Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR SHIRLEY ELIZABETH BARNES

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not edited by Ambassador Barnes]

Q: Today is the 16th of January 2004; this is an interview with Shirley Elizabeth Barnes. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. You go by Shirley?

BARNES: Shirley.

Q: Okay, I'll call you Shirley then and I'll be Stu. Let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

BARNES: I was born on April 5th, 1938 in St. Augustine, Florida.

Q: Shirley–you sure it's not related to Shirley Temple?

BARNES: I always asked my parents that when they were alive and they said: "Oh, definitely not." But I can't think how that could be true when she was probably the most celebrated person or personality and entertainer at the time.

Q: Somehow the name Shirley usually–it almost time-dates somebody.

BARNES: Absolutely.

Q: I've noticed that...

BARNES: Yeah, nobody is named Gladys anymore. So I think, although my mother denies that she had anything to do with... but I'm sure that Shirley Temple had some impact on who was named Shirley at that particular time.

Q: Oh well, the nice thing about it is Shirley Temple became an ambassador twice over.

BARNES: Yes. People loved, and still love her and deep down, they really do.

Q: Can you tell me a bit about your parents? First your father then your mother.

BARNES: Alright. My father was a waiter on a railroad: The Seaboard Airlines Railroad. He was born in South Carolina and I guess as I look at it now, I've gotten some background information. Apparently there were blacks who migrated from South Carolina in to Florida in the slave era. They heard that Florida was free territory if they could get from South Carolina to Florida, apparently. There was kind of a trail set up in Wade*, Florida now where apparently people out of plantations in South Carolina migrated to Florida because they heard that they fought with the Spanish; there was word on the Spanish side that they were retreating. This is all the way back–and I believe that there was a trail that was set up in Wade*, Florida now that became, manifested, from people going along that trail.

I have not gotten that from my father but just leading back in history that there was a migratory path of blacks from South Carolina in to Florida. But also I know that he said that was why they weren't Jamaican. So I have a feeling that it was a combination of people migrating up from the Bahamas from Jamaica and the Caribbean area and people migrating down from South Carolina in some way or another, and my maternal grandfather and my maternal grandmother got together. Because I have heard that he was of Jamaican ancestry. But the people that I know on his side for the most part were people that came from Melbourne, Florida. One of these days, one of my to-do things on my list would be to try and trace some of his roots and know a little more about my grandmother who also from what I understand, came from South Carolina in to Florida. That's my grandmother.

Anyway, my father, I don't know how he got in to the busboy and waitering type of business, career, or whatever. But I know that he worked in Miami as a busboy and that they followed the trail almost up to Saratoga where they also did waiting and busboying because the rich families would go to Saratoga, I guess, in the summer months and so he also...

Q: This is Saratoga, New York?

BARNES: Yes. Saratoga, New York. So his confession was, he was a waiter and he was affable, outgoing, waiting, that people would always ask, let Jimmy boy–his name is James Alfred Barnes–I'd like Jimmy to serve my table. And he knew how to be gracious and he needed enough of how to be gracious and he could also hold a decent conversation and be affable at the same time; and knew how to graciously serve and picked up all of the table manners and everything else that the rich had at that point–I mean very comfortably rich, not bourgeois, *nouveau riche* (new money) type.

He would in fact, I remember, tell us how we had to affect the table manners of those kinds of people that he would be serving. We left as a family group from St. Augustine when I was five years old. We migrated to New York City. He was with the Seaboard Airline Railroad and the Silverstine, the Silver Media and they would go from New York to Florida. So although I would hear him talk about his busboy days in Miami or Saratoga, I only knew him, actually seeing him, as a working person when he was waiting tables on the railroad. Later on he would always have another job; later on he got a job as a waiter at Birdland, which was one of the most famous jazz clubs in the world. The used to call it the jazz corner of the world.

So my father, his life was spent as a waiter for the most part. He would be out of town four out of seven days as a waiter, I guess, overnight a couple of nights in Miami and come back to New York. Silver Media I think was his favorite train on the Seaboard Airline's services, and the Silver Star which he also worked on.

My mother was a very accomplished person. People like, finished high school at that point when she was born; that was already distinguished. She finished high school and

went on to what was called a normal school. Most of those times the schools were churning out teachers. She became a teacher in a segregated school system.

Q: Where?

BARNES: St. Augustine. As a young woman she was a teacher and this is already a great, big, deal; honored to be a teacher.

Q: Oh yes.

BARNES: So she was a very accomplished pianist, both classical and she would play ragtime. She was an accomplished musician. She played as the organist for her church when she was still very young in St. Augustine. She was an excellent dressmaker; could crochet, knit. I mean she was just quite accomplished. I remember by the time I was going to high school in New York City and doing very, very, difficult, at that point, difficult mathematical problems she would sit down and speak–we'd sit up all night sometimes–figuring out some math problems for me. She had that kind of curiosity, a very, very, bright woman. As I look back on it, I don't know how she was able to do all that she did because not only was she bright and accomplished in doing things in the community and clean but she took care of that house too. I think of younger women today and they would–I know I would not–be able to do or even fathom, or think of doing the kind of things that she was able to accomplish both in her being able to do these things on the outside and also inside as working in her household.

So we left St. Augustine when I was five. I had an older sister and at that point I had one younger brother. The other brother was born in New York City. I guess his most distinctive thing in our family was that he was the only one of us that was born *in* New York City. I think he could say that he was a true New Yorker. But I consider myself a New Yorker and still have my sister–my two brothers died, they might seem younger but–my sister is my immediate family that is still in New York and I still go to New York as often as I can as a diversion. One of the reasons I'm not there now when I've retired was because the prices of the apartments had gone up so tremendously. Where I used to live was just a great, handsome, wonderful building on Central Park West. I had to sell my apartment when my co-op board told me I could not sublet anymore and I'd have to leave it empty and at that point I was in the Foreign Service. I had the apartment before I was in the Foreign Service.

So we went from St. Augustine up to New York City and lived in what was in the Harlem-Renaissance period called "Sugar Hill."

Q: From your parents or grandparents, were you getting any reflection of what life was like to be an African American in St. Augustine, Florida? I mean, really before you were on the scene.

BARNES: I would say, not nearly. I knew that there were colored schools and that's

where my mother taught. We lived in an all-black community. My grandmother–we lived with my grandmother–she was a domestic that worked for two white women, the Pessetes. And she would come home as a youngster, so it must have been when I could listen to conversations and understand. She and my aunt and my mother, she would come home and talk about the Pessetes and what happened with Lucy and I forgot the other one, and I'd listen in on the conversations. I was still young enough so that when they wanted us not to understand what was going on they'd spell out the words so we didn't understand. And their gentleman friend–they wouldn't say–they'd say "G-E-N-T-L-E-M-A-N friend" and I'd be listening. She'd come home with what was going on with Lucy and the other Pessetes so I knew that she worked for white people but it didn't register with me of what that was. I only got a perception of what was different in all of that. I would say going in to the late '50s and '60s when the Civil Rights Movement and African Independence was going and etc. We knew that by the time I got to New York when I was in junior high or something, we knew that there was a difference in race and all that. But we had our own community and we'd talk about white and black issues but it was not so much on a political basis until the late '50s and early '60s.

Q: When you went to New York, what was Sugar Hill like?

BARNES: It was great. Without my really knowing that at the point it was a safe community to live in and it was considered one of the swellest places for blacks to be living on Sugar Hill at that time. It was very curiously interesting when you reflect on what today is like and what people did back then, whether you were a waiter on the railroad, or Joe Luis or Lena Horne, we all lived in that community. It was considered to be ... we sort of made it to be, the way the Jeffersons did. You know, you saw "Moving On Up?" And if you could live on Sugar Hill that was very significant. We lived on St. Nicholas place and there was St. Nicholas Avenue and Convent Avenue and all around there, as whites were moving out of the area blacks were moving in. And although it was a fifth floor walkup and we lived on the fourth floor, it was considered quite something to be living on Sugar Hill. Edgecomb Avenue–555 Edgecomb was really in Harlem. I think Joe Lewis lived around at 409. It was a whole cross section of blacks who were moving up–lived in that area. So we grew up on Sugar Hill, as I said, not specifically recognizing what we were, but as you grew up people would say: "Oh you live on *the* Hill." That's what it was called, The Hill, and if they lived down The Valley–there was a real distinctive difference. It became noticeable to me and I was happy to be on that side, where The Hill was. So we grew up on St. Nicholas place and that area called "Sugar Hill."

Q: Correct me if I'm wrong but, being a waiter on the railroad was a significant and prestigious job?

BARNES: Absolutely.

Q: In major, almost political organizations in the black community were Pullman porters.

BARNES: Pullman porters, yes, A. Philip Randolph.

Q: Randolph and a lot of …

BARNES: It was a very good job. That and being a postman.

Q: These two particularly ... Randolph was quite a political figure.

BARNES: And the Pullman Porters and the waiters, this was very significant. And to finally achieve that ... As I look back and as we're talking, I think what happened was that my father had finally landed a job as a waiter on the Seaboard Airline Railroad. Before that he was a waiter around in St. Augustine and Miami. But he landed his job as a waiter and the terminus at that point was New York City for the Seaboard Airline coming back and forth. When white, really rich families would go down the Florida for the winter that was one of the best jobs. The tips were absolutely fantastic. You put your children through college on that kind of thing. So yes, it was considered a very good, very good job. As I said before, my mother had been a teacher in the college school system in St. Augustine so by the time in New York my father had this job as a waiter on a railroad. She became a home maker. He had his job on the railroad and this was the economic basis on which we lived for a long time. I respected waiters for the rest of my life because my father–that was his living–and respected also the tips and always remembered to tip a waiter a nice, generous tip because those tips got us through school. It put food on the table, etc.

Q: How about being six years old and growing up a kid in New York? Where did you go to school, what was it like? What did you do?

BARNES: I loved school. School at that point: the school system, the teachers were white, and in our community it was transitional. But, by the time I was in, I went to kindergarten and I loved school. I still love it today. I loved the teachers and always wanted to know more about their personal life and what they were doing and I loved learning and school was a treat for me to be able to get up everyday and go to school. We would walk to school. There was no such thing as a school bus. The elementary school was oh, maybe, ten blocks.

Q: What was the name of the–what number?

BARNES: PS-46 which is no longer there. Public School 46. I went from kindergarten through the sixth grade at PS-46 and my sister went there, then I went there and my brothers went to PS-46. It was still there when all of us were growing up. It was a real treat to line downstairs in the morning, four flights. I think I can remember how many flights, each landing was seven steps, run down and your friends would, you know–you sort of had a routine–they'd pick you up. They lived a few buildings down and you'd go on your tour and you'd pick up the next bunch and you'd walk to school and no matter

what the weather. There was no such thing as having your mom or anybody in a car. You walked to school and you walked home and there was no such thing as snow days and if it looked like it was going to snow, there's no such thing as keeping your kids home. There were no such things as snow days, or weather days, whatever they call it here in Washington. Rain, snow, sleet, you were out there. I would say that 99% of the people walking and going to the school with you, very few were missing and it was a lot of fun too. You'd talk about mainly the teachers and how much you hated everything, but it was so much fun socializing and gathering as you walked to school.

Also, you learned something in the New York City school system at that point. We were learning. My mother was very good at helping with homework and all that. My father didn't participate in that too much. I think my father probably had no more than about a sixth grade education. But my mother helped out and she would be there for all the school events. She would make costumes if you were going to be in a play; she'd help to make the costumes. I remember something where I was supposed to be the sunshine in something and she made this fantastic thing out of crepe paper. I had to study my lines and stand up there and the snowman melted as I came in and melted the snow, ran away, and I think he was a grumpy guy too so everybody was happy. She would be there for the plays, etc. Later on we had to take piano lessons. I remember when we got our piano as I went back to that apartment once many, many years ago after we had left and it looked so tiny. But I remember when we got our piano. When you got a piano and you lived up on the fourth floor, they pulled it in through the window. It was a pulley and it was an upright piano and we had to take piano lessons, my sister and I. So I remembered those things. Everybody in the building where the kids were, I think, everybody had a piano and you learned to play the piano.

Q: What did the boys do? You were getting a girl's education in a way. Your mother was there making sure when you did your homework and you learned the piano and all that. How about the boys? Around Sugar Hill?

BARNES: Well, when I was growing up the boys mainly they were out in the street. Besides giving the girls a hard time–young girls–they were playing stick-ball: That was a broom handle, and you would get what was called a Spaldeen, a rubber ball, and you'd hit it and some of those guys were so good they could hit it for one block all the way down to the next block! At one point in the early '50s when Willie Mays first came up to join the Giants–I'm trying to think of their stadium which was right on 155th Street and we lived on 152nd Street–when he came up to play with the Giants, it was so interesting as I look back on it. They said we don't want this young man to be completely subverted by the sins of New York City. They decided to have him stay in a room–a woman was renting rooms and they had large apartments as we went up St. Nicholas place–a very nice building, I think even with an elevator. She had a room where Willie Mays stayed and so he would get out in the street and play stick-ball with the kids right on St. Nicholas place.

Q: How wonderful.

BARNES: We'd say: "Oh Willie's in town!" and Willie Mays would be there and he was having as much fun as the kids. He could hit that ball and all those young kids could too. I will remember and I'm sure you can look back on what the Giants' home stadium was called. I'll think of it. Brooklyn was Ebbets Field but the Giants; we'd walk right across what we called the viaduct and he'd be at Yankee Stadium which is still there. But today the Giants' home team field is a housing project.

Q: Well now, try to capture the period ... I talked to people for example, Jewish kids growing up in New York in about this period and they said dependent on what block you were in, there were certain blocks they couldn't go because there might be Irish or Italian kids there and so you had to take a special route around. Did you run across any of that?

BARNES: Well I do remember when we first came up. I guess maybe by that time I was seven or eight, I don't think it was when I was five. You'd see the streets completely, all of a sudden, empty and people would rush up to their apartments and it was because one gang–you'd hear by word of mouth–was going to come and have a rumble on the streets or something with another gang from another section. It was all no more than a radius of about 20 blocks or so. We'd call them the "bad boys" and they would be coming in to this particular territory. Quite frankly I never saw one gang fight but it was always "oh they're coming!" So people would literally clear the streets. But in our neighborhood, the thing I remember, I guess the boys for the most part for certain blocks they didn't bother to go in to. But for the girls it was unknown territory to explore in terms of getting a boyfriend and someone to hang out with from another neighborhood. Through your school contacts you'd go another block or ten blocks away because you had a school contact and you'd say: "hey come by my house." So I remember maybe four girls or five girls who did want to go over to such and such's house or apartment, really, and hang out for those days and listen to music and learn the dances, etc. The boys were sort of silent but for the most part I remember just being a young girl at that point, maybe by that time age ten to junior high school in that area.

But we would love to, as a group, walk a few blocks over to sort of strange territory. The fellows for the most part, they were more territorial. Their thing would be to kind of work on neutral territory, might be the playground and the basketball court. So the fellows would work out a lot of what might be a tendentious situation by being on the basketball court or as I said, they'd be out and one block might come over to play a game of stick-ball with another block. So that's how they worked out some of their problems. The girls for the most part it was through your new found friends at school. You'd walk and get in to another neighborhood or you'd meet up when you're shopping. At that point it was over on Broadway where a lot of the stores were and you'd see a new pair of "ballerina shoes" and someone would come in with them, and you'd have to have the same shoes. A.S. Beck was one of the stores as we called "AS-Beck" and we'd go there to buy shoes and you'd meet up with your girlfriends who lived on different blocks.

The other thing was the movies. Saturday was movie time. These kids spent the whole

day in the movies. You'd go for the early show and you'd sit there because you'd meet up with your friends on Saturday. You had to do your chores first and I remember I would be reeking of Clorox because my chore was to do the bathroom. So I'd have to get through my chores doing the bathroom. Of course my sister and I had to do the dishes every night; either her turn or mine. It was always the story of "you did them last night, no you didn't, I did them." At any rate most of us would meet up at the Rose Theater or another one in the neighborhood. No, it was a few blocks over, which always was great because you'd get out the eye of your mother or the neighbors because they took special care to keep an eye on you and you'd walk maybe 10, 15 blocks to the movies. Or on Broadway, and that was also a place for shopping. One of the biggest things also was going to 125th Street where the Apollo Theater was. We would have a ball if we could break free and there was going to be some headline star there.

Q: The Apollo Theater was a pre-eminent ... a theater for talent, really, in New York City.

BARNES: It was just fantastic–absolutely. We'd go there on Saturdays. You had to have money to see the shows but we'd go to 125th Street just for parading up and down and doing a little shopping if you had some money from your allowance or some of the part time jobs the boys would get. They'd be packers at the super markets and the girls babysat for the most part. So it was a real thoroughfare for me. I think it was only when drugs started really seeping in to our neighborhood that it just tore the neighborhoods apart. And ensuing blight of those areas because when I was growing up it was really a great place to live.

Q: Who were your heroines? Did you have role models?

BARNES: Not in the early days. My heroines really didn't come along until I got into college and started becoming socially and politically active.

Q: I was thinking more, you know, beautiful women or something like that.

BARNES: Most of our standards of beauty were always from photoplay and magazines and our standards were the Lana Turners and all those. There were not too many blacks, even for us. Lena Horne wasn't someone that we felt was a heroine and she certainly wasn't anyone that we thought of as just being the perfect beauty for a lot of us. It was almost as if that was a given. But for us growing up, there were very few heroines or let's say people that we were attracted to, that we liked: the Betty Davises and the Joan Crawfords from the movies that we saw. We would act out what they said in the movie and, "did you remember when she came and ...?" We could say the *whole scene*: "oh and she said this ..." I mean, some of the movies that I see today, some of the old movies; I remember the lines.

Q: But it was also a great era during the'40s and early '50s for women stars. I mean there was a whole Hollywood system. But I used to get very bored as a kid, as a guy, watching Betty Davis and Joan Crawford do their emoting and I'm sure we were all were

so _____ and wait 'till the gap 'till the action.

BARNES: [Laughter] Yes!! It really shows the difference between boys and girls at that point. There is a difference because for us we'd come home and we'd say: "Do you remember when she said 'Get from behind that screen' and the ingénues said 'Well how did you know I was behind the screen?' and then she said 'I was hiding behind the screens before you were born.'" Now I have seen that movie on television and I know exactly when Betty Davis got to that part, and we'd say it over and over again. The girls would really love those. In fact, when we went to the movies, it was a double feature besides the cartoons so there was something for the young boys which was usually some kind of action film or detective film or cowboys–it was still cowboys back then–and there would be the romantic film. I think they would sort of squirm through that. But it was cartoons that got everybody and then it was the romantic film and then there was an action movie. So you got them all in one package. We'd see the movie two and three times and they'd let you sit there at the movie house and think probably your parents wanted to get rid of you for a while. So you'd sit there and you'd all get home and you'd start out at maybe, as I said, 10:30 or 11:00 when this movie opened and you'd sit there until 4:00 in the afternoon and you'd see it over and over. I remember the ushers they were old ladies who would come by with flash lights and helping the "be quiet" and you listened to them, it's amazing! You'd settle down and you'd sit there all day.

Q: While you were getting this great exposure to American culture...

BARNES: [Giggle]

Q: Did things like the Metropolitan Museum of Art or anything like that pass across your radar?

BARNES: No. For us, for the most part the only time, and that's when I started fundamentally knowing that there was even an economic and class difference was two things. We'd go to Radio Center to see the Christmas show and I'd see, hey, these people are pretty ritzy. And we'd go down on the 5th Avenue bus and you started seeing a difference in how people lived and their apartment buildings and a guy standing out there with a long coat on and a cap and he was opening doors for people.

Q: These were the doormen, yeah.

BARNES: Yeah the doormen. I mean we saw it in the movies a little bit but it didn't register because that was fantasy land. But when you started seeing that people actually lived that way and we'd be going down to–if we didn't take the subway–we'd go on the bus, the 5th Avenue bus and I started distinguishing that hey, we're not really living like that. It wasn't something that I coveted at that point but I knew that there was a distinction. And the people who lived like that, for the most part, were white. You never noticed anybody that was black that was coming out of one of these great, fantastic buildings on 5th Avenue. But we'd be going down to the Radio City music hall for the

Christmas show and I think that was probably the extent–we didn't go to the museum, at that point in my life we didn't–we went to Radio City and we'd go for the Easter Parade, which was a big thing. And I didn't even understand what the Easter Parade was. It was just people walking up and down the street with these clothes on and we'd make sure that it was somewhere near St. Patrick's Cathedral. You'd walk up and down the street and you'd always see it later on the Daily News or whatever, the Tribune, or the Reuter Review and they would have on these big hats, these crazy kooky hats. But we'd be down there on 5th Avenue for that and that was my brief exposure.

For us a lot of what we learned culturally came via the school system. We always went to the American Museum of Natural History that's on Central Park West and 81st Street. So that was always something that you would go to. And you'd find out about the Indians and the buffalos. That's what you would remember from that experience and that was through the school system that you got this kind of exposure. The school system itself would take you to the Metropolitan Museum. It was only when I was a young adult that I would go and be exposed to those kind of things. Our exposure besides Photoplay and Screenplay magazine and movies was either, as I said, I think we went to the cloisters; I think probably the teacher just wanted to get you out of the classroom for a while and so we went to those things through the school system. As a family group we got probably most of our education of "there is another world" when there was some special occasion.

Q: What about school? Your teachers were mostly white at this point?

BARNES: Oh yes.

Q: How did you find them? Mostly women?

BARNES: Yes. They were women. They were teachers who really had a conscience about being professionals. It was only later where I started seeing how the school system itself had changed; it was during high school when teachers would start talking: "I don't care if you learn or not, I get paid anyway." But all of elementary school, these were industrious, dutiful teachers who came out of a profession of teaching. They wanted you to learn for the most part. They were serious about your learning. And usually the parents were very involved in the school system, especially the mother. They would pick the kids up at lunch time, and that was when you went home for lunch. Very few went to school cafeterias. You'd go home for lunch and go back to school. They would be there at three o'clock when the kids were out of school, they would come to the teachers to find out if there were a learning problem, etc.

A lot of them were Irish women. Later on there was a transition to Jews and Italians. But for the most part you could pick out maybe one or two black females in the school system, other than that it was always white. What you'd learn from were books that were Dick and Jane and they were white, it was usually something like "Father Knows Best;" he was out with a job with a briefcase and a business suit and mom was home cooking the meals, Betty Crocker-type. This was our ideal. This was what we learned in school. The

teachers taught us, but they taught us math and science and everything else and they were dedicated teachers for the most part.

I'm going on to junior high school. The most impressive thing for me was they had a new system that came up in the New York City education system. They would take talented students and put them on the "faster track." And this was during the time when I was coming up in the '40s and they started this in the '50s. So they'd test you and they'd see where your talents lay and they would say: "Okay." If you had talent–they'd know whether you were good in science, they'd put you in the track in to science. And we were in a special class because as I said before, music was a part of my life. They said we're going to have an orchestra class and if you had any talent for music there were a group of us who were put in an orchestra class. And if you know the system it was like, you'd go in to 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, and 6-1 or 7-1 as you got in to junior high school. The brightest people were in 1, 2, up to 4 or 5. So if you were in say 7-1, 7-2, 7-3, these were the brighter kids and you were on a certain track. The orchestra class was maybe 7-3 or something. We learned to play an instrument. They would say, what do you want to play and all the instruments were supplied by the board of education. I had known the classics through piano lessons but we had learned the classics, etc., through the school system. It was in junior high school I started getting exposed to other things like going to concerts, etc. down in Philharmonic or Carnegie Hall.

We also had to learn a foreign language. It was either French or Spanish and I opted for French. When I got to junior high school in my seventh grade class, our French teacher walked in to class and it was the most astounding thing; all of us, I think collectively, our mouths dropped open because there was a dark-skinned black woman who came in and had an afro, first of all, everybody had straightened hair in those days. She had an afro and she came in and her name was Ms. Frazier and she came in and started talking French from the beginning... [END TAPE SIDE]

Q: You were saying you'd never seen anybody...

BARNES: Black who spoke French.

Q: Particularly the afro was not...

BARNES: Oh no, not in the '50s. She came in, she had a short afro; she came in and introduced herself in French and from then on I decided, wow, if she can do it, I can do it. She was the most impressive person in terms of my education besides my mother. I became just ardently impressed and wanted to learn the French language. I stayed that way and still am, today. I love the language and I like the French.

Q: Do you know anything about the background of this young lady at the time?

BARNES: I knew her name was Anita Frazier and she was of West-Indian parentage I believe. She's still around today and I invited her when I was sworn in and I wrote her a

letter and sent her an invitation and said that: “You had a large part of why I’m standing on this platform and will be sworn in as ambassador.” The reason why I had caught up with her was because one of my school mates in junior high school later on became a teacher and they became colleagues, so she was still in the school system when he became a teacher. In other words she had taught him and taught me. Later on he said to me, his name is Willie deFratus, he said: “You know, Frazier’s still in the school system! We’re colleagues!” By that time he started calling her Frazier, but it was Miss Frazier back then. I found out that she had studied in Belgium. I don’t know how she got to Belgium, but she had studied there and came back. I think she said that she always knew that she would come back to the school system. She taught French for many, many, many years. But she had such a lasting impression on me.

By the way, I read a book that was written by black women writers in the 60's to 70's. There was a woman who said: “The woman that made the most important impression on me was Anita Frazier.” So this woman, she really left her mark on us.

Q: Oh, how wonderful. Well what instrument did you play?

BARNES: The clarinet.

Q: Ah. You’re going to be the Artie Shaw of the ... [chuckle]

BARNES: Well a little bit more than that because at that point, most of our learning was for classical orchestra. We knew woodwinds, we knew string, and we knew the conductor and all of that. We had to read music, which we knew how to do because they really picked you and selected you, especially the ones who could read music. We learned and my father had played the clarinet once or something, so I thought, oh well maybe I’ll try this. So we knew the wind section, we knew all about the brass section. We had a small symphony orchestra type bringing up at that point. French horn, bass and a couple of cute fellows who were cool, very cool, all they wanted to play was the saxophone because that was jazz, you know, those were the types who were real cool. But for the most part, all of us we could choose and select our instrument. I selected the clarinet. All though junior high school we were the orchestra class, so all of us were all on the same track. The orchestra class from seventh through when you got out at the eleventh grade or tenth grade. Seven, eight, nine, we were all together as the orchestra class. They also, by the time I was ninth grade, we had a marching band too. So that type of thing that you have in a marching band, we had started, but I played the clarinet.

Q: What about reading? Were you much of a reader?

BARNES: Oh yes. A lot of reading and always a member of the public library. I spent quite a few hours there. Again, that was a 15-20 block walk to the public library.

Q: This was the big one with the lions?

BARNES: Oh no, no, no. This was a branch. All of those branches, unfortunately a lot of them had closed but there was a branch of the public library, you'd take out books and read them; all types of books.

Q: Any books that stick out in your mind?

BARNES: You know I don't remember that many that stuck out in my mind. It's just a whole host of things that you'd start getting interested in. There was no book that "changed" my life.

Q: What about–you were there–born in '35 so you ...

BARNES: '38.

Q: '38 I mean. The war–you were pretty young–did the war have any impact on you?

BARNES: Oh, I think of the movies and the songs. When we were growing up, oh, "You Must Remember This" and all of those kinds of songs we were singing because it was all on the radio and, "When The Boys Come Home." Those kinds of songs were on the radio. So we grew up during the war years and I remember distinctly when VJ day came because I didn't know exactly what was going on but they said the duration is over. I remember when we used to say, even back in St. Augustine when people were smoking cigarettes, we'd peel off the aluminum foil and make big balls out of them and it was for the war effort. That's what I remember. Then in my family, my youngest uncle was in the Marines, I think. The older one on my mother's side was in the Army. So we knew. And then there were always a lot of sailors and service men coming to the house so during those years still in St. Augustine I have a faint recollection of that. Then we passed on to New York so '45 when the war was over, I remember people–and we weren't down in Times Square–but people were throwing shredded paper out of the window. I remember it was a warm day and I couldn't understand what is all this, what is going on and they said: "It's over, it's over!" And everybody was in the streets and it was just a festive occasion.

So, it was during the war years that I grew up and I remember the day in 1945 when VJ day, that was the end of the war: the duration, as they called it. I remember when things were rationed, etc. I remember the rationing days, and the points you had to have. You had a little; I guess a book where you put coupons in. I remember that much, only vaguely. It wasn't the same for us, the war, as I'm sure you're aware as what it was for people who lived, say, in European countries. I mean, the way we still ate whatever we wanted to eat. And we didn't feel–I remember my mother had to stand on lines to get certain things–but we never felt deprived of anything.

Q: Well I used to think, we always ate a lot more macaroni but as a kid I liked macaroni, it didn't bother me.

BARNES: And all of those things, yeah.

Q: You went to high school. Where did you go to high school?

BARNES: My sister had gone to Washington Irving High school an all-girl high school and I wanted to follow what my sister did. I had a first cousin, she was a little older than both my sister and I and she had gone to Washington Irving. Washington Irving was an all-girl school at time, near Gramercy Park in New York City. Washington Irving was where we went to high school. The principal was Mary Mead who was an outstanding education authority at that point and was the sister of Margaret Mead. Mary Mead was her name.

Q: Margaret Mead being the most well-known anthropologist of that period.

BARNES: Yes, yes. Mary Mead was the principal and the school was patterned after Vassar. So we had a daisy chain and all of that. We were perfect ladies. You had to have the Washington Irving spirit. As the complexion, again, of the school changed, there were more blacks in the school. But it had started out, Washington Irving was a public high school but girls who wanted to transition in to being a Vassar-type person went to Washington Irving and the academic standards were very, very, high. You had to pass the regions to get in and the academic classes. And the people who came out of Washington Irving had gotten a great education.

Q: Where was the complexion spectrum at Washington Irving when you went there?

BARNES: Overwhelmingly white. There were few blacks and most of the blacks who went there were in what was called "commercial" section. They were going to be secretaries. It was overwhelmingly white, Jewish, a few Irish, and a growing number of Italians. So those were the people you spent most of your academic time with. You had another social life, which was black, because they did not socialize that much. You went to a few things, but never to parties together and all that. If you were going on something it would be the school boat ride or something where all blacks, whites, etc. would mix. But it was an all girl school and it had extremely high standards. It was a great school to go to.

Q: What courses were you working on?

BARNES: I was academic art because I had decided to go into art and design. It was fashion, illustration, etc. We had a great art teacher and we were exposed to the Metropolitan, the Modern, etc. All of us were down in Greenwich Village and we were all going to become Bohemians, as we called them then. We would all be down there, by that time I was in high school, we'd be down there on the weekends drinking coffee and going to exhibits, etc.

Q: Did you have a barrette?

BARNES: No, but we had certain things because after a while we got into fashion. We were going into fashion illustration. I remember during that period we had the best outfits in the world, whatever they were. One thing, it was a hat box, and you'd carry around a hat box. Instead of carrying a purse you had a hat box and that was something ... and crinoline skirts and all that.

Q: Now, carrying a hat box, it meant ... models carried hat boxes?

BARNES: Oh, yes, we were getting into that. We wanted hat boxes.

Q: So this showed that you were models.

BARNES: Oh yes, we were into fashion and design. Everybody came to school looking elegant. I mean really, especially those in the fashion area. At that point as I said, I was in art, academic. So my major was in academic courses that would get you into college but my minor was art. We would have–we were the only people in the whole school that had nude models–we would learn the body and the form the directions and all this and how you transfer that into fashion, illustration, etc. We also learned basic art; the Renaissance period, great classical, etc. So we got a very, very good education. I also was still in music and in the orchestra.

Q: Did international affairs ever cross your radar at all?

BARNES: Well, of course as I said, my big jolt and one of my few epiphanies was to see Anita Frazier and she was speaking French and I always said: "I'm going to learn that language and I'm going to Paris." That was always one of my goals even as I transitioned to high school because so much of fashion had to do with Paris and France. It was always in a subterranean part of my brain; it was always: "I'm going to get to Paris and it was fashion and all of this." And a lot of art itself was so hooked up with the French. So for me, internationalism not per se the role of international affairs, but mainly to be able to get to France. So, that was always there somewhere. I always had a longing to travel and to see France and to see Europe.

Q: Did you find at all, say, high school at all, did you sense any effort to put you down; you being a colored girl or something like this? Saying: "You know, maybe you ought to go over to the commercial program."

BARNES: Oh yes, that was always there from junior high school on. The guidance counselors would always ... that's why so many of my friends, as I said, went into the secretarial area or they went in to "cosmetology." That was where they always told you: "Well you should really go into the track on cosmetology." And I had enough, I guess, encouragement at home to say, oh, you're going into academics; we want you to go college. There was always a kind of subliminal thing that you went to college. My father wanted us to be college graduates. So the idea was that it didn't necessarily ... there were

some very, very good teachers who encouraged you to follow this path and go into academics and to go to college. But for the most part, your friends for the most part, up to high school were in things that after high school they were going to go right into the job world.

There were two things: they were going to be engaged by their senior year in high school and have the boyfriend give them an engagement ring at the senior prom and the other thing was that they would get the job usually at Metropolitan Life or the telephone company. That's the way they were going and the majority of the people that I knew at that point were still what we called "block people." They were from the block, saying it was placed on 152nd or 55th street or the block wherever you started picking up new friends. These block girls and block boys and you had a certain track that you were going to do. You were going to marry one of the guys either around that block or around the 20 block radius and you were going to get married and you'd work for the telephone company and the biggest thing then was to stay in Harlem, but then, finally, get enough money to buy a house in Queens.

Q: Well, you know I think it's fair to point out that this limiting aspiration, particularly of women was not limited to the African American field. This is, you know, girls are supposed to go for the MRS degree and this is a continued...

BARNES: By the time television came along and what you saw in magazines or whatever, this is what you were aspired to. So it was ordinary. As I said it became a pattern, both white and black, you got your engagement ring at the senior prom and Nicky or Barry or whomever, black, white, Chinese, there were few Chinese ... because you know, Washington Irving pulled people from all over. And there were Chinese girls too and everybody had a boyfriend and you were going to get married after high school. Because at that point also, college was way out in the stratosphere but you've got a high school degree, you've made a big accomplishment.

Q: Did you find that you were up against ... The Jewish girls, the ones who kept pushing the educational limits, there used to be quotas for Jewish people because they usually studied harder and worked harder than anybody else so to give the rest of the kids a chance they often limited the number of Jewish participants.

BARNES: At Washington Irving they didn't limit. Actually that's where I started finding out what Jews were really about. We had of course, a landlord who was Jewish, DeCapasis. They'd come around to collect their rent and there was always some guy that was selling something and you'd pay ten dollars or five dollars a week and it was usually someone Jewish who was doing that. Morris and somebody else owned the grocery store across the street. So you grew up where you knew an undercurrent of being Jewish or whatever and they were usually somebody that you had kind of an ambivalent feeling towards.

Q: Not entirely but...

BARNES: But, also, these were the people who were in the building and a lot of people worked in the garment industry and you knew a lot people who said: "Oh that Jewish guy! That Jewish guy's getting on my nerves!" and all that. But I got to high school and there were lots of Jewish girls at our school and that's when I really started seeing Jewish vs. Italian vs. whatever because we've grown up in a neighborhood that was predominantly black. We saw a transition to some, what we call Spanish, but they were Puerto Ricans who were coming into our classroom and into our neighborhoods but for the most part we had been in our own community. When I went to Washington Irving, to high school, this is where I got an element. The Jewish girls were extremely competitive in terms of making good grades because many of them, their parents wanted them to go on to school. That was usually the city college where you could get in according to passing the regions. You always wanted to make a high mark on the regions and so we would study and our whole class would be based around passing the regions, whether it was in your math classes, your English classes, or your foreign language classes. The Jewish girls were very, very, much into making good scores. Then you got on that track, especially if you were in the academic stream. When I was in high school, there were so few of us, the black girls who were in the academic courses. Most of them, as I said, were in what they called "commercial" courses. We started getting into the spirit of things, that is, the Asian girls, the Jewish girls, a few Italian girls, most of the Italian girls wanted to get married and so they were also, a lot of them, in the commercial classes. They would become secretaries and finally quit to have babies, etc. But the Jewish girls and I hung in the academic track. You start having the same aspirations as they had–to pass high on the regions. If you passed high on regions you would definitely get in to one of the city colleges of New York City. That's what happened.

Sometimes if you got only 85 on the regions, you'd take it over again. Say you get 90, because the Jewish girls wanted to get 90 and above. So if you got an 87, sometimes you'd go to summer school. I'd go to summer school. I'd go to summer school so that I can take the regions again and get at least a 90. So a lot of my actions became based on just hearing this and you got to know, also, Jewish culture. By that time in the '50s there became the state of Israel. So you became extremely interested of "what's this Israel stuff?" They were hearing this and you'd started finding out about labor unions and about Communism and so on. I have two boy cousins and besides I would say, knowing a lot of this kind of, more intellectual kind of high level ... we weren't sitting around just talking about the screen stories. I had two cousins whose father was the type of "academic excellence"-type people. So every Sunday we'd go and visit them around the corner. My cousins were also brought up to excel. One of them is a lawyer today and another one is a doctor, a neurologist in California, San Francisco area. But we had to also compete with them.

The father would say: "Well Shirley, what are your grades like." This, that, and the other, so, my uncle John: "Well what are you going to be doing?" He sort of looked down his nose at that, and it was the other thing. By that time we had it in our heads that you were supposed to pass and pass well, be good in school, and behave yourself. So with that, and

as I said, my father, he didn't say, you're going to do this and that. He was too busy trying to make a living. My mother would say it in a gentler way and she was a very supportive person. But when you got out into the public world and this world of competitiveness, you started seeing what your peers were doing and if you were in the academic courses, you wanted to be among the best.

Q: In a way, it wasn't a unique place but, New York was unique, I guess, in that you had this competition. This particular pace was set by the Jews who were fairly recent arrivals too.

BARNES: Oh, it was set, the bar was placed higher and you wanted to be a part of that. You placed your bar just as high as theirs. We all had a really deep and abiding respect for one another in our academic achievements because that was it. Other stuff, you know, knowing how to tap-dance or sing, that was only secondary. If you could pass well or exceedingly well, you were part of a certain in-group.

Q: Did you have boyfriends?

BARNES: All the time. I was always picking out the guys who could not know I ever existed. So I was always not really having a long standing relationship because the guys I was interested in, they wouldn't even look at me. [laughter]

Again, the standards are high. But anyway, you called it "oh she goes with him." That was what ... you're going together. Now "you're going out" but just then, "going together." So it was really interesting because in French, the word is *il va avec elle,* "he's going with her." So, in a way, there's this translation: "we went together," you'd go with someone. And not too many though, because number one, the one thing that discourages: you did not want to become pregnant. At that point, I had no conception of, these people have been together too long and the girl was always pregnant before she was married. So the thing is that, these were sort of romantic, idyllic situations you wanted to be in. But I never wanted to get too close to anybody and my studies came first. I always was in a sort of a blue-funk because the guys I liked never liked me and the ones that liked me, they were the jokes of the neighborhood for the most part. So I remember even in high school when we were going to the senior prom, I could not get a date and finally there's this guy, Harvey, and so finally, I said: "Well I guess I'll ask him." And he just jumped at the chance. I didn't even want to take my senior prom picture with him but he was so happy because, of course, I was an academic success in the neighborhood and this was really great for him to be able to take me out. It was a very nice thing, a nice affair, but it wasn't the guy ... I don't even remember the guy that I wanted, I can't even remember who it was, but it certainly wasn't him. Because it was the idea whether he was "cute" ... That was, "oh he's not cute." Harvey? So for me, by the time I got to high school it became very difficult because you didn't meet guys because you were at an all-girls high school. And the guys that you met, for the most part, our "brother" school as they called it, was Stuyvesant–which was academically superior. Stuyvesant was all boys at that point. Their sister school was Washington Irving. For the most part they were all white, the guys that

went to the school; very few black guys went to Stuyvesant. It was another competitive school where you had to take a test to get in to Stuyvesant. So by that time, you just didn't meet that many boys.

Q: Was there any interracial dating in those days?

BARNES: No, no. People didn't even think about it. I mean it was a given that you didn't know about; no way. It was something that just never happened; it never crossed your mind. Or, for example, because my father was ... we would know everything that was going on in terms of the entertainment world, because we had so many entertainers in our neighborhood who lived in the neighborhood, all the people who were jazz greats, etc., lived all in that area. A lot of them, those men would date or be with white women and you just hear your mom and dad say well you know, he's going with an "ofay" and you didn't know what an ofay was and then you found out, it's a white person. But there was very little interracial coupling and certainly at the high school level, it just never happened.

Q: I might point out too that particularly in that period there wasn't a lot of dating between say the Irish and the Italians and the Jewish and the Irish. I can remember in even my time, a bit older than you, I was discouraged from dating girls who were Catholic because we were not Catholic. I mean there was an awful lot of categorization.

BARNES: Well, I can tell you that West Indian parents did not particularly like it if their boys were going with a girl whose parents or roots were in the south. When I finally in high school had my one big romance, this fellow, his people were from the Islands. Oh his mother didn't particularly cotton to me, plus I was not light-skinned enough for them. So even within the racial group, you sometimes did not trespass certain distinctive lines. A lot of my friends, however, especially when I went to city college, a lot of my black friends came from West Indian parentage. Just like Jews, they pushed their kids to succeed academically. So southern blacks, they were very happy, but they didn't have– whatever it was–the same kind of fervor. So a lot of my friends by the time I got into City College, because there were four big city colleges and not just the city college in New York, there was also one in Brooklyn, Brooklyn College were all a part of the University system. My black friends at that point were of West Indian parentage, so I got to know a lot of distinctions within the race.

Q: Oh yeah, well, the Jewish group is divided up in to the German Jews who were ostracized.

BARNES: Oh yes.

Q: As opposed to the Russian Jews

BARNES: The Russian Jews ... This is what I found out. I did a lot of socializing on the daily school basis with a lot of Jewish girls. You found out the distinctions within that

group and some of them just could not stand German Jews. Of course growing up in New York City itself, you started listening to what Jews said about other Jews and you knew that the Russian Jews had a distinct grouping of themselves compared to other Eastern-European Jews. Or, especially, they had a love-hate relationship with German Jews.

Q: It's a fascinating mixture of people. It took several generations. But what you're pointing out on the side though, it seems to me a very interesting thing, and that is how the island blacks sort of jumped ahead immediately, up the social ladder. I think of people like one of my bosses, whom I have the greatest respect ... Barbara Watson and others. Colin Powell.

BARNES: Colin Powell. The island blacks.

Q: The island blacks jumped ahead and it comes from the parents and the upbringing.

BARNES: People have been doing lots of studies on this. Island blacks who immigrated into New York City and other areas, they took advantage of the opportunities and their background was such as that they ... I mean Marcus Garvey was a raced person. A race-man and he thought that...

Q: It was the "Back to Africa" movement.

BARNES: Yes. But at the same time, the distinctiveness that he had, the characteristic was that he didn't have the encumbrances of slavery. Although there was slavery in the Caribbean area, they didn't, whatever it was, once they immigrated, it was not an encumbrance the way slavery has been indelibly marked on the minds of people who came up from the south. The immigrant West Indian population took greater advantage and had a different kind of priority when they came to the United States and it was passed on, of course, to their children.

Q: Well, of course, part of is the immigrant priority. I noticed this having been a consular officer, having people talk to me about Korea, Vietnam, Greece, other places. I mean once they hit the United States there's a selection process. Once they hit the United States they brush aside everything and they understand what the goal is, which is education and property.

BARNES: Yes, well this is it. Mostly every doctor that we went to in the black community was a black doctor but they were mainly islanders. Many of them had graduated from Howard University or Tuskegee but they were West Indian blacks and they had this ... "you going to be a doctor or a lawyer?" And even to this day they are the same way, they have not changed! You are doctor or a lawyer within the West Indian community, of course you're also a Secretary of State but you were going to be a professional. And they did not, as I said, the one big boyfriend I had, the big romance, his people were from ... oh it wasn't Antigua but it was something that was an "a" and one of those really tiny islands. His mommy was not too happy when she saw me. [chuckle]

So I grew up, as I said, knowing as you get older you started seeing these distinctions, but for me, I wanted to be part of the in-crowd. And my in-crowd was those who had made these certain kinds of achievements. I had, if not overt, I had passive encouragement from my family. They never–even when I got my little jobs, because I always had a part-time job, from the time I was 16 I was doing something to get some money; my clothes and my own things–they didn't even ask you, they never said, "you got to give something to the household." And I never knew what their financial circumstances were and I could have contributed something but I never had to. Because I guess, the burden for them was that they didn't have to give me an allowance ... it was lifted from them. They were encouraging in their own way. They never said to you, "what are you doing that for? Why are you going in to this or that?" It was always, "okay if you want to do it ..." You always felt, you came in the house you were going to have a meal, there was always something to eat, there was always something like a roof over your head. You know that if you came with a financial problem, that they would find a way out for you. So it was an encouragement. You had this kind of undergirding that you had from your parents, even if they didn't understand exactly, all of these mystifying things of fashion illustration or museums and all of that. They figured, "she's on the right track."

Q: Yeah. Well then, I think maybe this might be a good place to stop. We'll pick this up, I put it at the end here, so we know where to pick it up. We'll pick this up, when did you graduate from high school? What year? 1956?

BARNES: Oh dear, I think that was ... 1959?

Q: '59? Well I'm adding 18 to 38 ... That's 1956.

BARNES: Because I went to college in ... let's see, I was at City College '58?

Q: '58? Well okay.

BARNES: I'll have to go back and see...

Q: Well we'll pick it up, I'm just adding 18 to 38 and came up with '56. It might have been '57 or something. Anyway...

BARNES: I think it was ... I'll have to go back.

Q: Okay. Anyway, we'll pick this up when you're ... we haven't talked about why you went where as far as college goes and we'll pick it up then.

BARNES: Okay, great.

Q: Great.

This is 13th of February, Friday the 13th, 2004. Shirley, so you're off to college?

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

Q: Where did you go?

BARNES: I went to The City College of New York in what was called the "uptown" campus, that's where they had liberal arts and the school of engineering and they had the famous Lewisohn Stadium which has been raised and there were some more of the academic buildings. I was there for a year on the uptown campus and then decided that I was going to go to the business school which was what they called the "downtown" campus. That was the Bernard Baruch School of Business, named after the great entrepreneur and financier and philanthropic person of the '30s, '40s, '50s, Bernard Baruch. I went to the Baruch School of Business and that's where I graduated.

Q: Well lets start first with the, I guess, uptown campus?

BARNES: Yeah.

Q: What was CCNY there like?

BARNES: CCNY was always considered at that point a left-leaning institution; the preponderance of the student body was Jewish. And I would imagine a great deal of the teaching staff was Jewish. Although, that was hard for me to ... I don't know whether it was all Jewish at that point but preponderantly Jewish. Certainly the student body there was a great, great presence of Jews who were, I guess, second generation for the most part. Their moms and dads had worked in the garment district; they had worked as union organizers. You had that kind of electricity throughout the school of being always on the left side of most issues. Their moms and dads voted Franklin Roosevelt and after that, oh gosh who was...

Q: Truman_...

BARNES: No, but, I mean before that even there was the Vice President that ...

Q: Wallace?

BARNES: Wallace! Oh yes, Henry Wallace. So you had that kind of energy out of the student body. That wasn't particularly political, but you had sort of osmosis after a while. That was when the New York Post was also a very left-leaning paper. It was almost a shock to me to see what the Post is, the New York Post. It was that kind of excitement there that was generated by the student body. There were very few black students but there was a handful on the uptown campus. Mainly the women were in the school of education because that was still the least that most African-Americans were aspiring to: middle class status. They were going into teaching and social work. So we found that a

lot of our black colleagues were in the school of education. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, whether I wanted geology or ... I was floundering around. I'd been in high school, academic and art, then I knew I wanted to go into art. I always, from my practical side said, "Nobody makes money as an artist and an illustrator." I knew I had to get *a* college education. I could not go through some kind of a trade school or whatever. So I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. When I decided to go to the business school it was bent towards retailing and that kind of thing.

But up there for the first year was quite exciting: Buell Gallagher became president of City College. He came from a white person, an academic and then guess what, the president of Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama which was a part of the HBCUV– Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He came and he was the president of City College which were these campuses, because City Colleges comprised Queens College, Brooklyn College, the City College of New York, Bronx, they had something in the Bronx ... it was a huge, huge operation of maybe 40,000 students, 35,000, I don't know. But it was huge. If anybody knows, the buildings in the campus were, it was a commuting campus but they had ready formidable looking buildings and the teaching at the school was outstanding also. You got in to the school by passing the regions as I've said in my past part of this tape. [END TAPE 1]

Q: You said you had joined the NA...

BARNES: NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People].

Q: Could you explain what...

BARNES: National Association of Colored People. To show how conservative the group of blacks on campus was; recruiting of members was very difficult, even among the handful of us that was there. It was a matter of people saying, "look, I'm not joining because once I graduate I don't want this on my record anywhere that I belonged to the NAACP. That's how really...

Q: Overtones of the former McCarthy period wasn't it?

BARNES: I had not been that involved in the McCarthy period so it was just a shock to me that black students, because we were still Negros then, or colored, would really opt out of this. It was before the real crest of the civil rights movement started in the '60s. But still, it was extraordinary for me to see that college students were so conservative, especially when the contrast had been to the whites that were on campus. If you went up and said, "Look, we need to some money to do this and that," they'd find money out of their pockets or whatever to support your causes because many of those students were extremely liberal. And it had been inculcated in them by their parents who had suffered discrimination being Jews in America at that point. I mean, Jews in America even then had the privilege of white skin. Many of them changed their names and changed their locations or whatever but they did, they were able, many of them, to integrate into a

middle-classed life style. Especially financially. A lot of Jews were still climbing and they were lower-middle class and their kids were looking for the best opportunities. They were doing for their kids what they could. So you had a much broader scale of lower-income, lower-middle class Jewish elements there at the school.

What they would tell me, my Jewish friends or colleagues at school, they would say: "Look, what we do is this: We pass the regions, we get into the city university, we get a terrific–you know, City College is one of them–we get a terrific education, and then we'd save that money for four years, then we go to Harvard or Yale and we have our ivy league education." So this is what they did and then.[they said] "We're going to jump into not just the middle-class, but we're going to be rich". This is the way they had a plan almost, they had a plan and a strategy of how they were going to, what was going to be their entree into the American dream. I figured it was, I think it was a really great plan because they got an excellent education as did I, as undergraduates. They had all the prerequisites to get right in to really good, good schools afterwards. They forged trails for other Jews that were coming in behind them.

At any rate, I stayed there. I was very interested in having a social life with other blacks who were in college because on my block in my neighborhood, oh we call it a block, I mean, my group of friends, I was the only one going off to college. So for me, the one thing that was, I think, a plus, being on campus was meeting other blacks who were in college and had these aspirations to get a college education and go on to do something professional. It was an outlet going to parties and you had affairs–social affairs–where you would meet other college students coming up from Howard University. They'd be there at Christmas or the Thanksgiving holidays or whatever.

So I had that social outlet which started there at the uptown campus. The most formative thing that happened to me at that point was that I pledged one of the black sororities, although it was open to everyone. It was started on a Howard University campus in 1913 and it's Delta Sigma Theta: that became my life in college. Even in other places afterwards; [it was] a group of really dynamic woman. When I pledged, Dorothy Height was the president of the Deltas. She had a distinguished career, was on her way to being a distinguished person; a very much younger woman because that's been 40 years ago, or more than that, I don't know. At that point, Dorothy Height was head of the Deltas, she was the president. Patricia Harris–Patricia Roberts, she just got married in fact, so she was Patricia Roberts Harris, was executive director. Their headquarters then and now is here in Washington, DC. I was bowled over by these women who were professional, who could stand up and conduct meetings and all of the components of meetings with a sergeant at arms and corresponding secretary and all of this: I pledged. I didn't get in the first time, but I was one of the stalwart pledgees of Delta. I was going to do anything to get in to that sorority. I just wanted to be like those women.

At that point, the national president after Dorothy Heights, she sort of hand picked, I believe, Dr. Jean Noble. Dr. Noble, coincidentally, had just started teaching at the City College and she was on campus. She was what I wanted to aspire to. She was dynamic,

besides being a very beautiful woman, she was just smart. She had taken her doctorate at Columbia teacher's college and just wrote a new book called The Black Woman's College Education which became, in a way, a seminal book on the education of black women at the college level. She was just, for me, awe-inspiring and I just said: "I'm going to be these Deltas, Dorothy Height, Jean Noble and Pat Harris, gee; I got to be up there with those people." That became a kind of a standard for what I wanted to achieve, a standard of excellence. I did get into the sorority the second time. I became very, very, involved in all kinds of meetings and activities and regional conferences and all those kinds of thinking. I gave my heart, soul, and body, anything to the Deltas at that point. They were very good to me, I got several scholarships through the Deltas because one of their things was to raise money for young, black women to go to school; young black males too, but certainly women. They are today, I guess they have about 60,000 members. They're a national-international organization and they have had a succession of very, very talented black women. There were other sororities too, Alpha Kappa Alpha and Theta Phi Beta. These are black sororities and their counterparts on the other side, black fraternities. I was going to say that the sororities are much more dynamic than the fraternities.

Q: I was wondering whether ... I think today, from what I gather and I haven't seen statistics but, there's quite a discrepancy between the number of black women who are going to universities and men who are going universities.

BARNES: But it always has been that way.

Q: Yeah, or at least in the movies with Spike Lee and all, you're getting the feeling that the men's fraternities, at least in the traditional places were big partying places. This is much more...

BARNES: Yeah, like the white ones.

Q: God knows, but much more organized, in a way; our initiations and all that ... But I mean, was there that going on at the same time or....

BARNES: Yeah, both the men ... The sororities and the fraternities, one of the failures were the pledging part of it. I think it just got out of hand and could be very cruel and bestial in a kind of way what they did. Some people have died or have been maimed by this.

Q: It still happens. It still happens.

BARNES: In Alpha Kappa Alphas, the AKAs, I guess almost three or four years ago, although they said it wasn't, but one of their routines, I guess, out there in California was to take blind folded girls, pledgees and put them on the beach and let them wander around at night. One young pledgee was drowned. It's a terrible case. And I know within my own chapter, we were suspended because of our cruelty and as I look back on it and what I did to people once I got in and what people did to me when I was a pledgee, I would never do

that again. But that comes with age and maturity. It's something at the headquarters level, it's completely frowned upon and they try and keep these young girls from doing this to each other. And the men are just worst than this; what they have done to young fellows, you know, they brand them. Once they get in the military, a lot of them have to take those brands off because you become property of the military. So these men have been branded with their Omega Psi Phi or Kappa Alpha Psi or whatever ... I can't remember all the names now, it shows you my age. I could rattle them all off before. They meant something to me then but not now.

At any rate, you're right. There has always been an imbalance of black females to black males in college and university. The discrepancy has widened at one point in the '60s and in to the '70s and '80s when there was affirmative action there were more young males coming up so that the gap was narrowing a bit. Now it's gotten wider again. It's a lonely thing for young black women. There are very few black males and in today's society, the black males that are there, they give themselves much more license, I think, to date and go out with white girls, Asian girls, Indian girls, Korean girls. Black females haven't allowed themselves that kind of venture. Maybe they just don't want it. They want the black males, perhaps, or whatever, but they're very ... the presence and disproportionate number of black females whether it's Howard University's campus which is something that is near here, you could see it if you walked on to the campus or whether it is, Talladega or some of the other HBCUs as they're called: Historically Black Colleges and Universities. It's a crying shame and I really mean that literally. I have a young niece who has now received her PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Nebraska in Omaha. She is now doing post-doctorate work at the University of Colorado in Denver. She's a young woman; she's getting older but there are so few black males that are out there that she has not much of a selection. So as I say, it's a crying shame what happens to these young girls.

We are not taught in the United States to be adventurous. Foreign Service Officers, yes, some of us who opt for this kind of lifestyle but so many of us are so inward looking that we don't go out of our way to meet new people or foreign people.

Q: When you moved over to the business side, you said you were in retailing?

BARNES: I was trying to get something that would dovetail with my interest in fashion illustration. I had done art academic at Washington Irving High School. A lot of my courses had been in fashion and illustration, and then I said, "well what can I do to keep this kind of fashion illustration" and that kind of thing. So I decided to try retailing. They had some really good retailing courses at the Baruch School along with merchandising and marketing courses. So I decided to go into that area and try and find a combination of things that my interest in art would also be involved in. It was very hard to make that kind of synapse but it was something that I was going to try because fundamentally I still knew that my parents said, "you're going to get a college education, you're not going to go out and got into the 'biz' or whatever. You're going to get an education." So I thought, okay I'll go in to the business school and get a BBA, a bachelor's in business and

administration.

Going down on 23rd street and Lexington to the Baruch School it was a whole different atmosphere. People were interested; everybody structured their classes around going out and working right after they left school. That was a part of it; you always had a job doing something. If you were really good in accounting classes you tried to get some little job even as a bookkeeper somewhere. Very few people in that school were there for the academics, the kind of thing that you saw in the uptown campus. I liked it there. I liked the Baruch School. Those people were about business and it was a very interesting thing. I still kept my interest in French. I thought, "hey maybe I could get this whole thing all hooked up together where I can get into something to do with retailing and fashion and then I can go to Paris." So it was all kind of muddled but I still had this undercurrent of trying to get to France and doing something. So the years that I spent at the Baruch School were good years and I appreciated those. I hark back to the point that my parents were always encouraging. They didn't know, they weren't very good in terms of guidance and counseling on "here is the road map to your career and what you should be taking these courses in." They didn't know from anything about my courses or what they meant. They were just happy that I was sticking to it and that I was in school. And I always had a job.

Q: What kind of work were you doing?

BARNES: You got these jobs through the school or you hustled somewhere else. I had a job I think mostly two and a half out of the three years that I was at the Baruch School, I worked for a German-Jewish small pharmaceutical company that, I guess, they had come from Germany after the war and had gotten out and they had been very, very, well known in Germany for some kind of little product that probably somebody 100 years ago had made; all it was was this kind of charcoal that you popped in your mouth, and it sort of pulled all the junk out of your system. But anyway, I worked for them as the bookkeeper and did a lot of other administrative work for them. So I would get to school, maybe my first class might have been 8:00 or 8:30 because you always staggered your classes so then you could run off to your job by 1:00. So I worked for them part-time for almost three years, two and a half years or more when I was at the Baruch School. And other kids had jobs on Wall Street or they had fathers who would take them in but mainly they always would ... they were hustlers. They'd get some kind of little job.

It's not like the kids today who have really good internships. When they go for their undergraduate degrees in business, I meet them and they're at places like Smith Barney or Goldman Sachs. No, we were in these little operations that were probably the size of two of your offices here and a little factory in the back. There was a hierarchal structure. Especially among the German-Jews. So these were the people that came over and they'd done the same work in the factory when they were in Germany and they were still doing the same thing. They were subservient to the boss and a little tiny Jewish woman who owned the business and I guess it was her husband who had it before. And one of these really awful sons. He was spoiled and he used to scream and yell at his mother and she

wouldn't blink. She didn't blink, she was a tough little chicken. And Mrs. Burger, Mrs. Burger oh ... She had all the old ways of doing business on little pieces of paper and all of that. They were just, for me, it was a comedy. Oh, Mrs. Burger. She must have been at that point, about 75, she was still running the company and Walton was her son. They would sit there and argue. He'd scream and shout at her and you'd think he was going to just kill her. She would just keep on doing and she was a stubborn old lady but she kept the company running for a while. Now, I'm sure it's no longer there. Standard Pharmaceutical Company - that was the name.

Q: The what?

BARNES: Standard Pharmaceutical Company. I'm sure it no longer exists but I would get out of school on 23rd street and hustle over there, get to work, get myself a sandwich and chock full o' nuts (coffee) or eat that in the cafeteria–the food was so lousy–but I'd eat and run. Jump on the bus, get across town and get over there to work. Work; go from about 1:30, 2:00 until about 5:30. So three hours, four hours a day because you just go and post all the bills and accounts and all that. Get home and study. That was it.

Q: As you're going those three years, did you sort of try to build a network of people who would help you later on?

BARNES: No, I knew nothing about that. My only network was really the sorority and that was career advice. You expect that once you got out that if they knew somebody they would help you. These women were at that point piercing the walls of segregation themselves; the leaders in the sorority. I mean Dorothy Height at that point was significant because she was working with the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] in New York. She had just gotten to the point where she was not a director or anything at that point, but we thought it was a significant job, which I mean in the pantheon of what the YWCA is today, it was a good job. She did rise up in the structure and was very, very much respected. But our network, my network was based mainly on knowing black folks. I guess maybe without my having put a lot of I would say, controlled, planned effort into it, one of the best things I did, I think, was to be with the sorority. They would take you under their wings if they saw that you were really serious. The contacts that they were then making became your contacts. I also had the church; my church was a good contact too.

Q: What church was this?

BARNES: At that point, I had decided that I didn't really want to be bothered with the African Methodists–the Episcopal Church that my family traditionally went to because all they did, I felt, was the preacher would get up there and scream and shout. They were too unsophisticated for me so I wanted something else. Something that met my personal interest and needs at point was the Church of the Mass which was on 122nd street and Morningside Avenue in Manhattan. That was James Robinson who founded Crossroads Africa. I found out about that church due to some friends of mine in high school who

lived around the block. Everybody started talking about Crossroads Africa and what Robinson was doing in the community in Harlem. So I started going to the Church of the Mass which is a Presbyterian church. I was there mainly for the social part of it, not for the religious part of it [chuckle] which was minor. Anyway, I got to meet a lot of interesting people and I was so interested in Crossroads Africa.

Crossroads Africa was the harbinger of the Peace Corps. They sent kids over to work in villages. They started in say about '58, '57. Right around the independence of Ghana. It was the first modern African state to become independent; Kwame Nkrumah was the president at independence. That sent a fervor through the black community of those who were knowledgeable. It was just extraordinary to see that there was a black, independent country. People put aside Liberia and Ethiopia; they didn't feel that really counted but to see Kwame Nkrumah and his stature, the way he was greeted, you know, people within the United States, governmental hierarchy, gave him his dues as the leader of an independent country. So among young people and others, they were very much smitten by the fact that this was a modern, black, African country. For me it also became, again, a goal to try and get to know people who were from these new emergent countries and see whether I could go there.

On the basis of that, I think, Crossroads Africa was established. The goal was to have an exchange; it was a student-exchange-type program really for a short period of time of six weeks to work in villages in Africa and help people, your African young counterparts, to build a school or hospital or whatever. You know, in six weeks you'd just get the foundation laid if you can do that. The credit was more the experience and of course the Americans got more out of it, I think, than the Africans did. For Crossroads Africa, through this network of friends in the white Presbyterian community, Dr. Robinson who was a very charming, persuasive, articulate person got lots of funding and he was smart. His tactics were to get a lot of young, white kids who were at the ivy league schools for the most part, or the Eastern establishment schools for the most part, a few from Stanford and places like that, to come on Crossroads Africa. You had to pay the majority of the money yourself to go on the trip. It wasn't something that was sponsored. So most of the white kids' moms and dads their families could afford it. So the majority of the young people that participated, the Crossroaders as they were called were white upper-upper middle class kids. And then there were on stream more and more black youngsters. By that time I had just graduated from college.

Q: You graduated what year?

BARNES: We've gone over this. I forgot to get this right; I think it was '58. I'm not sure. I went on Crossroads with the '58 group so I might have graduated '57. So I was working by that time. I had gotten a job but I wasn't satisfied with it.

Q: What was it?

BARNES: When I graduated from college, I went and came down here to Washington to

work with the Deltas for maybe six to eight months. I was still floundering around. Then I went off to Boston University for a year. I was going to take a masters but I didn't finish it. Then I was in Boston for a while and after that came back and worked but was still very active with Crossroads and all of that and then decided to work and I went on Crossroads Africa. I then quit my job and went on Crossroads Africa. So this was about '58 so I must have graduated in '56 because of what happened, yeah.

So I went on Crossroads Africa. That was when I decided, hey I think I'm going to just go and target into international affairs and international relations. So the French came back up again and that's when I tried to find something and when I got back from Crossroads Africa I went to see Dr. Robinson and said: "Hey, I've really got experience with Crossroads, it's really great and I'd like to do something." And he said: "Well, lets see what we can do," and he said, "hey I got a call from the Ford Foundation and they are looking for someone. "Apparently the Secretary General of this school: Ford Foundation has underwritten, it was the '60s right around the time of what happened in the Congo when Mobutu was still there as Prime Minister. Kasavubu was the president and it was just chaos there.

Reverend Robinson–Dr. Robinson–said: "If you want to go to the Congo it looks like they might be looking for someone to go there and this guy who is the Secretary General who'd been sent out by the Ford Foundation was looking for a black female to be his administrative assistant." And all I can think of was, oh fantastic! The light bulb went off. When I got back from the Congo I'd have that on my resume that I was with the Ford Foundation. So I said, "Yeah I love it." So I went and interviewed. The guy that was head of Congo–under Africa Bureau as it was structured then–he said, "I'm not sure that we want to send you out there at this time, it's really chaotic and very dangerous. You might think about it." So I said, "oh yeah but I really want to go." So that was in the meantime, that's when I said I got to find another job. So I came down here and worked for Deltas for a while. Then the Ford Foundation called me and I was here for about six months and they called me and said, "Hey I'm coming to tell us that I'm coming down," and we went and had a sandwich somewhere and he said, "Well," because I kept in touch with him. I wouldn't leave him alone. He said, "fine if you really want to go, you can go on out to the Congo." So that was in '60, '61.

Q: What did you do in Crossroads Africa, where'd you go and what were you doing?

BARNES: We had a great time. We went to two villages in Togo. They had tried to target those who had some French, to be in French-speaking countries. I had [a] background in French from junior high school and high school and in college so I was chosen to go with the group that went to Togo. We went to two different villages in the central part of Togo and helped build schools. We were three weeks in one village and one week in another village. I think there were eight or nine of us in our group and our leader. And it was a great experience. It was tough in the sense that everybody got diarrhea and hated the whole thing and all they could do is sit down at night and talk about what we're going to eat when we got back to the States. But for us, it was a great experience to be able to have

to see how other people live and to get to know them. I mean all kinds of things happened in the village; there were deaths, births, even in the three weeks that we were there and three weeks in the other. You made these quick friendships. And we'd have to get up every morning and go out to the "*chanter* [*shanti–from the word 'to sing' in French*]" as it was called and work and while we dig we'd mainly would knock rocks and take big rocks and make small rocks [chuckle]. And they started singing the songs that you'd sing on the work force there. I even remember some of them in Ewe which is the language of Togo and that area.

It was a great experience. Now the leader of that group, she's sort of group leader. She and I are still friends today, she lives here in Washington. I haven't kept up with the people that were in my group. She sort of knows where some of them are and over the years there's been minor contact but that was a great experience, which was over 40 years ago.

Q: Well then, you went out to the Congo in 1960?

BARNES: Yeah. When I got back from Crossroads Africa, I said, "I think I'm going into African affairs. Got some French. I wrote down that I was with the Ford Foundation, no, that I was on Crossroads and that some group would be interested in me and that's when Reverend Robinson said: "I got this call from the Ford Foundation, they're looking for someone to go out there. It looks like this guy wants to have a young woman go out and sort of serve as a role model for these kids that there are in this a *L'école nationale de la loi et de l'administration* [The National School of Law and Administration]. This was a school underwritten by the Ford Foundation because at the time of independence there was a total of one jurist in the whole country. They needed people for the middle-cadre, the middle-level-cadre and that's what the school was set up to do. It was to form these people.

Q: Well, you went to the Congo from when to when?

BARNES: About '61 to '63 ... '61 to '64 maybe.

Q: What was the Congo ... when you got there, the Congo as you pointed out, I mean you had ... Kasavubu was you know...

BARNES: Lumumba had just been assassinated.

Q: ... and you know, it was a real mess.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

Q: Where was it when you got there? What was it like?

BARNES: I was with the Ford Foundation. When I got there, it was rough. There was

curfew and all of that. They blew up the bridge so that getting from one part of town to the other took sometimes three to four hours. You had to go in different kinds of directions because there were no more bridges. It was a mess. There was nothing in the supermarkets. Nothing. How do you eat? What are we going to do? Fortunately I had met this black woman here. She had been invited to come out and help to work on a dam that they were building in an old part of the Congo but the offices were right there in what was then Leopoldville not Kinshasa.

She had gone over there to work a year or so before I went over there. So I had met her in the states before she went over there and she was there on the tarmac when I got off of the plane that night. It was a PanAm airplane. Just to show you that there was not that much to do in the Congo when I was there ... We used to go out. We said, come on let's go out and meet the PanAm airplane and see what's going on. That would be our big thing. They came in twice a week and we'd have dinner out there and just lean over the rail and see who was coming off the plane. But anyway she was there on the tarmac when I got in and she was a good friend. She supported me. When I got there they threw me in some apartment that was just awful ... but I was happy. I mean, when I look at having been a GSO [General Services Officer] and what our Foreign Service employees when they go overseas and to see what was available at a place like the Congo, we are so spoiled in the Foreign Service in so many ways.

But at any rate, I got into this little apartment. Next day, sort of, guys were taken around to the office and then ... sort of, there was no such thing as a welcome kit and all that. So, I had to go with this friend and we went out to the supermarket. There were maybe three limp stalks of celery and two carrots on the other side, no meat. The shelves were absolutely bare except for some insecticide spray and then there were like a hundred of them across the shelves. I just was ready to go back home. Of course, it was always, you'd hear about people getting shot. The UN had a very big presence there. They went in the Hotel Royale and if you ever read any of the accounts of the Congo in the '60s the Royale always plays a pivotal role in how many meetings that took place. There were all the different factions. But at any rate, my friend Ivine Reed was very helpful. She was going with a fellow named Chuck Robinson and they were very, very, helpful. They used to have me over for dinner all the time until I found out in kind of intricate ways ... If you found out there was meat in town, you'd literally just drop everything, I don't care if it was the Secretary of State on the phone or anything. You'd just put him on hold, or if it was the President of the Ford Foundation you'd just say, "there's meat ..." White butchery or butcher shop and you'd just run out, get in your car and drive and the lines would be around the corner.

And then... this is something that has bothered me. I still find it difficult. I feel very, myself, guilty about it. All the Congolese who were nobodies would be standing on line and you'd just walk up and I'd say: "I'm an American." And they'd let you in the shop. Or, of course if you were white, and of course I'm not white, I'd have to let them know, "look, I'm an American too." So, the French developed, mainly the Belgians that were there, they had elected to stay because many of them had run out in the '60s when all the

real problems ... But they'd just walk in with their little shopping bag and the women would walk right in and say, you know I want this cut and I want this and they'd set it aside and there was a Belgian butcher. And he'd look at me and I'd say: "I'm an American, I work with the ..." "Oh, alright." So they'd give me my preference. And I really haven't gotten over that yet because the Congolese would be standing in the street, the line, the queue forever and ever. And I just see how morally bankrupt and corrupt people are in that sense. The thing is, people have told me that even in places, in certain areas in Zambia today, even in South Africa, this kind of thing still exists. Not that there is any dearth in terms of meat or whatever, but certain things were ... if you had the right skin color or you'd know ... or you'd happen ... [END TAPE SIDE A, TAPE 2]

Q: What kind of work were you doing?

BARNES: It really was just an administrative job. I was the filter for my boss who was a very dynamic African-American man. Very talented, very quite extremely bright guy named James Theodore Harris, James T. Harris, Ted Harris, he was called. He was charming, he had been a ... Let's see, he wasn't a Rhode's Scholar. I forgot what kind of scholar he was. He was just one of those extraordinary brilliant guys. He had gone to Lafayette College in, around central Philadelphia and he then had gone to Princeton and was someone that the hierarchy in the white establishment obvious had singled him out as a "comer." And as things were going to change, they knew that they were going to have him in places; one of their black guys. You know. He was targeted. He was just extraordinarily talented, he spoke fluent French, he enjoyed being there, he was a *bon vivant.* His wife was just the most wonderful person; Anne Harris.

I worked for him. He had been hired by the Ford Foundation. He would give a monthly report of what was going on, what he'd done to try and set up this school, I would place his calls to New York with the Ford Foundation. I did a lot of the back-stopping with the professors as they were coming in. So I would be working with the people who did this. And that was it. I was just jack-a-bout, a factotum as they called them. That kind of thing. But I knew after a while, I became more than that. The teachers would come and sit down and talk to me. I'd say, "You know, Dr. So-and-so was in today or Madame So-and-so and she had this and that and I think maybe we ought to do this and that and see whether we can help them."

So, it became that and they'd say, "la petite mademoiselle, we talked with her: and we got this!" I also became that kind of a filter. He could care less about what would happen to them. I became, sort of, his guide. I was his DCM in a way. I was there to make sure things ran as smoothly as possible. So that's mainly what I did there. He and his family left to go back and work for the Ford Foundation at their New York headquarters. But that's mainly what I did, I was Ms. Everything.

Q: Well how did you find, dealing with the Congolese, your dealing with the judicial apparatus? I mean here is a state with the Belgians who had not done their homework? I mean they had not prepared this country to assume national status. How did you find

dealings with the authorities there?

BARNES: I didn't have that much to do with them except to write out invitations and help Ted when they were having some kind of *soirée*, some reception or something that they were having–representative things. I did not go in and demarche anybody or, "do this." I knew people on an informal basis within the government structure. I knew what was going on politically. You start building up a group of friends and therefore go–as is Washington or as was Cairo or all the other places–sharing in that community. It is the capital of rumors so you heard all kinds of things and I went and told my boss. People would talk to you, and these were people who were in government who knew what was going on. If you wanted something done on a personal level you got to know these people so you could go into their offices and you didn't even have to give them, as it was called a "matabish" that was the word for slipping something under the table. For me, my fixture, my kind of position there with the government was being social but in being social you got a lot of information. I think, in a way, Ted was right to have a very dynamic, very open, at that point kind of cute little girl there doing all of these things and running out and being sociable. It was a good role model in that the Congolese women were ... I mean I remember when I was in my little Volkswagen Beetle. I had one sent over from Germany. I was driving and the women stopped on the street, they'd never seen a black woman driving a car. So that was already something. By example, it was just amazing for them. One woman just started laughing, because sometimes when you're so, something that's so surprising to you, you laugh because you just can't explain.

Q: Oh yeah.

BARNES: So I looked at her and I said hi and you know, sped away. People used to know who I was, everybody knew my license plate number, that's how small the town was and I remember my license plate was U4226. It was a blue Volkswagen. And they'd say: "Mademoiselle we saw you at the Vis-a-Vis night club the other night" or, "we saw your car." [Laugh] You were at the Vis-a-Vis! And yes, Franco or Kabasele or someone was playing and I just had to be there. The whole thing was, they were very happy to see how I integrated into Congolese society. I respected their customs and morals and I was fascinated more than anything. They'd sit down and tell me what was going on, most of the women and the men about marriage or certain things in their political structure within the village. It was great.

Q: Were women at all sort of the power behind the throne within the structure?

BARNES: I think women had a certain role but they knew not to transgress. People have always told me that Madam Mobutu was a very, very powerful woman inside the house. But I think there were certain kinds of barriers that she didn't go over. She wasn't going to sit there and tell him how to run his government. The women had strong, strong control and power in the domestic part of their life. That would spill over because if you have an unhappy household and everybody's on your case, finally it's going to get to you. I don't care who you are. So keep the little wifey happy or whatever and mainly not the wife so

much as the wife's family and that was the important thing that the women knew enough to know that. If they were orphans you had a rough time.

You had to have family. So it was the family that was on the case of the men and the women were able to control through their families. You know, village people would come up and they'd sit around the house and live there and all of that so she had enough people around on her side to make sure that she had a lot of control over the domestic issues. Of course, most of these guys had their little sweetie pies on the side. If you said, I just want to be faithful to my wife, it was, "are you kidding?" So, it was almost a social kind of pressure put on these guys and especially once you've started going up the ladder of success by the time you were a minister if you didn't have at least four or five concubines something was wrong with you. But the women had a lot of control and I think the women in a way they didn't mind their husbands had their girlfriends on the sides, concubines; they'd always call them "*cousin* [French]."

You'd never have a sit down dinner because you don't know who these people are going to walk in with. So these little *cousins*, these cousins that they'd come in with, I think a lot of the wives almost got used to it. I think after a while it was good because you had something else to hang over his head you know, so it became, "give me another 100,000 francs because I know that's what you're giving to her. I want 200,000." It became almost, "oh, man, my wife got after me today because my little *cousin* she found some way or another that I'm giving her 100,000." I think these women were conspiratory. [Laughter] They told each other what was going on. But at any rate it was quiet for me. I loved it. I had some of my dearest friends and still we are friends and that was from my Congo days. And the ones that I still see, one in particular, she was with USIS [United States Information Service] at that time. And she said: "Shirley do you remember we'd be waiving people off at the airport including on the plane and how many of them think we'd all be crying when we leave the Congo, nobody wanted to leave where we are, it was such a great time." I think it was a combination of youth, the thrill and excitement of being there on the edge of danger. I guess maybe there are a group of people maybe in Baghdad today who will make life-long friends, you know the reporters or people who are there with some of the agencies–development agencies–and these crisis oriented places. I think you'll find people who band together and they become really good friends in these kinds of "eye of the hurricane" situations.

Q: Did you get involved in any events while you were there? Close fighting?

BARNES: The first time I was there was from like '62 to '65 and when I was there during that time everything was just in chaos. It was right after the death of Lumumba and Cyrille Adoula became the Prime Minister and Joseph Kasavubu was the President. The UN troops were there and they were trying to get Tshombe out of Katanga and the secession that was going on there. That went on and it was back and forth and back and forth.

There were a group of meetings and all of that. Finally Tshombe decided to come and

have negotiations. They installed Tshombe in a house that was right across the street from the house that I was living in. So I could lean out my bedroom window and see who's coming up. He finally became Prime Minister. I was still working for the Ford Foundation. He set up residence in this beautiful villa that was right across the street from where I lived. Supplicants that would come here starting I'd say five o'clock in the morning and they'd stand there and some of them had walked and others had come up in their cars and we could see who was coming in and out and I could tell, "guess who was at Tshombe's house last night?"

Q: Yeah.

BARNES: So those kinds of things were mainly what happened. There were no real overpowering incidents. We had a lot of curfew so you had to be in your house or some place off of the roads because there was always another outbreak of something happening. You couldn't go anywhere. So you started going crazy saying, we're just going to have a party and stay at somebody's house all night. So we'd have these curfew parties and at some of them I said, "I can't stay there all night, I've got to go home." That was sometimes menacing because here I was by myself in the dark riding around and these guys would come and they'd stick the submachine gun right in your car. You just said, "I hope this thing doesn't go off." I'd say, "I'm an American, here's my passport." They'd say, "Oh, yes, you're DeWhite." You can see how you get to be known, "okay, go ahead." I just look back now and say, boy, it's good to be young and adventurous and stupid. I wouldn't do that today but at that point those were the kind of things that happened.

But for me there were no big incidents there at that time. I married someone from the Congo and I went back to live there and I was there for another, say, two years and I was working for USIS then on a local contract. So I stayed there for two years but the marriage didn't last. When we were there as a couple there were a lot of things that – [now this] was during a transition period too, another transition. That's when Mobutu took power. It was rough at first but again things settled in for us and we had a good time. Again all we did was party. It was for me an exciting time.

Q: Did you have much contact with the embassy while you were there?

BARNES: No. That's not true ... yes I did. In fact, we were sort of the "in" couple and so we were invited to all of the dinner parties and all of the chic affairs.

Q: I'm talking about before you came back married.

BARNES: Before that when I was there with the Ford Foundation, yeah, I had some contact because you'd get invited to a lot of things. They have Americans over, the American Embassy people would have you over for something, the missionaries, there were some missionaries there and they had things. I see this around the world: you never met any of the oil executives. They had their own compound. They lived a separate life

apart from the embassy apart from everybody. There was the oil company, they didn't socialize with anybody. But for us yeah we knew the AID people, I knew the people at the embassy, some of the secretaries because it was very hierarchal. I didn't go to the Deputy Chief of Mission Mac Godley's house for dinner very often but on other levels people from USIS would have you over. So I knew a lot of people, a lot of people from the embassy.

Q: When you came back in '65 where'd you go?

BARNES: When I came back in '65 I had decided I was going to go to Columbia business school. When I came back in '65 was the first time. What I did was I worked for the African American Institute. My boss and his wife came back to the states before I did. I was there another year and a half and she got a job at the African American Institute. It was the Women's African Program and it brought African woman leaders over to the states. And we were the programming element; we made sure these women were programmed out to whatever was their counterpart in their countries. So I worked on a particular program called the Women's Leadership Project which was mainly to [educate]. These women took courses at Connecticut College. We had such a great time. We went to Connecticut College with the women and then we programmed them out around the United States. If they had been in the Girl Scouts or the Girl Guides [the] Girl Scouts took over after their course work at Connecticut College on leadership and group dynamics then for the next three or four weeks they were out in the United States. The Women's Africa Program coordinated all this.

So I was with them for about a year and a half when I decided to get married and go back. So from '65 to '66, I was in the United States.

Q: What was the background of your husband?

BARNES: He wasn't formally educated except he had been educated as a dental technician. He had started a small business. He was a young man and very, very ambitious. He was interested in export, import. Everybody starts out like that because that was the time when there were these duties and if you can get an export quota then you can keep the money in some bank in Europe and siphon it off. You'd get something in Congolese francs but then you can get it in, I don't know, devis and all of that. So you were skimming off money. Everybody wanted to be *exportateur*, *importateur*, and you said, well, how much exporting do you do? Not much. Everything was importing. And then at that point you had to get a license and a quota. It wasn't a free market situation. So any guy that could pay enough money to whomever was giving out licenses and quotas and it was mainly for importing a lot of rice and stuff like that; so if you could get that and get somebody to help finance it you could make a lot of money. He made a few good deals but then he just didn't have that kind of pull and clout these guys who came in [had]. You had to come from the right region and the right hierarchal group and all of that and he didn't have it.

Finally, it was obvious that he wasn't going to make any money. So we got together and decided that he would go off to school in Montreal and get a better education. At that point also, I was seeing that this was not a good marriage. He was not a reliable character. On my side, I didn't think he went anywhere. Maybe he thought he was doing his best but I decided that I was going to see about going to Columbia graduate school for business. I was not going to go to Montreal. I was in the throws of making up my mind but my fallback was to make sure that I got an MBA [Master of Business Administration]

Q: You had been serving in this international field, what brought you back to Columbia and MBA business?

BARNES: At that point, I've got to make some money and I did read and knew about how MBAs were going to shake trees and all the money was going to come down. So I decided that I was going to get into the MBA program and go out and make a lot of money.

Q: You went to Columbia when?

BARNES: I was in the class of '70. So I got there in '69. From a master's degree program in Boston, I had credits that they accepted, so I didn't have to do the two-year program. I came in and went to school from '69 all the way–that was in February or January–through the summer and then the next semester of courses. So I graduated within a year from the business school and went out to try to find a job.

Q: You know, during this time ... during the time when really, you were involved with the Congo and coming back and all. Farther south the whole Civil Rights movement was going on. Did this affect you at all?

BARNES: It affected me because it seemed that it was always the timing ... I was away when people were sitting in. I was with the Ford Foundation and later on I went back and I was married and so we knew what was going on from afar. But I wasn't coming back and participating when–for example–when Martin Luther King was assassinated I was there. He was assassinated on April 4th. I found out about it on my birthday, April 5th and things were not going very well in my marriage at that point. Our car wasn't working we were just having a heck of a problem with money and all of that. I was going to work, I was working for USIS and a fellow that was with USIS used to pick me up because our car wasn't working and drive me down to my office. He said, "Did you hear the news?" and it was my birthday that day. I said, "Why what's wrong." He said, "Martin Luther King has been killed." On top of everything my own personal problems and what I was going to do I just couldn't take it, I just burst into tears; I remember that.

Cause I had dressed up. I said, "I'm going to get up and dress up. Today is my birthday and I'm going to have a good time." So, things were happening in the states as you can see, it was getting there a day late for me, by almost, I would say, by courier pigeon or pony express in a way. We had a short-wave, those Zenith radios and maybe that was the

day we just didn't turn it on. But it was very devastating for me to be so far away from home. By the time Bobby Kennedy was killed; I mean I just said, "oh, what is going on? Why am I here in these far away places?" So I was always sort of slipping; brushing right past the events that were going on in this country. My sister was very active in the Civil Rights movement here. We were originally from St. Augustine and she was very active in St. Augustine and got arrested when they had a very, very big protest in St. Augustine. They were very brutal. They were all out and they were really beating them in St. Augustine. But I was not apart of it, physically.

Q: When you got out of Columbia...

BARNES: In '70.

Q: In '70 ... what?

BARNES: Seven. 1970.

Q: And then what?

BARNES: And then I thought I was going to find this great job and find a lot of money and that didn't happen. I really had to look for a job. But I had some friends and they, or a friend of mine, had a very dear friend who was a contract compliance officer. He had to go around and look at all these places and see whether they were complying with the new laws on desegregation and hiring. I was just lamenting on how, hey I've got this MBA from Columbia and I still haven't gotten a job. That was sort of like, five months or three months afterwards and I had done all these interviews on campuses and going through a hundred, a dozen places trying to get into advertising and marketing. I interviewed with some of the big marketing companies and big advertising agencies on campus. One of them was J. Walter Thompson and I had really interviewed well you know? And all of this ... gee I know I've got a good chance. What happened was that I didn't get the job and I kept all of the rejection letters. And this guy he said, "Well I'm going to call him and tell him about what's going on."

And so, he was going to J. Walter Thompson I guess, that week, and so I said, "Well, you know, what about this woman that interviewed on Columbia University's campus. She seems to have such a great resume and I was wondering why wasn't she selected for your junior officers program?" Oh my god and all of a sudden I got these calls and I had to interview with the head of personnel and all of this. Finally I got a job with J. Walter Thompson, which was then the largest advertising agency in the world. I started my advertising career at J. Walter Thompson as a junior account executive.

Q: How long were you with them? From about when to when?

BARNES: I was there from '71 maybe until '74. I was there for three years.

Q: How did they bring you in to the business?

BARNES: Very reluctantly. They were not happy at all. I could have been a man from Mars. I mean, they had a guy who was a Howard University graduate; did not know anything about advertising but was a very flamboyant, gay guy. He just knew how to talk and dress and he decided that he was going to come up to New York and work in advertising and no background in it at all. And he got a job. He was in the junior officers, junior account executive with me and with some others who had come in. So there was just two of us in that whole–there were 4000 people–I mean 2000 people I think in the New York office at J. Walter Thompson and we were the only two blacks at any kind of management level.

Q: Oh Lord. [chuckle]

BARNES: So, for me it was just being put under a microscope. It was a very difficult time.

Q: I would imagine it would be. How did you find your bosses?

BARNES: Very, very, very uncooperative. They did not want me there. They felt so ashamed that they had to take me on and I had to be a part of their team. I was not welcomed at all. They put me outside in the hallway and I had to sit at a desk and they just had me adding up numbers in an adding machine and the other junior account executives had little alcove desks and all of that inside but they were very, very unwelcoming.

Q: Well how did it work out in the long run?

BARNES: It did not work out too badly because I was pretty good at what I did and they knew they had to comply. Once they got to know me a lot of them found out that I'm very good at what I was doing. They weren't going to ever give me anything important. I knew that. I was not going to get to be a senior account executive there. You do start to try and get a brand and go out and meet the clients. They did not feel that a black female should go out and meet the clients and be sitting around the table and talking about what your strategy ought to be and how you should spend your millions of dollars.

So it was not a very welcoming thing for me to be there but they had to comply and so every time the compliance officers would come in, I think they started seeing, well that does make some changes. So I got a mentor, they had to have a mentor program and it was a guy who became my mentor. He was a senior executive vice president and we got along very well. But I told him, "Look, I know I'm not going to ever be at your level at J. Walter Thompson," I said, "Whatever it is, I'm going to do my job" and I did awful good. They'd take me out to lunch every month or something to see what I was doing. But he was picked to do this. He was a nice enough guy, we got along, but I was up front with him. After all I started going to a lot of the retreats with the senior executives and so I got

really good exposure and I learned a lot. I was a very good advertising person. I could stand up and make a presentation finally and some people would call you over and say, "Look, don't say this the next time or ..." do this or that. I got very savvy and I was very happy to have had that experience at J. Walter because it was *the* cream of the crop to be at J. Walter. It was like "wow."

The very interesting thing about that time when I decided on J. Walter after going from pillar to post looking for a job and I had been with some head hunters. Because that was a time when the big, big companies had to start hiring blacks and so a lot of the head hunters in marketing, management, just mushroomed black head hunters. So I got another fine offer, even better than J. Walter Thompson from Philip Morris. The president or the senior vice president of marketing; he wooed me and wooed me and he was so taken with me. I just said finally, no I can't come there because they manufactured cigarettes and my father had just died maybe a couple of years, a year before of lung cancer. And I didn't like to be around cigarettes anywhere. I didn't like to be around smokers. His name was Jack Landry and he was one of the outstanding marketers in America with Philip Morris which was *the* outstanding marketing firms in America. And Jack Landry kept asking me to come to work for him. Even a year after that when I was at J. Walter and I said, "I just can't do it. I don't want to work with a cigarette company." And that was at a time when you could go to Philip Morris headquarters and everybody was smoking.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

BARNES: And so I didn't but ... You know, feast to famine I got two great, really good offers. Because J. Walter was not as good an offer as Jack Landry because I knew I was going to be his protégé and I was going to go up the ladder within the Philip Morris company but I just decided against it. I didn't want to do it. But I did work with J. Walter. I just knew that those guys weren't going to push me up anywhere, nowhere. What happened was I was there and I had started getting offers, people, head hunters were always calling to see if you wanted to jump ship and go somewhere else. I'd call advertising and marketing the biggest legitimate prostitution business in the world because you're always just leaving other companies to go to one that was going to dangle more money. So I went to work for a black advertising agency after that. I had just gotten a big chunk of money to do advertising; Navy-recruiting advertising. I went finally to work with them. That was really good for me because I was a captain of the ship because they didn't know anything about advertising.

This guy had been a sales/marketing person before and he started this advertising agency. He didn't even want to call himself a black ad agency but finally he started seeing this as advantageous. Admiral Zumwalt with one of his Z-grams said, "look, after the Kitty Hawk and all of that, we've got to do some serious work about minorities in the Navy." So this guy John Small who was a Republican–black Republican–he got the Navy advertising business. Gray had the big chunk of the business which was about 22 million dollars and John Small had one and half million but that was a lot of money. So we did the Navy-recruiting advertising for minorities. We had to come down here to

Washington. In fact, right there in Rosslyn. That's where we used to be where the Navy-recruiting headquarters was and we would do the presentations there. So I stayed with John Small for two and a half years. He was a flamboyant guy who as I said, managed to put himself out of business. John just spent his money recklessly and just made some really bad decisions and they pulled the plug at him. Chase-Manhattan finally had underwritten him and they finally called their loan. They just got tired of him because he was just messing the money up. So I was out of work for about a year.

And then through another head hunter I got a job at Norman Craig and Kummel which was the tenth largest advertising agency and they offered me a vice presidency. I was the only black at a senior level. So I started out as a senior account executive, account supervisor on all the Ajax business which was a big chunk of business. So by the time I got there in the '70s Ajax was their mother's milk. That really built a lot of the Colgate Company in those days and around the world. It was an international marketing agency. I mean it is powerful around the world–still is–the Colgate-Palmolive company. So I worked for them–I worked for Normal Craig and Kummel–on the Ajax business. They were meat eaters. They would gobble you out and spit you out. "The client." That's what they were called. If you're in advertising, you've got to go over and see the client. You were always running over there with a presentation. They'd call you and, "I want you over here in ten minutes!" They were real meat eaters. Savages. They were the worst kind. They would spit you out and your bones [and] they'd throw you out, "get out of my office! I don't want to see you." They treated you like that and you'd take it. So I was there for about a year and a half and then finally I just said, I can't take this. They had lost a lot of business at the Ajax business. You know those guys go around and look for new agencies.

So they started downsizing. And I said, "Nah, I think I'm going to go out now" and so I left. I don't think they were unhappy to see me leaving. I just ... a person who had been doing a lot of market research when I was working at the black agency, he did a lot of focus groups. Back there in the '70s I mean, they talk about focus groups but political parties, they didn't even know what that was. That was very, very common in advertising and marketing to do focus groups; to find out what was the buzz. How do you really get this thing marketed to the group that you've targeted? We'd sit behind these one-way mirrors and listen to these women in the market that we wanted and they'd talk about the product and all of this.

So this guy used to do focus groups research for us when I was working at the black agency. We had the Navy business we were testing ads and how they'd go over with our target groups. We went all over the country for the Navy. At any rate, they asked me to come and work with them. I became an entrepreneur at that point because I had to contribute to the business–find a business–we did pretty well. But this was a guy that wanted it all to himself. He wanted to take it over. So if I bring in some business, it then became *his*...

Q: Oh no.

BARNES: ... so I said, "Ah, this isn't working." Then I just said, "look ..." and he didn't want me there, he had taken one of my businesses. So I went across the street, north of 57th street when Carnegie Hall was still there and right near Carnegie Hall about half a block and I opened my own little place there, a one-room in somebody else's [building]. We had a big office and he said, okay you can rent one of the rooms here. So I worked for myself and that for a while and I got a little bit of business, I got several good accounts. But they were catch-as-catch-can and I didn't know whether or not I wanted to keep this up. I was getting old, I didn't have a pension, I don't know what I'm going to do and so at that point some of my friends who had been at the embassy in the Congo they were the ones who said, "hey, you know they got this new program at the State Department." They were still with the State Department. They said, it was minorities and women and they're going to have this new way of getting in. I said, look, I don't know, I don't want to go and work for the State Department. It's too rigid, too bureaucratic and I don't always agree with U.S. foreign policy. I don't want to work for them. I don't think, and so they said well take the test and go down there and talk to the people, fill out the application. And that was during the period when I didn't know whether I was going to keep on with my own business or not. And I had gotten a bit of a good contract with the city of Miami to do a trade fair, an African trade fair and they decided they didn't want to go through the next step and they had abandoned it. So I said, oh I got to go out and look for some more clients and so it was at one of those–as they say–crossroads periods.

Q: This is tape three, side one with Shirley Barnes. Shirley, what date are we talking about when you came into the Foreign Service?

BARNES: I came in to the Foreign Service in October, 1983 and that's when I came to my A-100 class.

Q: Where did you pick up about the foreign services? Were you talking to friends and all? What's this odd group like, I mean, were you...

BARNES: I had learned about the Foreign Service when I was in the Congo with the Ford Foundation. I'd been in the Congo and started getting into the diplomatic world and I liked it. This is nice. I met people from different institutes including a lot of contracted groups and administrations which I knew associated with the Ford Foundation in finances. We met lots of people from the U.S. embassy. A lot of activity centered on USAID giving loans, grants, etc. to the National School administration and a lot of the other multinational organizations; the donors as they're called now were involved. So it was always, kind of an international setting that we found ourselves in whether we liked it or not.

Q: Actually, we sort of covered this. I was just wondering, you know, if you came in 1983, did you have any at all misgivings or concerns about getting in to this?

BARNES: Oh, not really. I didn't know I was going to get in: number one. Number two is

I had been, by the time I joined the Foreign Service I had had another career in advertising. I've been in advertising about twelve years with major companies. I then had started my own little business and it wasn't doing that well; it wasn't doing badly and I had enough savings to get by but I started thinking about what's going to happen with my social security and my retirement. I don't have any money. This is a real gamble. At that time since friends of mine told me about the women and minority program having started, and I said, "Okay I'll take a chance on that." And I did.

First there is an oral interview. It was kind of ... what they called an "in-box" take off.

Q: That's where you prioritize ...

BARNES: Crazy way I think of knowing whether or not you're capable of being in the Foreign Service. My own misgivings at that point were, I wasn't sure that I was going to get in. Am I going to be able to support America's foreign policy on every issue and whether I could do the job. So those are the only misgivings that I had. I was ready to get up and go and move to a foreign country and work with the U.S. government. So it was okay with me, I was ready.

Q: You were a hell of a lot more prepared than most. I suppose that you're a lot more prepared for your A-100 course?

BARNES: Yeah. I was and in fact I found that offsetting and all suddenly trivial. They were for the most part young people and I was a little older both in age and in my experiences and I found A-100 just a waste of my time. I look back on it and there were a few parts that were worthwhile but in general it was very poorly structured. I think it was too broad in other words. People like me should not have been in that class, having to truck along with I mean, real wet-behind-the-ear, breast fed kids. It turned me very sour against the whole process. I passed the French so I didn't have to go to language school because I had passed with a four/four in French. So I then became very big with Foreign Service because of course the "scuttlebutt" starts about ... if you're in a political cone and I didn't know cones and all of that from razzamatazz. It became obvious that minorities and women were put in consular and admin and I asked for econ or political. I kept sending in lists and doing all of that and following the game and it was told to me if you don't go in as a GSO, oh you can forget about the Foreign Service.

Q: General Services Officer.

BARNES: Yes. I said absolutely not with my experience, I'm not going to take that kind of salary. So I went back and forth and I think I finally got an assignment as GSO to Cairo. Of course, everyone else was in Paris and the assigning officer and everybody else sort of snuggling behind their sheets. And I said, "I don't know...look at all my experience." And I was 30-something I guess when I went into the Foreign Service. At any rate, I went in as a grade four and was a GSO. There were nine GSOs in Cairo.

Q: Pretty big embassy.

BARNES: It surely is. And they threw me right into one of the most difficult jobs. It had nothing to do with my background and experience except that it was ... I had to manage that place. I had 43 people and can you imagine if they had given that job to some 24, 23 year old? It was in travel, shipping and customs which was one of the most tedious, terrible jobs in GSO. It was getting everything through customs and the irony of it all. I became very sarcastic about what we were there to do. The people in USAID were more interested in the services of GSO travel, shipping and customs to make sure that they could import a second car and be able to sell it and be able to sell it in Egyptian pounds and be able to get back the money at our cashiers in dollars which would give them a windfall. And with each one of these sales I would have to go to the Egyptian government to their Ministry of Finance and argue, and it was like extracting blood with each car. That became almost what I was doing there, was making sure all of these bloody AID people would be able to sell second cars. They buy one and everybody would pass along the tips before they even got out to the post. Buy a car, usually something that would be preferable on the Egyptian market and since AID people were there mainly for four years at least, we'd buy one car but you had to write within 18 months or two years, to sell that car under some kind of term that they had–much before I got there–extracted from the Egyptian government and then you can buy a second car and get that imported, duty-free and sell it without paying duties. The AID people had this down to a science; buying and selling cars. And I'd tell them, "I feel like a used car sales man." Because I would have to go down to each one of these cars, plead with the Egyptian government to let this be sold duty-free.

That and I always questioned, "What the heck are we here for? Are we really here with 'USAID'? Helping people, or to sell cars?"

Q: Yeah, well...

BARNES: And I know this is getting/gotten on tape because I think it's an outrage what we let happen. I'm sure there are even more serious things happened in other countries but it's something that I will never forget. I will never forget.

Q: Well tell me Shirley, why wouldn't you be directed as you're looking in to a Foreign Service career towards information agencies? I mean your background in advertising; I think you would be a natural there.

BARNES: I can't explain that. There was nobody directing anything. I might again feel very cynical about that the directive was, got to get more blacks and minorities, you know, so scrub around and get some! Let's make our body count look good. There were no real, sit-down counsel sessions with anybody that I knew; surely that I can remember that I had any. It was, "here, the assignment sheet. You can have 16 choices and half of them have to be in developing countries or hardship posts." That was the criteria - that was it. Nobody ever said that you should really be in USAID and all of that. I think at one

point maybe I had decided, I'm joining the foreign service, is that really the foreign service, you know, being up there in an embassy for a year. I never pushed it either. I did push to be in commercial and economics and they said, "oh no, you don't have the background ..." and it's that and the other. Although I had been in business and my background was an MBA from Columbia .now an MBA and a BBA So, it was at that time that I felt, don't rock the boat too much. You're getting into something you don't really know that much about; I had no godmother or father to pull me through the ropes. I just went along to get along.

So, I don't know beyond that, why there was no counseling and why I did not get into or they steered me in to USIA [United States Information Agency]. But I spent the major part of my life as an admin officer.

Q: Well now, how did you find all of this rather distasteful ... quite distasteful. How did you find the embassy?

BARNES: Cairo, again, Cairo is so hierarchal. Nicholas Veliotes was the ambassador when I got there and he didn't know me from diddly squat and I didn't expect him to. But the hierarchal situation which I think now has changed somewhat, but that structural thing of all these busy little political officers are over there sitting under and licking the behind of the ambassador and the econ officers are floating around over there. They would get to–even though they were flunkies–all of the receptions and all this. We over at GSO were just a little bit above field-hands and especially, travel, shipping and customs and the other things. I didn't know what a representative function was until later on when I sat there and complained to my admin counselor who was Nick Baskey and he was a hard son of a bitch to work for. Whatever was his problem–he and they were very, very, tentative about having an inexperienced person who doesn't "know" the foreign service–coming here and being GSO. Well I just out performed all of them until I became one of the stories of the Cairo embassy. The USAID people just loved me and all kinds of good feedback and so of course Baskey than became a little bit more malleable but they were all hard to deal with. I didn't expect the ambassador to know me or acknowledge me. I was one [person], I mean all of those people that worked at that embassy. But I got a sense and a feeling that I was tolerated rather than really appreciated. I guess maybe that's the way it is with lots of people who are in senior positions who just feel that they are put on the line by risking something by having an unknown quantity come in to do work.

But as I said, that place was a mess. And they all had a young white man there before I became the GSO and he walked on water. And it was told to me by someone, "do not ever say anything against Ron" Don't say anything about the work that he did, he was wonderful in his job. I said, "Hey, did I say anything?" It was obvious that I had a long road ahead of me. My staff was great staff though.

Q: How did you find the Egyptians, the Foreign Service nationals?

BARNES: You could kind of tell, they say, "oh another one is coming here." They get so

inured to this, cause they know, it just rolls off their back. I guess it was a little rare to see this black female come in, but it became obvious that I knew I could catch on quickly to what was going on. A lot of things slipped by me but they knew how to carry their weight. They were magnificent and very nice people. I liked the Egyptians. I had a great time with them. I'd rather be with them than most of the Americans at the embassy.

Q: How about Egyptian officials you were dealing with?

BARNES: I was very low-level. I think the highest level that I ever dealt with as GSO in Cairo was once in a while I went to see the vice minister at the Ministry of Finance who had to file and make these decisions on whether these folks could have a second car and sell it. He did that every once in a while. I think I saw him maybe twice. But other than that I didn't see high officials. I saw a lot of people; I'd say the head of an office or something. But I saw a lot of people in the business world. Besides shipping and customs, there were lots of people in shipping who wanted the business. They wanted all of the packing and all of that. So we would set it out for bids. I knew all of these people who had shipping companies. I knew everybody that had a hotel–every hotel director–because that was part of travel. I knew every travel agency, American Express, up or down, latitude and longitude, I knew every travel agency so I had a great life, because I was always being invited places from the business world that had to do with travel, shipping and customs. So I knew a lot of people.

Q: And you left there in '85 about? Or about two years?

BARNES: Yes, I was there from '84 to '86 because I was here in training from October '82 so I left to go to Cairo the next year.

Q: Where'd you go then?

BARNES: From then I went to Dakar, Senegal, again as a GSO. I was a supervisory GSO in Dakar, Senegal.

Q: But this time in Dakar, you were in a French-speaking country and...

BARNES: Yeah.

Q: What was Senegal like for you out there?

BARNES: It was a nice place. I had been there several times before because these friends of mine whom I had met in the Congo had finally joined the foreign service and they were posted to Dakar. I went to visit them on a couple of occasions and I always liked it. In the 70's it was still a nice, charming, Frenchi-fied city. By the time I got there in '86 it started deteriorating but it was still a fun place. I was happy to leave.

Q: What were the problems that you had as a GSO?

BARNES: I didn't really have too many problems in Dakar. I worked for Lannon Walker and he and his wife liked me. We got along well together and my problems were very minor in Dakar. I had a good time. I enjoyed working for Lannon Walker. He was a difficult man but he liked me, his wife liked me and that made my job a lot easier. And they thought that I could get results. I didn't have any problems in Senegal. It was just that the Senegalese would get that in their own structured society, there's a caste system. The Senegalese have a caste system and they're so into being this upper-elite classes in to being very French oriented and they're very ... believe it or not, very skin color oriented too. If you are an African American they would prefer that you would be a light-skinned African American. After a while I found them just to be very boring. On an individual basis I had some very, very good friends. But as a group, everybody said, "Oh, Dakar is great, you're going there" and I thought so too. But it was enough after two years, I was ready to leave.

Q: Were there any coups or problems?

BARNES: Nope. Abdou Diouf was there when I got there and he was there for a long time after I left. That was a very stable country, politically speaking. And so, you went to work, did your work, you went to parties you had dinner parties and then the only things that happened which was very painful for me at that point was that my mother died while I was there.

Q: Oh no.

BARNES: So that was the real downside, but other than that, it was a great enough post. I had a chance to ... my grand-niece, my niece's child insisted that they've got to get it right, they've got to get a brighter perspective. So I paid for her trip out there and she had a great time although it was kicking and screaming. Her father, "oh what are you doing out there with these savages?" And this and 'what do you want with this' and that, yadi yada yada, even though I was paying for the trip. It was a significant defining moment apparently in her life because she was very, very interested and impressed with what I was doing. She didn't know I was *a* GSO. She saw me running all these offices and all of this. She had a nice little time; it was a young girl that was there for the summer with her father and mother who were working at the embassy. So I got her a job and this other young girl. We had these little jobs, summer jobs, we run around and put paper on people's desks and she got paid for it for the three weeks she was there! So she had fun. So that was a highlight. And as I said, Dakar, Senegal was okay; I never want to go there again. I'd never want to live there.

Q: How did you find dealing with the government?

BARNES: Nice, nice enough people. They weren't difficult to meet with, get appointments with, get your paperwork done. It was slow sometimes, but sometimes it wasn't and again my staff was very good. People that I had to do business with knew

what was going to happen. I found that the Senegalese, I knew it's bureaucratic, but so is the U.S. government. It was not any more or less. It was okay.

Q: Well then '88 I guess, you were...

BARNES: '88 I left Dakar and I came back for a short term assignment that Lannon Walker had sort of jiggled some strings. He said, "What you need to do is get a short term assignment and then go to the National War College." And what I did was get a short term assignment it was called an MMP, something management and something.

Q: Policy I think it was.

BARNES: Yes, and Ed Dillery was head of it then.

Q: Yeah.

BARNES: And I stayed there for six months and then went off to the National War College.

Q: What were you doing in MMP?

BARNES: Do I know? Pushing papers around, I guess. [Laugh] I don't even remember. It was a J-O-B, a bureaucratic job which I don't even remember that we may seem important for and probably was in the grand scheme of management, bureaucracy stuff but I don't even remember.

Q: National War College. You were there about '80...

BARNES: Oh, lets see, the class of '90 was the National War College.

Q: How'd you find that?

BARNES: Wonderful experience. I was never too fond of military people and our, kind of, military role and the kind of narrow mindset that our military officers get into. I had a change of heart. I met some of the most interested, the brightest. The most capable men and women that I met were those officers that I went to school with at the National War College. They were fun, they were articulate, you could tell they were on their wicket. They were almost trained to stand up and give presentations. I just learned a lot from them. Some of them were deep thinkers–not all, not a lot–in terms of a wide perspective on all kinds of things in this country. The War College itself lent the experience of traveling around and seeing all kinds of different things. But more than anything, it's just their grasp and knowledge of history, military history, their presentations. I would say that 80 percent of them were really were going to make fine officers at the Admiral, General level, you could tell. Now, I would say that the Navy guys there, it was, "why am I here? What the hell I'd rather be out on a ship." They all had this sort of attitude. But it became

more or more apparent, through, going to the Pentagon, having people come in that this new idea of having an integrated service and that they were all apart of it and that the War College had real cache because it brought all these guys together.

They began to perk up and see the innate value of being at the war college. It was a ticket puncher like they'd never know. So in general most of the service men and women there really made the most of their year.

Q: From this, where did you go?

BARNES: From the war college I became, let's see what did I do? I think I went to Strasbourg as Consul General. I think that was where I went after the War College.

Q: You were in Strasbourg from when to when?

BARNES: From '90 and from '93 I think.

Q: Could you describe a little about Strasbourg? Why do we have a consulate up there and what were you all doing?

BARNES: When I went to Strasbourg we still had posts in Marseille, Bordeaux, Strasbourg and the embassy in Paris. I represented the ambassador for the northeastern part of France. Consul General, especially in Strasbourg, most people in the United States don't even know what it is. The city has the Council of Europe, important to the Europeans, though the United States could care two cents about the Council of Europe. It is the gathering of Europeans who are at the local, the state level in their country. They are usually elected officials and they are at the Council of Europe. They come every four months and they have an ambassador to the Council of Europe that treats intra-European affairs and world affairs. They have beautiful, beautiful building in Strasbourg which considers itself the crossroads of Europe although in Brussels they say they are too.

I had both multi-lateral and bi-lateral duties. I would explain our point of view to those people who were senior officials in that part of France, what we were doing bi-laterally; our policy. And especially things in the economic area, that was very important, agriculture and those things. But, also what we would do politically. All these European countries, which were then I think about 44 members, because the East European countries were just up and coming. They wanted to petition; they were petitioning to be members of the Council of Europe. So I met, very often, with all of those ambassadors to the Council of Europe. Which turned out to be–if you knew the story–that most of these ambassadors were senior officials within their foreign affairs ministries and this would probably be their last post. I mean it was cushy, Strasbourg; you couldn't get a better post. And then there were outside people, members or that were observers like the United States. The Japanese opened an embassy there. So, besides all the European countries that were members of the Council of Europe there were some outside members. We just had a grand old time, having and drinking great Alsace wine and diddle-fiddling around about

policy and it was just fabulous. Great folks.

Q: Did our embassy in Brussels to the European Union send out people during...

BARNES: Only once in a while. You were–I hate to use this–we were a back order for them. I mean it was like an afterthought. So once in a while they'd come down to some meetings or something that were going on. But the United States didn't give a fig about the Council of Europe so in general our embassies didn't care about it.

Pamela Harriman–she was my ambassador in Paris. Someone else had started out and he was finished when Clinton got in.

Q: It must have been early '93.

BARNES: I don't know. I thought...

Q: He was elected in '92.

BARNES: Okay, '92. Then she became the Ambassador.

Q: How did you find Ambassador Harriman?

BARNES: Absolutely fantastic ambassador. She knew what she was doing and she did it well and people liked her in France and so it made life easy. She was very good at her job.

Q: Was the Council of Europe doing much?

BARNES: They were very good on human rights issues. For example, Turkey was petitioning to be a member of the Council of Europe. They have a very, very bad human rights record. Turkey always wants to be a part of Europe and so this would be held over their head. You've got to change your human rights record. And the Council of Europe was known throughout the world for their extraordinary position in human rights. The European Court of Human Rights comes under the Council of Europe. They have a lot of cases that come up from across Europe on human rights issues involving people who feel that their human rights have been violated. Those countries listen to what the Council of Europe comes out with and it does a lot of that kind of legal, extra judiciary work. In the area of some political affairs, if a nation seems to get getting out of line on some things, the edicts that come down from the Council of Europe make the rest of those countries or the country that *they* have their eye on back off on some issues: whether it's France and they way they treated some minorities, Spain or whatever. Council of Europe is a nice arbitrator in this sense and people have said, "Count me in I want to be a part of it." There are certain guidelines that you have to follow as a nation. If not, the Greeks and then they had their coup in 1967 and so the generals took over...

Q: It was '67, April 21st in 1967.

BARNES: They were kicked out! They were told, "You're out until you get your act together." And that had a tremendous effect on Greek politics to know that they were soundly and roundly told by the Council of Europe, "Get out until you get your act together."

Q: Did Yugoslavia it was beginning to split up at this time...

BARNES: That's right.

Q: Was this something that you were concerned with?

BARNES: We got demarche cables in and do this and go to the Secretary General over the Council of Europe and say, "this is what we think about the issue." So we had a nice little basket of what to do on Yugoslavia that was breaking up.

Q: Tell me about your relationship with–I mean here you are essentially the Consul General in a place–but yet, you've got this almost foreign operation going on, the Council of Europe, were you having any problems dealing with the Secretary General or any of these people?

BARNES: Absolutely not. They were so delighted that America was paying the Council of Europe some attention. So it was almost, "why didn't we see you, Shirley at this, that or the other?" I mean they were so delighted with the presence of the United States at their meetings, as an observer and they were so delighted when I finally pushed through with the State Department that we would be an "observer" because before that we weren't even that. We were just there once in a while; we would go to Council of Europe things and all of that but we had no real official status. As I said, I had a lot of other work too. I had two hats because I had all of these things that come in on a bi-lateral business, debts and Americans in jail and I did a lot of traveling around the country. For North-Eastern France I represented the United States for Alsace, Lorraine and other French areas.

This was around the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII [World War Two]. So the French are very patriotic and they do not forget the Americans and what the Americans did in two world wars. And everything you could ever imagine was going on in every village, every little county, every town. The American Consul General was expected to be there and the events were usually on weekends. So my Sundays became driving from one part of my territory to the next. And that was when the State Department was on this rampage to cut costs. They wanted you to drive your own car. I said, I am not driving on these roads. We would use these drivers, of course. I said, "I get overtime on Sundays" and it became, really, a kind of shuffling of papers because they would say from Paris, you should go to this. Because, I said, I've got to stop going to these things plus I said I had no free time on the weekends. Most of these people who were celebrating the 50th anniversary of WWII in Europe, they were doing everything on Sundays and I got to see a lot of North-Eastern France, all those villages. I got to really understand them, the French

in that area and the outlying provinces.

They had more American flags than I ever saw. They brought out of moth balls every tank, every jeep; you wonder "where are they storing these things?" And they would have their parades down these beautiful little towns all in North-Eastern France. And the Consul General of the United States was the most important person there so I really got an appreciation of the French and for North-Eastern France.

I got Mrs. Harriman to come there twice to events; one was in Colmar and something else. These were areas that had a real significant history. One thing seared in my memory was a group of Japanese Americans came through. They had served up there in the Vosges Mountains in WWII. They came into town and there must have been about two or three hundred of these veterans, maybe even more. They had made the trail all the way from Italy; this memory trail, through Normandy and on into that eastern part of France. They'd done this during the war, and they had been saving up for this for the last several years. Some of them came back every year. They know those people and those villages in North-Eastern France, "hey buddy!" You see these guys some of them with their grandchildren and great-grand children. They know the whole village, they know the whole region. When I had been told, "Consul General, there's this group that's coming in and they want you to go to all these things in Colmar and I forgot the other village up in the Vosges Mountains. I said, "I can't do another trip." Well, I got an earful from all these people calling me, I said, "okay I'll be there, I'll be there." I drove up in the Vosges Mountains. I didn't know that this was a Japanese American group. It was just a group of veterans, you've got to come. It must have been about 400 Japanese Americans and their families. Some of them had brought daughters and sons, three or four daughters and their grandchildren! And it was the most fantastic thing I had seen, to see these guys and they'd sit around and talk about ... that cold winter. That was the coldest winter that had ever been reported in European history.

Q: You're talking about the winter of '44 or '45?

BARNES: '44. You'd sit down and they'd start talking to me and say, "well you know, I was in the internment camp, I was 16, 17, I had nothing to do with it and when they say, 'you want to join the military?' Sure! Get me out of here." These were people who had been in internment camps in the U.S. and to see that they had been in 1944, 16 and 17 year old kids out there fighting for the United States of America it was the most moving thing I have ever seen. One of them was a very well known Japanese sculptor that lives, I think, in the Netherlands now. But pretty well known. He had a sculpted piece that was dedicated that was up there in the Vosges Mountains–I'm sure it's still there–but that had been commissioned and he brought it there.

It was something that I'll never forget, and the way they treated me it was like I walked on water.

Absolutely amazing people. Man oh man, you'd sit down and talk with them. "I was head

of the health services at so and so hospital, " and all these professional people during their lifetimes and they're not retired and they had their kids with them and their kids' kids.

Q: When coming to this part of France, where did it fall in the political spectrum? Socialist, Christendom?

BARNES: Northeast France is very conservative and they always voted for Le Pen. [Laugh]

Q: Did you ever run across Jean Marie Le Pen?

BARNES: No, no, no. I never ran across him. He came in here now and then in a campaign. I mean he knew it was in his pocket, that's why France is so conservative. They like me, but they didn't like, if when one Arab landed in a village somewhere was like a bit scourge was coming. The most conservative people, no way.

Q: Was there?

BARNES: I think Colmar was communist. Oh I know in French county there was a communist there. Who was in on of the government's of Mitterrand.

Q: Was there any immigrant worker groups there?

BARNES: There are lots of people of Middle-East origin; Moroccans, there were lots of them in Strasbourg, a great big community. In Colmar, too, there were a lot of North African immigrants; I'd say that about France. Proportionately speaking, outside of Marseille or Paris I think they had a large community up there in North-Eastern France. They say that the Alsatian income level is the highest in France. Those people are the kind that you see these novels and things written about ... that put their money under the bed or whatever, but they have had generations of great excellent wine and agriculture and they're very rich. The Alsatians are very rich.

Q: Good subsidies too.

BARNES: Pardon me?

Q: Good subsidies too.

BARNES: Oh yes, the subsidies and they are extremely well off.

Q: How did the immigrant community fit within this, did they...?

BARNES: Not very well. They don't fit that well. They are the people that are welfare people ... I mean, most of France is welfared anyway when you think about it, what with the subsidies but they're the ones who purportedly commit more crimes and they're the

ones that have trouble with their kids in school. They're going to be there and the French are going to have to deal with them.

Q: Yeah the French are having a little problem with this.

BARNES: Yup.

Q: This is what I gather, you know, basically a political job wasn't it?

BARNES: Absolutely. People don't know that when they go into that job. They just say, "Wow, Strasbourg!" It's a real political job and it was a lot of reporting and of course by the time I got there they had narrowed it down to one American as the pope; *un numero uno* [the number one] and I had a consular assistant that took care of passports and deeds and all of that and a very, very good secretary who was really the administrative assistant who could get out there and she knew a lot about what was going on politically so she was really, she was a little like my political assistant.

Q: When you left there, how did you find those of Ambassador Harriman, how did your direction or contact with the embassy?

BARNES: Very little. I have to knock on the door and say, "hello, remember we're here?" But that was the same thing with Bordeaux except that there they had great wine and everybody wants to go there. Marseille got a little bit more play but in general if you didn't keep knocking on the door they would pretend you didn't exist. Once a year, the Consul General in Paris would have a meeting with all three of us where the ambassador would see us, a two or three day meeting. Which was nice because it'd just made you feel, oh you didn't forget us and you'd come up to Paris and sit around and have a series of meetings on what's going on with the embassy and what our policies are and what are we doing with the French and it would be a series of very well structured meetings from, say, eight in the morning on. And the ambassador would have me over for dinner and/or a lunch and so it was really nice. They did recognize that those guys are out in the field doing something. The only thing that came up in the first part of my being there in that job was there was a big protest on the agricultural policy and at least 200,000 farmers from all over France and all over the rest of Europe marched on Strasbourg. And they marched on the Consul General's residence.

They knew where I was living, but I wasn't scared for some reason. But they did some damage to our consulate. They burned something and all of that and pulled down the gate. The mayor who was then a woman, when I heard about it, someone called and I marched out there to the consulate to see what was going on physically and they really damaged it. It was on international television, CNN. Of course, my friends didn't even know where Strasbourg was. They said why is it that whenever you go to some place there is always things that blow up? We didn't even notice Strasbourg!

Other than that, nothing too much happened in Strasbourg which was nice. I like being

under the radar. It was great. It took a lot of effort, of course, they were always petitioning me, Madam Consul General, you've got to have the ambassador come here. "Okay I'll ask her." So as it were she came to the 50th anniversary of WWII in Europe. I think she got inundated enough she came for something then and that was more difficult than anything else. At one point, the administration–Clinton–was going to come but then they scratched that. And I said, "Oh God, I'm so happy that he didn't get here." But she came twice and it was a lot of preparation but it turned out great. But other than that, as I said, I think our highest ranking person was maybe a lieutenant ... or what do you call it ... Lieutenant General or something like that. Nobody came. Once they came they wanted to get back though, oh god, this is great!

Q: You were there in...

BARNES: I think it was '93. '90...

Q: '93?

BARNES: Well let's see, I was there from ... I went to war college, I got out of there in '90 ... what did I do, I think from there I went to ... Oh I went to Berlin!

Q: I was going to say, because it doesn't quite work because you were in Berlin after the war college.

BARNES: Yeah, I went to Berlin.

Q: What were you doing in Berlin?

BARNES: Oh, let's see. I was going to be the admin counselor in the East Berlin. That's what happened, it wasn't the gulf war, it was the fall of the Berlin wall that looked like it was going to come up and happen, probably while I was still at the war college. I bid on and got this admin post in Berlin which was supposed to be one of the best jobs in the Foreign Service. Everything was paid for. Few people know this, but the German government paid for the occupation of Western Germany and of Berlin. So they paid for the Russian sector and the French and the Brits and we the Americans, everything, your housing, everything. You got on their metro or their subway.

Q: U-Bahn

BARNES: It was U-Bahn. You got on and you showed your pass. Whether you were with a civilian job or a military job. It was paradise and I had a great house. But before I left I had said, "hey well now, wait a minute" I asked my people over in the assignments and all of these folks, "What's going to happen? Are they going to close down? I mean what's going to happen, are they going to have this wall come down and what's going to happen to Berlin?" Nothing, nothing, go on out there. So about 18 months after I was there, well the wall came down just before I left, but then they unified Germany while I was there, so

I was there for the unification. It was great, euphoric, etc. but it became obvious that they were going to shut it down. They decided and this was the–excuse me–stupid policy of Holbrooke and all these others that, you know what? The Germans think ill of us so we're going to get out, we're not going to keep ... but we had a fabulous presence ... on Clayallee; beautiful, beautiful thing there where the military–U.S. military general–for all occupied Berlin had his headquarters here and U.S. mission had her/his headquarters here. Beautiful space; everything you ever wanted, we gave it up. I kept saying, don't do this. Then we started selling off our property there which were some of the most fabulous houses in the world. The Germans said, "Keep it! Don't ... we want your presence here!" We sold it there on ... 30 cents on the dollar, when we were selling it back. It was the most tragic thing that happened and our ambassador in Berlin kept saying, "we don't want to..." Who's the guy that died?

Q: Oh, yes.

BARNES: General what's his name...?

Q: General Walters.

BARNES: Oh yeah, he was. We don't want to make waves. We want the Germans to see that we're getting out. We had this little ratty place in East Berlin that was an embassy. I had to start firing about 70% of my staff, which was the most tragic thing in the world to do once I was in there. We had to let go of all these people and come up with plans. To tear down our embassy and our presence because we were going to move into this little dinky place in East Berlin. That was going to be our embassy. The worst administrative mistake in modern, Foreign Service history. Now, Harry Geisel said, he was out of the admin council. But he was under the gun for these people and it was the way to go, it was right. We got rid of some of the best property in the world. The Germans didn't want us to get rid of it, they said, "you maintain it and everything's so great." All the military housing. We moved people because of the square footage thing into these little dinky ex-military things which is nothing but demoralizing people when they have to move into these little houses that lieutenants used to live in. It was awful and we downsized our presence there and went. They were sitting on top of each other, I was so happy because I found out I got the axe too, which I felt was going to happen. The guy that was over in East Berlin, they made him the administrative counselor. They said, "Shirley, sorry." Nobody every said, "We got another job for you, what about this?"

I came back; I didn't know where I was going. They just said, "out of here." That's when I got in an appointment through a friend who knew the secretary of the director general of the Foreign Service who was then Ed Perkins. I said, "I don't know what I'm going to do, I don't have an assignment." And people were coming into my office because they had just gotten cable saying, "Your job is cut." I mean people were ready to commit suicide. They didn't have any jobs. These were political officers; these were all kinds of people. Well we just left there and said, "Goodbye you're folding up. Tell the people ..." And most Europeans, they, like Japanese even though it's changed now; you keep your job for

life. These are people who had been there at that mission for 20 and 30 years and just to tell them, "We're going to work out a plan and we're going to have a couple of ways to see whether or not you can get a different job." These people looked at me like a piece of crap. Nobody even did that at me. I had to suggest and keep yelling back to Washington, do something for these people! Do something for me! What's going to happen to all of us?

They had cut the personnel officer's job before I got to post–and I said, "I think you're such a disservice because we downsized the most important person that this post is going to need–the personnel officer." Turns out they had to get someone out of retirement to come there, short term which became longer and longer, for her to work out what we're going to do with these people. It was a massacre. It was the most demoralizing thing. We got rid of 2/3rds of the people that were over in our part in West Berlin. And everybody used to hate us anyway because we lived like little princes and princesses.

So they all tried to get into this place over in East Berlin which was too small and falling apart and they were spread out all over Berlin the rest of them. Finally today, what's happened in Berlin? They're finally ... they're building a new chancellery. They could have that place on Clayallee and if necessary ... the Germans said, "Well expand it if you need more space," or whatever.

A waste of U.S. taxpayer dollars and nobody will ever 'fess up, "yeah we made a mistake." Never.

Anyway, I was there for 18 months in Berlin and then from Berlin I came back here and I said, "I don't have a job. I don't know what I'm supposed to do next." Ambassador Perkins said, "Well I don't know what we'll do but here's the list before it comes out. Check off some things and we'll see what we can do." And that's why I said, "Oh boy, Strasbourg," I said, "well I'll never get that." He said, "Look, you shouldn't think like that. Put down everything that you would like!" I put Strasbourg down. That's when I went to Strasbourg, after I left Berlin. So I was about 18, 19 months at the most in Berlin and from there I went to Strasbourg.

Q: Okay. Well I'm thinking this would be a good place to stop.

BARNES: Great. I'm ready.

Q: When you came back from ... Just put at the end here, you got out of Strasbourg in what, 95?

BARNES: Let's see ... Yeah. Around there. Because I came out of Berlin. I was there from 1990 to '91 a little bit in to ... '92 to '95 I was in Strasbourg.

Q: Okay, so let's just put at the end, '95, where did you go?

BARNES: From Strasbourg? I came back and went to the senior seminar.

Q: Okay, we'll pick up at the senior seminar in 1995, great.

Today is the 23rd of June 2004. Shirley, 1995-'96 you were at the senior seminar. How'd you find the senior seminar?

BARNES: It was excellent. The senior seminar. The rest of the group was a cross section of people that were from other agencies. The chance to do all kinds of things we wanted to do was something of course that people never have in their dreams, these kind of things. But the reality of it, to meet with George Soros for example. And then the next day we went to the Mississippi Delta. It was just a wonderful experience. And then, the seminar had, as far as I was concerned, it had discipline to it. You had to write a paper. It became a kind of unwritten challenge to try and write a decent paper on a subject. In all I would conclude that it was an experience of a lifetime that few people get. Some people say, thank your lucky stars ... If you're spiritual, thank God or whatever but it was something that I think, State Department should be saluted for having done and unfortunately it's no longer going to be in existence.

Q: What paper did you write or what subject were you doing?

BARNES: Let me remember. I think I wrote on, oh gosh, let me remember ... It was on transitional governments in Africa.

Q: Well, let's see, '96 where'd you go?

BARNES: From the senior seminar I became Director of Western European affairs. That was a two-year assignment.

Q: '96 to '98.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

Q: When you say Western European...

BARNES: Yes, at that point Western European affairs had been resculpted to be in charge of France, Spain, Italy, Monaco, let's see what else did I have...

Q: Portugal?

BARNES: Portugal.

Q: Austria and Switzerland would fall under different...

BARNES: That's right.

Q: And then there's the Nether-Benterluxan after.

BARNES: Yes, those were in ... So what is Western European affairs, I really lucked out with some of the real choice things which made me one of the most sought after persons in the State Department.

Q: Oh. Alright well...

BARNES: Because everybody, of course, wanted to be assigned to one of those spots.

Q: Oh yes.

BARNES: And the subject matter was just so cross-cutting because you could be involved with the Africa bureau because of France's ties–historical ties with its colonies. So many of the things that would come up, for example, some of the things that would be happening with Africa, the French were very involved in it so the Africa bureau, we would be meeting. Or there would be other things that had to do with narcotics trafficking.

Q: Well this is '96, '98. This was Clinton administration. Madeleine Albright had just stationed over. In the first place, did you get any feel for Madeleine Albright and her impact on the area you were dealing with?

BARNES: Very much so. She was very, very euro-centric with her approach to diplomacy and so for her it was so important to interact with EUR. All of the people who were up there with her on the seventh floor, for the most part, that's all they knew. Most of them of course were C-schedule people who all wanted to get on a plane with her every time she traveled. And all they wanted to do was, for the most part, focus on European affairs. So we had a lot of action came out of our particular bureau and out of our office and we got to work late in to the night almost every night on some issue that was relative to France which was always a "spoiler," in quotes, in terms of U.S. policy. We had to always be on the phone with people in Paris, sometimes with all the others to round up votes at the UN and find out how the French were going to react or act on certain things.

I went to a number of meetings around the country or in Europe that had to do with France. For some reason I think she thought she could be charming with people also and get what she wanted and in some instances use her "big stick" and show how she was just as muscular as any man. I believe that–as has come about in other instances–a lot of what was going on in foreign policy the NSC had a lot to do with it. Tony Lake was there at NSC at this point. She did have a lot to say about some of the things that we were really interested in. For example, was there was any possibility, what would, for instance, France sent out signals that it was interested in a more important relationship with NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] for example. We had to do a lot on that. We had to

do a lot on what was called the AFSOUTH [Allied Forces South Europe] issue of France and the rest of the southern part of Europe. Their use of coming here with their own military. Directorate was an AFSOUTH-NATO agreement and we didn't rely on that for her. I don't think they would use, I don't think, our voice was used. Because we went up the chain of command. Jon Kornblum was the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs; very articulate. I don't think he really had a very good relationship with the seventh floor. I think he's a brilliant guy and I think he was probably just painful of their real analytical abilities. Of course the White House and the State Department I mean historically had problems within who gets to decide on what the policy issue would be and presented to the president, etc.

And Madeleine Albright's team was not that savvy in terms of filtering through it and meeting what we and others had to write about. I mean, we not necessarily, Director of European Affairs and my officers, but filtering up on up to Jon Kornblum.

Q: I've interviewed Phyllis Oakley who was head of INR at the time and her team ... I mean Madeleine Albright's team at one point said, "There's no need for you to have an INR brief for Secretary of State because she is being briefed by the CIA." I mean, to me this is incredible because you know, each of these organizations has its own focus and INR is preeminent in really, policy. The feeling that where as James Baker has a small, tight group around him, they're all extremely competent and many of them are still going ... but hers ... the name zone don't even ring a bell anymore. They just came and went.

BARNES: I don't know on what kind of basis her people were chosen. They seemed to be very flighty and interested in designer bags and things like that. They were more interested, very often, in the superficial circus things than really digging down. Far be it for me to say that I'm any kind of policy wonk but I certainly know how to respect those who come up with really good input and she had these has-been people who had been probably friends of hers in her other life as a policy wonk who'd shuffle in and say, "hey I want to be writing policy on Italy or France." They'd just be clumping your office. You had no say over it and I don't know what the heck some of them were doing, but of course all of them wanted to do something with France and Italy and Spain and all those kind of really luscious countries like that in Europe. It wasn't clear how any of this was ever really affecting anything.

Q: Yeah. Yeah I think so many of us really were quite intrigued and pleased with the appointment of Madeleine Albright as Secretary of State...

BARNES: Oh I was so elated.

Q: Secretary of State, and yet she really has come and gone without almost a trace. Whatever happened was not...?

BARNES: I would say she had a lot to do with deciding issues like Kosovo. You have to really reflect on her real key interest in Central Europe, etc. and her own ties and all that. I

look back at some of her assistants' values. It was very frustrating for a lot of really serious Foreign Service officers who were there until seven and eight o'clock at night, not because the content of a paper was wrong but because she wanted it on certain cards and you had to have a margin that was exactly 1/8th of an inch. And if it didn't come up to her office in exactly in that way, forget about the content, these underlings would shoot it back to you. And I couldn't believe this kind of thing was going on. We had these poor Foreign Service officers sitting there until seven or eight o'clock at night ... *ten* o'clock: just going over this stuff then shooting it up to our front office and then shooting it up to Albright and having it bounce back for these really inane kind of reasons; nothing to do with content. I think it was very discouraging for the officers. First of all the ones at the bottom were doing all the grunt work and as you get up, it filtered up at the top.

Can you imagine you got your hierarchy, your bosses, and they have to bow to this kind of complete superficiality? And you can't go back to your people and explain, you know I stood up to this jerk and told her or him when they're bouncing these back it means to people that, I'm going to be in these offices filtering up to the Secretary for two or three years and they're out! They're deciding on the fact that no, we can't send it in to her because the card margins aren't right. This is a terrible way to run an operation.

Q: Oh it is. Well, did you have any deal ...

BARNES: Now I don't know whether or not the Secretary herself even knew about this.

Q: Yeah, well this is it. But the problem sometimes ... the Secretary is responsible for the people who are around her. This is true of any Secretary and how they're allowed to operate.

I can't remember when she died but how about Pamela Harriman? When she was the ambassador when you were there?

BARNES: Yes, um ... Lets see I'm trying to remember. She was the ambassador ... she was the ambassador in France ... I'm trying to remember. She was excellent.

Q: I heard sterling reports of people...

BARNES: She was just so great at her job. Not only did she have class and polish. She was a really ... very, very much attuned to what was going on in terms of principles. It was all the information and getting the information. She could get information whether it's Iraq or any of those others and she ... They all, almost fell down fell over themselves to get next to her and to be able to talk about it. They spilled their guts to her. She was very, very good about making people feel comfortable. She would come into our office a lot because ... of course there was France but ... she would sit there and read through her materials and get up and get her own coffee and she would sit down and have a junior officer talk to her and give her the lay of the land as he saw it and she wasn't kidding. She was serious about sitting there and listening and trying to figure things out.

I don't think the people up in front office with Jon Kornblum. I think they were a little ticked off with her. But on my level, Director of Western European affairs, and the officers who were under my charge, we found her absolutely a fountain of information and someone who wanted to know. She was extremely ... since she took deadlines seriously and that kind of thing. So she was a real trooper.

Q: Dealing of France, you said acting as a "spoiler." During the time you were doing this, was there any particular instance of really the French were being difficult?

BARNES: I can't remember. I happened to be a Francophile. I took it opposite to what our front office did. Kornblum couldn't stand them, he actually couldn't stand them. And I had a very, very good relationship with the French ambassador and his wife. And really I like France anyway and they knew I had been to Strasbourg and we had an exceptionally good relationship. He could put his nose in the air a little bit. They were excellent and he would always be available and I tried and explained some of the difficulties we had with their position on AFSOUTH. They wanted to have a very, very strong military position in the Mediterranean, Western Mediterranean, etc. and they didn't want a bite from that if they were going to get closer in to NATO. They wanted a command; they wanted the AFSOUTH Command of the Mediterranean. So Kornblum and those guys they were rolling on the floor laughing because they had such utter contempt for the French. But I'd sit down with them and talk about these issues. I guess one of the major things I will remember that they decided that they would not proceed with the talks on AFSOUTH because they could not come to agreement. So that was just scuttled completely. I'll have to think of some of the others but it was an idea of how, first of all, the United States always went in with the idea of any European issue that "what are the French going to do." Or, ergo, the French are going to spoil it. So they knew that they had to contend with the French but they knew also that they just felt they were the jerks and that they're going to spoil it for us. They never said, "Well let's put ourselves in France's shoes," and say, "we've got a lot of things that we got out of our West European office and let's see what we can do and fiddle around with this." There were very few who felt that way.

Q: What you seem to be saying is that they weren't using Pamela Harriman who was quite skilled. I talked to–I can't remember who was her economic counselor at the time, I forget her name, she later went to...

BARNES: Oh, Janice Bay. She's a great woman, a great woman!

Q: She was saying, "You know Pamela Harriman could see how to deal with the French." In other words, okay you give them this you do this, but I mean, it wasn't as though this was just an absolute zero-sum game. I mean there was something that could be done without giving away our national interest but to allow the French their piece of the action or something.

And she said, "Harriman was excellent at understanding this." But I take that in your

level or one level above this, this is the Secretary, they weren't taking advantage or looking at this.

BARNES: Couldn't. They hated the French. I think unanimously that that was unjustified. It was just passed on from person to person. It wasn't even justified.

Q: Where did Italy fall in this?

BARNES: Well, this is very interesting too. There were DA meetings and there were other meetings where Jon Kornblum didn't even want to invite the Italians. They had the group of six, the group of five, the group of four and Italy was always knocking on the door and saying hey, for example, it was a group of four ... they went and said, "Why can't we have the group of five?" And again they would almost fall out, laughing on the floor to think that Italy would be involved in anything like this. They could not ... they wouldn't even bother. If the Italian ambassador or ... it was usually the DCM ... Kornblum would sit there and he'd start yawning as if he was going to sleep on the poor guy who was sitting there talking on some issue. It was extremely embarrassing in terms of the complete–again, this disdain for Italy–with which Italy was treated by our front office, except when it came to votes. If Italy was needed and you could always count on Italy for this that and the other. But the Italians kept knocking on the door. There was a plane lost or something like that, the Italians sent out their troops and were very brave about certain things and what was going on. They risked their lives, etc., but it didn't make any difference to the front office and EUR. I think Madeleine Albright might have had a better regard towards the Italians than the front office did. The only thing that really mattered was Germany at that point. That's the only thing in some of the Benelux countries. You know, the front office at that point, sought any... They only sought any merit with Germany and of course Russia or the Soviet Union and then Russia.

Q: It was Russia... Spain was not much of a factor for Portugal?

BARNES: Spain? No, not at all. The Spanish ambassador's wife was a Mellon or something. She was an American, so that was as far as it went. She was from some very, very wealthy American family. That's the only thing the Spanish were worth. They did have a little appeal because of NATO. They were included because they would vote NATO, etc. But the Spanish again, none of those countries counted with the front office. Demarches that had to be made was in terms of a wider forum that way; we wanted you to vote this way or that way and make sure you do. We appreciate it. That was the only time when they were any kind of significant recognition to Spain and of course it was in the context of NATO.

Q: Did you get any feel for President Clinton and your area, did he go there or is his contact with it was Chirac I guess at that time...

BARNES: I traveled to Portugal at that time and actually it was with Mrs. Clinton. Mrs. Clinton took a lot of these trips which were, I would say at that point, the goodwill trip.

But she was sitting down talking policy issues. We gave her reading material of our staff, real important policy issues and one or two people on her staff would brief her. So we went to the Azores for example and we went to Portugal and she was very interested in the Azores, etc. Other trips with Clinton became so limited that only Kornblum went and sometimes he was knocked out of the picture. It was only within the Albright-tight circle but they would get to go on these trips, very rarely, only really it would be Kornblum that would go. Nobody else. Maybe Tony Wayne who was one of the deputies. But that was as far as it went. Down to my level, no. Nada. You know?

I mean in some of these things it was only note-takers in a room and the note-taker would be Kornblum.

Q: What about the NSC [National Security Council]? Did you find yourself in your particular area, in conflict with the NSC or not?

BARNES: I think Nancy Soderberg was there at that point and she was easy to get along with. I would go over there and for example ... some of the time, off the record, some of my own views about France, for example, and you know, "Hey lets look at this, why in terms of AFSOUTH" are coming up and maybe some sort of other alternative to bring the U.S. and France about certain ... So on some issues they were ... the NSC at my level, I hardly ever got to talk. I mean Tony Lake was...

Q: Well Sandy Burger would have been there, I think at that point.

BARNES: Oh I like Sandy Burger, not on that level but on the next level with European personnel. We could sit down and talk on issues, very off the record and informally. Now they didn't get along at all with the Kornblum...

Q: This is tape four, side one with Shirley Barnes, you were saying that at your level with the NSC you had pretty good relations. Well what was Kornblum, did you feel Kornblum was ... Was this policy or was this Kornblum and he was at that time really focused on Germany.

BARNES: That's it, that was his particular advocacy and his interest and if you've got the Assistant Secretary of European Affairs going in and with persuasive arguments to the Secretary of State, that's who goes and persuades. So his issues and his issues were listed more than others.

Q: He later was ambassador to Germany wasn't he?

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

Q: What was his background?

BARNES: You know, I really don't know his background. I think he was in the State

Department at the age of two. His whole life was in the State Department. His whole professional life and it was always in European affairs. I don't think he ever had ... the only other assignment that he had before he became ambassador was, I think a two or three year assignment to Germany. He never went anywhere else. He was never, in any other post. He was never in any other bureau. Those were the kind of things which, by the way a lot of minorities never get a chance to be in the EUR. They say, how can a person stay in a bureau. He was in EUR his whole life in the Foreign Service ... and only one assignment if I ... it was something that people talked about. He had only one outside assignment. Any foreign service, I mean, overseas assignment was in Germany. Once. One tour. Go figure.

Q: Well, did you have a feeling that the European bureau was ... I mean you had served elsewhere ... was this an in-grown ... I mean what was the feeling about the European bureau?

BARNES: Well they certainly didn't want me there and my predecessor.

Q: Who was your predecessor?

BARNES: His name was John Willis and he and Kornblum…they almost came to blows. John Willis was black and I don't know exactly how *he* got that job. It was just against conventions to have him there and for me to follow him. But there was pressure put on top and when I was getting out of the senior seminar I couldn't get an assignment. So I went to someone I know, and I won't say who, but then I started to be considered for assignments other than going to one of the functional bureaus. I couldn't get an assignment out of the senior seminar. I mean I would submit bid list after bid list and I got nothing. So, at any rate, finally I got a call from someone that said, "You know, we've got something that we might be considering you for." And they asked me when I wanted to take–I had forgotten–the EUR whatever ... but it would be UK and whatever it was, Scotland. I don't know, or it would be EUR-WE. Which was Western European Affairs. So I said, "I'll take WE." But that was because someone called Warren Christopher, contacted Warren Christopher directly. I had never operated outside of the channels. But this was the first time because I became personally incensed and I felt that it was an erosion of my self esteem that all my colleagues were getting jobs and I didn't get out of the senior seminar, I couldn't get one job, I was the last person. This was in May that I finally got this call.

All of my fellow senior seminarians had been assigned between November and December so that by the time we came back in January it was a foregone conclusion that you knew more or less what you would be doing within the State Department. Some of our colleagues who were in other agencies they knew they would going back to their jobs.

Q: They went right back.

BARNES: But it was the kind of thing where it became almost an embarrassment to me

because people would say, "you're still don't have an assignment?" You know, I would slink off. It was bothering me so much I said, you know I'm going to go outside and ask somebody that I know and say this is what's happening. This person went directly to the Secretary.

Q: Did you feel, within the Western European thing, how'd you find the desk officers?

BARNES: They were superb. I would say. I think most of them would have preferred a white male because it's just ... the image of the bureau. It's the image of the bureau, plus I came from the admin cone and these people within my office, I'm sure when they were having their lunch in the cafeteria the first thing is, "How does it feel to work for her?" And the idea was, what's this working for a black woman, especially in the EUR-WE? I know this was ... I can ... and this is without trying to say that it was paranoia on my part. It would be that way if it were a Native American female.

Q: I don't doubt what you're saying...

BARNES: It's just a phenomenon.

Q: I can recall, I talked to people on a different thing, but the European bureau was also the hallowed halls itself; very dignified and back in 1974 when Greece and Turkey were brought in to the European bureau it was, "who are these people that are fighting each other and hating each other?" I mean, "How could these people come ... sully our marble halls?"

BARNES: It's almost as if ... and it's so funny because it's such an oxymoron to say, "But they have no history!" I mean when you say, they have no histories in Turkey? I mean, they're so awful ... it's almost impossible for me to think that people in EUR think that only France, England, and so on, oh they have history. These others ... oh ... and they would be really embarrassed. A lot of them were embarrassed when the ex-Soviet Union countries were ... the 'Stans' and all that, were integrated in to the European bureau and just to show you ... And this is off the subject for me in terms of my personal things, but oh when we had started hearing the word that Canada was not going to ... was going to get out of EUR ... the *Canadian lobby* that they didn't want to be going over to the Western Hemisphere of the bureau.

Q: And all those bunch of Hispanics you know?

BARNES: [laugh]

Q: You know?

BARNES: Oh you had such ... they were meeting and when you had the meeting of all the office directors, you know, with Kornblum and every ... I forgot what it was every Wednesday or something. It became such an issue. Because before, all you talk with

Canada were the salmon and that was our only real problem with Canada. But then it became, "why I got another call from the Canadian ambassador or the secretary and we had to take them out to lunch, we had to go to lunch," and they were really crying about this fact, "how dare you now put them in the Western Hemisphere of Europe?" So I mean, EUR, was as you say, hallowed ground and for me to be there became, "oh my god how did you ever get in here?" And I think Kornblum felt that way too. He was so suspicious of me. I really stayed out of his way as much as possible. I didn't feel that I could go around trying to continually prove myself to him. I had such great officers and they did most of the work anyway. I just gave directions and what really was very painful to me, with the officers, however, is that they would go directly to the deputy, to Tony Wayne. What was more painful was that he would accept them rather then bouncing the officers back and say, "Look, you got a director. Let it go through her to me." And I talked to him about it on one occasion but it didn't stop. And that I think is one of the problems within management, within the Foreign Service and outside is that lower leveled-officers, when they have someone out of the grain they don't know how to deal with it. They often think, also that this person could not be talented or intelligent and be a leader, etc., why is he or she here? They, if they can, they'll try to circumvent it and go to the next level where they have the prototype that they're used to, which is the white male. This happened to me and I would sit down with my officers and tell them, now, you can't stop people's friendships, etc., but when it comes to certain things that happen with policy or with flow of management and have substance with things, they should come to me. Very often they'd go right to Tony and say, "Hey, I met with the first secretary at the Italian embassy or the so and so." And they'd tell him before I knew about it.

Q: Well this brings up the subject of...

BARNES: He'd call them on issues also, rather than calling me.

Q: Along this ... how did you, looking at this, let's say the French first and the Italians and Spanish. How did say, the French play the Washington game? I mean a good embassy does not go to ... The State Department is probably the last call. I mean you're at the NSC, you're at conferences, you're at the Washington Post, the New York Times, but how did you find the French?

BARNES: The French were very good at the game and it was evident by the receptions that I was invited to. They had as many ins with people and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as they did in the State Department. They had as many with certain people in DoD [Department of Defense]. Of course those people, even the Supreme Court judges, they could get people to come out to their receptions, for this visiting time and what else...

Q: French cooking and...

BARNES: Oh, everybody was there. I met more senators and congressman at French embassy receptions and everybody was of course startled when the French ambassadors

say, “this is my Alsatian sister” because she was an Alsatian. So I got, from there, invited to other things by other people because I was at the French ambassador’s reception. He, his staff were very intuitive as you say. They knew the people at the NSC as well as they do someone like Kornblum. I don’t think the French ambassador didn’t like Kornblum either. Because you can get a sense that people don’t like you. There’s electricity in the air. They had as many “ins” with the NSC as they had with State Department. They had very good relationships with, as I said, senators and congressman reporters. Jim Hoagland was at everything they gave.

Q: What was his position?

BARNES: Jim Hoagland is the guy that writes on the op-ed page of the Washington Post.

Q: Yeah, I just wanted to...

BARNES: He was at everything that the French gave. To a certain–for example–I go to a dinner at the Italian ambassador’s house. I mean people like Nancy Pelosi and Connie Morella and all of those people of Italian extraction they would always be there at the Italian ambassador’s reception. All of them had a savvy about, “hey we don’t just go to the State Department and say ‘would you please do this?’” They were across the board whether it’d be Spain or Italy. The thing that I noticed because I also worked in the Africa bureau was that countries like Ghana, I don’t think they have the savvy. The sophistication and I don’t say this, I’m not saying this in any prejudicial way, but you never go to any of their things where they’ve got very prominent congress people at most of their affairs or their dinners. Once in a while they might have someone that had a lot of clout in congress for example. They couldn’t get a Newt Gingrich at that point or whomever. But everybody wanted to go to the Western European ambassador’s house. So Portugal invited me a lot and Spain and they’d always get the crème de la crème within the Washington movers and shakers and power establishment. The French were very good at doing this. The only thing that I feel that, sometimes the French lacked, is that a couple of their officers really didn’t know the English language or American English a well as they could have. So that kind of impeded their getting their points across. I think the French dutifully tried to train as many people within the foreign services as they can. But they have a real inability with English. The French admit this. They have an inability to learn the English language. That was one of their weaknesses. Because their junior officers, maybe some of them knew how to get into our language in terms of some of the common and everyday expressions but very few of them had them down pat. The Dutch were much better at this, the Scandinavians, etc. So some things were lost in the translation, very often, that they were not colloquially adept at the language very often. Some of them were always pleasing to find a Frenchman, a Frenchwoman who could colloquially speak American English.

Getting back in terms of what say the French were. I think they really, I don’t know of their intelligence service or whatever but they seem to know a lot about you. That is to say they listened when you talked. They’d ask about your background, they would seem

to retain it or they must pass it around within their embassy. Because they say, "oh you grew up in Harlem well I know and this particular ambassador was interested in Jazz," and all of that. So you had something he would remember and his staff would remember. But maybe that's changed with the next ambassador but they would make sure that they knew something about you as a person and they would establish this rapport. And if you had any interest in France, oh then they really like you.

Q: Well the Strasbourg thing must have been a very good card to play, wasn't it?

BARNES: Because I could talk, not only about France and North-Eastern France but I could talk about the Council of Europe, which nobody in this country knows anything about. But which, for the Europeans, is rather important and I could talk about the European, Council of Europe parliament and how they were elected, the parliamentarians–which is very different from the European Union–and I knew a lot of that. I knew also how the French always positioned themselves to make sure one of their European institutions would be on French soil like UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund]. They always do this. They have a knack. So of course the Council of Europe, they couldn't get to the EU, that's in Brussels. So they made sure the Council of Europe and they made sure that they always harkened back. When I was in Strasbourg I lived in the house where Winston Churchill used to live when they were establishing the Council of Europe and they would establish some of the other European organizations. So there's a big plaque up on the wall when you go and come into the entryway that says, "This is the house that Winston Churchill lived in when they were establishing the Council of Europe." And everybody says, oh my gosh and it becomes a real significance. So you can always say, "yes that house that I lived in was Winston Churchill's house." When Mrs. Harriman came, that's the first thing she saw and she said, "This is really something." It was always that kind of thing. The French are very good at doing all of these kinds of things in terms of getting you on one level if not on another.

So for the Council of Europe and for me to be able to talk about it, it was very gratifying for them to know that people could even converse on the Council of Europe.

Q: What about ... it wasn't your area, but the UK connection and the Clinton administration. Within the European bureau, did you feel that Great Britain was on the people and France was the joint enemy or something like that?

BARNES: When we had our daily directors' meetings with Kornblum or one of his deputies we would talk about what we know that's going on in our countries. The UK always got a prime position in terms of talking about what happened overnight. We'd get the news that was coming in overnight. The UK always got a substantial amount of time to talk about what's happening, even if it was just superficial kinds of things. It would always get some kind of erudite chuckles around the room about something that was going on with the UK and who the particular desk officer met with and so on. UK got very good time at the directors' meeting and Germany also got a lot of time because of that close connection. The only thing that people were interested in coming from WE

were "what were the French up to now?" And that was more or less the way they would always ask the question so you would almost ... oh my God.

Q: [laugh]

BARNES: You almost say, "you're the outcast in this group." And they wouldn't even ask about Italy or Spain or anything. But the UK or Germany usually dominated the meetings.

Q: Did you get involved with UN votes because, again, what were the French up to? [Laugh]

BARNES: Oh yes, we got involved usually only through IO [Bureau of International Organization Affairs]. So IO would ask us to demarche whomever at what level in terms of new info. I did it with a little bit more élan if it were Italy and Portugal and Spain. I knew they were of no ... I sent one of those desk officers to demarche someone at a lower level unless we were getting specific directions that I was to demarche the ambassador. I'd just do it at a lower level because the French, they'd look at me like I was crazy. I mean, the French ambassador wanted Madeleine Albright to demarche him. They didn't want me. Things like that, you left that up to the big boys. They even wanted the president–Clinton. They didn't want me.

Q: Were you aware at this time, did it intrude at all, the Congress was in the hands of, quite right-wing, quite anti-Clinton Republicans. Were they intruding in your area? The conflict between congress and the Presidency and those Watergate ... I don't know, Monica Lewinsky was...

BARNES: Very, very little at my level. Actually most of Congress's intrusions had to do with some constituent that didn't like the way he was treated when he went to the embassy or there's an orphan here, it's a French citizen, and I want you to do something. So all these congressionals would bounce to us and it was a policy that we're supposed to answer congressionals–turn around time was ten days on these congressionals. They were mundane things. I hardly ever got anything that I was supposed to do in my bureau, in my office, from a Congressman. When it was a plane that went down or something in Italy and one of the Congress people who of Italian descent, he said, "I want everything that comes into the office, I want you to notify us." But usually I think you know again that the unspoken rule was that our offices never got in contact directly with Congress. It had to go through the chain of command.

I would like to say one thing that I think was one of the crowning achievements for me was that the Italian chief of mission did come to me. We had a really good relationship too. The DCM at the Italian embassy, his name was Antonio Puri Purini and he came from a very aristocratic Italian family. One day he came to my office and said, "look, I really have something, perhaps you could help me with, there are now so many African prostitutes on the streets of Rome."

Q: In Somalia and other places like that ... it's really ...

BARNES: Actually, Nigeria for the most part.

Q: Nigeria I mean.

BARNES: He said, "Is there anything that we could do to work together, you and the State Department in our embassy or something, could we do something?" So I said, lets see what we could do together. That forged an intra-bureau and inter-agency team to deal with trafficking of African women in general, trafficking of women. Then, trafficking of these African women. The Clinton administration took the whole thing and it became a very big issue to work on within the State Department. Working across agencies about trying to deal with this whole trafficking issue. Which was finally put in to public law in 2000. It was public law in trafficking of persons. A lot of that had stemmed out of the fact that there were so many African women on the streets of Rome. I think the Italians got a lot out of that. We did work; I went to Italy a couple of times on the issue of trafficking of women in general. But to just get an idea of how our own legislation in the United States, what we could put forth as legislation about trafficking.

So I would say that this issue that became public law had germinated with the Italian embassy coming to us on the issue of the African women who were in Rome.

Q: That's interesting. I interviewed Teresa Loar.

BARNES: Yes, she was the one who...

Q: Who sort of became the coordinator on this thing. It really was a high point of the Clinton administration.

BARNES: It was. Overlooked. It was very interesting even this past year when President Bush went to address the United Nations. He made this one of his key points in this whole address. People said, this is kind of bizarre and there was another reauthorization law that was passed in 2003. He brought it out as a key point because he didn't want to deal with some other issues and his address to the United Nations, general assembly address. I'm so glad that you mentioned this but when I found out there was a women's bureau and here was an issue that was brought up by the Italians, well they started moving on it and they took it over. It was one of their big issues on trafficking in general. I don't say that they didn't have other things coming from other directions but I remember distinctly that because of this issue they took this on and it became a major jewel in their crown of some kinds of achievements during the Clinton administration. So, those are the kind of things that we worked on, which became public law.

Q: Well then, when you left there in '98 whither?

BARNES: I have never found out who my godmother or father was but one day I was sitting in my office, deciding, you know I think I'm going to put in my retirement papers and someone called and said, "We'd like to put you on our list as our choice for Ambassador to Madagascar." And I said, "What?" I was really quite surprised. I had not even bid on another assignment. So I hadn't even turned in a bid list. So I said, "Can I call you back?" I didn't say, "Yeah go for it!" I was very overwhelmed by it. It took me almost ten days before I called them back. They said, "Oh wow, you called us back, we thought you weren't interested." I said, "Well I thought it over and I talked to friends and family about it." They said, "Well we were really shocked when you said, 'I'll call you back I'll think about it'!" So I don't know who was instrumental because I didn't ask for it. So I got this from the assignment as Director of Western European Affairs. I was nominated as the State Department's choice as Ambassador to Madagascar.

Q: You were in Madagascar from when to when?

BARNES: From August 30, 1998 until July 2001.

Q: Did you have any problems getting confirmed?

BARNES: None whatsoever. Except that it was just a long delay with everybody.

Q: I don't imagine you working after bureau ... Madagascar is sort of really off to one side, isn't it? Had you ever had any dealings with Madagascar?

BARNES: Well before I worked with the State Department I was at the African-American Institute, which is now called the Africa-American Institute. In AAI I worked in what was known as the Women's Africa Committee. But there was a group–they used to bring groups over on what they called "leadership training programs." These were women who were either leaders or potential leaders that were selected to come to the United States. They were programmed around the United States to meet with women leaders either through established organizations like the girl scouts. These women leaders, these African leaders were programmed. They would select a country every year to bring these women leaders and we did have the Malagasy women came over as a group. So I had some idea or notion of, there was a Madagascar and where it was located and more or less what the people looked like and some historical background. But that was just put into the recesses of my memory. So literally I had to educate myself on where it was. I knew it was off of the coast of East Africa. But to really become oriented ... I now know as much about Madagascar I think, or more than most Malagasies do.

Q: How did you read and learn your way in to the job?

BARNES: Someone who had been the DCM there told ... we went to lunch and he told me that if you can get this book, get this book called A History of Madagascar by Sir Mervyn Brown. Sir Mervyn Brown had been the UK ambassador to Madagascar twice in his Foreign Service career. He knew the language and knew the people. He wrote one of

the most authoritative, one of the best books I've ever–it's like a bible to me I still read it–and through reading that book I also started–through his references and what he read–I started picking up a lot of material.

When I was in Madagascar I also became very interested in the people, the culture, the tremendous schisms in their tribal groups and I got to know a lot about the history of Madagascar. For example, one of the first consul generals from the United States was an African American man. It's a tremendously interesting story of a man named John Waller. He was a Republican from Kansas that was very, very instrumental. I think Grover Cleveland was President and later sat there and said, "So what are you going to do for me now?" And so they said, oh man there's this black man, "well you're going to be the Consul General in Madagascar." And he went to Madagascar and when he went there he signed an agreement with the Queen of Madagascar, the last queen in fact, for property to bring African Americans over. We got all this land in Southern Madagascar. He was going to bring a whole colony of African Americans.

Q: A little bit like Liberia or something.

BARNES: Yes. So very few people know all of these kinds of historical facts about Madagascar and it's still a very, very unknown place. But so was Chad. Most of Africa, yes, to most people. [Laugh] Unless you're there and you develop a real interest. The French have archives and archives on Madagascar but most of us don't know about it. So I became self-educated.

Q: Did we have a policy towards Madagascar going in there, is there anything that...

BARNES: Well the prior policy had been literally based on the Cold War as it was for most of those African states. After that it just fell off the planet of the Earth as far as the United States is concerned in American foreign policy. Nobody cared about Madagascar. All they wanted is, don't make many waves, just get in there and get out of there. When we need you it will be for a vote. Sure enough that's what happened. Madagascar at one point had some significance in that they had a massive transmitting station there. So, on that sense it was important but again it was dismantled after the Cold War. Then it fell off the chart again and it was completely operating under the radar screen. Nobody cared about it, leave it to the French and that was it. Some missionaries were there and that was the height of our interest. One of the significant things that happened to me and it shows how these micro-states do become important is when there's an important vote that comes up. This had to do with of course the Human Rights Commission in Geneva that comes up every year about Castro and condemning Cuba for his "blatant atrocities" or whatever they called it in terms of human rights. They have all now defined who's going to vote how and it's always then that the charm comes in with the Africans now to get their vote, or at least their abstentions. So we have to launch a whole campaign, demarche, etc., to get Madagascar to vote with the United States or to at least abstain and become a really full-frontal assault on all of the African countries to get them to vote. In Madagascar I went to the foreign minister, etc., the President wouldn't see me on that.

He's an ex-socialist, Communist who's now a born-again whatever. I don't know at that point but Ratsiraka was president. So I talked to the foreign minister, etc., but I wrote a letter back, I wrote a cable that said, "Look, we demarched everybody. We don't know what Madagascar is going to do but we think they may just abstain and that is the best we can ask. We don't see them voting for us." Oh no, I did see the President. The President told me in no certain terms. It was, "If you want me to vote," because he got a call from Al Larson, for example, that was how low it was.

Q: Al Larson is...

BARNES: Al Larson was the econ Poobah at the State Department. But he was always the econ stream. At that point he was Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs and they had him call this guy who was the President of Madagascar and ask him to vote for us. The President of Madagascar said, "I'm not taking a call from him. Who's he? You want me to consider our country voting, I want a call from George Bush." So I throw back and said the President says he wants to talk to the President of the United States. Somebody at the White House picked it up because all of our cables would stream through there.

So they said, somebody must have picked it up over at the White House. As I said, all our cables ... they get it. So somebody, because it certainly wasn't ... the State Department wasn't going that way at all. Somebody called and said, "Hey we got a call from the White House and they said, arrange a call for 9:30 the President of the United States wants to talk to Ratsiraka, 9:30." We said, "What?" So sure enough, the President of the United States and Ratsiraka talked. Ratsiraka the next day, said "okay." And he wrote the letter saying now he supports the United States, not only was he not going to abstain but he was going to vote with us. That was because, and then I said, well I'd like to get something in writing. And sure enough I was in the President's office and I had to go back because he lives ... the traffic was so bad, it gets two hours to get out to where he lives in this palace which was sealed off from the rest of the population; that was how unpopular he was. That was back and forth and got a letter that he signed because when I called his foreign ministry, she didn't know anything about it. When I called our offices in Geneva, George Moose, I said, "George, they said okay, they'll vote with us." He said, "Why?" I said, "Okay, I'm going to get it in writing." I had to go back up there two hour trip through the traffic because I called and asked would you have the President of Madagascar sign ... "this is what we're going to vote" because his foreign minister hasn't been informed. So I got a letter and said, "Look George." He said, "I need something." I said, "I'm faxing it to the State Department. You guys can take it over from here." Through our State Department here is a faxed letter from Ratsiraka, instructing his people ... because George Moose, they were just about to vote and was like, a half hour or 20 minutes away from the vote in Geneva.

So apparently their foreign minister hadn't informed their ambassador there to vote with the United States. I got the letter. It was easy to have me fax the letter to our people in Washington and get it to George Moose. And he ran over to the Madagascan ambassador and say, "your President says vote ... here it is signed in writing." At that moment,

everybody's vote was counting and they were tallying and they were expecting Madagascar to abstain and Madagascar voted with the United States and there a gasp, an audible gasp in this whole forum. In that letter that Ratsiraka wrote, what did he say? He said, "I'm going to vote with the United States on this because you, Mr. President," speaking of George Bush, "because you and your father, are the only Presidents that have ever taken me seriously and have ever spent any time even talking to me." It's all there in writing. I said, "I can't believe this is the way you run the country." Your own idea of what the foreign policy should be. His foreign minister, his ambassador, he decided that Madagascar was going to vote on the Cuban human rights issue. Because I had said in this cable, I don't think you're going get them to vote and someone at the White House convinced George W. Bush, "give them a call, why not?"

Q: Yeah.

BARNES: And I've gotten more kudos out of that. Oh I was walking on water.

Q: What was the political situation on Madagascar?

BARNES: Everybody hated the President and the President ... I think didn't like them. Now I guess, [laugh] but the only man that had been President was kicked out. Went up, got out of there and ran to France and in a way sat back and let the country deteriorate and the Madagascans are very ... I think fickle people. They don't like to sit for anything to much. They had always had a President from the coastal area. The highlanders, the people up in the mountains, they're the Merina people, were all successfully the prime minister. So this is the way they kept this ethnic balance because they really hate each other. They're always fighting. There's historically been fighting. It's an island, it's not that tiny, the fourth largest in the world, but they did nothing to get along, they didn't get along. And he'd been kicked out; he had to take refuge in France. Then he got back in again because they kicked the other guy out, so he became president again. So in all he had been president for 25 years. The first time he was president and then went abroad and then the second time.

I think he had gotten really comfortable with saying, "I know the Madagascans. I know them, inside and out, etc. And I'm staying here forever." Then there was Marc Ravalomanana, a brash guy that had became a multimillionaire from milk. And he used to sell milk on his bicycle. I used to call him the milk man. He first of all became their mayor of Antananarivo and he said, "Hey I'm going to run for president." And he did. And I think Ratsiraka just flipped him off. Number one he's from the highland, he's a Merina of low class because they have an almost slave to upper class system where they are ... the people their bloodlines count. So you can only have certain blood lines and be recognized to be worthy. Anybody from the coastal area were ... Ratsiraka was from the coastal area.

Q: The coastal area tends to be more black and the upper area is more Polynesian or am I wrong?

BARNES: For the most part is. The coastal area is more black and look indigenously African but that varies too because Ratsiraka looks a lot like ... he's got a lot of that Malaysian, Polynesian. The intermixture is just phenomenal there. But he is a coastie. He's from the east coast which is called Tamatave so he's from that area. He's disdained by the royalty, distained. But he knew how to grab votes from all those people who were non-Merina. So there's this ethnic thing that's always brewing underneath everything. He thought he was going to relax and get elected again because there is the unwritten rule that a coastie is always president and someone from the highland is always the prime minister. When Ravalomanana came in saying, I'm running for President and he was a Merina, well Ratsiraka didn't do anything until the last minute to go out and campaign. He just knew that this guy couldn't get the vote, but he did get the vote and he won. Ratsiraka and his followers contested that he won. He had enough votes when they counted up to say that he won. A lot of the African nations said that they would never recognize him so for the next two years after he won, there was a lot of contention. For the first time the Madagascans traded barbs and insults. They hardly ever go to war and kill each other. But this became something where they started a fight that wound up an armed fight. This is very unMadagash. People got killed and bridges were blown up and the whole strategy of war ensued. Ratsiraka fled the country again and he's now in France. Ravalomanana has been in for the past two years. The tension is still there. At this point I've been out of there; in fact the new ambassador had taken over just at the height of when they were going through all this struggle. I kept up through all my contacts and my friends and reading the local newspaper which is censored though.

Madagascar has less than a dollar a day than per capita income. Less. They say it's around 270 dollars a year that the Madagascans live in dire, dire, poverty. It is unnecessary poverty. So people are still not happy but they were getting Ravalomanana and the new guy at least, a little, they don't give much, he's only been in two years or less but I don't know when the situation is going to get any better. There are too many people who are too unhappy and they don't want to give the guy a chance. I don't think the Malagasy army is considered the big silent one, if you translate it from French, *la grand mute*. The silent one is that the Army, you never know, they've never gone in and taken over. They've always, they let the crowds in the streets do it. Madagascar has changed all the time when the crowds in the streets get out and whoever is in the palace, it's time for you to leave. So I think a lot of this might happen again. It happened to get Ratsiraka out. They just came out silently in the streets and then after all they started having ... it was obvious that they were drawing a protest again and they were throwing stuff at them. Because he wouldn't concede that Ravalomanana had won the election. So they both couldn't send anybody to any of the international meetings because one said, "I'm the President." And the other, "No, I'm the President."

So it's been rough and they lost money because of course the stabilities after when the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act which I was very instrumental in making sure Madagascar became one of the very first signatures, I was there then ... their foreign trade picked up by something like 70 to 80 percent. Now it's even gone higher because they've

got a great textile manufacturing potential there. Textile manufacturing clothing. A lot of people started coming in because their things come in duty-free to the United States. People had started investing. There was a lot of activity and trading commerce. Now there's instability again, so you just don't know. A lot of people pulled out again, this has led to instability and then with the oil crisis again, what's going on with Iraq. A lot of these nations, these poor nations, are the first ones to get ground up because they can't afford the oil prices.

Q: How were you received as an African American diplomat? Was this a new thing for them or?

BARNES: No, they had ... well they have had one there who was very light-skinned and I never made much of a comment about being an African American. I'm so prominently African American that there's no getting around it with me and I made it a point to bring out a lot of the culture of African Americans. Also, again, a lot of the Malagasy that were Merina that didn't have this Indonesian, Malaysian ... I think they're very hesitant in a way because you look at my physical features and I don't look like them. Although I am, I have color in my skin, I don't have their features. I didn't have more of the features of the people from the coast, so sometimes this was an issue, but in general my enthusiasm and my ability to get all of them so much of what they wanted, they come in to my office and I really push for programs that they were interested in. I became an extremely popular person. Being single, I didn't have much else to do there anyway except get out to every invitation that I thought was worthwhile. I was all over the place, up the coast, down the coast. I was always featured in television and newspapers, what else was there? Some of the other ambassadors they come to me and they say, "You know you're too active, now you're making me have to get active." [Laugh]

Q: [laugh]

BARNES: And they didn't really get upset. The American ambassador is everywhere! I did a lot there. It became almost, one of my duties to see how much I could get accomplished that was good for the United States and good for the Malagasy. So I was always in some hospital or doing something. I had more projects going. I told everybody that I really wanted to work with women's groups. So women's groups, everybody. I had more people petitioning me. I got as much done with the ambassador's self-help fund which was my little ... you know, every staff that the ambassadors have in some of these developing countries in Africa. I could get as much done with a thousand dollars as five thousand now. USAID would have to go through this cumbersome price kind of thing to get done. Also, I would just push the World Bank in the IMS people, but maybe the World Bank to come on, come on, do this. I mean we don't have any money usually. The other donors give proportionally much more than the United States. But my presence there said, look we need to do this and that. I know they wanted to say, "I wish she'd shut up." But that would get them in too ... they had to start rivalry with just my presence. They didn't give much money but my presence was a motivation and catalytic for those others to come out. The Japanese probably gave more in real dollars than I did. But I

made sure that they'd have to up the ante. So I [laugh] would go there with all these groups of ladies, with all these Malagasy women and the farm women and others. And it worked out well because they all benefited from it.

I even remember one project ... the market one. There are a lot of women mayors. One came; it's a little, something like a suburb event. She had a plan she wanted a latrine built and a shower built for the market women. Because she said, they're sitting in a market all day and they don't even have a place to go to the bathroom. So I said, come back with the plan and how much it's going to cost to construct and I'll have my econ officer who also managed my ambassador's self help fund, I think maybe a thousand dollars ... a thousand five hundred. We built this latrine and a shower for these market women. I became the most heroic figure in this whole place because I sat down and listened to this lady. You think the French ambassador would ever have time to do this? These are the kinds of things that I was able to accomplish. But once they knew about it, they said to their development officer, go out and do something before this American ambassador is doing it! So it turned out to be a help for everybody.

Q: Did you find yourself at all in competition with the French?

BARNES: Oh, all the time you'd ask, what are they doing out there? We knew, I knew more or less that the French has been there for the last 200 years. The place is a dump! It's like Haiti or whatever. So I know whatever they're doing, all they're doing, mainly was extracting wealth from the country; that was obvious. So it wasn't much competition for me, going with these little drib-drab projects and they were high-profile and it was the United States! The French ambassador used to come out to things because he'd knew I'd be there. Things they normally wouldn't come to. The opening of this and that. And they started, "she's going to be there" and so the French ambassador would be there. You know, he had better things to do. Sometimes I didn't ... I was single, I was, "hey this was fine." I'd go out to these things and you're sitting in these stadiums and you're hot and sweaty and you'd come with your umbrella and they'd go through a hundred speeches, about 75% of them in Malagasy and they'd say, the French ambassador came! Well I come hopping in and he'd be there, sweating and he had to be there because he knew I was going to be there! It was fun! [Laugh] Then they started their own programs; a lot of things they normally did not do. They started doing a lot more visible development programs. Their idea of development has always been to export the French language and to get the elite, or those who could pass the test to go to France and become model French people and to maintain that cultural hegemony in their ex-colony. So a lot of their development money went to this kind of thing, the stream of promoting French culture and the French language. Then they started doing broader things and then through the donor funds and usually their most prominent presence is through the EU. The EU is dominated by the French and is in most of these ex-French colonies. If you're going to any of these places it's the EU funds that are the development funds and that's dominated by the French. And that's a strategy that I think we, our American foreign policy should really track the way the French and these countries are able to get so much out of their dominance presence in the European Union. And they extract funds from the European

Union into whatever they want in the development policies of the developing countries. We don't do enough of how they track what they're doing and how they do this.

Q: Well I was wondering, when did you ... you left there in... ?

BARNES: 2001.

Q: Well then what did you do?

BARNES: Retire. And that's where I am now.

Q: Alright, I know you've got to catch your bus but how do you feel about what you've done?

BARNES: I'm extraordinarily ... I feel always, from a spiritual point very blessed to have this opportunity. I never would have ... I didn't expect it. Never! There's always a sort of subtle, subterranean wish to be an ambassador.

Q: Oh sure.

BARNES: But I never expected it and I think it's been the highlight of my life.

Q: What are you doing now?

BARNES: I'm really trying to–at this point–trying to start a non-profit to promote education for African young women and girls to track them into the business world and to make sure that they have formation and education that would be attractive to people who are in businesses, small businesses, medium-sized, not so much the larger, multi-nationals. But would encourage young women to feel that they should stay in secondary school and after secondary school that they will have a job. This is from my own experience growing up in New York City. There were always these commercial schools or what they called "trade schools" or within even the academic schools there were young women who could get out of high school and jobs were waiting for them as secretaries or administrative assistants. And they would have a reason to have gone to school and stayed in school. And in these developing countries, the women, the young girls might get a secondary education but they're almost not fit to do anything if they even want to go into ... not a profession, but to just work after they get a secondary education. So this is what the foundation that I'm developing is doing. I've gotten some interest and my thing now is waiting for a 501(c)(3), which is non-profit status.

Q: Well I wish you luck.

BARNES: Thank you.

Q: Thank you.

End of interview