Georgia training camps you didn't mix the blacks and whites

Sound Bite 22

TD: WE used to have the Montagnard program before we turned it over the military?

DV: Special forces Branch and that happens around 64

TD: Mmmhmmm

Sound Bite 23

TD: Stu had been involved in that whole turn over to the military...well what it was, was we worked with Special Forces. The turnover was we got out of the program and the Army was to take over lock stock and barrel.

DV: And MACV starts directed special forces as opposed to CIA but the same people stay there in place they just have different managers.

Sound Bite 24

DV: When do you start setting up PRU training at Vaung Tau, when the idea, you know, you want each of your province chiefs to have PRU contingent, you know, when does that become a formalized program that way.

TD: I suppose about January '65

Track 3

Sound Bite 1

DV: he's the one that increases the size to 59 people and all that

TD: no we did that in '65... we decided to just to change the emphasis, the small teams—the war was just getting worse—and the small teams were just too goddamn small to do anything about it. So we said the 59 guys lets standardize it.

DV: that's because you wanted to deliver services and you need the extra people to deliver the service whereas the small teams were just displacing the VC?

TD: yeah...they could quietly slide into village and if things got a little hot they could take on the one hand but with 59 guys you had some guys that had some more muscle, more tough and in many respects a hell of a lot more firepower than anyone else in the neighborhood would have.

DV: so the decision to have from the small units to the 59 is really a question of being able to deliver services just to wave the flag, so to speak, so show the flag, you know, the GVN is here, while the small teams were as apparent

TD: Well what were trying to say, yes, here is the a GVN presence, but it is a GBN presence that is really comprised of your people that are by god, gone of washed in the blood the lamb, they've been trained and they've seen the light and they're hear to defend—not necessary the same village, cause a lot of them obviously were rotating, they were moving around—but they spoke the dialect they were local boys, and they were able to set up some early warning systems for the village to kind of focus people on their own defense and enlist them into something positive. People were really frozen by fear. The government could no longer protect them. This is basic, it seems, element of every government, if I can't protect you it ain't no government that has to be part of the equation between the government and the governors. And as long as they were no longer and not able to delivery, by default, we had de facto anarchy.

Sound Bite 2

TD: No body really replaced me I had kind of a funny job...you know we built the whole goddamn thing up so basically...what they decided to do was sort of split the thing up what I'd doing because I had a funny position: I doing the selling the program, I was doing the handling the program, I was working on content. It was just kind of an odd situation that I happened to be there when the thing began to take form

Sound bite 3

DV: when you were setting up Vaung Tau who was responsible for the PRU training

TD: I brought a couple guys up from headquarters TDY

DV: can you tell me one person I can talk to?

TD: there both still gainfully employed they were very good they were experts. I brought them out TDY and kept talking them into extending and so they finally ended up I think both of them did a full term.

Sound 4

TD: just back to PRU, what there purpose was not to go in and assassinate people you don't collect intelligence from dead people for Christ sake

DV: but PRU is supposed to be intelligence for province chief

TD: you bet

Sound bite 5

DV: what about Vaung Tau as a training center, your assessment

TD: [something under Doug's louder questioning I am not sure]

DV: but then, the program begins to fall apart in the provinces—or not fall apart be maintained—depending on the personality of the province chief

TD: yeah very much so. What we had...if we had a strong officer and a receptive province chief you could do an awful lot.

DV: in terms of winning support for the government

TD: if the guy wanted to use it as a private army then you had troubles, this is really the case. This is one of the difficulties and, people like William C Westmoreland never could really understand this, and it was a really difficult situation. We had some terrible problems with MACV people who just could not see if a guy had a gun why he wasn't in the regular army. It was awfully difficult

Sound bite 6

TD: the troubles you used to have, this was always a difficult in a place like Vietnam, was to try to keep the local political parties from using it. You see you get a VNQDD element and normally was thinking in terms of political parties and you and to be goddamn careful they were pushing the long term development of the party.

DV: In others there people would get into the Rev Dev program, do the Vaung Tau Training, would get back to Quan Tre and when they would go into the villages they would start preaching the VNQDD line

TD: precisely...

Sound Bite 7

TD: I left Washington in '71

DV: did you continue in political programs around the world? was that your specialty?

TD: I went to place called Manila in 71

DV: To do basically the same thing, same kind of programs

TD: Good Grief no, Jesus!

DV: ok sorry, because I know in '72 Marcos that when—'67 is when he becomes president and '72 declared martial law

TD: no I was

DV: you weren't by any chance Chief of Station

TD: I was there for a long time I was there five years I was just so happy to get away from

Sound bite 8

TD: I think that the US government had ample opportunity, along the line, to get the hell out. It seemed to me that after the Diem business we could have gotten out. When they started the revolving door governments, with people like big[old man mumbles] that whole crowd, I think that would have been a good time to say Gents see ya. I know how shocked I was when I saw the first suggestion that US troops were being committed.

DV: big shock?

TD: [old man scoff]

Sound bite 9

TD: I suppose in September we were training, we had a training facility for a hundred people and, by the 15th of January, it was up to 35,000, in a very short time. That means building roads, building buildings, building all those things. And we pretty soon got it up to...well, I suppose by the time I left, I had 20,000 people in the program, I guess we had several hundred, I guess, when I got there.

Hunt

DV: and I'm speaking with General Hunt

JH: and I think he was...we...as I recall, we...uh...exchanged material with the school at Fort Bragg and I think he was running the school.

DV: right, the...uh...Military Assistance Advisory Program?

JH: yeah I just think he came over to coordinate what they could provide us, what we could provide them.

DV: when were you first assigned to the Phoenix Directorate? Do you remember the dates?

CT: I...I can tell you approximately it was probably in July or August of 1970

DV: and what kind of a post did you have at that time? A position where...what were you doing before you were assigned?

JH: Oh I came out of the...uh...the...uh...command general staff college, spent about year there.

DV: and...um...what did you know about Phoenix when you first got assigned to it? What was the...uh...

JH: absolutely nothing. I might have...uh...I might have...uh...read something about it in the news media but other...beyond that I knew absolutely nothing

DV: were you due for a Vietnam assignment?

JH: yes

DV: or had you volunteered?

JH: no, I was...I was...uh...I was due. I kind of expected to go from Vietnam from the command general staff college.

DV: did you expect to be a military intelligence S-2 with a line outfit or something like that?

JH: uh...no, I...most of my background was in signals intelligence and I expected probably to get a job in something related to...uh...that there.

DV: so then Phoenix came as kinda a surprise?

JH: uh...yeah, I don't know if surprise is the right word but yeah I didn't expect it.

DV: cause Phoenix is kinda of unusual program anyway...um...did you have any background in training?

JH: not a whole lot. As I said, most of my background had been in SIGNIT.

DV: OK, with...is that a...particular

JH: well, I say I had no background. I had a lot peripheral background. I had no significant background in the human intelligence or the human skills, as a discipline.

DV: is it...does...um... SIGNIT play a role in Phoenix operations?

JH: uh...if any, very insignificant. Now I can't say if any of the other organizations that contributed did.

DV: cause that was something that was of interest to me whether...uh...Army Security Agency was doing radio monitoring and then feeding information into the Phoenix directorate.

JH: No absolutely not to my knowledge. If...if there was anything that related to that it had to be outside of our...

DV: So how did...who...did you get the assignment in Washington?

JH: no after I got to Vietnam

DV: Ok that's very...uh...usual that people would get to Vietnam and then they get assigned to Phoenix.

JH: you gotta go into a replacement and then they look around and see what was available and...uh...

DV: and...um...did they...were you sent over to the Phoenix directorate and there you met John Mason or something like that, is that how the process worked?

JH: I'm not exactly sure how...how they did that...uh...I don't remember...I don't remember whether...it seems to me when I got there, and this is very vague recollection. You know, they looked at

what was available in jobs and somebody said, you know, “this is pretty interesting area” and...uh... “They’re looking for people” and...uh...I think...uh...I think...uh...I don’t know if they, at that point, they might have asked me if I was interested but once I went over I think I was kinda committed to the assignment. I think it was...

DV: who

JH: ...run an interview type thing, to the best of my recollection

DV: who at the Phoenix Directorate, then, did you...did you...um...if not interview with, get your orientation from?

JH: Well, my guess is there were...there were three kinda senior people that...uh...when I first got there, as I recall. Uh...the was Deputy was Colonel LeMan (Not sure says real fast)

DV: right, do you...do you have his first name?

JH: James. In fact, I...uh...before you came over this morning I went through my file just to...uh...

DV: he’s the one that filled out your efficiency reports?

JH: yeah, and, of course, John Mason was his boss and...uh...there were Colonel Reineison

DV: yeah that’s really funny spelling, R-E-I-N-E-I-S-O-N or something

JH: if you asked me to spell it, I...I couldn’t spell it.

DV: I think he later went to SACSA

JH: I’m not sure what SACSA is

DV: Special Assistant for Covert and Special Activities, under the Joint Chiefs of Staff

JH: I thought he went to Taiwan, maybe I am wrong. He was...he was kinda of a Chine—that might have been sometime after that—he was kinda...uh...Chinese expert.

DV: was a...would he have been an executive officer as opposed to a deputy or something like that?

JH: I don’t...I...yeah he was...uh...he was kinda the operations guy, next to Newman he was kinda...kinda the senior guy who seemed to have a lot of authority.

DV: Want to give me just a little bit on insight into their three personalities?

JH: uh...

DV: had you known any of these people from before?

JH: no I didn’t any of them...uh...they were all...uh...I...I really don’t have any anecdotes about personalities. It was...uh...pretty much a business...uh...relationship that...uh...you know, superior to subordinate.

DV: they were both full Colonels and Mason were both full Colonel

JH: Reineison and Newman were both full Colonels...Reineison, I believe, was a long time bachelor...uh...and Newman...uh...I’m not sure how long Newmann had been over there.

DV: Do you Reineison's first name?

JH: it might come to me

DV: what about...uh...impressions about John Mason. He's...uh...I've interviewed Evan Parker and John Tilton. Mason's in Hawaii. He's the only one, the only one I haven't interviewed. I wrote him a letter and he said he wasn't interested in talking to me even though I got a grant to go out to Hawaii to talk to him.

JH: Uh...

DV: I've seen photographs of him

JH: John...John Mason...uh...was very, very friendly...uh...but you were never quite sure, I think, whether...I don't know the right way to put it...whether John was being...

DV: Sincere?

JH: stubborn, terse or straightforward with you. The fact is, I will give you one anecdote if you turn of your machine

DV: sure [cuts out] When do you...when do you make your first trip down to...um...Vung Tau? Do you have an office down in Vung Tau or do you have an office in Saigon?

JH: No, I would...I would go down there periodically...uh...in fact, I would go down...uh...usually either open the class or close the class and either make some remarks...uh...at the beginning or end of a class. Guess the first time—I don't remember the first time I went down...uh...was...uh...kinda orientation thing. We were working. The school was set up in an old hotel. Shortly after that, we...we acquired...uh...what had been an old...uh...service club, right on the air base, there. We converted that into kinda of classroom. I think we may have even put the students up there after a while.

DV: in the service club?

JH: yeah

DV: is that a military?

JH: a military service club, games

DV: Vietnamese?

JH: uh...yeah...I...I...I'm not sure if it was Vietnamese. It may have been built by the Americans.

DV: so its not a particularly old building.

JH: no it wasn't...wasn't...a very extensive building.

DV: so that's not...that's pretty close to the city of Vung Tau, cause there's city of Vung Tau and then there's the airport and there's the training center, right.

JH: well, we were all on the little air field is...uh...

DV: OK

JH: is where the service club was and there's a little hotel...uh...which is you're talking a matter of mile or two, you're not talking any great distance so I...I can't remember where Vung Tau started and sorta seemed to me...

DV: everybody just says it was a real nice place

JH: yeah...it was...yeah, I am sure it was.

DV: resort area

JH: prior the war...nice beaches and...uh...the old French

DV: who was the handling the school, who was handling Phoenix training before you came down, was it somebody of...um...also a Lieutenant Colonel or were you upgrading the position...was it upgrading the position, having a Lieutenant Colonel?

JH: I...I...I really don't remember. Reineison might have been involved in it but I can't say that for sure.

DV: OK but there were instructors there instructing when you arrived or did you actually set up...

JH: no I didn't set it up. It was already ongoing...uh...

DV: and how big are the classes and how big, you know,...how long are the courses and that kind of stuff?

JH: uh...I...I...I'm guessing that they, and I am trying to recall, that the classes were a couple of weeks. I think the classes were probably anywhere from 15-30, 40 folks...uh...maybe not quite that many and I'm sure that we, I don't quite remember we might have done to the curriculum...uh...but I'm sure that it adjusted and we added and amount, you know, over time.

DV: OK, and is mostly Lieutenants and Captains for DIOCCs or is it also people for PIOCCs?

JH: well, it was sort of a combination. In fact, the...the paper you showed me sorta refreshed me a little bit...uh...It was sorta combination: one, we had what we called the Phoung Houng advisors...uh...people who were actually assigned to advise in the program that went either to the district or province or even region level and they went through primarily an orientation type thing and then there were people who were not directly involved but had jobs that sorta related and they needed to understand what the Phoung Houng program was about.

DV: like S-2s or something like that?

JH: We probably even got a few S-2s, I...I

DV: can you give me an example? Oh! Is it people like National Police advisors

JH: National Police advisors,

DV: OK, alright because I know a guy named Bill Philipson who was a National Police advisor who went. He said he was one of the few but he went.

JH: I would say almost anyone who had anything to do indirectly with the program, if they had time, they would get down to the Vung Tau.

DV: OK and the...if I understand, the program is "What is the VCI"?

JH: The program...uh...yeah I think and...and I again I emphasize a woeful memory but...uh...I think obviously we taught one what the what we considered the VCI...uh...what the objective of the Phoung Hong Program was and we talked...uh...about the basic contributing organizations.

DV: OK

JH: and...uh...and what their role was and how they contribute and then we went into such things as probably even how to keep certain files and setup files and how to...more operational kinda of things.

DV: so would you be able to explain to someone what the difference between the Special Branch, the MSS and the CIO are?

JH: yeah we did that of course we...I can't

DV: can you explain to me the difference [laughing]

JH: I can't...I don't...you know, I didn't teach down there and I'm sure that...uh...could right now. I would have to think about it and then I would be speculating as to what I recall Special Branch...uh...

DV: they're the owns who...um...man the PICs and...um...do...uh...I think the recording keeping...but...um there really seems to be a lot of overlap and gray areas.

JH: no I can't really...uh...I can't really speak to that with much...with much accuracy.

DV: did you have a permanent staff of instructors?

JH: I don't remember how many instructors we had. We had...uh...we didn't have that many instructors...uh...we had...we had a couple two or three permanent folks.

DV: military

JH: well, civilian. At one time, during my tenure, had a civilian then had...I had a military, I don't remember.

DV: your deputies, sorta people to the school

JH: well, they were...they were kinda the guys they worked for me but they ran the school.

DV: do you remember their names?

JH: I can't remember the name of the civilian. There was Major Stevens, but he wasn't there too long. He worked in...uh...

DV: and that would just be...those would basically be administrative jobs, anyway

JH: uh...

DV: grading people how they did in class or was there any kind of grading?

JH: I don't we gave a grade. I think we gave tests and so on and I think it was a pass/fail type thing and I think everybody passed.

DV: and everybody passed

JH: cause it was more, you know, just more an orientation

DV: OK...OK, how many...how big...how many could the first the hotel and the then the service club hold? Was it enough for fifty people at a time?

JH: the hotel...uh...I think we are somewhat limited. It was a pretty run down hotel, as I recall. That's when I first got there. I can't give you numbers...uh...uh...I am saying we could...ballpark I would say 40...uh...

DV: and then more people at the service club?

JH: uh...then I think we could probably handle classroom size probably more out in the service club...uh...I don't remember the ability

DV: so the classes were held in the same building that people were staying? The classes were in the hotel and then later the service club?

JH: well, initially, they were held in the hotel. Then, I believe...uh...it was combination. Staying in the run down hotel until classes start

DV: and then going over....

JH: and then I think we moved in...moved the whole thing in to the service club.

DV: were you...were...uh...was..um...the Phoung Houg advisors given instructor in the Revolutionary Development or any other kind of programs, going on at Vaung Tau? You know, there was...

JH: yeah, I think just a familiarization. Chieu Hoi and that kinda of stuff.

DV: OK, cuase those would be like contributing organizations?

JH: yeah that's right another thing, they needed...a Phoung Houg Advisor needed to know what were the various sources of information and who...who would cooperate, who would not. You know, there were some concerns about...uh...you know we had differences and examples as I recall with the Chieu Program because they wanted to maintain their creditability and operate in good faith and not be so it was...

DV: so Chieu Hoi was not a particularly good source information?

JH: well it could be but you really had to be careful that, you know, Chieu Hoi wanted to protect their program and they didn't want to...say, you come in under the Chieu Hoi program and first thing you know, you're being interrogated...uh...uh...which might turn some people off, form their perspective.

DV: because everybody who...all the defectors that became PRU and RD people all came through Chieu Hoi.

JH: yeah

DV: so

JH: you'd get some from some of 'em but...uh...most of that I think was done and any information was passed into...into the...

DV: so is that...did you travel around the country?

JH: I traveled...uh...I did that...out to various districts, provinces, regions.

DV: and for the purpose of getting feedback how the...how whole the program training had prepared people for their job?

JH: uh...that...uh...and...and to get a better understanding of the needs and shortcomings out there that we needed to...um...either teach or learn more about .

DV: so what on the those two points...um...how well was the training succeeding and were the things that needed to be corrected

JH: yeah I the...from a training standpoint, I don't think that...it wasn't that complicated and I don't think that...I don't think we had that many shortcomings in the training camp per se. I think it was...uh...I didn't think about it necessarily at the time but I think it really had to with...um...the relationship among people and the question of trust among the various people out in the districts and regions and...and the...the Phoung Houng advisor's job was to try to promote that and...uh...uh...it was really kinda of...uh...his job was to...to make sure that all these officials in a district were sorta pooling their information.

DV: so just like everybody else involved in the advisory mission, if the province chief was...uh...a problem the program was big

JH: he's corrupt, you know. He'd play games with you and you'd get out and find some where they were doing that, the typical frustrations of Vietnam but...you know, a lot of them didn't work in the afternoon. They had other things, they did in the afternoon. I don't know why people used to say "well, you know, if you had a war going on for twenty years...

DV: you'd take the afternoon off, too...

JH: you'd be causal about it" I guess. My response was "if they go after it full time they might not have a twenty year war."

DV: the mirror image sometimes

JH: well a lot of them had business and, you know...I guess they could be called business

DV: did...um...was there upgraded training for province...province Phoung Houng people over district and region above province was there some...um...difference in the training segregation in the classes or did everybody just go together?

JH: I don't think so. I don't recall. I don't recall us doing that. I think it was pretty...uh...uh...pretty standard all the way through. Now, on one on one basis we might...might get into some things. The course was not structure, as I recall, say, you know, we've finished core curricula now everybody that's gonna go to region, over here. Everybody that's going to district

DV: OK did...um...when you're people went into the field at a region level, your region Phoenix people, did they have to report to the RIOC, the CIA Region Officer in Charge?

JH: I'm not sure I understood the question. When the people from...

DV: your Phoenix region advisors

JH: region right

DV: OK...um...would go into a region to take charge of the Phoenix Program would they reporting not, you know, there's a CORDS person and then there's...you know, whose the CORDS region person. III

Corps, I guess it would be John Vann or whatever one he was in. Then he would have...uh...a region Phoenix deputy but then there's also the CIA region person. Is there...um...

JH: I...

DV: you know, is there...um...

JH: the regional. See the district advisors and the region advisors, as I recall, did not work for...uh...in Phoung Houg Structure per se. In other words, the...the Phoung Houg district advisor. Phoung Houg advisor at district, he worked for the district advisor, as opposed to working for the Phoung Houg advisor at the higher level.

DV: yep he worked for the district senior advisor.

JH: that's right and the same way region, the regional guys, whatever we called the senior guy in the region, the MACCORDs guy in the region. We didn't...uh...you know, we never really talk in terms of "Army" or "CIA" or anybody else. Obviously they were some people who had ties to CIA...uh...but a lot of the regional...uh...Phoung Houg advisors—in fact, maybe all of them—I think they were Army Colonels, full Colonels.

DV: yeah OK, did you know David Lockett, Colonel David Lockett?

JH: I don't recall, Lockett

DV: OK

JH: I don't recall Lockett, what time was he?

DV: well that's what I am trying to figure out [laughing] he...he wrote a paper, which was given to me and...uh...on Phoung Houg training and I am just trying to find David L. Lockett.

JH: He might have been...he might have been, Lockett.

DV: do you remember who the region guys were for you. Do you know, who was region guy in II Corps?

JH: I can't remember the names.

DV: OK, was Millet there, while you were there?

JH: No, I know of Millet. I didn't realize he was with the Phoung Houg program. He was a full Lieutenant.

DV: I talked to him.

JH: he was up at Devens at one time.

DV: yeah, yeah, he talked about that with me cause, you know, I was...

JH: I don't know him but he is fairly well known because he won the medal of honor

DV: his mustache and all

JH: when he left the Army he wrote a letter to the *Army Times* that...uh...sorta was not a very good letter. I...I...I...well, I believe the Army is not what it used to be, to start but...uh...he was a hero.

DV: when you said region, did you also mean province...district, province, and region or is there...uh...the province guy a little bit...is in a different relationship.

JH: uh...region...no province, the same thing. He worked for the province senior advisor.

DV: people tell me that that was one the big problems with Phoenix that everybody had two bosses...um...that there was...uh...the...the Phoenix advisor was always in a bind between two people and it's the same with anybody who was in CORDS. You had your...um...uh...CORDS person writing your efficiency report but the in your own service you had...uh...a chain of command. So quite often there is a operational boss and an administrative boss and that that resulted in a tug of war. Is that a problem with Phoenix...er...

JH: it might have been. I never sensed that, to tell you the truth. I...i...now there is no question one of the problems a...and obviously at least in the Army I can tell you your loyalty tends to go to the guy that rates you. Now so that means if you've got a Phoung Houg advisor at the district level, he's pretty much is going to be driven by what that district senior advisor wants to do and, if that district senior advisor, is a gung-ho guy that says "hey, you know, they're doing all that crap...uh...he's probably going to jump right on that kind of a bandwagon. In fact, we had guys, and I don't remember the names, but we had people that really...they really wanted to go out on operations and they wanted to be more infantry, in the infantry. That wasn't there job but I guess its kinda popular with their district senior advisor. That's what he wanted and that's the way that they would operate.

DV: but let's say the guy is a Phoung Houg province advisor. Now the guy doing his efficiency report is the province senior advisor.

JH: I think so

DV: whether he's a military man or a civilian

JH: I think so

DV: or his deputy because lots of times I've heard that the province senior advisor left a lot of responsibilities to his deputy.

JH: it might have been on ranks and personalities and a lot of times...

DV: did they did the thing were the one guy's military, one's civilian so but at the same time his region, the Phoenix region advisor, is coming by and giving him direction. Is that the way it works or no?

JH: not really direction...uh...

DV: cause, then, what is the purpose of the region Phoenix guy.

JH: its...its...its really more of a technical advice...uh...in a systems as opposed to saying giving him any authoritative direction. Now we could certainly...from a...from a... ..now its really more a technical advice than being in charge.

DV: OK

JH: because there is no way that the...the Phoung Houg channel, the people in the channel could give direction other than maybe format or this is how we would like to see the reports or something. There is no way that you could tell that that is this the way you, you know, that you ought more of this stuff next week because each district was different and each province and there were some things that were just not doable in areas because of the personalities of the Vietnamese as well as the Americans so.

DV: so you understand the problem that I was addressing.

JH: I'm...I'm not sure...that might have been a problem of degree to some people but I don't see it. I don't recall that's being if we could ever overcome that we could really do a lot better. I...I...

DV: how long were you there? Were you there for a year?

JH: I was there for just under a year. I...uh...my brother got killed and I went back on emergency leave and I didn't have enough to go back. You have to have either 30 or 60 days left. I was there less than a year.

DV: did someone replace you? Do you know who your replacement was?

JH: I don't know my replacement and...uh...I left suddenly and...uh...

DV: was..was your brother's death related to Vietnam?

JH: no he was killed in an automobile accident back here, in the States. In fact...as a matter of fact...uh...I was in Taiwan on R&R when I got the word he got killed and I think I went back to Vietnam got my stuff

DV: and that was it.

JH: and I don't know how long I was in Taiwan because I was going to be assigned there after the end of the tour and I was checking some stuff out.

DV: what was your assignment after Phoenix?

JH: I ran...commanded a...uh...Field Station in Singapore. I assume you won't put that in.

DV: no, that's...that's... I know that signals intelligence is just steeped in secrecy much more than...than

JH: that's not really classified but just the idea that, you know, if it's in writing somebody says gee

DV: I could make a connection here

JH: well it's just the idea that somebody might, quite frankly, be alarmed...uh...with security clearance, I still know things and I don't want to be too loose tongued.

DV: can we talk a little more about the Phoenix staff in Saigon?

JH: OK

DV: how big a staff was it and how much of your time was divided between the staff and the field operations, training included in that?

JH: well OK I would say that it was...I'll have to think for a minute and mentally count up here. I would say that at the Phoenix/Phoung Houng Directorate there might have been twenty, give or take a half dozen but some of those were...some of those admin. It wasn't very big.

DV: and that was in the CORDS building?

JH: it was in the...uh...in the...uh...I think we called in CORDS Two...uh...now...there was a...what's the director of the deputy ops training?

DV: deputy and ops being two different things?

JH: yeah ops was what...and...uh...and under ops they had a lot of the direct liaison with the police. They did a lot of the work with...uh...MACV headquarters.

DV: OK so they're might have been five or six people in ops, in operations?

JH: yeah at least, that was the biggest element and then there was a small logistics support.

DV: and that's if some province guy needs helicopters or jeeps, he makes a request through them?

JH: uh...no, I think it was mostly headquarters logistics kinds of things and they might...they might have helped out a bit in coordination but I think they got a big part of that support out of the provinces and region. We had, for example, we had green police chiefs that we...were assigned to us and I think it depended on where we were because we didn't have those alpha districts so much.

DV: what were those?

JH: what we called green police chief, like a jeep but...it was a jeep but it was painted green...uh...as far as the time out the field...uh...uh...percentage if you count and this varied from element to element. From my perspective, I...I...I would say about a third to a half was out in the field, maybe less than half.

DV: including to Vung Tau?

JH: including visits to Vung Tau, which...uh...was probably the biggest, wouldn't be close to even a third if it wasn't for the visits to Vung Tau but I probably...I probably spent...it wasn't unusual to spend two days a week at Vung Tau...uh...or maybe day, a day to two days...uh...because I would get down and open a class and listen to some of the classes or would go down on graduation and would go down a little early and see how things are going on.

DV: was there a reports section in the Phoenix staff, apart...or would that be under operations?

JH: probably under operations, I don't recall that might have been.

DV: cause did all the district and...um...were copies of the district and province and region reports send to the directorate?

JH: uh...I don't know that either. If they were, they would have gone through ops.

DV: what about...um...there was a Phoung Houng monthly newsletter, stuff like that that supposedly came out the directorate?

JH: uh...I have a vague recollection of that. I'm sure we contributed to it.

DV: OK

JH: little lessons learned

DV: right to make it helpful for each other

JH and that's one of the things we would also get from the school down at Vung Tau depending on how long people...because we had some people who had been out in the field for a while and then they'd come in. We had a lot of guests lecturers and all that kind of stuff.

DV: yep, I talked to some of the district guys and they said that if they had they been there for a couple of months they would get sent down the school as facilitators, is that the right word?

JH: I think that's right now that you mention it...cause a lot of it was seminar type discussions.

DV: did you develop any relations with any of the province or district people, was it the kinda of thing that...

JH: you mean the Vietnamese or the...

DV: well, the Vietnamese or the Americans.

JH: well some of the Americans...there was...there was...uh...you'd get to know some better than the others but not really...uh...not certainly any lasting. Some of the guys down in the...uh...headquarters area I still know and

DV: Oh OK so are there are some

JH: but I can't even remember the names of some guys, most of the guys out in the regions. The names will come back pretty quickly. I can picture some of the guys. But I think the whole...we had periodic...uh...regional...we brought in all the senior guys...forgot all them

DV: was there Colonel Eggar? Do you remember Colonel Eggar?

JH: yep...mmmhmmm

DV: was he engineer? Do you know? I've had a hard time?

JH: Eggar...

DV: III Corps

JH: I don't remember what his branch was but I remember the name. I can't even picture the guy. Was he a Colonel or a Lieutenant Colonel?

DV: Full Colonel...I think he was older fella,

JH: what?

DV: I think he was older but I'm not sure

JH: yeah, in any case, I picture one guy...

DV: so they come right to the directorate?

JH: they'd come in and we'd have...we'd have they all...we'd have a big one or two day kinda session.

DV: and would that be for policy or...

JH: for policy, talk about, you know, lessons learned, problems...uh...wa...what they need from us, really an exchange of ideas.

DV: and is there anything that comes out that that we haven't discussed yet, at this point?

JH: No I can't...uh...I can't think of anything.

DV: was there...um...uh...morale in the or a kinda...uh...of unity of the people in the Phoenix directorate? Was it...there was some problems within the program, at that time. Are people effected by the problems.

JH: No I think morale, you know considering being in Vietnam, I think overall the morale was pretty good....uh....

DV: because the whole Vietnam war at the time was a morale problem

JH: how ever that effected people, I guess, the...the...the Phoung Houg program per se didn't have much bearing on morale. Morale was, you know...I think it was more probably affected by what everyone thought was going on over there. I...I think that the...uh...at least while I was there, the camaraderie among...uh...especially the military guys who were working...uh...in Saigon was good and everybody seemed to get along pretty well. Go out and do things together at night...really no problems. I can't think of any. [cuts out]

DV: There was a...uh...when Phoenix was originally formed it was called ICEX, did you know that?

JH: I...I might have known that at one time but I've forgotten

DV: and ICEX was supposed to be a general staff for counterinsurgency that was reporting right to Komer and later on Colby...um...eventually...it...it starts out in almost equal in importance to CORDS and is later absorbed into CORDS and becomes a directorate but, at first, it is the focal point of the counterinsurgency, the culmination of the development of a bunch of different programs. At the head of...as an advisory board, board of directors to the Phoenix staff there's a what's called a Phoenix committee which includes the MACV J2, J3, Chief of Station...um...Agency RD guy and they report directly to either Komer, Colby and later Wayen...Whyen. Did you ever...did you have any understanding of that committee? Did that committee ever met or did you ever brief that committee?

JH: No, I am not even aware they existed. I didn't know the J2 got involved at all.

DV: yeah, well supposedly they met once in the...the history of Phoenix and that was when it was formed and after, then, they, as a...left it up purely to Komer, Colby or...uh...then Wayen, as I was saying.

JH: they brought in...uh...General Forrester as kinda of deputy to maybe to Jacobson. I'm not sure but...uh...it was never totally clear to me what his role was. I mean he was sort of an extra guy, sorta of a system up there. He came all the way briefed in but...uh...never really, most of the time I was there, he didn't see to get terribly involved.

DV: I guess what I'm...what I'm driving at is where is your...where is the supervision for the Phoenix staff from above? Is it...is it strictly...uh

JH: my feeling was that...uh...that...uh...this is my impression, I don't necessarily known this to be a fact...uh...but my impression was was that John Mason, Titlon...uh...worked primarily for Colby, perhaps through Jacobson, and that...uh...there was a close relationship with the...uh...uh...Chief Station and...uh...you know sorta like I kinda look at the chief of station over there sorta...uh...uh...a coequal basis. John Mason and Tilton and this guy obviously had a professional relationship and obviously the chief of station in their business was a senior guy that...uh... you certainly paid attention to see if I was working for John Mason, the civilian and there's a...there's a three star General over at MACV that wants to make sure...I mean I'm not going to talk about something we're not supposed to [cuts out end of side one]

Tape One side two

JH: ...message is a...is a...something we use all the time and its common practice and at senior levels, in fact, general officers can send back channel messages...uh...and its kinda a eyes only. It's not there's a separate system for eyes only messages but if I send a back channel...you...you may have a department somewhere and job and I've got a job and I...I may send you back channel message that means its not necessarily a formal message. You can't necessarily cite it. Its sort of a personal correspondence between you and I.

DV: So its something at senior levels?

JH: well...its...uh...uh...in the Army, its...its...uh...fact I think we are even restricted in the Army if you want to get formal. Now the other agencies when they have back...what they call back channel or what they use I don't know.

DV: is that what special security does, back channeling?

JH: no special security is just a...uh...separate control that doesn't have anything to do with backchannel.

DV: but it would involved a separate courier or special phones?

JH: you might use a...you might use a...a...you might use a...I...I...there is a...uh...special security office, SSO system, that we had a...and that is...that office primarily protects special security as a...as a separate thing, they will be the ones that would often pass the back channel but it has nothing to do...it just happens to be because...that's just sorta an additional duty for them. The fact, classified or unclassified has no bearings. Their primary purpose is to protect classified

DV: OK I understand. I...you see back channeling has a connotation of there's a chain of command and sometimes back channeling somehow gets around that chain of command. That's...that's the....

JH: back channel does not...in...in back channel does not...that's not the intent.

DV: its not there to get around the chain of command.

JH: that's not what most people mean when they say, you know, in other words...uh...I might...my last job down at four-scanner, I might send a back channel out to the J2s...uh...the Corps J2s and say "hey guys, we need to look at thus and so or...or you know, it came out of a staff meeting the boss is concerned and you guys need to be aware of it. You need to make sure bosses know." Now I may not want to put that in what we call a front channel message...uh...which a...you know, gets normal distribution and that's really what it is...its...uh...its...uh...less formal...its just a less formal means of correspondence that's really what it is and its usually electrical, when you say back channel in Army parlance

DV: OK. OK

JH: its not like backdoor

DV: but you can see from semantics that, you know, back channel sounds like, you know,

JH: yeah I can understand... we use back channel, all the time

DV: from like Marilyn Monroe coming up the backdoor of the White House or something

JH: I might go up a...a...and tell the boss, you know, he wants to get something out of four-scan, he wants to get something out to all his corps commanders now I might say "well, you can either send something front channel or you can put in, you know, the CG sends thing that he sends out once and

while to get their attention or maybe you ought to send so and so a back channel” and that makes a little closer held and a little less formal but its more personal also. They send a back channel. Its coming. If you’re the boss, you send a back channel that’s coming from you, Doug Valentine, not from...uh...I signed a lot of stuff

DV: its not MACV, its coming from Westmoreland

JH: just cause I signed it...Westmoreland sends it back to you and you know Westmoreland sent it. This isn’t something Westmoreland might have signed...somebody else might have prepared it.

DV: no I understand. Its not coming from the office. It’s coming from the person. Cause in the lexicon you say MACV and everybody understands Westmoreland

JH: but that’s like saying, you know, department of the Army or des ops in the army that’s a big organization. To be des ops, does not see everything that goes out.

DV: what do you know about the training programs back in the states? Did you have anything to do with them?

JH: we did. We had kinda a dialogue with people but it was sorta...uh...it didn’t amount to much quite frankly. We were sorta learning an...an...if you...from an Army standpoint, now, looking back...uh...recognizing where we were, Army Intelligence, which has changed significantly, and we were just going through a...uh...uh...kinda of an evolution back in those days. So we didn’t...we had all kinds of guys that...uh...you know, the disciplines were separate then. You know, e had the SIGNITER, the HUMINTer, the security and...uh...it wasn’t...we didn’t...a lot these people kinda learned these things as they went... it was...we didn’t really have that good a...

DV: do you think that a Phoenix is a thing for a military intelligence officers or should it be for...uh...combat intelligence officers or....

JH: I...I think, well, we don’t really distinguish between combat intelligence officers and, you konw, it’s the same.

DV: it’s the same.

JH: I think that...you mean the future?

DV: yeah sure or for then, both. Then, were the right people being assigned to the program?

JH: well, I think...I think intel guys ought be involved in it. I think it would be structured probably, a little more formally, we would have a little more training an...an...and maybe something like a Phoenix Program...uh...and I say something like rather than per se might be something that might but...uh...beneficial in some situations...uh...buy...uh...you know, its almost got to be tailored to the country

DV: and the people have to speak the language and stuff like that.

JH: speak the language...you gotta, what are...what is the structure in the country, what are base of support within the country...uh...obviously the bit danger of the Phoenix Program, theoretically conceptually, I think it’s a great program. The problem is...is you take that into any given country your sorta dependant on the ethics...the situation within the country...is to say I guess that there’s certaintly room and opportunity to take care of the program for these reasons.

DV: do you ever hear of Lucienne Conien?

JH: no

DV: he's a famous CIA guy who was there, actually advising Dong when General Dong when they overthrew Diem and stuff like that. I talked to him yesterday on the phone briefly he said he thought Phoenix was a good opportunity to for the province chiefs to shake down people they didn't particularly like. Is that extreme?

JH: I think it's really extreme. I think it's a gross simplification and...uh...maybe some could do that but...uh...I think, as a rule, it's unreasonable an...and if somebody wanted to do that I don't think that...if that was their motive, I don't think that they would have to have a Phoenix Program to do that. You don't need Phoenix to do that.

DV: They had the power to do what they wanted to do anyway, OK. Quite frankly Conien has a reputation of being something of a bullshit artist. Well, I think that really does cover most of my questions. I didn't have a whole lot. I guess it would be helpful to me if you could remember a few more of the personalities. The region...I'm having a hard time contacting some the region people who I wanted to talk with because one of the things I wanted to was get a just... you know, superficially could you say the differences from where region to region. I don't want to get into the differences from province to province, but just from region to region.

JH: uh...there was...I just didn't keep any documentation from that time period. I looked through at my OERs are pretty other than people that rated me...

DV: Reineison and Newmann

JH: yeah Reineison's name wasn't even in there and I don't even know if he's still alive or not. I've heard he was and I've heard he wasn't.

DV: what about Newmann?

JH: I don't know if he was. Newmann was...uh...

DV: was he military intelligence?

JH: no, I don't think so. I know McCoy wasn't.

DV: oh you knew Chester McCoy? Did he...he replaced Newmann right?

JH: that's right

DV: oh ok, difference between the two of them?

JH: oh yeah, well the difference is that McCoy was a...uh...

DV: West Point?

JH: well he was much more intense, almost gung-ho. Newmann was more laid back, almost philosophical. McCoy was more of an action guy, just a very intense guy.

DV: Is he there for...half and half between the two of them.

JH: Roughly, I think yeah maybe...maybe Newmann a little longer. I could check my OERs.

DV: were you there when Paul Coughlin came onto the staff?

JH: rings a bell, but I don't remember

DV: I think he would have replaced...um...the operations guy, not the deputy.

JH: probably...probably replaced Reineison but I am not sure whether like McCoy or Reineison. I probably like McCoy. Reineison was there for a long time. Newmann was there a long time but Reineison, let's see, I think he was a long time bachelor. I don't think he was ever married.

DV: do you know if McCoy is still in the area?

JH: I have never heard of McCoy since I left. I didn't know him before, haven't heard from him since. A number of those people...

DV: I think that pretty much concludes my question [cuts out end of side two]

Lawlor

Track one

Sound bite 1

DV: After the...after the offensive of '72, it seems to me a very important turning point and that afterwards preparations are seriously made to hold the line until the cease fire which everyone knew was inevitable. What I would like to know is the difference in anti-infrastructure operations leading up to the ceasefire and then after the ceasefire? [cuts out]

BL: The VC, and I still can't figure out why unless they...my own theory was that the only reason there was a ceasefire was so the VC could get us the hell out of there and they could conquer the country. But anyway—any event there was an effort made to have, particularly as you got close the ceasefire...uh...a...villages or hamlets were having...identify themselves as VC. So it became...it became...uh...all of the sudden there was a lot of business. Because as soon as we find out someone had a VC flag on their roof, gone! Not in the sense of killed but it enabled us to pick someone up and try to interrogate them and basically we were flooded.

DV: this was at the Da Nang interrogation center or all of the interrogation centers?

BL: I don't know where they went. You know, I didn't follow it. What we would do was going out and pick them up, usually bring them...I would usually work out in the Quan Non PIC down in Hoa Yan that's were the usually would go first of all.

Sound bite 2

DV: it is a typical PIC ok, at Hao Yan and then...

BL: where they were processed from there I don't know?

DV: well after there...they are only detained and interrogated at the PIC after the PIC they either go to the military or the jail?

BL: usually they go back out on the street for all I know.

Sound bite 3

DV: are the PRU at his point under Special Branch do you remember when that transition occurred?

BL: I was trying to think about that I remember first went first when we lost the ability to pay them. Big problem there.

DV: right that's when they wanted to kill you

BL: it seems to me that's when they became SRG, Special Reconnaissance Group, 'cause we didn't like the word PRU 'cause people were writing about it in the New York Times. So...

DV: Is this maybe after the offensive? [cuts out]

Sound Bite 4

BL: Uh...maybe it was after the offensive of '72, maybe it was after...

DV: then their called SRG

BL: SRG

DV: and then they go under Special...

BL: then they become Special Police

DV: how does that happen? is that when you loose ability to pay them?

BL: no we lost the ability to pay them when they became...no wait an minute.

Sound bite 5

BL: there was a...no, no it came out of uh...out of uh...

DV: Saigon?

BL: Saigon

DV: did Buckley come up and talk to you?

BL: no there was a massage... you know it one of these things you get called to Saigon. Patry was the one who actually went. And I believe as I recall it was...and they were going to fund the PRU through the National Command Authority through Saigon...and have the assets come down through the regional...uh...organization down in the provinces

Sound bite 6

BL: Now there was a period, wasn't a long, when they were no longer PRU...there was no PRU they were SRGs. The SRGs...[long pause]...uh...seems to me they became part of the special police as part of the ceasefire. That in anticipation of the ceasefire they demoted these guys because they were going to do away with them and we fought like hell saying "look, this is the best paramilitary force in the country you can't just disbanded these people. you got to keep them." And so because we were underwriting the special police we were able to sell that concept to the special police and the special police through the national police commander said "ok we'll take them" and they were melded into the special police and they became special police officers.

Sound bite 7

BL: I am almost positive that the special police timing was as part of the ceasefire, almost positive about that. When they became SRG, that's what I can't figure out. I know they weren't SRG when I got there in '71. I know they weren't SRG in early '72.

DV: so it's probably in the spring and then there's six months until...

BL: that's what you you're talking about. There's only a four-five-six month period there.

Sound bite 8

DV: When they become Special Reconnaissance Groups, is that when the funding gets cut off? And how does that happen?

BL: Seems to me... What happened was, Ted Shakley would be the guy to tell you how this work he was the one who did it...uh...He was getting a lot of heat from Langley because of the whole PRU assassination program...uh...allegations that were being made in the press. There is a reporter from the New York Times named, I think Robert Shaplin, who got his article up. I don't know if you read that one. He did...he came out expressly at Bill Colby's reputation to do an investigation and Colby said "listen you go do whatever you need to do and write whatever you need to write and come to whatever conclusion you need to write."

Sound bite 9

BL: Shakley's taking a whole world of heat for PRU assassination program. Shakley decides that there's got to be reorganization we've got to become SRG. Shaklet left.

Sound bite 10

BL: I tried to stay as far away from Saigon as I could. That place was byzantine.

Sound bite 11

BL: Shakely made them SRGs and it seems to me that Shakley's the one who transferred the pay to the GVN but I don't remember how the hell he did it. I don't remember how the function was. I remember that it was a major loss because when you can't control a guy's pay...uh...what we did to try to keep control was support. We could get them the gee wiz gadgets that they couldn't otherwise get.

DV: who was paying them...

Sound bite 12

DV: Did the salaries all of a sudden go down the GVN and did they start...instead of getting paid as a PRU did they start to get paid as an ARVN soldier or something?

BL: no they got paid as PRU/SRG guy...uh...but I remember they were concerned. They were very concerned about it because they knew the Americans were on us and they would pay us in honesty and they knew there was going to be no scam and they didn't want to be paid through their own channels and we basically had to say "you know I'm a private, the general just said that's the way it's going to happen."

Sound bite 13

BL: The issue where we were talking about earlier was...it involved corruption, there were pay offs and things.

DV: can we get to, can you tell me what was happening there?

BL: it seems to me....

Sound bite 14

BL: The short of it is, Fin cheated someone out his cut. And that person...its split, it fractured what was otherwise a unified unit leadership. Now it may have been ghost soldiers. It may have been...uh...extortion money, if you will, protection money, if you will. But at any event, they came to me.

Sound bite 15

DV: did you have Americans working for you running the PRU or did you guys do it all yourselves?

BL: We did it all ourselves. At that point the agency was disengaging from the PRU. They wanted to get away from it. It was bad PR...uh...and those of us who were involved in it were hanging on by our fingernails, trying to keep it going.

DV: at the point do you stop going out on operations with the PRU?

BL: no, I went out right up 'til the end

Sound bite 16

BL: I just felt very strongly that they were effective

Sound bite 17

DV: they change the name to SRG, they don't stop what they are doing they just change the name.

BL: just change the name

DV: they originally were counterterrorists so they change them to PRU, now they the PRU bad so they're going to change them to SRG, same people, same job

BL: same job, same modus operandi, same basic type of operation

Sound Bite 18

DV: and as people expose themselves in preparation for the ceasefire, you bring them into the PIC, you get more information on them and that's—you go out and get people

BL: get more and more, that's what you try to do

DV: and is something that happens right up to the ceasefire

BL: it continued beyond the ceasefire 'cause we developed information that enabled us to continue to operate after the ceasefire and we continued to operate after the ceasefire

DV: was there...

Sound bite 19

BL: but at this point you have to understand the PRU was...was... as far as Agency involvement, was denuded. We... The Agency had...they finally kinda transferred to special police...uh...it became a special police operation, which was legitimate and...uh...we sort of...I mean I guess at the point I would venture to say that American involvement was almost zero...uh...you know, the way I was able to maintain a semblance of influence was having worked with them and being able to get them into the hospital if they got hurt. There was a German hospital in Da Nang and I was able to get them those kinds of...I could get them those kinds...I could get them medical treatment which is a pretty big thing to a man who was exposing themselves to hostile fire so...

Sound bite 20

DV: where they used to getting paid directly from the agency

BL: right

DV: now they're not getting paid directly from the agency, so you lose influence with them but you still can conduct operations with them is that you still have operational control but you don't have administrative control

BL: what happened was is that we be—when we paid them we ran them. We had the capability to order and control them, then, what we became in effect were advisors. We were that [not sure]

DV: that is...what's that? that is that a French word

BL: No it's...uh...they didn't like the word advisors they thought it was demeaning so we became coordinators, that is the Vietnamese word for coordinators and uh...like any other American advisor, like special police advisor, you can go to the special police and say, "I think you should do this or I think you should have that training," but ultimately if the special police says "up yours" he has to go back to his office and sit down and think to see if he can get...

Sound bite 21

DV: that would make the job of a senior PRU chief more valuable because now he doesn't have to get money from CIA. He can get it directly from another Vietnamese guy.

BL: it became, in a sense...you mean for corruption purposes?

DV: for corruption purposes it just cuts the out the...

BL: absolutely, that's why I said to you the PRU members themselves didn't like the Americans being cut out of the chain because now...

DV: now they have to answer to Ho Chau Twan in Saigon and he is not going to be as just as the PRU guy, the American PRU guy down there

BL: everybody...the Vietnamese aren't stupid they know if their own pay is controlled by their own administrative process, the opportunity or the likelihood of graft or scamming, diversions of funds, is quite a bit larger than if it comes through the Americans because, you know, the Americans like receipts and they like to count out money

DV: yeah ok

BL: that kind of thing

DV: now I understand

Sound bite 22

DV: it pretty much stays the same when you go out on operations, its still the same...stuff

BL: initially...its...the relationship...it's the same objective. You're still trying to neutralize—I hate that word I got in more trouble with that word than you can imagine. We're still trying to attack the VC Infrastructure but the relationship between PRU advisor and PRU unit changes. Initially there's no difference because initially the impact...of...uh...of the payment process hasn't hit them yet. They don't understand they can tell the Americans to go to hell and still get their pay check. It takes a while for them to come to that realization. They do come to that realization eventually and...uh...it becomes more an art of persuasion than an art of command.

DV: on your part

BL: on the advisor's part, on the American part. Its no longer we're going to mount this operation to do this, it's...uh...we ought to

DV: let's go do this

BL: let's do this, what you do think of this, this make sense in terms....

Sound bite 23

DV: is...are there less operations is that what it translates to?

BL: Different types of operations...uh...and yes, to some extent, it meant less operations...uh...you began to experience situations where...uh...a lot of excuses began to surface why you couldn't go.

DV: we just went last week we're tired.

BL: not so much that but stuff like...oh, were going to need additional radio equipment, the batteries are gone, we're got a widgets being prepared it has come back, there's a problem with supply. Its one excuse after another because it's easier for them to sit in the province capital and...uh...run their little money nets. And they did like every other police organization in Vietnam they had there...I am sure they had their scams going.

Sound bite 24

BL: when you control somebody's paycheck you control...

DV: yeah

Sound bite 25

DV: in the beginning you're just the Quang Nan PRU guy

BL: in the beginning I was nothing. In the beginning I was Patry's bagman. You know it was one of things, you know, "Bruce I'm going out tomorrow night, you wanna go?" And...uh...first that seemed like...fine and then Patry channeled me toward the Quang Nan PRU because they were practically the best unit and...uh...my relationship with Quang Nan PRU was probably closer than any other in the region in fact I can....

Sound bite 26

DV: did you have an American in each province?

BL: we had Americans, it became a...an adjunct duty of the special police liaison but frankly many of them didn't take much interest in it.

DV: ok

Sound bite 27

BL: the special police liaison guys were, and I guess I am going to get in a lot of trouble for saying this but it was such an easy job. They didn't have to do much they go to the province special police officer shoot the breeze with him get a few reports from the PIC send them down and life was pretty easy...uh...nobody ever...those guys didn't go out operations...uh...you know, if they carried a revolver it was only because it looked good

Sound bite 28

DV: what about the whole idea of the province officer that ran both special police and PRU? I mean that was the big thing back in '67.

Sound bite 29

BL: I think that's why the...what happened during the build up, that's where a lot of these...uh...jeweler (?) types came because all of sudden there was a need to have a paramilitary capability. You have to understand, and after the Bay of Pigs, the whole paramilitary operation in the Agency got raped and they transferred the whole thing to the Department of Defense. Ok and then all of sudden we have this situation in Southeast Asia we have a requirement to run a secret war in Laos and we've got all this paramilitary stuff in Vietnam and the Agency looks around and its got all these FI guys and people that, you know, that...by the time I got to the agency there was no longer any requirement to become airborne qualified. There was no physical fitness requirement. I mean you had a lot of guys...some of them, if you said physical fitness that meant not smoking for the day. So all of a sudden there was need for people who could go in the field and they went out and recruited all of these...uh...um...military types and put them through the PM course. And part of the program...

DV: and Newmus has gone through the course?

BL: Newmus was one of those guys and...uh...then send them out to the province to run the PRU and to run special police type operations.

DV: both of them?

BL: in some cases yes

DV: 'cause I understood it was FI who did the special police

BL: that's really what happened. In reality, the FI guys concentrated on the special police and the PRU guy was PRU...

Sound bite 30

BL: when all the heat started about the program the decision was made that we gotta to disengage. We gotta lower the profile. What we're going to do is change the name, we're going to transfer the money function, this is the...this is the Shakley stuff, he can tell you this. But the concept, as understood it, was we change the name, we can distance ourselves by no longer paying the directly and we lower the profile

of the advisors, of the American involvement, simply by not manning the paramilitary slots in the province. What we will do first of all is man the paramilitary slot on the region level, have him work through the FI special police officer for coordination with the PRU.

Sound bite 31

DV: so there....so there...at this point the enemy is just doing it to themselves.

BL: they, at that point, they were sort of a self sustaining unit and then...you see we had removed the paycheck, we had removed the guy on the ground liaising with them and yet it was tough job because they were looking us for support. They would constantly, you know, we need, you know, one hundred blankets, you know. Well not one hundred blankets but, you know, support supply stuff and that was how I was able to maintain some degree of control because I could get them that kind of support. Another way I maintained control was particularly over the Quang Nan PRU...

Sound bite 32

BL: after the ceasefire, obviously, we were organized as a part of the special police and the PRU team no longer is a separate entity co-equal to separate police

Sound bite 33

DV: does the ceasefire bring reorganization?

BL: oh sure

DV how does that reorganize?

BL: we become part of consulate. We cease our independent compound. We fought for that for Vung Tau but we didn't win it now we were at peace. So we were incorporated into the St—State Department umbrella and worked out of the US consulate building, alright.

Sound bite 34

BL: now at that point the Phoenix program, the coordination program as far as I am concerned is dead. There is nothing left. No Americans were driving the program. To the extent that the Vietnamese give it lip service, it's form over substance. It's does not working

DV: There's no coordination between MSS and special branch anymore

BL: not of any substantive manner...uh...

Sound bite 35

BL: So you go to a meeting and there's special police there. There's MSS there. There's a Police Field Forces Police rep there. There's a National Police rep there. None of those guys were going to go out in a village and pick anybody up or try to run an ambush. So what's the hell is use in going out there, ok? Then I've got my own organization that doesn't trust information that doesn't come from within its own structure. So the special police give us information, my guys are real reluctant to act on because they're afraid they're going to get set up.

DV: well after the ceasefire do you...does the PRU organization still have its agent's in the field are they still getting intelligence

BL: sure

DV: you know, but it is, then, parallel to the Special Branch operation.

BL: it is subordinate to the Special Branch operation. What happened was the Special Branch police officer—see that whole thing underwent a transition. If you remember what happened, initially Special Branch and National Police were not—there were in a...uh...parallel command structure

DV: yeah two organizations

BL: that was changed, whereby the Special Branch came under control of the National Police. Then it was changed further whereby the PRU came under the control of Special Branch. So the National Police commander in the province controlled the special police commander who controlled the PRU commander. So the PRU was nothing more than...if you wanted to run an operation you no longer went to the PRU commander you went the National Police commander, the guy who was your liaison guy. Then the SP guy would call in his PRU chief and usually run the operation...in Qang Nan that ran real well.

Track 2

Sound bite one

BL: The structure was still there to come to me and say “hey we need this,” and what we’d do is go back to the PIOCC...uh...or whoever for that province and say “so and so came to me...its no offense or anything its just that” And they were more than happy because they did want to be involved in it. They...that wasn’t a program that attracted...

DV: in the same sense that that um...so, so each embassy ha—each CIA compound in each province is that abandoned after the ceasefire? Every province gave up its...its individual CIA compound and moved into the State Department consular office.

BL: No, no the provinces stayed separate. I had an office down in Hoa Yan. Th..the regional people moved into the consulate’s

DV: there was no consulates in the province

BL: that was a high profile operation. The regional thing...Christ I don’t know how many officers that were there. There were secretaries. There was communications equipment. Of course under the...uh...the normal course of operations at that time the Agency provided the communications people for all forms of...uh...diplomatic

Sound bite 2

DV: what about anti-infrastructure operations after the ceasefire?

BL: well obviously, they came under the aegis of the Special Branch and it worked with Qang Nan province because [cuts out]

Sound bite 3

DV: Special Branch now is controlling

BL: Special Branch has got the...got the PRU. Their task...see it was

DV: they must of...the PRU must of hated that because they hated the Special Branch.

BL: oh they did...uh but...but not in Qang Nan Province and that was because of the because of—I feel and he's probably a commie too but I feel we had a good Special Branch police chief. You know, this guy was...uh... when Patry was there. He recognized, when I see the Special Branch police chief recognizes in Qang Nan province that this forces did not have the capability to go into the village at night and attack the VC infrastructure that they were city cops...

DV: they're walking a beat at most

BL: yeah, they didn't have the capability to go into the villages and run paramilitary operations dressed up in a little green uniforms...uh...before this little thing happened we undertook to train a unit of the Special Branch in Qang Nan province to do that. We created our own training program. I'll show you some of the pictures. We took Special Branch guys and taught them basic infantry formations.

DV: they must of...I mean...I understood most guys joined the Special Branch so they didn't have to do that kind of stuff. They could get shot or somebody says guess what fella...

BL: they were not happy campers. But what that says is that the Police chief in Qang Nan province understood this weakness and before the PRU came to him, to try and develop that kind of capability. So when the PRU came to him, he appreciated it and they appreciated his respect for what they could do. So that relationship in that province was the best of any of that nature. I am not saying it's great, I'm not saying it's...but it was far better

DV: did you actually run that unit?

BL: what the Special Branch?

DV: yeah

BL: w...we...uh...

DV: ran them like as a PRU, as a paramilitary force

BL: that's were it came from

DV: where they working out in the village

BL: it was doctrinally if you will patterned, created, trained, organized and run as a PRU unit.

DV: and is this before or after the ceasefire.

BL: this is before the ceasefire

Sound bite 4

DV: I always understood the Field Police was supposed to be the action arm of the Special Branch.

BL: man, those guys were nothing more than corrupt cops.

DV: so they were not...were not there for the Special Branch to call on?

BL: th...they were national police action arm...uh...and they were lousy. In my area, right...in my area...In my experience with the field police just about all they did was shake down the merchants. Very, very poor.

DV: and did they have Public Safety advisors?

BL: yes, AID people

DV: what did you think of them?

BL: ex-cops, most of them...um

DV: can you give the most...you know, alcoholic, running away from bad marriages, war lords, corrupt and everything

BL: yeah one of the guys in Da Nang used to setup the shake downs of the merchants, an American.

DV: really can you tell me who it was.

BL: I don't remember

DV: he was just involved

BL: absolutely that guy was in it, up to his neck. He came out of that war, probably wealthier than you and I will ever be. And, you know, you can't prove it. You make allegations and one of the thing I learned over there you gotta be very careful...when I was 23, I would think the world operated on a set of moral values which...which...uh...to attempt to uncover and prevent corruption. So you go to some one and say "the son of a bitch is on the take." And it was "don't bother me!"

DV: yeah right so, what do you what me to do about it

BL: you know, I got rotate out of here in thirty-five days, I don't to be bothered who cares." And that...that was...

Sound bite 5

BL: I never saw, in the twenty five months I was there, the Field Police run a Field Police operation. I saw them go out in the middle of the day time and...uh...walk to village that might be one hundred and fifty meters off of route one, beat up people

DV: but they are not anti-infrastructure

BL: not in my opinion

DV: very crude paramilitary stuff

BL: they only people out there doing it as far as I am concerned was the PRU. They were the only ones out there.

Sound bite 6

BL: after the ceasefire?

DV: after the ceasefire, what was the...I mean, for instance, were you still bringing people back to PIC? Was the PIC still functional?

BL: oh yeah, we continued to interrogate. We continued to develop...uh...intelligence. We continued to develop...um...

Sound bite 7

BL: on yeah

DV: did you ever run penetration agents?

BL: oh sure, oh yeah it was one of the most frustrating things in my life because we knew there was no ceasefire...uh...we knew that they North Vietnamese immediately began repairing the road out in the western part of the region, repairing the route would be a better word, the infiltration route to accommodate larger supplies of...larger supplies of military material to launch the next invasion, or the next operation. We saw it and we weren't permitted to report it.

DV: did you have

Sound bite 8

DV: what kind of coordination did you have with milita—MACV military intelligence?

BL: not much

DV: never?

BL: never...not I. now we did work with some Navy Seals that were there. We did work with...uh...well...everyday there was a briefing at the headquarters and we always had a representative got. I never went...

DV: at MACV?

BL: yeah...I never went there because it was bullshit. I mean had better things to do than listen to these guys talk about the incidents of the night before. When I was in the province, the province senior advisor tried at one point to put me under his control and we got that problem resolved. I had access to the tactical operation center at the province. So I would go in see what they had and look at it but as far as a established liaison I never....

DV: and you never came under the control of the CORDS province senior advisor. Have you ever heard of a CIA officer who did?

BL: no

DV: unless he was the province senior advisor

BL: I never saw...I never heard. I obviously you try to be cooperative and coordinate and all that stuff but....

Sound bit 9

DV: was he...all I am saying is how did they divide up the responsibilities? I was always thought the chief of ops and the deputy to RIOC were the same job.

BL: No

DV: what's the difference?

BL: in the theory the chief of ops was supposed to be the guy who oversaw operations, intelligence collection, PRU, counterintelligence, reporting no I am sorry not reporting. He was just the intelligence operations guy. The ROIC and the Deputy ROIC was

DV: administrative?

BL: well he not only...the operations guy not only reported to deputy ROIC, the deputy ROIC also had control over all the logistics and the administration of the base. He was the day to day executive officer and the ROIC was the guy sitting on top the whole thing, theorizing the future, so to speak. The D-ROIC was the sort of day to day to business exec, the CEO. The Ops guy ran operations, then there was a support guy and so forth.

Sound bite 10

BL: they create their own index. Their, you know, their little the R-I-D index that Mr. McGee talks about in his book. Well I inherited one of those goddamn things. I went away for...I figure after getting of it two or three years of training all of that, I would be way from 3x5 cards. I walked in Da Nang and the first thing that hit me is about five hundred names and cross indexing and its big investigation and its gumshoe work.

Sound bite 11

DV: did you also have anything to do with province observers? After the ceasefire there about five hundred military intelligence groups sent in—military guys dressed as civilians who we called province observers and were supposed to report on what MSS and Special Branch guys were doing.

BL: yeah they were...they were assigned to...who they hell where they assigned to? What did they call themselves? They reported out to the building out by the airport. What were that guys...do you want another beer?

DV: I think so. Its very funny its hard to just have one....

BL: (talking away from the recorder)

DV: oh really

BL: he was the Special Branch liaison officer up in Qai

DV: he had been military, I suppose.

BL: I think he was a retired cop or something. He liked the good life...uh...you know, I am not going to say he wasn't any good but let's say he didn't have the enthusiasm the that the rest of us had. He was one of those guys who thought it was a joke...that it wasn't important and he wanted to stay over there. His tour was up. His contract was up. He was due be either discharge or to be rotated home, said sianara and he went down an became one of those guys and I don't know. You tell me the name and I'll remember the name. They reported to...uh...

DV: SAVA?

BL: no what hell was it called...was the organization that out of Ton Sonulate

DV: Defense Attache

BL: DAO he became a DAO guy is that what your talking about

DV: well yeah, probably. He walked around and did basically....

BL: he liaised, how you doing what's up?

Sound bite 12

DV: you must have received substantial training in interrogation, I assume?

BL: Received some. I was not trained as interrogation officer was trained interrogation techniques but not...I didn't undergo a specific course.

DV: I understood the station had people who were trained experts who would come out and do special cases and stuff was that...

BL: that's correct they were...I was not one of those guys.

DV: so if there was something important that they thought was really important, they would send out one of their experts, whom I understand most of them were from the SR division.

BL: I was trying to think there was a guy who was out their for years and years and years who spoke fluent, fluent Vietnamese. And always spoke to all the high level. He worked out of Saigon.

Milberg

Tape 1 Side 1

Sound bite 1: 00:12-1:03

DV: Tell me a little bit more about your background and why you got into the military? ...ok...uh

WM: Well that's easy...I...uh...went I was a senior in college I...uh...received a preliminary draft notice...uh...which was my first...um...I guess...uh...experience, you know, with the federal bureaucracy and it...uh...caught me up short and starting making me think about the fact that when I got out of college I probably was going to get drafted.

Sound bite 2: 01:10-2:05

WM: one thing led to another and...uh...I decided that if was, in fact, going to be drafted or I was have to some...uh...military service, I ought to look into the various options...probably a situation that was pretty common in those times. This was 1962...um...what I did was I spent some time talking to...uh...the recruiters of the various military services...the...um...to make a longer story shorter the Air Force made the most sense to me for...for a variety of reasons and those reasons being that they seemed to want to consider my needs together with their needs and, to some extent, it was quip pro quo. So when I graduated college I went off to an officer training school.

Sound bite 3: 4:36-5:15

WM: I finished...um...officer training school and was commissioned at the end of September 1962 and was assigned to Strategic Air Command Base in Wichita Falls, Texas. My job there was...was to...I was a junior officer...first assignment was...was part of developing security plans and procedures for strategic air craft and nuclear weapons at Shepard Air Force base

Sound bite 4: 5:28-7:00

WM: I no sooner got to Shepard Air Force base when some month later the...uh...Cuban Missile Crisis erupted which was my real...my first real experience with the idea that what I had done, what I had done from the standpoint of...of joining the military was real. That this was...this was real life kinds of things from the standpoint that, up until then, it was a little bit like a job and now, all of a sudden, things were happening at Shepard Air Force based that mirrored what was happening around the world and I was a part of it and what was happening at Shepard Air Force base was that, in response to...to the President and what he was doing with...with Khrushchev, he had put...had put the strategic forces on alert as a signal to the Soviets of the resolve of the United States and, all of a sudden...um...my life changed dramatically...um...from the standpoint of things like going on twelve hour shifts...um...being issued personal weapons, helmets, flak jackets and going to work, as if we are on a war time footing.

Sound bite 5: 7:58-8:50

DV: have you...were you, at that age, aware that, you know, had you thought about things...um...uh...of yourself as a person who had kind of a value system and that....

WM: oh sure

DV: ...I'm going to be my own man...

WM: oh sure

DV: ...even though I am in the military...

WM: oh yeah

DV: ...and I'm going to make decisions to do what I want to do. You know, some people are...

WM: that had...that had...

DV: ...you know, now a days people say its mold me, mold me, you know, did you feel that you were that way or that your values were maybe stronger than the system you were in, I guess is what I am trying to say.

WM: Well they were always stronger than the system I was in. There wasn't any question about that. That was one of the reasons I liked the Air Force or at least I what I thought about the Air Force because I was always able, for the most part, to...um...impose my will on the system.

Sound bite 6: 10:20-10:42

DV: so you had responsibilities thrust upon you at that point?

WM: sure, sure

DV: Ok and did you feel that you were up to it?

WM: um...it was exciting. It was heady. Um...it was...it was just like anybody in a position of power...um...it was a little bit frightening...um...and...it was a learning experience.

Sound bite 7: 11:21-13:00

WM: I was in a...uh...career area in the Air Force that encompassed things, at one end of the spectrum, that you would call physical and personnel kind of security, counterintelligence kind of activities together with positive intelligence, on the other end, and some where in between that would be things you might call intelligence collection, covert operations, paramilitary kinds of...of activities.

DV: you were already involved in this?

WM: well the way it breaks down in the Air Force is that there are broad trees of...um...career areas and, as you follow the branches of those trees, they went into these kinds of various areas. Where I started out was in the relatively mundane kinds of...um...uh...physical and personnel security areas...that...that also started to get involved in things like counterintelligence.

DV: and this had to do with base security, basically, Air Force base security or something?

WM: it had to do with...with...how you went about the business of protecting strategic weapon systems and nuclear weapons and that leads you to things like, what's the threat against these...these kinds of activities from...from both intelligence collection together with... from one side of the spectrums, running through things like...um...paramilitary or organized military operations that could be used within the United States or elsewhere really, if the bases were overseas, to otherwise attack or disrupt that activity.

Sound bite 8: 13:20-13:53

WM: I always had some, out of fascination although my childhood and...uh...adolescence, with weapons and with explosives and was...was pretty capable in both of those areas long before ever ran into any kind of organized system that ever attempted to train you...uh...um...formerly in what had been heretofore a hobby.

DV: with guns

WM: and weapons of all sorts...um...demolitions

Sound bite 9: 15:00-15:33

WM: The unusual thing about the Air Force I think is that its virtually the only service where the officers are the fighting force and the enlisted people are support forces. Now it even becomes stranger in my case...uh...whereas as a non-flyer...uh...just became one of few Air Force kind of people involved in ground combat operations. So you get some training on bases, local kind of training mostly in small arms—pistols and rifles and things like that, nothing very sophisticated.

Sound bite 10: 19:10-21:31

WM: I got caught up, internally caught up, in the idea of...um...I'm not sure how to describe this other than here I had been going through a lot of training...um...had a lot...um...what I thought unique capabilities in the field I was working in. There was a...um...war going on the other side of the world and young men traditionally go to war...um...this was a period of time when you start thinking about a testing yourself...um...and you think about...um...war as the ultimate experience you can be engaged in. You ask yourself a lot questions about how do you deal with fear? How well would you deal with fear...um...it becomes a time of testing...that kind of thought process led me, in 1964, to look into...um...volunteering for Vietnam

Sound bite 11: 22:00-23:00

WM: and I still remember one day when we went to...this meeting took place every morning. The wing commander who was...who was a full Colonel and in those days a full Colonel was nigh on to god...um...turning to me, with this look of surprise and chagrin on his face, saying...er...asking me...um...did I...had I really volunteered to go to that nasty little war in Asia and that he had just gotten notification through the personnel system that I had been selected to do that and had a lost my mind?

DV: was this a personnel Colonel

WM: no this was the wing commander. He was the senior officer of that base and...uh...I very sheepishly...uh...turned to him and said I thought it was something I ought to be doing at which point nothing more was said.

Sound bite 12: 24:33-26:55

WM: In any event a few months after that time...um...I was...I was well on my way to the other side of the world

DV: did you get some more training?

WM: yes

DV: well tell me more about the training you got in preparation to go to Vietnam? Did you know what your assignment was going to be?

WM: um...only vaguely at that time, I knew I was going to be going to the Da Nang area and I didn't even know where Da Nang was and I started reading the *New York Times*, which...which was more and more consumed with the affairs in Vietnam, at the time...um...I really had very little understand of...of...of...the background, the culture, the people, the history and I started to read a little bit more about that but obviously that was pretty superficial...um...I got some...some more weapons training on base and...um...and um I guess in those days...you...uh...you...uh...went to Travis Air Force base in California, which I think was a major...uh...um...logistics and...um....

DV: gateway to the Pacific

WM: gateway to the Pacific...yeah, I remember getting some more training there but it was relatively vague. It was just what it all consisted of.

DV: and again being trained by Air Force people?

WM: being trained by Air Force people. I eventually wound up in the Philippines, Clark Air Force base, where...um...the training got serious

DV: and this is '64,

WM: probably...um...early...yeah late '64 or early '65 by that time.

DV: did you um...was this outside of Clark?

WM: yes

DV: 'bout 60 miles?

WM: yes

DV: North?

WM: mmhmm

DV: to a base up in the hills?

WM: mmmhmmmm a...a...and some other locations. The training got serious...uh...a...a...at Clark and...um...I enjoyed it...um...it was getting to be real and the whole idea that seven or eight hundred miles away...um...was really the real thing.

Sound bite 13: 27:55-28:20

WM: um...there was also some...um...CIA provided training and this was really my first...uh...experience with the Agency, although I didn't know they were Agency people until sometime later.

DV: were they in uniforms?

WM: no

DV: they're civilians?

WM: well...it was....

DV: fatigues?

WM: fatigues, no names, no ranks

Sound bite 14: 30:18-31:06

WM: all the while that this was going on you start to...uh...build up almost an internal level of tension...uh...first its imperceptible a...and then you start thinking about...uh...you're just operating at a higher level anxiety. You don't really know what's happening and you feel like, you start thinking like...um...at some moment the plane is going to land...um...someplace in Vietnam and you're going to come out the back shooting, which, of course, doesn't happen.

Sound bite 15: 36:40-37:04

WM: When we finished it...uh...they had...uh...they told us the next day your going to Tom Smith in Vietnam and...uh...this was a great disappointment...um...we loaded up

Sound bite 16: 38:17-44:20

WM: we arrived, finally...uh...after seemingly flying forever, we arrived at Ton Sanote, the major airport in Saigon or outside of Saigon and...uh...

DV: and this is March '65?

WM: 'bout, you know...uh...and I don't know what was expecting but it was very different than...than anything I ever thought was going to happen and that was...this is an airport, admittedly kind of run down, nothing much to write home about...uh...and...uh...in Asia and I don't know if I thought this was going to be a combat landing or what...uh...but it was like landing in any other airport in the world. There were funny looking airplanes all over this place and...uh...my first exposure to some Vietnamese and what happened next was they dumped all of our duffle bags out on the ramp and the plane taxied away someplace and, I guess, took off and we...we...were sitting there and nothing happened, just nothing happened.

DV: nobody to meet you?

WM: nobody met us, nobody knew wa...wa...what were supposed to do

DV: is this now basically just the ten people you had been training with

WM: no this is the whole planeload

DV: the whole planeload! [Laughing]

WM: and I was just really disappointed by all this...um...it was funny I guess we were...everybody gathered up their...uh...their bag of...uh...personal gear and...uh...we trooped off to the what appeared to be the main building there, got in out of the sun, it was really hot as hell, got in side the building and...uh...we're all just kind of looking around and walking around, seeing what there is to see there.

DV: its like a terminal?

WM: it was like a terminal, yeah. People were going and coming and there were some civilians airliners coming and landing and what not and in between that there would be some planes that appeared to be combat-type planes...a...and what was going on here? This was the war zone. Obviously it was, as I've come to understand much later. Saigon was really unrelated to the war, in so many ways. I don't know how many hours passed but finally a jeep rolled up and some Air Force NCOs got out and...uh...came up to us and asked us for our orders and...uh...who we were and stuff like that soon thereafter a couple of, I guess, buses...um...arrived and we loaded up into buses and drove off to

DV: down town hotels?

WM: no, to...to some barracks type buildings on Ton Sonute and...uh...they told us, find us a place to sleep, in there and...uh...be ready to leave tomorrow morning. So we did that and...uh...what there was was, I guess, a remnant of the old French garrison that still there on Ton Sonute, and old open-style building with a lot of cots in it, things like that, just loaded our stuff up there and...uh...decided a couple people and just to walk around the base and see what's there...um...was really surprising to me was I know sooner started walking around the base when I ran into two Air Force NCOs that had worked for me...uh...back in Shepard and had left some months before and they were assigned to Ton Sonute and this was interesting and opportunity to kind of compare notes with these guys and we did. We went off to some place or another and some, something to eat, probably in the one the US clubs on the base there and their life...uh...on this base was pretty much like, life on any other base...uh...for the Air Force. They had...they had some security duties there. They had never been attacked and most surprisingly they had never been off the base. They...they had they never been to Saigon. They were scared to death of...of tip toeing off the front of that base for fear that as soon as you did that you'd be ambushed b...by I don't know what...uh...but I couldn't relate to all that. It was so amazing to me. Even years later when I ran into people at Ton Sonute, either coming or going, I still ran into people who were absolutely petrified of the idea of stepping off that us conclave in Asia

DV: not even the curiosity to take a look around and see what the country looked like.

Milberg Tape 1 Side 2

Sound bite 1: 2:10-4:15

WM: the that plane we were on, wa...was...had strap seats...um...along the interior

DV: for jumping...is that the...uh?

WM: um...yeah that general type of thing and...uh...and...I was sitting...uh...one person in from the end at the back of the plane. When we...uh...we had a pretty uneventful flight until...uh...into the airport at Da Nang and they had told us that the descent would be relatively steep...uh in order to avoid any kind of snipers or things like that and...uh...and it was. A...as we touched and the plane begin to...uh...taxi over to the end of the ramp th...the guy that was sitting next to me just sort of slumped over...uh...on my...on my shoulder and...um...this was really my first experience with death...um...he had taken a round that came up threw the plane on the way in and he had died instantly and I never even knew it...um...it we al got back up.

DV: was it a large caliber bullet?

WM: no it was a small arm of some sort probably a...uh...some kind of a...probably an AK-47 round, 7.6.

DV: how did you react?

WM: I couldn't believe it. I was astounded that this had happened and...um...it was really the first time I started thinking about a type of warfare that I was going to be engaged with that could be like this, you know

Sound bite 2: 6:35-7:55

WM: we...uh...the...uh...next couple months pretty much organizing the whole security apparatus in Da Nang.

DV: Patrols outside the perimeter?

WM: I was astounded to find...th...that there were layers of overlapping jurisdictions with hardly any agreement...uh...I'm going to skip forward kind of fast here, only probably because its only peripherally interesting but in theory, the Air Force had the responsibility to defend itself only inside the perimeters of the base itself and the...uh...Marine Corps, which was garrisoned in the Da Nang area had the theoretical responsibility for defending itself and the base outside the fence. There was no apparent modus operandi...uh...in force that I could figure out as to what happen if the base got attacked that would stop the Air Force people from shooting the marines, wh...who were there to defend them...uh...

Sound bite 3: 13:22-13:38

WM: by this time I got to know lot of people on the base and...um...had some...had some initial contact with the...uh...the CIA, who we were in liaison with.

Sound bite 4: 13:58-14:40

WM: and...uh...by this time I started developing counterintelligence sources, as part of my job along with other kinds of security things.

DV: with them with or through them?

WM: some were unilateral. So were bilateral kinds of activities and we got more and more involved i...in each other's lives to the point where they asked, through whatever channels, they asked for me to be more or less ssigned to their control, which I was more than agreeable to.

Sound bite 5: 15:25-17:00

DV: so they asked for you to be assigned to SOG

WM: yeah and I was sure, I'm still not sure, really, whether they had been some prior arrangement, long before I ever got there...uh...that was tied back into my training and original assignment and everything else. Where they get to take a look at you...uh...and evaluate you before they ask for you. So I felt like maybe my first two months or so in Vietnam was something of a test period. While I can't say never much about the details my time with SOG what I wound up doing was maintaining virtually...uh...my some responsibilities, my same overt position that I had, while at the same time organizing intelligence networks, pretty rudimentary and clumsily affairs that they were and also beginning to plan and participate myself in small unit operations.

Sound bite 6: 17:27-19:30

WM: no it was...it was like...everybody kind a new, all the Americans anyway...uh...at least in the security world, kinda new everybody else. You would meet them either in the officers club and there was a little officers club. There was also a relatively large...um...MACV compound in De Nang itself...uh...although at some point going off the base itself...uh...was off limits. De Nang ebbed and flowed in terms of...as a city, whether...whether Americans thought this was a safe thing to do or not.

DV: Were you told this is...what we like to do is come...i...is have you come work with Special Operations Group and...uh...that

WM: I'm not sure if it was identified as such then but that's obviously what it was.

DV: did you commander say, "Warren, I'd like you to meet with some people, who are going to talk to you—

WM: my commander never knew it!

DV: was one of the stipulations was that you were supposed to tell him.

WM: I don't know what he was told, tell you the truth. I'm not sure what he ever thought about what I was doing.

DV: cause in effect, then, you find your self working for the CIA instead of the Air Force anymore.

WM: yes...yes but it wasn't like one day working for Sears and they next day working for AT&T. It wasn't anything...a...as clear as that. Everybody was kinda there. Everybody was...as an American, everybody worked for the United States government.

DV: right I understand, still...uh...doesn't that put you in a funny career position?

WM: of yeah for sure!

DV: [laughing] because...uh...I've talked with Navy SEALs, who've had themselves in the same position and their career's ended in the Navy.

WM: oh yeah...sure and I..

Sound bite 7: 20:00-20:53

WM: when I...when I later left Vietnam and came back some nine months after...after I left, in the Phoenix Program and I knew what I was getting into this time or...wa...wasn't really a Phoenix Program but I knew I was working for the Agency directly. I was a fully integrated employee...uh....

DV: you'd be seconded to it?

WM: I don't particularly like that term but...uh...I was detailed from the Air Force under a thing called a participating agency service agreement to the CIA. CIA paid my salary, through a cover arrangement obviously, reimbursed the Air Force or something like that.

Sound bite 8: 21:05-22:10

WM: this was really my first experience, at that time—again I am skipping forward, with...uh...how...a...and what life was like for Agency people in Saigon, which was just really bizarre. It was bizarre from the stand point of here were all these people supposedly involved in intelligence collection, intelligence analysis and planning for the use of intelligence resources and the participation of paramilitary forces and these people were doing nothing. The...they would live in their villas...um...in and around the town in grand splendor...uh...and they'd come to work at, you know, eight o'clock in the morning and...th...they'd leave at five o'clock in the afternoon, just like being in an office building and they had no idea what was going on outside the city of Saigon. None!

Sound bite 9: 23:01-26:00

WM: I was going to be reassigned to Da Nang to work for the regional officer in Da Nang, turns out to be Aaron Desoxous and...uh...know it wasn't it was another fella who was there before Aaron who's name I can't recall.

DV: Jack Horton

WM: it was Jack Horton yeah. In any event, I didn't know but Horton had refused to accept me and what he was doing he was making a case that he couldn't afford to have amateurs. The amateurs being anyone who had not gone through and come through the Agency recruitment training process: CT program or whatever it happened to be and this was at the point that when Agency operations were expanding so dramatically in Vietnam that the Agency couldn't get volunteers from its own resources and this is the reason they had gone the JCS to work out an agreement to get people from all of the services to fill those depleted ranks Horton has an old intelligence hand so to speak that refused to take on of these people and there was a struggle between Saigon and Da Nang about the fact that its either you take these people or you get nobody. I didn't know this a...and when I...uh...finally when they worked it out and I was in fact going to go to Da Nang, they didn't tell me any of this...uh...I found out later...um...but what happened was I flew up to...uh...Da Nang in an Agency C-46 aircraft which taxied over and landed at the CIA part of the field, which I had known from my previous tour there was a CIA logistics place and I get out of the plane and...uh...get...gather up my gear and there's nobody there and here I am again, back in Vietnam, I go over to the little operations shed and park my stuff there and figure somebody's gonna come and get me and nothing happened. Again!

DV: this is not unusual, I should tell you. This happens to a lot of people.

WM: really, this déjà vu

DV: this is not unusual, either

WM: so I'm waiting and waiting and waiting and its getting later and later in the day and I figure, well there not coming to meet me. I'm going to meet them. Fortunately, I wa...was in the fortunate position of

knowing where they live, otherwise how do you ask where's the local CIA compound. I mean you don't find it in the phone book and you can't go over to base of operations and look it up or take a cab.

Sound bite 10: 28:10-28:35

WM: it became clear that Horton had given directions not to meet me...uh...he was making a point and I was the cannon fodder...um...Horton, reluctantly, was there reluctantly accepted me. He didn't have much choice at this point and wound up getting me some...some job and this is a couple days of transpiring here.

Sound bite 11: 29:20-30:00

WM: I wound up...um...getting a place to live and I wound up also getting some kind of make work job on the staff there, which had to with doing liaison with some of the military units in and around...um...in and around Da Nang and trying to coordinate some kind of intelligence collection and analysis program for things like some of the...some of the mortar units that the VC used to harass the base and things like that for the most part it was pretty unexciting.

Sound bite 12: 31:05-31:40

WM: and...uh...the guy...in the provinces they were broken down...the Agency people were broken down between a thing that they called the Revolutionary Development Cadre Operations officers and Revolutionary Development Cadre Plans officer and the RDCO people pretty much ran the overt kinda of pacification cadre program and the RDCP officer was really the intelligence and paramilitary covert action.

Sound bite 13: 33:30-34:30

DV: is there a particular person you're involved with? Is there a SOG...like there's and RD Cadre Operations and Plans guy is there a guy in the province or the region who is the SOG guy?

WM: I had...

DV: you know what I am saying, is there a separation?

WM: at that point I didn't know and...uh...I had know idea how they were organized. I had no real idea of the whole hierarchy of the place. I wasn't...most likely that was by design on their part.

DV: you didn't have a need to know so...

WM: I didn't have a need to know. More than that, I wasn't a fully integrated employee. I hadn't been through their screening program. I hadn't been polygraphed...um...they hadn't be responsible for doing a background investigation on me, all the things that happen—

DV: which, due strictly to CIA regulations they can't tell you unless, you've done it

WM: that's right

DV: it's a matter of record keeping and reporting

Sound bite 14: 35:43-36:25

WM: the only thing I can really tell you about, at this point, would be that we began developing...um...bilateral and...uh...unilateral intelligence operations, so with the Vietnamese and

some without and...uh...began organizing...um...counterterror teams...a...and began participating in small unit operations in South Vietnam and North Vietnam.

Sound bite 15: 39:18-46:00

WM: part of what we did, and maybe this will help clarify it for you. Part of what we did wa...was we'd take some of the people we trained and most of these people were either Vietnamese or Chinese, some Nungs, on long range patrols. Sometimes out in Ashong Valley, sometimes further west and obviously further west you start to get into other countries...um...although you never really knew precisely where you were.

DV: right, this bamboo tree here is Laos

WM: you can only guess at some point

DV: were you going after individuals? Were you targeting people?

WM: no, not anybody we know but one of things we did was...was we took sniper rifles some...um...I guess they were M-700s with sniper scopes on 'em, and part of...part of what we did was involved in the initial trail watch program

DV: the prairie farm

WM: some of it had to do with things like...um...sitting out on ridges, you know, for a few days on end and if you saw some kind of, either a Viet Cong or a North Vietnamese unit, moving through the valleys, is...um...shoot at them, some cases...uh...a thousand yards away. The idea being that they would never hear the report from the weapon at that distance and yet they'd wind up with...um...one of their people dead.

DV: you're going after the field grade officers whenever possible. Are the signs of rank or are you just going after the guy with the radio or something like that?

WM: we're going after the guy we think we can hit.

DV: yeah...it doesn't matter ok and are you hittin'?

WM: mmmhmmmm

DV: at this is there any kinda...are you feeling at this point this a good thing for me to do, this is helping the war...

WM: yes

DV:...by sniping this guy

WM: by this time

DV: ...uh I'm doing something productive.

WM: uh...it was during this period of time, and this was probably the...uh...six to eight month period of time...maybe nine months, I don't know, when...uh...when I really started to think more about the war itself and...uh...my role in it and...uh...also began to...uh...see the evidence of how the Vietcong was operating in the hamlets. Saw the...uh...the methods used by the tax collectors, saw the methods used by the political officers and, one event that will also just stand out in my mind, was there terror and torture

that they used to strike fear a...and get compliance...um...from villagers. This was an event where a particularly reluctant village chief...um...had his wife, who was pregnant, disemboweled...um...a...and their unborn baby had its head smashed threw with a rifle butt.

DV: and you saw the evidence of this?

WM: I saw the evidence of this.

DV: were you told to photograph it or anything like that?

WM: no

DV: one of the things I was told was that CIA organized teams to dress up like Viet Cong, to go into villages and to do the same sort of thing and then they would send other SOG teams in say” oh what a surprise this is what the Viet Cong has done and that that was part of political psychological warfare. You ever heard of anything like that?

WM: never

DV: ok...just something that I heard.

WM: I never saw, or heard or had any indication that that was going on...um...I mean clearly I am aware of some of the abuses that took place on both sides...American as well as North Vietnamese

DV: but the term, counterterror, then, did not mean itself that counterterror teams were out terrorizing themselves?

WM: the...uh...my perception of the role of counterterror teams was to strike terror into the enemy. The enemy being the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong

DV: not the population

WM: not the population

DV: what happens in villages called Viet Cong villages, let say that somebody says “this is a VC village. This is not a government village.” Was...were counterterror techniques used to terrorize VC villages and to shift an alliance to the Government of Vietnam the way Viet Cong counterterror teams used to terror to shift perhaps GVN villages into alliance with the Viet Cong?

WM: not that I’m aware of

DV: see that’s a particular definition...uh...because I have heard from people who told me they were in teams that did this, that dressed up like Viet Cong, went into villages and then had other teams come in behind them to say “oh my God, look at these terrible atrocities that the Viet Cong’s done” and then use that as propoganda and they said that within the compartmentalization one team would not know what another team was doing.

Tape 2 side 1

Sound bite 1: 0:39-1:10

WM: these were gangsters and thugs who had...who were mercenaries, who were recruited and trained and were in our pay.

DV: and you had been with them for a while?

WM: yes

DV: so I mean you had...but there good at what they do and everything and you're all in black pajamas?

WM: um...I don't think they were good at what they did...um...I don't know what the measure of merit is, I mean they certainly didn't have much military discipline...um...and we never really knew what they were going to do...um...in the various circumstances.

Sound bite 2: 3:30-6:30

WM: it was the kind of thing when your mind playing game on you. You start thinking about all the training you had. You start to think about all the tactics used by the VC...um...its to the point were you begin to realize how futile it is to worry about these kinds of things. Futile from the stand point that there were so many things that can happen to you that, in order to think about them, plan for them, and be afraid of them, paralyzes you from being able to do anything. For example, if you're really worried about falling into some pit of pugi sticks th...that are poisoned with human excrement or something else then every step you talk, you know, becomes a step of fear and you can't deal with that. If you deal with it, you don't take a step. If your worried about tripping a trip wire th...that's imperceptible. A tiny little wire running across a path. Its going to blow up a mine or a grenade that's going to take your leg off. You can't do anything. You become paralyzed by it. The list goes on endlessly. In terms of the kinds of things that can happen to you and have happened to people you know so you what wind up doing is building—you do two things you build a barricade against that kind of thinking, as much as you can and you start to believe in some kind of fatalistic...um...algorithm wherein, if its going to happen to you, its going to happen to you and, if its not, its not and your probably not going to be able to influence it very well a...and the flip side of that almost doesn't make sense and that is you develop an awareness. Your sense become sharpened...um...you listen better. You look better and you do it almost at the unconscious level and you come to depend on it. I came to believe in the sliver bullet philosophy and that was I was indestructible...um...that after surviving so many missions or so many miles or so many trips into the unknown...uh...where the guy behind you is the guy who trips the wire you just walked past...

DV: did that happen to you?

WM: yes...that you really believe in...uh...your own indestructibility.

Sound bite 3: 14:45-15:05

DV: How much time did you spend in SOG in that first tour?

WM: probably nine months

DV: nine months, ok...in the course of that nine months how many operations do you think you might have gone out on.

WM: ten

Sound bite 4: 16:00-19:30

DV: is there an event from that first tour that stayed with you?

WM: the disemboweled province chief's wife...that will stay with me forever. The dead baby, you know, it will stay with me forever...um...and it formed, we need to go back to that because its important to me...um...it formed opinions...it helped form opinions and justifications for what I was doing. It was...it was the idea that you needed to hate the enemy. It was...it was similar to in World War II whipping the public up against the yellow enemy. It was a justification. It was like who the world could do this kind of thing and for what reason. That coupled with, when I was growing up and probably all the way through my...maybe I am still that way, I was always the kind of person who was for the underdog. Even to the point, as a kid, I remember a friend of mine...um...was being picked up and beaten up by a fellow, and I guess we were probably twelve or thirteen at this time, by a fellow who was about a eighteen or nineteen and, I don't remember what the cause of this whole thing was, but I wound up going to his rescue and myself got...got beat senseless. It was the same thing. It was the same of kind of feeling that I had in Vietnam. Where here were innocent kinds of civilians, who probably had nothing to do with...with any kind of political philosophy, who were being used and abused and tortured by a bully. The bully being the enemy and here I was in a position to avenge that...that kind of philosophy. Now no one of this was the result of any agency or US government or any kind of...uh...propaganda

DV: this is strictly you own conscious at work

WM: yeah my own conscious at work. It was the beginning really of my own personalization of my role in the conflict, which is...which gets to be important later on. It was really one of the drivers that resulted in me going back to Vietnam when everybody told me—everybody being my parents, my friends, my wife...um...who in their right mind would go back to Vietnam. This was a thing that all my military friends and colleagues were totally avoiding. People in the military were taking all kinds of strange assignments on the bet that they could avoid going to Vietnam if they did that and here I was going the other way.

Sound bite 5: 20:10-20:35

WM: I never saw an American tortured. I was aware of Americans doing some torturing and I think I might have mentioned to you that I wound up later on having a Marine working for me who I think was a psychopath. I never saw him or participated in what he did but I was aware of it.

Sound bite 6: 23:45-26:05

WM: you really believed, I really believed, that you were helping these people defend themselves from a bully a...and sometimes that worked well and sometimes it was horrible. Horrible from the standpoint if you really make them believe. If you really make some small little village on the periphery of...of the universe really believe that they could, in fact, stand tall and defend themselves against this thing we understood as the enemy and come back the next day and find them all slaughtered.

DV: which I assume happened?

WM: which happened, you had to ask your self: "what did you do here? what did *you* do here?" *You* made these people believe they could do something and know they are dead.

DV: this is the same incident as the disembowelment...this is a different one.

WM: maybe it would have been better if you had done nothing, if you had left these people alone. All they really wanted to do was live in peace, grow their rice, raise their children and they had no perception, you know, of...of...of the political, geostrategic and ever other kind of political science theory at work that they caught up and grinding away at, they were the cannon fodder.

DV: I'm glad you said because I was wondering if there was a conflict because you can make yourself believe that you're the good guy in the white hat depending against the bully but as we all learn, especially when we are young, our good intentions sometimes inadvertently bring harm to people and sometimes we should not be where we don't belong. How do you reconcile that conflict and that conflict obviously begins to grow for you in your first tour? How do you reconcile that tension, that conflict.

WM: I'm still reconciling it

DV: at the time, how do you reconcile it?

WM: with the white hat the bully...wa...was the best way I could do it, like I've said I still don't think I've worked it all the way through.

Sound bite 7: 30:12-32:00

WM: if you were to compare, for instance, my...my experience with violence, which was very intense and very personal with, for instance, with some of the stories I've read about US Army enlisted people who were out at some of the far support bases and the lines they would eat and the fear th...that encountered and the battles that took place inside and outside of their wire. I don't know how those people came back whole. I had no...I had no experience that was even...I had some experiences that were...that happened later and I'll tell you that but I had no experiences like theirs. No...um...

DV: you mean like major force combat

WM: that's right big units

DV: big engagements with fighting for days and...uh...with the just a the noise and the guns and...

WM: no sleep and wet and cold and people dying a...a...and artillery coming in and going out

DV: and not knowing who was what because you were in control in your little... your little small units. You were in control but how do people deal with it who aren't in control

WM: that's right

DV: is that something you wonder about?

WM: a lot...I didn't wonder about then, I didn't know about it then I started wondering about it later when I'd visit one of those places later on in Vietnam...um...and when I left and continued to read about what was going on there. I still just have an absolute amazement for how those people, you know, held themselves together. I'm not sure I could.

Sound bite 8: 35:40-37:06

DV: but there's an element of vengeance in going back the second time?

WM: um...I'm not sure if it was vengeance...uh...it was certainly the idea...of...of wanting more than ever to...um...protect people from bullies that same kind of concept was...was harder at work than ever. The other aspect was that it was very different and I had to with this event that was just a little bit too...and how you deal with fear. This event really resulted in me being afraid for my own personal safety, which was just a new experience for me and...um...I spent a lot of the intervening time, which really wasn't that much between tours thinking about it and wondering about...um...how I would really react again. So it was almost like I needed to test it again.

Sound bite 9: 38:58-45:27

WM: the reason I went back wasn't singular and it isn't simple. Its complex and involved...involved a lot of things. It involved both going to something and going away from something...um...it involved the continuing feeling I had about protecting or helping villagers protect themselves together with this other thing about testing myself again for a variety of other reasons...um...it also had to with...with the only mal assignment I had in the Air Force in my whole career and for a variety of reasons what that involved, when I left Vietnam, I was, for reason that probably aren't any interest to you, I was assigned as a launch control officer of a minuteman missile complex in South Dakota. A job that is about as far removed from what I just come from as you can get. Here was a situation where I found myself in was in control, with one other man, of ten minuteman II ballistic missiles, where the people, the senior officers who ran this base in South Dakota, really believed that what they were doing there was the real war. This was the strategic nuclear deterrent of the United States against the Soviet Union. I could hardly conceive of that as any kind of reality coming out of the jungles of Vietnam. All my colleagues there were astounded when my decorations caught up with me at this base t...to learn what it was I had just come from.

DV: were you able to relate to them and talk to them about it?

WM: not very much

DV: you were alienated at this point?

WM: the major military officers who, in theory, are the in the business of being warriors who...who are bureaucrats. They are desk people. They were people who sat hundreds of feet under ground in North Dakota and that was their battle zone. I...i...it was hard to adapt to that and I found that...

DV: ...and that's the going away from something?

WM: yeah...I found the kind of job that a relatively intelligent trained monkey could have done just as well as we did...um...we sat there and looked at blinking lights, where machines dictated to human being what it was you were going to do, as opposed to the machine serving the human being...um...bizarre...um...I found myself, after doing this for about six months, so demoralized and so depressed that I was about ready to resign. There wasn't any way to get transferred...um...just the nature of the system this was a forty year tour and the only way people like me left was either to resign or die and there weren't any other alternatives, except one which was about to occur and that is one day when I was home, the phone rang. This almost gets to be like a Beetle Bailey cartoon at this point you know how the general was always waiting for a telephone call from the Pentagon...um...what I got was a telephone call from the Pentagon, which nobody in...in South Dakota or anyone else in Air Force ever really gets. The person identified as some military officer, calling from the Pentagon, asking me if I had any interest in...uh...in a counterinsurgency program that was being developed, which would result in my being reassigned to Vietnam and that's about all he could say about it. He was looking for the binary answer, I either was or I wasn't.

DV: is that how he phrased it?

WM: no but that's the upshot of it and what he was looking for was if I was what he would do was cause a message to be sent to my base from some place in the Pentagon and I have to say, when you on some base in South Dakota, the Pentagon is about as far removed from your consciousness as a real place where things happen. I never been there. I didn't know anything about it. I mean thins was heavy stuff...um...he would cause a message to be spent to my base that would cause me to be placed on detached duty for about two weeks, where I'd go TDY to Washington for some orientation and training and testing and variety of other things at which point, if they liked me and I liked them, I would be

enrolled in this program and eventually go back to Vietnam and was I interested in that. My response to that was “yes!”

DV: put on the spot without even thinking about it

WM: I mean I thought about, like I said I was getting ready to resign...um...I was days away from resigning...uh...I said “yes but I don’t think you can make that happen.” I said “from what I understand of the missile business they have a lock on the people and their not about to let go and this guy chuckled and said “let us worry about that.”

Tape 2 Side 2

Sound bite 1: 6:20-7:05

WM: what they were looking for was did we meet the basic requirements. Again this back to what I said earlier about how they ran out of their own people and the program was expanding and they needed...needed bodies. We were bodies. They had levied a requirement to the military system to produce a certain number of people, with the following kinds of qualifications and background, and that had to do with people who had been in Vietnam previously. Everybody that was in this group had been there previously. They all had...um...some expertise in small arms and small unit characteristics a...and paramilitary operations and were willing to go back to Vietnam. That was the initial cut.

Sound bite 2: 8:50-9:30

WM: he eventually quit this program because he felt that the means and the methods that he thought were going to be used were similar to the means and methods used by the Nazis in World War II.

DV: well, he’s not the first one to feel that way

WM: he was...he was French born who lived through World War II as a very young child in France and...uh...

DV: and their resistance movement was targeted by the Nazis in quite the same way, I understand.

Sound bite 3: 18:15-19:45

WM: They went off to their regional officers who, then, could assign them at will to whatever they wanted them to do. I mean we weren’t identified as here is the in place and here is the in thing you were going to be doing . We were a body pool....a body pool of military officers assigned to the CIA for them to do with what they choose to.

DV: what was the stated mission?

WM: for us?

DV: yeah for you, did you go over there thinking I have a mission to perform?

WM: I...I had a very clear idea, at least I thought I did, of what it was I thought I was going to be doing when I was going through the training. They had recruited me...uh...on the basis of being a leader in the one of the...uh...of this...of this high level presidential quote un quote...uh...counterinsurgency program. I saw myself as...as somebody who was going to keep the war free for democracy. I was going to play a leading role there. I was...I was the guy who...who was gonna discover the location of COSVN...um...you tend to do that to yourself, only to find when you get there that the reality of it was very different.

Sound bite 4: 21:30-24:00

WM: I got to Quang Tre almost by default...uh...it was a way for...uh...Horton t...to get rid of me. He didn't want to have anything to do with the people in this program and Quang Tre was the end of the line really, literally and figuratively...livin' eight clicks from the DMZ and whatever. I go up to Quang Tre and...uh...I was delighted to find, when I got there, somebody actually met me and...uh...this was the guy who was living. He had just fin...he was finishing his tour and he had three days left in Quang Tre and, those three days, he was going to orient me t...to what it was that was going on there and he did. He did a fantastic job of this...uh...the first thing we did after spending virtually the whole day and night talking was...was we...uh...next day we loaded up two jeeps and what he was going to do was we were going to drive around, he and I and a jeep load of Nung body guards to all the districts in Quang Tre...uh...and meet the people in the...uh...the police special branch and in the CIO and everybody else that he dealt with that were part of...uh...his bilateral operations and I remember feeling as we crossed the Quang Tre river bridge heading up highway one toward Doang Hok thinking that I'm back and now I am really back and...uh...what was all of this going to be like.

Sound bite 5: 24:10-27:00

WM: I guess we couldn't've been driving for more than a half an hour when a bus—I don't know if your familiar with one of those Asian buses, pigs and chickens and people hanging on the roof

DV: not real familiar...

WM: its kinda like one of those open buses, you've seen in movies, you know...got...tended to hold twenty people and they got fifty in there and they're all with their lunch and animals and whatever else. This bus which is about fifty yards ahead of us, blows up. Highway on, obviously is just a little two way road, runs along the coastal plain and what it was, was a land mine and that I came to understand that was constructed of a US five hundred pound bomb that had landed some place and not exploded and had been made into a...uh...instrument of destruction by the Viet Cong and remotely detonated and probably meant for us...a faulty detonation, vibrations, whatever else and here we're a lot of innocent civilians on this bus, either dead or wounded and it was like déjà vu again because here I am again...um...and what I am doing here? What is the whole thing all about? And...uh...I guess I went through a period of dep...depression early on thinking that there is no way to win this that this war is going to go on forever...um...that all of these programs and activities are just a waste of...human and economic resources.

DV: is that still your opinion?

WM: very much...there's really...there's really no way to fight this kind of war, you know, and I had, by this time, read a lot about counterinsurgency warfare. You know, I read all the Lansdale materials

DV: Trinkee? (not sure)

WM: yeah...read Sir Robert Thompson...uh...I've read Guevara...um...lotta doubts...

Sound bite 6: 27:55-3:18

WM: one of the things that happened was that the people you inherited, by that I mean the counterparts in Special Branch or the CIO really had a lot to do with the kind of tour you were going to have. They were either good an competent people...um...or they were incompetent, bureaucratic, corrupt officials, functionaries or some graduation in between and I was really fortunate to...uh...to wind up working with a man named Win Van Khoi, K-H-O-I...uh...who was head of the Police Special Branch. He and I developed a closeness and fondness for each other over a period of time I was there, where I think I might

have mentioned to you previously, I was really there to advise and assist him, only to find that out that he...he had just years

DV: he had been in the Sûreté and...[laughing]

WM: he'd fought the Viet Minh

DV: yeah

WM: he was a pro, he was as honest as the day was long a...and a true Vietnam nationalist. He'd been fighting the war his whole life! Just could conceive of somebody who fought the war, his whole life, incredible man.

DV: and his fate?

WM: his fate was...um...uh...he survived my tour there and, often times at great risk to himself...um...I believe he was killed in Quang Tre during the...uh...'73 Easter Offensive.

Sound bite 7: 30:20-30:34

DV: did you ever meet Evan Parker

WM: oh yeah

DV: did he...did you all...did your group of people meet him together in one place in Saigon?

WM: No, I met him I Saigon...um...where occasionally I was called to Saigon to brief the embassy council on various program reviews and whatever bureaucratic things those people in Saigon were doing. I don't have very much recollection of Parker.

Sound bite 8: 30:50-31:12

WM: My whole recollection of Saigon wa...was pretty negative in terms of...um...the paper mills they were generating and the kind of...uh...um...ridiculous kind of requirements they laid of province people in feeding them this paper work.

DV: the reports that you had to write up?

WM: yeah

Sound bite 9: 31:22-32:53

WM: at his point my feeling was, and this might sound strange, but at felt, by this time very at home in Quang Tre...uh...which was really nothing more than a pretty sleepy province capital...um...consisting of two cross streets a...and a population of some fifteen to twenty thousand people...uh...when a went to Saigon...uh...you know, with its teeming millions, I felt in more danger in Saigon than I did up country in my little compound in Qunag Tre.

DV: where you could control...er...felt you had control...

WM: of course when I went o Saigon I used to go and stay at the Duck Hotel and I felt like...if...uh...if the Viet Cong targeted the hotel or targeted the city it would be a piece of cake. I was in the business of doing, of planning these kinds of things and I knew that if I had to do it, you know, would be a simple thing to do and I used to say to myself, my god, if this happens what the hell do I do here in Saigon they

have the no plan, people were carrying around rusty old pistols, you know, because it was fashionable. They had shoulder hostlers and most likely they had rusty bullets in these things...um...it was a bureaucrats war in Saigon.

Sound bite 10: 33:10-33:36

WM: Certainly there were lots of...lots of...of terrorist type of attacks on the by the Viet Cong in Saigon. Where cowboys would go by or whoever and throw hand grenades into restaurants and whatever. I felt...I just felt...um...helpless and exposed when I was in Saigon and it was an uncomfortable feeling.

Sound bite 11: 34:44-37:40

WM: one of was is that this was a far that my first tour. Far different for the stand point that, again things are relative...far different because I wasn't out on operations in the jungle in the same way that I was in my first tour...um...wh...while life in a province capital is certainly not a piece of cake...um...I wasn't sleeping the jungle for two weeks...two week periods of time...a...and so forth...uh...I had a compound that relatively comfortable, as things go...um...I had a personal guard force, which was consisting of Nung mercenaries, whose job it was to keep me alive...uh...I had virtually unlimited resources to...uh...develop agent operations, to pay for a staff that...uh...translated and produced intelligence reports that I disseminated to anybody in the province, US military or otherwise that I thought could take action on those intelligence report and I owned and operated a PRU force that was my own personal army.

DV: how much money passed threw your hands in the course of a month?

WM: its hard to recall...um...I can remember thinking at the time, I don't remember what the official exchange rate was, maybe 110 to one or something like that...uh...that this...that I controlled more money as...a...a single individual that was sprinkling around the province, one way or another, more money that what the province budget was and that...thinking that...having conversations—oh now I recall—I had conversations with a fellow who later came to be the deputy in Da Nang. Having conversations with him about the fact that we thought that we were providing some measure of economic stability and we really weren't interested in the quality of the intelligence we...we were supposed to be buying...that by sprinkling this money as we did, you know, to these low level informant men that we were creating economic stability, as opposed to being engaged in intelligence operations

Sound bite 12: 41:00-43:45

WM: you know, I had begun to understand a little bit about...um...why it was the United States was thought to be in Vietnam

DV: please tell me why?

WM: I don't know why. I mean all I can do is...is...uh...think of...um...of what was being put out as the litany, which didn't make any sense to me at all and at some point, relatively early on I dismissed it from...from my own...uh...own scheme of things. It made no sense to me at all. The war began to make no sense to me at all, per se. So all I had left to justify why I was there and wh...what I was doing was the same thing that I had down before, which was to personalize it on the basis of...of...of while I was in the midst of...of all this turmoil, and nightmare and pain and agony and thing that made absolutely no sense to me. The only thing I could do was apply my own value system to it and my own value system was such that I was going to keep pregnant women in the villages from being disembowled...a...and their husbands tortured and it got to be a very personal kind of a war for me. By that time I had come to believe that...that the war, as we had come to know it at that time, was not winnable...um...I knew enough to know that...um...the war was artificially being constrained in terms of what we did in North Vietnam and

I really believe that there was any way to win it nor did it make any sense to try and win it...uh...I had gone through all the arguments in my mind about civil wars...uh...

DV: didn't apply though

WM: didn't apply a...and thought that this was going to go on forever. A lot of that stemmed from conversations I had with my counterpart who, in fact, had been living a war going on forever.

Sound bite 13: 43:54-44:30

WM: I remember reading...um...comments that were written by Lansdale that had to do with how each American was fighting the war once and it didn't make sense to send them for a year and off they go and they didn't know anything when they came and they probably didn't know a whole lot more when they left and here comes a whole new batch of people and there was no continuity, no understanding of the culture...um...no understanding of the history...um...and so forth.

Sound bite 14: 45:00-47:00

WM: the way I got to the region was...um...after being in the provinces and Quang Tre was something of a different province—I guess all provinces were different in a lot of ways—from the standpoint that it was...a...a province that with a lot of conventional military activity going on as opposed to kind of Viet Cong...uh...um...insurgency types of activity. Clearly, both kinds of things were going on but it was a heavily military oriented province and...um...so there was a lot of action. It was different kinds of action...um...but there was a lot of action there. When the Tet Offensive occurred...um...the little province capital in Quang Tre was under siege for nearly five days and everybody had been reported killed...um...

DV: did you stay there through the siege?

WM: yes

DV: cause I've heard a lot of people got on planes and took off

WM: the province chief did...uh...I mean we had...we had pretty good intelligence...um...up to twenty-four hours before the actual attack that an attack was coming...um...not directly but by...um...putting things together and intuition and deduction, we knew...we knew Quang Tre was going to be attacked. We didn't know obviously that this was going to happen in 43 other provinces as well...um...but we knew. There was plenty of information...um...that this was going to happen...um...and we prepared for as best we could

Tape 3 Side 1

Sound bite 1: 1:50-2:30

WM: I'm not sure where you bound Phoenix, to tell you the truth. I am not sure where it begins or ends but Phoenix certainly falls right in the middle of the whole program...uh...I mean at this point there had been an ICEX program, there had been a Phoenix Program and this was about the point where the Agency people were turning the reins over to the Army as advisors to the Vietnamese and to go through...um...whatever the Orwellian mindset is to make believe this is a Vietnamese program.

Sound bite 2: 3:55-6:10

DV: did you have a PRU region advisor who assigned you a...the PRU.

WM: well, the PRU belonged to the RDC/O side of the organization until this consolidation were as the province officer in charge I now had both programs this is were we could actually or I could actually direct and control the PRUs myself. Previous to this, if I had need for the PRUs because of some intelligence I had developed for one reason or another what I did was go and see the RDC/O people, which was a relatively large program, it involved five to six Americans, whereas, the RDC/P program involved me. I lived by myself away from them and so forth. I'm not sure if it was that way in very province but...um...that's the way it was in Quang Tre...um...so I went to them and, you know, we would sit down and discuss what I had and how to react to it . When I became province officer in charge, I was in charge of the whole thing...um...and there was a PRU advisor in...um...in Da Nang and he was an Agency guy.

DV: and he would go down to the different provinces in I Corp and make sure the PRU program was going along?

WM: yeah, h...h...he was a relatively strange guy, himself...um...one of these kinds of guys who is, I think, probably has ruined his own life, running up on beaches with bayonets in his teeth and tossing hand grenades and whatever else kind of idealized stylized...

DV: Rambo cliché now

WM: exactly that kind of guy

Sound bite 3: 7:00-8:22

WM: there was the Tet Offensive...was...was a pretty...a pretty draining experience. We managed to survive the first night of...uh...of attacks against our compound and against the city and it really wasn't until the second night that I began to believe that we wouldn't survive it at all...uh...the first night, the first twenty four hours really, were pretty much run on...on adrenaline and...uh...when the fighting...uh...really tailed off, this was really my first experience with...with pitched battle type fighting.

DV: well that's what I was thinking.

WM: I realized how venerable we were, that we really had very little chance of surviving some mass assault.

DV: no...no chance of reinforcements coming up...being sent up from Da Nang because everybody else is under siege.

WM: maybe for the town, which did happen, but this is when I began to burn files...um...and I was really making preparations for my death. I really believed there was no way to survive it.

Sound bite 4: 8:55-10:00

WM: I knew that, if I left the province which I had the opportunity to do, it wasn't like I was stuck there but the Vietnamese were. They weren't...they had no place to go...uh...I knew that, if I left, I could never come back, not come back and be effective.

DV: I understand, yeah, so you stayed

WM: so I stayed

DV: for five days

WM: for five days and...um...we survived...the...um...next night, which was probably worse than the first night

DV: because you compound came under attack, and your running window from window?

WM: We weren't in the building, we were in the compound

DV: ...in bunkers, you know, are you running from bunker to bunker and playing tag in the night

WM: yep, it was a pretty difficult time but we survived it and I believe mostly because we weren't the primary target. We weren't important enough to be a primary target.

Sound bite 5: 12:34-14:50

WM: after the Tet Offensive was over the month of February or so '68 wa...was one of cleaning up and moping, you know, and trying to resurrect whatever kind of agent networks you had and finding out who survived...just real chaos in the province and...uh...

Sound bite 6: 22:30-

DV: Did you find any difference them having...uh...lists of collaborators, a sort of infrastructure list—the Viet Cong lining up and shooting 'em—an Phoenix having lists of collaborators and, not lining them up against walls and shooting them

WM: I don't have any problem

DV: do you see a difference in the morality there?

WM: yeah I guess I do

DV: the difference being?

WM: um...I'd rather skip it...I just see a lot of qualitative difference there

Sound bite 7: 23:10-31:30

DV: do you have any problem with the quotas...uh...and the idea of having to meet fifty...meet a quota of fifty, and meeting it and not going beyond it and not going under it, you know?

WM: I think it was something I just ignored. You got lots of that kind of you stuff. You got lots of requirements laid on you for collection against various subjects...um...and for the most part it was coming to from those people in Saigon who were going home at night and sitting on the veranda of the continental hotel and you didn't take that stuff seriously...um...they were...th...they couldn't related to what you were doing just like you couldn't related to what they were doing. It was a different war, a different part of the world.

Sound bite 8: 25:10-26:222

WM:...and...uh...had me reassigned from Da Nang—I mean from Quang Tre—to go work on his staff and...um...in Da Nang and it was a welcome respite

DV: so you ended up in Da Nang in maybe April of '68

WM: yeah, I remember...I remember going home, going back to the United States, where...we had one of these kinda of programs were you could go back to take leave, back to the United States...um...a

couple times in the tour. I remember coming back and listening to...um...to Lyndon Johnson in the March of '68 tell everybody, for a variety of reason he wasn't going to seek reelection and, you know, that kinda enforced in my mind the futility of the whole...the whole...uh...endeavor.

DV: if he was going to give?

WM: it really made a big impact on me

DV: it certainly was a sign

WM: you know, he was a casualty of the Tet Offensive, among other things, you know...uh...at that point all I wanted to do was finish up my tour, you know, and get on with my life

Sound bite 9: 26:25-26:55

DV: and you spent the rest of the time at region?

WM: I spent the rest of the time at region and it was a relatively uneventful kind of almost a bureaucratic life where...uh...I had some responsibilities to visit some of the provinces and see what they were doing and give them advice and guidance and it was a relatively comfortable life.

DV: and by that point you were ready for it

WM: yeah I was ready for it

Sound bite 10: 27:10-28:00

DV: do you still think of yourself as wearing the white hat?

WM: um...no, I think I'm far too cynical for that

DV: as a result of Vietnam you're cynical

WM: among other things and things that have happened since that have lead me to...to believe, you know, that I don't want to be an instrument of policy, anymore. I mean, I think the people who devise the policies and cause idealistic young men to go off to war...um...probably need to experience some of kinds of things I've experienced to temper their judgments because I'd think they'd probably do things differently...um...if they had to participate in the things they wrought.

Sound bite 11: 28:35-30:00

DV: do you consider yourself an anti-communist?

WM: sure

DV: Do you think that the battle against communist is worth the pain and misery of a Vietnam?

WM: no, no and the reason I would say that is that it's certainly possible that life under a communist regime in a country anywhere or country X could be preferable to life in that same country under right wing dictator whoever...um...the...um...its too easy to...to be superficially attracted to the...um...the dogma of socialism...uh...until you actually get to see...see how it really works...um...

DV: the dehumanization?

WM: right

DV: do you think anti-communist is enough of a rationale to base a foreign policy on? The idea of rolling back—there seems to be two policies, you either roll back communism or you stand off communism, you know, there the one which is the hawkish one, rolling it back

WM: this is a conversation for a whole different kind of situation...uh....

DV: All right I was just looking for....

WM: but...but I think that the only thing I could see in like a summary would be that...that...um...y...you would need to better articulate your own national interest rather than vaguely being against something like communism. Anti-communism is not the basis of a rational foreign policy in my mind.

Muldoon

Track 1 Sound bite 1

DV: Now the Provincial Interrogation Coordinating Centers didn't get off the ground but the PICs did

JM: No...the PICs did...Fin...Finally I think the decision was: they hadn't been able to convince anybody to go with the P-I-C-Cs but we would build the PICs anyway and then once they became successful people say, "hey man, this is a great spot. We'll send all our prisoners there." And then they would start moving and then would step the P-I-C-Cs eventually around—build them around the PICs instead of having just having PICs be part of them when they first started, and that never happened.

Sound bite 2

JM: I don't know who made the decision. I think it was the a question of we couldn't get the US agencies all to agree or something. So lets get the Vietnamese it would have to be a combined...maybe it was...what-the-hell...maybe it was...Provincial Intelligence Combined...nah, nah it was coordinating centers or something. But you needed the...needed the Vietnamese army, the Vietnamese policy, the civilian authorities

DV: and they couldn't agree on anything

JM: you need the US army, the State Department, and...uh...the AID and CIA and everybody else. We couldn't get our own side much less the Vietnamese to agree.

Sound bite 3

DV: its important because in '64 there wasn't a war yet, still

JM: well there was a war, a bitter war. They weren't kill many Americans

DV: But there weren't American—the American Forces hadn't arrived yet?

JM: No they came in '65...June of '65...first real...I mean there were lots of murders there, hell there were thousands of them.

DV: yeah 13,000 for 1964

JM: but they were you know, MACV advisors, special forces...there was helicopter...uh...support guys, over-air...uh...they called 'em BACs over-air controllers for artillery stuff like that. They included little airplanes. I spotted some guys—snort--[???? Unintelligible]. But as far as battalions, regiments—

Nothing. That came in 65

Sound bite 4

DV: Then a little bit—alright I'll bring, a little bit about your background in Korea before you came over...um...can you talk about what you were doing there and uh....

JM: I worked interrogation...meh...uh

DV: In Seoul?

JM: In Seoul I got there in my first...I had never been involved in interrogation until I got there

Sound bite 5

JM: People ask me if the military there are people any tougher than the...uh... Specials and I'd say "yeah, the SEALs."

DV: yeah...SEALs...yeah

Sound bite 6

DV: so you get there in November of 64, right and you go Siagon

JM: I got to the NIC

DV: to the NIC, ok

Sound bite 7

DV: Ok lets talk about you in November 64...[ahem]...basically what kind of orientation you get, what kind of situation do you find there, in November 64?

JM: before I left?

DV: No, when you first get to the NIC

JM: when I got there?

DV: yeah what's the situation like?

JM: I was brought down to the interrogation center and told this is where you going to work. You're going to advise x number of interrogators, Vietnamese interrogators, you work with them. They will bring in their initial debriefing of the guy they are working with. You will give them requirements—they have their own requirements. You'll give them additional requirements.

DV: The requirements is what...the guys...kind of information they want to get from them. Is that what, the requirements are?

JM: we had standard requirements that we wanted depending on where he was from in the North—if he was from the North—or where he was from or what units he was with, how they were organized, where they were trained all that good stuff. And...uh...the Vietnamese interrogators knew basically what they were supposed to be getting but sometimes their real interests wouldn't necessarily match ours all the way down the line. They'd be one thing, another things that we would be interested in that they didn't really care about that we wanted to get. So that's where the American advisors would come in. To tell them, you gotta get this

Sound bite 8

JM: It seemed to me that the Vietnamese are more interested in...uh...uh...being able to take this guy somewhere and convict him somewhere as opposed to...uh...well, they wanted order of battle type information, and all. They also—they wanted to get the quote infrastructure unquote of the organization—of the units they were with. But we...I don't know, we basically wanted the same thing they did but we wanted other things too that they weren't too interested in collecting, sometimes in the way of intelligence that uh...that uh

DV: Maybe what kind of information they were using or just more specific detail

JM: anything about foreign weapons that they had or any training they got or any notice of any foreigners that were in the camps that they saw

DV: yeah, like where Russians advising them or something like that

JM: yeah sure that kind of stuff. And usually we found out no

Sound bite 9

JM: I remember...uh...one particular guy I'm not sure if it was even the one I was advising but one of the prisoners they had was talking about being trained in the use of 105 millimeter howitzers. I said "Jesus! That amazing, what-the-hell. they got howitzers they are sending down with these guys." So I go back to ask him "did you ever see any 105 howitzers any place you where in Vietnam?" he said "no" I said "well why did they train you?" He said, "well they figured that when the US army came in, in force, they would be bringing them all, we'd capture, we better know how to use them when we capture them." And I thought that's pretty sharp.

Sound bite 10

JM: of course we were interested in a lot of information about many things in the North too, that the South Vietnamese Army could care less about. They just wanted to know what was going on against them in the South; whereas, we had a guy that had been North for any length of time or came from there that we wanted to get anything we could get about the North. We wanted, well, all sorts of information. Had he traveled a train from one place to another? What kind of dedication papers do you need.

Sound bite 11

JM: they wanted information they could turn around and use in their...their battle against the Viet Cong. Even though it was supposed to be the Central Intelligence Organization running all of this. They were there collecting intelligence. They still were mostly all military anyway. It was basically military mind. They wanted to tactical strategic...uh...military intelligence.

Sound bite 12

DV: The NIC—the National Interrogation Center that’s the one the river map, right

JM: yep, right down river

Sound bite 13

JM: It was part of a great big Naval compound down there and...uh...just one part of the whole overall compound...and you had a wing of offices...uh...which the...uh...the American chief was always a military guy even though it was run by a CIA guy. There was a guy that worked down there ,that had an office there that stayed there ever day that was a military guy.

Sound bite 14

JM: And the interrogators came everyday—I didn’t really know that much. I was not in there that long before they pulled me out and put me in to the PIC program. So even though I was assigned there I didn’t spend many months. Once I got assigned to the PIC program I hardly ever went to the NIC.

Sound bite 15

DV: About how many American advisors altogether?

JM: I’d say interrogation advisors when I got there, there were, three, four I was the fifth one. We actually worked with the interrogators. There was three more enlisted types. I think all of them were Air Force and one Army officer and myself and of course there was an Army or an Air Force commander, which was...uh...and then there were three of them when I was there...Deputy Chief of the American Group and then my bounce who was CIA. And that was it as far as Americans went.

Sound bite 16

DV: When you get shifted over to the PIC program

JM: Oh I got into the PIC program I guess we went up...there was a conference up in...uh...they had asked me to help up in Matran with this first PIC they were getting going. And they had asked help from the NIC, send some people up there. So I went up along with a couple of these guys, these enlisted guys and this Captain. We went up first, looked at the place, and found out what kind of staff it was going to have, figured out how were going to train ‘em. And while we were up there and trying to break these guys in and all. The man who was in Matran called in on single side radio and asked Tucker if you keep me there until this conference they were having will all of our people, all across the country and meet the new chief, taking Paul Hodges place...uh...then he said I just want to keep Muldoon there until this thing because he wanted be able to show of his interrogation center to the people.

DV: So military guys go back and you stay there?

JM: yeah basically they had done there job and I stayed around, he wanted me to stick around with him and clean up any loose ends and make sure everything was really going to be...It was a few more days before the conference and these military guys wouldn’t have been involved in that anyway. So while...so it was then...when they came up Tucker and Red and everybody else at this conference that and my immediate boss the NIC Chief, Sammy...uh they sort of doubled teamed him, Red and Tucker. Tucker first told me “Look John I want you to come work with me and we going...this program is going to build

and build and build an I need someone to oversee the whole operation. I want you do it. I have already talked to Red, Red says its fine, he'll go along with it and were going to talk to Sammy." I said "that's fine with but Sammy's my boss

DV: and Tucker took you away from him

JM: yeah he stole me from Sammy

Sound bite 17

JM: And of course I had to get these other guys eventually each time we open up a PIC. Set up training schedule and they were all Sammy's guys and they had—he had to agree to let them go. And everything worked out fine. Sammy was very cooperative about it.

Sound bite 18

JM: we had this big conference everybody was there and they all got of the interrogation center. It was filled with prisoners. They picked up from...they had prostitutes and your neighbors. I don't think they had one Viet Cong in the place, but this guy wanted to show off the thing with a bunch of prisoners it so he got his police buddies to get a lot of convicts and throw them into the sells and then after the conference was over they went back to the regular jail.

Sound bite 19

DV: When is this conference to the best of your memory?

JM: it was in...it was after the evacuation of the [not sure????] so it was after February. I would say sometime around...let me see...April it was after the bombing I believe. So the bombing was what, the 30th of April—whatever, it was the 30th of March that it. The bombing of the Embassy was after the St Patrick's Day.

DV: so either in end of March or early April

JM: some time either in April or May was when we had this thing, and that's when things really started really started getting off the ground with the PICs.

Sound bite 20

DV: so when do you start going—you know, they make that conference, they decide you going to go that's around...uh...

JM: sometime April/May

DV: Yeah April/May of 75 you go down and down that one in

JM: Fuklay. I go down to Fuklay and check out that place, and set up a train schedule for these two GIs. The captain was still involved with a lot...

DV: did you go around and pick out the provinces to start them in based on where the action was the heaviest, where the population was the thickest?

JM: well,

DV: was there some sort of plan behind it?

JM: they did have a plan as to where they were going to go. Each province—each region, they had a regional directorate. It was up to the regional director to decide which province had PICs built in it first.

DV: Now the region is a police guy not a paramilitary guy.

Track two

Sound bite one

JM: I forget who it was who actually came up with the first plan for this...uh...thing and...ah.... uh.... a bunch a people worked on it, you know, come up with ideas, sat down, you know, drew up a couple sketches and said, well we gotta bring these prisoners in, then first thing you want to do is...uh...delouse the clowns, you know. So we want to have a medical facility right near the front of the building. So they first thing we'll do is come in there and, you know, and run them through the shower and all that good stuff. And right after that, we gonna sit them down and then they gotta be checked out by docter and a nurse.

DV: cause I bet a lot of comin' shot up or something,

JM: uh...not so much but god knows what diseases they may be carrying with them or...uh...suffering from something or they needed certain medication and they we wouldn't do us much good if they died they first day their and you never get a chance to interrogate them. We figured one of the first things we needed to do was have them checked out by a medical staff and cleaned up. So that's why the medical officer is right inside the main gate.

DV: Vietnamese medical doctor?

Sound bite two

JM: and what they would do is when they had a prisoner coming in is get a local doctor or something, a army doctor would come out for that particular day or whatever and he would check the prisoners and...uh....so that was a necessity. We wanted it close to the where the cell block was so we could, you know, run them right through.

DV: are you going to draw me a diagram today? Is that why...is that what you doing.

JM: well, if I can remember...I got the...I'm gonna say...alright...here we go...the in front, the medical staff was, like I said, the first thing inside the main gate. Over was usually....there's officers in here. They also had a weapons room, I think....um...cells were down here.

Sound bite 3

DV: so there is corridor going down the middle of the cells

JM: Mmmhmmmm, going down the middle of the cells

DV: you got doors in it periodically or anything like that, like...um...a police station like jail or something.

JM: sure there's cells, individual cells and they got doors and with a panel at the bottom that you can slip the food in and a blind at the top where you can look in and see what the guy is doing and then close it again.

Sound bite 4

JM: Then...uh...interrogation rooms...i guess down here too...interrogation rooms

Sound bite 5

JM: guards lived there oh absolutely, yes. The ones who weren't on duty were sleeping. We had quarters for them down here too.

DV: how many...uh...how many...uh...Vietnamese does it take to run the place.

JM: oh god, the guard force, I guess, consisted of about twelve or fourteen guys.

Sound bite 6

JM: I don't remember who the hell they were. They were Vietnamese I know that. Some of them were carrying around—they had given them those damn M-1 rifles and they weighed more than the Vietnamese guards did they couldn't really pick them up. And...uh...some of them really had a good store of weapons. They had couple BARs and stuff. A BAR took two Vietnamese to pick one up and carry it

Sound bite 7

JM: everyone was different. We build them in the mountains, we build them in the delta and you built them on the coast and...uh...wherever and you have to...go out and check out a spot and say we can't build here so you got out and find another spot.

DV: it is usually near the provincial capital? Is like...uh

JM: always...because that's where our guys are stationed, in the province

Sound bite 8

JM: in addition to training the staff when it finally gets built I mean once I...I get into it all. From going out with each one of them, helping to locate the spot, giving them ideas about where they might get the property...uh...telling them because once I've worked a couple provinces with these guys I'd be able to go tell another guy who is just now just getting off the ground. What do I do first. I say ok here's what worked in such-a-such province here's what worked in

DV: your talking about the province officer?

JM: yeah our guy, our guy. Cause they've never had any training in this either. All of sudden the guy says build a PIC and staff it, and he says what do I do first.

Sound bite 9

JM: so that was part of my job, to travel around to each place and one place I go in to find the construction half way done, another place I go in and they were just trying to find a piece of land, another place

DV: so they're all going up...

JM: they're all different stages

Sound bite 10

JM: According to our priorities...uh...once we said these six are going to build and we had deadlines. Deadlines for buying the land, deadlines for find a contractor, deadlines for starting the construction, deadlines for...uh...you know, getting your staff and...uh...deadline for when we were going to start training them and so down the line. And it got to be—I don't remember how many there were, thirty-some

DV: forty-four

JM: and...uh...we were going build one in every one so

Sound bite 11

DV: how much did it cost to build a PIC

JM: I'd say—god let me see—I think it was about 30,000 bucks. Obviously with their plan it was going to cost 30,000 dollars. I don't know maybe it was 60,000 but it was a lot more than ours. Then we had what we called nit-PICs. We didn't really call them that they were called Demi-PICs or Semi-PICS or something like that. But I called them nit-PICs. They were smaller versions of the bigger, the ordinary PIC.

Sound bite 12

DV: so the big one hold sixty and the smaller ones hold half of that

JM: Oh I can't remember how many they held. I don't think they held sixty I don't think any of them. Maybe thirty would be a better figure...maybe 30 or 40

DV: thirty cells or thirty prisoners?

JM: oh we only put one prisoner to the cell at least we were supposed to

Sound bite 14

JM: they didn't get time to walk around in the yard like I prison here. They sat in their cell and when it was time to be interrogated they were in their cell and once they were finished with their interrogation

they were sent to the local jail or whatever and...uh...then they kept them in a...uh...as a matter fact they were treated better in the PICs than in some of the local jails.

DV: did you have anything to do with the local jails?

JM: no but I have went into a couple of them.

DV: Did...uh...anybody

JM: just to look at them see how bad they were.

DV: was anybody advising the regular jails?

JM: I don't think so if anybody it would have been the Special Branch people

DV: what about Public Safety people

JM: oh yeah...sure they worked they but they were CIA guys. Public Safety under the AID

DV: they advised the regular jail

JM: yeah that's what their job was they worked with local police, advise them in traffic control, whatever they needed. That was their job.

Sound bite 15

JM: They were big times, I mean they would have sixty—seventy people in there. You should have more than ten but that's what they had and they didn't care. You're a criminal you suffer. Don't like it too bad. Don't be a criminal.

Sound bite 16

JM: When I said they went to jail, they didn't go to the local lockup. When they left our place they were turned back over to the military where they were put into to a military POW camp or whatever you call them or taken out and shot for all I know. I don't know what they did to them.

Sound bite 17

DV: what were their jails like?

JM: never saw any. Their jails might have been six feet under for all I know. The question I have never heard is what happened to all the prisoners...the impounded prisoners that were their when the North Vietnamese finally won the war. Were their any prisoners to release or where they all dead?

Sound bite 18

JM: my only concern was...

DV: you didn't have any concern afterwards

JM: finding a place to build one, building it, staffing it, getting some prisoners into it, getting some intelligence out of it, and then just keep on going. What happened to the prisoners right after they left there is no concern of mine I was worried about building another PIC some place.

Sound bite 19

DV: so you traveling all over the place, you travel by Air America?

JM: Scarab Air took me everywhere.

DV: did you ever get to know the pilots?

JM: a lot of them...for the most part a good group of guys.

Sound bite 20

JM: When I am talking to you I am not talking about CT side, two different shops.

DV: because you don't have anything to do with them.

JM: Oh I have a lot to do with them but nothing to do with PICs. Except that where they could help us. Like the one case where we had the CT team go out and capture the...people that had been pinpointed by one of our interrogator and then gave the information to the CT teams who went out to get more people.

Sound bite 21

JM: these guys are small groups, you know, CT teams. They were heavily armed but they were smaller groups. Attack team I think were, I think, thirty—forty guys. CT Teams were, I think, ten and they were out there operating on their own in VC patrolled areas. Armed to the teeth but small groups.

Sound bite 22

JM: what kind of guy are you going to get to do this? You're not going to get your average Joe off the street. Oh yeah give me a sub machine guy I want to live in the jungle out with 6,000 Viet Cong. Me and my nine buddies I would love to do that. They had criminals and everything else. They just wanted to get the hell out of jail. All sorts of strange people that...uh...they go out there, there are no controls. If they decide to kill someone and not bring them back, you're not with them. You have no controls, no knowledge for sure of what they are doing back there.

Sound bite 23

JM: the advisors to the CT teams were our guys

DV: civilians?

JM: civilians but they didn't go on patrol with these guys. Attack teams, same thing. You had two guys: one worked liaison and one worked with the...uh...with the...uh...irregular warfare guys and...uh...they worked very close to each other, in some provinces, and in other provinces they didn't even talk to each other.

Sound bite 24

DV: you never told me how many Special Branch guys there might be at a PIC. You told me how many gourds but you never told me...

JM: oh...they'd be about six or seven interrogators...uh...the chief and the deputy and...uh...maybe that was it. I don't know a couple others.

DV: then guards but guards don't do the record keeping, right?

JM: no, they had analysts, I guess they would call them analysts, civilians mostly, who worked for the place and girls, they had secretaries for that kind of work. But the guys who did the interrogation and the chief of course were the main cadre of the place and the rest were guards or clerical help, analysts, kitchen staff, medical crew.

Sound bite 25

JM: most of them were either built or under construction by the time I left.

Sound bite 26

JM: career trainees... JOTs, junior officer trainees, they called them. They went to a course and they brought them in out of college or whatever and they gave them their JS rating was. They put them through...uh...a six-month course in training. They did everything. It was part of...uh...part of...uh...paramilitary training, alright. And then they sent them over to Vietnam. They send a whole class over. They all couldn't go in as intelligence so some went paramilitary. It just happened to be luck of the draw.

DV: so they would send forty guys over at a time or something like that.

JM: well they did with this group. They send a whole bunch—a whole slew of them. They had all been—like two classes in a row. They had graduated within a couple months of each other. They shipped the whole group over to Vietnam for first assignment. They've never been over seas in their left except maybe if they were in the military first. This is it learning. And some where just learning the paramilitary business and some the intelligence business. They had gone through training.

Track Three

Sound Bite 1

DV: So what were they supposed to do with the PIC and did you give—was part of the your training, training the guy what he was supposed to do? Did you go and say to the region guy. You say listen I am coming in we gotta do...um...you want me to do this PIC in lets say Tay Ninh ok...so um...and lets say the guy is one of those young guys who came out in '64. Do you instruct him what do to with the PIC, the province....

JM: sort of we had...uh...um...well they knew to collect intelligence. They had their list of what was needed for their own province.

DV: and the Agency trained them in interrogation—

JM: They weren't trained in interrogation. They didn't have to. All they had to do is make sure whoever it was they had running the thing would...uh...follow their orders, you know. They look here's the privates I want, you have to review—read all the damn...uh...official reports on these guys. And then go back and give them requirements. Just like we did at the NIC

Sound bite 2

DV: they got toilets in the cells or just a pot

JM: just a hole

Sound bite 3

JM: I mean are we going have a regular toilet for these guys. Shit, are you kidding me, they didn't have one in the whole town, why should we build them in the goddamn interrogation center...yeah they slept on a concrete slab and you would give them a straw mat or something. Depending on how cooperative they were, they could get extra things like a blanket, maybe. Not that they needed one. Cause it can get chilly in the highland area. It got really cold at night. So they are things you can give and things you can take away from them according to how they cooperated in the interrogation room. Not a whole lot but every little bit they were grateful for.

Sound bite 4

DV: now do you have a counterpart Vietnamese team that...and...so that...you know...a permanent team of Vietnamese trainers who go around with you from province to province.

JM: No, No but they got a captain and his main thing was training the guard force in each place and he put them through their drills. Two EMs, worked—one worked with the interrogators one worked with the report writers, tell them the kind of reports, you know, that this is the first report you do, this is the second report you do and then, one, two, three, four these are the next reports you do, whatever. And they'd show them, give them a sample of it, and explain to them how it should be written. You know, this is what you ask—how you ask “how you go about interrogating a man?” Well, they guy who worked with interrogators worked all that. The other guy would work with them on these on the kinds of reports you need to do and he worked with the report writers...uh...who were going to do the work, get it from the—getting the notes from the interrogator and actually write the reports for them.

DV: cause, alright these guys—the interrogator then trains the guys how to take notes

JM: yep...mmmmhmmmm...and...uh...and how to...uh...you just don't sit down with ten questions and ask the ten questions, get ten answers and walk away. Because lots of times, the answer to one question should lead you to an hour to talking. You never get to question three because question two is so interesting. Its giving you so much.

Sound bite 5

JM: you have questions—one, two, three, four, five—and the first one is have you ever trained in North Vietnam? Yes...uh...second question: where were you trained and...uh...no, the second question is where you ever trained by...uh...other Vietnamese? And the guy says yes and the third question is...uh...when did you come to South Vietnam and the guy tells you, you keep—you go down and ask all ten questions and say fine that's it. That's the end of your interrogation. Well, you know, you were trained in North Vietnam, yeah. When were you trained? Where were you trained...uh...what were you trained—sixty questions you could ask them. Some of these guys, if you gave them ten question, they'd give you ten answers and that'd be it. They would not go one step further and then you would have to send them back and say alright now go back and ask them—give them ten more questions on this one and ten more on this one...and that's what a lot of them had to learn. You just don't drop it when you have the answer. The answer should...uh...if it's the right answer...should lead you one to a bunch of more questions.

Sound bite 6

DV: what was that...what was that little song about Muldoon that you recited to me earlier the other night. You got your Brigadoon, Lordadoon

JM: that had nothing to do with over there. One of the coaches at St. John's came up and he used to say all the time, he said "There's Lordadoons there's Brigadoons, and there is sand dunes but there is now dune like a Muldoon.

Sound bite 7

JM: a lot of people have different ideas about the values of the PICs. You can talk to a few people, some of my very good friends, think they were the biggest waste of money and time ever spent cause they didn't produce anything. And a lot them, didn't

DV: who is somebody who thinks it's a waste, for what reasons? from what perspective?

JM: Well...there was one kind and...uh...if you turn the machine off for a second a tell you what his name was [cuts out] there was a lot of people who did not think they were any good. And there were a lot of them that were because, I thought, because the guys in the province didn't push them, did drive them. And some people say oh baloney its not that we didn't try its just that it was a dumb idea in the first place and it couldn't have worked and...um...a lot of them said it was a stupid idea because we couldn't get the military to turn over—they were the ones capturing the prisoners and they weren't going to turn them over to us until they were finished with them. By the time we got them, they were pretty much washed out. But you see this was part of the overall plan of the P-I-C-C, it as a gathering. Sure the military gets their tactical military intelligence first obviously that is the most important thing going in a war.

DV: yeah are they going to hit the town over there?

JM: yeah you have to have that kind of information but then we felt you could work your priorities after that. After the military had really gotten what they felt could get out him—what they could use today, tomorrow, next week—then they should be able to sit them down and say ok whose priority is this guy, maybe the Navy should talk to him first, maybe the CIA should talk to him, you know, this is the way it should break down. But certainly the first thing that should be done is get tactical military intelligence. And that was the whole idea of having the P-I-C-Cs and the PICs being part of them so we would be able to use all this and work back, forth but it never came to that. Maybe that's way people thought they were no good because the original idea of it...was never materialize

Murphy

Ed Murphy Transcript

Tape 1 side 1

DV: 1987 and I'm talking with Ed Murphy [cuts out] OK, Ed...um...you got to Vietnam in May of '68 and...uh...within thirty days you were running agents on the base, and eventually you move off the base and into the city of Peliku itself.

EM: well, I didn't actually move, I stayed there but I continued to run agents on Camp Enari. That's E-N-A-R-I...um...and began to work...um...uh...in the city, started running agents in the city and doing...um...work with the different police and the military.

DV: which different police did you work with, did you work with...

EM: I worked with the National Police, with the Vietnamese military intelligence, worked with the OSA, the...worked with the Special Forces, Air Force, you know, anybody who was involved with anything.

DV: OK and...um....the guy who was the Phoenix coordinator, who's also the OSA guy, OK

EM: right

DV: when did you first get introduced to somebody as being he's the Phoenix guy. He's the Phoenix coordinator. When...when did that...

EM: probably within the first month

DV: do you remember that, how you were introduced? Was it this captian...

EM: an agent

DV: Berkul

EM: no, Ray Geer who's an agent and...uh...had been doing the liaison work in the past and...um...uh...he brought me into meet them.

DV: he brought you down to the province house?

EM: yeah he brought me down the house and...uh...um...and we started going to meetings together and then I took over.

DV: um...OK, is it at the province house that you start meeting people from the various other intelligence agencies or do you meet...is that sort of the place where all the different people come, Special Forces, National Police...

EM: well both. Ray...Ray had traveled...uh...and knew these people and I had...um...he introduced me to them both down at that compound and also at their offices and other places, meeting with the Vietnamese police chief...uh...all the different characters. We would go to their place or...uh...we might be at the compound...

DV: the compound...

EM: down at the civilian personnel office or

DV: so you talk about all these different places and I'm not quite sure which one is which one OK, for instance...

EM: the OSA compound is where Phoenix operated out of, then you got

DV: well, tell me a little about it

EM: the OSA compound?

DV: yeah, what does it look like? Is it...is it...does it have a wall around it? Are their armed guards on it? Are there machine gun emplacements on it?

EM: well it's got walls on one end of Peliku...um....

DV: do you know which end, north end, south end, west end?

EM: actually I don't remember right now but...uh...the...but it's one relatively remote section of Peliku...it's got a wall around it. It's got a guard tower. It's not really a tower but is got a guard gate and it's got Montagnards at the gate...um...with rifles and, as you come in, they salute to you.

DV: are they PRU?

EM: yeah I'm pretty sure. Yeah they're PRU. They're PRU who had...uh...who were at the gate and then there's a, you know, there's house where people live. It's more like the French colonial residence and it's got...uh...a place where people live and it's got some section that's an office space and it's got another section that's a cage, where they keep people when they are captured.

DV: yeah

EM: and then there's a whole of Montagnards hanging around squatting...uh...um...and there's armed guards all over the place.

DV: so...um...how many people live there, maybe?

EM: um...there were two Americans, I think, who lived there and...um...beyond that I'm not positive. I think there were others who lived there but I'm not sure who.

DV: OK and the office, where you meet, is in the same compound and it's apart from the house

EM: yeah, it's...it's...it's...yeah it's apart from the...uh...as I remember, somehow I kinda of remember also a U-shaped compound that...that the structure but I'm not sure...I don't really have a good memory of the physical structure of the building other than that it's a...um...kinda...uh...French colonial mansion type, not a mansion but...

DV: and the two guys there are this Ron somebody and maybe this Major

EM: Major, it might have been Dave...I don't know if the guy's name was Dave or whatever but there was a guy...the guy, who...he was the boss and I remember seeing him once in an Air Force Major's uniform and I think it was at the air force base but I'm not sure. I don't know why. I mean it's the only time I ever saw him in a uniform. I was never clear if he was actually in the Air Force or just wearing the uniform.

DV: yeah that's...sometimes you never know

EM: he might have been just wearing a uniform. He might, you know, what he was doing

DV: Now, in Peliku there also...uh...a National Police advisor and he's a different compound, at different place?

EM: I think he was...I think he was at the II Corps headquarters, which is another compound that had both Vietnamese and Americans living and working there.

DV: also in the city but just in a different part of town?

EM: different part of town

DV: OK, and was there police chief...where was the police...

EM: headquarters?

DV: national police headquarters?

EM: that was a separate place too

DV: and there in separate place and would this police advisor go into that headquarters and would you go there to talk to him.

EM: yeah, we would...I would go to different places for different things.

DV: what would you talk about with the National Police advisor and the Police Chief?

EM: basic intelligence stuff, I mean just what you needed. You're running agents or you're trying to share information on...uh...on...uh...problems that existing, collecting information, getting cooperation

DV: Well give me an example OK? I mean it's obvious to you but it's not obvious to anyone on the outside. For instance, National Police, they don't run agents. They're just policemen right?

EM: well there were two...there's two police. There's the MSS. I'm trying to remember their names

DV: Special Branch

EM: yeah that's right and there's National Police. Yeah there's too separate ones and I'm trying to remember that

DV: Special Branch is...is CIA, that's...the Special Branch is advised by CIA. The National Police are advised by AID Public Safety

EM: right

DV: do you remember now the delineation between the two? That's what I need you tell me about. How they separated their responsibilities? Is National Police...

EM: If I remember correctly I remember the National Police doing the intelligence work and the others just doing the normal police stuff keeping, you know, keeping things moving, keeping security, like a normal police in the...neighborhood police...um...but...uh...

DV: OK so you would see the Special Branch person who is doing the intelligence work

EM: yeah I see all of them, We did...I did...I didn't just do Phoenix work. I did everything...everything that related to...um...intelligence and the 4th infantry division, you know, be it...uh...we had a problem of identification or ID cards or something like or we need to work with...we had, you know, running an agent or had something going wrong with documentation on somebody and sometimes it might be...be working the...uh...CPO, which is where they hired people. Another time I might have to do whether somebody had license or they had...uh...uh...an identity card.

DV: you'd go to National Police for that

EM: I'd go to all of them, I'd go wherever

DV: can you give me an example of...uh...let's say you have an agent and...um...he's in the city of Peliku and...uh...what would be a...what would be a matter that would bring you the National Police advisor, regarding your agent? He needs a license...

EM: No I never...I don't think...I never went to them for anything to do with my agent. I never shared my agents with them. They may have...those agents may have relat...independent relationships with the

National Police and I suspect they did...uh...but I can't say I actually discussed any of my agents with those people. Those are my agents. I had independent relationships with them...uh...

DV: well, let's back track a bit

EM: there maybe...there maybe times where...well, once I did currency investigation of...uh...some Lieutenant who worked in...uh...working in...selling greenbacks to some Indian...Pakistani tailor. I may have worked at this point with the...uh...local police on that and to some extent with the national...intelligence group police that...uh...because there was some fear that the money was going to Chinese communists for weapons or something and, you know, it wasn't true it just peopling stealing and making money of the currency

DV: how would does that currency thing work, they would take the script...

EM: they would take the somebody...guy went Hawaii and came back with 10,000 dollars worth of greenbacks, which is illegal to have in Vietnam and he sold in on the black market for, I think in his case, it was 12,000 dollars in military payment certificates. He took that and tried to translated that into a postal money order the infantry division level and...uh...the forged the signature and he got a postal money order then he sold that for another 12,000 because postal money order was a negotiable instrument.

DV: How much profit was he making on the deal?

EM: He was making about 20 percent. He should have been making 80 percent.

DV: so he wasn't really doing it right

EM: he was stupid uh...he got in...but he did a couple of times and got caught and I got pulled into that so I mean that was the kind of thing that I did that was separate from Phoenix.

DV: that was something you would do, then, with the National Police

EM: yeah

DV: See that's important you can't understand Phoenix accept in relation to all the sorta other intelligence activities

EM: so I worked with all the of the intelligence organizations. Phoenix was part of my work.

DV: at one point, did your Captian Berkel say you, "your going to do, as my liaison to 4th Division to this OSA guy whose running this Phoenix Program, which is identifying the Viet Cong Infrastructure, now one of the important things is to when one of your agents has any information on a potential VCI you got to bring it over to him.

EM: right, right...if either my agents or anybody else's agents have developed information on an individual, OK, that stuff come into the counterintelligence section for the 4th military intelligence detachment, I take those identifications, right, and I share that with the CIA.

DV: OK when do you...when do you...when is, do you think is the first time you think that one of your agents stumbled on a VCI and that you bring to the OSA guy is that...

EM: probably right away, I mean we are picking up things all the time

DV: yeah how much stuff do you pick up? How many VCI have you identified?

EM: I think we met...I think we met once a week and I think if any of the other agents from unit brought...um...some information than every week I would bring that...bring that in and I had a couple agents I was running my own and many other people were running them too.

DV: how many people are we talking about altogether?

EM: numbers of agents?

DV: yeah, number of agents that fourth division is running?

EM: I think we were divided in five sectors, the area of operations was divided into five sectors and I had the six one which was the Vietnamese, the other five sectors were Montagnard.

DV: and this the districts and the province?

EM: not within the province within the area of operations. If you took the base camp and say you went out ten or twenty kilometers and drew a circle, OK, and took that circle and divided into five p...the pieces of pie, OK, and...uh...there would be one agent for each sector. There were five sectors and I would be the sixth sector which would be dealing with the Vietnamese and the other five sectors would be Montagnard areas.

DV: um...is Peliku in one of the sectors?

EM: yeah Peliku is within one sector but...

DV: but the base camp's in a different sector?

EM: yeah the base camp is eleven kilometers from the city and...um...uh...so, even though there was a different sector there, the city was in the sector, it was really....since it was Vietnamese, I dealt with it

DV: you got...are you the senior of the six?

EM: no, we're all equal

DV: you're all equal but you're the only one who is liaison to...

EM: right, I'm the only one who speaks Vietnamese and I'm the only one who works with...uh...uh...with Phoenix.

DV: is there a reason why you're the only one who works with Phoenix, is it because you speak Vietnamese?

EM: yeah...yeah, I speak Vietnamese and I'm dealing with the Vietnamese

DV: so it's not exactly senior...

EM: I'm designated as the liaison, as the person who works with agencies other than the division. Now the other sector guys work with people within the fourth infantry division so they work with the medcaps they work with the...uh...the infantry units, the artillery units but mostly what they do is go out in jeeps with radio and a Montgnard interpreter and they travel do different, villagers and work with the people

DV: and radio back

EM: and radio back and talk, you know, you go out for the day and work with people and you meet with agents and you collect information and you keep your eye on an area.

DV: now in a sector, how many agents would one of these guys have?

EM: you might have ten...not a whole lot but then those might have their own...they might have

DV: those might be case

EM : they may be run...they may have, you know, work with all sorts of other people

DV: each one who has agents work for them

EM: you might have ten people working with you directly

DV: and each one of them might have ten guys so it might be one hundred by the end of the day. Now at the same time everybody has stuff going on so there's intelligence agents over the place.

EM: yeah sure and in a sense...in effect it's walking around keeping your eyes open, that's all and talking to different people and knowing people.

DV: when you meet...when you meet

EM: it doesn't mean everybody you meet is agent, it's just that you're talking to people.

DV: when you meet you agents is a surreptitious, clandestine...

EM: no, no

DV: not that kind of thing, he just comes over to your office?

EM: no just I meet him downtown. We meet someplace. I used to meet same time same place basically. It was very open. It used to scare the day lights out of people working in Berlin or something like that and then coming to Vietnam. It would scare people because of the regularity and the openness but I mean anybody with common sense would know, that in a place like Vietnam, you can't have that kind of surreptitious behave that...uh...you know, you got white people dealing with people of color and its obvious

DV: when they meet it's suspicious anyway

EM: when they meet something's going on and the jeep's have the markings missing from the jeeps so they know that's intelligence and they know what you're doing. If I'm walking around in civilian clothes with a .38 caliber pistol...um...in my pocket or in my belt, I'm unusual compared to most Americans. So I'm either working for the Pacific Architects and Engineers, I'm working for CORDS or something like that, or working intelligence...so...in...in in the mountains, in an infantry area how many reasons are there...

DV: there are only a number of reasons why you should there...

EM: ...for civilians-type person being there, with short hair and young.

DV: In...on the base, your agents were basically military intelligence people under cover what about the city? Did you work with civilians, US military intelligence...did you have civilians on your payroll?

EM: in...in the base camp, I had people who were Vietnamese military intelligence people I had other people who were just Vietnamese workers.

DV: would they be people you recruited on your own?

EM: either recruited or somebody else did

DV: They're handed down to you...now in the city of Peliku out side the base, is it the same mix?

EM: yeah sure...no military intelligence people. I only used civilian people

DV: OK...um...how big of...uh...

EM: but then Vietnamese military intelligence had their own agents that they ran.

DV: No you don't seem to be to clear on the difference between the MSS and the Special Branch?

EM: I think I got them all mixed up these days...you talking, seventeen-eighteen years

DV: Military Security Service is not the J2 G2 S2, it's a separate Army intelligence unit within the Vietnamese, like the 525th is Army Intelligence. It's not S2 within a division.

EM: OK

DV: OK

EM: well, we had a Vietnamese intelligence, Captain Nhu was the guy we had...was attached to us. He had his own unit. I seem to remember,,OK there were National Police Special Branch

DV: that's...those are the intelligence people. They're the ones who do the security checks.

EM: and MSS and the Vietnamese intelligence

DV: that's right, for the military but is the same thing; within the United States army you have a S2 unit, which does tactical information. Then, at the same time, you have the 525th, which is spying on people in the military.

EM: 525th was running agents in the city

DV: oh yeah,

EM: I mean they're not just looking at us

DV: apart from the division?

EM: yeah, right...right.

DV: there not mounting operations?

EM: as far as I know

DV: ok...uh...now...in unusually...in the province, there the province officer. He's working for the CIA and he can sometimes be...uh...a career military intelligence officer on detached duty because there's not many CIA case officers to go around. They're divided into two groups. There's the RDC/O and the RDC/P, the Operations and Plans, usually in the bigger provinces. I don't know how it was in Peliku. So if there were two people at your...at the CIA province, one for intelligence work and one for operations, OK, that's usually the way it is. One guy runs the Special Branch, he's the intelligence, which is P, plans, and then there's the guy who is running the PRU and the RevDev Teams, that's the O. You, you don't seem like your province had a guy for each of them. It seems like the same guy must have been running both of them?

EM: uh...I think it could be the guy who did the operations and went out with the PRU...I have a sense there was a separate guy from the guys I used to meet with. Now, Ron was the junior of the two guys I was with and I don't know whether or not he went out with the PRU.

DV: was he the liaison to the Special Branch?

EM: I think so...he was the main liaison person...I think so he did the kind of stuff I did. He worked with everybody, with all the agencies...uh...but I don't know...I do seem to remember other Americans being around but didn't have much contact and I always under the impression that they did the basic work with the PRU.

DV: what about Special Forces in your...involvement in Phoenix

EM: I mean they were there. Special Forces, they had their headquarters in Peliku and they had...um...Special Forces people around...my...I think that they were the ones who went out with the PRU. I don't know. My memory's not all that good with the details but I think they were the ones who went out with the PRU...um...it...you know...the Provincial Reconnaissance Units went out with them.

DV: apart from that...

EM: I never went on any operations with them so but I mean they might around when someone was in a cage or something...somebody was up at the Provincial Interrogation Center.

DV: OK where the PIC?

EM: the PIC is a separate unit, separate placement, up on a little hill. It's an old compound...uh...I don't know what it used to be but it's an old building, might have been an old school or something but that was definitely U-shaped. You drove in and there was different doors you go in to and...uh...there was an area in the back.

DV: can you describe it a little bit?

EM: they had...people basically said, you know, you might drop somebody or off or you might...it was understood that we didn't go in that it was something...what goes on there, you don't want to know about.

DV: OK, well I want to know a little bit more [laughing] is it a single story building?

EM: it's a single story building

DV: surrounded by a wall?

EM: um...its surrounded by a fence. It's not really surrounded by a wall with wire

DV: is it in Peliku?

EM: it's on the outsides, on the outskirts...it's on the outside, up on knoll, on a hill and its...um...you know the clear vision, you could look you could see a half a mile.

DV: good position

EM: exactly

DV: and is it heavily defended

EM: not overtly. It's not overly heavily defended but it's like a lot of things there...you could...uh...nobody's coming very close.

DV: now, the PICs is where the Special Branch

EM: yeah, it was separate. I think it was a separate headquarters from Special Branch headquarters.

DV: yeah well maybe the headquarters but the PIC is staffed by Special Branch, OK, and...uh...the RDC/O...P guy is the liaison so, now, is Ron the liaison to the PIC?

EM: I assumed but I d...assumed so

DV: was he the one who told you not to go near the PIC? Or is that something that comes down from the military?

EM: probably Ray did...probably Ray did, many of the guidelines and rules I got from Ray, the transfer...the agent there...and then I come in and I'm taking over, he's passing stuff on.

DV: do you know where Ray is at?

EM: no I don't. I know he got busted after he got back from Vietnam...um...for doing some stuff with the Black Panthers.

DV: so he's a black guy.

EM: no he's white, while he was in the military, he came back from Vietnam to...uh...was it Chicago, I think it was Chicago but he came back, while he was on leave prior to his assignment, he got arrested at the Chicago airport. I think this would be in '68, I think, late '68 probably and he was doing something, handing out pamphlets with the Black Panthers.

DV: so he's...

EM: and know...I only know that from word of mouth from Vietnam from back in the States and I never saw him I left Vietnam.

DV: be he had been to Halburton (not surre), did the whole thing before he got there?

EM: yeah, he was an agent and he spent three months in language school. He had had a fair amount of contact with the Buddhist's there. That...that picture of the wall is the something...he and I went down to see this Buddhist monk. He introduced me to a couple of them. So I think he had been pretty significantly affected by the war and came turned against the war and...uh...

DV: back to the PIC, is it on the same side of town as the CIA compound, is it on a...is it...

EM: I don't think...I don't...at this point, they're just places to me

DV: now would you bring, suspects there...if you picked up someone you thought were VCI, did you bring them to PIC?

EM: anybody I had I brought to my own cage

DV: so you had an interrogation cage

EM: yeah we had our own interrogation center

DV: tell me about that

EM: I'll show you a picture [cuts out]

DV: so if it's a prisoner of war, it's a civilian you'd bring them back to your place?

EM: yeah sure he's a prisoner. I'd bring them back. What's the difference between them? Why's that not a POW?

DV: I thought a POW had to be an armed person in a inform, where as...uh...

EM: not in my book

DV: in the Geneva Convention. That's one of the things that ultimately gets Phoenix in trouble is that it supposedly breaks the rules of ground warfare...of arresting civilians. Military's not supposed to arrest civilians, like in the United States.

EM: it's a difference of opinion. What's a civilian and what's not?

DV: well yeah that's...wh...you worked with the classification system, A-B-C, for Viet Cong Infrastructure? Did you have that A-B-C classification?

EM: I don't think we worried too much about stuff like that, to be honest.

DV: I don't think...they might not have even come up with it until '69

EM: I know I got a picture of the interrogation center somewhere around here...

DV: and were you the person that did the interrogations?

EM: not usually, I interrogated a couple people but...uh...this is the police chief

DV: and that's his family

EM: yeah...this is another guy that's in the police

DV: you don't happen to have a picture of Ron do you?

EM: no

DV: they all have picture of themselves

EM: hmmm?

DV: they all have pictures of themselves

EM: what do you mean?

DV: just everybody who was a province officer or a CIA guy, they all have picture so them selves, you know, standing around with their cocktail glass with the counterparts, you know...

EM: this is one of the tents we lived in

DV: OK. So you had this little tents and did you ever rocketed and your base there?

EM: sure

DV: and we you get rocketed would you hide behind the sand bags?

EM: well you see there's...uh...I probably have some pictures here of...uh...this is the base camp so you can see there's bunkers. These are the bunkers here.

DV: was it shelled once a week?

EM sure...uh...I don't know. I don't think it was that often...um...

DV: how many...how big was the base...how many guys on the base? What's the population of the base, 20,000?

EM: no not on the base camp, you'd have that many in a unit...in a division but...a couple of thousand, probably

DV: five thousand?

EM: five thousand...I now I have I picture somewhere in here of the interrogation center...anyway it's just that there was barbed wire fence and that was the interrogation center.

DV: now are these hardcore Viet Cong prisoners, are these guys soldiers who got picked up in...uh...

EM: no these are civilians. These are people who...these are not soldiers. The ones...the ones that I would have?

DV: yeah

EM: I would never see a soldier

DV: oh I see

EM: in the city...in the city of Peliku, it'd a just be...you wouldn't have a Viet Cong soldier in the city. You would have...I mean you're talking about Post-Tet. These people are dead

DV: yeah OK but what kind of people are we talking about?

EM: we are talking about civilians, infrastructure people, people who are supporting the Viet Cong or the NVA.

DV: well, in your experience, what's this person? What's his occupation of a VCI?

EM: um...could be anything. Could be somebody he works in a movie theater. Could be somebody who's...uh...sweeping up.

DV: could it be a hotel owner?

EM: well, they don't...i mean...this is a very remote area. There aren't hotels are anything like that. The city of Peliku was hardly anything to it

DV: maybe five thousand people to it?

EM: I doubt it, a couple thousand, a city like that

DV: OK, so it's not a business man?

EM: ...see this is all the sectors...this is probably a guy who's working his sector and showing weapons...uh...showing weapons...showing stuff to people for them to identify. One of the guys would be out there telling the Montagnards "if you find something like this out there, turn it in, don't play with it."

DV: yeah OK [sound of knocking]

EM: come in [tape out] what information did you have to have on a person before you arrest them and put them in the cage?

EM: nothing...whatever you want

DV: so it's really...uh...would it be a strictly decision you would make one your own, to decide whether this person

EM: it's conventional sure

DV: well, what's the criteria you used?

EM: whatever you wanted

DV: what would determine that?

EM: what would...what would we use?

DV: yeah

EM: well, if my agent said somebody was a Viet Cong

DV: OK

EM: If I had reason to believe him, after a while, that he was telling the truth and I needed to bring somebody in and interrogate them I could bring somebody in and interrogate them.

DV: did you use...um...did you have...uh...did you know if they were a liaison person or part of the farmer's association, is that kinda of information you would find out?

EM: yeah

DV: build it up on them

EM: yeah if I built it up and I believed that somebody was and I wanted to bring them in and talk to them I could.

DV: what would you...would you go out and arrest them or would you have the police go out and arrest them?

EM: um...I think only once in my whole time did I ever pick anybody up, you know...um...yeah I don't think...probably...we only picked up one person...uh...superficially

DV: well who...how did you go picking somebody up, arresting somebody? Did you have to issue...did you have to get a judge to sign an arrest warrant?

EM: No, you went out and told somebody get in the jeep and come with you. It was as simple as that. Now I don't know...I mean this wasn't a situation where you went downtown to the DA. It's just if you wanted somebody you went and got them...it's just, I don't know

DV: did you tell the family that you were taking them? Was there any commun—like for instance, let's say you didn't get somebody you want somebody. You want Tran Van Trong, OK so, how do you go about getting Tran Van Trong back to your interrogation cage, once you've determined he's a VC.

EM: well, basically you go...if you want out to house, see, you might just say [whistle noise] I mean I don't recall a whole lot of...uh...um...I didn't make a whole lot of arrests it's just...um...

DV: yeah OK, but who where the people who making the arrests, then? I mean you don't need a PRU to go in and get somebody out of his house?

EM: the police could, yeah, the police could, you know, the police might do it.

DV: the national police?

EM: yeah the national police or...it's an interesting question, you just go get somebody, you know, I mean you're caring weapons, they're not in all probability and unless you some reason to believe

DV: you got to understand, I just don't understand. I just don't understand...

EM: your talking post tet...your talking post tet, you're not talking a whole lot of armed people around. You're not talking a whole lot of activity. People had just been wiped out, off the face of the earth.

DV: as a military intelligence, E-6, whatever you are, do you have a group of Americans working for you and can you say to these Americans, "go out and arrest this guy?"

EM: if I wanted to I could.

DV: did you ever do it?

EM: no I don't think...I don't recall...we...the people who interrogated were usually the people who came in through combat situations and got brought in to the cage, OK? Where we were in Peliku, OK...um...we were collecting information. Almost never did you bring someone in. if you did, you know, a lot of our guys might interrogated somebody because of the agents I was with because they somehow got into the cage. They got brought in for some reason or that they were in combat or something happened. I never thought a whole lot about how people wound up in there. We picked...uh...I forget who was involved, but we picked up a woman once and interrogated her...um...and forget exactly the details of how were go her but just picked up this woman and...um...uh...and she was innocent

DV: and is this the guy says "go to bed with me or basically you're going to become a VCI?"

EM: yeah it's this one woman and...uh...I don't remember exactly all the details of how we brought her in, whether I picked her up on that her they picked her up...

DV: so basically you're not picking people up, when you have enough information you...

EM: you're passing it over

DV: ...you're giving it to the Phoenix guy and he picks it up

EM: yeah people were passing information around and they take it. They took care of that. That wasn't...uh...it appeared very low activity, right after Tet the real obvious VC have been killed or split and what we're getting is a real low level stuff.

DV: ok are you getting...are you getting...um...the guy who's the district party chief?

EM: no. no

DV: are you getting...I mean what kind of VCI

EM: these people are dead. These people are dead. I mean most of these people are dead now because they've been killed in February. I mean you just wiped out...

DV: by the 4th infantry division?

EM: by everybody, by the Air Force, by everybody. I mean you got the Tet uprising...uprising in February, you know, and they're just...for those people in country at that point...they're just...there in, you know...the results of a bulldozer just dumped them into a mass grave. I mean they're gone. These people...

DV: figuratively

EM: no literally. They're gone. They're dead. The NVA, you know, has attacked up North. The Viet Cong has risen up in Saigon and all around. There's massive fire fights. The bodies just stacked up and bull dozers have come in and anybody who is Peliku who has been annihilated some them have...those who were left...

DV: just don't

EM: what we are getting is low level people and the VC is reconstructing...restructuring themselves so we're starting to pick up a little bit of this, a little bit of that as they're...they're rebuilding their structure. Now I'm there from May of '68 to May of '69, it's the period where the VC are starting to rebuilding themselves and they are starting to identify new party people, a new this, a new propaganda, trying to reorganize themselves so I'm not getting a whole lot. Phoenix is functioning, what your interested in, is functioning but the activity level is low because the opposition has just been KOed in many ways and so you get...this was period for Phoenix, at least where I was, of relatively little activity. I mean little actual capturing people, killing people; identifying people because they have...the other side has really been wiped clean.

DV: are you doing anything of trying to recruit VC?

EM: not really no. I had...I had...I had

DV: when you identify someone as VC do you send them back...to...to...send them back and say "now, we know who you are and you're not going to tell anyone you knows" or anything real sophisticated intelligence kinda stuff.

EM: No, no, no, no, no...CIA is.

DV: there doing that kind of stuff?

EM: CIA suspects that one of my agents is double, alright. They want to send him up north. He's got a bother who's an NVA major, we know that much. They want to send him, turn his bother around and use his brother. Then, they want to kill him.

DV: after they have done that?

EM: right, then they want to kill him.

DV: this is something Ron tells you?

EM: No...I...I know. I mean I know I mean I just know, Ron, this is going on when I first get there and Ron tells me this so I told Berkel. I told the Captain. I said "one thing I know is hitting one of our agents is something we don't do, I don't do on my own. I am not authorized to participate in this..."

DV: Kill your own agents

EM: I know that much and this beyond my level authority, I will you this. I mean it's really beyond my level of authority to kill anybody unless they're trying to kill me.

DV: and you don't ever fire any...you're really involved in any....

EM: right so I'm not in situation where I can walk around and just blow somebody away and get away with it so I tell my Captain and...um...me and the Captain met with Ron and talked about it. Now Ron did some talking. Berkel did some screaming he didn't want anything to do and he particularly didn't want me involved in any of this. He wasn't about to get involved in...uh...in this. He...I mean he went through the roof...uh...about this and it's...I just went I forget this guy's name, Joe...Joe Doyle, no...I'm trying to remember that Captain's name, the one who was before Berkel...Anyway...um...and I'm a little befuddled at this moment. When I'm in this meeting because Ron's trying to swear there is no CIA in Vietnam, right, that he doesn't work for the CIA. I mean every time Berkel uses the word CIA. Ron issues a official denial, "I don't know anything about the CIA. I work for the office of the Special Assistant to the Ambassador."

DV: yeah...yeah

EM: and he's just calmly telling him that.

DV: so Berkel's not getting anywhere because this guy is like talking to a wall?

EM: right

DV: but in the mean time everybody knows he's CIA and he's running hjs agents.

EM: everybody knows what's going on here and...uh...so...uh...see, what I think what is was, was they wanted me to send this guy off or they wanted me...I don't know if they wanted me to run the agent and...up North and...um...

DV: Berkel did not want you doing that

EM: I knew that I wasn't...I wasn't running agents for anybody outside my area of operations and going on an operation, doing anything, you know, without them knowing that and for whatever reason something was going that I think was going on beyond my understanding. Berkel had more information than I had.

DV: now getting back to this thing, you're there for a year in Peliku...um...and in all that time you never arrest somebody because you....

EM: we picked up that one lady and I forget the specifics of how we got here. It might have been a drive by.

DV: even in '68, Phoenix people had quotas, were you aware that they had quotas for arrests, and turns and rallyings and all that kind of stuff

EM: in terms of what

DV: rallying, sentencing, neutralizing, they had quotas. Were you aware that there were quotas?

EM: Not in the sense that...no they weren't...we never discussed things like quotas I mean we would just do them. We would discuss...um...you had to have so many people and, again, the thing is it's hard to have a quota when you got nobody...I mean this is a very difficult situation you're talking about. It's very...hard in place in the mountains. This is not a city and this is not the Delta....[cuts out]

TAPE 1 SIDE 2

DV: ...at all?

EM: in the actual...the actual...I wasn't...I didn't go out with PRU. Right, I was involved in the...uh...um...identify...um...identifying the names of the people and...uh...you know and selecting who was Viet Cong Infrastructure, who was this or that.

DV: How many Viet Cong Infrastructure were you identifying a month?

EM: we were dealing with a lot. In many ways we were dealing with the same names a lot but...but

DV: repeat offenders kinda thing

EM: yeah but you're talking about people who are far away, you know, you can't get your hands on 'em and you got names and...uh...I'd say if there were fifty people...I mean we'd circle a lot of these names and then try to cross check these names. Um...I tryin'....I'm trying to figure if we got...you know, I;m playing wild guesses here. I'm playing...if you go in with ten names and another time you're going in with three or four, another time.

DV: A week, maybe one week it's ten. Maybe one week it's three or four and some of these are the same names.

EM: right some of these are the same names. You're not talking about a lot of names, here and had this been six months earlier you're talking about a lot of names but most of these people have...um...either been killed or gone away.

DV: OK...um

EM: and now they are starting to come back and, as they're starting to come back, we're starting to re-identify.

DV: what is it about Phoenix, then...I mean the way you're kinda describing it to me, it sounds benign.

EM: in some sense, I'm not trying to make it benign, but, it some...when you're

DV: what is that bothers you about Phoenix while your there?

EM: while I'm there?

DV: was it the first month, second month, third month, fourth month that you start seeing something fishy going on? Are people...are people's names coming up on the list who are political opponents or Montagnards who just are against the GVN?

EM: I think its important to understand what bothers people, while there in it is that they are in it and they want to be out of it. You know, it's not you got a fundamental...it's not the people Vietnam are suffering from moral dilemmas...of great moral dilemmas. The dilemmas that you're involved in how the hell do I get out of here. You know, you're not...and the reason why Vietnam veterans have post traumatic stress disorder is not some much because of...uh...uh...what they did in Vietnam, its contrast. I don't know if you've read Peter Marin's article on living in moral pain.

DV: yes I have

EM: it's the issue of taking a moral system here and a moral—you know, going to war, moral system and then you're stepping outside of that moral system. For most of us, while we are in Vietnam, we are not in some great moral dilemma in Vietnam because the moral ethnics...the ethnics of that situation, are different because you're in a totally different situation. It's when you come back that you really engage with moral conflict. You have rules you were brought up with. You operate outside those rules and then you have rules here, you know, there...I'm not...I can't say...that while I was...

DV: were you aware that rules were being broken?

EM: sure

DV: you were?

EM: when people are getting killed, you know, innocent people...people getting killed in the war...people getting killed in Phoenix. I mean I'm not saying...I wasn't that squeamish to say that...uh...you know, I'm objecting to people getting killed. You know, I am trying to be honest with you. I wasn't a great moral hero, in Vietnam. Now I didn't...I didn't torture people, although...although

DV: did you see torture going on?

EM: made sure I wasn't around it.

DV: like with the PIC, you just didn't go to the PIC

EM: yeah, plus there were radios that people wired people up with.

DV: over in that little cave

EM: yeah, and I didn't spend a whole of time trying to stop people from wiring them up. Yet, I didn't wire them up. That was...you know, like a lot of vets, I made my choices about what I was going to do and what I wasn't going to do and there were things that I did that I didn't like that I did...uh...and I knew when we were going to send a guy up to recruit his brother that something triggered in side of me, whether it was a moral issue or it was a...a...uh...supervision issue or whatever something trigger for me to go to Berkle and talk to Berkle about it. Now, I can't say it was a fundamental moral thing but it was like it was a combination of that. This is outside of, you know, what's OK here and I go to Berkle and I talk to him...uh...

DV: OK what about the guidance you were getting with Phoenix? Were you told Phoenix was secret? You can't tell anybody that this Phoenix exists?

EM: No, I don't think so. I think...well, I understand that you never used the word CIA. I mean it was just...uh...I mean you didn't use the word CIA, OK? There were certain words you didn't use...uh...and basically that was to protect there, you know, keep them safe.

DV: did you understand Phoenix was a CIA operation and not a military operation?

EM: sure, sure, sure...well, it was a joint operation.

DV: because the CIA would...would handle the intelligence and the Army would handle the PRU.

EM: that and plus we were, you know, I...I was was the forth infantry division.

DV: and you have some input into this

EM: I'm involved...I'm involved and I have some input. As much input as...uh...as I wanna make. Now, I don't decide but I'm in a liaison relationship and if they want an infantry company to go do something, they are not asking me. You know, I might discuss it with them, if they wanted it, but then it would go up to the next level.

DV: you would not say send an infantry company

EM: we were participants in a joint project that involved the CIA, the military, the Air Force, the civilians, CORDS the...uh...the...uh..you know, different people there.

DV: were you aware of...um...the Phoenix people ordering airstrikes for instance?

EM: yeah

DV: you know, it was simply those PRU operations to go out and get somebody

EM: it might be support...yeah, the PRU might be out there. They might need support. They might radio for something and then...uh...they'd have their advisor and the American might ask for something.

DV: Did you know what a PIOCC was?

EM: uh...I don't think so.

DV: Intelligence Operations Coordinating Center

EM: oh yeah sure, sure

DV: there were DIOCCs and PIOCCS...did you ever hang out the PIOCC, the Province Intelligence Operations Coordinating Center?

EM: I think that was at II corps. I think it was at II corps headquarters and I used to be there all the time cause I dealt with the guy who was the II corps guy there was a Colonel who had been at the landing school with me. I forget what his name was. I dealt with him a couple times. You know if I had something but...um...see, the other thing to remember about this is that these distinctions are only significant intellectually in the United States. They are not significant all in Vietnam

DV: you mean the difference between a PIOCC or DIOCC?

EM: a PIOCC or a DIOCC or something...it's just like you're working together. We all work together, alright? I mean these are just intellectual distinctions they are not operational distinctions. When I go to II

Corps I go to II Corps and deal with somebody. When go to (not sure O-Sha?) I deal with Ron or this other guy...uh...or if I'm off with Special Forces, you just deal with the people.

DV: is II Corps fourth infantry division?

EM: No II Corps is separate. See the whole structure of the war is you've got units...military units that...like 123rd, Special Forces, this and that and then the whole country is divided into four corps and a corps are...is a Major...Vietnamese Major General who is commander of II Corp and...

DV: he has an American advisor?

EM: and he has an American system...you know, there is a whole system of American advisors. That's the military that's dividing the country into four Corps. Now, the fourth infantry division is primarily located, I think it's totally located, within II Corps, OK.

DV: so does the General who's commanding the fourth infantry division report to II Corps?

EM: Not really, I mean that maybe logic...that maybe part of the logic but the guy he reports to Saigon, you know, to Westmoreland and then Abrams, and then whatever that guy's name is after Abrams

DV: Wayen

EM: you know, so he reports to them but he coordinates with the II Corps

DV: but what does II Corps do?

EM: They there just to make believe...uh...uh...II Corps is the pretends. The I Corps, II Corps, III Corps, IV Corps is the pretends that the Vietnamese are winning the war that's all it is. It's just the pretends. I mean it's a coordinated group. It's not like they decided it. Theoretically, if you're going to move on something, you get clearance from the II Corps commander but that doesn't mean...I mean that's just...you know, that's propaganda, that's just what pretend. I'm not...I'm not aware that II Corps had any decision making ability or I Corps or had, you know, decision making ability. The General for fourth division or the first division, he made...he had his own structure of decision making and that usually went on to, you know, he would spend time down at the...uh...US Army, Vietnam or whatever the hell...

DV: yeah

EM: ...Pentagon east...and he go down...and they had their own structure for how they decided things and that was...uh...I mean I can't imagine and Major...a US Major General asking the permission of Vietnamese Major General...I mean giving a Vietnamese Major General some authority over decision making.

DV: yeah

EM: didn't happen

DV: so the...the corps is basically Vietnamese?

EM: yeah the corps structure, to my understanding, the corps structure was the...was the Vietnamese command structure.

DV: yeah

EM: uh...and the Americans happened to be there and you had American people assigned there to...uh...stroke the Vietnamese to make them think they had something to do with what was going on.

DV: Like, for instance, Peers would be...

EM: they didn't have...they didn't have...they didn't have

DV: Peers is the commanding General of the fourth infantry division but there is another American general who is assigned to II Corps and the two them are supposed to coordinate?

EM: I think don't think they wasted a General. They may have had a colonel over there. Who's, you know, its liaison in that...but there wasn't...I think it was a Vietnamese Major General who ran II Corps but he basically...uh...had a Colonel probably who was...uh...you know, told what to do. So the Vietnamese structure...military structure was in terms of corps and then they had province chiefs

DV: yeah, right OK and the province chiefs...

EM: and the province chiefs were theoretically the civilian government

DV: OK

EM: and the Corps was, I think, the military government.

DV: OK

EM: and then you got the American structure which is the infa...division...the unit commander. So the division commander or whatever commander and that general might have responsibility for what's going on operationally.

DV: So, in other words, corps...corps is like the advisory thing and the infantry divisions are just American military operations.

EM: yes

DV: they're not advising anybody

EM: that's the way I saw it. I'm not saying I'm right.

DV: the forth infantry division doesn't advise anybody. They don't have any Vietnamese Generals hanging around them...

EM: they've got some...they've got some people that they're in liaison with but...um

DV: that might check on them

EM: theory was they did but, you know, I don't think that really happened

DV: did you ever meet a province chief or anything like that? What kind of business did you have with the province chief?

EM: social mostly, that would be it...um...I dealt with there staff but I don't know. It was just...I guess these days I just think more who had the authority or power to get stuff done and they were just telling, as most of us by '68 we wanted...um...we weren't there any longer as invitees of the Vietnamese and...uh...doing what the Vietnamese wanted. We were just doing what we were doing.

DV: what about these Phoenix committees? The ones...you know, the committees, did you have anything to do with them? What do you know about the Phoenix committee in Peliku?

EM: well, I always viewed the Phoenix committee as the group that got together and (O-Sha not sure again) and were always there.

DV: and these are Vietnamese?

EM: no these are...uh...[cuts out]

DV: is Phoenix a Vietnamese program or an American program? I mean are there Vietnamese involved in the decision making process of forming operations, targeting people.

EM: I don't recall...I don't recall any Vietnamese...I don't recall any Vietnamese being involved in any aspect.

DV: so really from your experience, Phoenix...

EM: I don't recall any Vietnamese involved in any decision making process

DV: cause, you see, a Phoenix committee, technically, at the province level, is supposed to be all Vietnamese. No...no Vietnamese at all, you know, Americans can give them intelligence information. American can give the Phoenix committee, you know, a name but the Phoenix committee is the group of Vietnamese that sit down. Its supposed to be the National Police chief, the Special Branch chief, the Military Security Chief, they're all supposed to get together review the files and decide this guys a good target and they write up a list because that's where the legal power comes to make arrest but, you know, from your experience that's the way it is. It's just the Americans are handling it. The Americans are doing.

EM: we did whatever want

DV: OK is that what bothers you? Is that the root of what...what bothered you about Phoenix, that Americans were going into Vietnam conducting these operations?

EM: what bothers me...well what bothered me, at the time when I came back from Vietnam, was we had already lost the war. The Americans didn't know it and Americans getting killed. So the first thing that bothered me was the stupidity and that...uh...this war is being run in a way...uh...that were losing a lot of people being killed so there's a moral thing there, right? Uh...that things are going on in the war that are outrageous both from the government's side and the individual side of what we are doing...uh...

DV: just bombing villages and that kinds of stuff

EM: yeah, who gives a shit? And its racist...uh...that the Americans don't care at all about the Vietnamese they are not involved at all with the Vietnamese. It's just a colonial war that it makes me think that I am on the British side against the Irish...uh...so I don't like what it does to me. I don't like what I was involved in...uh...I think that its...uh...a lot of people were maimed and hurt

DV: you said Phoenix somehow put everything into focus for you. You made that statement earlier...

EM: yeah, I think so...it wasn't just people going out and...uh...uh...um...you know, it was just fighting NVA and people in combating it was fighting...fighting an alternative political structure to the political structure that the United States wanted to be there and that the purpose of the Phoenix Program was to annihilate that political structure and neutralize it and destroy it.

DV: is the thing that bothers you that you could see it happening here, in America?

EM: well, its...uh...first of all

DV: that's a big logical jump that you made when you came back to the United States.

EM: first of all, it bothered me that it was going on in Vietnam that not what...we were told we were fighting communists.

DV: but these people turning up VCI are not communist

EM: they're not communist

DV: they're Buddhist, they're...

EM: they're right, they're not communist so, first of all, I'm...I'm bothered by that, OK? That the people...now, while I'm in Vietnam, these are the people trying to kill Americans, right? Now I am interested in staying alive and seeing my friends stay alive.

DV: right, so you don't mind going after them

EM: right

DV: whether they're communist or not, they're still your enemy

EM: right, I'm still trying to stay alive. When I'm back here, right, I'm not being threatened by these people I'm saying to myself that...um...this is insane, you know, we've got to stop this. This is...uh...we shouldn't be putting any more people over there, killing people, or getting killed and there is no rationale that justifies eliminating a democratic or a natural process where people are trying to control their own lives and the people we are trying to stop are just trying to maintain their own dignity and have control over their lives. So I'm outraged by this...

DV: let me back up for one second.

EM: so Phoenix is what puts it into focus.

DV: On your lists of VCI are the people that are coming up as Viets...VCI, are they ever communist? I mean are they sometimes the RPG, the people's republic of...you know, are they sometimes...

EM: I mean it's irrelevant...it's not even relevant whether they are or not

DV: well for the purpose of my book

EM: why would it be relevant?

DV: its relevant because the *raison d'entre* of American foreign policy since World War II is anti-communism. Anything is justifiable as long as its communist.

EM: yeah

DV: you can draw...that's...that's...the whole thrust of American foreign policy is you gotta stop communism, therefore, its OK to kill communist but if a person's not a communist you start to get into a gray area.

EM: some of them are communist

DV: OK some of them are communists

EM: but some of them aren't

DV: some of them aren't

EM: so what? I see I don't judge...I don't support that kinda...uh...it's like killing Protestants

DV: you don't care whether a person is...

EM: I don't care if they are Protestant or Catholics, if they're Protestants that's their business. If they're Catholic, it's their business. If they're communist, that's their business. If they're non-communist that's their business. I...what do I care? There Vietnamese

DV: but still, nevertheless, when you're giving your names to the Phoenix coordinator, some of them are communists, some of them aren't.

EM: right

DV: they're still going out and getting them regardless of whether communist or not.

EM: and no one is going around in detail to check whether they are communist or not.

DV: they're just rumored to be communist

EM: nobody cares

DV: your agent says "I know this guy is a communist because I saw him at a communist meeting."

EM: a communist means that the people thing in terms of a duality. If you're not with me you're against me, so that's it and the two examples are if you won't sleep with me you're a communist.

DV: that...that's the classic example

EM: right ok and...uh...you disagree with and you're a communist so

DV: or in American, if you support the Democrats, you're a communist sympathizers

EM: yeah right so you're like Jews or something like that...it's...it's...it's just that...that's what bothers me

DV: OK this is a good discussion. First of all, I want you to understand just finally...just finally being able to put this into some perspective...you're particular perspective.

EM: what a cup of tea or something? [cuts out]

DV: If it's not...if it's something that you...alright there's one thing you're a soldier. You're fighting people. They're the enemy. Let's say they're the communists because the communists are the enemy so it's OK to go out and fight and kill and if you get rough in an interrogation that's the way it goes because it war because that's a legitimate enemy. That's a communist. Now this is what Phoenix is supposed to be. Phoenix is supposed to root out the communist infrastructure. It's not supposed to root out the Buddhist infrastructure, it's not supposed to root out the Dai Viet party infrastructure, it's not supposed to root out the women who won't sleep with your agents. Its only supposed to root out the communists its' directed against the communists.

EM: that's what you tell the Americans but that's not what it was there for

DV: that's not what is there for

EM: no its not

DV: what is it really there for, you know, I mean if its not just to get the communists?

EM: it's an attempt to control and eliminate the opposition. Now the only way...the only...

DV: the opposition to the Americans?

EM: yeah to us getting what we want. I mean so the only...the...these others definitions and stuff are just intellectual jargon what the Phoenix Program was there for was to root out those who denied Americans the ability to get what the Americans wanted, to control...um...uh...control Vietnam through the...um...you know...

DV: this subtle terror that you were talking about

EM: through clients, through them Diems, through the Thieus, through the Kys and to control Vietnam. Now the war in Vietnam, when it began, had a rationale. The war in Vietnam lost the rationale.

DV: what was the rationale?

EM: the rationale whether...I'm not saying it's a good one...I'm not saying it's good but it had rationale. It had a belief structure that said we have to stop communism and the Vietnamese people wanted to have control over their own lives and that Diem was he was the best representation of...that he was the Churchill of Asia, you know, OK. Now he was there, thank you Victor [cuts out] Alright we had that rationale when the war was started, as naïve and wrong as that rationale was. It was the rationale that we operated on. Kennedy, democracy...um...you know,

DV: bear the burden

EM: bearing burdens, Lyndon Johnson's belief system of...uh...you know, we can do in Vietnam what they did in the Tennessee Valley and electrify 'em and help the poor people

DV: so wa...so Diem gets killed, Kennedy gets killed what happened?

EM: so what it turned out was, as Pete Seger, said...uh...waist deep in the big muddy

DV: what's that?

EM: waist deep in the big muddy and we didn't know how to get out, OK. So the domestic political stuff and the international political and combat was so interwoven that you can't do one without the other and they're so woven together and there so woven together that, even at the point, were nobody believed the rationale, when Robert McNamara gave up the rationale, it was too late. So were still going there...sending people there and you got Generals like Westmoreland doing what they're doing. Phoenix, I think, was an attempt, a logical attempt, a wrong attempt but a logical attempt to try and root out the infrastructure because you take basically what Mao said and what I think Ho believed is that revolutionary is the fish and the people are the water. They were trying to dry up the pond. You know, and the Phoenix Program was an attempt to dry up the pond to...to root out the infrastructure.

DV: to get the fish rather than the water?

EM: well yeah to get the ones who were...um...right to get the revolutionaries.

DV: right...not...because before with the big unit operations they were just getting the water, just to trample the village, make refugees and put them in the center

EM: They were trying to get the fish but they were polluting the whole pond and I think Phoenix was an attempt to identify the specific...uh...infrastructure and eliminate them.

DV: so, in a sense, it's like this...uh...if this can be analogy, the Phoenix agent is a fisherman and he's supposed to go out into this pond and he's only supposed to get bass and every time he picks up trout he's supposed to throw the trout back except every time you pick up a different, you know, if you get a pike you're supposed to throw the pike back if you get a... You know, in the meantime the only way you know is once get that fish on board and you look at him, by then its flopping around on board and he's dead.

EM: he's dead

DV: is that sorta of...the...the...an embellishment

EM: I hate to reduce things...I hate to reduce things to Marcus Greensbury rules but, you know, here...here in the United States you can have all these intellectual visions. OK, so I get to Vietnam, I experience all this stuff...

DV: but at the same time, you're an intellectual and I mean you're an intellectual in Vietnam and I can't believe for a minute you weren't intellectualizing when you were in Vietnam. I mean I'm an intellectual too. I've...I've done things I've regretted but that didn't stop by from intellectualizing about them.

EM: let me show you something [cuts out] ever see this book?

DV: No

EM: The America, OK

DV: I've been talking to some many CIA agents its just refreshing to engage with somebody in a conversation who actually talks.

EM: what you mean talks, that actually talks about something?

DV: yeah, rather than get the...

EM: the party line

DV: the party line. I mean these guys I talk with they just have their standard speech prepared

EM: alright, this is the 5th of June, 1968, right Ed Murphy. I've only been in country for forty five days and this is a letter I wrote and...which lays out...um...refers to the kulterkampf in...um...you know, Austria...talks about...Talk about intellectuals...talks about morale...I discuss morale. I discuss the base camp. I discuss what I do...uh...I talk...and it's the day Bobby Kennedy is killed. OK, Bobby Kennedy gets assassinated. I sit down at the type writer and a letter to my brother and this letter talks about a lot of that stuff. I'll give you a copy of it. It talks about what my attitude in Vietnam and how I handled myself to deal with it, you know, the Pacific Architects and Engineers.

DV: yeah you mentioned that before, I mean they were the people that built the PICs.

EM: yeah, right

DV: did you...were you aware they were doing that kinda of stuff. What did you know about Pacific Architects and Engineers?

EM: well, I'll tell ya, they...

DV: I mean they also provided cover for CIA agents

EM: what all this means is there is a feeling about Americans being taken care of by other Americans. The people here see money being spent, and see the uselessness of it. Build more trucks, buildings, airplanes and one civilian contractor is robbing the American people blind.

DV: yeah

EM: OK? The contractor has mostly retired people who don't know much about their job but they do know...a military job and have connections in Washington, DC. A civil engineer who work...who works for the company told me a lot about it. He mentioned a dock on the Saigon River and place called Camp David. The pilings were spilling and it was his job to...um...and, as it was his job, he told his superiors. They told him to forget it. Let it collapse. It would take the government another million dollars to reconstruct it. He mentioned some two million dollars in material and cash being unaccounted for. Who cares...uh...I asked him if he thought the company's presence here had been beneficial to the Vietnamese. He said "hell no, if anything, it was detrimental. He said the employees do not receive a fair shake. We worry more the money we put into the country and too little about the people or the culture." And you can see the kinda thoughts...

DV: yeah you're intellectualizing

EM: yeah...this a back b...I'm analyzing...I'm trained to be an intelligence agent, right. I'm an ex-seminarian...uh...I'm involved in community organizing

DV: do you remember that guy's his name?

EM: yeah sure, his name is Saul Lapitosa

DV: spell that for me

EM: L-A-P...uh...probably L-A-P-I-T-O-S-A. His w...he's married to a French women. She lived outside Paris. He was a civilian engineer on the Verizanno Bridge and that's why we got so close.

DV: is he back in America, would you know?

EM: I don't know...I doubt it...I don't know but he would be...I would probably say he would about...be...I'm 41, he'd be about 60 right now and...uh...he was...the reason I got close to him was he was a civilian engineer on the Verizano Bridge. I was from Staten Island...uh...he used to live on Staten Island and he provided some cover for stuff we were doing and we just became friends.

DV: so you...you can say that Pacific Architects and Engineers provided cover for military intelligence agents?

EM: yeah sure

DV: what kind of cover?

EM: um...just in the sense, you know, when need a truck for something. We'd do some stuff together.

DV: could you...did they...would you say you were working for them?

EM: I never did

DV: could of...I suppose that's the kinda of cover they would have given you

EM: but if you...I saw you looking at the pictures. You see me up there in civilian clothes, looking like a construction worker sitting on jeep. That's basically what I did, I walked around in construction clothes most of the time and if I needed cover I could use it.

DV: I could probably write to PA...PE&A and ask were this guy is and they might now huh?

EM: or you could...you could...um...got to the state department, check his passport, you know, I'm sure, if he's still alive, he's got an American passport.

DV: you can do that?

EM: why not? I mean he's an American. Can't you ask...uh...the State Department, you know?

DV: there not...uh...generally very helpful to me in my pursuits [laughing] anyway...

EM: get somebody else to do it. PA&E is all military

DV: I've read where were guys running PRU, SEALs and Special Forces would actually have cover of PA&E or...uh...RNK

EM: you mean RMK?

DV: yeah RMK, you know

EM: RMK BLJ

DV: that those construction companies would give these guys identification and stuff like that

EM: they made a lot of money off us, so anyway you asked me what bothered, that's what bothered me and then so then while I'm in the middle of it all I got to do...I got to survive, I can't do anything stop it, right? So come back, immediately get involved with the anti-war movement, while I'm in the military.

DV: while you're in...

EM: while I'm in intelligence and start working on stopping it and now Phoenix Program, I didn't know that nobody knew about Phoenix. So I came back, I didn't know anybody never stood up and spoke up about it until I meet Mike...uh...Jerry Rifkin and Miked Yule and all that crew and Todd Ensign and to me Phoenix was a platform...Phoenix was lever, in many ways, to use to help stop the war.

DV: I've thought about it that way

EM: that's why I used it. Now, you use what you got. What I got is this: I'm an Irish Catholic born and raised in New York City. I'm living in Staten Island, alright? I'm a hometown kid. I'm very intelligence and I'm very articulate, alright. So the tool I got is right here. I'm an intelligence agent...a former intelligence agent. I'm fluent in Vietnamese. They don't come...come like that, former intelligence agent, fluent in Vietnamese, involved in the Phoenix Program, worked in the Central Highlands, came back with a, you know, not a big medal but a medal, you know, all accommodation medal.

DV: you're credible

EM: I'm credible, right and

DV: so Phoenix is a symbol to you too

EM: it's a symbol to me but it's important when people want to hear about it. I'm using it from a value based position to make a political statement and to me politics is from the Greek, we intellectual, politai, whatever it is, is...it means values in process. It's like implementing values. Now my values aren't one iota different from the...the article that I wrote for *Military Intelligence* on how to be a Special Agent. They had not substantially changed in twenty years, right. When I say what you do overseas...

DV: you should do back here...

EM: ...will eventually come on you, OK. So I go in I write an article in 1966...an essay in 1966 that says this. I got to Vietnam I see bullshit going down. I see this going down. I come back to the United States I see the exact same thing going on here. I'm an intelligence unit, the 116th Military Intelligence Unit, and, as you exit the room, they have nine pictures. They have nine slots for pictures and they have eight of them filled, right. Ready Davis, Ben Spock, Abby Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, right

DV: and this reminds you of Phoenix

EM: this is Phoenix. This is Phoenix.

DV: so you are seeing what's happening in Vietnam, happen in the United States

EM: THIS IS PHOENIX, OK, and I'm being sent out to spot these people, to identify these people. I'm doing Phoenix...

DV: because you had pictures, in Vietnam, of your suspects,

EM: right, yeah. I had pictures. I didn't have photographs but I had images

DV: Composite?

EM: not even, I didn't even have pictures. I had descriptions maybe. We weren't in place we had technology.

DV: well they got more sophisticated. In the Delta and some places they had photographs.

EM: yeah, well that's a place with a lot of people

DV: but in other words you saw the Phoenix mentality...

EM: in the United States

DV: in the United States

EM: Army Intelligence being used against the American people

DV: that's not allowed anymore. That was something the Church or Rockefeller Committee

EM: and one of the reasons they did that was people like me, who were inside and worked on a Congress Intelligence Project to expose that

DV: so, in other words, the less of Phoenix is, if it could be used in Vietnam, it could be used in the United States. If it...

EM: and it was used in Vietnam and it was used in the United States and it is used in the United States.

DV: because, you know,

EM: it's not like it was used in the United States, it is used in the United States

DV: in what regard?

EM: it's still being done

DV: in what...can you give me an example an instance, elaborate on it a bit.

EM: Um...a guy name Bill Brownstown, Lowenbrook, Staten Island...uh...do you know where Lowenbrook is?

DV: Geraldo Riveria, sure do. I'm from New York

EM: Geraldo went over the wall at Lowenbrook. The people who took him over the wall were Bill Brownstown, Mike Wilkins and woman named Elizabeth Lee, OK? And...uh...the FBI sent files on Bill Brownstown and Milk Wilkins to...uh...New York City to be used against them. These people were targed people...uh...

DV: you don't see that as being legitimate?

EM: no I don't, I means that's what they were doing. These were targeted people. These are my friends but I was there I was at Willowbrook.

DV: and it's not because there communists it's just because their going against...

EM: they were going against the...uh...what was going on there and this was an attempt to discredit that. The FBI, they were doing other stuff besides that. They do...I mean

DV: yeah, like what?

EM: well they were doing Black Panther stuff, they were doing a lot of stuff.

DV: Brownstown?

EM: yeah Bill was, they were doing a lot of stuff and...uh...uh...I mean these guys were doing a lot of anti-war stuff

DV: so you're saying dissenters of any stripe become targeted people

EM: Willowbrook, what they did...what they did about them related to Willowbrook was not because of what they did at Willowbrook but because of other things they were doing and this was used as a way to discredit them

DV: yeah, so then

EM: and these were friends of mine

DV: so, then, the problem which Phoenix represents is a larger problem, what is that larger problem and what...articulate it? Is it that powers-at-be don't brook any dissent...

EM: yeah basically

DV: does that sound, you know...

EM: it's a violation, you know, it's a violation of, one, the American constitution if I can say that. The American ethos of democracy...

DV: in other words...

EM: ...of freedom of speech...

DV: and the point of Vietnam being....

EM: ...of dissent...

DV: if Americans can go to Vietnam...

EM: and do that

DV: ...and do it, then...the precedent has been broken, not only according to your...uh...what your sorta saying, its bound...it's inevitable to happen.

EM: and it did. It's happening in Central America...

DV: you see, what hear...

EM: you can overthrow the Chilean Government

DV: what I hear is that there are Phoenix death squads that operate in America

EM: that maybe true, I don't know

DV: that...that...um...that people who are dissenters, not only have...uh...dossiers and get arrested, but they get killed too. You know, I mean I have yet to find any evidence of that.

EM: you're saying...you're saying that people believe that?

DV: people believe that. People are afraid to talk to me who are PRU advisors because they say there is a group that...um...if they were talk to me, there's a group...their names are known...that anybody who was a PRU advisor, who actually led these PRU hit teams, they're known to government. I mean they know who these guys are.

EM: oh sure

DV: and if any of them were to talk to me, there's still a team, within that larger team of guys who actually went around doing the hits, some of them still work and are still in a group and they would go around bump off any of their old crew that was talk to about what actually happened.

EM: I think if that happens it's done by renegades. I honestly don't believe. Now, I'm as and I don't want to say paranoid, but I'm as...I'm as...perceptive as...

DV: you're willing to believe

EM: yeah, I'm open to a lot things being possible. I don't believe in the kinda of parallax view mentality. I don't believe that, I honestly don't, you know...

DV: the bureau of social studies

EM: I honestly don't believe that. I mean Al Lowstein, over there, Sheri Lowstein's my friend and Al was killed

DV: yeah, I remember

EM: I lived and worked with him and he was killed by a lunatic

DV: that's what they say, yeah...John Lennon was killed by a lunatic too

EM: but...but it's my belief that he was killed by a lunatic. Now, there's...there's plenty of reasons to kill Al Lowstein, OK? I believe he was killed by a lunatic. I'm not saying I'm right. I'm just saying what I believe, OK? Now...uh...there were many other people...John Lennon was killed. I think it's as possible because of my experience in Phoenix and my experience in Vietnam. It's possible for systematic things to happen like that I mean a parallax view, OK and...but it's equally as possible for people to do...assume the authority to do a lot all sorts of and an awful lot of that is dependent on the individuals. Now, if I wanted to I could have gotten away with a lot of stuff, you know, a lot more than I did and if I want, even in my job right now, I have as much latitude as I am willing to push my elbows out and...until somebody stops me and it wouldn't surprise if somebody would be killed who spoke out, wouldn't surprise me, you gonna want to save this tape, it wouldn't surprise me if I get killed. I'm not going to take that as a shock or surprise, you know, but I don't believe...I don't, at this point and I think about these things a fair amount, don't think that that would...that I would be targeted by the government.

DV: but you see this is something I can't talk about with the ROIC, the Region Officer in Charge for the CIA in the Delta. You know, I mean they'd just dismiss this as a fantasy

EM: that that could happen?

DV: yeah, that that could happen but, at the same time, I mean you mention parallax view, middle age men wanted for...for work, you know, I mean it takes a certain mentality, you know, it...uh...it's hard to explain away a lot of things. Where do all the Phoenix people go, the ones who devised these things, who think them up, the mentality behind Phoenix, the force that creates and institutes it. They go to El Salvador. They got to Brazil.

EM: some of them do. Some of them get out of the business for some of them it's a...uh...it's something they did at one point in their life and they're doing something else and I think for some of them it's like...cause I deal with Veterans, a lot people do one thing in their life and they never do it again and that that happens to people.

DV: did you ever meet any Phoenix people?

EM: sure

DV: you met guys from Phoenix?

EM: sure

DV: in what...uh...you know, in what respects? I mean military people like you, basically.

EM: yeah people who worked in the program one way or another, I just...in the veterans movement or, you know, or from someplace...

DV: did you meet any PRU advisors?

EM: yeah I think so. I think I met a few. If I was about to go about it I could probably ask this person and that person and find somebody. I mean it wouldn't be hard to find.

DV: would that...would you consider doing that for me?

EM: uh...what are you looking for...you're looking for PRU advisors, people who run PRU, who actually work with PRU?

DV: yeah I want to find some people that worked with PRU...uh...particularly Special Forces. I don't know I suppose you probably have percentages wise a whole lot less Special Forces coming in because Special Forces tend to be professional soldiers anyway, who do a twenty year career or something.

EM: no, no plenty of those guys went in for...a lot of guys got attached from...guys who were with me got attached to Special Forces

DV: military intelligence?

EM: yeah and they did their three years and got out. So they worked on that stuff, other guys...a friend of mine who was a medic in...Special Forces medic, medal of honor recipient, he runs out...he set out in Rochester, he might know some people.

DV: yeah my sister lives in Rochester

EM: his name Darron Belcar, B-E-L [end of side two]

O'shea

Track One

Sound Bite 1

CO: I think it was the...

DV: over what?

JT... typical problem of Police Special Branch maintaining no dossiers and not opening one up and in many cases we came to expect that fact at this period in life, 1972, it was not time to start arguing Police Special Branch. The CIA has run an effective DIOCC. We need to have their dossiers. The time of that was forty years prior to get that on. At this stage in the game—

DV: there is no cooperation, there really is no cooperation

JT: there really is still no cooperation in that area and, you know, we were losing the DIOCCs and PIOCCs advisors and things were...uh...Stan was insistent that they were never competitive and he was going to get at them and I, I think

Sound bite 2

CO: ...because I think it was, I may not have been the right, the wrong but it was, at that particular time, it was pretty much accepted that they were not going to open up their files. They hadn't done it for four years.

DV: they hadn't done it anyway, huh?

CO: they hadn't done it anyway and they weren't going to do it this time.

DV: well, you see this the...this the big problem I have with understanding Phoenix, ok...this is my...this is my...

CO: this is probably why it wasn't as effective as it should've been

DV: this is what I've

Sound bite 3

DV: is that distinction made when you're...back in the early days, '66-'67, that the VCI are a civilian people behind the military?

CO: I think the VCI as we defined it were just the Viet Cong Infrastructure that included political commissars, military...key military leaders, tax collectors those which, you know, if you got them structure would tend to fall apart. That included military and political leaders.

DV: alright, there is a pretty precise definition

Sound bite 4

DV: what I am saying is—

CO: the idea was never to go kill them.

DV: right, right, it's the turf

CO: it was to capture them, talk to them and use them. That didn't always work.

Sound bite 5

CO: I don't...I don't think its that they just didn't want them captured. I think it was just standard procedure that they are not going to give out their files.

DV: for security?

CO: for security.

Sound bite 6

DV: exactly what he said

CO: because he knew he moved across World War II and he moved across Europe. He had civil affairs, government stuff like that. He had military intelligence, particularly a counterintelligence corps, civil affairs people [volume drops to almost inaudible whisper] following up on that and you know they were taking a look at all the line crosses coming through who were ostensibly civilians. They were screening

civilians, debriefing civilians, trying to find out who were spies, who were Nazis trying to get away...um...who were high level political people trying to infiltrate to Argentina. So I meant there was very definite...uh...gray

DV: and that was counterintelligence

CO: and that was counterintelligence, right and that was against civilians!

DV: right

CO: because those civilians there was and of course, you know, and that was...that wasn't being done as much by OSS that was a predecessor to CIA

DV: yeah they were mostly paramilitary

CO: there were more primary...yeah, right paramilitary and secret intelligence at that time so they weren't really doing that counterintelligence

Sound bite 7

CO: what you perceived in the beginning was CIA started, that's a good perception, with the Special Branch found it was successful that the...it was a good method of attack to go after the VCI and then wanted to expand that methodology on out through the DIOCCs...

DV: ...and make it a nation-wide program...

CO: ...to put Army people into that, intelligence people into that to support it were appropriate and nothing wrong with that kind of thing as a counterintelligence thing. As it moved on out there, do that though, they wanted to have there cake and eat it too.

DV: who did?

CO: CIA

DV: yeah ok

JT: so they wanted to have an attack on the infrastructure but they didn't want to open it on up—open up their files for security reasons. They still had their rice bowls. So they really expected, and this is all supposition, that program to work as well as it could.

Sound bite 8

CO: that commanded that the very essence of their program was to get at the political tax collectors, the VCI comma liaison things, you couldn't get those because those were the guys kept in Special Branch.

DV: right well that's what I am saying what is this—

CO: its kinda self defeating and what happened was, I think, is that the Phoenix Program went more after VCI so called it was more on the military side.

Sound bite 9

CO: those DIOCCs were coordination centers and information that came in that would be put in those dossiers came from all sorts of different sources.

DV: except Special Branch

CO: except Special Branch

DV: but Special Branch is at the DIOCC, its at the PIOCC and its monitoring everything else that everybody else has put it?

CO: I had more men complain that there was, you know, more advisors that complain they keep there own files over there and they will not give us that extra. So, you know, that's the way it was and why is that evolutionary process they went through, they wanted to expand it and I think they wanted to have their cake and eat it too and so they kept their files to themselves.

DV: they want military resources, they want people...

CO: they the military resources in them but they wanted them to take all of this stuff that was available and go after them. As a result of not having that Special Branch input, I think the Phoenix Program and its military advisors tended to go more after common liaison links and more or less those VCI that were more military than political that they could identify.

Sound bite 10

CO: that particular when I was...uh...what it had—the program had, well save the children, it had got it to...they...the province office was a managers office and we were not doing any operations and I don't think the province...and in provinces and the districts we're trying to keep their PIOCCs and DIOCCs going.

DV: so the region's a manager's office?

CO: region, manager's office and it...what it primarily did was try to coordinate those provinces and districts and like these couple operations we want out on. We were not really run a big effective DIOCC at the time.

Sound bite 11

CO: and basically what I was doing was...is closing down PIOCCs and DIOCCs

Sound bite 12

DV: why close down a source, because, you know, its like somebody once they might not lie to you tomorrow, anyway

CO: well it...there's reasons for doing that and I'll go into that and, if you want to ask later, I can tell you a little about the policy.

DV: yeah, go ahead tell me know

CO: well just basically that it is a business...

DV: ...and you have to do business

CO: ...and you have to live up to your word...

DV: ...and you have to establish trust...

CO: ...that are captured, have been captured...uh...we made agreements that we would pay...US intelligence services made agreements that you would take care of your family and come on out. We have done that for as much as twenty years. A guy who was prisoner of foreign sources or something like that when they come on out none of that happened and no US intelligence relied upon...

Sound bite 13

DV: why can't the same standards apply between MI and CIA? Why can't they do business together?

CO: oh yeah, yeah well it that's...we do do business. I...I don't think that, what I don't want to say here on is that MI and CIA don't do business together. They do business together.

DV: very well together

CO: very, very well together

DV: people have problems

Track 2

Sound bite 1

DV: He says Phoenix coordinated at corps level—region level.

CO: region level rather what do they mean by coordinate.

DV: well that's what I am saying that military and CIA get together at region level but not necessarily at province level. I mean that seems to be the suggestion. Maybe not

CO: well I...

DV: is there something

CO: ...my impression that the theory was...

DV: coordination at every level

CO: yeah and that the PIOCC and DIOCC, they were trying to get what they could from CIA. CIA wasn't giving it from the Police Special Branch stuff. They would give them other stuff. They would give them some, you know, stuff that came in. So they were coordinating down there. We were not doing that much at region. There was not that much....

Sound bite 2

DV: Now, a couple of Phoenix guys who were province officers went to the Combined Studies Group in Saigon that was the post office address that they sent their reports to.

CO: the Combined Studies Group was the—you know what CAS stands for?

DV: yeah Controlled American Source.

CO tha...that's cover names for CIA...uh...there...there...in other words, people and there not cover names. The...the CIA does not like to be called the CIA in situations like that so they come up with euphuisms

DV: O-S-A, OSA, and Office of Special Assistant...

CO: CAS...CSG. CSG was CIA another euphuism like CAS for CIA, as far as I'm concerned. I still maintain that the evolution I outlined here while we were talking out there in the kitchen. Laos in '59, white star teams...uh...CIA coming into Vietnam and running its army in Laos as CSG, CAS, whatever...maybe it was running operations in there that gradual military involvement...uh...the...uh...the attempts of the military to try and do a little UW, the formalization of that in SOG...uh...the parallel operations, well, I think the parallel operations of CIA, of course, I worked with the 149 back in SOG. There was military intelligence operations, there was CIA operations...uh...there was SOG operations, which were limited out of country and there were CIA operations out of country that were total [I don't know] and there were also CORDs operations.

DV: And at the same type are there also synpac operations?

CO: and it was also CORDs that started things when in back when I there in '66 and '67 like the Kit Carson scouts program up in one corps which was, you know...uh...

DV: marines...

CO: getting Chieu Hoi guys and using them as turn-arounds go back after...uh...uh...the VCI

Sound bite 3

CO: Put together CT four. That's why they started the Phoenix Program, we've got to get someplace were all this information, whether you call them double agent or agent or some other piece of information some place where it all can be put together. It was beginning to understand intelligence for counterinsurgency which the British did back in the early 1950s.

Sound bite 4

CO: basically what it becomes is you're targeting is different for intelligence personnel is different in a counterinsurgency situation than it is in the Cold War or a normal situation.

Sound bite 5

DV: He had just told me about something called Special Military Intelligence Advisory Team. Did you ever hear about that?

CO: SMIA

DV: yeah,

CO: yeah...yeah

DV: what is that?

CO: SMIA was a predecessor—

DV: of CT four

CO: No

DV: ok

CO: of the 149th

DV: oh ok that's what he has down here

CO: it was the predecessor of the 149th that's what it was

DV: it was collection?

CO: yeah,

DV: alright he was a Phoenix guy who was in that

CO: it was in country. He was in country just like the 149th.

Track 3

Sound bite 1

CO: you know, its very, very expensive and its very slow to respond.

DV: yeah it take's years to develop. This is...

CO: now a lot of people...a lot of people....

DV: See this is another one of the tremendous contradictions oh Phoenix.

CO: the regular army—the regular military mentality is I want now and then I want you gone. You know, it doesn't—HUMIT [human intelligence; agent penetration, I think that this what he is saying] takes a long time to get going.

Sound bite 2

DV: and not having any time to develop anything

CO: in fact, the more pressure on to get something like that going and respond to that pressure the more chances are that you're going to get penetrated yourself because you gotta go out and get guys and that's what happened to us in Vietnam

Sound bite 3

CO: what happened was the 149th, in fact yeah, I was in on the forming of it and I was in on the end of it

DV: So it ends around December of...

CO: that's right

DV: ...of '60

CO: that's right and they decided that what they wanted to do was put it altogether the 135th, the 149th ...uh...they would put it altogether...

DV: about the time of....

CO: ...in the 525th

DV: and that all...so then that's CT IV and then at that point

CO: it kinda came on

DV: oh ok so everything happen—everything, then, falls under the 525th

CO: that's right when I got back over to Vietnam in '70-'72 there was 525th with its corps...corps out.

Sound bite 4

DV: What is Special Security? What is a Special Security Unit?

CO: ok...uh...S...

DV: SSU, I think yeah

CO: Special Security, I think what we are talking Special Security means were also talking about Special Security Group type things. Special Security Group. You go back and read any of the stuff from World War II starting out with Holtra stuff (?) history of Holtras, Special Security Group. Special Security Group is...uh...the units that handle...used to handle the dissemination—you can get this out of many books of history going back to Holtra and...uh...it handles the dissemination of SCI material, Special Compartmental Information in addition to your regular intelligence which is secret, confidential, secret, top-secret

DV: ultra-secret, yeah

CO: you got what you call SI, Special Intelligence. It's no secret that Special Intelligence is SIGNIT. Ok? What happened was that was so...so sensitive prior to World War II and during World War II because the very existence that you could do some of that type of stuff wasn't known to anybody.

DV: it was like radar, ships didn't have radar.

CO: everybody knows you have SIGNIT, IGNIT and HUMIT but it's the degree of technology of us versus them and some of that. Back then, even existent wasn't on so what they did was they set up, with the British and the US, they call SSUs, SSLs

DV: and those people just handled that stuff

CO: and what they did, they just handled that information and only went from them to the commander. Outside of regular intelligence, there was like a special compartment.

Sound bite 5

CO: ASA, Army Security Agency was the SIGNIT outfit...uh...and Army Intel—Army Intelligence Agency handled [a couple of words that are two mumbly for me to make out maybe "all left and right"] psyops and that type stuff. Many of the commanders found out in the Vietnam War that they would get

their collateral intelligence briefing for one time and then Special Security Officer, the SSO would come in and give a Special Security briefing based on the SIGNIT and either they wouldn't jive or one was out of time sequence with the other and some cases people got killed because guys were protecting the information until it was too late to affect the operation and Senior Army Commander quite rightfully said "that ain't going to happen. We are going all source and when I get a briefing I want..."

DV: everything

CO: ...my people cleared, I want all source and the Army better start realizing the orders.

DV: in that case your divisional commanders and your brigade commanders and your people who were running a line outfit that need that information.

CO: that need that information and that's why we reorganized and put in under one command.

Sound bite 6

CO: and when he came on up first they said "we're going to send him down for three months to Fort Bragg, give you six weeks of advisor school and of...uh...Phoenix/ Phoung Houg course.

DV: where did you take that?

CO: It was at Fort Bragg

Sound bite 7

DV: tell me about the Phoung Houg course?

CO: ok, [cuts out] language school was basic, abbreviated course in military terminology taught by [cuts out] but the six weeks portion of it was good. It basically centered around...uh...targeting of VCI. I had a sample dossier that I don't have they used in there it was unclassified...

DV: yeah I've seen it

CO: ...but it centered around the operations of the DIOCC...uh...coordination

DV: with CIA?

CO: with all intelligence agencies trying to get a coordinated approach.

Sound bite 8

CO: They concentrated, yeah, what they were concentrating on in instruction was the DIOCC and PIOCC

DV: not region

CO: not...not region. There was no schooling in region. It was on DIOCC and PIOCC. It was on mechanics, a lot of mechanics. This was a captain's level course.

DV: your mean reporting and stuff like that, mechanics?

CO: yeah reporting...reporting and mechanics of reporting, mechanics of keeping a dossier and emphasis on Bill Colby's get three pieces of information before you go after a guy that's that the whole judicial approach to things, now.

Sound bite 9

DV: You could've been in directorate. You could've been in region in province, whatever.

CO: I was...I was assigned as a...as a...bottom as a...as a...what...see military a requirements come in even in the Phoenix Program. They come up a Montgomery O5s and Montgomery O4s and where they're going to put them and they send them back to the states so they can match them up again.

Sound bite 10

CO: I was called in by...uh...this was at the time when they were just starting to go through the reorganization and were thinking of turning it on over to the Vietnamese National Police and that action was up and down.

Sound bite 11

CO: He says "you've come in at an opportune time, we've just lost our liaison officer down there in Con Son and...uh..."

Sound bite 12

CO: I said...that wasn't my size. I wanted the feet (?) but...uh...he said "well, let's try this for a while." So I went down there for about two week and this was around January, probably the end of January

Sound bite 13

CO: This is strictly liaison so he was social function [mumbles something I can't make out] Tilton wanted it because it was CIA, you know, experience and all that kind of stuff.

Sound bite 14

CO: It was more him than me whoever he had down there to come back and tell him, you know, what Son was thinking. What the guy was...

DV: what was Son thinking?

CO: you know, you know, you know, what was he doing, trying to keep track on him as much as anything.

Sound bite 15

CO: you know go back

DV: what was happening there, at the directorate?

CO: ok now, at the directorate

DV: I mean that couldn't have been s—there must have been something going on there?

CO: the big thing that was going on in the directorate was between...uh...US officials and Vietnamese police officials as to how this—major action was how to get this thing transferred, start to get this transferred.

Sound bite 16

DV: are they doing that FREAKS, Phoung Houng Reexamination at that time?

CO: That's what it was called FREAKS Phoung Houng Reexamination. Now the decision had not been made—

DV: I have never seen than. Now I understood from Codlet who I interviewed that that is a fundamental document that I should get. I haven't been able to find it anywhere.

CO: I don't know if you'll be able to find it. It is basically, it was going on and...and...it went on most of them while I was there until the end when—

DV: is that the substance of FREAKS, then, the...the turning it over.

Sound bite 17

CO: there was already start to talk of ceasefires in papers back here, of pullout call it what you want, that was starting to come in. People were looking for ways to back out of this.

DV: yeah I mean, actively, right I mean everybody had decided that.

CO: this was not Tilton's decision or any people's decision this was coming down from I don't know where

DV: from Washington DC

CO: it was coming down from Washington DC. As to here are some—I believe it was a list of things we should start to back away from.

Sound bite 18

CO: this was the big thing that was going on. The Phoenix, the Phoung Houng management information system and Bill Johnson was computer guy and he was designing that thing and Bill was a tremendously hard worker and he worked night and day trying to get that thing working.

DV: now is he actually in the directorate?

CO: yeah he was in the directorate. This was one of the major things going on as well as the FREAKS.

Sound bite 19

CO: I really came to understand after all those briefings and all those reports how we could have lost that war and I'm being sarcastic, facetious, you know what I am saying is this and I work for a computer company know too—they'll probably fire me but I don't mind saying this—is really could never see how that system could be of value. A computer system in Saigon dealing with some VCI comma liaison guy

coming down a trail and trying to identify the trail and all that, putting that into a database in Saigon. When you needed information for an operation in the field, you needed it then, you need a quick response. Sending down to Saigon, going through a database, getting it on out, putting it back on up, to me, is a misunderstanding of what you really want [more mumbles] computer capability. This was probably I don't think a good application.

Sound bite 20

DV: now isn't that the double checkus (?)

CO: they would try to automate that and I'm not to sure that, you know, have a mess and you automate a mess you have an automated mess.

DV: but do I understand it do be this double checkus I mean that is the double checkus.

CO: that is the double checkus that is done normal in intelligence, whether it's automated or not.

Sound bite 21

CO: by the time we got there Bill Johnson spent all his time working on that, it was not a ready to go system for the field.

DV: really even in '71.

Track 4

Sound bite 1

DV: you know, go from your transition from the directorate to the field

CO: ok well that was around the end of January...um...I moved up to become Mallet's deputy.

Sound bite 2

DV: John had asked you to do this?

CO: well, kinda, you know, I had a talk with him before I went out and he was tremendous guy he said "it takes a lot to go on off and go crazy," you know he says.

DV: meaning?

CO: You outta be able help them and look at some of the resources at the time

DV: you mean he might mount an operation without properly having researched it or something?

CO: No, no...I kinda really like maybe I should leave out, really leave it alone

DV: I mean Lunala has a reputation as hard charger

CO: that's really what he was

DV: go in guns blasting is that—

CO: John Tilton was saying “you’d make a good compliment.”

Sound bite 3

CO: my initial impression on those things was the problem with program at that time was a problem with staff. It was supposed to have, you know, your advisors for everyone PIOCC and DIOCCs. Some of the people who rotating out, the replacements were not coming in and the same is true of the province teams. So what was happening is as the province teams lose intelligence officer they and the province chiefs were co-opting the PIOCC and DIOCC people to double hat them and in many cases they said double hat them what they did was put them doing the province intelligence job.

DV: so as the S-2s are going home the Phoenix/Phoung Houng guy is taking over that function.

CO: that function, that’s right.

DV: of tactical military intelligence

CO: and the Phoenix guys were also going home too

DV: and then the S-2 takes over his job, if he’s still there

CO: well no see that...it’s a one-way street. The Phoung Houng was the one that was starting to fall aside. He was trying to do was really try, he believed in the program, he was really trying to keep the Phoung Houng people, the Phoenix people doing the Phoenix job.

Sound bite 4

CO: and he was really hard to get off working with, Colonel Cordley who was he G-2 there Com To that April and you can’t fault the guy, you know, you got a major, regular invasion on his hands and this guy is saying “hey I got to check on my VCI,” you know I don’t wash.

DV: yeah doesn’t wash

Sound bite 5

CO: that was one jobs I saw them let doing, trying hold the program together organizationally and going around number one...uh...trying to keep the organization in place and if they had to do some of that job. Not let them forget the VCI job, that was nothing else. He spent a lot of time, number 2, going around making himself visible so the province and district chiefs Vietnamese so they would not get the perception that were pulling out.

Sound bite 6

DV: the Vietnamese picking it up?

CO: that’s what were trying to do to get the Vietnamese to pick it on up because the...the...the...also, you know, I brought up some of the word, and the word was coming out of Saigon about the reorganization and going to the National Police and trying to get that...get them to take. So what I...I think what...Mallet tried to hold the program together organizationally from the US side...uh...to convince the people they should keep the organization in place. If we’re missing people, that mission should not be let go, we should try do the mission as a second mission if we have to.

Sound bite 7

CO: but that's why I say the traditional—the best goal have a guy go on out, get 'em, recruit them, debrief the. The other is...

DV: set up an ambush

CO:...all you can do is stake up an ambush for a...for a trail. Now that's not an assassination program.

DV: No, I understand.

CO: because it was firefight and everything on else, we never killed anybody that wasn't—

DV: what about in Na Tran city itself.

Parker

Track One Sound bite 1

DV: and we have arrived in Vietnam

EP: I arrived their for a purely station assignment, agency job. When I arrived I found that th-they were on-going discussion about setting up a coordinated mechanism or plan to deal with what was called the Viet Cong infrastructure, VCI. We had brief conversations with the Vietnamese [cuts out] and with members of the MACV staff. The MACV staff decide that that would staff the think out, discuss whether or not they want to do this, whether or not this was a good idea. In other words, the J2, the J3 and so on would come up with their position to respond to the agency chief of stations proposal. This was overtaken by events because the ambassador and the Agency chief of station and MACV, and the chief of MACV agreed to go ahead and do with it before they got a real staff position on it. So I think from the point of view of the military they may have felt that this was shoved down their throats.

Sound bite 2

EP: But Komer was really—he liked the idea. He thought it was a great idea. It appealed to him very much because it...he liked the idea of the attack on the infrastructure. Uh...it...I guess to use one of his terms, it sounded kinda sexy and um....

Sound bite 3

EP: anyways they said do it and they identified me as the man they proposed to head this staff to deal with it and the Agency said they would sa...sa...supply assistants. Now all of this is very vague, but I was promised I would have Agency people to help me...uh...the state people in the field I would presumably get some help there, MACV would assist and so on

Sound bite 4

EP: one of the first things they said, "is you will need a deputy." I said, "absolutely I will need a military deputy." They asked me, "who do you want?" Well having been there about three days I was sure who was around, having discovered there was a Colonel named Geniche Bhuto—he is dead now unfortunately—but he was J2 staff. I think he served with counter intelligence, which made sense

and...uh...since I'd known him in OSS, I sorta reached out to him. Like was gasping and reaching for a life preserver...he was a senior full Colonel in the Army

Sound bite 5

EP: and then with his assistance we found another—a bunch of other Army officers, all of whom were near the end of their tour but could be spared from whatever they were doing and so it went.

DV: and that's how the ICEX staff was built

EP: that's the ICEX staff, yeah

DV: ok, yeah

EP: that's the ICEX staff

Sound bite 6

EP: we got some...uh...part time secretarial help we used...uh

DV: Vietnamese

EP: no, these are Americans. This is all American at the beginning

Sound bite 7

EP: but to make a long story short what we did then starting with strictly an ad hoc staff of people assigned their on temporary basis [cuts out] go with this sort of staff, we gradually developed a concept, a staff plan, some staff papers to enable the thing to get going, which we put through MACV. I am sorry I don't have the ca...ca...we had copies of all these things.

DV: was that the action program?

EP: it was action program...that's available too...that came later...wa...wa...what we did first was MACV staff papers, which described what this...what this program was and what we were going to do with the coordinating program was to be, ICEX...um...that was more less strictly working with the US military trying to put this together, so the people would know what we were talking about

Sound bite 8

EP: so we had the Agency regions behind, they knew what their responsibilities were, they were to be the nucleolus to get it going. Then, we briefed the four senior military people in those regions.

Sound bite 9

DV: well I assume that as senior advisor to the National Police, him and General Loan would have a very close relationship

EP: oh yeah, yeah...uh...John Monopoly and I would wa...wa...worked very well. As a matter of fact, part of the original concept of infrastructure was to deal with the...uh...incarceration of captured...uh...infrastructure. Well that put us right in cheek by jowls with things that had to with...uh...prisons. Well, one of...Monopoly already had a staff dealing with that on that so one of

things that we tried to work was developing and reasonable and acceptable relationships for that kind of program.

Sound bite 10

DV: is that the PIC program or is that apart from

EP: eh...eh...its separate but there again in the PIC staff there was an HT program. There had to be a lot of understanding and close relationship between—just not to waste money!

Sound bite 11

DV: then, I suppose that people paid very close track to your budgeting, as is generally the case with everything.

EP: yeah...the...the main this is...is...it must have been very confusing for the Vietnamese things that are dealing that with say the police but money and aid and advice and guidance, wanted or not, coming from several different agencies, with different roles and functions and different sources of money and yet the aid was

Sound bite 12

DV: well, is this part of the scheme you have in ICEX or not? Is that just an ancillary kind of thing?

EP: these are thing we discovered. These are things we discovered and...uh...one of the thing at least that one of the benefits of ICEX or Phoenix was that it brought the US agencies into closer cooperation too

Sound bite 13

EP: all I did was, first of all, get the infrastructure, and also...deal with the incarceration of captured infrastructure. Well, when you get into that you obviously get into additionally things because there are other agencies in country, other US agencies, whose function was to assist the Vietnamese, in very closely related activities if not identical, in sense, and it sounds screwy but

Sound bite 14

DV: for instance do you wanna...uh...just give me...uh

EP: this is another name I'll give you

DV: ok

EP: [very softly] Wellingford.

DV: [very softly] thank you

EP: he was dealing with a program, one of these paramilitary programs,

DV: is this R-e-d

EP: R-e-d yeah he's a former colonel in the Marine Corps. He's Agency. Well, his program also was going after the Viet Cong, Viet Cong Guerillas, Viet Cong whatever. There again its not directly related but nearly so

DV: was it perhaps the CAPs, combined action patrols.

EP: no, I can't what the hell do you call....

DV: Trong Song?

EP: See, I haven't thought of it and so long I forgot what they call these people. These were paramilitary people...uh...mostly former VC who worked against the...

DV: was it the PRU, then?

EP: right, he was—thank you very much—he was the advisor to the PRU, P-R-U

Sound bite 15

EP: the P-R-U ultimately became in many of the Vietnam—the Vietnamese Corps areas, the principle paramilitary arm against the infrastructure

Sound bite 16

EP: many, many instances the local Vietnamese province chief preferred to use the PRU as his action arm against the infrastructure.

DV: rather than calling in regular army forces that might not be as reliable or responsive

EP: exactly...responsive, that's the key

DV: I understand

EP: See they could be directly responsive because, you see you were dealing, in other words, you were dealing with the convinced.

DV: right, well I also understand the PRU were a unilateral American operation they were advised and run by Americans.

EP: the key guy was the province chief, which you didn't have a whole bunch of Vietnamese to worry about. They were advised by Americans. They were directed by Americans and so forth. Of course, The Americans didn't go with them; they went on their own.

Sound bite 17

DV: you wanna go back...

EP: yeah lets go back

DV: incarceration, I think was what you were...uh...yeah and how you resolved what the problem was and I know...uh...I've heard the term "nobody wanted to be Vietnam's jailer," is that the problem?

EP: Well, it was the police...these were police jails, province...uh...police jails...uh...first place there were enough of them and th-there were two, in effect, police, if you will, systems. You have the civilian and the military. The civil police ran the local jails the you know...and so on that program was under US AID. The military were responsible for prisoners of war. The PICs were responsible for picking up people who were...uh...enemy agents and whatnot , interrogating and turning them over to the proper agency.

DV: either civilian or military?

EP: yep

DV: and I understand that PICs that is CIA.

EP: it's a CIA run thing but its staffed with Vietnamese.

Sound bite 18

EP: a problem that we dealt with was to make sure that when a knowledgeable prisoner was picked up that the right people got to talk with him that he didn't disappear in the wrong system. In other words, if you had a prisoner that had military knowledge get him—make sure the military got and vice versa.

Sound bite 19

DV: If you had Vietnamese in the PICs how can you be sure that that was happening unless there was somebody there—

EP: cause you had Vietnamese whose salaries were paid by the Agency

DV: ok

Sound bite 20

DV: people often say that the PICs were part of Phoenix and ICEX but from my research I found that they came before and then were grafted on later

EP: they came before and were grafted on to it, later

DV: ok these are one of the elements that's pulled together from everything that floating around.

EP: The idea was there were all these separate programs: agency programs, army programs, navy, Vietnamese. The ideas was to get all of those that had anything to do...uh...this is...anything to do with other than purely military intelligence or purely civil crime. Or get anything to with this...to get the information to right people.

Sound bite 21

DV: so the only real creation, then, are—is the Phoenix system. That just brings things together and in itself that becomes a creation.

EP: the idea eh...eh...it's to create a coordinating mechanism so that the various...all these—we didn't try to command anything. In other words, we weren't put over the police. We weren't put over military. The idea was to come up with some sort of organizational thing that would pool the intelligence on the infrastructure and try to get these people to use that intelligence to go out and arrest if was the police or if

the army catch him but to make sure that intelligence everyone has is used to benefit. This is so easily said and difficult to do because you have the agencies, these agencies all have their own jobs, their own functions, they have existed long before Phoenix...uh...you had...uh...certainly on the Vietnamese side a certain amount of distrust not that it was—but they felt one agency said “we can’t give to them because they have been penetrated by the VC.” If we tell them the VC will do it, that sort of thing.

Sound bite 22

EP: ICEX got started, very briefly, the corps areas were briefed, the principles were briefed on the American side.

DV: You do not have a Vietnamese counterpart?

EP: Not yet, I’m getting to that. In the course of these briefing of these corps areas, the Agency guys in I Corps were rather more imaginative. In other words, they came up with the idea of Phoenix, Phoung Houang. ICEX was sort of a fakey ever name I ever forget what

DV: intelligence coordination and exploitation

EP: exploitation...yeah well that’s more than anybody can swallow so they decided to call it Phoenix or Phoung Houang.

Sound bite 23

EP: then came the job of the police, the police were brought into and then you run into something else.

DV: when you say police do you mean Special Branch

EP: No, I mean the National Police because you have to do the head of the police not just the Special Branch. Ok...uh...immediately you have a problem because there are already advisors to these things. And even on the American side, on the Agency side, there are people advising so if all of a sudden a I come in and put in charge that means. I am getting to someone business already. So if I want to get Special Branch of police I have to sell the American advisor to the Special Police. He should cooperate with us. Well, maybe he wants to, maybe he doesn’t, maybe he feels that we were already doing

Sound bite 24

EP: he may not like but he has to do it, so he does it but that doesn’t necessarily make the pill any better. You know what, in a effect, you getting another...uh...layer of command or layer of coordination put over you

Sound bite 25

EP: Everything is so screwed up, in a sense, because here although my boss, the guy who signs my fitness report is Agency chief of station. The man I actually work for is Komer. So here you have a military in effect telling this other fellow that he’s got do it this way and it...and it...this way

Sound bite 26

DV: It seems to me that in many cases there must be...um...many...uh...internal problems but the fact the Phoenix belongs to nobody, except perhaps Robert Komer and William Colby should be in a position to coordinate and, in sense, direct other agencies which to tend to think of themselves as reporting to

somebody else and...uh...I was wondering if that was weakness in the program simply because it didn't take into account the human element, how people would not like that.

EP: it took it into account but it decided that...uh...it would work because we say so sorta thing. In other words, you had...you had strong personalities. In other words, the Agency chief of station he knew that his people would cooperate and would work because they were told to.

DV: and that's John Hart

Sound bite 27

EP: MACV also even though—see they had they same sorta thing. The country was used to that because some of USAID was working with the military under the military command, as opposed to purely civil kinds of functions.

DV: right

EP: So you already had, since ya...ya...you already put this thing under the military anyway...uh...they were used to having this mismatch of agencies. And after all, even the military were under the State Department

DV: right because you're already under CORDs now, at this point

EP: well see you have the ambassador, then you had the military then you had CORDs and CORDs is a mixture of all kinds of stuff so they were used to this interlocking directorates. This is were it messes up, the idea of...of working with strange tentmates or strange messmates was already setup and it was working.

Sound bite 28

EP: the temporary people were beginning to go home and it was found that obviously we had to have something more permanent. So we set up a working organization built around the Agency's people with individuals made available to me from the different agencies but still paid for by the agencies that they belonged to both wartime temporaries and some regulars. So I gradually built up a staff. I had secretaries. I had agency people from USAID and so on who were assigned in effect to this Phoenix staff working under Komer

Sound bite 29

DV: the staff that oversees ICEX not the individual...

EP: No, no the...the...this is still just the Americans, see you have an American...you have an American staff in Saigo. In other words, my assistants, my...my...my Agency people, my other civilians: guys from the State Department, all sorts.

Track two

sound bite 1

EP: then you have people assigned to ICEX, although, still bought and paid for by their own agencies. Then you realize, as you being to flesh this thing out, that your going to have nation wide or South

Vietnam wide field organization as well as a headquarters. So you have a headquarters staff, you're going to need people...a lot more people than you originally envisioned and so the Army becomes the principle source. So the Army, then, decides that it would provide, and we came up with a staff-type organization, so many people at province, so many people at region and so forth. Most of these people who came from the Army, alright

Sound bite 2

EP: MACV, then, took the bodies at first, as they came in country, and assigned them, regardless of the fact they may have been intended for something else.

Sound bite 3

EP: then, as the program went on, people were identified in the States before they got out to Vietnam and then even were trained in the States or at least trained to some extent in the States. The ones that had no intelligence training or no experience we tried to give at least an orientation in country and then we actually set up training program in country that was about a week long

DV: at Vung Tau?

EP at Vung Tau

Sound bite 4

DV: half way through '69 perhaps

EP: yeah at least into...yeah in '69 I guess—yeah I left in '69. So, by that time you had the staff structure in place that people were about then business and then it was simply making sure that as new people arrived in country, from the military primarily, that they knew what they were doing. Meanwhile, were working with the Vietnamese to sell them the idea. It was so the idea...the police obviously had...as Vietnamese police obviously had a major role in it became after all you dealing primarily with civilians but the army did assist. And a Vietnamese structure set up, very similarly: region, province

DV: and also a staff

EP: yeah the staff. At first, we simply used people, just as I had done, people that were already doing other things. Then a Phonies staff was set up by the Vietnamese primarily people from the police, the National Police. They had to set up quarters for them and so forth. The two organizations had separate quarters because we wanted...we wanted the Vietnamese to feel that Phoenix was a Vietnamese program and that the Americans were simply advisors, which parallels everything else we did in country. We are not in command of anything. Even though, obviously, certain of the Vietnamese things were more responsive than others.

Sound bite 5

EP: one of the great problems with the Vietnamese in getting this thing started is that the thing was the classification of the directives was so high in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy that it was very difficult to handle these documents, in the field. They were secret or top secret and the safe guarding of these things is very difficult so that made it hard to get it out to the state or province and tell people what they were supposed to do.

Sound bite 6

EP: now one thing that did occur that I personally didn't really think was right and that is I didn't think we needed an elaborate structure everywhere in country. I didn't think that some of these provinces for example had enough people in there and enough activity to warrant trying to staff out everywhere. I would have preferred to concentrate on the more populated areas or the more active areas, where you know you had people to work with and also something to work against. Both we and the enemy had something going on.

Sound bite 7

DV: ok who was your...who became your counterpart, which Vietnamese individual, did you know.

EP: well actually the worked most closely with was...was the director general of police. I had no actual counterpart.

Sound bite 8

EP: and having the Special Branch play such a key role made it somewhat difficult because in many of the provinces, many of the more rural areas, if you will, they had of the Special Police, the Special Police officer was probably equivalent to a sergeant. So we give him a key role in it and he doesn't have much clout, after all he's not even an officer. And the police also are pretty subordinate to the military, in a sense, and you have all the business of army vs police, two different organizations makes you wonder how it worked at all.

Sound bite 9

EP: we had to have something to work with and since nobody knew what...knew what they were doing and nobody had been trained, except for the Agency guys, well anyway ta...ta...to sort of make it quickly we went through this organizational phase. The Vietnamese went through the same thing, pulling together police and whatever, trying to setup staffs of some sort, try to find places for them to sit, provide them pencils and paper, and then to...to try to get them to actually conduct some kind operations and here you come to the nitty gritty. Basically the PRU, were effective at least in many areas they would go out and chance around after infrastructure or conduct operations, which would produce some sort of results. In some areas the police were effective. In many areas...uh...I would say probably more got done in capturing...they were sorta military operations, they got military prisoners. So and it varied rally according to what was available in terms of facilities and people.

DV: and this is exactly what the program is designed to do, to use resources wherever they were.

EP: Yeah to use...a...a...and even more than that...uh...it depended on the personality and the personal likes and dislikes or preferences of the senior Vietnamese people. So you don't have uniform program, a uniform—you don't have the same response you made expect from a British unit or an American unit, something like that.

Sound bite 10

EP: in I Corp there was a lot of activity not so much concerned with the Viet Cong Infrastructure as you were with machinations of rival political parties

DV: the Buddhists in particular

EP: well the Buddhist or whatever

Sound bite 11

DV: oh ok, you mean like the Dai Viet party

EP: the Dai Viet party and things like that. In other words, other political activities which

DV: nationalist

EP that weren't necessarily working hand a glove with government. This is always the problem you run into something like this, sort of open seasons on the enemy of settling scores.

Sound bite 12

EP: So...so...so lets say you have some sort of a structure set up, some of facilities, money...money or resources available to them...uh...people are captured, people are interrogated, so forth then you need to keep...then you need a record keeping system then... Komer was a great one on setting objectives and then keeping score of your performance against those objectives

DV: is that how quotas get developed?

EP: exactly, then they came up with the idea—well I resisted like mad, quota. I thought that quotas would result in cheating or would result in...uh...people being arrested and this being...looking good on a quota. Or the idea of names listed on arrested that didn't even exist. In some areas, I thought, in one area, I was told that they were taking names off the gravestones, if not literally at least the equivalent of that

DV: ex post facto?

EP: yeah...uh...anyway you had this and they had quotas and they'd try to meet their quotas, I think in reports of actual accomplishment in terms of captures, in terms of...well, killing wasn't the name of the game in a lot of places because they had to listed anyway. Um...you got the idea that is some sort of murder organization.

Sound bite 13

EP: in order to make this thing work, I would say that the core people were the Agency guy in charge of the police, that's Special Police, the senior Agency advisor. I'm not sure I want you to use this in print or anyplace.

DV: Ok well at anytime you want to turn that off but I did—

EP: leaving aside, the key people are John, Robert and myself because he had so much to do with the police. That is on the American side, in the staff.

Sound bite 14

EP: this is a staff responsibility. See we didn't command anybody. We simply gave a directive in the name of MACV or in the name of the Colby or Komer and it got...it was done sooner than the actual commanders, it was done through the chief of police, it was done through an Army colonel, something like that.

Sound bite 15

DV: you made a consideration in...uh...

EP: because I firmly believe in the soft sell.

DV: well that's what I mean [doug and evan talk over each other]

EP: they had their orders and after all this is a military organization and their responsible Komer said you'll do it and Colby said...Colby also a soft spoken person and...uh...they said you'll do it. So my job is to say "ok, Colby says to do this and this is how your going to go about it, this is what your expected. In other words, what I did is...is help the people to carry out what they were ordered to do. I was, in effect, an advisor. Just like everybody else on CORDs, they all were advisors.

Sound bite 16

DV: were you able to think of yourself as disassociated from the station or were you basically thinking

EP: turn it off...[cuts out]...a leading role, the Agency's no longer was going to have a leading role, the Agency people in the field, in province and so forth was—turn their attention to their own business of intelligence and so forth—continued to assist and cooperate but no longer provide leading role, as I said, and let the military staff officers who have been provided by MACV take over. Um...

Track 3

sound bite one

DV: in that summer/fall of '67...um...uh...ICEX was grafted on the CIA station field operations organization so...uh...initially

EP: eh...it was...it wasn't grafted on it, it simply took advantage of it. The...let see, the key agency...put it this way the province or not...the regional officer—you've heard the time ROIC, R-O-I-C, right, he was simply given his Phoenix or ICEX duties in addition to his duties.

DV: and at what point....

EP: A...a...and when this was all done there was nothing in writing. I told them to do this. It was all done orally. You were simply told that ya...ya...you've heard that of what Ev's in charge of, you'll get it done here, you'll pass the word to your employees.

Sound bite 2

DV: how were Phoenix operations conducted in Saigon, was Saigon as separate region?

EP: uh...yeah....Saigon was done by the people responsible for the police in Saigon.

Sound bite 3

EP: a lot of thing were done in the name of Phoenix

DV: well this is one of the confusions and...eh...eh...it...

EP: there were a lot of operations that were in order to, I suppose get brownie points, were to say that we conducting X many Phoenix operations and that looks good on your record. Um...I think the US Military did that too because they were ordered to conduct sweeps and so forth. They might have pick up some

VC, but the...the...they just as well could have been military as civilian. Wa...wa...whatever the results were it could be, it was conducting in the name of Phoenix. This comes into your record keeping....

Sound bite 4

DV: that's the next thing I wanted to talk to you about...um...did you have a computer person on your staff?

EP: No, not as such. I had people who feed information into the computer but the computers were run by...uh...CORDs. We simply gave the info. Ultimately, I resisted producing that kind of information simply because we know garbage in garbage out. I was very afraid of getting...I was more...I was, again it comes from a whole mindset, I wasn't interested in numbers, I was interested in just in getting key people.

Sound bite 5

EP: its just a strange thing as you run into today, talk about guerillas, you catch lots of little guys but you never get the big one. And you can the arrest the little ones but operation goes on and on and on. And never you never really hurt them. It's just like getting people that are selling dope

DV: yeah why get the guy selling nickel bags on the street, right?

EP: A...a...and they're a dime a dozen, and there...but its to god its providing...and it's the same with the VC its very hard to get a really important one.

Sound bite 6

DV: I had heard that...um...uh...lists compiled in province of the people whose name through, you know, interrogation or informants, whatever, were all, before they were acted upon at the province level, passed through the Phoenix Directorate in Saigon is that a fact?

EP: no,

DV: a province chief would write up his own list and act on it independently?

EP operation control was done at whatever level it was under, province level—in other words, if it was something the Vietnamese operated, it was in strictly Vietnamese channels. If it was PRU it would be done more or less under the PRU advisor or the Agency officer whose responsibility included the PRU and some them had a number of different duties.

DV: so Americans could unilaterally conduct an operation without telling the Vietnamese, and the Vietnamese might do it without telling the Americans and vice versa.

EP: unfortunately

Sound bite 7

DV: Phoenix national committee which was composed of the Amry G2, G3, the [cuts out] when that committee would meet would the Americans advisors come along for instance, the would have been a senior American advisor to each one of these people, would they come a long.

EP: we had some meetings were the American counterpart, if you will...we all met. It was a herd of turkeys I mean there were so many of us

DV: there were, there were actually meetings were they for the purpose of organization, yeah

EP: yeah pretty much, not operations because you don't like to discuss operations with some many people; you'll have a security problem

DV: right, ok

EP: the operations were really done by the so-called action agencies and...uh...if there needed to be cooperation the Vietnamese would consult if they trusted their

Sound bite 8

EP: that's when we had Robert Thompson there

DV: oh, yeah. Was he much help

EP: he was some help because his situations were different in that, in a nutshell, in every situation that he talked about and he worked with, in Malaya for example, the British could give orders, where in Vietnam we could only advise. Now, obviously the Americans had clout because we had all the money, and goodies to give out. So we had a great deal of influence but we couldn't specifically order someone to do something. The British could. They're in charge

Sound bite 9

EP: a handful of British officers working with the USAID police, in Saigon

DV: with John and...

Sound bite 10

DV: Rev Dev Cadre participated in Phoenix operations can you tell me about your relationship?

EP: just as...you know...the personal relationship, I had no command or anything like that but they cooperated because...uh...they, like all the activates of the station we...were things that were as helpless as they could and if they had the capability and they had access to that sorta thing else, sure.

DV: in terms of resources, people, ideas whatever

EP: whatever

DV: and this is all basically on an informal basis?

EP: informal basis. Your always...always with

Sound bite 11

DV: Revolutionary Development as opposed to the police, do you...were you concerned about that as a program or not? You have really no interest in...um....

EP: I...I knew about it and I was set up and wha-what they could do to assist us in the field because the RD program did have, among its other functions, I think, a low level security function.

DV: but I don't understand what low level security function is?

EP: Well its...RD cadre...

Sound bite 12

DV: this is something of interest to me because in my conversations with William Colby and I have twice met with him, he was not really, in any respects, all that aware of the formation—of how Phoenix was actually formed.

EP: because he wasn't out there that was Komer's period.

Sound bite 13

DV: how...he was...was it something he took upon himself to take the heat...uh...or you know.

EP: he was more concerned with things that took place on his watch in other words, as...as the director of CORDs, the program came under him in advisory capacity

Sound bite 14

DV: what are your feelings on the Vietnam War and, you know...uh...your role in it? [long pause] I'm sure it's something you thought about.

EP: Yeah but I always figured I...I...I went because I was told to. You know, I...I...I'm a believer. It's like the soldiers. You go where your told to go that's the enemy, fight him. Like or not, you don't have a choice, you can either quit or resign or do as your told and do the best you can to make it work.

Sound bite 15

EP: I was very sorry to hear the Americans involved in that because I knew in an early time when the subject of Americans going to Vietnam was taken up at the staff level. This is another agency, it was thought not to be a good idea and I still don't think it was good idea.

Sound bite 16

DV: Did you ever go do to the National Interrogation Officer—Center—and interrogate prisoners was that...

EP: no I never participated in

DV: any kind of operational things at all

EP: I've seen even heard in movies and everything all kinds of bad things about this. Uh...I don't know what I can say. I've heard that the interrogation center was a bad place.

DV: never were there?

EP: the closest I came to...I...I would say a place that had an evil reputation was that island

DV: Con Son?

EP: yeah I went there and even when there I...I was—I didn't personally see any of the evil things that were alleged to have taken place. That isn't to say that wasn't taking place, or couldn't take place. I did not see them and I...I...I did not see any prisoners of war being maltreated. Again I saw what I was allowed to see.

Track four

Sound bite 1

DV: he doesn't have his tag on...I guess only the military have the names on their uniform.

EP: I think Mason was highly amused by the whole process. He was probably wondering which one he'd rather when he left. [laughter]

DV: I'm sure

Sound bite 2

DV: well that just about does it. I would be fascinated to hear for about five minutes what you did in Detachment 101 with you know?

EP: Yeah that was probably one of the lesser lights, primarily in 101...um...my basic job was to...uh...we would get out there and get into the field, but my basic job was to interrogate everything at mention of...of everything except Japanese prisoners of war or whatever and Chinese prisoners...lots of Chinese in prisons too. I had assigned duty and I was, in a sense, his bodyguard. I was keeping him from getting hurt because he was a...he was a Burmese officer and his batpin (no clue?) was Gemadar (?) and he did the interrogation because he could speak the languages. My job was to make sure nothing happened to them because he was someone the British government wanted to keep safe and well.

Sound bite 3

DV: did you meet John Singwald out there in those days

EP: I met Sinwald before then, as a matter of fact Singwald's wife and I went to school together?

DV: Cornell?

EP: we took the same German class.

Sound bite 4

EP: the I met Singwald himself in OSS in training camp. So I've known him since, I guess he ended up in France or someplace like that and I was in [unintelligible] and I've been running into John Singwald ever since. Last time I saw him was when passed through Washington, he was fooling around on this thing and doing...he's home alone about 2-3 days a month. He's an anticommunist's anticommunist.

DV: yeah I wrote him and he wrote me a letter back and in the letter he included the leaflet from World Anticommunist League.

EP: oh yeah, he's been in two or three years and he's had very high positions . He's very much involved I guess with the...with the Chinese Formosa, what is the name of that....

DV: Taiwan

Sound bite 5

EP: you know what I remember about Jack when I first met him in the OSS thing, we had some pretty raunchy guys

DV: Louse and Conin

EP: yeah two dwits. Jack, at that time, was...he was appalled at some of the activities of some of these guys. He was pretty straight laced fella. I think that some of these fellas really tore at him.

Sound bite 6

EP: they were more afraid actually of crashes and more afraid of mechanical failure and also each other that they didn't have the psychological screening and all that kind of stuff. He said that....

DV: a lot people were breaking down

EP: he said that the worst of it was probably being an instructor because students would freeze at the controls and they....they didn't have these sophisticated screening

DV: well, on TV the old movies

EP: one of the reasons I didn't get into the Air Force is that my nerves don't respond properly. I have from the air I have a tendency to....

DV: well they always show the...

Polgar

DV: and I am with Mr. Thomas Polgar [cuts out] kinda sounds like a sneaky tape, let me move it closer towards ya

TP: let me tell you something, its not the equipment but the people who use it

DV: I know and that's one of the things I've come to find. I've had interviews in my tapes that didn't come out but it didn't matter as long as...um...my notes were good.

TP: in my intelligence career I never used tapes. I always relied on taking notes and my memory.

DV: well...I...I tape but I also take notes at the same time.

TP: even a generation ago it would have been considered a terrible insult to walk into a meeting with a tape recorder.

DV: I know...well my wife has been trying to get me to get one of those little pocket ones but they cost 90-100 dollars so I just keep using this one anyway.

TP: if you don't mind carrying it the difference is worth it

DV: and the little ones with the little...

TP: and furthermore this is the standard cassette the little has to use the special ones...

DV: that's just what I was going to say

TP: ...that aren't good for anything else.

DV: also they good for anything else. We went in and had a demonstration at the electronic store and it didn't pick up the voice very well at all. Anyway maybe...um...we could start by...uh...you tell me just a little bit about your background.

TP: well tell me a little about yours first.

DV:OK...um...I'm...um...an author...here I won't [cuts out] maybe we can begin Mr. Polgar by you telling me a little bit about your background please.

TP: well I was born in Hungary, came to the United States in 1938 as a student, got a degree in business administration in New York, worked a couple years as an accountant in New York then...uh...after the United States entered the war, I got myself into the US Army, served in the Army with an infantry division and then I was picked up by the Office of Strategic Services, which was the World War II predecessor of today's CIA...uh...and...uh...after the war, I continued to work as an intelligence officer in...uh...Berlin and...uh...when CIA was established I was...uh...hired as a civilian intelligence officer by the CIA and I spent the next...uh...almost thirty five years in the CIA.

DV: so you went in '47?

TP: well that's when CIA was established. I went in with the first batch. I was one of the founding fathers and...uh...I retired at the end of 1981 and...uh...since then I've been...uh...regiment consultant and I do a quite a bit of writing for the...uh...*Miami Herald*, *American Legion Magazine*, *Orlando Sentential*, which is a local newspaper and *Order*, a German newspaper.

DV: is this a column?

TP: well its more like future length columns when something come ups on which I feel like writing for example in next Sunday's *Miami Herald* I will have a major article about the administrations misuse of the National Security Council Staff.

DV: I could talk to you about that for a while, I'd be interested to hear...um...when did you get assigned to the...as Chief of Station in Saigon?

TP: um...uh...I arrived to take up my duties as Chief of Sation in January of 1972

DV: and you replaced, Ted Shakley?

TP: did you have an opportunity to talk to Shakley?

DV: I've...I've written him a letter but I didn't get a response, I think that after he might talk to me. He's kinda besieged these days so...

TP: well its not so much that he's besieged off the record I think he has a serious health problem. I understand he has...uh...cancer of the prostate but I can't tell you that for a fact and I think that...uh...his problem maybe the reason why you have not gotten an answer.

DV: well that's pretty unfortunate. January '72...um...what were you'r...had you been a Chief of Station anywhere before...so you knew....

TP: before and since

DV: before and since OK...were you duties substantially different in Vietnam, was it a different situation than usual?

TP: yes it was very different form the usual station; first, because of the wartime environment; secondly, because of the size of the station, which really could have resulted in much more shall we say administrative and management problems than your normal CIA station; thirdly, because of the very controversial nature, by that time 1972, of the entire American effort in Vietnam. Therefore, as chief of station, you have to spend a lot more time worrying about your public relations, the press...uh...congressional visitors, White House visitors than...uh...the routine CIA assignment were you would not encounter the press, not encounter the White House...

DV: as a matter of policy, y...you keep a low profile. So it was a much a higher profile.

TP: so it was very different.

DV: what about the nature of the program that you were overseeing?

TP: by the time I arrived in the Vietnam a transformation had taken place under the regime of Ted Shakley and...uh...by the time I arrived the CIA station in Vietnam was essentially a state intelligence collection agency.

DV: no more cover operations or paramilitary operations?

TP: no paramilitary operations at all and...uh...practically no paramilitary operations.

DV: was your background in intelligence rather than cover operations?

TP: uh...my background was in intelligence collection throughout my CIA career however in my OSS days I was in what you call covert operations.

DV: I understand that its not...its sometimes hard to distinguish between

TP: well the [some I can't make out] station is supposed to be...lets see, at my grade level, is supposed to be able to handle both.

DV: was some of the thrust of the station on intelligence collection

TP: entirely

DV: what is the...alright...what is the...um...main apparatus for doing that? Was it Special Branch?

TP: No the Special Branch was...uh...one of our liaison contacts. We had a number of liaison contacts. Naturally, we went across the board with all the agencies of the South Vietnamese government concerned with intelligence and security matters and one of our tasks, under the heading of intelligence, was to improve the intelligence collection capabilities of the Vietnamese.

DV: but apart from that you had your own collection?

TP: apart from that we had our own forces.

DV: OK...um...so did you have a deputy in charge of liaison division?

TP: let's see how were we organized...uh...yes as I re—well, the way we were organized is we had an operations division and we had...uh...reports and analysis division and an administrative division and the chief of liaison operated as an element of the operations division.

DV: that's operations, reports and analysis and management?

TP: correct, well administration

DV: administration...and liaison would come under operations

TP: would come under operations

DV: um...what about the relationship CORDS? When CORDS was disbanded and that had originally been CIA programs...um...for instance Cheiu Hoi and other kinds of things?

TP: by the time I arrived on the scene, all those activities were either under CORDS or the several successor organizations of CORDS in Vietnam and they were basically under the control of the military.

DV: OK and is that MACV or the defense attaché?

TP: MACV

DV: OK

TP: MACV and MACV had...um...a deputy for civilian operations and that was, in my days, Mr. Jacobson.

DV: OK...I've interviewed George Jacobson also. He was pretty helpful to me

TP: he knows as much about Vietnam as anybody

DV: Upon arriving...uh...did Mr. Shakley brief you and make you familiar or was it...h...how did you become familiar?

TP: well, actually, after I was appointed Chief of Station, which was in July 1971, I was in South America. I arranged to take an orientation trip to the...to East Asia and I visited...uh...Thailand, Laos and Vietnam and that was in October of 1971 and I had extended briefings in, so by the time I arrived in the Vietnam, I was not totally ignorant of what was happening and I when I arrived, Shakely whom I had known for, at that point I guess twenty years or so, that made it very simple, you moved another desk into his office and you just did...we were together...uh...literally all day. We went to the same meetings, we looked at the same...um...cable traffic, we look at the same reports, I stayed at his home, we had lunch together, we had dinner together so during our ten days overlap, which was a little bit less because I took time out for a period, to visit many of the...uh...province but, during those ten days he tried, you know, to give me as much insight and as much benefit of experience as was possible.

DV: OK, in January of '72 Phoenix was still in effect.

TP: yes it was still in effect but it had nothing to do with the CIA station.

DV: ok, when Phoenix was originally...uh...constructed, it was built on...uh...the CIA province and region structure, using the region and province officers.

TP: well I do not know, that was before my time.

DV: Did your briefing include anything on Phoenix? Were you told about Phoenix?

TP: well I had heard...I had heard about Phoenix by them, of course, because during my previous assignment, I said I was chief of station in Argentina, and it so happens that the head of the military advisor group in Argentina Brigadier General Allen had come directly from Vietnam. He commanded...uh...a brigade so...uh...I heard quite a bit about Phoenix from him

DV: can you...what did you hear about it from him, can you say?

TP: well...uh...Allen was a straight...uh...infantry soldier and...uh...a typical Southerner, in fact he was from Georgia, himself

DV: excuse me [cuts out]

TP: I think we were talking about...uh...General Allen's views and, you know, as an infantry soldier he felt that...uh...the mission of the US military should be the destruction of the other side's military and he didn't like to see our military diverted to...uh...what are essentially police tasks.

DV: OK that's a pretty common feeling among the military about Phoenix. They didn't like...they felt that...

TP: ...this was not their job...

DV: ...imposed on them and they didn't...it wasn't proper

TP: right

DV: OK, do you think that Phoenix would be a proper...um...role for CIA?

TP: uh...in general terms or specifically as applied to Vietnam?

DV: either...that's...it's interesting that you've thought of it in both terms

TP: well, I think that the...dealing with subversion, an organized counter-subversion campaign would...uh...certainly be an appropriate thing for the defending governments to undertake and if it is our policy to help that government defend itself than I don't see anything wrong giving aid and support to their counter subversion campaign.

DV: through CIA?

TP: uh...probably through CIA because I don't know how else you can do it

DV: 'cause...cause

TP: we tried it, for example, in Uruguay through AID

DV: right

TP: and that was quite a disaster

DV: well they also had public safety/AID in the Vietnam advising the National Police

TP they did

DV: and, of course, McCan I believe was probably

TP: McCan was there when I was there

DV: and they took over a lot of the Phoenix...uh...

TP: and that is not right, either, in my opinion because American policemen are not trained in a counter subversion role. I think American Public Safety was perfectly fine to assist local police agency on teaching traffic control, teaching identification procedures...uh...teaching police organization, criminal detection etc but...uh...the average American police officer, I'm not talking a patrolmen on the street, I'm talking about the Captain and...uh...assistant and superintendent, and assistant commissioner and inspector levels. They have—they themselves never had any experience with counter subversion because subversion in the United States is not a major problem to begin with and then it appears it is an FBI responsibility not a local police responsibility.

DV: OK, is that because of the political nature of it, you think

TP: No because essentially we have municipal police forces or state police forces, you know, whose jurisdiction is very poorly...very limited and when you are dealing with the Federal government, inevitably the Federal agency has to get involved.

DV: of course, the National Police in Vietnam eventually did absorb Phoenix responsibilities

TP: Well the National Police in Vietnam, of course was...uh...a very, very different thing from what we conceive to be a police force to be in the United States and the National Police did absorb Phoenix and it also absorbed the CIA's...uh...Provincial Reconnaissance Units...at which point the program started to go down hill.

DV: uh...when was...when were that absorption of PRU and Phoenix, did that occur during your tenure?

TP: that occurred during my tenure and I would put it somewhere in the late summer of 1972. When I arrived in Vietnam, I am under instructions to phase out PRU

DV: and how did you go about doing that?

TP: well, I negotiated with the National Police and...uh...it...er...uh...President's assistant for National Security Affairs.

DV: Thieu's?

TP: Thieu's Presidency yes. We are talking about General Quang

DV: That's Q-U-A-N-G

TP: Q-U-A-N-G

DV: he had, at one time, been commander of PRU in the Delta

TP: no he was commander of the Delta as a whole

DV: OK...um...I understand that the National Police didn't want the PRU, is that...is that the case

TP: the National Police had no problem with PRU but they felt they didn't have the money for it.

DV: was that, in effect, the problem?

TP: probably, by 1972...uh...Vietnam was getting to be an increasingly poor country.

DV: and USAID is of course diminishing

TP: USAID is diminishing, the 1972 offensive took, of course, tremendous financial took an burden on the Republic of South Vietnam. They had a tremendous refugee flow, to take cover of...uh...and...uh...I would say that they...uh...the cost of the 1972 offensive and then the oil embargo of 1973, which resulted in the skyrocketing of oil prices, along with the diminishing USAID...uh...created tremendous financial pressures on South Vietnam.

DV: was there a...um...PRU national advisor on the Vietnamese side and did he an American advisor?

TP: no as far as I know there was no such thing

DV: OK but PRU was a national program, was it not?

TP: PRU...uh...was a program of the CIA that was applicable to the whole of South Vietnam but we didn't necessarily have PRU everywhere in South Vietnam. We had in some places where the local environments adjusted its desirability and we didn't have it other places, where their seemed to be no need there.

DV: um...in the public, I think Phoenix is often confused with PRU

TP: I don't think the public has any idea that such a thing as PRU existed.

DV: OK...there's some sort of burgeoning awareness. Can you talk to that subject at all, about PRU...uh...

TP: well...uh...they...uh...w...what aspect?

DV: OK well, I know...what I know is that the province chiefs needed a reaction force which would be accountable to them because they couldn't always rely on the military to provide them support when they needed it. The CIA created PRU....

TP: No, no, no, no, no, no that's far too ambitious a [something unintelligible] for the PRU. It wasn't like that

DV: OK

TP: The PRU was a very, very modest...counter subversion force, which had a dual mission: first, to spot and identify members of the Viet Cong or other communist sympathizers with the objective of recruiting them as intelligence asset.

DV: in effect double agents? Sending them back into...

TP: not necessary sending them back but getting them to report...uh...the...the...you get into things like double agent that opens up a whole new level, a whole packet of worms

DV: OK, OK

TP: because the way people through around the terms such as double agent and so forth is not necessarily correct in the way intelligence uses it but anyway the PRU and in the first instance the task of identifying potential resources on the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese and secondly to conduct small scale raids with the purpose of capturing prisoners or documents that would help us get a better understanding of what the enemy was up to.

DV: were they—

TP: so far as I'm concerned, PRU was a logical extension of CIA's intelligence collection mission in South Vietnam.

DV: are there...are there...just before I go on...are there similar programs to PRU, in other countries, that CIA runs? Is that a...uh...is that a

TP: no I mean certainly I cannot imagine having a PRU type organization anywhere in Western Europe

DV: ok, yeah, well OK but What about in South America?

TP: no we didn't have it my days in Argentina and we certainly had nothing like that in Mexico.

DV: is PRU involved in...uh...is it political at all in so far as...um...is is used as a political tool to trick, to change people's attitudes?

TP: PRU, no

DV: that's Revolutionary Development?

TP: PRU had no political role whatsoever. I mean if you...if you...uh...think of the PRU like the Philippine scouts

DV: which brings to mind

TP: there an intelligence, lets say it's a unit that focuses on collecting intelligence through occasionally violent means.

DV: is interesting you talk about The Philippines because of General Lansdale's, of course, renown and fame for his political teams in The Philippines, which had as their objective use of violence and propaganda in order to convert people to the government's side that's well documented that's part of his psychological warfare, psywar, political warfare doctrine and the CIA of course has the same program inside of Vietnam through Revolutionary Development. Revolutionary Development teams would go into a village and help, not only with programs, but they would also...

TP: this is all long before my day

DV: OK this is what I was going to ask was RevDev, Revolutionary Development, still a program, while you were there? Had the government given up on that?

TP: uh...I don't know whether the government—no the government hadn't given up with that it just had nothing to do with CIA.

DV: is that, again, one of the CORDS programs?

TP: um...CORDS must have had some role in it, yes

DV: but you would separate PRU from those kinds of political action programs?

TP: absolutely...absolutely. PRU had no political role except in very remote sense that to extent that they were weakening the Viet Cong then the prospects of the government would increase.

DV: but that's certainly not the objective that's just the result...OK...um...was there an American advisor PRU affairs. I've often heard it was Tucker Gogleman.

TP: before my...Tucker Gogleman was long gone from Vietnam by the time I got there. In my day, the CIA officer in charge of the region's provinces had responsibility for maintaining contact with the local PRU. I did not have on my staff in Saigon a man who had the PRU...uh...task.

DV: ok that's something I wanted to understand, whether there's a national organization...its just region and province.

TP: of course, as I mentioned to you before, by the time I arrived in Vietnam I had instructions to divestment myself from PRU so...

DV: From Langley or...

TP: From Langley so...and that instruction was a result of...uh...a gradual disengagement of CIA from PRU that had already taken place during the Shakely region. So by the time I arrived PRU was not a big deal.

DV: and it was basically Ted Shakley who reversed the John Hart...John Hart had been carrying on the...uh...deeper involvement of the CIA in covert and paramilitary operations and then Shakley arrives and shifts back

TP: no...no I don't think we can put the onus on John Hart. I think that CIA was deeply involved in the paramilitary effort in Vietnam starting I suppose with Colby and then continuing through several Chiefs of Station preceding Hart and even Latham and then in Shakley's day and...uh...Shakley came in about six or seven months after the Tet...uh...Offensive...uh...there was a gradual change of emphasis in the Station.

DV: through, I understand the force of his personality Ted Shakley had a lot to do with that change of emphasis?

TP: well...uh...I don't think any of the station chiefs in Vietnam were known for their weak personalities.

DV: OK...OK very good, alright

TP: and...uh...well...uh...I think that...uh...it reflected a change in consensus in Langley as to what should be the proper role of the CIA.

DV: did you...did you agree with consensus?

TP: uh...well yes certainly I...I...I always thought the principal role of the CIA should be collection and analysis of intelligence and that...uh...uh...nation building and similar socially oriented projects really do not belong in our charter.

DV: it seems to me, just as my observation, that whenever the CIA gets involved with paramilitary...well small paramilitary seems alright but nation building it trips up their own intelligence gathering operations and then inevitably leads to problems.

TP: well what...um...uh...often happens in those circumstances is you start to believe your own propaganda.

DV: F. Scott Fitzgerald said “be careful of what you pretend to be. Someday you may wake up and be it.”

TP: I have an occasion to point out in a recent *Miami Herald* article, fooling ourselves does not necessarily fool the enemy.

DV: what about the...uh...moving to a different subject, unless there is something else you would like to say about PRU? Would there be somebody that you could, you know, think would be more knowledgeable.

TP: No unfortunately the...the...uh...office that knew the most about PRU, a man by the name of Phil Potter, died a couple of years ago and Ron Landret, another one who would have known about it, also died a couple years ago so

DV: Ron?

TP: Landret but he's dead

DV: would anybody from the...uh...were you in touch with anybody from the...uh...police advisors other than Michael McCant who might have followed in its closing days. No? OK

TP: I was pretty busy with my responsibilities in Vietnam. I did not have time to pry in the responsibilities of others.

DV: then, let's move on to Special Branch, which, I assume remained one of your responsibilities

TP: oh yes, Special Branch was on the important elements of our liaison with the South Vietnam authorities

DV: um...before I get into Special Branch itself, Special Branch ran what is called the PIC program, the Province Interrogation Centers

TP: Interrogation Centers

DV: um...which I understand were advised by...had CIA advisors at the PICs and the CIA also always advised the Special Branch particularly the PICs. Was that program you also phased out or did it remain in place under South Vietnamese control.

TP: the Province Interrogation Centers were entirely under South Vietnamese control and they did...ops..and we didn't have officers assigned to the PICs we had officers in the provinces whose duties included among other things...um...liaison with the South Vietnamese to see if the PICs had picked up information or personalities of value and...uh...they tried to ensure, working with their local counterparts, that when a person of unusual knowledge appeared in the PICs that he would be sent to Saigon for the...uh...National Interrogation Centers.

DV: would that be the province officer reporting to the region officer who would then say “well, let's this guy on to Saigon”

TP: well...uh...

DV: basically?

TP: well...uh...he would talk with his regional chief, certainly but the decision to send someone to Saigon was a Vietnamese decision.

DV: I see, OK

TP: now obviously the Vietnamese would be in most cases very susceptible to suggestions

DV: and would the first impulse be try to get the person to come over to the GVN side and then go back as an agent himself or would it be...is that kind of...uh...you have to...or would he just be debriefed and jailed?

TP: well, ideally...ideally and I am speaking in entirely general terms when you get somebody who comes over from the other side, your first must be can I send him back because obviously a chicken that lays eggs is of more value than the egg.

DV: OK...uh...if conditions prohibited that, then, just debriefed and then incarcerated or whatever.

TP: if conditions prevented than you took a look at the guy to find out what he knows and what he knows is not always immediately obvious.

DV: so then I an extended period....

TP: a man may know many things that he himself doesn't even realize that he knows

DV: ok...is the National Interrogation Center part of the Special Branch?

TP: no the National Interrogation Center was under the jurisdiction of the Vietnamese Central Intelligence Office

DV: ok...uh...did Special Branch have its own interrogation facility?

TP: uh...I would imagine so...uh...because they suddenly have detention facilities in the National Police headquarters but...um...Special Branch was exactly what the name implies. It was a specialized counterinsurgency, counter subversion unit of the National police. It wasn't...uh...terribly big organization [door bell rings and tape stops]

Tape 1 side 2

TP: just as I would be very opposed to have the same guy heading the FBI and CIA

DV: that's sound scary. What kind of operations would the CIO have conducted within South Vietnam.

TP: well operations aimed at the North Vietnamese or Cambodia

DV: were CIO people...

TP: for example...

DV:...were they military, I understand most people in Vietnam of any responsibility had been...had military rank was CIO generally military people?

TP: military rank[cuts out] the officers were civilian officers

DV: and...uh...

TP: but I would say the important people were military

DV: in that case how are they different from the Military Security Service, the MSS

TP: well they had different responsibilities. The MSS was solely responsible for the security of the forces, similar to our own GIC.

DV: so just uncovering agents who would be in the military, anything like that

TP: correct...the physical security of military installations, guarding against penetration

DV: but it still is a little unclear to me how the CIO is different from the Special Branch. I think I understand a little bit how the lines might be different on paper but out in a province, where the Special Branch would have its agents in the village, would the CIO also have its agents?

TP: the CIO would not be expected to operate in the village

DV: is that one of the differences, then?

TP: CIO would be perhaps more strategic and the Special Branch would be more technical and one of them has law enforcement functions and the other does not. No they are really quite different. CIO could not arrest anybody.

DV: ok they are any kind of police in any sense? You could not call them secret police or something like that? Would they be involved in, the difference between strategic and tactical, would they be involved in long term agent...uh...cultivation.

TP: hopefully

DV: yeah, OK so they are trying to get into the upper reaches of enemy structure rather than the Special Branch which is trying to lower level.

TP: the CIO is, of course, much smaller than Special Branch.

DV: how much smaller? How big of an organization was it?

TP: I don't remember the figures

DV: more than five thousands across the country?

TP: excuse me [cuts out]

DV: difference between CIO and Special Branch. CIO is involved in long term...uh...uh...agent operations. Special Branch was short term.

TP: let me put it this way, CIO was interested basically in intelligence. Special Branch was interested in wiping out the Viet Cong and other anti-government activities, in the process of that it also collected intelligence because you need intelligence for the...uh...law enforcement task.

DV: OK...um...and Special Branch, as I understand it, came under field operations, that's the...um...province officer in charge.

TP: field operations of who?

DV: CIA...American advisory

TP: CIA maintained liaison with the Special Branch at all levels. We talked with them in Saigon. We talked to them in the...uh...four regional capitals and we talked to them at the province level.

DV: ok who is the Vietnamese...uh...military officer or whomever who reports to Bin and is head of the Special Branch.

TP: in my days lets see...in my days you had...uh... Brigadier General Kay, K-A-Y, and his deputy was Colonel Minh, M-I-N-H.

DV: and they would report to Bin and would he determine their policy, basically?

TP: Yes

DV: and if it could said you had a counterpart in the Vietnamese government would it have been Bin?

TP: uh...my counterpart strictly speaking would have been...uh...Bin, yes

DV: OK...um...did you

TP: the parallel is exact, because, of course, I had no law enforcement function. So my counterpart was Bin in the capacity as head of the CIO.

DV: OK, OK...very good, alright.

TP: In actual fact, I had no counterpart because Vietnam, being what it was, and the CIA station, being what it was, I had all kinds of contacts with the government that were not Bin.

DV: is that proper? Is that the way a CIA station should be set up?

TP: well Vietnam is...uh...very exceptional but actually most countries are...uh...exceptional in the sense that each one is different.

DV: and none of the parallel...

TP: none of them are exactly...

DV: like the United States, I suppose. Alright within the...uh...organization of the station, is the Chief of Station, his deputy, and I understand that John Tilton was your deputy for a while...

TP: Yes...I had...yes, he was one of my deputies

DV: uh...is there also an executive officer in the station?

TP: sometimes

DV: is that an administrative job?

TP: uh...normally in the station you do not have an executive officer. Ted Shakley had one. I did not.

DV: could you just simply tell me why he would have one and you wouldn't?

TP: uh...well in the first place the station was larger in his day. In the...when I took over it was quite obvious that the American effort in Vietnam was beginning to wind down.

DV: OK, is it an administrative position, I guess is basically what I was....

TP: the way Shakley used it was...uh...exclusively an administrative position.

DV: ok

TP: but...uh...but I thought in both in Vietnam and similar CIA station I had which was Germany, that the executive officer wasn't doing anything that the Chief of Administration shouldn't be doing.

DV: OK, alright Ok...um...do you know who Shakley's executive officer was?

TP: I...I...uh...he had an Irish name but I don't remember.

DV: Ok that was just something I was interested to know. I guess it is just something the Chief of Station has a prerogative of staffing the way he feels he should.

TP: uh...actually...uh...each Chief of Station operates with a table of organization that is given to him by headquarters. Headquarters determines the size of the station and once headquarters tells me I can have say four hundred people, then I have...uh...considerable say so in how those four hundred people are going to be utilized.

DV: does that include contracts agents?

TP: uh...well it depends contract agents are part of your authorized strength. You can't just run out and hire...well, contract agents come in many different colors but, for the purpose of this conversation, I am talking about staff employees, US civil service pay rolled out of budget.

DV: OK..very good...was the pacification security coordination division still in effect, when you were there, under a man named Bob Eshvac?

TP: yes it was still in effect when I came to Vietnam for my orientation trip and I think it was phased out very early in '72.

DV: Do you know what...can you tell me what it was and what it did?

TP: I have no idea

DV: um...now I' gonna...I'd like to...I think we have probably covered as much as you know about PRU, and Phoenix and PICs and stuff, would you? Do you think there is anything you should add on those subject.

TP: no I think I have already made clear that PRU by the time I got there was relatively small, not uncontroversial, but it was a lot smaller and not terrible significant, I think.

DV: PICs continued to be...play a role of importance in Special Branch operations?

TP: yes, indeed

DV: did you ever visit the National Interrogation Center, was that part of your duties?

TP: I went down to the National Interrogation Center, yes.

DV: OK...um...and you would actually debrief people who were there?

TP: did I?

DV: yeah

TP: no

DV: no, OK...who handled anti-VCI activities within Saigon, not in the provinces? Was that also just a Special Branch?

TP: you mean on the Vietnamese side?

DV: yes

TP: yes it was a Special Branch activity

DV: because in none of the Phoenix organizational structures is there any place for Saigon. It's just setup for the provinces and regions and I'm just wondering how that might have been handled?

TP: it was...it was a Special Branch assignment.

DV: OK...Now may we discuss some personalities, your opinion of William Colby...you know...uh...

TP: I never served with Colby.

DV: Ted Shakley, you said you knew him from South America

TP: I had known all these people...uh...for a long time, although Colby and I never actually crossed paths...uh...because when he was in the East Asia Division I was in the Europe or Latin America Division. When he went back to Washington, I went to Argentina. When I came back to Vietnam, he was already back in Washington...um...so

DV: but everybody knows everybody by reputation...

TP: well also...also personally because there is super-grades, you know what a super-grade is?

DV: GS-15

TP: No, 16

DV: 16, OK

TP: You have the generals, the five officers of CIA, you know, they have their own dining room and...uh...you know, the meet at...uh...all kinds of social affairs, professional meetings, so they all know each other.

DV: and you were a GS-16?

TP: well...I was a GS-17 and 18 too but...uh...

DV: OK

TP:...the...uh...yes I have the GS-16

DV: since maybe?

TP: 1963

DV: OK...OK lets...

TP: Ted Shakley I have known since 1951, as I mentioned. When I got to Vietnam, I had known him for twenty years...uh...what is my opinion? That he's an extremely competent, hardworking, goal-oriented man...an excellent briefer and a very accomplished professional intelligence manager.

DV: In his book, now for a more sensitive subject, Frank Snepp said 30,000 Phoenix agents—the files for thirty thousand Phoenix agents were left behind in South Vietnam, any truth to that statement? In his book, *Decent Interval*, he makes that statement, the files for thirty thousand Phoenix agents were left behind.

TP: Frank Snepp makes many claims in *Decent Interval* and I don't know if want to engage in rebutting Mr. Snepp or arguing with his language.

DV: OK...can you speak this is the one instance I would mention that book and his allegations because my book is on Phoenix?

TP: mmmhmmm

DV: and because he says in the book that the files on 30,000 Phoenix agents were left behind. My understanding is that there is no such thing as Phoenix agent, anyway. Phoenix did not have agents, right?

TP: I don't know that there were thirty thousand Phoenix agents. I will say this because of the circumstances that preceded the collapse of South Vietnam, I'm not confident that all sensitive South Vietnamese government files got destroyed. I'm not confident of that at all. I am absolutely sure that all sensitive US embassy CIA files were destroyed but I'm not sure what happened on the South Vietnamese side and perhaps I should explain why I am not sure. When President Thieu resigned, as I recall on the 21st of April, he had an orderly transition to the Vice President. The Vice President made personnel changes in key position.

DV: and this is Ky himself?

TP: no...no...no I'm not talking Ky I'm talking about the Vice President that assumed control...what was his name...Houng

DV: oh...OK...OK

TP: the old man who was practically blind,

DV: OK alright

TP: appointed a new police chief. He appointed a new National Security Advisor.

DV: OK

TP: and General Bin and General Quang made a orderly turnover of their office including their files to their successors. General Quang's place was taking by...uh...highly respected bureaucrat who's name escapes but was a former Minister of Justice and Bin's place was taken by another Army general. Now the Houng Regime lasted eight days and then General Minh came

DV: Big Minh

TP: Big Minh and Big Minh, then, replaced the people that...uh...Houng has appointed...

DV: OK

TP: so in a period nine days we had three Chiefs of Police, we had three National Security Advisors...um...we had new people in the CIO. We had new people new people in the Special Branch and God knows what happened to the files!

DV: OK...my question is not some much the files as the notion that there were 30,000 Phoenix agents...

TP: nah...

DV: the statement...to make...to make it sound as if Phoenix was still in effect and have 30,000 agents in the field this what the reader intuits from...that's what it suggests.

TP: that, is I think, pretty wrong. I don't believe that Phoenix ever had 30,000 agents by agents if you mean sources.

DV: that's what I mean...that's what...that's what

TP: but when you say in the course of its fifteen year history or whatever you ask did Phoenix talk to 30,000 people, yeah it probably talked to a lot more than that.

DV: and would that, would he mean specifically Special Branch.

TP: Who?

DV: Snepp when he says that.

TP: how would I know you'd have to talk to Snepp.

DV: OK

TP: I'll tell you a little story about Mr. Snepp

DV: he's not been...I called him up and he was not at all amiable to talking to me

TP: when...when...uh...after Mr. Snepp wrote his book, which was published in the fall of 1977, he asked the Senate Intelligence Oversight committee to investigate his charges and the Senate Intelligence Oversight committee had a subcommittee that was headed at that time by Senator Robert Morgan of North Carolina, which incidentally is that state Snepp comes from

DV: that's right

TP: and...um...Morgan held hearings for a couple weeks and then dismissed Snepp's charges as being basically unfounded.

DV: well this is what...

TP: and Snepp said he didn't get a fair hearing because...uh...Morgan and his people could not had time in that period several weeks looking through...uh...all those...uh...charges. In fact Morgan was, before he became Senator, a nine year Attorney General of North Carolina. So as far as he is consider was he establishes a man lies he doesn't want to spent a lot of the tax payer's money, just how much detail has he lied.

DV: OK...this is my, you know, one of things I've had to do is to debunk some of the myths of Phoenix and I think that if I write a good place to start would be the blanket statement that there were 30,000 Phoenix agents because I have not been able to substantiate that at all and...uh...I called up Snepp on the phone and I said "what do you mean 30,000 agents?" and he said "I'm not going to do your research for

you.” [laughing] and I said “I’m not asking you do my research for me. I’m just asking what you mean by 30,000 and he would not say.”

TP: look, Phoenix was essentially a militarized extension of the Special Branch that would be my definition of the program.

DV: but at the heart of it is the Special Branch, the Special Branch system, which I understand in ’65 and ’66. 1965, there were maybe fourteen province officers in all of Vietnam and the CIA...

TP: led by whom? Province officers of who?

DV: CIA, province officers... who were involved in liaison to the Special Branch, OK? And that the field operations branch of the CIA built that up so there was a CIA province-officer-in-charge by each province by 1967 and his main responsibility was advising the Special Branch but he also coordinated all CIA activities in the province but at the heart of the operation was the Special Branch. Is that an accurate understanding of that...uh...and Phoenix was imposed on top of it but because Special Branch...

TP: I do not know what happened in the 1960s frankly. I really do not know...uh...I was in Europe until 1965 and...uh...after that I was in South America and...uh...I didn’t concern myself with the affairs of Vietnam because I felt it would never be going.

DV: it does seem a little unusual.

TP: and...uh...they...uh...nobody could have been more surprised. It was the Station in Buenos Aires, I was a GS-17, which is a Major General, and I said I am safe from Vietnam because I am too senior to be a deputy and surely they wouldn’t make the Station Chief. That’s where I was wrong but...um

DV: what was the reasoning behind that, do you...do you know?

TP: well...uh...there were a couple of reasons: first, I have had a lot of experience working with the US Military and, despite the great similarity—dissimilarity of our backgrounds, I managed to get along well with a number of senior American generals and...uh...secondly, my years in Argentina have given me quite familiarity with the problems of subversion violence...uh...military government...uh...working with the local military Special Branch type operations and so forth. In Germany...uh...as a younger officer, I was special assistant to the chief of mission and the organization of the German station in those days, with over one thousand people, was very similar to what there was at that time in Vietnam, fifteen... eighteen years later.

DV: where is that....

TP: and lastly...lastly and this is the most important, the guy who was slated to go Vietnam, who would have been a very obvious choice, spent all his time in East Asia, was deputy chief of the East Asia division, was chief of station in Tokyo, would have been the logical successor, had...uh...a family tragedy and he had to resign from CIA to take over the family business because nobody could come.

DV: who was that?

TP: Joe Smith

DV: Joe Smith,

TP: we called him Big Joe Smith because we also had a Little Joe Smith.

DV: ok like big man and little man OK

TP: ...and...and he resigned on very short notice, without the chief of station...uh...without an obvious choice for chief of station. I was involved in Argentina in a spectacular hijacking of people where I talked the hijackers into surrenders.

DV: that's right you put pills in there in Coke, or something like that

TP: Well...I didn't actually, not really at all

DV: that's not true?

TP: not true at all...They got their pills from a doctor at the Lima airport. I found out from that doctor what kind of pill it was, so then I sent some beer to the airplane because the Argentine doctor was telling me that if you feed them alcohol on top of those pills they are going to be back that of their feet.

DV: OK...yeah that was pretty spectacular...

TP: and it happened just at that time and...um...uh...Kissinger...uh...and Helms was flying out to San Quaminta (not sure) and he meets Kissinger and they talk about this and Kissinger knows me from before, in fact, had asked once if I be assigned to work with him and I think the idea was for him that I should go to Vietnam.

DV: is the...is the German station in Bonn?

TP: no the German station is all over Germany.

DV: isn't there a headquarters

TP: headquarters is in Bonn.

DV: is in Bonn, OK, cause I know everybody thinks it would be in Berlin but its not

TP: well...well...well, the...the CIA station, with on exception, is the ambassador...the American ambassador is, that's is where the station is

DV: well that's basically all the questions I have for you. I'm sure I could talk to you all day and ask you questions about your background. Maybe you could, just for the fun of it, tell me what you think of American involvement in Central America? In Nicaragua, in particular?

TP: well, I'll tell you...

DV: having had that kind of experience.

TP: uh...the United States in a constitutional republic, OK? The President is elected. The President runs foreign policy. The Congress authorizes the money to run the foreign policy of the United States and has a very limited veto power, OK? Now the President has embarked on set of policies in Central American, which I personally feel are dead wrong but I do not question his right to pursue those policies

DV: yeah

TP: and there is no question in my mind that CIA, when directed by the President, is duty bound to carry out those policies as well as it can.

DV: is that...so your...you don't think that CIA is leading the President...that Bill Casey...that Bill Casey is leading the President into these polices, you think its just Reagan's advice...

TP: I do not know...I do not know Casey says to the President. I know Bill Casey quite well. A couple months ago we were together at symposium on terrorism. We were both speakers in the symposium on terrorism. Bill is a very strong minded person and has many firm ideas on a great many topics and there is no question in my mind that he is a strong ideological ally of the President. They are the same age. They have similar backgrounds. They have had somewhat similar formative experiences and I think that they...uh...contain each other [cuts out] ...uh I think if one estimates a distinction between I think what CIA...between Casey as the President's friend and advisor and the CIA as an organization with Casey as its head. The...Casey's a very strong director and I have no doubt at all that he will push the CIA in the direction which he thinks will do the President's policies the most good but I don't think CIA has the rank and file, the structure of CIA does not to get to vote on these things. They are a hierarchic organization. They follow orders and the only recourse a CIA officer, regardless of rank, has is to resign and that's a very difficult decision and people do not do that causally and there are not all that many resignable issues....uh...now people that go to great pains, perhaps, to avoid assignment to Central American affairs or think of ninety-nine reasons why they cannot become chief of station, but CIA has not choice in the matter, so I think, again, that CIA is going to get a lot of bad publicity for something they absolutely cannot help.

DV: seems to be the case but the National Security Council...the spotlight seems to be shifting away from the CIA to the National Security Council.

TP: but it will shift back. In 1984, when the Boland Amendment became effective, CIA was specifically prohibited from engaging in operations against Nicaragua, in support of the contras. This was after the port and the assassination manual whatever...now that Amendment has been abolished the vote of Congress this summer.

DV: well...I would say...very close

TP: so now CIA is probably going to get geared up again and I have no doubt that there will be...uh...Nicaragua task force and they are going to put a hungry GS-16 in charge who thinks this is his way to become a GS-18 quickly and...uh...there's going to be a lot of motion and a lot of noise and then there's going to be a reaction to it.

DV: are they going to try to form a provisional government in some remote Nicaraguan province and declare a provisional government and do all that kind of stuff?

TP: I...I...I doubt because unless they...uh...can put in an awful lot of sophisticated anti-aircraft, those Soviet armored helicopters will take out the cite they establish themselves in.

DV: what about the new F-16s going to Honduras?

TP: that has nothing to do with it

DV: not a factor, OK...well that's really it did Lou...

TP: the F-16s are really a bribe to the Honduran Government to tolerate the presence of the contras

DV: back to Vietnam, did Lou Lapham stay after you became...

TP: Lou Lapham?

DV: Lapham

TP: no, no, no, Lapham was there before Shakely .When Lou Lapham was chief in Thailand.

DV: oh ok...maybe...maybe I should ask you, while I got you here, a little bit...what do you think of Iran and the...um...McFarlene, I think I was McFarlene. Did McFarlene really go?

TP: oh certainly...uh...the Iranian ambassadors says he tape recordings of the telephone conversations and you know...uh...on things like that I am inclined to believe him.

DV: how does it happen that in government that could be so close to the United States for twenty years, like Iran, and I...even I have friends who's fathers worked there, and went there as kids and everything was fine and Iranians were wonderful people and then government changes and the Iranians become the villains of the world, how does...how does that... is that just public information management.

TP: have you ever heard of divorce? ...if you go to a divorce hearing and you read the dispositions that husbands and wives against the person they lived together with for maybe thirty years

Sauvegeot

Andre Sauvegeot Transcript

DV: I am talking with Andre Sauvegeot. Mr. Sauvegeot would you tell me a little about your background: where you were born, where you went to school, and how you got into the military?

AS: Surely...uh...I will. There...uh...let's see I was born in...uh...Akron, Ohio in April the twenty-sixth nineteen-thirty-three and...uh...and...uh...went through college, staying out the Korean War by staying in college. The rules was you kept your grades up to a certain point you didn't have to go to...get drafted or anything and then...uh

DV: what was your study in college?

AS: I majored philosophy and minored in English...uh...was planning on teaching but decided not to and therefore wanted to have some more time to think of what to...uh...what I wanted to graduate in work or whether I wanted to go to law school. I just had several things to think about. I was thinking seriously of law school, going into the FBI or something of that sort but then decided that...uh...uh...I needed some time to think about it and the draft board was going to draft me and there was...uh...they were drafting. They had a shortage in the Navy so there was a forty percent chance of getting drafted into the Navy, and a sixty percent chance of getting drafted into the Army. So I enlisted in the Army to be sure that it would be the Army and...uh...volunteered to the Airborne Division so, you know, you get an extra fifty-five dollars, you got, at that time anyway, and extra fifty-five dollars a month jump pay added to your seventy-five dollars base pay and...uh...made it a little bit better after getting out of jump school and I figured just on spending three years...uh...enlisted service and then, you know, get out and go to graduate school but I got interested in what I was doing enough to...uh...stay in the 82nd airborne division for a while and...uh...go to the NCO school, their jungle warfare training school down in Panama and then...uh...finally to officer candidate school and...uh...then got interested in various assignments as an officer and...uh...actually stayed in the Army until...uh...March '84...um...uh...when Northrop Corporation offered me a position as their manager for international programs so I decided I would retire from the Army and do this.

DV: I understand that you are an excellent Vietnamese speaker? How did you get your Vietnamese language training?

AS: oh...just studied Vietnamese, actually I never studied Vietnamese...uh...in a school. In fact, one of those strange things with the Army personal system...um...I had go through the advanced...uh...course,

that is, you know, the advanced infantry course, as an Army...as a Junior Captain...uh...and a number of us volunteered for service in Vietnam. That was in...uh...the Summer of '64. Well I actually went to Vietnam in the summer of '64 but I guess we went to the career goes in '63 and...uh...volunteered for Vietnam and the strange thing was some people were assigned to language school, either for three months of Vietnamese language, a quick course, or for the whole year course and...uh...I wanted to take the whole year course and they wouldn't send me to any of the courses...either of the courses.

DV: is that Monterey course?

AS: yeah at Monterey that...there were other schools later but at that time it was all Monterey and I wanted to go to...um...take Vietnamese language but they said they needed battalion advisors out there right away. So I got together with one of my friends who was married and didn't want to go language because it would even make...uh...a longer time away from his family and we went to the personal people and suggested they just switch us that way...uh...I could go the language course—I wouldn't care about it being a long time—and this guy would go straight to Vietnam and get his tour over with but they wouldn't even switch us and we could never understand why.

DV: ok

AS: but anyway I was sent over there with no language and then...um...I just had to get the language as a could but I had a good assignment. The first assignment was a district advisor and...uh...the

DV: which district?

AS: in Ben Tranh district that B-e-n, first word, capital T-r-a-n...uh...h in Binh Toung Province, B-i-n-h T-u-o-n-g, and that's one. The province capital is Ne Ta and the village Binh Toung is Tahiep, t-a-h-i-e-p and...uh...so anyway that was my first assignment and of course I was the first American to go into that district because I got out to Vietnam in August 1964. The...uh...shortly after the decision had been made to...to put American advisors down the district level or some people called it the subsector...uh...level, before that they had not been lower than the Province level. So...uh...although I initially wanted to be battalion advisor...uh...the senior advisor in the...uh...in Ne Ta...uh...the...uh...I guess he was the advisor to the 7th ARVN division said he didn't need any battalion advisors right then because he had people there at the time.

DV: who was it?

AS: I don't remember his name, full Colonel, and I just somehow don't remember his name but anyway he...uh...said he didn't need anybody there. I wanted to advise that 44th Ranger battalion, as I recall, but...uh...he already had an advisor there but, you know, just a short time after I was assigned to the district...uh...as the first American advisor there, all the Americans with the 44th Ranger battalion were killed in ambush, the battalion was ambushed by the...um...communists. They lost many people and all the Americans were killed. So sometimes people are saved from getting what they want so I figured I lucked out and besides the district was very interesting. I think maybe more interesting because there you had the range of paramilitary operations going on military operations with small units like the regional force units and the popular force units and...uh...at the same time you had the range of civic action and economic development concerns and I think it was a better way to learn about Vietnam and my district...uh...um...my district chief was Captain Liam, didn't not speak English and didn't speak Vietnamese. He spoke fluent French and I had very rusty...uh...college French that had atrophied from a low achievement level and...uh...so I had decide should I try to enhance a...what had never been very good French or go with a brand new language so I decided I would...uh...try to learn Vietnamese, on the job.

DV: and obviously you did.

AS: and did, that's right.

DV: who was your American boss or...uh...commander in...as in...when you became the district chief, who was yours, you know, the person you did the official reports

AS: understand, understand, when I first went out there. Remember I was a Junior Captain in rank and I was the senior...I mean I was the advisor and I had finally some enlisted men assigned to me. I took a little time before but they got a Sergeant out there for me and later s...some more of a team and...uh...so at that time, initially...uh...my American boss...uh...was an Army who was the province senior advisor and he resided in villa in Ne Ta, the province capital and...uh...but then soon after that they...uh...assigned a Major as the...um...district advisor, district senior advisor and then I became his deputy because actually Captains were considered too low in rank to be...uh...the senior district advisor and...um...so when they got more majors available they put in a major in there and I became his deputy and...but, even before they assigned a major over there, I got two Vietnamese personnel to me. I finally got an interpreter and got a...um...driver because first I was driving my own jeep and I complained about because I don't mind driving the jeep but maintaining it something else and you need to have somebody who knows what he's doing so they gave me a South Vietnamese regional force soldier, a very good, very good person to drive and he became a very good friend. Then they...uh...gave me...uh...a Sergeant, an ARVN Sergeant, as an interpreter, a Northerner, and...uh...he also became a very close friend of mine and...uh...uh...but I just had to complain to Ne Te because I said "I cannot do my job efficiently without an interpreter," but my interpreter then became my first...uh...Vietnamese language instructor that gave me some system because he taught me the alphabet in Vietnamese and how to spell and basic vocabulary drills and on and on.

DV: what kind of programs did you start getting involved with?

AS: well, in the...uh...district?

DV: in the district, right...uh...especially in the...um...were you involved in any things that like Frank Scotton was involved with. I had a long conversation with him for about six hours, spoke very highly of you...uh...I don't know if you aware of how much he likes you?

AS: yes, Frank and I

DV: really, really...he doesn't get...he didn't get sentimental about it but it was obvious that he really liked you a lot.

AS: no that's true and...uh...because Frank, I owe a large debt to Frank Scotton as far as my own...uh...education in Vietnam is concerned and...uh...Frank first of all, Fra...Frank Scotton is one of the key people who got me interested in staying in Vietnam for a very long time because I always felt if there were...uh...Americans like Frank involved in the effort in Vietnam and to the extent people like Frank Scotton could have an influence on policy that there really might be some hope of winning that war against the communists and...uh...of course I put a lot of ifs in there. The extent they could influence policy and all but I...if I had...if you had...if I had to pick one person who I believe understands more about the Vietnam than any other single person I would say it would be Frank Scotton. I thought that then and I believe that know and...uh...I know when I was...when I had questions about things that were happening or needed to...uh...double check my own analysis about a situation...uh...I would always try to go to Frank and discuss with him because he had such an in depth knowledge of the...uh...insurgency and I did not meet Frank Scotton, until I had...was reassigned out of the district...uh...but...uh...I was uh...as I say, they had moved me a Major into the district and I became his deputy then, not too long after that, that Major, Major Sears was—S-E-A-R—was moved to...uh...some position on the staff, I think, in Ne Ta, not in the...not in the...uh...not as a province, not on the...not on the staff of the province senior

advisor but on the staff of the division, 7th division senior advisor in Me Te and he was replaced by a major Vanderlinder in the...in the...uh...district and now then I was the deputy for Major Vanderlinder. Major Vanderlinder also very good advisor and I enjoyed working for him very much and I wa—still wanted to...uh...to advise a battalion so I...uh...you know, the tour is only supposed to be one year so I should have only had to go in Vietnam from August '64 to August '65 but in the sometime I think in that winter I extended it...uh...for six months...uh...with the purpose of advising a battalion because I didn't want to leave Vietnam an...and...without doing that and I had already...uh...extended and then sometime that spring I think in the...this would be the spring of '65 maybe about April '65...uh...I got a very unexpected and sudden order that led me to meet Frank Scotton but anyway the order was that I would be reassigned effective immediately...uh...out my district of Ben Tranh to a special...uh...cadre training program...uh...and I was to...uh...to get transportation to Saigon the very next, report into the United States...uh...information agency...uh...information service USIS, U-S-I-S that was before it became dustcom (not sure?)...uh...and I was given a name to report to and I think the...one of the names might have been Frank Scotton, at least that's where I met him because he was a foreign service information officer...uh...in the USIS in the that time and...uh...and so anyway...uh...I had to go up and report and, then...uh...and I didn't have any idea what it was about and they...and I reminded the people in Ne Ta that I had signed...I had extended to advise a battalion not to go on a cadre training program but they said no discussion because they had a special requirement and it was going to take some proficiency in Vietnamese to fill it and I was picked because I had the...at that time, about nine months in the country. I had extended. I would, therefore, be available and in the nine months I was there I had picked up a working knowledge of rudimentary Vietnamese and that was a requirement for the position. Now, the position turned out to be as Frank Scotton...uh...primarily that I remember but I think some others explained also. Also Colonel Montague of MACV explained to me that this program had been put together by...uh...Just Pow...I...I...well, I'm...USIS, U-S-I-S and MACV and the program involved...uh...training some rural political cadre, comdo chimchi nomcone (that's a guess), that's it rural political cadre in the...uh...uh...art of training of other...uh...cadre. In other words, they become trainers to train...uh...province cadre or district cadre—no actually district, they were supposed to train cadre in various districts under the authority of the district chief to become that district chief's tool for...uh...really...uh...political, attitudinal surveys, public opinion surveys but on range of topics to do with the welfare of the people and their perception of how the war was going and...uh...their perception of who they liked and who they didn't like, popular leaders, unpopular leaders...uh...their perception of the regional forces, that kind of thing.

DV: is this census grievance program?

AS: uh...it was not the census grievance program. The census grievance program...uh...it's termed...uh...to be confusing because the original census grievance program was a...uh...CIA run program of...that involved intensive training for...uh...people living...uh...for people living in village or a hamlet to...who would return. Th...they would take their training in Saigon and then return to their village or hamlet and just stay in place and it was just a one person operation. It wasn't a team. It was just one person, originally later there was something called census mobile, which is census...mobile census grievance teams attached to the 59 man...uh...RD cadre teams that...uh...were trained in Vung Tau at a later date than the date were are taking about now but the...uh...uh...but anyway Frank Scotton in USIS told me that the...uh...that my assignment would entail him driving me down to Long...Long An province and I...I hate to say but I can't remember what district now but...but down to Long An province to a certain district and introduced me to the five or six Vietnamese...uh...who were in this...uh...uh...cadre...uh...team who made up this trainer team, this cadre trainer team and what it was there were the number of trainer teams that were taking training in the various districts of Long An province but then they weren't going to stay in Long An province they were going to move on to...uh...different districts and the team I was to be assigned to was going to be assigned after the completion of its training to Ding Toon province to work the districts in Ding Toon. Now the reason I

was assigned so abruptly was that the Army Captain who had been programmed from the United States to...uh...be the...uh...American advisor with the team was relieved from that job. In other words, he had had three months of Vietnamese language training before being assigned to the team and then...uh...he was relieved because frankly...uh...it got on his nerves, you know...uh...it made him very frightened to be out with the that team at night with no other Americans around and, you know, you had to sleep where ever you could find a place, maybe an empty school room or whatever, put your mosquito nets. Sometimes you'd get intelligence reports that there might be a VC squad in the area or something like that and this just got on his nerves so

DV: were you doing the same thing?

AS: yes of course because that was part of the job but...but, you know, just...uh...people adapt to things differently, you know. Some people need a more structured...uh...environment I think or something.

DV: my interest is superficially the psychological...uh...techniques that were used by you to train the trainers, to achieve results, can you speak to those techniques?

AS: oh yeah, of course

DV: within the program itself

AS: of course, of course, the...um...the...uh...well when we were assigned to this...um...um...when I was assigned to this team and of course Frank Scotton explained all about the philosophy of it and everything. I found it extremely interesting work. So interesting, in fact, that I, again, extended my tour in Vietnam just to try to finish the...uh...job with this team in...uh...Ding Toon province but the...uh...techniques of...of working with the...uh...team. I thought they were a good group of people I had there...uh...they had a team leader, they had one person who had some training in English language but he never had to use it because my Vietnamese by that time was about the same as his English or maybe a little better and I decided better to keep...ahem...psychologically, you mentioned the psychology, it was better psychologically...uh...I found out very quickly, to communicate only in Vietnamese because that put everybody on an equal footing with the American advisor. If communicated with the person who had been the...had been trained in English...uh...he was not the team leader, you see

DV: I understand

AS: he was not the team leader so that...then...therefore he would become a conduit of communication between even the leader and everybody else and the American advisor, which already would...uh...could cause resentment.

DV: I understand

AS: and put him in a position to manipulate...uh...a number of things or even if he didn't, to be perceived that way

DV: had the structure of the team been had arranged before you moved into it?

AS: yes it had

DV: and what was the structure?

AS: well it was...uh...as I said, it was very simple...uh...I...I...I'll have to think to figure how many people were one it. Cat Ban was the team leader, Win Van Long had the English language training, Win Van Anh, on the surveyors...um...

DV: maybe six people?

AS: yeah I think six people, about six people, at the most and...ahem...these were rural political cadres and the

DV: from Binh Toung themselves?

AS: they were from...uh...not necessary from Binh Toung province. Some, I think were, as matter of fact. Some where from Long An, maybe even Saigon, a couple of them but the people...but...but the technique was...was this...uh...MACV and Just Pow had...uh...had come up with a questionnaire, of course in Vietnamese language...uh...to ask the people and it had a lot of questions on it, you know, maybe thirty...forty questions on it, and these people had to be able to memorize the questions and memorize the answers...uh...and not to fill out the questionnaire in front of the people and...uh...not write notes in front of the people, so what they'd have to do is try to have...uh...as we lacked, causal conversations as possible...uh...with the people in a given hamlet or village, get out of that house get some place where they were not seen and...um...fill out the form with the questions and...uh...fill in the answers and then...uh...what we would do after taking one of these surveys...uh...would...uh...we would get together at night, wherever we had to sleep, you know, as I said, it might be a school room, or any empty office or anyplace...uh...and we'd...uh...compile the results of these surveys, go through these surveys and compile them on a statistical matrix, so you know, so many thought that the regional forces performed fair, poor, whatever...uh...uh...the perception of who was winning the war was such and such...uh...future such and such, the state of their economy, the district chief, the village chief was...uh...efficient or incompetent or corrupt or not corrupt, you know, whatever, a long...large range of questions.

DV: is there a way to get a copy of the questions?

AS: I'm sure long gone, long gone

DV: long gone

AS: they would be great to have. I wish, you know, if you had the foresight to keep some of those things.

DV: Long gone almost sounds like a province

AS: that's right Long Anh, that's right but now that I know your interested I can...I can...uh...I'm just strained on time when I go back home I have all these boxes that need to be, things filed or...or thrown away or stuff like that I could just rummage for them for just some kind of clues like that.

DV: that would be fantastic. Frank explained to me that his...his driving ambition was to use these teams not just to get surveys but to displace Vietcong from the villages and as he explained it to me there would be, lots of times, three or four teams operating in tandem so that your team of six would go into one village, another team of six would go into another village and they would then group together also every week or two. Were you involved in that program, also, of displacing the Viet Cong?

AS: I think we are talking about the same program because...uh...remember this is...Frank was the same person I reported into to learn about this program. He's the one that introduced to me my...uh...cadre team and, you know...uh...you're saying that Doug, just brought back a briefing, my first briefing from Frank Scotton...uh...that I actually had forgotten about because it was in 1965 when he gave me that briefing, so its been a long time

DV: twenty years

AS: oh that's right, twenty-one years

DV: sure

AS: so...it...but the thing is I remember that briefing, now that you mention it and Frank told me, basically outlined the concept that you just gave me there

DV: ok

AS: and...and he told me that, now I remember, he said "if we do this right...ahem...the people will perceive that we, not the communists, are the true revolutionaries that...if we're going to win this war," Frank said, "if we have any hope of winning this war, the only way we can is if the people come to understand, legitimately, not by some kind of phony manipulation but come to understand legitimately that...that we and the government of the...of the government of the Republic of Vietnam are the...uh...forces that are truly dedicated to social change, to giving a...uh...more equal opportunity, a stake in the society, so that they have, you know, their self interest has to be indentify...um...and enhanced by the...by our efforts and that's [cuts out]

DV: knowing what I'm interesting in did you also set up ambushes and go after Viet Cong, did you do any of that?

AS: no...no absolutely not, let me...let me, you're asking the right questions, I...um...the...these people, this trainer team was...uh...uh...had no...uh...arms, actually. It was unarmed.

DV: oh...uh...how did you defend yourself?

AS: well, you used passive security what that means is...the technique we used was to get into...uh...well first of all we tried to sleep in a secure area, like maybe sleep in the district capital, or something like that or at least an area that was...that had established security and then...uh...we would target a...uh...hamlet for our survey of the next day and the daylight came...uh...after road security had been established, if that was something that had to be done by the...uh...the paramilitary patrols or whatever, then we would go to that hamlet and bypassing the security the idea was you got in there and got down and got out before the communists...uh...intelligence picked it up that we were there or an American was there and became a target...uh...now sometimes we did get...uh...district to...uh...lend us carbines if we felt we needed them or something like that and...uh...then, sometimes they would...uh...assign a squad of popular forces to go with us, our district chief would do that for us, if he felt the that situation wasn't safe for us to go in with just passive security. It was very situation specific...but...but our mission in no way entailed...uh...paramilitary operations or anything of that sort.

DV: did you have any experience with paramilitary operations, prior to becoming part of this program

AS: oh did because I came out of the district where we had the regional forces and popular forces and...uh

DV: so you were comfortable working through the...Vietnam at night, you knew how to do...

AS: sure

DV: you know, you're an infantry man and...

AS: the basic was infantry, anyway. That's my basic. So we had, of course, with basic infantry training you have plenty of training in night operations and things of that sort and actually...uh...if didn't we shouldn't have been assigned to the things were assigned to because as American advisors the idea was to enhance...uh...the training and operational capabilities of the...uh...Vietnamese forces that we were

dealing with and...uh...we couldn't be expected to know more about Vietnam than they knew because obviously, we would not much less about Vietnam than they knew but...but we could be expected to have basically a good command of standard military...uh...tactics and military practices...uh...noise and light discipline, proper dispersal, flak security on an operation...uh...uh...the correct of artillery, calling for artillery in situations...uh...um...providing a...uh...uh...air cover for operations.

DV: so you would have had a radio man for your operations too?

AS: I did in the district but not in the survey team, I was really out of communications with Americans on the...uh...

DV: very interesting

AS:...on the...uh...survey team

DV: because of the limited time, I'll have to skip a bit, how did you get involved

AS: or come back again...

DV: ok, yeah good...

AS: 'cause your gonna have to

DV: I think so

AS: if...if..if your gonna want to go over all of this

DV: I do, if...if we can arrange a time

AS: Sure

DV: how 'bout...uh...your meeting up with John Van and...uh

AS: Alright, I met with...uh...uh...John Van I think after getting out of this...uh...no I met him sometime, I think, through Frank Scotton when I was still involved with the survey teams...the survey trainer teams

DV: which I then assume also did training of other...of other people

AS: oh we did, oh we did...I followed them for a long time. What we did...when were...uh...when I joined them in Long on Province, what we did at that time...my, you know, our own team was simply learning to become efficient or proficient in the...uh...in conducting the surveys because they had to themselves become a proficient team before they could train others and so, at that this time, they were really trainees not trainers, while they were in Long An but once they got their graduation...uh...certificates...once they got their graduation certificates from the...uh...um...whatever authorities granted these

DV: was it through Vung Tau

AS: no...no...nothing...way before Vung Tau now a...and...not...went before the...when they got these graduation cert...uh...certificates then, the team I was assigned to...uh...deployed to Ne Ta. See once the graduation was over and there we had to introduced ourselves to the Binh Toung province chief...uh...Colonel Pho-ok, Lieutenant Colonel Pho-ok, as I remember, and he was the...and I knew him

already because I knew him when I was assigned to the district. He was still the province chief when I was the...district advisor and later deputy district advisor.

DV: so he was the Province Chief

AS: the Province Chief Lieutenant Colonel Pho-ok and so I made an appointment with him to explain about the cadre team we had that would go from district to district in his province...uh...with his permission of course, and that we would hope he would give us some entrée with the districts chiefs so the district chiefs could see way to give us a place to sleep. They could...uh...uh...also, more importantly, that they would...uh...assign some of their cadre to take the training course that we were prepared to teach and that, when we moved out of the district...uh...that...uh...when we moved out of a given district, we would be...uh...we would be leaving in place a...uh...a team to conduct public opinion surveys...uh...under the authority of that district chief who originally assigned to us to train.

DV: ok

AS: and that...uh...we would weed out people who were incompetent that...who didn't have the personality for it, who didn't a good enough memory to memorize the questions and the...uh...the...uh... answers. In other words, it was going to be hard work but we hoped to leave in place a...an instrument...uh...by which the district chief could...uh...keep a better handle on what people were thinking about various things and hopefully...uh...adjust his personnel, policies and the implementation of his pacification and...uh...development programs accordingly, based on what he found out.

DV: how would you describe your success in Binh Toung?

AS:well...uh...we trained...uh...some of the time...uh...we worked out of the province capital in Ne Ta. We had a base in Ne Ta but we would also go out and stay in district capitals when we were working in a particular district we did train a team, as a I recall, in Chung Gao...uh...district and, I don't think we ever did my district, Ben Chine. No we never did Ben Chine, apparently. It was on our list, we intended to all the districts in Binh Toung but the program was cut short so we never finished even though I extended my time. I had extended an extra year just to try to finish these districts but...uh...the program was killed along with almost all the cadres programs throughout Vietnam to pave the way for a much more comprehensive national...uh...cadre effort which was called the RD cadre program or...uh...Americans called it Revolutionary Development Progr-uh...Cadre in Vietnamese it was actually Rural Development cadre but in any...whatever name, they were the...uh...this was the cadre program to...uh...to be implemented Vung Tau, at the national training center, and the concept was to...uh...the base was supposed to be the...uh...forty man PAT team, which was a paramilitary armed team, PAT standing for...

DV: Political Action Team

AS: that's right Political Action Team and...uh...and graphed on nineteen specialists...uh...as I recall and some were Census Grievance, there was a Census Grievance team, a New Life Development team...uh...several specialized teams and the was idea, then, beyond this fifty-nine man team, RD cadre team, was to marry up the best virtues of the PAT team, which after all had forty people on it and was armed and therefore could provide for its own security and therefore could operate in villages and hamlets with being antimidated by a Viet...a Viet...a Viet...a VC squad.

DV: and these are the outgrowth of Scotton's people who were going in and actually displacing Viet Cong?

AS: that's right, that's right, that's sorta, that's right

DV: ok

AS: you know, this thing was just taking concepts and putting them on a larger scale and, then, but also I think it became realized that...that it was wasteful of personnel, an efficient use of human resources, to have a large number of...of disparate cadre groups

DV: yes

AS: um...you know, some of whom who may have had, as in our own...as in the program I told you about, some specialized abilities but no arms or too small to go into insecure areas. They had to have too much security to go in.

DV : They couldn't go into go into areas controlled by the Viet Cong

AS: yes and...uh...but if you...that's right but other teams might be able to get there but they might not have the specialized skills to do much when it got there, the idea is put to the together, have a fifty-nine man team that had competent specialized people along with people who knew paramilitary operations, had a sufficient number of people and armed to conduct them and...and

DV: a universal program

AS: universal program, given universal training at the national training center at Vung Tau and then...uh...um...anyway, that was the...that was the concept and that started to take place up in Vung Tau and...and...uh...

DV: what time is this? When was this that you knew...

AS: it was 1966 and...uh...

DV: at that time were you seconded to Tom Donahue over at Vung Tau is that...

AS: well, the...the...the, yeah, well what happened was...this...at either the end of '65 or the beginning of '66, something in there, in that time frame...uh...of course when they killed that...that cadre training program, the one I was involved in....

DV: did that have a name?

AS: must have had...uh...but, as I say, it was just...but it was a training program for rural political cadre. Th...the cadre teams were Rural Political combo, *chimchi nong to*...um...rural political cadre but the...uh...but anyway, what happened was, when they killed this team, I already had some more time to Vietnam because I had already extended again and so I thought, my first idea was to try to get into a Vietnamese battalion to be advisor...to Vietnamese...a Vietnamese battalion

DV: still pursuing that

AS: so I went in to see the senior advisor at that time it was Colonel Sid Barry, later General Sid Barry but anyway, but he was the senior political advisor and I reminded him that I had extended in Vietnam more than once and I still did not had a...had never...uh...advised a Vietnamese battalion and he said, "if I...if I insisted on that, he would certainly put me in Vietnamese battalion." He promised that to me but, he said, "he wanted me to know that the embassy already told him that they would like to have assigned to Vung Tau as a advisor, like a political officer, political advisor...uh...to the...uh...national cadre training center in Vung Tau to assist with the, with implementing the new RD cadre training program and that Colonel Barry [cuts out]

Side two

AS: to me whether I did it or not

DV: a little bit of a guilt trip there?

AS: yeah and so...I think he really meant it, he really I think, you know, just said "do what you want to do and, if you want a battalion, get a battalion" ...because I could do that very well after being in Vietnam so long. I could...uh...do a battalion very well.

DV: which is also important...

AS: yes

DV: ...function

AS: very. So I had to think about that, but...uh...but then I decided to go to Vung Tau...uh...with the...because I thought...a...and also the CIA had some people contact me. The embassy had people contact me and a CIA advisor took me to Vietnam and introduced me. When I say CIA advisor, the man who was to become the senior advisor to the national training center at Vung Tau.

DV: who was?

AS: Dick Fourteen—Forton, F-O-R-T-O-N, I think, and...uh...so anyway, he took me to Saigon and introduced me to the Census Grievance training center in Saigon, I think it was at 35 Win Pan Chone St, I think...I think that's the name...

DV: and that John O'Reilly?

AS: Who?

DV: John O'Reilly

AS: was the advisor?

DV: wa...was he the person at Census Greivance....

AS: There, I don't remember the name b...but he was a French person

DV: oh...ok not O'Reilly

AS: not that name I'm sure because he was a...um...an older French person and...uh...and he was the advisor to that and he spoke perfect Vietnamese. No problem there, with that, with communication with and he could also speak English.

DV: maybe this is a good point to bring up

AS: sure [cuts out before three minutes]

Simmons

Aby Excerpts

Track 1

Sound bite 1

DV: when...when...how...when did your training, when was that completed?

RS: it was pretty much completed within a year. It was about a year cycle so I went to Vietnam in November of 1970, I joined in November of '69. I went over in November of '70

Sound bite 2

RS: what generally happened in Vietnam was: you arrived, you processed, you got your province or region or whatever, you went up there and you got, you know, a couple days a week, sort OJT get your feet on the ground. We were trained to drop in a place and do the job.

Sound bite 3

RS: because I was supposed to go the Delta and I talked to my PIOC ahead of time, he was back in Washington on consultations and I was slotted for the Delta and I talked to him, he was great guy and we were going to have a good time and the province was going to be great.

DV: what province were you going to go to?

RS: it was some Delta province it all vague to me know, I arrived in Saigon and they said there's going to be a change, ok...uh...in Phu Yen the got that had my job in Phu Yen had basically gone a little crazy

Sound bite 4

DV: is your counterpart the province PRU commander?

RS: my counterpart is the Special Police chief, ok? Now in MR2 the PRU had a regional...uh...PRU advisor, whatever you want to call it and it was a big region and...uh...he would fly around.

DV: But not people in each province?

RS: not people in each province, now that a difference...big difference

DV: that's amazing this is the first region that's...that's been the situation

Sound bite 5

RS: look at, look at...uh...look at the map. Look at MR2

DV: very big...biggest

RS: Huge. What's the population of MR2?

DV: less than any other.

RS: pretty small...it just didn't make any sense to have the same sort of PRU structure there and what you had was my buddy and I saw him actually a couple of months ago he came up to visit Jack Harrell, H-a-r-e-l-l, was the MRS PRU advisor. I believe he worked alone. He may have worked with one other person but he flew all over. He would visit each of the provinces, he would come in, he would stay with us for the night, he would meet his people, he would pay his people, he would take care of them: "What do you need? How many are the 'rolls? What kind of ops do have?"

Sound bite 6

DV: what is the relationship in Phu Yen between the Special Branch and the PRU? I mean now in most province they are completely separate things with PRU unilateral operations for the PIOC and having—actually, in many cases, working against the Special Police.

RS: in Phu Yen it was similar to that but because, you know, every organization looks for a godfather, you know, a parent because the PRU...um...in our area was not...uh...you know not fully taken care of by a resident American there was a tendency for the PRU chief to get along better with police forces.

DV: ok...I got you

RS: and they did

Sound bite 7

RS: this office housed Vietnamese translators who would receive the reports from the PIC in Vietnamese and scan them and translate the good ones into English and then we would disseminate those in reports.

Sound bite 8

RS: and the translators I got them to sort of, you know, keep good relations with the PIC people and oh you know we give them a few groceries, or this, or cigarettes or a little booze and so my translators were in and out of the PIC a lot. Um they would get...uh...sometime we would ask for them to work with a special prisoner for particular types of information and occasionally I would do the interrogation myself. For somebody that seemed to be reluctant to work with the South Vietnamese or any Vietnamese but you know if an American comes in and he's alone and he speaks a little bit of the language my by they will warm up to him. So I did some it myself. The whole focus was to try to have good relations with the police. Was to ensure that the prisoners were well treated because as far as I was concerned the PIC program was an American program and if it didn't run right it was going to make us look bad.

Sound bite 9

DV: did you have a Special Police officer that was your PIC chief?

RS: uh yes...but the PIC chief worked for the...uh...for the, you know, he was a policeman.

DV: Special Branch policeman?

RS: Special Branch policeman that's correct

DV: but he reports to the national police chief

RS: that's right he reports through the command structure but he also knows that the building was built—see they were built and turned over...

DV: yeah I understand yeah

RS: ok, but he also knows that hey, you know this building came from the guy in the Quonset hut

DV: also Special Branch salaries are paid by the Americans not by the Vietnamese

RS: yeah that's right and also the agents. If you got a hot agent you want to recruit money comes.

Sound bite 10

RS: yeah the informant network...so I was very interested in the informant network. I was very interested in some of the quality interrogation that was going on and I had some access to resources so I could manage and get what I wanted.

Sound bite 11

DV: anyway who is your boss?

RS: Uh...I can't tell you my boss' name. My boss is American. He's the POIC...um...but I can't tell you. He is no longer with the Agency but here was there in funny name so I don't know his real name.

Sound bite 12

DV: how big of a staff did the POIC have

RS: uh...the POIC had three or four Americans depending on the period of time...uh...generally it was three Americans working with him. Um...

DV: and is one his Special Branch liaison?

RS: yeah, that's me, the paramilitary guy. He had to people when I was there. He had...uh...there was himself. There was one guy working closely with the Koreans.

DV: the blue dragon?

RS: uh... i forget. There were two Korean regiments in our province, one south and one north and one would do liaison with the Koreans...uh...and then you had the...uh...Special Police advisor who did everything except the PIC and then you had a guy doing the PIC. So you had two contractors and two staffers.

Sound bite 13

DV: so are you the Special Police advisor at the PIC as opposed the Special Police advisor?

RS: No, I was...um...the Special Police advisor overall. The...in a way I outranked the guy at the PIC and when he left he wasn't replaced and I assumed responsibility for that. as you know toward 1972 they were phasing things out.

Track Two

Sound bite 1

RS: we were required to submit reports on corruption to Na Trang (*not sure what he actually says here*) and my understand was they were all failed there.

DV: not in Saigon.

RS: they were not to be sent to Saigon. And this guy said “in the course of a year,” you know, “I handled corruption and in the course of the year we only got a couple of dozen reports.” And I said well in the course of the year I filed a dozen reports.”

DV: if the Saigon people knew that was happening they would have flipped out probably. Lots of power was given to the regions—

RS: this guy was a State Department officer, CIA knew what was going but he was State Department.

Sound bite 2

RS: The CIA station in Vietnam was the biggest in the world. The military activities going on there, where the biggest in the world. There was a lot of churning around.

Sound bite 3

RS: There was a lot of, as I learned later, there was a lot of CIA people...

DV: ...marking time...

RS: punching their ticket, marking time and, you know, hey this has to be done. I am going to get promoted here but I am not going to risk my life.

Sound bite 4

DV: when were you...when did you...when were you presented with the PRU. When did you start having that as a responsibility along with your police responsibility?

RS: lets be clear about this, I was never responsible for PRU. Never. Nobody Phu Yen was ever responsible for the PRU. Jack Harrell was responsible for the PRU. He relied us on to...um...

Sound bite 5

RS: They would use our—they would come in periodically to use our radios to file reports...uh...they would get their targeting from the DIOCCS our whatever you want to call it...uh...it was...they operated on a semi-independent basis.

DV: sounds like even more than semi

RS: pretty independent

Sound bite 6

RS: my appraisal of the PIOCC was that it was bunch of...uh...people keeping files that were neat and clean. They had lots of charts they do their briefings but these were people that were definitely afraid of being sent out to the districts.

Sound bite 7

RS: I don't, organizationally, I don't know how they dealt with the PRU after 1972 because, you know, were getting to the point were a lot of Americans were going. In December of '72, you sorta have a peace agreement and I don't know what became of the PRU...uh...

DV: that's one of the things I am trying to find out.

RS: I don't know. I don't know what became of these guys. I don't know when the money stopped flowing.

Sound bite 8

RS: there's some talk of turning the PRU over to the police, the police said 'hey, were not sure we want that. We might take some of the but not all of them.' A lot of the PRU people were recruited from ethnic groups...uh...and...and social groups that were not to appealing to the leading, ranking Vietnamese, South Vietnamese, many of whom were from the North, may of whom were Catholics. A lot of the PRU were Nung Chinese or where Montagnards. Some of them had been with the VC and were now with us and police were very concerned about that. That they couldn't be trusted...um...some of them were pretty rough hombres.

Sound bite 9

RS: what Jack used to, Jack would come up. You know it was always a problem they would submit the names. He's who's on the various teams and so give us the money for these various people. Uh...and Jack what Jack would do is say "fine I am coming up on such-and-and such date have everybody in the compound and have them come with their equipment."

DV: but somebody's always sick or somebody's home on...

RS: and they would go down the list, face by face, by name by name that was his... the first thing he would do

DV: would you do finger printing and photographs

RS: well Jack, Jack was unusual. A lot of the guys would just let the wool be pulled over their eyes...um...

Sound bite 10

RS: I was there through the summer of '72 it was basically...uh...as I recall it was an 18 to 20 month tour. I came November of '70 through November of '71 though November...November of '72 would be two years. Uh...so it was an 18 month tour

DV: probably May or June?

RS: no, it was closer to July when I left...uh...as recall, and...um...I came back to go graduate school at Havard...uh...and...um...I had to back in August. I think I left in late July.

Sound bite 11

DV: Special Branch is always focused on the infrastructure is not Phoenix, then, duplicated what your doing?

RS: Two an extent....

DV: just using other resources.

RS: yeah, to an extent, you always get duplication in wartime you get duplication in intelligence, we have CIA, we have DIA why? Why? Well, you know, some people say competing analysis other people say different focus, whatever. So the duplication is not in and of itself wrong or improper. Government duplicates it so its part of what Reagan would call the safety I suppose. One program may not catch you but another one will. Um...I think in a way...uh...the way I saw Phoenix operating in our province was that they provided a service and the service was the information that they had in their files. If the PRU, you know, you would try to do targeted operations but that's like saying were going to go fishing for bluefish [cuts out] put on bluefish bait there's any number of things that may take that bait and lure. So going after the infrastructure is sorta the same way you try to run a targeted operation and you may end up with something else so you go back to the DIOCCs or the PIOCCs and you say "we got this guy, what do you have on him."

DV: you would go the PIOCCs?

RS: yeah, not me personally, but we the police or the PRU chief or whatever. Uh...and then they would say "we do have a file on him. What we got on him... and then we would use that Phoenix file to build our case with the judicial system if you will. So that...so that...so from my perspective these people were a great source of information.

Sound bite 12

RS: we would send a copy of that report to the DIOCC

DV: you did send reports from the PICs to the DIOCCs

RS: yes...oh yeah and they would file it and sometimes the PRU would come in and they'd write a report that they picked up somebody who told them this and we get them to send it over and the military people would do a sweep or something and they'd do...they get a prisoner and get some information. And it was all supposed to go into these files so these files were extensive and that's saying it did go there but that's what we tired to do. Uh...

DV: so they're less operational than they are a library

RS: yeah, it was resource for files on people that was the....

Sound bite 13

DV: you know, to the extent possible that they would disseminate reports and they would go out into the Phoenix files and we all understand what the Phoenix files were they for. There...that was supposed to be the best files on the infrastructure and we were supposed to contribute to those files but we also realized

that because they were the best files on the infrastructure they were the target of enemy collection efforts. Uh...you know, DIOCCs were attacked and the files were burned or stolen...uh...occasionally cases would come up where somebody working in one of these offices became, you know, suspected of being a double agent.

Sound bite 14

RS: lets get into the special action team. I have some documents

Sound bite 15

DV: at what point in your tour did this directive come down.

RS: here's what happened, this is kinda of interesting, but the day...the week...the month I arrived and see where going to have to sort some things through here...the month I arrive this operation took place with my counterpart who is here he is the Special Police chief and this guy, whose name I forget, but he was the guy that wanted to start the special intelligence unit we will got through this to make sure we get the right names. They called it the Viet Kitch Voy Tin Boa (best guess?) now this...this...my counterpart was a former Legionnaire a paratrooper he was not a police chief that wanted to set behind a desk he was action oriented to begin with this guy here was also of the same sort. They had gotten a source that had given them some information about some VC hold up in this bamboo area in a hole. So they got suited up and went to check it out and low and behold they were in there and they talked to them and the guys wouldn't come out and...uh...eventually there was an exchange of gun fire and they popped a grenade and the three of them were killed by the concussion and the three of them were all VC and they all had documents on them. And here is the letter that went out on 23, November signed by Tran Hwon Nan who was the police chief. Ok he is the chief of the Phu Yen national police to the national department, MR2 second tactical zone.

DV: Police Special Branch

RS: Special Branch, yeah, the list of name, positions of cadres who were killed on the 10th of November. Now this happened the month I arrived, ok and it was the success of this operation that led to our forming of a special group. Now that happened early in my tour. Alright, now we later called it, I called it in this thing here, and I haven't looked at this books in years, the intelligence special unit but as we get in they have another acronym for it.

Sound bite 16

RS: so they were all fairly important thugs

DV: VCI

RS: VCI so this was considered a big thing

DV: yeah province people that's unusual and they got information they went out and located them in that bunker or whatever you want to call it. It was the sort of thing they'd spend the night in. They moved around a lot. They caught them in there but the guys wouldn't come out and they killed them. That's, you know, that's the way it is. It's too bad some people would say they were assassinated but...uh...it really wasn't the case.

Sound bite 17

RS: the Police Intelligence Special Unit was formed and trained in October, 1971 so that was a year after this other operation. They operated in Tu Hua and Sung Hoa. This was there first successful targeting operation in Tu Hua itself. They were all volunteers from the Special Police and the National Police Field Forces, N-P-F-F. They were commanded by the Special Police operations section and they perform other duties on a regular basis. They receive no additional pay, promotion or benefits for serving with the unit.

Track 3**Sound bite 1**

RS: I take little or no credit because I had a good counterpart. Sure I supported him, I worked with him, I got weapons and equipment I spent a lot of time with these guys and...and...and...uh...but...um...but I couldn't have done it without them.

Sound bite 2

DV: what was the Special Branch presence in the district?

RS: it depended on where you were. Obviously we had a pretty big representation in Tu Hua, which was the capital city, but there was a Special Branch arm in Qu San, here, Tu Hein, Son Cau, Dong Shien, and Song Hoa. (all of those are pretty much guess)

Sound bite 3

DV: were they located in DIOCC or did they have their own separate facility

RS: there own facility but as I recall, depending on where you were, the DIOCC could be very close even in the same building. It really depended on the district there was no uniformity.

DV: but they also had a guy in the DIOCC?

RS: yes usually they did

Sound bite 4

RS: our SIFU...um...laid an ambush to stop the movement of cadres of Qua Thon

DV: and its basically...its basically a province team which could go into a district and then it would hook up with the district people who would be specialists of what's going on in that area.

RS: yes, yes...and occasionally...I mean, you know...occasionally the district team go do there own thing too. This...the SIFU of Son Hawn district.

Sound bite 5

DV: were you the paramilitary instructor for these people were you the one who, you know, gave them some rifle training and got them some ammo to practice with...

RS: I did the basic training...uh...and we...I provided...uh...sort of the philosophy of the unit...uh...sort of the oriental style—good men, good spirits, good training, good intelligence good results, the Five goods. The four don'ts, don't need aircraft, don't artillery, don't need ARVN don't need complex equipment.

Sound bite 6

RS: we had no body killed or wounded and we...uh...killed, wounded and captured 27

DV: and these were not fed in as Phoenix results, Phoenix could not claim anything

RS: this was not Phoenix this was all Special Police. Here is what we captured and we lost no equipment. You know, I believe you go out with ARVN everybody runs. "Run die we, run" (again something of a guess) they all run away and drop everything.

Sound bite 7

RS: here is the type of the Special Team we had, the eight man teams. This is what we gave them. One team per district, two teams at province total of 64 men and sometimes the teams would match, as I said. Sometimes the two province teams would go out and join the district team or one province team and the district or two province teams, this sort of stuff.

Sound bite 8

RS: generally the information that would come from our own sources and then we would try and when would develop it we would try to...uh...touch base in a secure way as possible with those elements who would provide us with what we thought we needed before we would proceed. Uh...but it was supposed to be very quick response. The problem in Vietnam was running anything quickly you could only do it with you own assets, really. That's one of the reasons for this. For us to get the PRU wrapped into one of our ops, responding to our information, would take three or four days for us to get the...uh...Vietnamese to do would take weeks, all the paperwork. This was a way to cut through the bullshit, to get hot intelligence and move on it quickly.

Sound bite 9

DV: where they're guards for the PIC, you know, isn't there, on each corner of the PICs, a post?

RS: there was...most of PICs had the same kind of...uh...see here is another tower here...these towers are all outside the PIC and my recollection was they were for security generally for the full compound but certainty they could be security for the PIC too they were in line of sight.

Sound bite 10

DV: what was the generally occupancy of prisoners or detainees?

RS: well were pretty loaded at that point and there was a province level jail so...uh...

DV: which is the national police advisor

RS: so you have that jail so you know we...we...we...interrogated all these lambro drivers but a lot of tem didn't know anything other than that "well, I was recruited I was told to do this and I have...I was

threatened they were going to kill me or take my wife.” You know, most of them were just a bunch of poor guys who had been caught in the war.

Sound bite 11

RS: you know, as I recall there were six or eight interrogation rooms there were offices for the head of the PIC, himself and then the rest were the cells and some of the cells were isolation cells and some of the others were...uh...for the women, for example, they were separated away a bit. They were...you know, the isolation cells they accessed through an exterior door. Some of the other cells you accessed from the inside. I think these were some of the isolation cells here.

Sound bite 12

RS: here is the Tu He Wa airstrip which was a PCP airstrip here's route one heading north and the city over here and, as I recall, the jail was some place our right a long here or something...uh...and then the police station with the...uh...PIC and everything else was over here. That looks like a church so that can't be it but it was somewhere. It was in the city.

Sound bite 13

RS: these are Koreans this is a Korean outpost here what were they doing. They were in regular patrols, military stuff. They were in the black market like nobody's business.

DV: that's what everybody says.

Dori Excerpts

Rob Simmons

Dory's Excerpts

Track One

RS: Or particular types of information and occasionally...uh... I would do the interrogation myself...uh...for somebody that seemed to be reluctant to work with the South Vietnamese or any Vietnamese but you know if an American comes in and he's alone and he speaks a little bit of the language my by they will warm up to him. So I did some it myself. The whole focus was to try to have good relations with the police. Was to ensure that the prisoners were well treated because as far as I was concerned the PIC program was an American program and if it didn't run right it was going to make us look bad.

DV: How many...did you have a special police officer who was your PIC chief?

RS: Uh...yes but the PIC chief worked for the...uh...for the...you know he was a policeman.

DV: Special Branch policeman?

RS: Special Branch policeman that's correct

DV: but he reports to the national police chief

RS: that's right he reports through the command structure but he also knows that the building was built—see they were built and turned over...

DV: yeah I understand yeah

RS: but he also knows that hey, you know this building came from the guy in the Quonset hut

DV: also Special Branch salaries are paid by the Americans not by the Vietnamese

RS: yeah that's right and also the agents. If you got a hot agent you want to recruit money comes.

DV: so the informant networks

RS: yeah the informant network...so I was very interested in the informant network. I was very interested in some of the quality interrogation that was going on and I had some access to resources so I could manage and get what I wanted.

Track Two

RS: but in any event what happened which was quite interesting was in capturing this guy we captured the outline of the battle plan that was going to be used. What they were going to do was bring their troops, bring their forces into the city in lamros...

Track Three

RS: had worked as basically as a filing clerk for seven or eight years with the agency wanted to go to Vietnam because gee that's so exciting and he got a job in the region in MR2 pushing papers. His predecessor up where I was got booted out for hitting a priest.

DV: Let me interrupt you for a minute, they guy wasn't Ted Sloan was it? I had done an interview with the province senior advisor of phu yen from 66-69

RS: yeah see Gray Chow was the first special police advisor there and he was a Chinese American and...um...and he was there for two years he was very popular.

Track four

DV: so are you the special police advisor at the PIC as opposed to the special police advisor

RS: no I was the special police advisor overall. The...in a way I outranked the guy at the PIC and when he left he wasn't replaced and I assumed responsibility for that. as you know toward 1972 they were phasing things out.

DV: and a lot of the Phoenix people in other provinces starting getting some of these other jobs like the ones you took. A lot of the Phoenix people—and every province was different and it was hit or miss lots of times but—

RS: what you're talking about is a POIC who's responsible for the country team if you will for, the intel team. Then he's got a UO officer which is what the other staffer did, unilateral operations. That guy would work independently to develop sources of intelligence in the province

DV: and he would do that through a counterpart Vietnamese?

RS: he would usually do it through a principle agent, PA.

Track Five

DV: what was the generally occupancy of prisoners

RS: well we were pretty loaded at that point and there was a province level jail so

DV: which is the national police advisor?

RS: yeah you have the jail so we...we interrogated all these lambro drivers but a lot of them didn't know anything other than that you know well I was recruited and I was told to do this and I have...I was threatened and they were going to kill me or take my wife. You know most of them were a bunch of poor guys who had been caught in the war. So of them were perhaps a little more hardcore than the others.

Track Six

RS: Laid an ambush to stop the movement of cadres at Phua Thong

DV: and it's basically...it's basically a province team which could go into a district and then it would hook up with the district people who would be specialists of what was going on in that area.

RS: yes, yes and occasionally, you know, occasionally the district teams would do their own thing too. The SIFU of Son Hau district see Tu Yen and Son Hau had them and Dong Shawn...um...he's some of the things they did. This is again Chief Nam writing a letter trying to...um...uh...you know, get some feedback from the [not sure?].uh...Secret agent of this network...uh...directed, gave the information so the SIFU went out and laid an ambush at these coordinates killed two communist, captured one communist, seized one ak-47, one mauser, one mine. Here a rallier took them out to Sac Mau at this coordinate two VC were wounded, one seized a carbine, a clip, five grenades. Blah, blah, blah... I mean this is the standard sort of weapons you would find with the VC not with the main forces. Redstock rifles, this sort of stuff, they got a bunch of stuff. Tuy Hien know that is what you see here that is the rallier there...uh...she was Bo Te Houng Phan. She took them out showed them were the stuff was and they went out and they got it and there was somebody there when they got there and there was little firefight. So that's what you have. And here she is again with the flag and the rice, they seized the rice.

DV: there's somebody representing every branch of every Vietnamese agency

RS: I know...well, one of the problems was getting equipment that was uniform and you know these guys...it didn't matter they were all part of the same group in spite of the some what...the difference. But you're right I could tell you exactly how many were on the team and how many were not. But we would scrounge and what we did was scrounge.

DV: where you the paramilitary instructor for these people. Were you the one who you know gave them so rifle training and got them some ammo to practice with.

RS: I did the basic training....

Timmes

DV: October...

CT: 23

DV: 23rd and I am in the office of General Timmes and we are going to talk a little bit about the anti-VCI effort during the strategic hamlet period. Um...perhaps you could tell me when the strategic hamlet program began.

CT: secretary McNamara was briefed by me in January 1962 as to a plan to start a strategic hamlet program. He approved the plan and from then on we started implementing the plan. It was first implemented in the province of Binh Youn, just North of Saigon along primarily route 13. The purpose of the plan was, at that time, we thought if we could eliminate communications of the communists between...uh...zone D to the east of route 13 and...uh...Taint Minh province where...uh...the other communist were in force. If we had strategic hamlet programs, this would...uh...intermit their communications between both places. However, this was a faulty concept in view of the fact that the communist were entirely too strong up there and the possibility of actually having a strategic hamlet, fortified hamlets along route 13, was impossible. It require at least one Vietnamese division just to safe guard the road, to say nothing of...uh...of the hamlets in that neighborhood. However, the strategic hamlet program continued on and we start building throughout Vietnam...uh...some of the provinces...some of the problems were that the province chiefs themselves...uh...at the goading of Ngo Dinh...Ngo Dinh Nhu...uh...made reports of the effectiveness of the program and that how many of the hamlets that had been cleared were entirely faulty. The hamlets were not been cleared...uh

DV: was there a reason behind that false reporting?

CT: the reason was that they tried to...uh...make themselves the number one man in the eyes of...uh...Ngo Dinh Nhu.

DV: what about...what about Nhu's motives, any idea what they were?

CT: uh...yeah, I think he wanted to show the Americans how effective the Vietnamese were in this program...uh...the...uh...British...er who I am thinking of...

DV: Thompson

CT: Sir Robert Thompson was advising the President as well as Nhu on the strategic hamlet program and it was probably Thompson, in the first instance, that...uh...encouraged the President to start the program. I think Nhu wanted to show Thompson how effective the Vietnamese were.

DV: even at the expense of the program itself.

CT: oh...the effectiveness of the program hardly payed...played a picture in the reporting of the province chiefs

DV: OK, maybe we could go back a minute and...uh...um...talk about your background in Vietnam, when did you first arrive?

CT: I arrived in Vietnam July the 7th '61 as a Major General and I was first deputy MAAG Chief to Lieutenant General McGuar. McGuar left in March '62 and I took his place as the chief.

DV: how would you define your role as chief of MAAG? What do you think were your major responsibilities at that point?

CT: my responsibilities were...uh...the leadership of the advisors: first to see that the advisors were assigned to the division and down to the battalions, to go out and check if the advisors were doing their job, how well they knew their job, to go out and check...uh...their reporting of the effectiveness of the Vietnamese Army forces they were advising, the effectiveness, then, primarily of the strategic hamlet program, the effectiveness of...uh...supplying and assisting but primarily supplying the Vietnamese forces.

DV: ok when you...when you arrived in Vietnam in...um...and became the Chief of MAAG in '62. There were, I understand, only maybe seven thousand American advisors at that time?

CT: I think there were three thousand two hundred by...as I remember right. There was more people there because they brought in some Marines at the beginning of...well in December '61-'62. They also had...uh...the...uh...US Air Force was there. Together it may have been that number but I don't think it was that high but the advisors were only built up eventually to thirty two hundred.

DV: OK

CT: there were in my command

DV: and were they fairly evenly distributed throughout the country?

CT: uh...every...at that time, there were about 11 Vietnamese...uh...divisions. We had advisors at everyone of the division, down to the battalion level. There were two at the battalions. Then there were advisors in every province advising the province chiefs and also advisors down to the district level advising the district chiefs.

DV: OK...now...

CT: together with having advisors at the the...uh...logistical locations and the schools.

DV: OK. In selecting advisors for the provinces, in particular, was there a particular criteria you followed in selecting a man to become...uh...a province advisor?

CT: no the criteria and I think would be the same for the battalion...for the province as they would be for the division because essentially the divis...the province chief had the regional forces and the civil guard, which was a purely military operation. As far as the political aspects, as far as the civil...helping the people...uh...in their civilian capacities, to aid the people in the countryside, I think the advisors were equally qualified.

DV: OK but as a province advisor it was his job to oversee the civilian programs that were being run in a province, is that correct?

CT: that's true...that's true

DV: ok now, aside from the strategic hamlet—the strategic hamlet program being one of those civilian projects, what other kinds of programs were you running at that time?

CT: under the...I'm afraid I have to place this under the strategic hamlet program because under that program the advisors were first concerned with seeing that the...uh...that the...uh...I need to...I need to think about that. [cuts out]

DV: let me...let me try to help you

CT: what I was...what I was thinking about was the government was supposed to send down a team to help people in the country side...the political, the...uh...agriculture and the...um...hospital, sort of first aid, to sell, a propaganda team, to sell the government's position. That was part.

DV: this was the idea of...uh...to bring the government to the provinces.

CT: that's right

DV: to...to extend the authority right to the village

CT: right to the village

DV: OK...um...these...the province advisor had the responsibility to see that those programs ran...

CT: were supervised not supervised but sort of report on

DV: eventually in Vietnam the province...

CT: this is not on is it?

DV: oh it is

CT: is it, oh

DV: eventually the province advisory teams would include as many as two hundred or three hundred people.

CT: eventually, this was, of course, after I left.

DV: of course, in 1962-63 how many people would be in a pro...in a province team?

CT: as I recall, say 4 or 5 in the province and then probably, in '63, on or two at the district

DV: so it's a very small group of people

CT: a very small group of people

DV: so do these people become a sort of...do these advisors by and large become a cadre within the American pacification effort? Are the people...are the military advisors who were there in early days, do they generally stay in Vietnam and carry on as sort of senior experts

CT: you mean after their term?

DV: after their term.

CT: after their term, not that I'm aware of, no

DV: do you think that it would have been a good idea if...if people had stayed?

CT: oh of course, as learn your job, learn the customs of the people, learn the culture of the Vietnamese. Of course, this has been a critici—a worthwhile criticism ever since we first went out, all the way to '75 and more so now.

DV: very often I hear that the biggest problem was that the advisors were changed every year and by the time they developed a rapport

CT: that's right

DV: you had...it was too late

CT: I mention that in my article on this war

DV: lets talk about the anti-VCI effort in those early days, OK? Um...was the anti-VCI effort carried out under the civic action program?

CT: yes it was carried out under the strategic hamlet program

DV: the strategic hamlet program

CT: this was one of the facets for determining if a hamlet was secure or not. One of the questions was were the VCI eliminated and unfortunately the advisor was not in the position to know if I was eliminated or not, except by reports of terrorism in districts. All he would know is what the district chief, what the province chief told him, what the military commander in the area would tell him. They certainly were not capable of speaking the language sufficiently, if at all, to...uh...cross examine people if they were telling the truth or not. If they would go in and actually speak to hamlet chief and ask if the VCI were eliminated of course the answer was "they're all eliminated." The province chief, everybody said that the advisor was that mercy of people they were talking to.

DV: OK...um

CT: I'm sure you've heard all of this before

DV: oh yeah, what I think I'd like...one of the things I'd like to know that might be know is within your MAAG staff who were the people...how was...how did you setup within your staff a group to be responsible for the Anti-VCI campaign? Did you have...was that, for instance, the responsibility of the intelligence officers?

CT: uh...we setup an officer in Vietnam called the Strategic Hamlet Headquarters. Carl Shod, a colonel, was in charge of that. Primarily the purpose of this office was to bring in all the information so when the McNaramas and everybody would come out you could show them all the charts in this particular...at...at the beginning we were not aware...uh...in...uh...of the seriousness of the VCI in the villages and we certainly did not give it all the attention we should have given it. We were thinking more of the military part, whether we were training the Civil Guard and the...uh...Civil Guard SEC and that was the primarily responsibility to try to secure and this thing about the VCI. We didn't have many intelligence officers at all.

DV: OK I see probably one the reasons you weren't getting the information that you later would have needed.

CT: sure and we had intelligence officers, suppose we had an intelligence officer at the province, even down to the district...uh...his...that would have been primarily his responsibility but we didn't see the importance of it at that time. We didn't realize the significance of it and we certainly didn't do anything and, besides that, we were limited in the number of advisors that we were permitted to have.

DV: limited by Congress, by actual legislation?

CT: limited by legislation

DV: OK

CT: and how many send out to me and where I would dish them all out

DV: OK, let's talk about your...uh...you have a reputation for knowing more Vietnamese than any other—at least according to Colonel Jacobson, more Vietnamese than anybody else. In those early days...um...you must have established rapport with people in the Special Branch, for instance, which I...Special Branch of the Vietnamese National Police, which eventually in the Phoenix operation became responsible for carrying...um...the anti VCI structure. What kind of relationship did you have with the Special Branch in those early days?

CT: in the early days, very, very little. We weren't...um...I...I would almost say we had none. Certainly none at the province or district level.

DV: maybe at the national level you would talk?

CT: maybe at the national level I would meet them but that would be about all.

DV: I see. Do you think that was something that needed to be developed? That a relationship need to be developed?

CT: of course, it needed to be developed but the basic problem was we didn't realize the significance and we listened and believed or more or less believed what we were told.

DV: OK...alright...what about relations with that you had in MAAG with the Central Intelligence Agency? Was the Central Intelligence Agency doing its job establishing agent nets to keep you informed of what was happening in the province.

CT: very, very little relationship with the CIA. They had their job to do, we had ours and it didn't seem to cross over. Just to be sure that we didn't interfere with them in anyway, that Special Forces units that were on the borders that did not come under MAAG, that I wanted to know what they are doing...

DV: well that's interesting...

CT: and not go out and see them. I started to find out generally what they were doing and to keep them in touch with our province advisor.

DV: I see, do you mind if we talk about that a little more? Its...uh...interesting to me that the...uh...Special Forces, which I understand are an element of the US Army were not under control of the Military Advisory Group in Vietnam at the time.

CT: that's right

DV: is there a reason why they weren't and would it have helped you position if they had been under your...under your direct command?

CT: I think it would have because one of the big problems and I am thinking from a military viewpoint. One the big problems was to try to know how much infiltration was going along...going on along the border, the Laos border and...uh...we didn't have much information on that at all.

DV: I see. It seems to me unusual, to say the least, that you would be denied that information or unable to achieve that information can you tell me a little more about what was going on behind the scenes that divided up the areas of responsibility so that the CIA was controlling the Special Forces on the borders and you were controlling the advisory groups within the country itself?

CT: uh...MACV, under General Harkins became operational on May the 15th in '62. MAAG then became just one organization, one entity, under MACV.

DV: I see

CT: another was the Special Forces

DV:OK

CT: another was the Air Force, another was the Marines. So we were sort of boxed in by our responsibility. What we had to do was advise the divisions, the train, check on the...um...supplies, make recommendations to MACV on the supplies and how effectively they were being used at the training schools. That was our responsibility.

DV: very interesting so

CT: together with as we had province advisors we were responsible for the strategic hamlet program. That came under the advisors.

DV: so its an interesting difference between MACV and MAAG, One which I think a lot of people are confused about...um...except military people in Vietnam who understood the situation. Was it a good system to have...uh...so many different components to MACV.

CT: Admiral Felt, at the time, was very much concerned in '62 that...no I'm wrong about that it was in '64 that MAAG was disestablished and he thought this was a great mistake and so let Washington know but his deal did not hold, were not accepted.

DV: so it was this time, 1964, that you finished your tour in Vietnam.

CT: that's right in May...I think it was May the 1st when MAAG was disestablished and when, under General Westmoreland shortly thereafter, the...uh...advisory responsibility were taken over by MACV. I

DV: I see, OK. Was MAAG responsible for the rural construction program

CT: No

DV: it wasn't, was that strictly an Agency for International Development program?

CT: yes, that's right

DV: OK, how was that different, the rural construction program, different from what MAAG was doing.

CT: MAAG was very much concerned with checking on how effective the Viet...Americans and Vietnamese were in supplying the things necessary for the hamlets and villages, such as building schools, hospitals, clinics, roads, water, that kind of thing. We were reporting on that as part of our Province Chief advisory, responsibility.

DV: OK when did you return to Vietnam

CT: July '67

DV: '67, in what capacity? [cuts out] well talk a little about Civic Action programs in '62, '63, '64. Did you have a chief advisor to the Civic Action Program?

CT: No we did not but the...uh...province advisor, the district advisors were responsible for assisting their counterparts in helping them in the Civic Action Program, primarily carrying out the construction of the hamlet, the...uh...clinics, the schools, roads, water but even maybe more important was to try to sell the government positions to counter the communist propaganda in the village. This was the responsibility of the advisor to push it along to try to find out how effective it is, or was and assist the province chief and their counterparts in doing that. The bad part of all this program was that...uh...first of all, the government did not have people qualified to go in that great number to go to all that hamlet and to...who would train well enough to be propagandists, to know what Civic Action meant, that... The teams were almost ineffective.

DV: is this an area of interest to you, Civic Action? Is something you took an interest in and thought was important?

CT: I thought it was very important because winning hearts and minds [laughing] of the people. This was the program directed to do that

DV: OK

CT: and to win the hearts and minds

DV: OK, eventually, the Civic Action Program develops into a number of programs designed to...uh...win the hearts and minds, the chief one of which is Revolutionary Development. Did you play a role in formulating...uh...the program, the Revolutionary Program

CT: No I did not

DV: and when did you return in '67 did you monitor it at all?

CT: somewhat as I would travel around the country I would be talking to the people in the provinces and that was a matter of some interest. That was not my primary function but it was a matter of some interest.

DV: how would you compare the effectiveness of Revolutionary Development in 1967 as well as the anti-VCI campaign in 1967 compared to where had been in '63 and '64. Where they were winning...was there...when Robert Komer came in and instituted his programs, did it have an effect, did people start giving their hearts and minds to the GVN

CT: uh...I would say they made tremendous progress. Tremendous progress when I'm talking in the sense that there was very, very little. There was considerably more but how effective they were in winning the hearts and minds of the people, it was better than it was in '64 but it was far from being good

DV: OK, OK

CT: it was semi-effective

DV: do you...from your point of view what was the failure of WHAM, winning hearts and minds program?

CT: I think some of the reasons were that the...uh...officials themselves, the commanders, did not appreciate the effectiveness or the necessity of winning the hearts and minds of the people. The military people, in the long run it was the military, the...uh...division chiefs that were responsible for the strategic hamlet programs and then they ran these programs to see that they are effectively carried out. At least, they had a very important role. I think they were mostly concerned with military operations. They were trained for military operations, that was the most important thing. If I could go back to the Strategic Hamlet program, you know, it was thought...well, it was planned that the division chief would be responsible for program in those provinces that his division were located. He had no interest in this at all, almost without exceptions or just didn't realize the importance of it.

DV: and then later that responsibility is transferred to the province chief

CT: that's true and the province chiefs were military officers

DV: and they had

CT: and the district chiefs were all. I don't know of any civilian and they were still primarily concerned with the military

DV: was this a source of frustration for you?

CT: very, very much, very much. I remember in '62-63 one of the primary jobs of the advisor was to convince the military counterpart of the necessity of carrying out this program and...uh...we were quite ineffective.

DV: I've often heard it said that John Vann was the most effective of the division advisors and later of the provinces advisors and even later he became a Corps advisor.

CT: that's true

DV: is it...do you agree with that?

CT: yes he certainly was very, very effective.

DV: why would one province...why would one advisor be more effective than another?

CT: human nature

DV: just...just his character

CT: his interests...uh...the advisor might be interested in fields, more competent in the military side, or maybe in the training side, or maybe in the logistical side and naturally he's going to give more attention to that but primarily the military side. I think the initial mistake we made, and you might already have heard about this, already in 1955 when divisions were established the contest was in the hamlets and villages not at the division or battalion level and it was no assistance. The police assistance was not given at the village and hamlet, were the contest was.

DV: that's an interesting area, one of the areas I'd like to get into, during the strategic hamlet program, the MAAG program, what was your relationship with the National Police?

CT: very, very little

DV: I mean I understand that...even at the top the people in National Police were all military

CT: we were not responsible for training the National Police.

DV: was that an Agency for International Development?

CT: well...uh...an AID

DV: it was AID?

CT: AID yes...I was going to say I can think of the man that was responsible for that. He's in Hawaii now.

DV: Frank Walton?

CT: yes

DV: ok, do you...were they involved at that point in the anti-infrastructure...later on in Phoenix the police play a major role in the...because they start putting the police in the villages and developing their agent nets through the National Police. In those early days are the National Police involved in...

CT: no they weren't. Not involved at all or a minimum involved, only to the extent that the province chief maybe wanted to involve them, which we were not aware of.

DV: so within MAAG

CT: at least I wasn't aware of

DV: within MAAG, there was very little in the way of understand about the relationship between the province chief and his police chief?

CT: that's true

DV: because later on it becomes a critical relationship in the attack against the VCI

CT: right, right and since it was not the MAAG responsibility to train the police or supervise their operation

DV: what was your relationship with Frank Walton in those days, did you meet?

CT: just social

DV: do you think you should have had an operational relationships, that there should have been...uh...an convergence of interests?

CT: we should have, certainly been integrated to extent of what they're doing, the importance of their program, and saying "what can we do to help." Never thought of that until just now [laughing]

DV: I see, I see cause I was talking to an individual that was an advisor to the National Police Field Force...uh...um...the man's name was Douglas McCallum. I also talked to with William "Pappy" Greives the other day do you know Colonel [cuts out] with a single American advisor would come in with thirty or forty American policemen and they would conduct a screening and a search which were was immensely effective in finding out the VCI were in a village and I was just wondering if those kinds of ideas for those kinds of operations were ever conceived of in those early days.

CT: yes there was there was some cordon operations conducted in '63-'64. Where the military cordon out all the people into...and then the people that would go in to check would be the province chief people. They probably weren't police.

DV: I see. Regional forces perhaps, or something like that?

CT: yes...yes...yes the regional forces probably were mostly used in these operations. Together with the regular Army when necessary but it was primarily...um...regional forces.

DV: OK...um...when you came back in...um...'67 as the Special Assistant, where you in a position to observe the Phoenix Program, was that one of the things you were able to do?

CT: never much. I was interested. I would talk about it...uh...but I was not reporting on it.

DV: towards the end after 1973 wa...when all American advisors were withdrawn from Vietnam, at that point did you begin to take an interest in the anti-infrastructure campaign?

CT: no not very much. I think, by that time, it was becoming more of a military problem not concerned about the effectiveness of the hamlets and the villages...

DV: of course the divisions were coming over from North Vietnam...

CT: divisions were coming and we were concerned about holding them.

DV: I see right

CT: the effectiveness of the divisions and I would...I would travel around very much at the time. Try to observe operations, observe what they were doing, how effective they were.

DV: in those later days did you still have American military advisors to the divisions?

CT: no, you mean in '73?

DV: in '73

CT: no, all the Americans were gone.

DV: it sounds to me that things happened backwards. That when you needed advisors at the village, you had advisors at the district...

CT: have to think about that

DV: division...

CT: I got to think about that...there were civilians advisors

DV: to the divisions?

CT: not to the divisions, to the provinces

DV: to the provinces

CT: no military people, with the military...with the Vietnamese on it...only as a recall, civilians the district and the province.

DV: those would be State Department people?

CT: that's right, AID people

DV: I could with...um...a Vietnamese gentleman and his analysis of the war was the Americans we didn't want them and left we wanted them. Would you agree with that analysis?

CT: um...first of all, Tran Van Dong wrote a book how...uh...that when the American advisors came...uh...they didn't need advisors. They knew how to fight the VC better than we did because it was not a Korean War. They needed the advisors to show them how to use the equipment they had, which was entirely wrong. He didn't realize how ineffective much of the regular army was...uh...and so many of the programs, the strategic hamlet program for one, he didn't realize that the follow up that was necessary by the commanders were not taking place. Until the advisor went out and said "you're not inspecting your troops? Look how they are. They don't have their ammunition." All this kind of thing. And when the advisor was there, they did it because it reported...would be reported. Then as far as the schools are concerned, the training schools, often the instructions wouldn't appear it was run very slipshod but when

the advisors were there the instructors came on time, became more effective, by just being there they became much more efficient.

DV: motivated by presence...by their presence.

CT: and surprised to see that they were being criticized

DV: what...um...what would be your

CT: but then you a...the latter part of your question, should we have been there in the end? Uh...well first of all this is...uh...our congress cut out the budget so...of course they would have been effective if they hadn't

DV: OK...um...where you around for Hop Tac...the Hop Tac?

CT: yes

DV: was that one of your...

CT: you've got to remind me what that was?

DV: that was called the ink spot, where it began in the provinces right around Saigon...

CT: of yes...sure...sure...

DV: right around...and as I understand it was the follow program to Strategic Hamlets.

CT : yes it was in this province where it was started and it was started by now who is Lieutenant General. He was the first one who thought of that...

DV: he was a Colonel, back then

CT: yes

DV: in III Corps?

CT: Lieutenant Colonel, IV Corps

DV: was that in Long An?

CT: no it was down here it think it was in Pak Lu. That's my quick recollection it could but...IV Corps. It was his idea to do that.

DV: do you remember his name?

CT: I sure can't get but I'll think of it

DV: is he a General?

CT: yeah John

DV: General

CT: Lieutenant General and he lives in...uh...New York City, above New York City...not Yonkers but...West

DV: Westchester?

CT: yeah

DV: that's were I grew up

CT: in that area...John

DV: well known person?

CT: quite well known. He became...he came back as a...a Corp Commander I think... but he's the one who got that idea around '40...I mean around '63.

DV: ok, did you think that Hop Tac idea was a bit more...a little better? As I understand the Hop Tac idea was to displace the Viet Cong from the villages, rather than...rather than creating a strategic hamlet fort to take the war into the villages. Do you think that was the...uh...I understand Hop Tac is sort of the model for future pacification...uh...programs. Do you think that's a turning point?

CT: I think it's a good tactic

DV: a good tactic, OK

CT: a good plan maybe...tactic might make it a little stronger. It was effective back then, quite effective. As far as we knew and reported on, our reports weren't always accurate [laughing]

DV: I'm going to ask you some...um...side questions...um...I'm very interested in SACSA, the Special Assistant for Covert and Secret Activities...uh...which I believe was...uh...created around 1964 and I think that a Marine general was the first chief of SASCA. Are you aware of the role of SACSA in the prosecution of the war.

CT: no

DV: no OK. What about the role of the Special Operations Group, SOG...um...were they around during MAAG days?

CT: well it's an outgrowth of the Special Forces

DV: ok...was it called Combined Studies Group? Before it was SOG? Do you know what it was called? Does that ring a bell?

CT: Yes it does but I...that's an Agency program wasn't?

DV: SOG was going against North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia.

CT: right, OK

DV: so that would have been MACV, one of those programs under MACV

CT: that's right. Not my program...I was familiar with it and I would hear reports on it.

DV: is...um...interesting to me come from the outside and see how all the different compartments of the military operate. Do you have comments opinions you would like to offer about how the war was...the American effort was organized and carried forth? If you, you know...maybe its all a matter of record already which your opinions are. Have you rethought them or do...um...you have opinion on how the war was conducted.

CT: well first of all, I started saying before I thought the original mistake was creating division when they were...when the contest was in the hamlet. We should of built up the police and local forces. That was the initial mistake that we never really over came.

DV: and it gained a momentum and developed a life of its own

CT: that's true and in 1961...uh...I happened to be the briefer of General Taylor when he came out in October 1961 and...uh...at that time, recommended a few more divisions so I had to [laughing]

DV: OK

CT: more divisions and we're still only thinking of the military portion, beating the VCI on the battlefield. The strategic hamlet program only came after that. That through the prodding of...um...what's-his- name...the British

DV: Thompson

CT: Thompson, Sir Robert

DV: did you meet him?

CT: very much I would talk to him an awful a lot. I thought he had an awful a lot of good things to offer. Oh I've talked to him very, very much.

DV: I am always surprised at the incredible influence Thompson had in forming American policy and I can never understand why a Brit would such a big role in a...uh...American action?

CT: because of their effectiveness of in Mala...Malaysia.

DV: who was his sponsper within the American government that said listen to Thompson.

CT: I don't know

DV: was it, you know...

CT: I don't know. I sure talked to him a lot. No I don't know. I'm in the Army. I'm not sure about that. There were some jealousies, of course, at the time.

DV: uh...I think that that really finishes my prepared questions

CT: another thing if I could go on

DV: please do

CT: you asked me about the effectiveness of the American...uh...of course, in '61 we continued making the same mistake but we started the strategic hamlet program. We had to learn by experience and it took a long time until Komer and Colby and them put it all together but this was a start...uh...and we thought we were quite effective. We really thought in '64 up to Diem's coup that we were effective but, then at the time of coup, of course, they changed all the province chiefs...uh...the program was ignored throughout the country and it just fell by the wayside and we found out how ineffective our reporting was, how many hamlets actually were not under government control.

DV: that's interesting point, how...where you aware of the impending coup?

CT: of the impending coup

DV: in 1964...in October of 1963.

CT: Somewhat, sure, the air was full of it even before, that...that...there was talk about the coup and a few days before the actual coup I happened to be sitting in the stands for their National Day, which is...uh...I think October 26. I was standing between Tran Van Dong and Minh [laughing] right as the was fixed up already, all planed already. Of course, they didn't let me know anything about it.

DV: I see

CT: but we've talked about this often since the but that's just besides. I think the mistake we made after that was...is the ineffective governments that follow. This was the time. How could we expect the Vietnamese to defeat the VCI when they themselves were so unorganized? The Americans couldn't do it. That was probably with hindsight a good time to have pulled out.

DV: OK, I see certainly it's the time when the Viet Cong made their strongest gains

CT: that's true

DV: there's no question about that. They capitalized on that. Did I ask you who the architect of the strategic hamlet program were? The Americans who were the main forces behind that?

CT:

Tape 2

DV: OK, I see certainly it's the time when the Viet Cong made their strongest gains

CT: that's true

DV: there's no question about that. They capitalized on that. Did I ask you who the architect of the strategic hamlet program were? The Americans who were the main forces behind that? Was yourself?

CT: yes and whole MAAG headquarters, Jacobson, Brewer, who was a G-3 at the time. We were all trying to put this thing together. At that time, McGaur was the boss.

DV: Brewer is a name that's new to me.

CT: yeah, well he was a G-3. He's around here. I'm not sure would get very much anymore. Certainly Jake was working for.

DV: yeah, I see.

CT: so you got everything and Jake was probably much more involved than Brewer

DV: yeah, he had a lot of interesting things to say...uh...especially in...in...in terms of CORDS and the involvement of Phoenix because he was in a position to see all that. Can I ask you a little bit, just about your background? Where you were born and when?

CT: I was born in 1907 in...uh...I don't know if you wanna, are you going to put that in the book?

DV: no just for my own...

CT: Innsbrook, I was I born in Innsbrook Austria. My father was born in Brooklyn and studied medicine in Vienna. My mother is Austrian

DV: I see very interesting

CT: I went to a boarding college, 24-28. I applied to get into West Point. I had an alternate appointment. They told me I qualified physically and mentally. I already had three years of college and...uh...uh...the principal guy was...so I studied law.

DV: and that was from '32-39 you were...uh...

CT: and then I practiced law, '32-29, in New York

DV: and then you enlisted in the military?

CT: no I was a reserve officer. I went through CMTCs, Civilian Military Training Camp at the end of four months training, one on each summer. When you were...if you were qualified, when you twenty-one, you got a commission, after taking some correspondence course. So I think by '39 I was a Captain. I first went with CCC, Civilian Conservation Corps.

DV: I remember them, sure

CT: and then in '41 was ordered to Fort Dix. I became a paratrooper in '42.

DV: oh really

CT: I commanded a battalion of the 507th parachute infantry

DV: in Europe?

CT: '62 from jump school in the states. Then we became part of the 82nd that jumped in Normandy in D-Day, as battalion commander.

DV: I've always been interested in people's backgrounds

CT: I got DST, Distinguished Service Cross for Normandy. We made another jump. We were assigned to 17th Airborne Division and we jumped on the east side of the Rhine River.

DV: well I heard that the 82nd...that a good portion of the 82nd had been dropped into German troop concentrations in Germany. I heard that a whole company or brigade or whatever of 82nd landed smack dab in the middle of a German...uh...

CT: yeah I...don't put this down...I lost fifty percent [cuts out]

Tilton

John Tilton

Track One

Sound bite 1

DV: So first tell me where you graduated from college or where you grew up even and then where you went to college and...uh...how you got into intelligence work, government work.

JT: I grew up in Washington DC and I went to George Washington University and have BA and Master's Degree in International Economics...um...that's school. As far as my intelligence experience is concerned, I enlisted in the Navy...it was two years in the Navy Security Agency when each service got its own agency, which was essentially code breaking. Now of course, its all under the National Security Agency.

Sound bite 2

JT: In...about '48, I am not sure I went to work the State Department when it had its own intelligence department and in '52 I transferred to CIA where I stayed until I retired in '74 and since that time took the few temporary jobs on a contract basis which I am not doing now.

DV: for governments or industry?

JT: for CIA

DV: for CIA

JT um...now I just collect rocks.

Sound bite 3

JT: overseas I served mostly in Central America and South American except for a tour in Vietnam, which included being the last director of the Phoenix Program and after that was turned over to the South Vietnamese. I finished my tour there as a member of the station, CIA station and as deputy chief of station.

Sound bite 4

DV: your career in Central and South America for the CIA, what branch of the CIA where you in or what kind of job duties...what kind...what kind of...of duties...where you ever a chief of station your self in any the places?

JT: I was chief of station in two countries and...uh...two others operations officers. Now the compartmentalization between intelligence...intelligence collection and covert action is not as sharply delineated in the field as it is in headquarters.

Sound bite 5

JT: in other words, an operation's officer, especially in a small station, must be able to run both straight intelligence operations and covert action operations.

Sound bite 6

JT: paramilitary operations are a much more...um...limited type of activity and obviously most stations are not involved in paramilitary operations. Its more of a capability developed for contingency use.

Sound bite 7

DV: had you volunteered for Vietnamese...Vietnam duty or was that...um...any reason, any particular reason do you think that you were assigned the last tour there as...um...the last Phoenix director.

JT: I don't know if it was any particular reason. When I was asked whether I'd accept the assignment my answer was "I have a boss who is in charge of assigning senior personnel and I agreed many years ago, I'd go where I was sent. So don't ask me, ask him."

Sound bite 8

DV: when did you arrive in Vietnam to take over for John Mason

JT: what was April '71

DV: and is this...um...everybody did a 18 month tour, is that pretty much the way it work.

JT: the military personnel generally had a 18 month tour. Ours was not that fixed. Many had 18-month tours and some were extended and some came back for two tours but the...well no let me...let me change that...uh...I'm sorry many of the personnel, military personnel, in the Phoenix Program had 12 month tours and speaking now of the major captain lieutenant...uh...and below.

Sound bite 9

DV: yeah how long were you there as Phoenix director?

JT: I can't give you that exactly but let me see, I go back...at the end of...um...toward the end of '72. I can't give you an exact. I just don't know.

Sound bite 10

DV: and it was at that point, then, that you phased out the American involvement within Phoenix and turned the Program over to Special Branch, I think it was, who took over?

JT: No, No Special Branch didn't take over the...uh...Phoenix or Phung Hoang Vietnamese program stayed in being just that it was considered but that time if you wanted to do it you could do it on their own with out our constant advice and we were approaching a time of Veitnamization when, you know pretty, soon about everything was going to be turned over when it was the military.

DV: Did some people stay on as advisors to Phoenix?

JT: Phoenix? No, nah

DV: nobody did

JT: any that stayed on might have stayed on for a while as...um...I think Mike McCan (?) might have taken a couple as...um...Public Safety Program—No, we closed down...

Sound bite 11

DV: could you...uh...describe the duties of the Phoenix director? [cuts out]

JT: yeah the setup was this: as one of the many directorates of CORDS in Saigon, I reported to Jacobson and to Colby who was...nobody problem seeing either Jacobson or Colby directly and, while I was not part of the CIA station, I did attend their staff meetings...uh...to keep them advised and keep myself advised but it was in...no way was I worked for the station and you have to understand the organizational setup of CORDS to understand really my job and the directorate jobs in Saigon. There's the four military

regions, Colby had allowed them to organize themselves pretty much the way they wanted to. So you had for regional DEPCORDS they called them who had different ideas about authorization, different backgrounds, one a former ambassador, one a former colonel and one a former AID guy, I don't remember the other but...um...anyway under the DEPCORDS in regional there was 1, 2, 3 and 4 they had their setup of Phoenix, public safety and other CORDS programs and the personnel there reported to them

Sound bite 12

JT: with Saigon coordinating a nationwide, South Vietnamese wide, Phoenix program providing guidance, instructions, visiting and so forth and working with the Vietnamese Phung Hoang leaders in Saigon. These people at regional, province and district level in the Phoenix program were not in a direct chain of command under me.

Sound bite 13

JT: one age old management argument between centralization and decentralization, as you know, but...uh...in that respect I think probably there is something to be said in a program like this of a chain of command emanating from a headquarters. Not that they weren't uncooperative but...um

Sound bite 14

DV: did you contribute in those policy determinations? Or is that something that Colby decided on or something?

JT: well obviously I mean the overall policy was Colby and...uh...above all Bunker and back to Washington but...um...the policy as far as certain priorities in the program and training and so forth, yeah, yeah. It was a policy job, there was always someone above me, you know.

Sound bite 15

DV: you didn't then participate with the different region Phoenix people in...um...formulating different operations?

JT: well yes...uh...it's not a hands off policy I mean I frequently visited and sent out members of my staff in the directorate, regions the provinces the districts. I went usually by chopper to nearly all the regions and provinces but as many districts as I could get into and talked to the US personnel and the Vietnamese personnel at that time, was briefed...uh...made recommendations and reported back to my bosses in Saigon.

Sound bite 16

DV: Uh...then lets talk about as advisor to the Vietnamese ...uh...Phung Hoang committee which ok I believe was chaired by Kheim?

JT: uh...yeah that was...that was the big factor, which met infrequently. It was a US committee. I think probably chaired by...uh...Ambassador Bunker. In practice neither one of them met very often. The Public Committees much more frequently. The Phung Hoang directorate that's the name the Vietnamese used I am not sure anymore but in other words the counterpart to Saigon Phoenix directorate was in Saigon.

Someone: John....

Sound bite 17

JT: the point I wanted to make we were in extremely close daily contact and there were not two programs going this way

Sound bite 18

JT: I never...I never found any hesitance in the part of the Vietnamese to take our recommendations— suggestions to send out directors.

Sound bite 19

JT: we...we stressed constantly the advantage of rallying—to the use the word— there's another program for that, Chieu Hoi, but anyway. They even call it inducing to effect in other areas or capturing. Interrogation as opposed to [coughs] finding one killed and claiming it was neutralized Viet Cong. We plead for careful records of identified Viet Cong. One of the more difficult frustrating things, as you know, was to find out who they were and where they were.

Sound bite 20

JT: now the Special Branch...uh...Special Branch was a different organizations from the Vietnamese Phoenix organization. Special Branch was an arm of the National Police, which was responsible for investigation or direct police they come at the same time but more like a security force, FBI type of operation but in this case not a part of it but pretty independent but still apart of the National Police, fairly autonomous and their adviser was USI, a member of the CIA station

Track 2

Sound bite 1

JT: this committee concept, I think, probably stemmed from recommendations by Sir Robert Thompson, Malaysian

DV: that's right

JT: very strongly advised, when he was advising the US. [some mumbly words I can't make out] on the committee well...committees to me are alright in setting war policy but ineffective in executing it.

Sound bite 2

DV: who besides Bunker would have been on the American Phoenix committee at the top? Would Thompson be on that?

JT: No, no, no, he only come out on TDYs. No, it would have been, I don't remember because I think whatever night I was...it would have been probably Abrahams and General Lions probably Komer and Colby and...probably Shakley, CIA chief, and Polgar, something like that.

DV: ok and u

JT: something like that

Sound bite 3

JT: I won't spend much with because...

DV: it didn't do much

JT: it never met the whole time I was...

DV: ok

JT: now the other ones did, I was at a meeting at least one—

DV: on the region levels, they did. You're talking about when you say the other ones did.

JT: on the national ones did on the US side, as far as I was ever was there, never met.

DV: the Vietnamese national ones did meet?

JT: The Vietnamese, yes, I attended a couple

DV: yes and you attended those, ok

JT: I'm not...I don't know what they would have done anyway

DV: no, I understand

JT: it was on paper.

Sound bite 3

DV: wasn't there a Phoenix career program, eventually?

JT: well if you want to call the training of the personnel to work in the Phoenix Program—it was at Fort Bragg—and they were...uh...highly selected officers who had training program there, so they did not come out cold. They knew what the setup was. They knew organizational setup. They knew what they were expected to do in running say a DIOCC as they called them at the district level, the records to keep and that sort of thing

Sound bite 4

DV: did those reports make back to the...uh...directorate?

JT: oh yeah

DV: and then you would read the reports?

JT: yeah we...reporting...uh...reporting was alright the...um...problem with the reporting was fault of anybody in the program, I think but it was system of national reporting, which had to come from all levels to go back to the Pentagon, which would show on a monthly basis the number of Viet Cong neutralized in the three categories of rallying, capture, and I guess later sentencing added, and kill. Now, there was in effect when I got there...uh...they called goals and my interpreter Pontus (?) so they would give them, I

don't remember the figures, but lets say nationally you had a goal of twelve hundred neutralized nationwide. That's what I am trying to figure out.

DV: it was 18 and then it was reduced to 12

JT: well alright at least we have that straight, 18. Inevitably, invariably they met that goal. I suspect had they made two thousand they would have met that too because your getting the statistics mainly from the Vietnamese. I mean the Special Forces ran out in the field shooting and capturing Viet Cong. When it was reduced, as I remember to twelve hundred, and the results came in twelve hundred too.

DV: so neither more nor less

JT: well no it wasn't that precise

DV: but close to it

JT: the point is that they...uh...which is a fallacy of goals or quotas. One can argue that you have to have some kind of goal, something that you can reach for.

Sound bite 5

JT: the Pentagon was hooked on statistics, well maybe not the whole Pentagon but there was an awful lot of reporting of statistics of that war, which may not have proved very much. Now I don't know if I was told if it was true or not but at one time the Pentagon asked...uh...for statistics to show the cost effectiveness of one bomb, if you get my point.

Sound bite 6

DV: just one more question on that central Phung Hoang, the Vietnamese. When you went there as an advisor and the different Vietnamese came and sat the table who were members, their Chieu Hoi person, their Revolutionary Development Person, did their American counterparts come too.

JT: I was the only American

DV: You'd be the only American there?

JT: maybe Bob Wall came at one time. He was the Special Branch Advisor, Bob Wall...

Sound bite 7

JT: and that was one of many, many programs in Vietnam, when you were trying to cover everything, trying to organize a country with where...really wasn't a country...um...all kinds of...uh...rural/urban programs. You know everything. To the point of helping establishing credit unions. You name, we had some program or were going to do it.

Sound bite 8

DV: here's a copy of the original ICEX staff, does that look anything like your Phoenix staff?

JT: my lord

DV: ICEX having been sort of the model for Phoenix there

JT: Nah. I'll tell you why. This was MACV NSO, and MACV OSA, that's the old acronym for the Agency...um...now once it was...once it became a US Army program then the whole structure conformed more to a US military set up with that kind of Pos. I am not saying this is bad but this was invented on the spot obviously.

DV: that's right, yeah they

JT: you know, put a guy here, there, someplace but the organization...this was...it was organized by inheriting a military program that...and your directorate and your region, so many personnel, colonels and so and so forth on down and at province maybe a lieutenant colonel, or major. District maybe...probably a lieutenant, maybe a second lieutenant and each one was pretty much alike...uh...this probably, well, on paper it's a nice readable organizational chart or TO...uh...and everyday DIOCC had instructions about reporting and briefing and so forth.

DV: How many...how many people do you think there were on your staff in the directorate?

JT: oh...well I did vary I was trying to reconstruct it and I don't remember the TO.

DV: you wouldn't happen to have copy of it?

JT: no, my deputy was full colonel, and one or two possibly type three lieutenant colonels, five or six majors, a few more captains and then...uh...usual supply sergeant and some others, my secretary and four or five civilian female secretaries, I guess but it didn't vary and they weren't always full.

Sound bite 9

JT: and, then, a lot of times was taken up pinning medals on or having medals pinned on me.

DV: with Vietnamese?

JT: oh the Vietnamese loved them, they pinned them on us and we pinned them on them and our own people were always you know

DV: yeah

JT: [I can't make out what he says]

Sound bite 10

DV: and was your staff organized into...uh...um...somebody overseeing the region, province, DIOCC

JT: I tried...I tried to keep it as loose as possible on purpose because...uh...at any given time you might have a problem somewhere so that my deputy, who was in a full sense a deputy, also did military work and went CORDS staff meetings, whenever I could get out of them and a lot of traveling too because there was no way I could cover that entire country by myself so I encouraged and others were eager to do it the...um...other offices to travel and to come back and report to me and we...we have them up. I mean we always invited the others to come from the field to Saigon and we used to have big fat one or twice a year and we got as many as possible.

Track 3

Sound bite 1

DV: I know when Parker started there were all sorts of tremendous secrecy. There wasn't that kind of secrecy when you were doing Phoenix by that time it was a public program and there was

JT: oh there was no secrecy at all and...uh...I was sent out there with no cover whatsoever.

Sound bite 2

DV: did you have a person on your staff, taking care of your computer? Did you have a computer?

JT: we had one called Big Mac but...uh...our stuff was fed into it. It was run out of MACV someplace. These endless, these dreary statistics were all fed into it. [air plane flies over something like "dated now"]

Sound bite 3

DV: so how you and then...just...how would you describe your staff was basically involved in doing what?

JT: working with the Vietnamese, working with the people in the field...uh...doing the required paperwork to go back to the Pentagon and back there. For instances we tried to put together a monthly newsletter, which went to the field and I don't think we got it out every month partly because they were so far apart and did not see each other, you would've in a closely knit organization. We tried to let them know in the field, somebody had a particularly interesting manner of briefing or operational technique we urged them to tell us so we could put it back in and try to give these people especially down in the district level informed and partly a morale thing to because life was not very pleasant at the district level, just plain living was not very pleasant at the district level.

Track 4

Sound bite 1

JT: information from all sources theoretically, especially on the Vietnamese side, to come...be given to Phoenix

DV: so Special Branch would give information to Phoenix

JT: yeah, yeah

DV: but they are not part of Phoenix

JT: no, their could be a Special Policeman attached 'em but everybody and I'm not saying in any given district people in who were part of the Phoenix DIOCC there did not under their place whatever capture somebody, hold somebody, turn somebody over...uh...return that somebody but the thing that was...committee concept is what grew up back here based on the...uh...its understandable when you see Phoenix says that it has captured somebody [airplane noise can't make out what he was saying] it will do it. I am not saying that nobody who ever was part of the Phoenix Program every captured anybody, every induced anybody to rally or every killed anybody, sure but no one committee took on this enormous job of capturing you got a whole directorate on it.

Sound bite 2

DV: Labelle

JT: Labelle, he was the same level as me, head of the Chieu Hoi directory.

DV: yeah

JT: His whole...all his people doing nothing but trying to induce people to defect so...uh...he had his own statistics I'm sure. Any statistics he came up with, how many people defected or rallied, went into the reporting system.

DV: ok so these people, through Cheiu Hoi, went into the Phoenix reporting system?

JT: yeah

DV: ok

JT: uh...people who were killed in active fighting, maybe with ARVN, who were identified as Viet Cong went into the Phoenix system.

DV: even if they killed by the military?

JT: yeah I am sure of it. By a bomb!

Sound bite 3

JT: on the plus side, on the minus side it is not a streamline single organization with loyalty to that organization only and that chain of command.

DV: yep, yep

JT: so

DV: ok

Sound bite 4

DV: that's really phasing out...uh...who took over the role of attack on the VCI after Phoenix? That was just...just went over the Vietnamese right?

JT: well, yeah on the stational skill there, pilot program. We were one of the first if not the first CORDS program to have it...minimized. Public Safety stayed on, and we had some agency programs, Chieu Hoi and some of the others.

Sound bite 5

DV: how were the reductions carried out at the region, province district? Did you get rid of your district people first, then your province people, then your region people?

JT: no, it was...uh...pretty much up to the military because the ones toward the end of their term were reduced or some taken over by another program, like mentioned Colonel Kerry and a few others in the directorate in Saigon...um...Mike McMan had slots for them.

Sound bite 6

JT: no we...we allowed time for...uh...psychologically, it would have been sort of stressed if everybody went home the same day. They had plenty over there. We had been talking about it for a long time so it came to no surprise to them.

Ward

Track One

Sound bite 1

JW: I was asked if I would be interested in going to Burma, so I went to Burma.

DV: what year is that, is that late '43?

JW: well, late '43 in Washington but it wasn't until early '44 that I got to Burma. And in Burma for thirteen and half months I commanded guerilla forces, Kachin hill tribesmen.

DV: I heard of that from [not sure of the name]

JW: um...yeah...I had a great deal of combat experience and I learned a great deal about the strengths and weakness of guerrilla forces.

Sound bite 2

JW: this was not like Vietnam. In Vietnam, we just advised...uh...and supported but during the war, we commanded, we advised, we supported. We were in charge. Although for the most part most of our operations were highly decentralized—activities here and there—and we kept them as decentralized as we could. So that, for the most part, a lot these operations were conducted by the Kachin leaders themselves, and then afterwards we would find out exactly what happened through after action reports and debriefings. Uh...but it gave me a real depth of understanding of working with local people, fairly primitive people and also of guerilla warfare and I had to learn it the hard way because although they thought they were teaching us something about guerilla warfare they were actually teaching us deep penetration operations. They kind that rangers and commandos would go on, not really guerilla operations. Guerillas just because the fact that they are not nearly as strong as conventional troops. Hit and run type tatatics and that's what I had to learn the hard way with the Kachins.

Sound bite 3

JW: second batta—this battalion that I had down in that area—there really were five battalions altogether, five three hundred-men battalions...uh...this is the...we moved on down the place is La Soc Pontera and there we killed so many Japanese that we were awarded a presidential citation, the whole outfit.

DV: what was your outfit?

JW: detachment 101, OSS

Sound bite 4

DW: so what did you do after detachment 101, after they...after...if like summer of '45 OSS was disbanded and detachment 101 was split up and people either went to the military, like Aaron Banks, or went to State Department or went back to private business. Which way did you go?

JW: well, I went back to law school and I came down with malaria so much I had to drop out. I got married, began having kids and then in 1960—in '47 I joined the Foreign Service and then I went out to Malaya in '48, right after the fighting started there, the communist insurgency. So for three years I was in Kola Lumpur watching the communist insurgency and how it developed and how the British responded to it.

DV: what was your job in the Foreign Service?

JW: at that time I was vice-counsel

Sound bite 5

JW: I was transferred to Burma, and I was there for three years

DV: in the embassy?

JW: in the embassy, yeah...and I had a daughter who was born there, three children all together...uh...

Sound bite 6

DV: Incidentally when you were in Malaya did you Thompson at that time, Sir Robert Thompson, was he back there at that point?

JW: uh...yeah...at that time I did not know him very well and didn't pay much attention to him at that time...uh...the guy who was most impressive, at that time was Sir Claude Fenner. Now, Claude Fenner was a—he became inspector general of the police force. When I was there, he was head of Special Branch in Koal Lumpur, Special Branch sorta was the intelligence service of British police.

Sound bite 7

DV: Did you, in those early days, meet Flying Tiger people and...

JW: oh sure...oh absolutely I met a lot of those guys, like Don Bussard who was an old Flying Tiger. He used to fly out of Rangoon back in the days when Schnalt's forces

DV: I think I have heard about him....

JW: yeah...very colorful guy, married a beautiful Chinese girl.

DV: so when you getting air dropped back in those days was a lot of those—Flying Tigers doing the dropping?

JW: no, I knew Don Bussard b during the war briefly, well I stayed his apartment down—he had a very luxurious apartment—he was flying with SNCE during the war. First he was with the Flying Tigers with Schnalt then we they stared SNCE they hired a lot these guys. They were, you know, professional and...uh...SNCE was China Nova Airways Command, I think it was called and they flew the hump and the...uh—not like the military transport people flew the hump but these guys were flying the hump on

their own and getting paid for it, getting handsomely paid for it, in those days...uh...I knew a lot of those guys. A lot of them went with CAT after the war, civilian transport and so forth.

DV: well some of those guys play a role in Vietnam

JW: oh sure, a lot of them dropped there and later some of them even went with Air America but I don't think any of the original Flying Tigers were with Air America, although some of them stayed with CAT for a long time. I knew Don Bussard did.

Sound bite 8

DV: and then when do you get to Vietnam what time in '67?

JW: uh...April '67

DV: and your assignment

JW: was all through '67 and '68 and the rest of '67...to...uh just before the Christmas of '68 then it was back to Washington working for Vietnam affairs.

DV: so all your Vietnamese...Vietnam [cuts out] Vietnam experience from April '67 to December '68, no more no less?

JW: I went to Laos, two years.

DV: ok in the 70s

JW: ok I was in Laos from mid '70 to mid '72

DV: what was your...what were you doing in Laos, what was that?

JW: uh...I was sorta working within the embassy. I was sorta of a senior officer...uh...in the embassy working on the war.

Sound bite 9

DV: I know that you were the Delta...uh...region four senior advisor in—region officer in charge from 1967-1968, is that correct?

JW: yeah in the Delta...yeah, no this is the problem, this is the thing that...

DV: you don't want me to refer to you as region officer in charge?

JW: uh...not if you tie it in with the Agency

DV: what was your light cover?

JW: uh...it was...it wasn't really any until later—

DV: Where you working for CORDS?

JW: yeah

DV: I can just call you a CORDS official

JW: yeah, senior CORDS official

DV: but are you the....

JW: I was pretty much in charge of all the pacification apparatus in the Delta then, with CORDS, yeah

Sound bite 10

DV: ...what you were going to do and what was going to happen?

JW: well no just on the war. What we were doing right and what we were doing wrong in the war. Everywhere I went I could see things that were being done wrong.

DV: well, what were they saying? What were you doing right and what was going wrong.

JW: well on of the things that was being done wrong was we'd see the positions the South Vietnamese forces had, you know...uh...they would have...uh...fortifications made out of mud, hard bate mud but still the kind of thing that rockets could go right through, could penetrate with no trouble whatsoever. You know, and it just seemed foolish to me for them to have that kind of defensive position. I thought...I think of it...uh...defensives positions that they could change every single night and they made use of natural terrain features for cover and concealment rather than these stationary forts that the enemy could study, get good intelligence on and then attack.

DV: are these regular ARVN forces your talking about?

JW: I'm talking about regular ARVN and RF/PF, all three.

Sound bite 11

JW: one of the things before I finished the second week—third week there. I drafted a paper and which I said the key to this whole war, particularly down in the delta, was people, the control of people and this war was not being fought for the control territory but for the political control of people and the communist were doing a better job than we were. We were trying to defend terrain while they were trying to acquire control of people. The best way to stop this was to get at the infrastructure.

Sound bite 12

JW: I also saw tremendous failures and discussed this with both the Colonel Wilsons in the flow of intelligence. It seemed to me that the police would always try to transmit their intelligence upwards through the police channels from the district to the province and then to the regional and national headquarters that were significant of national interest. The military were doing the same thing and there was no real good lateral cross transfer of intelligence.

DV: Ok

JW: So

DV: you wanted to bring the police and the military together

JW: right from the very beginning, this was in my third week in country, I could this was as major weakness there. What was necessary was to bring together the intelligence representatives of the police, of the military of the revolutionary development cadres, of the PRU, of the census program and anyone else who was involved in collecting intelligence. At the appropriate reaction, which for the most part were

the district levels, so that intelligence could be coordinate...collected and coordinated, analyzed and interpreted, collated...uh...at that level and reaction operations could be undertaken almost immediately.

DV: without having to up to province

JW: without having to go up to province or to region for approvals.

Sound bite 13

DV: Quickly, how quick from...the time intelligence was gather and collated and analyzed before the operation took place?

JW: again...again...this depends upon...upon...uh...kind of target...uh...the size of the target the availability of troops to respond. It might small target, and it might be an individual who could be picked up or it might be tactical target because this was equally valid for tactical intelligence as well as intelligence on the communist party structure

DV: so when you say tactical target intelligence as opposed to VCI you mean military

JW: military

Sound bite 14

DV: end of your third week,

JW: ok this the end of my third week, I wrote all this up and ...uh...I talked with some people about it but I didn't surface this paper. I just used this as...uh...and at that time a lot of people were talking that they had to coordinate intelligence. A lot people were talking about...a...around Saigon and other places and these ideas I had were not all original but I pulled them together...uh...but I was told that Evan Parker was coming out and that Evan was going to head this program and since Evan was an old friend, I waited until he came out and had a long talk with him and showed him the paper I had written on it

Sound bite 15

JW: see when I first went out there I didn't take over the Delta immediately. I went out early...early so and I what I did was to...to replace different people in the field...uh...doing their jobs while they went on leave or off for training or something like that.

DV: did you replace them with people outside the country or people from inside?

JW: I replaced them myself

DV: oh ok you were the replacement, I see

JW: see when somebody wanted to go some where, that's how I got down in Long An

Sound bite 16

JW: I did this in Saigon in, I did in Rat Yung province (best guess) down in....oh....Keim Jung. I did it in different provinces and in Saigon too. I would take over

DV: was it...

JW: I was head of the Revolutionary Development Program at some point

DV: oh did you really?

JW: yeah

Sound bite 17

DV: and this is all before you assume your...

JW: all before I went down to take over the delta, yeah

DV: when...when

JW: I visited every place in the Delta...

DV: and you just became very familiar with everything that going on

JW: yeah

DV: ok and how long a period is the orientation of the country, how long is that last?

JW: went on for quite a while including...particularly down in the Delta, where I spent time in every province...uh...sixteen provinces takes quite a while. At least a few days in each on to get familiar...uh...I spent actually I went up there about four and half months.

Sound bite 18

JW: actually by...I've been in...I think I have been in forty provinces in Vietnam, I think there are four three ove there

DV: that's right

JW: yeah there were a couple of them in three-corps I missed and maybe one or two in two-corps but I saw all them in eye-corps and of course of them in the delta.

Sound bite 19

DV: lets back up a bit...uh...um...when you went over to...uh... and took over Rev Dev how long of a period was that?

JW: that was three weeks there

DV: three weeks, could we talk about that a bit...uh...uh...did you replace someone who was going on leave again...and he had a deputy that was till there ,perhaps, and the deputy said "alright you going to fill in his place but you just watch and this what happens and I'll take you around and explain to you what's going on?"

JW: yeah...well, I know one of the things we did was move a hell of a lot of paper. He had a big back log and I finished those up...uh...that's because I am a pretty good paper shuffler but...uh...I did

DV: can you describe the facility to me and what was going on there?

JW: mostly its...uh...your getting all the reports in...its mostly a probably of getting reports making sure you get personnel replaced...uh...personnel replacement was a tremendous job and...uh...if you know somebody was coming up—but sometimes they'd have problems like a guy

Sound bite 20

DV: did the province officer handle the Rev Dev in his province or was their a Rev Dev officer apart from him...

JW: there's a Rev Dev officer in every province.

DV: apart from the province officer in charge.

JW: he might have been—aside from the senior American advisor, yeah...to the province. There is a senior American advisor in every province.

DV: usually a military person right?

JW: generally military personnel or it could have been a senior civilian, a guy of at least rank of at least JS 14 probably 15...a Lieutenant Colonel or Full Colonel in the military

DV: and he would have deputy

JW: and he would have deputy...yeah...and then they would have USIS personnel usually someone for psychological operations...uh...they would have a lot of ECA people, one in charge of the police program...uh...they'd have...uh...a guy in charge of Revolutionary Development Program

DV: as a...

JW: these are all coming out of the province senior advisor. Ok...um...these would be people from some of the—from the Department of State, the former Vice Counsel to Czechoslovakia of mine when was Counsel there...uh...I was ahead of the Counsel section for these. This guy went out and he was up in Bien Hoa province as a psy ops officer. He was working with ground services...uh...so they would have in CORDS people from the State Department, CIA, ECA, USIS and military.

Sound bite 21

DV: and in any case Rev Dev program would be the same in any province, no matter who was running it and that Rev Dev program is the 59 man teams that would into villages and...uh

JW: in the beginning there were fifty-nine men and eventually they were cut down thirty and then fifteen men teams.

DV: did you have anything to do with that reduction?

JW: later on, that was happening, yeah, just as I was leaving.

DV: was that something you wanted, that you encouraged?

JW: well, part of the accelerated pacification program that was Bill Colby pushing that

DV: what is the reason for the reduction for the...

JW: because they felt security had already been straightened to such an extent and they had already created the...uh...and had enough weapons to arm the People's Self Defense Forces so that with guys instead having the large security element

DV: they had like six...uh...three or five groups of six men who were just there for security. They eliminated those security teams?

JW: they didn't have them they would...uh...a...and then they could the local People Self Defense Forces from the villages. You know it might be a seventy year who is charge and he might have a fifteen year old kid who's deputy but you know...uh...and I woman as his other deputy or something like that...uh...still they were helping provide the security and they were also into mingling.

Track two

sound bite 1

JW: we would set up, we would use natural terrain features for cover and concealment and we would make sure we had the best possible fields of fire covering all approaches, right. And then we would have it so ranged that we could fall back—it was a mobile defensive set up—we could fall back into positions of increasing strength. So if you have three men here and three men there when they felt back there would be another three man group, here. Use both of them. Fall back again and you have a nine man group.

DV: I understand

JW: get a heavy concentration of firepower, same fields of fire practically and...uh...if they had to fall back even further and...uh...if they had to fall back even further

Sound bite 2

JW: and what they would do—I had this all worked out by Australians, because I didn't have the time to sit down and work it all out and I talked to an Australian Colonel, Colonel Barnard—Bernard about the concept of defending Revolutionary Development teams in the hamlets. I wanted everyone in the hamlet to be defended and...uh...when I discussed it with this guy he said "I can see the problem," he says "it's a hell of a job to train it" but he says "I tell you what I can do. I can loan you two warrant officers." And so he gave me warrant officers, who were highly seasoned, competent, combat veterans and both these guys were great and I described to them precisely what I wanted to work out and they went out and lived in some of the hamlets. And then they experimented and—with the RD Teams—and, they way they figured, they found that there were enough vines everywhere so that if they didn't have string they could use vines and these guys...the three men would be here, say there would be one man here and two back there. This guy would be altered at all times, maybe all three of them depending on the situation. And then there would be there over here, like one here and two here, OK?

DV: mmmhmmmm

JW: right here you'd have three men too. Ok so this guy is connected with string to this...these other guys, alright.

DV: yeah

JW: and if one tug on the string means alert, something's up there, you know?

DV: yep

DV: two tugs might mean something else three would mean we pull back

Sound bite 2

DV: no need for this during the day?

JW: and every night you go to a different place, you take a different segment of the village and you just use natural terrain features. You don't dig entrenchments and so forth that the enemy can get intelligence of, where your positions were.

DV: who were the Vietnamese that were doing this?

JW: these...uh...these...uh...the RD Teams

DV: these are RD Teams

JW: along with the People's Self Defense Forces

DV: OK because the RD

Sound bite 3

JW: no whenever they—they'd just take one segment one night. They'd change it another night they'd be some where else and they wouldn't say until its just about getting dark. They'd assemble everybody and say "this is where we are going to go," and they would put everyone in position just before dark. Now, that would—there would be no chance of the enemy getting intelligence on them and we had been watching the pattern of the enemy for a long, long time. They never attacked a hamlet without thorough intelligence. Without even, sometimes, setting a mock up...uh...oh what they hell do you call it...duh...a place that looked like it.

DV: sure

JW: so that they could practice and rehearse ahead of time

DV: the VC did that?

JW: the VC did this they would not exactly where you have your claymore mines, you know

DV: really?

JW: and they would know...and without that they never attacked, never attacked. Now we had experience down in the Delta, once we got this whole system working and that...uh...we had...uh...oh, I'd say close to one hundred villages using this system.

DV: spread around the provinces?

JW: spread around and in different provinces of the delta. Not a single one of these provinces was ever attacked in all the time I was there. Now listen, we didn't get this thing organized near the very end, see—of my tour. Now the a single one that was using this was attacked but a number of the others particularly the PF units

DV: yeah

JW: where they had PF units in a triangular fort on the edge of a hamlet. Those outfits continued to be attacked. You know, maybe sixty attacks a month, not a single one against the RD teams using this concept but there were attacks against RD teams that had not yet been retrained for it.

DV: ok

JW: you realize we had a lot of RD teams out there that had to be retrained for this.

Sound bite 4

JW: I explained to Colonel Bay first and then the Australians took over and they explained exactly what they were supposed to do and they ran through how to train them. These guys have been doing this for about three months before we set this thing up and they were really good at it. They ran it through by the numbers. It just worked perfectly and Colonel Bay says "I fully support this concept and we will institute it starting tomorrow. Start training at Vung Tau." And then we put as many people through. We would take different security chiefs from different RD teams and send them up to Vung Tau to put them through this again, you know? Although we used the Australians for a while and trained them all in the middle of the Delta.

Sound bite 5

JW: unfortunately, like almost everything in Vietnam, we started this too late. If we had started this in the beginning of the RD program in 1964, had this kind of defense instead of the static perimeter defenses that they built, the RD program would have worked a hell of a lot...

DV: well, you see, Scotton told me that that was his idea back in '64/65.

JW: what idea?

DV: was not having static defenses

JW: yeah I know. Everybody was complaining about static defenses but didn't come up with solutions. This is what...this is what...I could....I could explain it to, you know—

DV: who were the people you were trying to convince, the Vietnamese or Americans?

JW: oh I had to convince everybody.

Sound bite 6

JW: actually the guys who were ahead of the RD program up in Saigon didn't carry the weight that the regional officers did in the...uh...regions. These are the guys that really carried the weight.

DV: is Donahue in Saigon at this time?

JW: uh...Donahue, no. Donahue had left and gone back to Washington, oh, by '65 or something like that. He was there in '64/65

Sound bite 7

JW: we had deplored from the very beginning—one of the failures in the Revolutionary Development Program was the fact that General Westmoreland...uh...had early in the beginning of '67 or earlier than

that maybe had said that he wanted to relegate 60 some ARVN battalions to pacification duties. Ok? These ARVN battalions were never trained or told what to do. All they were supposed to do was protect the pacified areas. Uh...a few didn't do a bad job. Most of them were worthless. Most of them would send out—they stayed in battalion formations practically. They didn't decentralize and break up into companies and platoons, as they should of...uh...they had...they had static defenses. They would send patrols off and establish patterns of patrolling that the enemy could observe and then evade.

DV: and this is all because the Vietnamese generals thinking?

JW: yeah these guys are bunch of ex-sergeants that had been in the French. Sergeants that moved up and became generals and never were properly trained. Now some of them were good instinctively but a lot of them were not.

DV: well where were their American advisors?

JW: well a lot of their American advisors were also conventional warriors and they didn't understand the revolutionary development program and they didn't like the idea of being on pacification duties and they wanted to get involved in maneuver operations.

DV: I understand, ok

JW: so they were all pissed of at the thing...uh...

Sound bite 8

JW: we didn't like this at all and we said that the only way in which we are going to solve this problem and provide security for the pacified areas is through...uh...using units that we ourselves can exert some control over or the province chiefs can exert some control over. We can sway the province chiefs. Now that meant more RF and PF. So Wilson began pushing real hard through CORDS for more RF and PF, everywhere and at the same time General Abrams had instituted a program for training RF and PF.

DV: ok and...uh...Abrams is...uh...Westie's deputy at that time?

JW: At that time. That was the first assignment We...Westie—Abrams was given was to upgrade RF and PF. Territorial security, see.

Sound bite 9

DV: and this is actually putting guns in the hands of Vietnamese

JW: putting guns in the hands of Vietnamese in the RF and PF and also PSDF, the People's Self Defense Forces. Ok? Now this is what enabled them, under the accelerated pacification program and the latter part of 1968 to really make tremendous progress.

Sound bite 10

JW: the American Military Advisory Group, they operated two ways: one was their assigned to conventional military units, ok? Now those guys were not under the CORDS concept.

DV: right

JW: and the CORDS came, the province senior advisor and all the people advising at the district level or the province level. Ok, so they...all those people came under Komer or Colby. Who were the deputies to the commanding general

DV: first Komer and then Colby.

JW: yeah first Komer and then Colby. So that eventually these guys all had—Komer and Colby had more guys under them with guns than General Palmer did.

Sound bite 11

JW: getting the RF and PF to be increased in large numbers, getting the PSDF, getting the PRU program really working, getting the RD program really working. These are the things that made the main contributions to the Delta. Now, then just asked if the 21st division, the 7th division, the 9th division, that they be targeted against main force units and concentrate on main force units and to the hell with providing territorial security, because they couldn't do it. They didn't know how to do it.

Sound bite 12

DV: talking about now, from this point, just the Delta....

JW: this the Delta

DV: there is a complete...is there a different RD program in 3, 2, 1

JW: except...and once...and once the program...once Colonel Bay got hold of the training concept, then it was introduced nationally. Now I don't know the extent to which this worked on a national basis. Everything was moving so fast then ...uh...then they began the breakdown of the RD teams and—

DV: they made from 59 down to 30, that breakdown?

JW: right...and one of the first things I had to do when I got back to Washington was turn the entire program over to the military. The US military took it over.

Sound bite 13

DV: so actually the military, MACV, takes over RD

JW: right

DV: in '69...70?

JW: uh...yeah...in '69 I think. Yeah they took it over in '69

DV: ok and at the point...uh...anybody...uh...who was working for CIA stopped working for CIA and started working for the military. Is that basically what went on?

JW: basically, no...no everything was just turned over to the military and the military assigned the wrong personnel to deal with the RD program.

DV: and it would be at the point that someone like Samaigo would go work someplace else.

JW: well

Sound bite 14

DV: ok, so that very interesting. Once MACV takes over RD then it becomes military advisors, strictly military advisors.

JW: but also at the same time, you see, as the areas are being pacified the RD teams are also being upgraded as far as their specialties were concerned. And they no longer had basic security missions their jobs were, then tying into the ministries. If somebody was in the field of information, you know, building school houses manning them and so forth they would tie them into the Education Ministry. If they were tied into health they would tie them into the Health Ministry, if they are involved in setting up a clinic or something like that. So that the RD teams, then, began to be phased out by being tied directly the ministries.

DV: what about...um...what about

JW: this is all going on with Vietnamization.

DV: right, ok

Sound bite 15

DV: what about PRU operations in the delta?

JW: PRU in the Delta were probably the finest fighting force in the country. Ok now each guy in—the PRU originally started off as a counterterrorist program.

DV: yeah, I am well aware of that Ok

JW: and that was not too well received, in certain circles. So...uh...that was not the basic mission actually. They were trying counterterror they were trying to get some of the guys who were ordering the assassination of school teachers, village heads, policemen

DV: yeah do unto them as they do unto us

JW: but that was not their basic mission. They were an armed intelligence collection unit. Their basic mission was to capture prisoners and bring back documents and frequently a lot of the American commanding generals wanted to use them after B-52 strikes to see what the situation was. Sometimes they were used to go into VC territory and put posters up on the trees stating “10,000 piaster reward for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of so and so who is wanted for murder.

DV: yeah Rip Van Win

JW: yeah that sort of thing but we had Navy SEALs and some special forces advising them in the Delta

Sound bite 16

DV: how big of an American advisory force was there to the PRU and the Delta.

JW: in the Delta, well, the PRU came basically under the RD guy...uh...and then under him came the SEALs.

DV: would that have been the RD guy's, would that have been his?

JW: the paramilitary specialist from the...uh...rather than the police...

Sound bite 17

JW: out in the Delta they'd be one guy who was police liaison and another who is RD and the RD usually had the PRU under him. Although they cooperated so closely that the two were almost interchangeable sometimes.

Sound bite 18

DV: and so Suddif would have a police liaison and an RD guy, both?

JW: well no he didn't have a police liaison that was strictly intelligence ok?

DV: that's Special Branch

JW: yeah Special Branch...the RD guy was...uh...handling the PRU program, the RD program and other programs such as the Census Greivance.

Sound bite 19

JW: nothing really significant

DV: just to see...

JW: how they operated and that sort of stuff and that was the early days. That was in the beginning when I first went out there after a while I was so damn busy I had no time to go out a single operation. Furthermore, I wouldn't be very wise anyways. You know when you are responsible for 16 different provinces and thousands of people on the payroll you don't have time to go out on operations. They think you are playing cowboy.

DV: Yeah so you leave that to your SEALS and...uh...

JW: yeah they were the ones who went out on these operations

Sound bite 20

DV: a lot of people when they think about Phoenix, if they even know what Phoenix or PRU was, confuse Phoenix with PRU. That's been the thing that I discovered the most doing a book about Phoenix that most people acquaint Phoenix with PRU, not knowing that PRU had been going on for ten years before Phoenix...uh...I even talked with Tom Polgar yesterday and he said that they were training the equivalent of PRUs in Cambridge University in 1943 for...uh...behind enemy lines in Germany.

JW: yeah as concept

DV: as a concept, its nothing new. But what I find—

JW: but an example of how that works. The PIC/PRU are basically were specially selected and everyone was given individual PRU training at the PRU center in Vung Tau, the training center there, OK? So they were trained as individuals in collecting intelligence and they didn't run agents, not that kind of intelligence. The job was reconnaissance...uh...and they were good at that, capturing prisoners and capturing documents. They would go through and some of the Americans, like the ones in the 9th division

wanted them to have them go along with them and the 101st and First Air Cav and others always used to talk about the PRU. How they could go through documents so quickly that they knew what to look for. What was worthwhile and what wasn't because they had gotten so many.

DV: this is part of their training but its also based on experience

JW: yeah its based on experience mostly and training never stops. If you stop training your crazy

Sound bite 21

JW: now they way the PRU were picked frequently you would hear they thugs,

DV: yeah convicts, ex-VC, Chieu Hois anything

JW: yeah a lot them were ex-VC maybe between twenty percent and a third...uh...a lot of them in the Delta were Cambodians...uh...Cambodian ethnics...uh

Sound bite 22

JW: now a lot them were classified as deserters. Here was happened, a guy would join the army and frequently he would find his ARVN unit is being reorganized, he's being sent for training and he is being sent to Quang Tre province and yet his family is down in the Delta and he wants to be near his wife. So he goes on vacation and deserts and the first the he does is go to the province chief. "I am a first class radio operator, I am a good marksmen or I'm this or that. Can you use me down here in the province?" And frequently the Province Chief would say, well...uh they'd work out away, if they could use them and frequently these guys would get in the PRU that are very good. But the province chief selected all these people so their usually about the best he could get and the PRU were responsible to the province chief, right to the province chief directly to the province chief. Ok

Wilbur

Track 1

Sound Bite 1

DV: and I'm talking with John Wilbur and John, I might ask you to tell me first a little about your background ok?

JW: ...oh ok. I'm forty-five, I'm currently a lawyer...uh...living in Palm Beach...um...my background...my general education background: I graduated from Yale University Bachelors in 1964; in the fall of 1964 I entered the Navy OSC program. I was always...I had been a diving enthusiast since I was about 13 or 14 so it was on of my aspirations to be a frogman at the time not really having a very good idea what that was. So that interest led me into the underwater demolition team training, which I entered right after, I was commissioned ensign in early 1965.

Sound bite 2

JW: it was an interesting time, it was sort of the transition between the old conventional amphibious World War II leading team type mission and, of course, this was early on—when we got out of...when I was actually into...uh...Team 22 this would have been in the fall of '65 in which there really wasn't a

great deal of...uh...awareness of exactly how much military involvement we were going to go into in Vietnam.

Sound bite 3

JW: there was an interest as to what exact people were going to get involved in actual military, you know...um...conflict.

Sound bite 4

DV: where they together SEAL and UDT?

JW: No, at that time...um...the SEAL team was still in a very embryonic, and not very specified stage. The idea was to...uh...the idea was...to initially have a very small elitist unit, which would function sort of as the Admiral's boys, a small unit, very mission specific kind of adjunct of the underwater demolition team sort of in anticipation as how the unconventional warfare was growing and developing.

Sound bite 5

DV: and is this the point where they ask you to volunteer for the SEALs?

JW: No...um...it in that time, from '64 to maybe about '67, you had to have been in the underwater demolition team before you qualified for the SEAL team,.

Sound bite 6

DV: did you get to have...uh...security clearance to be in the SEALs.

JW: Yeah we had a security clearance pretty much from the time went the Underwater Demolition Team. I don't recall whether the security clearance...I know the security classification was everything was secret down to the jockstraps.

Sound bite 7

DV: How did the chain of command work within the SEALs

JW: well characteristic of what I call special force organizations, which the real special force organizations were developed and really by the British. You know, the British were the classic special force...

DV: SAS

JW: yes SAS, SSAS stuff like that...um...we had...we were trained to...it was training intensive but also enlisted man intensive and by that I mean...uh...the real guts of the special force teams are your senior enlisted personnel. By the time I was in the Navy, there was no—what they call now—Special Warfare Classification Officer. Were you go in and remain as a special warfare designee throughout your whole command experience.

DV: There is that command designation now?

JW: that was developed in 1968 at the very...had I stayed in 1968, I would have become a Special Warfare Officer but, at that time...um...you came from the fleet you were a general line officer...um...there wasn't any career pattern so there was a lot of turnover among the officers. There wasn't...the enlisted, once they became SEAL designate or UDT designate, would remain throughout their career, until they got kicked out or opted out, in that specialty so...uh

Sound bite 8

DV: ok so how did you get approached to join the SEALs, in I suppose that happens in December of '67.

JW: Well during this time had become aware that the SEAL team in the west coast had started to develop an assignment over in Vietnam as obviously the military involvement started to increase and...uh...one of the characteristics of the special forces genres is there is a lot of internecine competition. Everybody wants to get on the fray. So there was a great deal of excitement in my sort of generation that still had a couple years to go, still had, you know, a major part of their military obligation to go, to get into where the action was and...um...this was not necessary team wide but there were a bunch of us who had wanted to get into the SEAL team because the SEAL team were probably going to be the only groups specifically assigned to Vietnam. Whereas...

Sound bite 9

DV: How where you approached?

JW: well I wasn't specifically approached except that I had made be known that I wanted to get into the SEAL team. I don't recall exactly who or where. No one came specifically but I was sort in...there were maybe 20 officers in UDT, 22, and out of that maybe five of us who wanted to go into the SEAL team and...uh...at that team the SEAL team was not a...had a very inflexible compliment. People stayed in it and they weren't a lot of openings they are either going to stay in and expand and then take more people or you had to wait and see

DV: so the five of you who wanted to get in did you all get in at the same time?

JW: More or less, I ended up getting in before a bunch of other people because I guess I was a little more aggressive about it. I get in...uh...and something like...all of a sudden to billets opened and...uh...I was asked if I wanted to do and I said yes and then....

Sound bite 10

JW: there were, I think, at the time I went in they knew that as of April or as of early '67 they had orders to...uh...to...uh...ship a detachment which would have been an operating platoon to Vietnam...um

DV: of SEALs

JW: of SEALs and that I was going to be in the second detachment going over in early spring

Sound bite 11

JW: ...uh we left for Vietnam, I believe in April, '67.

DV: You and how many other SEALs?

JW: well we were...we were...there were 12 of us, two officers and ten enlisted

DV: was that a team?

JW: that was, at that time, a platoon.

Sound bite 12

JW: so we got assigned a certain tactical area of responsibility, T-A-R, which was the parlance of the time, in the Delta.

Sound bite 13

DV: did he have prior combat experience in Vietnam?

JW: No...no

DV: did any of you of SEALs?

JW: no none of did...um...some had some SEAL 2 had been involved in a...the questionable invasion of Santa Domingo, which if you remember was back in '66 as a matter a fact I think SEAL 2 the only really combat active group in whatever that was.

DV: that was in the Dominican Republic

JW: Dominican Republic

DV: yeah right, ok

JW: Dom Rep, which I was in for very minor thing...that was a very scandalous operation everyone got bronze stars and then they recalled them and whatever happened that was really...and then there was some of them who had been in Beirut. There was some very minor exposure.

Sound bite 14

JW: In Meto, we were sort of assigned with the...um...I don't know what exactly the command name of it was but it was sort of a river patrol command. They had about with...uh...the PBRs. We were sort of loosely associated with that command we were under there operational control but were sort of under them administratively

Sound bite 15

JW: We really had a carte blanche the Navy didn't really know what to do with us. They... the Navy really didn't understand the SEAL team, maybe still doesn't to this day. The same way that the Army never understood the Special Forces people. They...uh...they didn't really know how to target us. They didn't know how to operationally control us so basically they said you know you guys go out and interdict supply lines harass and ambush, created destruction upon the enemy however you do it and then we would then go to the PBR squadron leaders and say we are going to conduct an operation or they would give us intelligence from their PBR patrols, you know these...uh...supplies...uh...they saw...er...they would report if they saw enemy troop movements or supply movements or sometimes they would stop sampans and say, "what's going on?" SO this...intelligence would filter up and then we would decide what to do.

Sound bite 16

JW: We were to be reacted and protected of the Navy PBR patrols.

Sound bite 17

JW: that was well enough organized disciplined so that we were, in parlance, grown up boys and we weren't going to go off and blow up or burn down villages. We didn't have any of those undisciplined or untrained elements that made us sort of...delinquents

DV: unprofessional...no, I understand.

Sound bite 18

DV: they just wanted to be part of the special forces

JW: the Naval command...uh...they...uh...to be very honest, we were their little...uh...amphibious invasion team the Navy was in this business that they had never been in before...uh...they need to have some troops to charge on shore and fight the enemy and we became that little kind of unit that they said, "hey, we can use...."

Sound bite 19

JW: Administratively, you see, we were in this river warfare organization and operationally, we were pretty much on our own.

Sound bite 20

JW: see we were the second...our platoon was the second to be there, then, there was and, I believe at the time, they were planning to have something like three or four SEAL platoons. Now like a lot of things that happened in Vietnam, typically American, is...it was that it was all of sudden "lets have five SEAL" teams and there weren't five SEAL platoons available. There weren't...the system had not been geared up to produce what the, you know, organizational battle plan required. Ok? So, there was...this was in early '67...during the course of '67, I think three other platoons...two other platoons in addition to the Meto detachment were set up. One was in Ving Long province, V-I-N-G L-O-N-G, and the other was at a naval installation north of Can Ton that's in Phoung Dinh, that's Fee..P-H-O-U-N-G D-I-NH,

Sound bite 21

DV: you get there in April/May...April '67,

JW: '67...

DV: how long were you there for?

JW: I...um...was there until I think May of '68 but that was not what was anticipated

DV: I see, ok...you said four months was...

JW: yeah, we were to go over on a three or four month...um...I think it was four months...rotation.

DV: was it TDY?

JW: yeah we were TDY, that's exactly that what it was

Sound bite 22

JW: during the first month or so, we were in Meto I became aware of a SEAL 1 enlisted man who was assigned to...I don't know what the hell they called themselves at that time but what we understood as the CIA province house. He was one of two advisors to the then Provincial Reconnaissance Units, P-R-U's. Now it was more or less an experimental relationship.

Sound bite 23

JW: PRUs who we sort of vaguely knew to be...um...independent sort of I guess...I guess they would come in the definition of a mercenary but they weren't. I guess I would use that term only to differentiate them from anything else. They were not attached to the Vietnamese military chain of command.

DV: yeah they belonged to the province chief.

JW: they belonged to the province chief advisor...uh

Sound bite 24

JW: in 1967...um...as you are well aware all kinds of programs and organizational organizations starting to emerge and develop and change names and so that there is sort of a merging of, as you know, the Phoenix Program ended up to be sort of something...what I am taking about is sort of the incubus of the whole time.

Sound bite 25

JW: the PRU had been another name, I think

DV: Counterterror

JW: Yeah they were Bit Kits I think

DV: B-I-T?

JW: we could them CTs, sort of a derivation of the Malayan phrase

DV: yeah CT is counterterror

JW: but that's what they were designated in the Malaya—the real bible in terms of we wanted to do was the SAS Malaya handbook.

DV: you actually had it?

JW: oh yeah sure

DV: you got a copy of it

JW: no but I think it is print by some brigadier colonel or something and it really set it...it was the first how you fight a guerilla war. It was the only real model that anybody had at that time which was the Malaya experience, which was....

Track 2

Sound bite 1

DV: prior to this your just doing everything alone. You're not working with any Vietnamese.

JW: Well no...not at all and it became dramatically transparent to me in the first month of all of kinds of operations. I mean everything. We were sort of running around trying to fight a war and learning how illusive operational success was. I mean we were really spinning our wheels in terms of knowing where to go, what to do...

Sound bite 2

JW: So there very loose not...loose but formal relationship obviously between the American Marine force and the Vietnamese Navy, Army and all that kind of stuff. So the information would come in through there sources and be then sort of collated by the S-2...uh...the Riverene (?) and then they would come and say "this is some...uh...here's a potential operation," and then we'd say "well we don't want to—I mean there was nothing, no obliga...obligatory action reaction to it but it came through those sources. This fella who was PRU advisor presented us with a whole different opportunity.

Sound bite 3

JW: You see the whole SEAL team squad was...uh...we were a fairly...um...what would be the proper word...we were a fairly impressive sight in terms of armament go. When we would go out on an operation we would be loaded to the bloodily balls. I mean...

DV: M-79s....

JW: M-79s, and CAR-15s and Swedish Ks and Grease Guns and grenades and shit we had more...we had all the toys and we were a toy R and D outfit. We were the first kinda, you know, these R and D people would come up with a new gimmick or toy and immediately they would ship them off to the SEAL team to use.

DV: well Grease Guns and Swedish Ks because they are deniable

JW: yeah well...actually they weren't necessarily deniable but you picked your weapon of your choice suited to your needs and so it was...not only that we had a tremendous support capability.

DV: Through?

JW: Through Sea Wolves, PRUs, the naval teams, captain to the goodies

DV: whatever you wanted you could get.

JW: exactly. Reaction, immediate reaction right down to...uh...to...uh...what the hell do they call the...uh...snoopies.

DV: Uh yeah I've heard of them....

JW: uh...C-123s with...

DV: yeah the ones that light up the night.

JW: Yeah we could bring a world of piss on everything so we became...so it was very advisable to the PRUs and we continued this when I was involved in PRUs The Vietnamese wanted to go out and they wanted helicopter rides. They wanted to have that reaction requirement so it became a very...it be...it had the potential of a very beneficial relationship.

Sound bite 4

DV: you bring the two together...

JW: they had the skills, the intelligence and the experience to know where to go, who to shoot at, who not to shoot at...um...where the bad guys where, where we could maximize.

Sound bite 5

DV: that first month you were there

JW: that first month we were there, we started out with some typically sorta disastrous screw up kind of operations. We...we...got used to getting lost, getting stuck, getting lost...uh...

DV: because you didn't have any Vietnamese with ya?

JW: Didn't have any Vietnamese with us

DV: and that's probably a big problem

JW: I didn't understand basic things of...uh

Sound bite 6

DV: yeah you might as well go back and tell me about your introduction to the PRU, this guy comes down and says "I'd like to meet and do some joint operations..."

JW: ...we want to do a couple operations. My guy says there is...uh...um...a district—VC district chief meeting. We need...uh...we need...uh...some...um...helicopter gunship support we want to be able to air-evac...uh...can you give us the Sea Wolves, we give you the operation and together we will score...uh...I don't know a victory, however, we....

DV: ...we'll do good

JW: we'll do good, whatever that meant.

Sound bite 7

JW: at the beginning and through my tenure there was a consistent policy on behalf of my superiors and myself to keep the PRU autonomous within our chain of command...uh...it was more that they Navy and the SEAL team want came to us, and when I say us I am putting on my other hat when I was in the program, to help them rather than we would go to them, that agency or my superiors wanted very, very strongly and in some cases ineffectually to keep the PRU in a tight operational focus, which we can get

into later on, and it was the struggle to do...probably the greatest challenge I had in my time was to try as best as possible to ensure that policy.

DV: and that's a policy that comes from the top down to you

JW: and for reasons that we'll also get into it improved almost impossible to do.

DV: yeah, cause... I would seem to me that, cause they were so effective, that the idea would be to go to them in every case.

JW: every case. That's exactly what happened, Doug. The story of Phoenix, is the explosion of this concept so it became a department store for everybody rather than a real specialty. That's what happened.

Sound bite 8

JW: you're aware of the fact that there's a number of spheres organizational...organizational spheres operational in the same area. When I say province chief you know that could be tremendously ambiguous. It could be the Vietnamese political province chief, I could mean the CIA province senior advisor that is what he was called. He was called provincial chief senior advisor and then you had you're A-I-D province chief senior advisor and then you had your paramilitary advisor and they all had their little programs and their little areas and in some cases all lived in the same house or the same compound, utilize the same office building.

DV: and some time it was different houses...

JW: right

Sound bite 9

JW: that the Navy had no operational authority over us, I don't know...I mean...in practical fact that was sort of true but that didn't extend completely. We worked for the Navy. The Navy could say "what are my SEALs doing around a bunch of CIA people, where there isn't a boat," in the event he found that out. We did not necessarily to my recollection clear our operations that high.

Sound bite 10

DV: So how did...how did the language thing work between you and PRUs?

JW: well there were...this of course was one of the chronic problems that happened in Vietnam all over...uh...we had...the PRU advisor had, in every instances, had a PRU interpreter.

DV: Ok the guy came down....

JW: pretty dependent...pretty dependent on...on...a interpreter to help us out with him.

Sound bite 11

JW: one of the great, great strengths of the PRU were that they had their own intelligence system.

DV: but you're not part of that?

JW: no...it wasn't anything unusual it was just that they were from—one of the requirements of the PRU is that would come...they would be from the province...uh...

DV: where they operated

JW: in what team they were, so that they would have their cousins, aunts and neighbors and friends and they operated through their infrastructure. Their cultural infrastructure, you know, there's Joe he's a buddy of mine I will tell him about the VC who is going to blow u a boat,

DV: so you are talking about agents or spies or whatever you want to call. They have their intelligence network set up.

JW: they had their own formal or informal intelligence network set up, their friends or whoever their contacts who would....

Sound bite 12

JW: my experience going out in SEAL operations basically instilled the incentive for me to get out of the SEAL operations and into the PRU and classically illustrates what happened. First operation I told you about was supposed to be VC first aid hospital for wounded VC on this particular island...um...not only could we never find the damn thing, we could never get to it. We didn't get on the right tides, we got stranded, our weapons didn't work...

Sound bite 13

DV: when you said you wanted to get in on the PRU program, you mean you wanted to...you didn't want...you mean you wanted to become like this guy who was an advisor to the PRU?

JW: right, that's right.

Sound bite 14

JW: in the pre-PRU operations we would get lost. We had no assurance of who we were shooting at we should have been shooting at.

DV: did you ever shoot up the wrong people?

JW: oh yeah, we shot up people

DV: we didn't know whether it was a goddamn VC cadre or a guy trying to get a piece of ass late at night...uh...the only thing we these very crude operational...we had...we had...uh...curfews and free zones and what was a free fire zones and what was curfew became an administrative political decision which made...

DV: ...made instantaneously on the...yeah

JW: for all we knew everyone there was terrible and for all they knew, you know...

Sound bite 15

DV: tell me how all of a sudden your operations start really working because you have the PRU with you.

JW: Well it was just it gave me a sense of confidence that we were not...uh...spinning our destructive wheels. I mean not only were we spinning wheels we were going at it with the potential of creating in a small sense, a lot of havoc and...um...the idea that you were creating havoc for no beneficial or for not benefit that what your...what your objective was very unsettling.

Sound bite 16

JW: I remember one particular example, which is very, very indelible experience is...uh...we...uh...we raided this island area across from the 9th division on a morning surrounding this...uh...settlement and...uh...came in with guns blazing and killed about four people...um...and was crawling in these...in every...in most huts throughout Vietnam, as it developed, and also the Delta, you know, the huts encompass... would be a shed basically encompassing the...the...you know, mud pillbox, sort of you know...don't know why I can't remember these names...where you would hide from air attacks and so forth. And I remember going in and shit there would be nothing be terrified boys and girls and women and he I'd be. I have hand grenades pins pulled, hands on automatic, guys running around, adrenaline just going crazy people firing and you don't know who the hell was firing at who. People screaming, wounded people screaming, wounded women screaming and you were just about and, you know, a remember a few times where shit I just wanted to throw the damn grenade in the...uh...

DV: and say....

JW: screw who was in it

DV: right...right

JW: and all of sudden find out it was nothing but women and children in there and those were the kinds of indelible experiences that Americans had, created tremendous conflicts.

Sound bite 17

JW: I felt when I was there that it was very, very important for me to be there and the reason why it was important for me to be there because I discerned that I had a ability to control and discipline the events better than the William Calley's did.

DV: In other words, you felt that you were leadings

JW: I was a professional officer in an elite organization that had a lot of professional pride and we were not going to fuck up.

Sound bite 18

JW: I sensed that there was just nothing that sort of...chaos, you know, anarchy boarding on idiocy going on...uh...in...in...how we were conducting the war and remember writing in my mind, and I don't remember if I put in down in writing Kingmen Brewster, who was then the president Yale University which I attended who at that time was flirting with Black Panther units or whatever, telling him how goddamn important it was for people who had some moral training in education and benefits in life to be on the ground to prevent the negligent cruelties that occurred.

Sound bite 19

JW: I remember being on Sea Wolves and people shooting at peasants on water buffalos

DV: yeah you hear about stuff like that, generals doing it

JW: or shooting at fishermen in dug out because they happen to be in a free fire zone or rocketing abandoned huts, burning things down, waging a war sort of not of pillaging but of burning.

Sound bite 20

JW: well I was very aware through all the training I that had and all the training schools—jump school and ranger school—and everything else how minimally trained most American combatants were to deal with those problems.

Track 3**Sound bite 1**

JW: lets say at the end of the three months for all the reasons, you know, stated I was dissatisfied with the ineffectiveness of a just a SEAL oriented operation. I was impressed with the PRU capabilities and potential benefits. I was intrigued with the CIA, you know, mystique.

DV: why...

Sound bite 2

DV: When you decide you want to do what he is doing is he the person you go to or do you...?

JW: I had indicated to him that I would like to get into that program. I had....indicated that Mouse Boinot (?)

DV: Ok...alright

JW: and then some occurred which was very coincidental...uh... this PRU advisor was one of, I believe, to or three. There had been...um...the Agency or whomever wanted to expand the PRU, develop its mission more specifically and...uh...and build out it would require...it envisioned a unit in every province with a special force military advisor doing the daily operational control.

DV: special force including SEALs

JW: SEALs, Force Recon, Special Forces, SAS, whoever was available. Now this all going in the...uh...staffing rooms up in Saigon. While I was first having my first experience so lo and behold as I became anxious to get into this other area word came down that the se—the Navy was to suggest and officer to go up to a two week briefing in this program to develop a SEAL advisor system, which many members of the SEAL team wanted to develop, very anxiously

Sound bite 3

JW: There were about 20, I don't know, about 15...20 of us...by that us I meant they were...maybe there were a couple a guys on the SEAL team but there were a bunch of Special Forces people, there were bunch of Marine Force Recon people...uh...there were....then there were some straight army people, infantry types...um...and we were given a...uh...a presentation of that were...volunteers assignees and in this particular program. We were to be the PRU advisors.

Sound bite 4

JW: Before I mean I'm coming from the military envelope and I'm sort of being awakened into...

DV: this whole new world.

JW: whole new world.

DV: brave new world...it must have been very exciting then.

JW: it was very exciting. I mean it was heady. It was sort of a hey it's a secret and...uh...were tough guys...were going

DV: yeah, I was in an elite unit before and now I'm even more elite because I'm the elite of elite.

JW: yeah, I was pretty impressed with myself and impressed with what I was doing and I was very happy with the fact that I was not going gnash my teeth as a SEAL wading up and down a nameless canal, you now, I felt like, gee, you know, my sorta dream had come true. I was getting in with the really good guys.

Sound bite 5

JW: I was a real military elitist snob...uh...I liked being with the best people and I disliked intensely being with people who I thought were quoted (?) unprofessional

DV: nothing wrong with, I think that's a great attitude to go threw life with.

JW: I was a real...military elitist snob. I very much was drawn to the really good guys.

DV: two weeks you spent there....

JW: I wanted to be like them

Sound bite 6

JW: the PRU was always...uh...an American controlled military special force. There was never

DV: a PRU national commander

JW: right or an advisor counterpart this is very important

DV: absolutely essential

JW: absolutely essential and it was the breakdown of that led to the destruction, so to speak, of the PRU concept.

DV: breakdown of what

JW: it was the breakdown or it was the disillusion of the American control of the PRU military units and when I say control really I what I mean the American protection of the units that was mandated our withdrawal which is the second part of my tale, I guess...um...because became sort of a victim of that or agent of that...um...that...uh...corrupted the quality control of what we were able to develop.

DV: ok, alright

JW: turning all the PRU to be turned into a department store

DV: ok

Sound bite 7

DV: and the mission of the PRU is?

JW: the mission of the PRU was always as it was enunciated policy wise—mission of the Provisional Reconnaissance Units was to target the political infrastructure of the Viet Cong to gather more accurate and compile more accurate information about it within itself and react upon that information to try to destroy or impact the political and economic infrastructure of the...uh...COSVN, Central Office, right isn't that right.

DV: was COSVN mentioned?

JW: yeah and a lot of our briefing was what COSVN was, what the infrastructure was, what the political economic and military arms were just as

Sound bite 8

DV: the guy were...

JW: specific jobs were...

DV: the guy for intelligence would he have been the Special Branch guy? Did you ever hear that term?

JW: no the Special Branch people were in the plans part, the intelligence part. We didn't have any direct...I was not in their organizational session.

DV: now but Dodds....

Sound bite 9

DV: and what kind of perks did your new found job afford to you? Did you all of a sudden get treated very well? Were you given a cover? Where did you become a CORDS official?

JW: Now I was wanted to have cover. I felt in my...tha...that was part of my uniform that wasn't given and sort of pissed off about. I got in trouble because of this a couple of times...uh...cause frequently now I wasn't given a cover

DV: you just remained a Navy officer?

JW: I was a Navy officer. Sometimes, you know, I would be out with people who had cover wouldn't be subject to curfews and we'd get into a little bit of a problem and I then it turned that I was the thing and then I would get in trouble because I was out pass curfew.

DV: the MPs would....

JW: the MPs would hard ass me and they couldn't hard ass anybody else so they hard assed me.

DV: you didn't have on of those military assistant command advisor passes, did you ever hear of them. Get out of jail free cards.

JW: no, no. I never...I never had one of them things. I sorta wanted one. Of course, the enlisted men working below me desperately wanted it. I mean they wanted to be...they really wanted to be...I mean they really wanted to put up the dog (?).

DV: ok so you get

JW: we wanted to maintain, military identity but worked in civilian clothes I had no

Sound bite 10

JW: the Navy, I started working for (I have no idea what he says here?)

DV: ok

JW: and the Navy still wanted me to work for the Navy and it was...they wanted me...they wanted me...See, they wanted to creep in and pervade with sort of control over the advisors. They didn't want to loose. They wanted to make the PRU program theirs so they could brag about it and when I went to my superiors to find out where I stood in terms of providing them operational reports and things like that they told me absolutely not. So I told my military boss to go screw themselves. I didn't say that. I was unresponsive and then they tried to put pressure on me and they tired to relieve me because I was being unresponsive to the military chain of command. So Ken Loc told them to go screw and we will kick the Navy out of the program and it got to be a big, little bureaucratic mess, whoever I reported.

DV: so when you did your after action reports, who'd you give them to?

JW: I gave them to...I mean I was working for Ken Loc Bull and I gave them to whoever he told me I gave it and I didn't give it to anyone else and that caused a tremendous rift among the Navy people.

Sound bite 11

JW: it progressed to be a tremendous tug of war to have the PRUs because they inflated their statistics; they inflated their success; they could take whatever. I turned out to be in...up to the Tet Offensive a very, very effective, successful program, within its scope.

Sound bite 12

DV: when do you start you new job? When do you get back to—now your Cam To, what time are we talking about?

JW: I'm in Cam To I'm...I'm...I'm told that there are 11 out of 16 provinces that need a unit. We need 11. I assembled my advisors I tired make sure they were all senior enlisted men of the SEAL 2 or 1 I didn't care which. I wanted first class and chiefs...uh...and then...they were then assigned to various province teams and they then came under the direct command of the Provincial advisor not under my direct operational command. I was regional advisor...uh...I was the military officer in charge for military purposes but operationally they were really under the command of the Provincial

DV: so you become an administrator?

JW: I became much to my horror.

Track 4

sound bite 1

DV: how often did you meet with your PRU advisors in each of your provinces? Where you constantly on the road, hoping around?

JW: that's what I did, I was constantly on the road. I attempted to be constantly on the road except for when Dodd or somebody would make me sit in the office and handle reports...um

DV: is the office in...

JW: that's what I saw my job was, I saw my job as someone who maintained contact and therefore some operational supervision over my advisors in coordinator with their superiors and then I would also do inspections and field checks on the efficiencies of their groups.

Sound bite 2

JW: so then the reporting requires. You know, I don't know who you talked any of these province advisors but the biggest problem in that order is that there were thousands of reports. There was an RD report, there was PRU report, there was a CQ report, there's a plans report so everybody became strapped desk bound in just trying to supply the paper that fed Saigon and Washington.

Sound bite 3

JW: operationally our biggest...grapple...the biggest problem we grappled with operationally was the demand to go out and capture...VC cadre.

DV: did you have quotas at this point?

JW: uh...no and operationally there is nothing more difficult than capture someone who doesn't want to be captured.

DV: who is determined

JW: whose got a gun and you've got a gun and its nighttime and there's mud out there and...uh...you know it is a very, very difficult thing to and its not the kind of thing you prefer to do.

DV: but you're not...but you're not

JW: hold up your hands your under arrest

DV: yeah, yeah right it's draw.

Sound bite 4

JW: first of all the targets, in many cases, were illusory.

DV: the what?

JW: illusory...

DV: yeah ok

JW: illusive and also illusory. They were illusory in the sense that we never really knew who the hell the district VC chief was and...uh...in some cases there wasn't one because there wasn't any district there for all the reasons you're aware of...shadow government...and in other...and...and if there was someone there to find where he was going to be tomorrow and get the machinery to be there before he gets there tomorrow was illusive, I mean they're moving around....

DV: but the idea is are you involved in the selection of targets?

JW: we were involved in setting the priority of the targets, the type of targets we were, the generic targets. "We want district level cadre!" The word would come down from Saigon "We don't have... we must get a province level cadre!" and very rarely did we ever even hear of one but lets say district level cadre. See Colby would say "goddamn it we are out here to get the infrastructure. Who do you get in the infrastructure? Well we don't have anyone in the infrastructure. We've got a village guy and town guy and a hamlet chief and all this kind but I want district people, I want some district people. Goddamn it get district people. Goddamn it get district people.

Sound bite 5

JW: see operationally ordered to do that you have to work very comprehensively on the target

DV: and slowly

JW: you've got to exclude all the other demands, you know, you...to get a district cadre you may have to set in motion an operation that may not culminate for six months

Sound bite 6

JW: what happened was that the demand for...the American demand for immediate results justified the program started to swamp our operational capabilities, which, really to large extent, were not allowed to develop much because, while we were...it was much easier to go out and shoot people with guns and set up an ambush and sleep all night or whatever...um...than it was to do these sort of long range subtle operations and so at these particular juncture the province chiefs started to see the PRU as being his only effective combat reaction force.

Sound bite 7

JW: we literally had times where the province chief would order the PRU to go engage the battalion and when...because he couldn't trust, couldn't rely on the province battalions he had under his command and therein was sort of the daily tension that sorta primed PRU on track onto the demands for high level cadre type targets.

Sound bite 8

DV: how long is it from the time you get to Cam To and you have your new job before you put all your people in place and you have a SEAL advisor to the PRU and everyone the provinces.

JW: I'd say within the first...I'd say...if I was...if I started in July everything was in place by August or September. It didn't...you're talking about 12 guys and ultimately 14 people and, you know, you're not talking about massive troop movements here. You're talking about flying a lot of guys out

Sound bite 9

JW: as an explained to you this was a very, very plum assignment for the SEAL team. Senior enlisted people loved where civilian clothes and saying that worked for the CIA and having cover, and nobody officers and bullshit in the barracks and playing general they loved it.

Sound bite 10

DV: how long of a tour would a SEAL advisor have?

JW: there going to have...that was a bone of contention. We wanted to have them there for a long time. The SEAL team wanted to rotate as many people in the program, you know, sort of a keep it theirs kind of thing so it got out to be six months.

DV: is this a compromise?

JW: I think it was compromise yeah. We wanted, and I recommended, that they be year billets.

Sound bite 11

DV: did you yourself go out on any operations?

JW: I desperately tried to go out on as many operations as I could. I...uh...I think because, like a lot of people in Vietnam, the further you got from being involved in field operations the more intolerable the war was and...uh...I tried the best I possible could. My objective was to go out on operations with all of the units so I could report having first hand knowledge of what their capacities and problems.

DV: cause you had...

Sound bite 12

DV: do you have a counterpart?

JW: no I did not

DV: ok so on the national level there is no Vietnamese counterpart, at the region level there is no Vietnamese—

JW: at that time there was no strictly a...

DV: province

JW: an on sight province. That's what they were a provincial—

DV: see that's something that's important for me to know cause, you know, there is not Vietnamese policy involvement until the province level.

JW: there was no regional overlay or province overlay, which was a very, which allowed them to maintain their autonomy more than they would otherwise. There was...at the end of my experience, I did have a...I was assigned a counterpart by pressuring the Vietnamese.

Sound bite 13

JW: that was an area outside of their control. They wanted control. So they pressured to have control and they started doing by getting people who were starting to...uh...look over my shoulder and walk into my office.

DV: do you remember the...

Sound bite 14

JW: my job was very—a lot of my job was very political. It was to maintain good relationships with province officers and to ensure that they had good relationships with PRU advisors and to keep everybody happy instead of entrenched in their own little things. So I spent a lot of time out in the provinces and I got—and I would spend the night and the day with the province advisors so I became

DV: and you'd eat....

Sound bite 15

JW: uh...some of the—many of the PRU advisors were ex...uh...uh...retired sergeant majors from the Special Forces, a lot of them had really distinguished military careers.

DV: you mean the province officers in charge...

JW: in charge...

DV: ...where Special Forces?

Sound bite 16

JW: the provincial advisor was more, if they had a military background, was more...uh...uh...intrusive into the internal operations of the PRU than someone who graduated from college and was deployed.

DV: because the ex-Special Forces guy says "I know how to do this better than you."

JW: exactly,

DV: ok...um...ok

JW: exactly, so in the areas I had the most problems it was basically the people who had the most expertise in what the PRUs were doing would run it more hands on than and in many instances better and I had to relieve some.

DV: you did? Because, inevitably, in the battle between the officer in charge and the advisor, the officer in charge would win and he would say "I just can't deal with this guy anymore. Replace him."

JW: exactly, absolutely and...

Sound bite 17

JW: I spent more time talking to other people than a lot the people in the agency did. Now I talked to the RD people or the military advisors and one thing you may run into: intelligence people, they operated in the closet a great deal.

DV: that's right. That's why Phoenix is instituted to bring everybody together.

JW: yeah and it go so...it, you know...the guy had literally no idea what was happening on the street corner of where he is 15 feet away from, where he could found out—he could have found out the answers to his problems by asking to someone over coffee.

Sound bite 18

JW: there was a very quasi-definable feeling that things were not going, that we were not having the destructive effective on the Viet Cong network that everyone was sort of mounting. We had a lot of programs, we had all this staff, all this reports. We were smothering the problem but we weren't really...

John Wilbur Disk 3**Track 1****Sound bite 1**

JW: you know, the Tet offensive was...exemplified the genius of oriental guerilla...of oriental unconventional warfare expertise, I mean. Their ability to move logistics maintain control...uh...effect cohesive leadership and discipline the reaction is staggering. I mean they could [static for a second] perform multi-battalion tactical maneuvers without radios. You know, they...no question...its no question that the finest trained...uh...most effective small unit infantry...uh...in the world are Vietnamese. They kicked the shit out of the chad Chinese everyone knows that

Sound Bite 2

JW: PRU was Jim's baby I mean that was his love the other stuff [cuts out] Jim was an operationally oriented person

Sound bite 3

JW: I remember we had a PRU that started wearing...uh...uh...you know, one of the things we tired to develop obviously was a lon (? No clue what this means) within the unit, you know, camaraderie and a familiar kind of thing. Of course they wanted to have pins.

DV: well, didn't they wear those skulls and cross bones?

JW: skull bones...they, at one point in time, had skull and cross bones bandanas and Ken Loch Bull saw that and went bullshit. He didn't go bullshit about very many things but he said "you go tell him I don't every want to see anything associated with that or any display of that ." He was a very...he didn't like the...he saw the problems in the inability to control a PRU-type operation.

Sound bite 4

JW: started seeing what the agency was suffering from which was the bulge, the battle of the bulge: more and more contract people, less and less staff people, less quality among the contract people, more programs, more involvement in overt paramilitary activities, more involvement in paying for Rev Dev and things that were not classic intelligence gathering functions

Sound bite 5

JW: Tet happens. Don't give me that ICEX shi, get guys and the guns and go out start shooting the enemy don't pull this cadres crap, you know. So tet propelled the PRU into full on conventional type small unit infantry action.

DV: I got it, ok...which is not there mission.

JW: No which really they felt more comfortable with than this sophisticated mission that was so illusive and illusory, as we spoke about.

DV: who felt better about, not the PRU?

JW: I think the PRU did

DV: the PRU did.

JW: yeah, you know, there's a...there's a bunch people who some...there's a VC squad in the woods, let go get them. It was a more tangible thing for them to do.

Sound bite 6

JW: I am not going to be so stupid as to speak for the average PRU person, but the perception was that it was much easier to go out and do something which was very more conventional, and more tangible and more controllable...uh... I mean it's easier to go out on ambush than to sit there and, you know, try to figure out those kinds...it became, and then at the same time, people perceived the PRU as a strike force, a shock troop kind of thing.

Sound bite 7

JW: I think they produced, I think Jim had told me or someone had told me, a staggering amount of statistics.

DV: they did

JW: in the Tet Offensive and all that KIA shit that went on. "How many did you kill today?" uh...well...you know...there were so many different tensions going around so many criteria of quote success...uh... that the PRU simply never...it got visible, it was successful insofar as it was recognized as an elite shock troop, it became attractive for manipulation and distractions and the...you know...the...the...you know...the...the objectives started becoming slogans. I mean the practical difficulties of achieving what is academic objective was to me, which was to be a...a...somehow an...uh...ambulance squad that went and anesthetized district people and brought them in and then they would be mentally dissected, and all this information would be coming. It was a...

DV: is that your metaphor or someone else's

JW:...historical kind of approach that just didn't work out that.

Sound bite 8

DV: when is the first time you hear about ICEX?

JW: I guess it had to be in the end of '67, before the Tet offensive. ICEX was something that Jim Ward came in and proselytized. Committees were set up...uh...I...since ICEX was a broad term that assumed the coordination of many agencies, I really...I perceived ICEX as something that other people were going to make intelligence gathering capabilities more efficient but we were going to simply continue doing what we have been doing so it didn't really effect me.

DV: alright, you were part of a committee or anything?

JW: no. the idea of ICEX was to give us better, more timely information to do our thing on.

Sound bite 9

JW: they were to be the reaction arm of ICEX...that...they

DV: right ok...one the action arms or the primary one? Was there any kind of priority put to it where you tell you going to be the...was ICEX built around PRU?

JW: well...uh...we were the reaction force. It's sort of like we are on call, ICEX comes in with a hot number and we got out with the ambulance, you know. We were responding to information

Sound bite 10

DV: did he say you going to be involved in this along with other people?

JW: I don't...of course we had to be, we had to be. National Police force, you had...they were the reaction force of the plans people, ok?

Sound bite 11

DV: what do you know about Census Grievance, anything? Was that...

JW: yeah, I know a lot about Census Grievance. I like Census Grievance. I thought Census Grievance was a terrific idea. Census Grievance was essentially a method by which you could accomplish...Census Grievance was a wonderful idea on paper and it established ways by which...uh...local communities would be able to have...provide a conduit for what was going economic, political or whatever it was. Oh by the way have you seen the VC tax collector? You know while you complaining about district tax chief or whatever is, you know how many land minds have they stopped. That kind of stuff

Sound bite 12

JW: ICEX was a name and it appeared to create a process but the process was basically informally in place anyway. It was called ICEX, what does it mean. Intelligence coordination

DV: I...I...and exploitation

Sound bite 13

JW: I think what happened was I think the Agency, and I knew at least from individual expressions, wanted to get their ass out of Vietnam as fast as they could. For all the reasons Ken Loc Bull foretold. It was losing control. It was diluting its cadre. It was being misdirected. It was not performing its classic functions. It was becoming a hodge podge to cover up the amount of involvement we had. It was becoming a bag man for Lyndon Johnson's frantic desire to win the war, whatever he thought that meant and...and...uh...it became the sponsoring agencies for hodge podge thing then Phoenix was going to be the conduit or the mechanism by which it was going to withdraw its control and sponsorship of its...its going to...

DV: turn over to the military.

JW: ...transition it over to the military.

DV: ok

JW: and that, in effect in my baby wick meant that the PRU were no longer going to become...were no longer our exclusive boys, which foretold a real human crisis in the...in the units because the Élan and the

moral or whatever had been very, very carefully nurtured because we protected them from being...from the dilution of control. We protected them from the province chiefs. We protected them from the military battalion commanders. We protected—we insulated them from being used for whatever multiple good and bad reasons other people wanted to use...

DV: like what happened in Tet

JW: and the exchange was that we would take of them. We would pay them a little better. We would take care of their dependents. We would provide them the best military support there was, you know, we were going to be—we were going to parent them and so the ability for us to develop that relationship was, which I think, was one thing that we had to...acquired about doing things and...no...you know, motivated them so to speak.

Sound bite 14

JW: I mean we had seen what happened to PRUs, you know their integrity, their intelligence sources, whatever, the quality people that became attracted to them, that would stay in them. So what happened, we everybody started messing with them, we knew and I knew, that the minute Vietnamese got a hold of them and they had occurred all of resentment by the Vietnamese whom they had previously been in touch with.

DV: yeah ok, because they were not responsive to the Vietnamese, because they were not responsive to the United States.

JW: that's right so obviously the PRU cadre, the, you know, the leadership levels were marked men among many Vietnamese political forces. They resented them. They had become more powerful

Sound bite 15

JW: in other words once...once we lost the control and is—insulation of the PRU it was matter of time before they would be...manipulated by multiple hands

DV: misused...yeah ok.

Sound bite 16

DV: do you ever—

JW: two things occurred: one was the official word had to go out that the PRU was going to become within the Phoenix Program, ok?

DV: yep

JW: i. e. we're going to loose control.

DV: ok

JW: i. e., you know, they're getting ready for the transition

Track 2

Sound bite 1

JW: well this guy was gonna...well this guy was gonna be in the Saigon new office. He...he was a Vietnamese Colonel.

DV: oh...ok

JW: and it became very apparent when I should up with a Vietnamese Colonel. You know, it didn't take a, you know, written manifesto for everybody to understand what was going to happen.

DV: yeah, it meant the military

JW: it meant the military and that meant that the leadership elements of the PRU...elements in every case were jepor—in jeopardy of maintaining the mission. They weren't Colonel or Majors or Captains.

Sound bite 2

JW: so my experience with the Agency was...

DV:...very positive

JW: very, very positive. I mean they treated me, other than Bill Redell but what the hell I mean you know we're all grown men

DV: you don't have to like everybody.

JW: its not illegal to manipulate and exploit somebody...um...I was very...I was really...it was a very positive experience for me. I met higher level people than I met...higher level caliber people than I met in the service and...uh...as I said before, they were scrupulous in their principals.

Sound bite 3

JW: you know I...

DV: ...mismanagement...

JW: really resent the fact that no one ever called me up and...and never asked me about what I thought about, you know, how the, you know, things should run better in Central America, you know and I told Jim Ward that. I said, "you know, did anyone ever say 'Jim, we're getting into again and we want to get a bunch of guys...uh...back here for this. To make sure we...we aren't...they all were allowed to retire. They all were rified. The Bill Dodds, a hundred years of experience in counterinsurgency and they have a whole bunch of guys down there doing exactly the same shit wrong as they did before.

Sound bite 4

DV: is there anything else I should know about the last part of your tour

Sound bite 5

JW: A...and what I was going to end up doing was seeing if they are going to try to convince people to turn off control of PRU to the...I mean I was going to witness the dissolution of the PRU.

V: you're going to assist it you're going to propel it

JW: and I had spent all this time arguing for its insulation and its control and arguing for its independence and, you know, I had been very, very, very active and aggressive in this and I wasn't going to sit there and go back and say "by the way guys, everything I said before is bullshit...uh...cut these guys loose and tell them transition over to the military." Cause it put me in a position...it...I lost whatever integrity I had with the units.

DV: and you go home in September/October?

JW: so I go home in...uh...September and ten days later I started law school.