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

WILLIAM N. TURPIN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

[Note: Mr. Turpin was unable to edit his interview prior to his death.]

Q: Today is October 3, 2000. This is an interview with William N. Turpin, that's T-U-R-P-I-N. I join us on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuard Kennedy. All right, let's start with something I'm sure you can answer. You tell me when and where you were born and something about your family.

TURPIN: That I can manage. September 3, 1923. Macon, Georgia. My father was a local lawyer. My mother, an ex-school teacher. The less said about my paternal grandfather the better.

Q: Why?

TURPIN: Because he lost every dime he had four or five times, I think. Total wreck. Totally useless, except fathering children. He had quite a number. My maternal grandfather, however, was a great man. He was a doctor in Coweta County, Georgia, which is so far back in the sticks you come out on the other side. And if you don't know the works of, well, Run with the Horses, A River Runs Through It, there was a doctor

from Fayette County who, well you know, it was practically an autobiography as far as I was concerned. I mean he had the same kind of background that I had in the summer time.

Grandfather died in 1937 as a result of getting up in the middle of the night, he had pneumonia, to attend to a patient. Certainly that would not be done nowadays. And his wife, whose name was Caroline, my father said, never touched a life she didn't ruin. But she was quite musical, which was kind of handy because I had a great deal of interest in singing and other musical activities.

That's basic background. I should also mention Captain William Nelson, for whom I am named. Captain C Company, 2nd Virginia Volunteers, Stonewall Brigade. Nelson was there when it became the Stonewall Brigade. There was a shot, but Nelson was not killed.

Q: Did the war play a large part in your life?

TURPIN: Well, certainly, I imagine in the imagination. I mean, as far as I was concerned, it wasn't the lost cause. It was just a temporary intermission.

Q: I have to say my grandfather was an officer with a gentleman named William Tecumseh Sherman. He was at Gettysburg too.

TURPIN: As I said, we got three hundred thousand before they conquered us. In one incident, one of the funniest episodes in my diplomatic career, was in Moscow. On the 19th of January, it must have been 1957, Ambassador Bohlen (Charles E. Bohlen) was in command. And our chief of the chancery decided to hold an indoor picnic. Any other kind in Moscow in January is singularly unadvised. And at that party there was a young army captain who was the third best informed person on the Civil War I have ever known. And we decided that this being Robert E. Lee's birthday, which we planned to go out and celebrate, we had to do something. So we all got up , I guess it was in the DCM's apartment, I forget, and there were a bunch of farmers around, of course, and this kid and I, I forget his name, he got PNG'd, unfortunately, and went off to Lao, singing of Dixie. He must have shown snow to the KGB. Anyway, he and I got up, my son had a confederate hat and I had a saber, and we had a confederate flag and this, that and the other. And we put the record of the confederacy on the hi-fi, turned it to great volume and marched in, and looked around. Mrs. Bohlen, who was so proper, was just horrified at all this. What were the farmers going to think?.

The Ambassador kept saying, "No, I wasn't born in the Confederacy, but my grandfather or my father died at Vicksburg," or something like that. "Three hundred thousand Yankees are stiff in Southern vests. We got three hundred thousand before they conquered us." We were singing it merrily and he was singing along with us. "I fought with old Mr. Robert the soldier, the saint, I ain't been reconstructed. You goddamn right I ain't." Well, I thought Ms. Bowlin was going to have apoplexy. So we got out of our gear and came in and there were sill repercussions. I remember that day the Charge came

around, I don't think he realized I was part of this caper, he said "is this really serious." I said "certainly is, there is a large underground movement that is going to tear the confederacy." I don't think I believed it, but I suspect that in the Danish Foreign Office archives there is a report about this incipient revolution that is going to hit…anyway. Yes, we were very big on the civil war.

Q: Let's go back to growing up. What town did you grow up in?

TURPIN: Macon.

Q: What was it like growing up there? Where did you go to school? Before we get to high school even.

TURPIN: I went to Joseph Crisby grammar school. There were seven grades. Co-educational. I don't know what else to say about it. I was not allowed to go to first grade. My aunt was a first grade teacher and I'm afraid I learned to read before I was supposed to. So they took me over there and the teacher said, "You can't put him into first grade. He can read." They did not say anything about my abilities in arithmetic, nor was I very good at writing. Nor was I ever any good at either one. But that was it and I got through that. And I was bare footed all the time. Didn't put on shoes on except on Sunday. Macon was a kind of funny little town. About sixty thousand people. I guess half of them black. Totally segregated, of course. There were no black kids in any of the schools I attended until I got to Dartmouth. What else. It had been a railroad center and a cotton manufacturing town, both of which were kind of on the uppers by the 30s, which is about as far back I can remember. What else?

Q: Was your father what you might call a typical town lawyer, or was he more connected with business?

TURPIN: Oh, he was a lawyer. He was one of the few members of that profession, I know. Daddy honestly believed that the law was some kind of platonic ideal. Out there, it existed, it had sides and he thought it was the business of the law to discover the truth. He mostly did civil stuff, but he defended a few, was appointed to defend a few indigent defendants. But he really was a great idealist about the law.

When I was in the marines during the war, he sent me a copy of a briefing file in the Supreme Court of the State of Georgia on behalf of a negro who had cut some white lady's throat for two bucks. The guy was as guilty as sin, nobody ever questioned that. Daddy questioned, however, that he was convicted properly, on the grounds that he was entitled a trial by a jury of his peers and no black person sat on a jury in Georgia since 1918 or before that too. And therefore, he needed to be, should be retried properly. He said in the course of that argument, it made, except for this boy and his mother - he had accepted some kind of wild-ass religion and was perfectly prepared to go to the electric chair – except for this boy and his mother, it doesn't make any difference what this court decides. But [my father thought] it makes a [difference], with the times, when our sons

are fighting for equal justice under law, it makes a great deal of difference that he be properly condemned. Well they threw him out of court. The Supreme Court held officially that the Supreme Court of Georgia is not subordinate to but is coordinate with and equal to the Supreme Court of the United States. Daddy got up and said "your honor, that decision was reversed at Appomattox." And they threw him out.

He wanted to appeal it. Because I'm sure he wanted to plead to the Supreme Court, which he never did. The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) from Atlanta came in and said, "Look, don't be stupid. The only thing you can get out of this is to try him again and electrocute him. Why don't we wait til there's a case where a real injustice is being done." But that's the way he felt about the law. And, what else can I say?

Q: How about at home,with your mother a school teacher, your father a lawyer, [there must have been a] lot of discussion about what was going on at the dinner table and that sort of thing?

TURPIN: Oh, yes, at the dinner table particularly. And my father was, I'm afraid, trained me rather too carefully in forensics to be altogether useful. Caused more problems for me I guess than it ever solved. Daddy was a reader and so was I. Always getting in trouble. Mother said "get out and play. Get out and make friends." Drove me crazy. And also later on when I was in high school, she felt it was my God-given duty to bring home friends who could be boyfriends to my sister, a view to which I...

Q: How old was your sister?

TURPIN: Just a year younger than I.

Q: Oh, yes, well then you were...

TURPIN: And she was no beauty. She's a great person in a lot of ways. Very bright and attractive and all of that. But not the kind [looks] at fourteen or fifteen a high school kid was going to knock himself out for. And it was comfortable. In the depression things were kind of iffy for everybody. And daddy always said if it hadn't been for the Home Owners Loan Corporation, which hired him to examine titles, which he loved, unlike any other lawyer I ever heard of, we wouldn't have made it. Nobody had any money.

Q: I am somewhat younger than you. I was born in 1928. There was not a lot of money around. For kids it was great.

TURPIN: Where did you grow up?

Q: I grew up on Southern California, mainly. But for kids, you don't really notice money. People weren't being flashy or showing it, so you could have a lot of fun without much money.

TURPIN: And the people who had money, it was kind of accepted. My father's law partner's son, who is my oldest and closest [friend?], and his grandfather who ran the big manufacturing company, which was then the biggest cotton spinning company in the world I think. [It] went on the rocks, fairly shortly thereafter. But Mr. Adamson had a chauffeur and a handyman and porter who would help us, help me or McKibbon do all kinds of ridiculous things. The only way I didn't suffer at the time cause I didn't think about it much, but my father always had some idea that I ought to become an athlete. God knows, that's the most hopeless aspiration that any parent ever had. And I had played midget football because I was a year younger than my classmates.. But daddy wouldn't even get me a helmet and a jersey. But I was out there playing with kids with proper armor on without even shoulder pads. And it seemed to me that this basically, for a pusillanimous kid, this was no way to behave. It seemed to me rather silly. Anyhow, I don't think it bothered me much.

Q: What about reading? Do you recall what sort of books you were reading?

TURPIN: Anything I could get my hands on. My grandson out in Seattle had just been demanding, "What did grandfather read?" And I managed to get him a few Henty books.

Q: G.A. Henty?

TURPIN: G.A. Henty. Nobody ever heard of him. I'm surprised you have.

Q: <u>The Dash to Khartoum</u> with…

TURPIN: Well it was "with blank in blank," most of them. And there were always, as my father pointed out, good little English boys, even if they were in Carthage. And he wrote a hundred and four of those things. Two a year for fifty-two years. Well, they were out of print when I was growing up. Daddy would pick them up in second hand book stores or borrow them from friends. And I don't know what proportion of them I have read, but I formed my opinion on Dutch affairs by Pike and Dyke and England's Aid.

Q *These books were all British pluck and courage and standing up to the natives. All of this...*

TURPIN: The history was more or less straight, as far as I now. I mean it was McCalley-type. Not popular in this day and age.

Q: Well, you picked up a lot of history.

TURPIN: You did. Because they were well written. And I read the damn things so fast. And of course there was the Three Musketeers. Also, daddy was to read books for the Macon Telegram on occasion. And I remember something called "I like diving" about a guy who tried to rescue, or salvage, the S-51 and the S-4. And I remember that stuff much

better than I remember a lot of other things. And of course my parents, my mother particularly, would bribe me to memorize bible passages or [sections] out of the prayer book, whatnot, with which I built a moderately good stamp collection, assisted by cutting grass for a quarter a shot for my neighbors. Mother always said, "You always got your nose in the book." And she thought that was very bad. Mother always felt until she died that anybody that picked up a book was simply indicating they wanted to talk. The idea that anybody actually held a book because they wanted to read was totally foreign to my mother, which was odd because she went to Columbia and earned an MA in history after the First World War.

Q: Columbia in New York?

TURPIN: Columbia in New York. With, who was the guy who was the head revisionist on the Treaty of Versailles?

Q: I always think of the Beards. Mary and Charles Beard.

TURPIN: No, no, they were economic. This guy was, all I can think of, is Guge and he was English and that's wrong. But there was a very prominent Columbia historian whose big thing was history of the First World War, the outbreak of the First World War. Mother always claimed that daddy made her drop out of school because he did not want her to rank him academically.

Q: Where did your father go to college?

TURPIN: University of Georgia, class of 1911. Of which I suspect I'm the last surviving member. Because of the fifth occasion of their fiftieth reunion, 1961, I was in attendance and they voted me in as an honorary member. The only snag was they were all too drunk to remember it. Anyway, that was that. And then he went to Mercer Law School.

Q: What denomination were you?

TURPIN: Episcopalian.

Q: Now in the ranking in Macon, was this sort of a Baptist, this area?

TURPIN: As they said in Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, in Macon they ask you what church you go to. The Baptists were the big noises, followed by the Methodists, followed by the Presybyterians, who were socially a cut above, then there were the Episcopalians who didn't speak to anybody. [There were} the Roman Catholics, who had a big church, but they didn't have very many of them and nobody paid attention to it. Same way with the Jewish. We had a lot, I thought a fair number of Jews, the only thing about them was they went to church on Saturday. It really was very odd. I had a very close friend whose husband was in the Foreign Service, retired now, a labor attaché, they were in the Hague with us, we got to know them. And I told Lucile Horowitz, that, on one

occasion, of course Jews were members of the Idle Hour Country Club. She came from Spartanburg and flat refused to believe it. I said look, Alma Bloom was the club champion, a class ahead of me in high school, don't tell me they weren't. She said that just didn't happen. By God it did. I don't think she ever did believe me. But it was true. I mean they were, I dated them, in fact it was one of my father's friend's daughters, was a year or two older than I was and she really took me under her wing when I started going to high school dances. I'll never forget it. She just couldn't have been nicer. Anyway, that was the religious setup. Now of course we didn't know anything about the black churches at all.

Q: What about, when you get up to high school, was this when you were being pushed into athletics and things like that?

TURPIN: Well not particularly in high school. No, that was really earlier when I was ten or eleven. I think daddy gave up because I was totally incompetent at anything except rowing and wasn't very good at that. No, high school, the main thing about that high school, for five years, was the ROTC unit. We were all in it unless you were physically incapable of marching.

The first two years you went out and one period out of six a day you drilled. The first two years in civilian clothes and the third year you might or might not be put it what they called the sub-R, that's called the non-ROTC. And the third year lot, no, the third year you went into it. Some of the second year people went into what they called the sub-ROTC. You had really old uniforms and puttees and what not. The rest of us, sophomore year, you were issued uniforms. Not summer ones, you had to buy them. And we went out and we drilled, manual arms, squads left, squads right, all of that stuff. And the ROTC regiment was responsible for discipline in the school. I don't think the teachers ever bothered with it at all. We mounted interior guard at each hall and checked the military cartridge belt on and checked the lavatories for people smoking. This was an all boys high school, by the way. No girls around. There was an officer of the day or a corporal of the guard on each floor and there wasn't any nonsense and if there was, (swishing noise), you were out marching tours.

The teachers would occasionally paddle someone for misbehaving in class. But outside of that, there was absolutely no nonsense. The cadet regiment took care of it. And in junior year you got to be a non-commissioned officer and senior year were anything from colonel of the regiment down to, some people in the annual just had "private eternal" because they never got anything. And it was really a big deal. It seems very funny nowadays because of everybody so opposed to anything military as a way to run school.

Q: Well it worked.

TURPIN: It worked.

Q: Of course it did.

TURPIN: And furthermore, when I got in the Marines, and my senior year in high school they changed to this ridiculous company mash right and all that sort of nonsense instead of the really good stuff. "Company quad right... (chanting squad march, unintelligible)." And you had to have some sense to do that and you had to be reasonably well coordinated because you threw your rifle up and marched at the same time you were doing all of these turnings and dancing about. So my senior year, as I said, we learned this nonsense that they do now and when I got into the Marines I was three months out of an operation and not in the world's best physical condition. But the first day we were messing around with a rifle and the guy said "port arms" and I threw mine up, which is what you did in the old days. Nowadays you hoist it up. And then he said, "Where'd you learn to do that, boy." And I said "In high school, Macon, Georgia, Sir!" Well, he really couldn't believe that. I mean I had no problems with that; there were plenty of problems, but not with the drills.

Q: You graduated from high school when?

TURPIN: 1940.

Q: What were you planning to do?

TURPIN: At that point one didn't plan. No, to go to college. And I was admitted to Harvard because I wanted to take the Harvard scholarship exam - I never did, for what reason I cannot remember – and Dartmouth and Trinity at Hartford. Emory because I wanted to take that exam, and I did. My father and I sat down with the great catalogues and all that and we decided to summarize the case starting with the kind of place that I wanted to go.

Q: This is long and far away. Usually for a southern boy, to go to Princeton was about as far as they went, unless there was some urge to go to Harvard.

TURPIN: I didn't want to go to anyplace in a big city. And the more we... Trinity is apparently a nice school, I don't really know much about it, but it's in the middle of Hartford. In the middle of Hartford, Connecticut. Hanover sounded like exactly the right kind of place for me, and I went and I loved it. Of course, I don't think anybody goes to Dartmouth and comes out any other way.

Q: You were at Dartmouth from when to when?

TURPIN: [Until] 43', I was class of 44', but I was drafted at the end of my junior year. And they gave me my degree which I never asked for and, in fact, shouldn't have been awarded. They gave it to me *summa cum laude,* [but] one of the qualification for that is you have passed your senior comprehensive exam with high credit. I didn't pass it with high credit. I never passed it at all. I never took it.

Q: Now when you were at Dartmouth, early on, I mean this was 40 to 43. You got there

in 1940. What was Dartmouth like?

TURPIN: It was in the middle of nowhere, of course. Nobody under a junior was allowed to have a car. It was all men, naturally. It was fairly small. It was too big, already. It has I think about 1,700, maybe more than that, 2,500, undergraduates. Which is too big to be a Williams.

Q: Yes, I went to Williams.

TURPIN: When?

Q: I went there 46 to 50 and we were about 1,100.

TURPIN: Yes, and then you expanded. I mean you got girls, to start with. I don't know about Williams, but Dartmouth, when they wanted to go co-ed, [they] said they weren't going to have any more people but they weren't going to admit any fewer men [either], which is a little hard to arrange. Like the great French ambition in the 1950s: they wanted a German army to be larger than the Russian and smaller than the French. You know, it's a little difficult to see just how it could work. As I say, it was in the sticks.

And it was cold. It snowed. I think there was thirty inches of snow by Thanksgiving of my freshman year. The pond was frozen solid. I had managed to, entirely by good luck, in my English class there was a son of one of the math professors, a great teacher and a wonderful fellow, and he invited me to go to a party on some Saturday night, and I don't know how I knew he was going to have a little blond girl there, but there was, namely his sister. And I held Barbara's hand for two years and then she went off to Vassar, married one of my roommates, later on. But she taught me how to skate, among other things. But my experience was unusual in that most of the undergraduates did not have a local girlfriend. There were no girls around, period.

It was put into - I think after the first essay in English - an English 1-A class, which was about twenty-five people, including George Springsteen, who later was Executive Secretary of the Department ,and nobody else of any great distinction, under a bearded old coot by the name of David Lambert. And we were all convinced that Lambert only had one necktie. Not true. He had lots of them. They were all the same. His Welch family plaid. Lambert ran around, winter and summer, in a white flannel suit, with a flowing beard, a tan, a cloak, and driving a white Packard. Which it was said he got because Ms. Lambert was color blind and he wanted to get her a car she couldn't miss. And it was also alleged that she got into a milk truck one time and drove off. As far as I know that wasn't true.

Old Lambert, I must say, he did his own stuff. We didn't have anything to do with the regular college curriculum. And he gave us a dose of Browning in particular, and Shakespeare. There's some Browning points I can't think about without that old goat standing with his beard parallel to the floor, with his book on the music stand, holding it

up just like that and letting us have it. And he was marvelous. They also gave us a French placement exam, and I was called into the office of the dean of freshman and this rather old battle-axe, I thought she was a hundred, [but] she must have been all of forty, probably. She said Mr. Turpin, "What do you mean signing up for French Five?"

And I said, "Well, it says if you've had two years of high school French, that's what you should do. And I know it wasn't very good, but that's what I did." And she said, "Where did you go to school, in France?" I said, "No, Macon, Georgia." "Well you can't have done that with American high school French. Sorry, that's just the way it is."

They put me in a more advanced class. That was all fine. I went on and majored in English, but I got diddled out of my second year. I had an honors tutor, which was the Oxford system, and much better than it was ever done at Oxford in my experience. [His name was] Frank Cudworth Quinn, [and it was] especially typical of him, with a perfectly normal name like Frank, he'd call himself Cudworth. He wore glasses which were made out of coca cola bottle bottoms. And he had to hold a book within six inches of his nose to read it. And he would plunk himself on his couch every Wednesday night at eight o'clock with his old blazer buttoned up over his tummy, which was bulging out between the buttons. And he would say "All right, read your essay." So I would read my essay. There would be a fairly profound silence and then he would say, "On your very [first] page Mr. Turpin, you said so and so. Now do you actually believe you, do you defend that position?" "Yes, sir." He said, "Well go to the bookshelf and the third book from the left on the second shelf. Turn to page 327 and start reading." So I go over there and he'd had one very prominent critic who just said that anybody who said what I did was a fool. He said, "Do you still hold your opinion." I said "Yes, sir." And we would argue for three hours. And then he would take that paper off and he'd return it having written more comments than I wrote paper. I mean he was the best named teacher I ever had, Flint, hardest mind I ever ran into in my life, I think. We never exchanged a simple word between "good evening" when I got there and "good night" when I left. And I'd leave gasping. But by golly he taught me something.

Q: Why literature? Why English?

TURPIN: Well, I wasn't supposed to have done any reading my last few years in high school except for what was necessary, because I was quite myopic. And the theory was that if I didn't do any close work then my eyes would improve. Now this was completely false.

Q: Yes, I lived in Annapolis and people were going through all sorts of eye exercises and so on.

TURPIN: It was all total nonsense. But anyways, so I felt that I was hopelessly illiterate. And I'd better do something about it. So my sophomore year, this Jock Brown, this classmate of mine who's brother to Barbara came and said, "We ought to take Greek." And I said, "Great." Because my father had done as near to majoring in Greek in Georgia

as you could do in those days. He had a teacher who was an absolutely terror named Willis Henry Bowcock, [and one time] my father took me up to Athens when I was certainly in high school. His knees were knocking as he went up Mr. Bowcock's front steps. Just a holy terror. And daddy said, "if you can read Greek you can read most of the gospel." Because we knew them pretty well by heart. But he thought it was great stuff. He never put any pressure on me to take Greek. But when Jock made this proposal, he said "My father will get us anybody in the department you want."

So he got us mixed up with Royal Case Neimeyer, Laurence Professor of Greek and Gospel, who was a superb and thoroughgoing fascist. But he said "Gentlemen, what I propose to do is teach you how languages work, and where your language comes from." And he knew all that stuff. And he was just great. And then the next year I had a complete mirror image, practically. One John Barker Sterns, who was as Dartmouth as Neimeyer was Yale. Neimeyer tackled me one time and said "What did you come to this place for?" He said, "You belong in Amherst or at Yale." And I said, "Mr, Neimeyer, there's only one good argument against that." He said, "What's that?" I said, "You ain't at either one of them." Which was God's truth. I didn't have to butter up my teachers by the time I was far along.

I was so scared my first semester because I believed all this stuff they put in the catalogues and what not. I had to take Chemistry, English, of course, French, Classical Civilization - it was a disaster – and I forget what the other one was. Anyway, by Christmas I thought that I was just barely making it. And we went through exams in January and I thought I just barely, well, if I was lucky, I wouldn't be put on the next train. I was out skating with Barbara one afternoon and the dean of freshmen skated up to me and said, "Mr. Turpin, do you have any idea what you did on your exams." And I said, "No, sir. I hope it wasn't too disastrous." "Well," he said, "I think you might like to know you had one of the five four point averages in the class." And I was colder than the ice. I couldn't believe it. Well after that I reckoned I was as good as any of them and have never looked back from that position.

Q: At Dartmouth, was there an ROTC?

TURPIN: No, nothing military at all.

Q: We are talking about 1940 going in [to Dartmouth], and things are really hopping over in Europe. How did that affect you all?

TURPIN: It didn't really very much, I don't think, now. I was a senior battalion commander in our high school regiment and we wound up with a parade, competitive drill and all that. When my battalion came passed, passing through, and I knew that those [people] knew where they were going. We all knew where we were going, we just didn't know when. Or how. A lot of them had sense enough to get themselves commissioned in the Navy and one thing or another. But it really, I mean that night I was very, you know, I was a student of 1940. But at Dartmouth...

Q: When the hand that held the dagger, plunged into the back of...

TURPIN: Yes indeed. Um, but it seems to me at Dartmouth, it didn't make much difference. After Pearl Harbor, quite a number of us, we had a rather dramatic to and fro over the class of 1941, which was, of course, before December. One Charles Guy Botei, with a big mouth and was big on the Daily Dartmouth, which I worked on, had a debate. There were two guys, both of them on the Dartmouth, they were president and vice-president of the forensic union and they said Botei could pick out anybody he wanted, and he picked out another guy from Club Dartmouth who was an extremely good writer and a lousy speaker. And those two, Botei and his friend, were arguing for intervention and the other two were not. And they really did wipe up the floor with them. Now Botei, he challenged them, or somebody challenged somebody, to go off tomorrow morning and go to Canada and join the army, the British army. And Botei said he wasn't going to do that. He was going to finish his degree, which was only a couple of days or a week or so away. He did go off with some of his friends and join the 60th rifles, once the Kings Royal Americans, well, then the Kings Royal Rifle Core. I don't know what it's been made into now. Got his foot blown off in North Africa.

But on the whole people didn't really think much about it. The day after Pearl Harbor, Mr. Neimeyer addressed his class. He said, "Gentlemen, some of you, after what happened yesterday, will feel you ought to go off and join the army right away. I have nothing to say about that at all. The rest of you, who intend to do what your president asked you to do and stay in college till you are called up, I just want you to know we are going to go right on with Greek in this course and when I say "war" I mean Peloponnesian." I said, "That's fine with me, Mr. Neimeyer, as long as you understand that when I say "war" I mean the civil war." But it didn't make that much difference...

Q: I found personally - I was too young for World War II - that if nothing else it was the greatest geography lesson because, you knew where Guadalcanal was, where Rostov was, Tabruk, what have you. Was this something that you were following?

TURPIN: Yes, because, particularly since my junior year I was taking the AP (Associated Press), they called it. They dictated AP stories over the telephone line and I'd type them out.

Q: Associated Press, yes.

TURPIN: Yes, I was a member of the Associated Press. That's the way you did it in those days. Somebody, some person, on the paper had to be a member. Yes, we got a lot of that. Especially, of course, after Pearl Harbor, got a lot more of it. And I think it was 1942, the navy put a V-7 unit up there, which was the ninety day wonders. And they, the navy of course, with its usually brilliance in March, when the campus was two feet deep in slush, would march three files along the duckboards, there only being room on the duck boards for two. And one of these poor clods was slogging along up to his ankles or knees in

slush. And the navy never seemed to figure that one out.

And, I don't know what it was like after that, because I was 19 when I was drafted. Because I tried everything else, but with my eyes, they weren't having anything, thank you. Except the army, they didn't care. So I finally decided I might as well wait and be drafted, get as much college in as I could, which I nearly did. But it didn't make as much an impact as you might think.

Q: It's interesting. Well, did some of the depictions of Dartmouth, Bud Shulberg, who had written about Winter Carnival, and...

TURPIN: Well Winter Carnival was one of the worst movies ever made.

Q: Oh, yes, but...

TURPIN: But I don't think it was as damaging to the college's self-esteem as Animal House, but...

Q: Well, it was a movie of about 1940, wasn't it, something like that?

TURPIN: Something like that, Schulberg was class of '36, I think.

Q: Yes, and he was quite a well-known writer, but Dartmouth played a big hand in some of his writing.

TURPIN: Now I have never, I can say it to my shame, never read any of his [writing that] I remember.

Q: What happened to you military-wise.

TURPIN: Well, I went down and duly reported to Fort McPherson with the draft and they claimed I had a hernia, which I never [did], this was in June, I guess, of 43, and I never believed it. But I went home and got operated on and the doctor said, "Well you can't go back for three months. So don't get impatient." So I went off and took a couple courses in physics and chemistry at Mercer University. Quite a booming institution now, but in those days it didn't amount to doodly. My lab instructor was a guy I had been in high school with. The equipment was just pathetic.

Q: Mercer University is where?

TURPIN: Macon. It has a branch in Atlanta and apparently it is really going great guns. But it was not a highly regarded institution in my day. And I did it purely to have something to do. I mean, I was walking with a cane. In due course, I went back into the draft board and the navy guys said "I'm short college men for my quota so you got to go in the navy, marines or the coast guard." So I took the marines. And the reason was that I

didn't get a commission in any branch of the naval service and I could in the army and if I could be an artillerist that could be quite useful.

Well, I didn't get a chance to make that case and the next thing I knew I was in San Diego. And went through this classification routine. And they said, "you got a real good break and we're going to send you to radar school." I didn't know what a radar was. "And you get a stripe every three months and you come out as a staff sergeant." And I said, "I don't care. I don't want to do that." They said, "You got to." I said, "No. I don't." Cause I had been offered to be a drill instructor. Our boot camp was quite unusual considering that I didn't do terribly well on the rifle range. Really quite unexpected. But anyhow, there I was, and I spent eight months drilling boots. And that took priority over this thing, so I said that was fine.

And I got through. After about eight months I asked for a transfer and got up to the same damn navy lieutenant and he said "ah, your back, are you." I said, "yes." "What do you want?" I said, "I want to go out for artillery." "Son," he said, "you've got the highest GST that ever came through this base and we are not, repeat not, sending you to the infantry or the artillery. Now you can either go to radar school or you can go to Japanese language school." And I said, "Which one of them is quicker?" "Japanese language." I said, "Sign me up there." So they did.

Q: Where did you go?

TURPIN: Camp Pendleton.

Q: Camp Pendleton is in New...

TURPIN: Madison, California.

Q: Oh, that's by...

TURPIN: Oceanside. The Marine Corps really is a remarkable organization. They put us out at the end of nowhere in what they called a shoe and textile repair school, along with a bunch of Arabs and other non-literate non-English speaking [people]. And everybody in the language school had a GST of officer level. Had one PhD who eventually got sent out because he got to be 38 and two MS or MAs in geology who had been out digging up uranium we found out on our way to Japan in '45. They said, "ah, that's what we were doing, is it?" And it was a very bright bunch of people. One of them, who came in later, Bill Burdett, was an ambassador in Africa somewhere. His brother was killed or lost in action over Vietnam.

Q: Well now, you took Japanese?

TURPIN: Yep.

Q: How long?

TURPIN: Well, theoretically six months. It took them nine months to get us through it because they kept moving us. And you know, if they leave you alone, anybody can learn it. So they brought us back to the east coast. Typical Marine Corps reasoning. They wanted to get us some nisei instructors, so we would hear Japanese as she is properly spoken. So they struggled with the army, which didn't want to let any Japanese back to the west coast. Got permission. And promptly shipped us to the east coast where, equally promptly, no nisei ever appeared. Typical. But we were, I must say, quite thoroughly drilled in Japanese.

Q: When you finished this, where was it war-wise?

TURPIN: It was just, well, I was home on leave before I went to the Pacific. And we shipped, we got out to the west coast, they put us on an LST and it went down to Fort Waineenee, California, a God forsaken hole if there ever was one. Took us off, for some reason, and they had us, tried to have us stacking lumber for a while. But we had a piece of paper that said these guys should be allowed to study Japanese as much as possible. So we'd sneak off. We learned very well from Japanese language school how to goof off and get away with it.

Q: Oh, yes.

TURPIN: And finally they put us, it wasn't an LST we finally wound up on, it was a respectable troop ship. Finally got to Pearl Harbor where they said they were screaming for us. Fifth Amphibious Corps. So we tossed garbage cans for two weeks. This all standard Marine Corps procedure. Finally got up over to Maui. They were people who lived in Japan before the war and were really good. And there was one very nice lieutenant, from out of Ann Arbor, in the army. [There was] a real schmuck from Harvard, who later was in the Foreign Service, in the Korean business and got fired and I don't, while I disliked him intensely, I thought he was most unjustly treated.

Q: Who was that?

TURPIN: Gregory Henderson. Well it was really rather funny because [later] when my second wife and I were sailing out of Seattle, Nancy said, "there's somebody," and I don't know what her name was now, "is living on that island, lets go see it." So we do and she was a pathetic case. Practically blind and going the rest of the way. And with her husband. Somehow, the name of Gregory Henderson got mentioned and she really exploded. She said he had taken up with her in Hawaii, where she came from.

Q: He did well.

TURPIN: Yes. We really had a wonderful time picking Gregory Henderson's bone. He was dead by then. But what, the thing, he did, well, we had a high school equivalency

training, after hours, thing, and I got to teach senior English. Next thing I know, here came Lieutenant Henderson and he said that he was going to help me. And I said, "come off of it lieutenant. Lieutenants don't help privates first class. If you want the thing, take it." And he did. Did not leave me feeling very happy about him.

He was also the censor. And one time he turned around and he says, in his most Harvardian tone, "don't you know that the word is homogeneous and not homogeneous." (with pronunciation differences) And I said "No. I think that's a perfectly valid use." And I did check it out and he was right. It should have been homogeneous, but homogeneous was okay. Okay, so I couldn't do anything about that.

Couple days later, he turns around, "I say Turpin, do you by any chance know the derivation of the word halcyon." I said, "lieutenant, is it possible that a graduate in the classics from Harvard has forgotten that delightful chapter in the fifth book of the Odyssey where Homer talks about the flight" – and I blew it – "of the halcunauts across the waves." He was probably abased.

Well, when Nancy and I bought a boat in Edenton in the late 1980s, it was named Halcyon, and I determined that we should re-christen it in Greek. It turns out that halcyon in the genitive, or hucunauts is the genitive and the nominative is halcios, and I was wrong for forty years, or thirty years. Henderson didn't know it either, so...

Q: So what happened from Maui?

TURPIN: Well, we went eventually, naturally, we were beasts of burden for the fifth air corps headquarters. Got in a boat and went to Japan. Got into Sasibo and...

Q: The war was over by then?

TURPIN: The war was over by then. We were still on Maui when they dropped the atomic bomb. These geologist friends of mine figured out what they'd been doing the previous two, three years. And then we went off and occupied Japan for awhile. I didn't do any good during the war at all. I didn't do much harm, as far as I know. And we had some really rather good experiences in Japan. But, do you think the State Department ever had any intention of making any use of that? Don't be silly. I mean I was fairly fluent in the stuff and I could decipher enough. What we were really supposed to be able to do was look at a field order and tell you, tell what this was. We weren't supposed to go through it in detail. And we were taught from day one, you do not say to an officer, "I do not know how to say that." Damn well figure out how to say that, whatever it is. Well our vocabulary, naturally, was pretty much military, except for the (Japanese word) . And when we got to Maui, about five of us had finally made it together. They said we were going to have classes with this Ann Arbor lieutenant whose name I've forgotten. And, so they said, well, so and so, will you read this. And this corporal stumbles through the chapter. And he said, to one of my colleagues, well, will you read the next lesson. "With my book or without it." But we did have it pretty well memorized. And that was the best

way to do it.

Q: Well that was the system, too.

TURPIN: That was the system. We'd have a Japanese class when you played the interpreter and I played the questioner and you played [interpreter] and we learned [the language.]. Over the dead body of the Foreign Service Institute, but we did it.

Q: When you were in Japan, where did you go and what were you doing and how long were you there?

TURPIN: Nine months. Sasibo then Kokora. Then very shortly Nagasaki and then east coast, Miyazaki-ken. Went up to a little one-horse town, Mimitsu, a little fishing village with a bunch of horses. And we spent a very happy month riding around on these ex-Japanese calvary horses. McClellan saddle. I don't know if you know them or not, but they're very hard on your butt.

Q: Yes, it's curved but not very deep. But it's split right in the middle.

TURPIN: All the rest of them had been there for a while, a couple of weeks, and I got up there with a very nice intelligence sergeant. And they said, "you can ride ole' Pete." He was alleged to be a grandson of Man-OWar, which he may or may not have been. But the trouble with him was he trotted like a normal horse and none of these guys who were westerners know how to post, and fortunately I did. And we would go out and put a K ration in one pocket and a can of beer in the other, couple of ears of corn for the horses, and go checking schools. . .

Q: Well, what were you doing?

TURPIN: Well, the main thing with schools, we were trying to find out if they had properly censored their textbooks. And otherwise we just, well in Sasibo, we were put to supervising a fleet of tugboats which was hauling scrap iron out of the underground factories and dumping them off Bentenjima, which I remember very well. And we used to have a lot of fun riding around. Captain, whatever his name was, would let me shout down the speaking tube every once in a while and these roars of laughter would come back up from down below and we'd had a go and try the navy ships and find out which ones had the best lunch. And the officers of the deck, we usually pretty much snowed when this obviously American voice comes off this rather seedy looking Japanese tug boat.

And we couldn't get captain whatever his name was and his crew fed, but they had their own, so we'd just go ahead. And the officers would come around after we got back and they wanted to know how every job we went on was. And we were very careful not to tell them. We told them perfectly horrible and dreadful way to spend your time and they were stupid. They claimed that all they could do is translate, they couldn't really speak. As I

say, we were taught: “when you’re told to speak, speak.” .

Q: I would imagine looking at the example, looking at the Japanese text books, I’m told that at least in Germany and Japan, the kids all brought ink and crossed out the...

TURPIN: Exactly what we did.

Q: And that, I mean, must have ended up with a pretty sparse text.

TURPIN: I don’t know whether they actually quit using [them]. What was I supposed to do? I mean, we didn’t even have any orders about what to do if we did find they hadn’t censored the textbook. I don’t think they had a clue. Nobody knew anybody. I mean none of the Japanese knew who they were voting for.

Q: Well how about with the Japanese? This was really right after the war. How about hostility and problems of that nature?

TURPIN: Zero. At least not expressed. The kids, of course, were like kids everywhere. We had candy, or they thought we did. But we used to, it depended, in Mimitsu, we were in this little ex-hotel that the Japanese navy had had, we know a lot of, a number of people. I can’t say we were ever really loved. That’s not entirely true. We knew people very pleasantly. A friend of mine named Merl Edgington and I were attached to a CIC unit, and we were told that we were civilians. Edgington was willing to put on an army uniform. I wasn’t. I just said, well I have been with the marines. We wore these little “U.S.’s on our collar. And we wanted to date the nurses at the 98th general hospital over in Bogi. And their boss wouldn’t let them date our lieutenant, Lieutenant Scoolcraft, who was our commanding officer. But all the sergeants were wearing U.S.’s and pretending to be civilians so we could date the nurses. And we did.

We were living in a Japanese house and therefore taking our boots off when we came in. We were still sleeping on cots. I remember one night Edgington came in and woke me up. He said, “Bill, ever since I got in this God damned outfit I wanted to fuck a second lieutenant. And tonight I did.”

Q: We are talking about nurses that had military rank.

TURPIN: Yes. Matter of fact I was dating a first lieutenant from Marysville, Tennessee. A nice girl. The rest of them were second lieutenants, mostly. . .

Q: At this time, MacArthur had issued the order no fraternization. And certainly it didn’t play at all when they tried it in Germany. And I’m sure in Japan it didn’t play at all either.

TURPIN: Nobody paid any attention to it at all. There was one, I was told, I guess this was when we were coming back, about some celebrated case with the second division,

which was in Kasubo, I don't know. Anyhow, there was a young, brash, Jewish second lieutenant who was officer of the day and riding around with a salty old master gunnery sergeant. And they go by this whore house and there's a whole line of black leather shoes lined up before the door. They went in and pinched the joint. Got two captains, three commanders, I think and an admiral, and that guy was on the boat home so fast he never knew what hit him. Cause I mean there were one set of rules for the enlisted men and another set of rules for the officers, of course.

Q: I occupied Japan during the Korean War, for about two months. And all of a sudden I was protecting Japan. We signed a peace treaty.

TURPIN: We never signed a peace treaty with them, did we? Oh, we have, I think. I guess we did, [but] the Germans, the Russians never have.

Q: The Russians...

TURPIN: We got no peace treaty with the Germans, that's right.

Q: But uh, anyway, what were you thinking about? Were you getting ready to get out?

TURPIN: Out of the marines?

Q: Yes.

TURPIN: Oh, the minute I could. They had a point system and I hadn't done anything and been in anything and been in very long and didn't have any combat. If I'd had a stripe every time they promised me one, I'd have been a rear admiral, but they never came through on any of this and I was discharged a corporal. No, I wanted out, sure. But I wasn't in any tearing rush.

Q: Did you have any feel of what you wanted to do?

TURPIN: Not a very clear one. I had considered the idea that it would be quite nice to go to Oxford.

Q: Yes.

TURPIN: Didn't know. But I did think, yes, I had an idea that after the war I would quite like to go to China and do something useful. I don't know what. I was not an engineer so it wouldn't really be very practical. But that was kind of buzzing in my head. Otherwise, I had not a clue. One thing I know I did not want to do was go back to Macon or go to law school and go back to Macon and be Bill Turpin's little boy. That would have been cushy, but not... no.

Um, so I got back, and had a thirty-four day trip back on a rust bucket, during which I am

sorry to say the interpreters drew mess duty the whole time because we had been able to get away with "Colonel, I'm not going to translate a damn fool statement like that." If you were the only person who could speak both Japanese and English for fifty miles around, you could get away with it. But when the Marine Corps got its chance to get its own back, mess duty. Which was okay. We got back to Norfolk and, I went home a couple of days later. My father said he got me a job. He sold me into slavery teaching English at the University of Georgia that fall. Which I did. Had a marvelous time. And in October...

Q: This was 46?

TURPIN: Yes. Went over to Atlanta and went up for the Rhodes scholarship interview statement. And I wasn't, it never occurred to me I wouldn't do well on that one. That was Thursday. Saturday was the regional district thing.

Q: Were these interviews, or what?

TURPIN: Yes, well they have rather complete files, including a one thousand word statement of what you have done and what you expected to do. Five hundred words, two thousand words. A thousand is perfect, hell. Try to write an essay of that length. Yes, they had a, you had letters of recommendation of eight people I think, not more of five of who shall have taught you. And of course your college transcripts and all of that sort of thing. And I guess mine had some kind of military record in because when the crunch came down, as I've always found, the only single way to get away with anything with a board is to have an advocate. The only trouble is you can't pick one. But there was somebody on that board who was determined that I should go to Oxford. So when they raised the question of, well this guy's got no military, no athletic ability, whatever, which was perfectly true, one of the conditions in Rhodes' will was fondness for and aptness to manly sports, or something like that. They've changed that, of course, now they've got the girls. Except one of the girls who's going this year was both a marathoner and a parachute jumper. So anyway, fortunately we didn't have to compete with that crowd. Well, my advocate pulled and said "Hell, he did three years in the Marine Corps, isn't that enough?" Which,of course, is a very poor argument except for the fact that it worked.

So, and the night between the state and the regional thing, I was staying with a former rector of mine. It was either All Saints or Saint Lukes, there were two big churches in Atlanta right side by side. Matt Marner was rector of one of them, I don't know which. And Thursday night I had a date with a girl from Macon. And Marner's wife, Becky, a marvelous lady, asked me who I was going out with. And I told her. And she said, well remember you've got a free night tomorrow night. So she sent me down the street two doors. And there was a classmate of my sister's from Vassar and, well, it was just, kablui, head over heals in love. Then the next day I received the Rhodes scholarship. And now believe me, you can't feel very much higher than that.

Q: No. Now what sort of things were asked of you for that?

TURPIN: I don't really remember the questions. They did ask me about this China caper and one guy said, I found out later, "sounds like a dilettante to me." And again my advocate pulled my file out, threw it across the table, said "take a look at that and see if it looks like a dilettante." Well, the guy was absolutely right. I am a dilettante. I never finished anything.

I don't really remember any of the questions we were asked. I do remember the people I was down there with. And, which I had, as I say, no feelings of inferiority about the state lot, that bunch in Atlanta, they were, three apiece, is that right, yes, three apiece from six states, eighteen of us. And I could, we sat there you know, all day. And by the time that was over with I could honestly say I wouldn't mind losing to any one of them. I mean those people were [good]; one was later president of the University of Virginia. Another one was a CIA guy who allegedly got killed fairly shortly after he joined. One of them was president of the University of Florida and University of Virginia Medical School. Nick Katzenbach was another one, Under Secretary of State and Attorney General.

Q: Ambassador to the United Kingdom. No, no, no...

TURPIN: And anyway, the secretary of our class was headmaster of Lawrenceville for years and years. .

Q: So you went to Oxford when to when?

TURPIN: October 47 to June of 49.

Q: What was Oxford like then?

TURPIN: Cold, hungry and wonderful. The quality of the tutors was not too swift. I was better taught at [Dartmouth] than I was by anybody at Oxford. Uh, but I read P.P.E., which was a degree which, if the Americans did it and the British found out about it they would make really rude remarks. I had the advantage of, being a wartime degree, I could take six of the eight prescribed, uh...

Q: What field was this in?

TURPIN: Philosophy, politics and economics. And what I wanted to do was philosophy. What I got terribly interested in was politics because my tutor, well, one of the reasons, my tutor was, uh, Christopher Seeton Watson, MC with bar, major royal artillery, who had had a hell of a campaign. I did not know this til much later. He as not very much older than I was. And he was not allowed to sit school at Oxford because they had already given him a scholarship and they were so afraid he wouldn't make the first, they wouldn't let him and another guy who was eventually my honors, my dissertation for a PhD, which I didn't get. But they were both elected as scholars, and not allowed to take their degrees. Christopher is the only person alive who ever taught me. And a marvelous friend. I see him every time I go to London. Usually takes me to lunch.

But Oxford, it was cold. God it was... I had the only room in the college which didn't have either electric or gas heat.

Food was simply appallingly bad. Fortunately, my mother shipped peanut butter and canned corned beef and all stuff like that over in enormous quantities. I fed the boat club, pretty much. But it was not a comfortable time by any stretch of the imagination. I went off and worked for the Bartlett Theater that next summer and that was a wild time.

But Lucy [the girl met during the Rhodes competition]was going to drive up to New England with her father and we were to spend a couple of days with her grandmother. And then I was supposed to take off for Oxford. Well, she came, we went to lunch, and she said, I hate to tell you this, but I've fallen in love with somebody else. Okay, that was that.

Uh, so I went to Oxford. You can't be very heartbroken at the age of, what was I, 24. But at 24 with Oxford under your belt, I wasn't too chipper. But I did meet a girl when I was sent down to the railroad station one Sunday afternoon shortly after I got there by a lunatic dean , John Collins, one of Khrushchev's favorite correspondents. He eventually wound up as a communist, a nut. Uh, anyway, he was completely inefficient. So he sent me down to meet the wrong train. There was some German students coming over for something and so he said there'd be somebody from Lady Margaret Hall to deal with girls. So I went down and there was this girl. She had been mis-assigned too. Typical of anything John Collins got mixed up with. But, she started asking me where I was from. I said Georgia and she promptly started singing marching through Georgia. I said, "Young lady, that is not the right theme." Anyway, we took up and eventually got married between my schools and hers.

And she complicated my getting into the Foreign Service rather considerably because when I went up for my orals, which was before we were married, they wanted my picture of the girl to whom I was engaged. And they took all that in. Then we went off to Florence on our honeymoon. I got this long telegram collect from the State Department offering me an internship at $ 2,800 a year, if you can believe. I was paid $ 2,400 when I was teaching in Georgia, but then three months I didn't have to work. Well, in those days, the pound was in the process of being devalued from four dollars to two dollars and eighty cents. And Andrey was beside herself. "Handsome husband and a thousand a year," she said. She was never very good at economics, I'm afraid. Anyway, we get this thing and Dick Service was the consul. And I went out to see him, asked, you know, because I didn't know him from Adam's house cat, asked him about this. Well he had tried to get one of these internships for one of his staff. So he made it sound like it was going to be ranking with, but just after, the secretary of state. I was stupid and I didn't believe him, but, you know, sounded like a good thing. So we went back to London in due course and I went in the Embassy and the administrative officer, Clement Sabatka, I knew him very well, he said, "Does the State Department know you are married to an alien." I said, "Well of course they do, we went through all this business at my basic..."

"Take my word for it, they don't know that. And let me NIACT them and we'll find out."

Well, about a week later, they got around to saying, okay anyway. They didn't know. So we eventually sashayed back to the United States and Audrey duly got citizenship. Well, she applied for it. And I was assigned at the end of this caper to Germany to be a resident officer. Then they said, ah, but you have an alien wife. I said, but that is rather silly because I'm already there. Oh, I guess I was on the waiting list, of course. Well then, anyway, there was some argument about, you can't do this because you've got an alien wife. I said I can because I already have. They let me in with an alien wife because it was a purely in the Freign Service administrative convenience. They could screw us about it that way. Not have to get in the civil service. Not get into old business about, what do you call it, staff, or civil service, or...

Q: Civil service. .

TURPIN: Whatever that thing was called. And so they had hoist themselves by their own petard because there wasn't much, so, by that time they couldn't issue me, they wouldn't naturalize Audrey until we had orders to go abroad. They couldn't give me orders to go abroad because I was married to an alien. We finally got the papers, went down and she duly swore allegiance, I mean forswore allegiance to all foreign potentates and powers and whatnot, except, she said to herself with her fingers crossed behind her back, Queen Wilhelmina and King George.

Q: What was your wife's background?

TURPIN: She was Dutch by origin. Her father worked for Unilever .And Mr. Dehous and about half dozen other Dutchman and a similar number of Englishmen went to the other's headquarters. And he was the only one that really stuck. Or practically the only one that really stuck. So Audrey was raised British from the time she was five.

Q: She was at Oxford?

TURPIN: Yes.

Q: And what was her major?

TURPIN: Oh, she read English. She read English and Welch. Turned down a chance for a first. Well, she always said she did and I'm quite sure it was true. Having Dutch, she could do the language part. She had German. And she's one of the few people I know of who were ever admitted to Oxford University twice. First time she went up was when she got out of school. And that was in the middle of the war and she had to go do national service and Oxford being Oxford wouldn't reserve a place and, oh, they had to do it all over again. And she did. And, the second time, for the language part of the proceedings, [they said]just translate the following into any language you know. So she naturally translated into Dutch. And she said, "but ma'am, since I know that's not quite what you

had in mind, here it is in German. Found out later on that it had caused a major flap among the examiners because they didn't have anybody around who could read or, tell whether her Dutch was any good or not. But she got in and she was at Laidmarker Hall as I say, which was the class institution among the ladies. And it still is. My daughter went there. I don't think my granddaughter will.

Q: What was an intern in those days?

TURPIN: Oh, well, it was FSS-13. I can tell you that. Although we did get promoted eventually.

Q: Sort of basically a staff person.

TURPIN: Well, it was the same as intern anywhere, except that I don't think they were worried about security clearances. At least I was in what was sort of an embryonic executive secretariat, consisting of about six people, including Gene Davis who was a PE-2 at the time and the most embittered PE-2 in the entire United States Government cause she thought she out to have been higher up, which she certainly should have been, and eventually wound up running the national security council staff. Frank Malloy, who got himself killed.

Q: Lebanon.

TURPIN: Lebanon or Cyprus? Lebanon, it was. Yes. Had a guy named Wexler who later on wound up at the USIA and I think Bob Barnes ran the operation.

Q: You came in when in the Foreign Service?

TURPIN: Must have been August, maybe early September of 1947. No! Nonsense. 49. Having gotten married that July and gone of on our honeymoon and came back. They got us on a boat.

Q: So they just, they sent you off on a boat to be a crisis officer, is that right?

TURPIN: No, I was going to be an intern.

Q: An intern.

TURPIN: Well what they did, with the usual cleverness of the State Department, they had recruited I think there were five of us, or three of us, off of the Foreign Service waiting list, and maybe five out of the staff, one of whom was Nancy Rawles, who shot up to the exalted heights. And then about twenty carefully selected from good schools and colleges all over the country. Came June, they didn't have a damn thing to do with anybody. Those of us on the waiting list, they could send us off as FSS to Germany. I don't know what they did with the staff people. But the other ones, they just lost.

Q: Well then, where were you sent in Germany?

TURPIN: A place about forty miles west of Marbury.

Q: Well, I tell you, I think this might be a good place to stop now. I usually put at the end where we are so we know where to pick it up. So we'll pick this up the next time, 1949, you have come to your little town or kreis, in...

TURPIN: Oh, Beidenholf was so far in the sticks you wouldn't know it.

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

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Today is the second of June, 2001. Well, let's start, year 1950, you were in a small German town. What was the name?

TURPIN: Well, one was kreis Beidenkop. And another kreis, Dillenberg.

Q: We have a dachshund, for this for the transcriber, we have a dachshund who is a little bit leery of this whole process. We are conducting this particular part of the interview in Annapolis, Maryland. What, um, what land were you in?

TURPIN: Hesse. In what had been the Hessen kassel. Dillenberg, Dil kreis, was where the family of Oranion Nassal basically came from. The ruling family in Holland. Anyway, Dil kris was, got shut of fairly soon and then, in August of the next year, I was hauled out in some disgrace.

Q: Well, let's talk a bit about your work in this kris. What were you doing?

TURPIN: Well they said resident officer and I guess the main thing was to be there. We were known, all of us, as der Americaner and sometimes as, I don't know what the army had called it, but we took over, were Foreign Service people - about four or five, I guess, off the waiting list and the rest of the, I don't know where they got them – and we were supposed to go out and be "in charge" of these kris, including city ones. The main sort of official function we had left was to issue (German language), I haven't thought of it in years, permission for people to settle in the kris, which we always granted. It was a matter of signing and stamping things. But the real, we had a staff consisting of an intelligence officer and a rear orientation officer and a secretary and two Volkswagens and an Opel Capitain, with drivers, that we toodled around the krises in. We were supposed to make democrats of the Germans, which was a good trick. I never thought we would pull it off and I don't think we did. But the thing is the place has certainly turned out better than I would ever have believed possible. Mainly, my wife spoke fluent German. She was Dutch by origin and had had German in school. I didn't know enough to have bought a shotgun

when I got there. Had had a year in college which did me no good whatever, but I did take lessons.

And we operated on the principle that we would go out and visit Durgemeister or, schoolteachers mainly, and I would put my question in what I thought was German and then either, Seigenhaggen, my intelligence man, or my wife would translate it into proper German and then I would know what I was doing. And I got to where I could understand the replies reasonably well. And we were, I think, the main thing I was interested in was trying to get the teachers headed in the "right" direction. We didn't have much, well the Durgermeisters were all friendly, but this was a real country operation. And the only people in the kris who had anything on the ball were refugees. And this was, I had a bunch of the masters from the local high school and going down this way, re-education center, or education center, that we ran along the lawn.

And anyway, there were these three "paukas," as the kids called them, meaning grumpiers, teachers at the local school. And they were all saying, paying no attention to me in the front seat, that the place would be absolutely devoid of anything if it weren't for the refugees. The Beidencolfers called themselves (German), root citizens, and boy they were, they were. They were back in the, firmly lodged, back in the 18th century.

Q: Was it strictly agricultural?

TURPIN: Yes. Well, Beidencolf had a population of about five thousand people and it had .advertised itself as a (German), an air-treatment place, and wanted to be a tourist center, at which its chances were close to zero. It makes no difference. But we did get some activity going with the young people. There was a lady school teacher taught typing at the local factory. And she was, she looked like something right out of the handbook for the (German). But she was, there were two people in that chris that I was convinced would have to be shot before the next Hitler came along. One of them was a refugee, a Sudeten German. I have no affection for Sudenten Germans whatever. He was one of the best people I ever knew and eventually got promoted to running a girls school in Frankfurt. And those two had more idea of what it was all about than anybody in the American occupation forces ever did.

So Frauline organized a youth group and she came around and said "what do you want us to do?" ... do anything, so at the request of the landrat or somebody I had them out marking trails. You know the Germans have got to hike in unison. They did a lot of stuff like that. And they put on plays. I went to the mat with a biesbarden headquarters to try to get some plays that would stimulate the kind of thinking that we wanted to stimulate and be put on my amateur group, of which there were several in the kris, one headed by a doctor, very fine fellow, who was living in sin because he couldn't, according to the tax system, he couldn't afford to get married. Anyway, beisbarden had no interest in that whatever.

Q: By beisbarden you mean the...

TURPIN: The land headquarters. The land commissioner was a colonel out of the army and so was his deputy, was a lieutenant colonel and I don't think either one of them had the faintest idea what they were supposed to be doing. Anyway, my wife had started the practice of having open house on Friday nights for these local young people. He would come around with considerable enthusiasm. And he would do it and this was not to get propaganda or anything like that. Anyway, I don't know whether making any progress or not. I thought it'd take at least five years to do anything notable.

Q: Well, how did your wife react to this, being Dutch? I mean, no group with solid reason held the animosity longer than the...

TURPIN: Still do! They still do.

Q: Yes, it came as a real shock to the system because they had been neutral in World War I and being rather close to the Germans and then getting Rotterdam and all that...

TURPIN: Then occupied.

Q: And a real brutal occupation. How did your wife react to this?

TURPIN: Well, she lived in England from the time she was five. So she had no noticeable accent. And when we went to Holland later on it turned out her Dutch was excellent up to the age of about eight. On anything more sophisticated than that she knew as much as I did. But she was one of the first civilians to come into Germany after the surrender. Her father was working for the Quakers, dealing with people out of concentration camps. And he found that he, the British of course, had equipped themselves with German speaking interpreters, but not Dutch. And the Dutch, whatever else they did, they weren't speaking German, period. So they, after a few weeks, months, I don't know exactly, weeks I guess, he said why don't you get my daughter over here, she can speak Dutch perfectly well. And they did and she was interpreting for released concentration camp prisoners, some of whom, she said, couldn't communicate because they'd had their tongues cut out. She was not friendly towards the (German), as they still call them.

And one night we had the local Lutheran pastor and his wife in to dinner. We went to church there fairly regularly. And, father Filings said, well, he had been to Holland recently and he discovered that people somehow didn't like them very much, this being 1950 remember. And he thought this was most un-Christian of them. They were most unforgiving. And Audrey said, "do you have a lot of Dutch friends?" And he said "well, a few." She said, NS Bayer, I bet," meaning national socialist party of Bavaria. And he looked at her like she just said a dirty word. She wasn't supposed to know about that. And "well," he said, "I guess they mostly were." But I don't think the Dutch should be so unforgiving." We were just, (phrase in German), which curls my hair whenever I think about it. Upright German soldier. Great.

And next day, I guess, we were going off somewhere, and Audrey said, "what would you do if you were ordered to shoot babies in their mother's arms?" And I said, "I don't know. I hope I would have the guts to put half a clip into the guy that gave me that order and the other half into me. But I don't know what I would do." Anyway, she was remarkably, she was incredibly good. I mean she hated Germans as a people but she did not hate them as individuals. She was very good with them. And she of course helped me enormously with the language and everything else.

And we rocked along. And then I got in trouble. Because my father-in-law had just, had been widowed, of course the year we were there. And we had a, the occupation forces had a big house at Dillonberg with an office in it and nothing else and at Beidenhoff we just had a second story flat over the local (German). So I conceived the idea, dimwittedly, that we should move to Beidenhoff.

Q: Yes?

TURPIN: Yes. I made the mistake of saying that this was not my purpose, which it wasn't. Not to get my father-in-law although I thought we might well do that. But, it probably wouldn't have worked anyway. Anyway, the detectives made this big local case of that, made the usual "hoo haa" about it. And I, as I say, made the big mistake of saying that they had misrepresented what I was trying to do. I was thereupon called on the carpet to Wiesbaden and told, quite rightly, that you should never deny anything like that – just puts fuel on the fire – and that I was stupid and that I was going to be shipped off to the consulate general in Munich.

Well when that news hit the kris, uh, frolein Stuckeradt and the school teacher that I was so fond of called my boss at Marlburg, who was a marvelous fellow called Charlie Lloyd, one of the closest friends I ever had, never knew him before but I certainly did afterwards, and asked him if he would get them to Wiesbaden. And he said "yup." And he did. I didn't know anything about this. And they went down and told the landrat, I mean the land commissioner, "you take that boy out of here and you tear up everything you have done for the last five years." And it really shook him up. He said "never had anything like that happen before." I don't think it was true but it would have, they were right in the sense that what we were doing took a lot longer than some new kid every year or so.

Anyway, that was the only major compliant that I had, except, one of my drivers denounced my intelligence assistance as a homosexual, which I now strongly suspect he was. At the time, the fact that he had a wife, a child and another one on the way, I thought, demonstrated that he wasn't. That's how much I knew about it. So anyway, I went down to see the assistant lan (German for "party")) commissioner and told him this tale. And he said, "well, what do you want to do?" I said, "keep that snoop of yours out of my kris. He parks, or if he does, don't let him park in front of my office. It gives the place a bad name." And I told him the story. And he said, "well, when did you hit him?" I said, "well I haven't yet but it lacks half an hour of quitting time, on your recommendation I go

down and cheerfully paste him one." Well I didn't and, uh, I mean he, this snoop – I've forgotten what his name was – said, "well either you are, you are either too innocent to have lived or you're mixed up in this yourself." ...

Q: Was this an American?

TURPIN: Yes. That clown was. Yes. Anyway, that was a thoroughly unpleasant bit of business. They sent me, I only heard about it when the personnel people sent me a OF-57 or whatever the form was that said sack this guy. I called them up, said "damned if I will. You want to sack him, sack him yourself. As far as I know he hasn't done anything wrong and I'm not about to fire him." I had fired the other guy. Never could replace him. He wasn't doing much anyway, except report, we were supposed to be encouraging the Germans to have town meetings and what they call "associations of citizens" and they were supposed to be ginning up grass-roots something or other. I told them at Viesbaaden, that's silliest thing I ever heard of. There's no problem getting the Germans to talk. They will do that without end.

Um, the guy that I sacked had reported more of these meetings that never took place than you would believe possible. So they naturally, Viesbaaden, wanted to know why the number had actually dropped off. I said "because I'm only reporting things that actually took place." Well they didn't believe that for a minute, of course.

Q: The meetings being?

TURPIN: Well local things. School teachers would usually get them together. And they would, I don't know, complain about something or other. I can't remember. I used to go to the wretched things and remember clearly having my ears deafened by (German), a brass band. It was a small school. And the Germans never heard of playing less than all nineteen versus of anything. And then they would sing all nineteen versus. It was all rather tough. On the other hand, when I went up to Hesshousen, Holshouen, one of them was a so called Musterdorf, a model village, had been from time immemorial. And the other one was where this, uh, Fritz, anyway, my Sudeten German friend lived and ran the school. And his wife was the most marvelous preparer of (German) that I ever ran into in my life and would get furious with us if we came up without notice. Not because we were going to find out anything but because she didn't' have two days to fix the (unintelligible German). So we were very careful with our advance notice.

Anyway,on the fifteenth of August 1951 I was called off to go to Munich, where I was assigned, refugee, DP visas. Now, anything you want to ask about that episode?

Q: In Munich?

TURPIN: Yes. In Biedenkoff.

Q: Oh, in Beidenkoff. Well by this time, what was your reading on the former Nazis? You

know, they had the fraggables and all that sort of thing. Had the Nazi party at all taken deep root there or were these simple people who said "okay, this is the next phase..."

TURPIN: I think probably both. Biedenkoff, if I remember correctly, voted ninety-seven percent in favor of the Nazis in the last election they had. But whether they knew what they were doing or not is another question. They didn't have any refugees in those days. Meant there was really nobody who could read and write, practically speaking, in the kris. Wwhen I got there there was a big upset going on because theAmerican courts were trying some German war criminals, and had tried them and convicted them and they were now going through the appeals process. And the German line on this was, you waited too long to do anything. Well the only reason there was any wait was because they were exhausting the opportunities given them under American law. This was not a thing you could get through the German head very easily.

We did have an election while I was there, which led to one of the most flagrant cases of apparently mistaken and self-interested reporting that I ever ran into. The SPD was campaigning very strongly on the principle of "ona-mee" (ponetic), without "mee." We were trying to get the Germans to re-arm. Our official line was, we did not, it wasn't up to us to say, but if the Germans wanted to re-arm, they could. Anyway, this was due, the CBU candidate was an agricultural official well known throughout the kris and well beloved. And the SPD guy was some parachutist from I don't know where. Anyway, the SPD duly carried Hesse, including Beidenkoff, and there was a meeting of resident officers in Viesbaaden the next day and I was standing around yakking with my colleagues and they all agreed that it was "ona-mee" that had elected the SPD.

A dispatch went out from Frankfurt saying that "ona-mee" had nothing to do with it. It was the social program of the SPD that had won the election for them. Well, that would have made more sense if there had been any SPD program. Anyway, we all agreed, standing around, that this was absolute BS. Went back to the kris and I happened to have a meeting of my forum leaders that night and they all said, "what's the matter with you guys?" I said, "what do you mean?" "Well everybody knows it was "ona-mee." And why do you, this was of course in the newspapers, comments of the high commissioner and what not. I said, "well I don't know. I tell you one thing. Our policy is that if you want to re-arm, we can't stop you. But I'm concerned, I never want to see a German with a helmet or a gun in his hand unless its across the sights of an M-1 rifle." And they said, "what's the matter with you, we are good soldiers." I said, "you certainly are. But if I go into battle with an Englishman, a Norwegian, a Dutchman, and I'll take a Frenchman and I'll take the Belgians on faith, then I know that we know what it's all about. If you guys are there, I know we don't." That I did not report.

Q: Well, when you went to Munich, what was the setup? Were you part of the consulate general?

TURPIN: Yes.

Q: Who was the consul general?

TURPIN: It was Sam Woods when I got there. Husband to Minnie Bush Woods of Anheiser Bush fame. He was relieved fairly soon after I got there by Charlie Thayer, who was one of the real professionals.

Q: He was a Russian expert?

TURPIN: He was.

Q: Well then, how did the refugee program fit within the consulate general operation?

TURPIN: We had a branch office out at the Fookazama and there were about – I don't know – eight or ten vice consuls. Most of them just staff people, I think. There was one FSO who was in charge. And there were others. I forget exactly who was there. And we processed visas. And, the, when the stuff came in, it started off...

Q: This was part of the displaced persons program?

TURPIN: Yes, this was the DP. But mostly, by the time I got there, we were down to ethnic Germans. Back at the Fookazama. And they, oh yes, we were presented in each case with a dossier which surprised me by being headed "religion." I said, what in the world is that? And they go, well, my interpreter was a Bavarian Roman Catholic who had been raised in West Prussia and had been tutor, or governess, in her youth to the children of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and Sophie Koltax. Well, she said, "oh, it's perfectly simple. It says their nationality. If they're Roman Catholic, they're Polish. If they're Orthodox, then they're Ukrainian," or something like that. But the main thing is what organization is going to look after them. And if they're Jewish, Hias, and so on.

Q: Orthodox, Tolstoy foundation and uh...

TURPIN: Actually it was the Lutherans, mainly.

Q: Wow. But Lutheran...

TURPIN: Church World Service.

Q: Church world service, yes.

TURPIN: And the Catholic one of course, they had theirs.

Q: National Catholic Foundation or some... I can't remember. Anyway but...

TURPIN: They were the people who were actually handling the refugees. And theoretically, according to this questionnaire "the careful investigation which has been

made into the background" bla bla bla bla bla "of the applicant by the displaced persons commission." Well they never saw anybody. The first time any of these refugees ever saw an American was us. And so we had to do, basically, all the stuff. Find out whether they were ex-Nazis or otherwise objectionable and eventually give them a visa, which we mostly did.

And the climax of this was New Year's Eve 1951 when the DP commission dumped on us all the really smelly cases they had. I mean people who'd been fairly high ranking Nazis. They thought they'd push it, we didn't get to go to the bathroom. It was so crowded in that barracks that you couldn't get through the mobs.

Q: Well, was it that the program ended on...

TURPIN: Yes, yes, for the DPs, yes.

Q: I was with the refugee relief program and I remember we ended up with those. In fact we had issued visas and then interviewed them after the time. I mean, it was one of these...

TURPIN: Well, we didn't do that. But we did, we didn't have an awful lot of time to do any of this stuff. But we had BDC – Berlin Document Center – checks on a lot of them. And, well one guy, that New Year's Eve, had Polish credentials that were impeccable as you could possibly want to see. And he's, after I got through writing my name, he said "does mean I got a visa?" And I said "yes." Then he said, "I want to tell you the truth. I am an first lieutenant in the Russian Army. My name is so-and-so." And, uh, I just, he didn't want to get shipped back...

Q: Of course not. He would have been shot.

TURPIN: Would have. Or sent to Siberia in a summer uniform, which is the same thing. More uncomfortable, probably. Anyway, we had a perfectly hellish night. I can tell you that. But I think we did not let any obviously smelly cases through in spite of the fact that it was the last minute.

Well, after that the pressure was off somewhat and we did ethnic Germans. And it was rather hard on occasion when you had to turn a mother down who's had a son who was serving in the American army. But she was Russian. And married to a German, which did not meet any of the criteria set forth in the act. I felt [terrible],but what could you do? And I had one guy who was obviously ethnic German but he was born in Bulgaria because his father was stationed there. And he didn't count. So all you could do was be thorough going bureaucratic.

Anyway, I got pulled off of that about the time Charlie Thayer got there. I think July of 51. And Thayer, I want to say, he was a marvelous boss and a marvelous fellow. Extremely fond of him. A real pro. Assassinated, of course, because Chip Bohlen was his

brother-in-law. And the Eisenhower crowd couldn't get Bohlen, so they got Thayer because he'd had a Russian mistress in Vienna during the war. And so on. I had just gotten to the consulate and I was told, okay, you've got todo a certain amount of administrative stuff like the price index and the other stuff... oh, evacuation plan and so on. Thayer came in and said, "now when are you going to get off that stuff and start doing political reporting?" I said, "well, as soon as I can." He said, "well do it right away. I want you to get to work."

Well ,one thing that amused me greatly was this evacuation plan, which was something of a farce because we knew perfectly well that the Russians weren't going to wait while we evacuated. Nor was our army, which was occupying officers clubs and commissaries and strung out in a line from the Adriatic to the Baltic, they weren't going to stop a troop of Polish boy scouts, let alone the Russian army. They know besides that, there was never any reason why the Russians should invade Western Germany, as they did not wish to inherit a bunch of smoking ruins, which we could quite easily do. And the army kept coming out with, or the defense department, with stuff about how if we don't have this that and the other by 1955 the Russians will invade. And of course we'd start in 54 and 55 and so on. And they never did anything effective to stop the Russians, anyway.

The only thing that I could do with this evacuation was make sure that the names were up to date and deal with the marine guard detachment which we had just acquired. The NCO in charge was a master gunnery sergeant with so many hash marks they practically had to run them up around his elbow. He had every decoration the marine post got except the CMH.

Q: Congressional Medal of Honor?.

TURPIN: Yes. So I went down and said, "well gunny, what do I do for you guys?" He though for a while and he said, "I don't know. I guess I hold this consulate general until the consul general tells me to secure, and then we go out and relieve a division of the army." There were eight of them. And he wasn't joking. And I didn't take it as a joke.

Anyway, I got off of that and went to doing political reporting. And I must say I had a great time. My boss, immediate boss, was a Harvard labor type named Bill Nothy. And he had the SBD, mostly. And I had the rest, mostly. So I had a very, very nice German newspaper reporter working for us, I said, frau whatever her name was, I can't remember now, fix me up with lunches with everybody I ought to know, which she proceeded to do. One of em' was the head of the secret police of Bavaria, a marvelous man, who sent me a wedding invitation when he was about a hundred. And his mother was his hostess.

Q: You were saying you arranged a series of luncheons...

TURPIN: Yes, and I had some of these people to dinner. One night, CSU representative in the legislature – I was supposed to cover the legislature – and his wife, and Dr. Kanine and his mother. Now I don't think anybody else was there or not, but we gave them a

dinner. Next day he called up my German friend and said, “I don’t know where that boy found out as much about music and what-not as he knows, but I want to have lunch with him once a week.” And he would then proceed to spill his guts. He did tell me a good bit that I wasn’t supposed to know, I’m sure.

And then there was a blond secretary of the SBD who, I don’t know how I got to know him, but he was very pleasant. I remember having a beer with him at the Lantag one afternoon, and he said, “well, of course, we know you have your intelligence organization, the British have got their organization such-and-such, the French have so also, and you have the gayland operation.” And I said, quite innocently, “what’s that all about.” He said, “oh don’t be foolish. Everybody knows you got him and got that organization.” Well Thayer had told us when he got there, said “well I’m not even supposed to know about this although I was in charge of the political section in Bonn. If you ever hear the word gayland mentioned, let me know at once.” So I duly trotted around and told him this tale and he was absolutely livid.

Anyway, about that time the CIA sponsored the Bundes Deutsche unit and ours was the Frier Deutsche unit. Anyway, it turned out the head of ours was a card-carrying member of the communist party. That they were getting training in (phrase in German) making, placing cold, a whole bunch of people, in case of an invasion. The leading name on the list was that of Dr. Wilhelm Honer, minister of the interior, whom we had brought back from Switzerland in 45 and made prime minister of Bavaria. Well Hegner was understandably outraged and he put out the word, you talk to nobody from the consulate general but me. Well I never laid eyes on him. I can only assume Dr. Kanine had told him something or, more probably, he had me mixed up with my boss, Bill Nothy, who had had a lot of connection with the SBD.

Anyway, I told Thayer this and he said, “get him over here.” And Thayer had set up a lunch room, or dining room, in the consulate. And I never heard anybody talk to anybody harder than he worked on Herdner. And at the end of that time, Herdner was at least pacified. Later on Kanine told me, every time he told me about any raids that his people – he was the head of the (German) “protection of the constitution” – and he would send his people, and every time there was anything sensitive Thayer would tell me and I would tell him and he would call it off. Which was quite useful.

And one time, over lunch, he told me that he had to go, the next week, to Frankfurt, a big meeting of all the landt (German) people. And I said, fine, and I duly reported this. We sent a cable that said we would appreciate it if consulate general Frankfurt would find out about all this. And they, “what are you talking about, we don’t even know that it exists.” So when Herger came back, I mean Kanine came back, I asked him what went on and I duly reported it to Frankfurt with great pride. They couldn’t find out but I could. And I really think I had that place pretty well wired for sound, mainly because the Germans were so busy stooling on each other. .

Q: B*y the time you got there,. what was our concern at that time? Was it communists or*

was it Nazis?

TURPIN: Oh, communists. We were also very much concerned and rammed through the lantaag (German) a bill compensating the Jewish victims of the holocaust. And I did my duty. And it was duly passed, but not because I had anything to do with it. But mainly we were worried about communists. I made a trip one time up to northern Bavaria, Nuremberg, and what not. Got back and discovered that this weekly secret intelligence report put out by the CIC which had rated C-3 a report that I had been visiting people in Nuremberg and other places. And I called the guy that ran it and said, "well look, I don't know why you need to have C-3 if you wanted...

Q: C-3 is a way of saying whether it is confirmed or... it's a rating system?

TURPIN: Yes. The "C" is for probably true and the "3" is for reliable source or the other way around. Not even get it from the horse's mouth, if they want it. Well he said, "we have to use our own system." Their system included left wing parties, communists, and social democrats and as well as right wing parties except the CSU.

Q: Which was the Bavarians, uh, Christian Democratic.

TURPIN: Yes. Oh, there were lots of funny things in that period. I don't know how much you want..

Q: Did you feel at all or see the repercussions of McCarthyism at this point?

TURPIN: Only, I guess after I left. When I got to Belgrade I discovered that, what was that woman's name that was one of the head squealers, Massy, is that right?

Q: I can't remember.

TURPIN: Something like that anyway. She had reported that I had made remarks at a party suggesting that I agreed with the policies of the president and the secretary of state. Of course she didn't put it that way. And the charge in Belgrade called me – this was right after I got there – and said "what about all this?" And I said, "certainly I did. Am I to be crucified because I defended the secretary of state and the president of the United States?" He said, "don't be stupid. They won't do anything." And they didn't. But, I don't think anybody was, I can't remember that anybody was terribly lathered up about McCarthyism then. That came later.

Thayer was worried about communist infiltration into Bavaria or anywhere else, as far at that goes. He was duly concerned – I don't know that he was as concerned as I was – about the malseys and what not. But they buried Cardinal Phalhopper and I remember watching the funeral procession from the second floor of the consulate. And there were all these border guards in field gray uniforms with shovel helmets. I thought, uh oh, this I did not like to see. It seems to have worked out all right, somehow. But I certainly was

wrong about where they were going.

Q: Well when you left there, your feeling was that there might be a fourth Reich or the equivalent thereof?

TURPIN: Yes. I certainly thought there was plenty of people in favor of it. Well, it was mostly German nationalism. They were good patriots. I never had any serious discussions about the war, war crimes, any of that sort of thing. Their line, to me at least, always was they were just good soldiers doing what they were told. But they were quite proud in Munich of that brother and sister pair.

Q: The white rose.

TURPIN: Yes. That thing. And I can't remember the name of the boy and girl.

Q: I can't remember. This was a group of students who were guillotined.

TURPIN: Oh, were they? I didn't know what happened to them. I thought they were shot. But anyway, they were certainly executed in very short order.

Q: I saw a German movie on them.

TURPIN: Oh, well, I didn't know that or I would have been even more horrified. They certainly hadn't come to terms with the war but they certainly didn't think they had won it. I mean everybody who thinks that unconditional surrender was a terrible policy ought to remember that it was very difficult to deal with.

Q: This was no stab in the back.

TURPIN: No. Absolutely not. They did contend that their equipment and their soldiers were better than ours. Which was probably true.

Q: Well, individually, but in mass, no.

TURPIN: We just had more tanks. And they had better tanks. We had more of them.

Q: Yes.

TURPIN: And this was more or less what professor Niall Ferguson of Jesus College Oxford has said in his book about the, what's he call it, the horror of war, the tragedy of war, something like that. And I wrote him and I said, "you know, you remind me of the late General Robert Toombs of Georgia who was addressing an election crowd after the [civil] war and somebody said, "general, you said we could lick those Yankees with corn stalks." And Toombs replied, "I did and we could have, but they wouldn't fight us with corn stalks." And that seemed to me... I mean according to Fergusson, the Germans were

better at every point, including mobilization, which I don't think is right. I think the British did a much better job of mobilizing their economy for war. .

Q: Yes. Then you went to Yugoslavia. You were in Yugoslavia from when to when?

TURPIN: From March of 1952 to December of 55.

Q: You went to Belgrade. What were you doing there?

TURPIN: Economic officer.

Q: What was the situation? You were there at a very interesting time.

TURPIN: Indeed. Theoretically everybody kept saying then that Tito had defied the common form and had left the communist block voluntary. Well he didn't. He was thrown out kicking and screaming. But they were trying, we had a tri-partite relationship, the British, French and Americans, mostly American money, and a fairly large - I don't know what the aid mission called itself in those days, but it was one of those things - headed by an ex-trade union organizer from the State of Washington, whose assistant was an economics professor who sat proudly behind a desk which had a huge sign on it saying "E.A.J. Johnson, Chief Advisor to the Government of Korea." And I've always thought it a remarkable achievement that the Koreans managed to get themselves back on their feet in spite of the advice of Dr. Johnson, which I'm sure they never took.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

TURPIN: Jamie Ruberbaker came out while I was there, with his Dutch Indonesian wife. They were real pros, both of them, and just terrific. Great fun to work for and ran a good ship.

Q: How did he operate? From what you were seeing, did he have much contact with Tito...

TURPIN: Oh, yes. Yes. And particularly the foreign minister. And he said, his wife learned Serbo-Croat, tried to anyhow, I don't know how far she got. She started and she probably did very well at. And he said, he'd always, he was very sorry he didn't have time to do it, but Tito spoke perfectly good German and the foreign minister spoke perfectly good French, so it'd just be a waste of my time. That's I think who he operated with most of the time. And, I don't know what he did ; I was down at the grass roots level.

Q: Wasthe embassy an apartment building?

TURPIN: No. We had various places around, apartments and houses and what not. But it was quite well located. It was the pre-war legation as far as I know. And Belgrade was sort of a pseudo-Paris built in the late 18th, 19th century. It had its charms. The street

names were a little hard to remember. But you could always tell what the political views were of anybody you were talking to by what they called the street. If it was the Krumska, on which we later lived, the crown, then they were unreconstructed royalists. Or Servena Armina.

Q: Yes. Red Army.

TURPIN: Red Army. Then they were pro-communism. And if it was Proletoski Brigada.

Q: Proletarian Brigade.

TURPIN: Yes. Proletarian Brigade. Anyhow, we did live out among the population, certainly. I was the only person in the embassy until just before I left who could really speak Serbian. .

Q: Where did you pick up your Serbian?

TURPIN: In Serbia, mostly. I had a week or so at the Foreign Service Institute, which did nothing but convince me that I could speak Serbo-Croat, which I couldn't. But I went on doing it anyhow.

Q: Did you have an instructor while you were there?

TURPIN: Yes. I had a very nice lady whose husband represented Gone with the Wind. Margaret Mitchell. She was a very attractive half-Hungarian, I guess half-Serb, I don't know. Terrific lady and a very good teacher. And I had lessons every day....

Q: Was that Ms. Anjelitch?

TURPIN: Of course it was. Yes.

Q: Oh, yes. Well, she was an institution, with George Kennan and with everyone else. She was a delightful and very strong.

TURPIN: She was very, very good indeed. The only thing I can remember that she ever did wrong, if I can use that term, was that as you know Serbian has two letters for "tch," one of which is the one that ends up "petrovitch" and the other one is "chashakup." And there's a similar thing with the "dj" (pronounced "dee jay"). Most of the dj words of the second kind are Moslem or Turkish and the other ones perfectly normal Serbian. I could never, never, never tell the difference. And Ms. Anjelitch always swore that I was making it, which I've always assumed meant she was hearing what she expected to hear. Anyway, she was great. I had a two good Serbian economists working for me, both of whom spoke pretty good English. And one was the son of the guy that old man Seeton Watson said was the best pre-war Soviet politician in the bunch, name of Stoyanovitch. And his wife was an extremely attractive lady who labored for Radio Belgrade, and was the source of

some of my better Yugoslav stories.

Q: How was the Yugoslavian economy at that point?

TURPIN: Terrible. They at least had knocked off forced collectivization. We were feeding them. And we were equipping their army, navy and, such as it was, air force. And, generally speaking, we were keeping their heads above water. They hadn't the faintest idea, [but] I was an economic officer, so my main interest at least was reporting on how they were running the place. And the problem with that was they hadn't a clue. Just about the time we got there, Boris Kidrich, a Slovene, who was their economic, supposedly their economic brains, died. And after that they didn't have anybody who could even pretend to work out a theory of what they were doing. So they went off on this workers self-management kick, which was kind of the backbone of what they were doing. But they'd revise their economic system every six months. Without the dimmest notion of what they were doing.

On the other hand they would tell you. I mean, you'd go talk to somebody and he would say, "well so and so." "Yes, I know, I read that in the paper this morning. Now what's really going on?" "Oh, that's quite different," he would say, and tell you. The only place, I could go anywhere I wanted to, except the Belgrade city waterworks. I could not make that one. I've forgotten why I wanted to go there.

And I paid a visit to their aircraft factory and asked as I always did, the director if I could see around the place. He said, "no. We have to get permission. But don't worry about it." He said, "your attaches have been all over this place." And I said, "well what I'm interested in is how this works under the new system." "Oh," he said, "that's quite different. I can tell you that." And did. So I think as far as anybody knew, understood that system, I did.

One time they had one of their revisions and my boss came in and said, "have you read this thing." And I said, "yes. And I read it in the paper and I read in the joint translation service and I went over it with Stoyanovitch." "Do you understand it?" I said, "no." He said, "what do you propose to do about this." "Well, I'll have Merial call up the guy who wrote it and see if I can come talk to him." So I had a secretary who was, just, in many ways, absolutely brilliant. And she said, "yes, come over about six o'clock this afternoon or some such time." And I went to the assistant secretary for the economy and we sat and I'd say "well now this appears to me..." He'd say, "yes, by golly it does, doesn't it. We don't want that." Now how would say... We sat there for several hours.

Q: Well, this is one of the problems when you would read speeches because of the jargon. You would read (unintelligible name) and come out not knowing what the hell they were talking about because it was filled with jargon.

TURPIN: And it was sort of quasi-Marxist jargon and quasi-God knows what.

Q: Yes.

TURPIN: As I said, I am firmly persuaded they didn't know what they were doing and were looking for something that would be socialist but not socialist. And that's not all that easy. And not capitalist, of course. Not all that easy to figure out, especially if you were missing Boris Kidrich, who would have said something, whether it made any sense or not.

Q: What were you picking up as you talked about attitude towards the Soviet Union at that time?

TURPIN: Well, you didn't get the impression that anybody felt strongly, was warmly in favor of it. I think Djilas' summary in Conversations with Stalin is, as far as I know, more or less what everybody thought. And it is true that every Serb that you talked to was anti-government. It was said that the communists were all Croats. And the Croats said they were all Serbs. And we were just having pre-war Yugoslavia all over again. I don't think there was enough ideological anything. I don't think they were unfriendly towards Americans. Not individually anyway. And as far as I could make out, not as they later became, hostile to every active policy we followed. I don't think that was a big deal. And you would certainly, when I went to Moscow I thought I could do what I had done in Serbia and I couldn't. I mean in Yugoslavia. You couldn't get around and in Yugoslavia you could. I mean Murial would just call up. I was civil air attaché, labor attaché, church attaché, among other things. And whatever was going on, I did. My immediate boss was an extremely great fellow, but he was much more of an economist and he concentrated on the numbers. And I concentrated on trotting around.

Q: Did you cover all of Yugoslavia, including Croatia and Slovenia?

TURPIN: I wanted to travel a lot more than I did, but it was centralized, there was no two ways about that. I did go to Zaghreb several times, to Trieste, which of course was not part of it, and to Ljubljana, Split and Sarajevo. But I never did any of the tourism I wanted to do.

Q: Did you get down to Skopja in Macedonia?

TURPIN: No. Landed there once but I didn't do anything. No, I was busy in Belgrade most of the time and would go out on trips when I could.

Q: Were we trying to get trade opportunities either way?

TURPIN: Yes. Not very hard. But I mean, you know, they didn't have much to export. And they would import anything they could pay for. So there wasn't a great – there was a problem, because the Germans kept insisting that we prefer American. And we took the line that even though the German stuff was cheaper, ours was better, which I never exactly believed, but, anyway, that was the German complaint, and the French to some

extent, that we were favoring American manufactures over Europeans.

And we did get them in touch with the army. They were buying beef and selling shell casings, which led to one of the most interesting encounters I had. Fellow came into my office one morning at the crack of dawn because I worked seven to two. He said, "look," he said, "I'm in a terrible jam. I don't know what you can do to get me out of it. I've got a client who is a scoundrel. He is in the scrap business and if you're not a scoundrel you wouldn't be in the scrap metal business. And we have got a very sticky problem with the Yugoslavs. Will you come with me and talk to them?" And I said "sure" and went over there. "Now these 1-05, I think they were howitzer shells that you sold us from the army of Germany." The guys said, "yes, that's right" – this was before they got onto the thing they were arguing at us. Said, "well" and threw out a bunch of pictures and they had these damn things ready to go into an open hearth and the Americans had not removed the explosives.

Q: Oh God.

TURPIN: That set the conversation off on a pretty unfortunate basis. The guy, the lawyer, was very complementary of my efforts afterwards, but I don't think there was much anybody could do about that one.

Q: The nationality divisions exploded during the 1990s. But how about at that point? How did we see the situation?

TURPIN: We thought Tito had it under control and I think we were right. Now, somebody at DACOR about four or five months ago…

Q: This is a retired foreign service club.

TURPIN: Yes, DACOR – Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired. This guy was a lecturer at I believe GW (George Washington University) and they had a class and they invited other people to come in. He was going to talk about Yugoslavia. He was an Austrian. When he was there, he said that in the early '90s, there was no ethnic animosity at all, that Tito had wiped all these ethnic divisions out and they were just steamed up by agitators. Well, that's as pure a bunch of baloney as I've ever heard in my life. Tito suppressed it. But one thing you could not get away with, as far as I could tell, was making any nationalistic remarks. You could be as nasty as you wanted to be about the Shiftars, which is what they called Kosovars.

Q: Yes, Albanian Shiftars is a pejorative name.

TURPIN: Well it's the Albanian name for themselves, Spetaki.

Q: Yes, but used by the...

TURPIN: Well, all of them, Slovenes, Croats. They were street sweepers and regarded with...

Q: But, I'm trying to go back to the time you were there. We felt the situation was pretty much under control. I was there in the 60s and we knew there were problems but thought these people where too civilized to go in for ethnic cleansing or whatever you want to call it.

TURPIN: That's right. We did. It just, in the 50s, it didn't come up. Nobody was going to bring it up with you. There just wasn't any hassle. It was just not one of the things you talked about. Djilas' difficulties, of course, were. I was in the Skupshtina the night...

Q: Skupshtina being the national assembly.

TURPIN: Yes. The night that Djilas was deprived of his member ship of the Savo River Fishing Club. He had other troubles that were much more severe. And I think, I still think, he's one of the great figures of the 20th century. And if he had, well if he had, who knows? But, that was of course a big... he published of course that article (recites name in Yugoslavian) Anatomy of Morals in which he took the Yugoslav parties, particularly their wives, to task for being nasty to one another. Everything. He thought they were corrupt. They were all riding around in Mercedes and just making a good thing about it. And in particular the resented the atmosphere of their wives, most of whom were old partisans, to the wife of the chief of general staff, who was an ex-movie actress. And they were very severe on her, apparently, for not having participated in the war, when she was about thirteen. And that caused a considerable stink. And I am pretty sure. I am absolutely sure, that a guy I was talking to on the train to Trieste one time was his brother, who was a prominent atomic physicist.

Well, it was an unpleasant time because, well, it's hard to talk about politics in Yugoslavia. You certainly can't divide them up between liberals and conservatives or any other normal [division]. I don't think there was enough loyalty to the communist party or to, really, Yugoslavia – I mean after all King Alexander said "I'm the only Yugoslav" business and Tito more or less repeated the remark later on – in fact it's true. They were Serbs. They were Croats. They tried to make Macedonia into a separate nationality. And there was a professor of Macedonian from Harvard who appeared in my office on one occasion and I think he was the only person outside of Macedonia who thought there was such a thing as Macedonia.

Q: Well, this would enrage the Greeks and enrage the Bulgarians...

TURPIN: And the Serbs. Because they all fought two wars to get it. And they told me – I don't know if it's true or not – that in the good old commie tachi that what they made out of committee, and these were bomb chunkers and people who remembered the vido don uprising of I think 1904 when, and they told me that every family in Macedonia had a Greek, a Serbian, a Bulgarian and a Macedonian nationalist among the brothers. So that

which ever one won, the family farm stays intact.

Q: When you left there in 55, wither Yugoslavia and your feelings?

TURPIN: Well we thought, I mean I think everybody thought, it was, with our help, pretty well on... certainly the standard of living had risen in those two years. Agriculture was doing better. Indeed, they were developing some industry, some expertise. Nobody would have bought shares in it. But I think everybody thought that things were on the up and up.

Q: What other things did you notice at the time? I certainly notice that people who serve in Yugoslavia – I'm talking about American Foreign Service people – feel a certain kinship to the Yugoslavs. I mean, it turned into somewhat of a Yugoslav mafia which, in a way, sort of hindered us when we had to deal with the breakup, I think.

TURPIN: Well, it hindered us because the ambassador, I think, because Ambassador Zimmerman and most of his crowd were so, so pro-Croat. They hated the Serbs. They ignored 600 years of Serbian history. The only thing anybody ever talked about was Kosovo. And I grant you that if you went out in the sticks in my day and were talking to a peasant and said something about Kosovo, yes, you were in the family. But, they never, we never mentioned the two Balkan wars, the Congress of Berlin, the Bosnian crisis of 19-something, any of that stuff. All of which convinced the Serbs that – not to mention World War 1 – that A) the west was against them, and B) they certainly wouldn't do anything to help them. And that they had been done in time and time again by the great powers.

Q: Well then, 55, where'd you go?

TURPIN: Back here to do Russian language and area.

Q: For what, a year or two?

TURPIN: No. It was six months here. Then they sent me to Oxford to do my academic year. It was an experiment and they asked me how I felt about it and I said "terrible mistake." As my tutor wrote, "we can't turn you down if we want to because you are a senior member of the university and you can come back any time that you want to." And I said that "it'll take any normal person at least a year to find out where the libraries are and how to work them." I thought it was fine for me but no good for just an ordinary American who hadn't been there before.

Q: Well, was there an attitude towards the Soviet Union in the University at Oxford when you were doing this, because one thinks of the...

TURPIN: 60s.

Q: Well, going back earlier, to the Soviet Union and the academic infatuation with communism. Was that gone by the time you got there?

TURPIN: Probably not, but I didn't hear very much about it for fairly obvious reasons. No, and what nobody wants to admit is the undercurrent – if that's the right word – of anti-Americanism, based on jealousy, a lot of it, the British feel it. They don't like us, basically. The father of one of my wife's good friends, been up at Lady Margaret Hall with Audrey, was a Cannon Presento of Chichester Cathedral, a wonderful man, and he said, one time, he said something about Americans, this that and the other. And I said, "well I don't really think that applies." And he said, "oh, I'm not talking about you. You're an honorary Englishman." I said, "Oh, Cannon Brown Wilkinson, that one don't wash."

But I think they were perfectly willing to make an exception. American. At Oriel, there were certainly no feelings against Americans that I ever found out about. Now maybe there was. But I had good friends and it seemed to me that I was perfectly well accepted into the college society. But there is no doubt, well for one thing, when I was an undergraduate, there was a very strong socialist – I mean in the sense of labor party – feeling in the college.

And I remember the morning they nationalized the steel industry, I guess it was. And all my left wing friends were just jubilant. I said, "what earthly difference do you think this is going to make?" They said, "what do you mean?" I said, "well, you're exchanging government bonds for shares of stock. But you're not doing anything about the organization of the industry. And I don't see what difference it makes." Well they thought it made a big difference. But it didn't, obviously. I mean they were just as doctrinaire about nationalizing as Margaret Thatcher was about privatizing. And it seems to me with equally little grounds in both cases.

Q: You served in Moscow from when to when?

TURPIN: August of 56 to August of 58.

Q: Who was the ambassador at that time?

TURPIN: Chip Bohlen the first year and Tommy Thompson (Llewellyn E. Thompson) the second.

Q: Two solid professionals.

TURPIN: Oh, the last ones we had, I think.

Q: What was the state, in 56,of relations with the United States.

TURPIN: Well, remember this was just after the 20th party congress and Khrushchev's

secret speech and all that. I didn't have anything much to do with the government's relations. We were carefully, unlike Yugoslavia where you could go where you wanted and talk to who you pleased, it was very, very difficult to do that on any continuing basis in the Soviet Union. I had this terribly frustrated feeling the whole time I was there that here, within a half mile of here, were people that know the answers to all the questions that I would like to ask, like how do you run this planning system.

Q: You were an economic officer?

TURPIN: Yes. Consular first year and then economic officer, but I was doing both most of the time.

Q: When did you arrive there? What time of the year?

TURPIN: August 56.

Q: Well, then you were there during two major things in October, the Hungarian revolution and the Suez crisis.

TURPIN: Yes. And Sputnik.

Q: And Sputnik. Well, let's start with the Hungarian revolution, because this was when the Soviets put their troops and crushed the Hungarians. What was happening in Moscow at the time, from your point of view?

TURPIN: I don't think much of anything. The British had withdrawn all of their military people to do Suez. We had a Hungarian assistant, or an assistant attaché of Hungarian origin. And we sat around a good bit talking about what we ought to do. And I remember going out after church one Sunday and thinking out what we should do. Got back and got into the bull session, which we of course know was being taped. We thought that was a good thing.

And I said, "well I figured out what I think we ought to do. I think we should send Bohlen to the Kremlin, tell them 'we ain't going to reach for big one unless you do. If you do, we'll wipe you out. Meanwhile, get those pungos of yours out of Hungary or we're moving in.'" And the air attaché, who was one of the most brilliant officers I ever knew, of any sort, Tom Wolfe, he says, "just one problem with that." I said, "what's that Tom?" He says, "well I've just come back from a trip to Germany and I can assure you that our troops are in no condition to go anywhere." I said, "well, that sort of puts [an end] to that one, doesn't it."

But I don't know what the people on the street in Moscow were thinking.

Q: Was there a cut off of contacts, or... ?

TURPIN: You didn't have any contacts to cut off. [At least they didn't] amount to anything. I mean, I still doubled the consular section of the foreign office. And that was that and nobody ever mentioned it. It was no place where you mixed with people.

Q: What sort of work were you doing in the consular section?

TURPIN: Trying to get Americans and Russian relatives of Americans out, which we mostly didn't. We were expatriating a fair number of them. And some of it was rather interesting to see these old files which they shipped out to us with expatriations paper signed by Bohlen, Thompson, Thayer and whatnot when they were in Estonia or Latvia or wherever it was they were in the 30s. And I had a slight hair pulling with Virginia, or whatever her name was, in SOB – she was doing all that stuff – because they kept [saying] "don't you want to reconsider expatriating so and so?" And I said, "well, they were expatriated in 1923 for excessive residence abroad and I hardly see that another thirty years of the same, you know, cuts any ice. And they ain't going to get out on an American passport anyway. The Soviets will never recognize that they have American citizenship. And indeed they will say loudly 'this person is not an American citizen as the Embassy'" – we were sending notes all the time asking about this, that and the other – and they would always say that "this is not an American citizen but a Soviet citizen. And one time they sent one back saying 'this is not an American citizen but a stateless person.'" And I went to Thompson and said, "look, I think you can bitch about this to the foreign office. They have a perfect right to say that somebody is a Soviet citizen. They may be wrong, but they've got a legitimate basis for saying so. But they got no basis for saying that somebody can't be an American citizen and they say he hasn't got any status at all." And he wouldn't do it, probably rightly. Wouldn't have gotten us anywhere.

Q: We've all been in those arguments. Were you dealing with people who were trying to get back who left the United States in the 30s, got enthralled with communism and went there and then said "oh God, let's get out of here, and then they got trapped."

TURPIN: Well, I think most of them could have gotten out in the 30s if they wanted to. But after the war, they couldn't. There were a couple of people whose names I've forgotten – Ike was one of them – who'd been in our consulate in Vladivostok and they had him in a concentration camp. Because they were letting a lot of people out of concentration camps in these days.

Q: Yes. Khrushchev had a program for that. Yes.

TURPIN: Yes. And they were showing up at the embassy. Talking about people who went there and wanted to go back, there was a couple by the name of Imshanitski – this was after I was out of the consular business – they threw a rock over the wall of the catholic church and said they were in trouble. So Ed Killum, who took my place as consul, got me out and we went down and met with them, including one occasion on Christmas, which was very helpful. Imshanitski had been thoroughly hauled on board by the Soviets during and just after the war. They promised him the earth. His wife said

"don't be a fool." If she didn't run his nose in it particularly. He had diabetes and couldn't get medicine. He had a terrible time. They wouldn't let him go stay in Moscow. It was a real mess. And Ed and I decided that if the Soviets really wanted better relations they would keep Imshanitski there. If they wanted to really make us mad they would turn him loose, which they eventually did. And we had to issue them, no, I guess we "visa'd" their Soviet passports. That's was what we usually did if anybody got out. We'd visa the Soviet passports, even if they were American citizens. And after they got to Copenhagen, they'd be get handed an American passport.

But we had very few of that. There were hundreds, must have been hundreds of people applying, saying they wanted to get Aunt Suzie out, they hadn't seen her since 1948. And there was a form called a "wizoff" that you had to have. An invitation from somebody in America, signed by the Secretary of State of the state and then endorsed by the Secretary of State of the United States. And they'd send it off to us and the Soviets would say "no." So you did have the feeling this was kind of a futile operation. We did get some of them out. It's true. But not any large number.

Q: Were you looking at the economy?

TURPIN: Trying to.

Q: There, I assume you really weren't able to get out and do much.

TURPIN: Not much. I was allowed contact with this economic section of the academy of sciences. Some bird that I met – I don't even remember how I met up with him – but he was supposed to be in the academy of sciences working on Latin America. And he asked me if I could get any material about American imperialism in Latin America. And I said, "I don't know, but I'll try." And I wrote the state department and INR duly sent out a bunch of Spanish language stuff which I duly handed over to this guy. And in 68, when they wanted me on the Balkan economic desk, this gumshoe interrogated me at great lengthy about "didn't you know this guy was a KGB agent." I said "nope. I assumed he was approved. I didn't know if he was an agent or not." "Well, didn't you hand him some materials." I said, "I sure did." He says, "what were they about?" I said, "I haven't the faintest idea. They were in Spanish, which I don't read. But they were sent to me by INR, so I assume they were innocuous." Anyway, that was a very unpleasant set of interviews. But just gumshoes being gumshoes.

But they did set me up occasionally appointments at the academy of sciences. And I was working very hard on what was called "the price question," which was a big thing in Soviet publications. They were trying to figure out how to set prices, which they didn't know. And in fact there isn't any good answer to it that I know. But I did talk to the author of at least one book who told me that 1956 was the first time a Soviet statistical publication came out, it was a very thin volume indeed – he said, they'd been to, I guess to Khrushchev because Stalin was dead by that time, and said "look, we cannot just keep on grinding out this stuff without some numbers." And they eventually agreed and

published this thing and from then on, they published a fairly substantial statistical manual. Not too many of the numbers meant too much, but at least they were publishing.

And I had this long conversation with several of them about the price situation and it finally came down to this: "Look, we didn't start from nowhere. There was a price structure in place in 1928 and we have simply modified it from time to time. Otherwise we just set prices to, we think, get things done the way we want them." But of course, prices didn't mean anything anyway. It was all done by .a military system under Lenin, by a guy whose name I've forgotten, but to whom Lenin is supposed to have said, "you have studied these things with the Germans" – meaning operations and general staff – "now look into them for us."

And they did have prices and they were all a mess. I don't think anybody thinks they had the most remote idea what actually happened with production and what not. They were trying to set physical targets for everything. Which was fine in the case of coal, which worked in BTUs. Or in electricity, you worked in kilowatt hours. The story was – I never have known if it was true or not – that first they started setting targets for a nail factory in terms of weight. And the factory started producing railroad spikes. Then they put it on piece work. And they started producing carpet tacks. Then they said quality. And they started making hand hammered brass nails for decorating doors. It was also said there was only one style of shoe, men's shoe I guess they meant, for the entire Soviet Union. And we would see people lined up. They'd line up and then find out what was at the head of the line when they got there. And take it off.

Q: Our impression was that the Soviet Union was a mess, I mean economically...

TURPIN: Well it was not a mess from the point of the view of getting done what Stalin and his successors wanted, which was strengthening the defense power of the country, building up heavy industry and raising the moral and economic level of the populace. And that number three was way, way down. One thing I never saw or heard discussed very much was what the Soviet population really wanted, which was housing. It was a bloody awful mess. They were building stuff. They had a whole bunch of apartment buildings under construction on the way out to the airport. And people coming in would say, "ah, look what's going on." They didn't stay long enough to find out that those cranes were still right where they'd been a year before.

And we had visitors, the Carnegie Foundation started sending economists among other things, right at the time I got there. And they were willingly hoodwinked, as far I could make out. There was somebody that stood in my office when I had just got there and said, "well, of course, you've never been around. You don't know anything. And we see all this going on." I said, "take a look out behind this embassy and you will see people lining up to stand pipe." "Oh," he said, "well that's just propaganda." You know, they weren't about to believe anything.

Had a couple of sociologists that appeared and I took them upstairs to talk to the internal

reporting people and they were full about how "I'd met somebody on the train from where to where and they were telling me this that and the other and I'm sure this is something you've never heard of." Well my associates were too polite to say anything. I said, "yes, well that was [so and so] the day before yesterday. And by the way, what language did you do this in?" "Well, chap I was talking to happened to speak English." I'd say "happened?" They'd say, "you don't mean to say that you think that we have been hoodwinked?" "I certainly do." And that did not establish my popularity.

But I did get a call one day after I talked to these academy of sciences people. There were a couple of American economists whose names I have forgotten who were visiting and for whom I had left messages at their hotel saying I would like very much to meet with them. They didn't return. So the guy called and said, "look, we've got these two Americans coming in. Would you come sit in on the meeting?" And when they got there, they found this – because Americans don't want anything to do with the Embassy if possible. Well, okay, there is an awful lot of baloney been written about the Soviet Union, especially the economy, and particularly by the CIA, which, when I got back I discovered that where it was technical stuff like particularly ferrous metallurgy, which I knew something about, and non-ferrous metals and that kind of thing, they had people who really knew their stuff or were fired shortly thereafter. They cleaned house over there in the late 50s or early 60s. But their people of a general subject, absolutely hopeless. They of course went off to be professors of Soviet economics at the University of Virginia. They were playing games.

But when I was there, Dick Morstein from RAND found I think it was volume 4 of an official price list, which gave careful specifications for everything that that covered. And RAND had written the manufacturers of tractors and radios and all of that kind of thing and said, "what would you charge for a tractor meeting the following specifications?" And mostly they wrote back and said "we ain't made one of these things since 1925." They were obviously - even I could figure that out - heavily overweight and underpowered. And the boys were taking those statistics and adding them up, worried about the rapid expansion of Soviet ferrous metallurgy, for example. And the steel delegation, a couple of members of which I went out to Magnitogosk and we were talking to the director and the chief engineer. They wanted to know how you get such high coefficients of blast furnace use. Well what they did was to prepare the charge much more carefully than we ever did. We can't afford it. They had people out there with shovels mixing this stuff up. With the open hearths, they were preparing,. they just made all low carbon steel. The American vice president for research at U.S. Steel who was with me and knew a lot about – spoke Russian, some – and knew a lot about steel in general, he said, "no, we can't use that stuff. Everything we do is specialty steel." Broadly to interpret that. But they don't get the big, long production runs that the Soviets did. Because we were trying to do something else. And judging by that price list, I'd say that a truck or a tractor weighed at least three or four times as much as the American equivalent would. So that the fact that they were producing a hundred million tons of raw steel a year didn't mean all that much.

Q: Was the feeling at the embassy at that time, this 56 to 58 period, that the Soviets were adventurous as far as trying to do something in Western Europe? Attack Western Europe or...

TURPIN: No. If anybody ever believed that, they never said it to my hearing. No. I don't think anybody then or later thought the Soviets were going to mass divisions across the Elbe or whatever it was. Maybe, but, no, I don't think people were worried about that.

They were worried – my military friends then and later – were worried about the ability of our, however many it was divisions that we had in Germany, to do anything about it if they did. The Fulga Gap and all that. But no, I don't think anybody was expecting an attack any time.

Q: When you left there in 58, where did you go?

TURPIN: Back here.

Q: To do what?

TURPIN: Well in those days it was the office of Eastern European affairs. And I was the junior economic officer in that. And the Soviet boys were trying very hard to get a bureau of Soviet affairs set up and they didn't. But they did get a separate office. And they took my boss, who was a GS-16, not because he knew anything about the Soviet Union, which he didn't, but because it was a GS-16 slot. It left me in Eastern Europe from which I was very shortly pulled out to join the staff of the special assistant to the undersecretary for economic affairs for communist economic affairs.

Q: Who was that?

TURPIN: J. Robert Fluker. At least there was somebody else who was in charge when I got there, but he wasn't around very long. And Fluker, well that's just... I don't want to get into libelous [comments]. I can say with perfect honesty that he drove his secretary crazy. He would call her in, dictate something, take the typescript, cut it up with scissors and put it on his desk and move them around and then re-dictate and then do this and, no piece of paper from that office ever went anywhere, to the best of my knowledge.

So in due course my old friend in Moscow, Soviet Ted Elliott called me up and said, "how would you like to come over here and run the executive secretariat." I said, "I don't know anything about running an executive secretariat." I had been in a sort of rudimentary secretariat when I was an intern. But I didn't know doodly. He said, "well come anyway." So I told my boss that this was happening and, "oh, I know how to fix that," he said. Picked up the phone and called up Ted Elliott and says, "I know Ted Elliott. I can stop this nonsense." Ted told him he was terribly sorry but the Secretary was personally insisting on it. I don't think the Secretary had ever heard of me, but never mind. It worked. And I went over to the treasury.

Q: The treasury?

TURPIN: Yes. Dillon had gone from being undersecretary of economic affairs to being Secretary of the Treasury. Took Ted Elliott along with him as his special assistant. And John Leady, who was later Assistant Secretary for European affairs. Maybe a couple others. I think we were about all there was. We were charged, especially by Leady, who was leading a Soviet, a Muscaloid invasion of the treasury. I got along with Leady fine. Anyway, I went over there, as I say, knowing absolutely nothing. But fortunately, when I was an intern, there was a B-2, I think she was then, named Gene Wilson. No, that may have been her married name. I've forgotten. She married a lawyer in the State Department. Anyway, she was running the executive secretariat. I called her and said, "Gene, I've got to go over there and do this and I haven't the faintest idea what to do." She said, "well I got a guy here who will come over and help you." And he did.

The reason Dillon wanted an executive secretariat was that when he got over there he wanted to look at the offset agreement that he and the then Secretary of the Treasury had negotiated with the Germans. And Treasury didn't have it. Didn't have a copy of it. It was all in the Secretary's personal files, all of which he removed when he left office. Dillon wanted that stuff there. He was very much embarrassed to have to go to the State Department and ask them for their copy. So that was our business. We were supposed to set up something to handle his correspondence and see that it got answered and so on. And I must say I had a marvelous time.

My boss was a treasury guy and after about two months he was removed because he kept writing the Secretary policy advice, which was not perceived as his function. Well, I must say, people were most remarkably nice to me over there. I think one of the greatest gentlemen I ever knew was a guy called Jim Hendricks, who was a deputy assistant secretary for the whole works. In those days, *the* assistant secretary of the treasury had charge of narcotics, customs, mint, coast guard, public . . . no he didn't have public debt. Anyway , oh, [he also had] bureau of engraving and printing, and the mint.

Q: Secret Service?

TURPIN: Yes. Secret Service. Right. Absolutely. And Jim Hendricks had worked on the United Nations with Ms. Rowful. He had come to Washington in the 1930s with these idealists that came in under Roosevelt. And I hadn't been there very long when he called me up and said, "Bill you better come down to my office." And I went. He handed me a piece of paper, looking away, said "I don't think I was supposed to see this." He wasn't. I had put a note on it and sent it into Ted's, say "Ted, what do I do with this? It's the biggest mess I ever saw." Of course, I felt like a total ass. Cause I had known Hendricks before when I was in economic affairs at the State Department and he was one of the nicest gentlemen I ever knew. And he did not hold it against me.

When I left, he had – I'm sure he did it, he never admitted – prepared an embossed

parchment thing saying, "we the undersigned, with one exception, who shall be nameless to save the faces of the rest of us, have all submitted things to the Secretary ,all of which have been bounced by you." And when he retired, I was the only non-treasury hand who was invited to his retirement ceremony. So I reckon he didn't hold any grudges. And later on I discovered, maybe six months ago, his son had married the former wife of my lawyer, who was also the real estate agent who sold us this house. Perfectly marvelous person.

Anyway, people used to get very disgusted with me. One of them said once, "you're nothing but a God damned male secretary that can't take dictation." Which was true. I was an errand boy and I must say I thoroughly enjoyed it. The hours were not too good, but I went through the Cuban missile crisis mostly sleeping on the couch outside the Scretary's door.

Q: You were there from when to when?

TURPIN: I was there from about July or August 61 to 63. And I eventually moved into be – which I did not want. I wanted Ted to stay right on there where he was. I had a fine operating relationship with him – but I moved into that office as Dillon's special assistant.

Q: The Cuban missile crisis. What was the role of Dillon?

TURPIN: I didn't see any of this stuff. We had a special telegraph set up manned by the coast guard. Highly classified stuff. And they'd wake me up three o'clock in the morning to see something that was nothing more than a weather report, which got kind of irritating. But I told them, "well for heavens sake, don't call me when you send somebody out. Have him knock on the door." Anyway, I did not know doodly. I didn't see any paper. I had nothing to do with any of it. All I knew was when he was there.

But there is an account - I've forgotten who wrote it now. I read it fairly recently – about intelligence methods and what not and they discuss the missile crisis in some length. And apparently it was Dillon who suggested using the navy. I had not known. I suspected that he had, because he was a naval officer during the war. And it was a kind of practical suggestion that Dillon would have made. I did not know until I read that account that the navy was bitterly opposed to it. They were so afraid their boats would be sitting out there sitting ducks for Soviets. Well, that's understandable enough.

The Sunday afternoon when the thing was more or less resolved, Dillon was going to Mexico City. And when he finally came out, I sat in his office trying to watch the Redskins out of the corner of my eye with Ms. Dillon, who was unquestionably one of the nicest ladies that I ever knew in my life. She would say, "Oh by the way Bill, I thought you did a nice job thanking the troops for their work on the tax bill." And I said, "well I thought that it was good for the Secretary to do that." She said, "come off it Bill. Who do you think writes those things for him at home?." I mean, Mrs. Dillon was nobody's fool

and without a doubt one of the most attractive people I ever met in my life.

Anyway, we got on the damned airplane and he locked himself up in the front in and came back as we were going into Mexico City, handed me a batch of legal papers, said "Bill, I think you better take this down and lock it up in the embassy." I said. "fine. May I read it?" He said, "sure." And it was the speech, basically, that he was to give the next afternoon and that the President gave, what, seven o'clock Monday, whatever it was. And it laid out the whole words.

Q: About the missile crisis.

TURPIN: Yes. It didn't have all the inside stuff, but it got the .[tone right] . . So the next morning we didn't have anything to do. We were standing around the Maria Isabelle hotel waiting, really, for five o'clock in the afternoon or whenever it was that the troops were going to assemble. And Dillon was infuriated because Richard Goodwin appeared and said he was down there to tell us how to run this thing. Well you didn't do that to Dillon.

Q: Also, Richard Goodwin being, I think he was dealing with American public affairs, but he was one of the wiz kids who came in...

TURPIN: Wasn't he on the National Security Council?

Q: Something like that. And there's an account of somebody saying when this thing really got hot, "Richard Goodwin, shouldn't we call him back?" And said, "no, for God's sake, keep him out of the country."

TURPIN: Here, here! Well he appeared and was going to go and tell Dillon how to run things. I could have told him that was a mistake. Because it was all done anyway, for one thing. Well, the Secretary and I were standing about lunch time on the balcony of the Marie Isabelle overlooking the peace angel, feet on the balcony. And I said, "Mr. Secretary, may I ask you a question?" And he said, "sure." I said, "what did you guys think Khrushchev was up to?" He said, "we didn't have the dimmest idea." Dillon practically never admitted there was anything he didn't know. That scared me worse than anything else...

Q: Well, it was a very scary time because there were two blind people messing around and a very volatile situation.

TURPIN: I was persuaded then and am persuaded now that Khrushchev took the measure of Kennedy at Vienna and decided that this guy will blink.

Q: Well, this seems to be one of the feelings that he [Kennedy] and, as with most of these things, also internal politics, he was going to show the people – because he was considered rather unstable by the Kremlin crew...

TURPIN: You mean the Kremlinologists or the... ?

Q: No. The people in the Kremlin themselves.

TURPIN: Yes. I think they thought he [Kennedy] was weak.

Q: Yes. And so this was going to show them that he was really a very clever guy.

TURPIN: Well he didn't look too clever after the Bay of Pigs. And, he did not want to be the one who lost Cuba or who lost whatever it was that the democrats had suffered for for years. Judd and all the rest of these...

Q: Yes. The China policy.

TURPIN: Well, that really scared the hell out of me, that they didn't know what the heck they were doing.

Q: How did you find the structure and the personnel of treasury when you were over there?

TURPIN: Well, the structure was rather screwy because everything practically was in the office of the Secretary. I used to, among other things, make up the guest list for the Secretary's lunch room. And he would sit there and eat tomato with cottage cheese and the rest of us would sit around eating pretty well. And I tried to get Henry Holdsclaw from engraving and printing to come. He was very reluctant. He had his empire down there. He had a better dining room. He was very reluctant. But I thought the Secretary ought to know these people. And I don't know whether it did any good or not, but I did get them up.

There was one particular turkey that we had gotten, named Bob Wallace, who was for practical purposes the black advancement officer. And he said in a memorandum one time to Dillon, urging that somebody whose name I have forgotten, should be promoted to assistant secretary. He was in the office of, I guess it was by then the assistant secretary for international affairs, one of the most competent groups of people that I ever ran into in my office. And also the nicest. Then and later. Anyway, I put a note on the top of it – I didn't do this sort of thing very often – suggesting to the Secretary that Mr. Wallace resign his assistant secretary-ship in favor of this moron. Dillon did not take me to task for that as he probably should have done. But sometime later, this guy was appointed advisor to, I think to Liberia, and I went in the office and said, "all right Mr. Secretary, all right, how did you do it?" He said, "I swear I didn't. The State Department did it to itself." I said, "all right, if you say so I'll believe it."

Anyway, Dillon was not an easy person to work for, by any manner of means. He wanted everything done yesterday. He did not want to be corrected. I once did correct him about something. Oh, he caught me in one morning and he said, "I'm having the Brazilian

Finance Minister for lunch and here's a list of guests." He had it arranged in protocol order, and right awayI knew somebody, I think it was Glen Konga, in protocol at the State Department. He gave me a list and I said, "shouldn't the American Ambassador toBrazil be with the minister? – and Konga said, "no, only when he is accompanying the chief of state." So I went in and presented him with the list. Dillon looked at it and said "I see a mistake here right now." I said, "what's that, sir?" He said, "you haven't got the American ambassador to Brazil up here with the minister, where he belongs." I said, "only when he is accompanying the chief of state, sir." He looked at me hard and said, "where'd you get that?" I said, State Department protocol, sir." He wouldn't sign a thing I put under his nose for the next two days. He did not like to be – even in something he absolutely no reason to know and which he had delegated to me anyway – but...No. He was a difficult guy. I don't think he ever liked me much.

One time I made some flip remark having to do with the stock market or something and two or three hours later when he had a minute he called me in. He said, "Well Bill, you said this morning so and so and that shows you don't know the first thing about such and such." And he proceeded to lecture me for the next thirty minutes. He didn't like me, but he didn't want me going around being stupid.

He was in many ways a wonderful person. I think Ted Elliot summarized it best. He said, "some how, you can't help liking the old son of a bitch." He was a son of a bitch in many ways. But he was thoroughly... I mean, I don't mean anything less than thoroughly decent. But he did not suffer fools gladly. And it tended to be me that caught them .

There was one problem we had which we never solved, never got close to solving. He had a messenger, whose business was to sharpen pencils, mainly. The guy's a Baptist minister over here now. Was then. And a very, very nice person. And I think one of the biggest pieces of prevarication I ever did in my life was a job description that got him promoted from GS-2 to GS-3 or something like that. Anyway, sometimes the Secretary's messenger was not immediately available and we would call up the message center and tell them to send a message "right now. The secretary has got something urgent to go to so and so." And they never came. Never came. Ted had told me that he had been through this time and again. So I duly called in the assistant secretary from administration, the head of office of whatever it was. I said, "now look." And they said, "oh, it won't happen again. We'll do this." It happened again time and time. Mostly I took it myself.

The treasury was so set in its ways that that there was one guy who retired while I was there who had been some kind of something. And in the remarks I drafted for Dillon I pointed out he had been in the treasury for more than a quarter of its entire existence. Bill Heffelfinger, he was assistant, I don't know, something to do with currency or coins. Anyway, Heffelfinger would have been much happier using a quill pen. And there were a lot of people who had quill pen mentalities. Not in the office of international affairs. They left people in place long enough to know something.

Q: Yes. Well they've had a very high reputation.

TURPIN: They deserve it. They were God awful smart. They knew their business. I had a set to with one of them one time, cause I always had to carry cables over to the State Department to get them sent and then they were never cleared by the State Department, and I asked loudly, "how come you don't clear these things? I don't mind, but it seems they ought to be cleared with the State Department if you're going to use them." He said, "there's nobody over there except Mort Goldstein who would understand these things, and he's on leave. So we aren't bothering." They were incredibly competent and they had a very, very low opinion of the State Department's interest in and competence in economics. Rightly.

Q: 1963. Where did you go?

TURPIN: The Hague.

Q: And you were there from when to when?

TURPIN: 63 til 64. I was pulled out to go to Vietnam.

Q: What were you doing in the Hague?

TURPIN: Economic officer.

Q: Who was the ambassador then?

TURPIN: Bloke called Rice, who was the ex-head of Gettysburg College, I think it was. He was a pure politician and never pretended to be anything else. Never interfered with anything. He told the State Department, I was told, that he wanted a thoroughgoing professional as his DCM. They gave him Fisher Howe, who may have had many virtues, but being a real professional weren't among them.

Q: Well, Fisher Howe ran the executive secretariat at one point.

TURPIN: He wrote a book or pamphlet or something about the use of computers back then. I don't think he was disfigured with any knowledge of what he was talking about. He was a holy terror. His wife was drunk most of the time. Didn't add much to the joys of living. Holland was the easiest place to work in that I can imagine. The Dutch would tell you anything that you wanted to know on Saturday morning, if it didn't involve Phillips or electronics. And they could not have been more cooperative. Could not have been nicer. I thought it was too easy.

Q: I know that part of this time, the only dispute was KLM landing rights.

TURPIN: Well that wasn't in my time, thank goodness. We had a big dispute about degousing.

Q: This is for mines on ships?

TURPIN: Yes. And what the argument was about, I don't remember. But we wanted something and they wanted something. And I went over to see my friend in the foreign office and said, "here we are, what are we going to do about this?" He said, "I don't know. I've never seen a situation like this. You are totally wrong and won't admit it. We are totally wrong on this other issue and we won't admit it." I said, "well, Yonn, we've got to figure some way out of this that keeps both our sets of admirals happy." And we did. I don't know what it was.

The biggest fool thing that I can remember was when I got – this was the most embarrassing experience I think in my entire, if you can call it that, career – just about three or four days before Christmas of 1963 we got a cable. And it said "transmit and close note verbatim." And in those days you didn't do verbatim text very often. I don't think anybody cares now. But they did then and this thing said that under the mutual security act of 1962 or 3 or whatever it was, any government any flagship of which had called out or planned to call at Cuba would be instantly cut off from all U.S. assistance unless said government can give us iron clad assurances that this won't happen [again].

Well the way the Dutch had been handling this was that day to day the shippers association told people "don't go to Cuba." And nobody had except one ship that had broken a propeller shaft and another one that intended to go but turned back. Well the State Department was, I will say for them, properly humble. The deadline, by the way, was New Year's Day. And they were to accept these terms unconditionally or we cut off all aid. Now our aid in those days consisted of about $450,000 I think, which was devoted to training tank crews to operate tanks which our military attaché was busily engaged in trying to sell the Dutch.

So I went over to the foreign office and presented my thing. And I was allowed to apologize, as I did. Because it had gotten fouled up in Washington and that's why we got it two days before the deadline or something like that. Well, in due course I was called, I think eight o'clock in the morning, to the foreign office, which I seldom went to. It was a building that looked like something out of Charles Adams, especially on a gray January day in the Hague, which can be about as gray as anything is. And I was called into the presence of this tall, saturnine – he was in charge of American and western hemisphere affairs – and I had been told that he had Americans fried for breakfast. He hated Americans. So I was not anticipating any joyful time. He handed me his reply and I said, "may I read it?" And he said, "sure." I looked at it and I said, "well, I hope that this works and I know that the State Department was going to bend over backwards trying to straighten it out and I do want to apologize for this asinine demand. Sometime I hope you have something equally silly to ask of us."

He said, "young man, we know perfectly well who ran the Germans out of this country. We know perfectly well who fed us during the hungry winter. We know perfectly well

who is keeping the Russians out of Western Europe. You can have anything out of this country you want. Good morning." Talk about crawling under the door. It seemed to me at the time, and subsequently, that the Dutch and the Canadians are the only people we can keep around in great regularity.

Q: In 63 then, was there a chicken war going on?

TURPIN: No. There was the usual hassles going on with the ECU, or whatever they called the thing in those days, and I got... I knew a good deal about what was going on because the Dutch would talk to me about it. I didn't know much about... I mean the Hague, we didn't have any problems with them. The big problem we had, or the problem had by our political counselor, a good friend of mine called Dan Horowitz who died last year, trying to get them to agree to the "multilateral nuclear farce" as we used to call it. "Force," of course. Which was a State Department idea, I think. It could only really have come from the State Department. And the idea was if you remember that they were going to put a British, American, Turkish, French and somebody else force on some kind of missile destroyer and that was going to put the European finger on the nuclear trigger. Well the problem with the Dutch is they didn't want a finger on the nuclear trigger. They wanted ours on there and that was perfectly satisfactory. And they simply weren't going along with all this. And Dan Horowitz spent hours and hours trying to get them to agree to it. And they wouldn't. They said they thought it was damned stupid. Which I think it was. Anyway, we didn't have big problems. And if you wanted information, as I said unless it involved Phillips, you got it.

Q: You then went to Vietnam. Was this voluntarily?

TURPIN: No. Killen called me – my ex-boss from Belgrade- Jim Killen who had been meanwhile in Pakistan and Korea, called me up in the middle of the night just after we had taken this new, lovely spunket out for few little sailing bits, I remember over the fourth of July weekend. He said "Bill, I have just been put in charge of the aid mission to Vietnam and I need a special assistant on whose personal integrity and professional ability I can absolutely count, will you come?" I said "yes." My wife proceeded to give me hell afterwards for not consulting. I said "Audrey, there was no question. We did not join the boy scouts and this is what you do." Well she was ticked off about that and I don't blame her. She was quite right. She said "you never liked Jim Killen," which was perfectly true. It wasn't a question, do I like him or not? If he thinks he needs me, then I better go. But I told Killen on the phone that I didn't really know where Vietnam was and I certainly didn't know anything about it. I wanted to come back to Washington and go around with him on his briefings, to which he agreed.

And the only thing that happened during that period of any particular note was a lunch at the CIA after we'd had a session with Mr. McCowen in the morning. And we had William Colby, he was running the far east at the time, and a guy named, I think, Mansfield from the State Department.

Q: Manheur?

TURPIN: Yes. Phillip Manheor. That's right. You're right.

Q: Later a prisoner of the Vietcong for a long seven years.

TURPIN: I didn't realize that. Anyway, they were talking busses and trams around the cable and I still didn't know anything. So when they finally got around to asking me for my positions, low carb low salt as you could get. "Do you have any questions?" I said "yes, I've got two. I'm sorry but you got to remember I don't know doodly about Vietnam. What I would like to know is what's eating the VC and what are they peddling." And these hotshots looked at each other and said "well that's a really very good question." If I'd had any sense I would have refused to go right then and there. If we didn't know by this time, there was a hell of a poor chance we would ever do anything sensible.

So anyway, couple of years later, as you may remember, a book came out which I must say I have never read, by some CIA type, about basically what was eating the VC and what were they peddling.

Q: Yes. It was called Victor Charlie, I think.

TURPIN: You are probably right.

Q: Yes. I can't remember. I think it was a USIA officer.

TURPIN: It may have been. In any case, I went. And did my best. Killen said he wanted me to learn Vietnamese which I worked at quite hard and quite ineffectually. There wasn't much use, and this really kind of bugged me and still does. I think that the State Department has never had sufficient [language expertise]; they've been okay about languages on the whole. They will give you training and it's good training. But they don't keep anybody around long enough in a country to really master the place. Unlike the treasury people.

Q: Yes. This is always a problem. A language officer should put about five years in a place.

TURPIN: At least. What we need is people that start out about third secretaries and go up to ambassador knowing, I don't mean necessarily Finland, but Scandinavia or something. And what [harm] they do when they send these people off to Africa or Southeast Asia. My last assignment, which I didn't take up, was to Bangkok as economic counselor. And I said, "look, I just don't think I'm man enough in my present tender age of 49 or whatever it was at the time to take on a tonal language." And they said, "oh, you don't have to worry. We've got a kid in the economic section who speaks Thai, and, besides, everybody speaks English. I said, "sorry, I can't play that way." And well, I didn't retire

when I got the chance to.

Q: Let's *turn back to Vietnam. You go there from 64 to 65. What were you doing?*

TURPIN: Well, first I was special assistant to Killen. And I don't exactly know what I was doing. A couple of the counter insurgency people wanted me to come up and take charge of I corps. Killen wasn't aware of that. I don't know what good I would have done. Mostly I just sort of tried to find out what was going on, or what we were doing, to the extent one could. And, I went to Killen's meetings and I wrote a memcon. You know, this was in the days when they were changing their governments faster than you could change your shirts.

Q: Sure. Generals were moving in...

TURPIN: Yes. Everybody moving in, moving out. There was a new finance minister who was a pretty bright cookie, I thought. And Killen said, in the course of the conversation, we must put all of our resources on the table. "We" and "our" are systematically ambiguous in English, unambiguous in Vietnamese. You have to translate it into either "we on this side of the table" or "all of us here in this room." I don't know which was used. I couldn't hear what was being said. But whatever was being said, the Vietnamese had absolutely no intention of putting their money [on the table]. They thought our money was the stuff that was to be dealt with and counted on.

Well, I wrote a memorandum to that effect. Killen got furious. And next thing I knew he'd asked the embassy if they would take me on. Yes, they wanted me to come over and run, so he said, provincial reporting. So from about January on, that's what I did. I was told when I got there, don't bother anybody. It's running perfectly well. Just sit there. I sat there, took Vietnamese and went around as much as I could. And they were perfectly happy to get shut of me the following summer.

Q: What was your impression of the reporting that was coming through the post?

TURPIN: I think the stuff from the provinces was good. It was the cables, which everybody read, that...

Q: These were cables emanating from the embassy to Washington?

TURPIN: Sure. Sure. Yes, I asked them one time after I got over there, we were busily engaged in operation "many flags" or something of the sort, trying to get everybody's litte brother down there...

Q: Get the Philippinos and the...

TURPIN: The Australians, the Koreans. And I said, "do you think this is an inside job or an outside job?" They said "it's being run out of Hanoi." I said, "okay, I can give you

that." But here we are about to intervene with troops when, as far as I know, there is only one North Vietnamese army unit in the country, and that's the mythical whatever it was, tenth division, which kept getting reported from the mountains. But nobody ever saw it, as far as I could see. And meanwhile the VC were killing us quite happily. Then the troops came in and it really did start.

Q: You were there when the troops came in?

TURPIN: Yes. Yes. I was in Hue the day Turner gave whatever the over one was called, the destroyers were allegedly fired upon.

Q: Yes. The Turner Joy, and another one.

TURPIN: Joy. That's right. And something else. Yes. Well, I did not see either... In the first place, I did not think that our aid program was doing a damn thing except dispensing largess. I got to a meeting shortly after I got there. They were talking about transportation and they said, "the Vietnamese were completely irrational. They would rather requisition a new jeep than use their own money to buy a new carburetor." And I said, "well, you may dislike this, but irrational it is not." That went over like a lead balloon.

And the medical chief was talking to me before he went in to see Killen about something and he said that they had this big hospital which we had built and he wasn't about to turn over to the Vietnamese because they wouldn't use American training methods. They insisted on using French ones and they were not good. I said, "well hell, there's fifty million Frenchmen around. They ain't all dead. They must do something right." "Nope. This would be a waste of the American taxpayer's money." "What about having that building sit there empty?"

And the exchange guy came in one day and I said – this is all while they were waiting to get in to see the boss – and I said "what are your ex-exchangers doing when they're back?" He said, "we've never had one come back."

Q: You mean...

TURPIN: People we had sent over on exchanges programs for training. They got off the plane in Paris and stayed there. And I asked the education chief, "what was the political content that we were having printed at considerable extent in Manila?" He said, "oh I don't know. You have to ask Ms. Wynn, or something like that. She's responsible for content." I said, "you mean you don't know whether this is supposed to make these kids loyal to Vietnam." "No. We don't know about that." And the head of the agriculture thing told me after church one day, quite distinctly, "the Viet Cong don't bother us because we are just teaching them how to raise grains. We don't care who gets it." Well, by that time I was pretty sure that, as I'd advised Kinnen in my early days, we should not do something- just stand there. But I never got anywhere either.

Q: Then you sort of left without much optimism about what was going on?

TURPIN: None. And my next efficiency rating had to do with "Mr. Turpin did not make the best of a bad assignment."

Q: In 1965 you came back to Washington. And what job did you have?

TURPIN: Well, I was Korean economic officer for about six months. And then one of the finest guys I ever knew and ever worked for, Ray Low, who was head of the office of Eastern European affairs, asked me if I would take on the job of economic officer for the Balkans, replacing a guy who had taken some loans from the Yugoslav I think commercial attaché, anyway, a known agent, and had to be sacked of course. And I must say that was one of the happiest working relationships I ever had.

End of interview