RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS GRAY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

NICHOLAS MOLNAR
and
GERALD CARLUCCI
and
DAVID FRESCHL

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
SEPTEMBER 15, 2011

TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Nicholas Molnar: This begins an interview with Mr. Thomas Gray, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on September 15th, 2011, with Nicholas Molnar, Gerald Carlucci and David Freschl. I want to thank you for coming to New Brunswick today to participate in an oral history interview.

Thomas Gray: My pleasure.

NM: For the record, could you please state when and where you were born?

TG: Kearny, New Jersey, in 1944.

NM: I understand that your mother and father immigrated to the United States. Could you tell us about your father's family history, and what led him to emigrate?

TG: My father was one of six children, four boys and two girls. He was born in Renfrew, in Scotland which is outside of Glasgow, I remember. [Editor's Note: Mr. Gray is speaking to his mother, who is present during the interview.] You'll find a similarity in the way the families immigrated at that time--a lot of Scottish families came to Kearny. My grandfather had a very interesting job. He was an engineer for Carrier Air Conditioning Company, and as far as I know, he came over first to work. However, his job took him all over the world. As the supervising engineer, he did the royal palaces in Siam--now Thailand of course--and he also did the Kimberley Diamond Mines in Africa. Most of his work was in South America, so he spoke fluent Spanish with a Scottish accent. I don't know the order that they came over, but he brought the members of the family one at time, as was the custom when they had enough money or resources or whatever it was. That's about as much as I can do. The ancestry and what they did in Scotland, I don't know.

NM: Do you know what brought your grandfather to Kearny? Did they end up settling there to be with other Scottish people?

TG: Right, I'm sure that he had friends or acquaintances who had already settled in Kearny, and I'm also fairly certain that his work headquarters became New York, or Newark, or something, somewhere in the metropolitan area.

NM: I understand your mother immigrated as well. Could you tell us about her family history? Was it a similar story?

TG: Somewhat similar, and of course, I'm not sure if the tape reflects, but she's here and may be able to help with some of this. My mother was born in Edinburgh, and she's presently ninety-eight. Her father died when she was very young.

Elizabeth Gray: I was three when my father died.

TG: That's Elizabeth Gray that's speaking, for the record, and they were in Scotland for some time. I think that you were fourteen when you came over?

EG: I was fourteen when I came to America.

TG: There was one brother and three sisters and they varied in age considerably. The only brother's name was Dan, and Dan came over first. He was also an engineer, I think. He worked with Waukesha Company from Wisconsin although he was in New Jersey. So, he came over first, and then, when he got established and settled and so forth, he sent for other members of the family.

NM: Would your mother like to speak about some of her experiences?

[TAPE PAUSED]

NM: Could you tell us about when you met Tom's father in Kearny? Could you tell us about settling in Kearny? What do you remember?

EG: Well, I don't know exactly what you want to know. I came to Kearny when I was fourteen. I lived in Scotland until then. I was finished with school, and I found out I had to go to school until I was sixteen here. So, I went to Kearny High School, and after that I went to work. [laughter]

NM: This would have been around the time of the Great Depression in the United States.

EG: Yes, it was around then, yes.

NM: Could you tell us what you remember about the time?

EG: Like I said, I went to high school for two years, and then I went to comptometer school. That's an adding machine, and it does everything, and that's what I worked at. I was a comptometer operator. They don't have these machines anymore, and that was about it.

NM: Mr. Gray, do recall any stories that your parents told you about the Great Depression? Were they working during that time?

TG: No, I can't think of anything off hand, and I wasn't really prepared for the question.

NM: No, it is okay. There are some things that we just ask that you might not know. Do you recall if your parents worked during World War II?

TG: I know that my father did, and I think that at that time my mother--you didn't work during the Second World War did you?

EG: You know, I can't remember. I did work.

TG: My father worked for General Dynamics, which may have had a different name at that time, but in Kearny they had a factory where they made PT boats. He told me many times that his job was, "to sell PT boats to the Navy," and I take it that that means that he was involved in the, somehow or other, in the government contracts and in the specifications and maybe

alterations that they made to the boats. He was not an engineer, so in any event that was his employment. I also know that he was a civil defense volunteer, so he had a hard hat that said CD on it. He'd go around at night and check to make sure that everybody had blackout curtains in their windows and that whatever the rules and requirements were for people during the war that, he'd enforce those, but I had the impression that it was definitely a cooperation type of thing rather than an enforcement type of a job that he had.

NM: Did your father always work in Kearny prior to the war?

TG: I don't know. He became an office manager of small offices, and even when I was growing up, he had a number of jobs. I don't remember him ever working in Kearny. He worked in other communities.

NM: On the subject of Kearny, you mentioned that there was an enclave of Scottish there.

TG: There was.

EG: It was Scottish town when we came, but it isn't anymore.

NM: Could you tell us about growing up in Kearny? Were there a lot of Scottish traditions brought over to Kearny that you recall growing up?

TG: Kearny actually was an ethnic melting pot of sorts, but it was known for its Scots, and it still is today, even though the Scots have mostly moved on or have been displaced, but we had, for instance, there was a Scots-American Association in Kearny, a social club. It had what we mistakenly call a soccer team here, but it was a futbol team, and there was an Irish-American Association that also had a futbol team, and their big game, one against the other, was a relatively big event of the year, at least to those people who were connected with any one of the clubs. Kearny also had--of course, it's New Jersey--so there were Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, and English. Sometimes there was a mix of a lot of people, a lot of recent immigrants, a lot of the kids were first generation, but also back in that era, Kearny High was the big school soccer champion practically every year, and that's because practically every year at least half of their starting teams were foreign born. So, there were people who had played the game since they were small children and knew it in a way that Americans couldn't learn it at that time, and soccer wasn't nearly as popular then as it is now. So, other things that I know my parents went to what were called the Highland Games or the Scottish games, and they took us along. I had two brothers, and they took us along for that. They weren't held in Kearny. And then, the Scots-American Club was kind of a community center, so they had when you were a little kid they had Christmas parties there for the kids, much like a lot of other clubs did during that time period. Go ahead and ask something specific if you'd like, because that about finishes my answer.

NM: Was the primary sport in the whole community soccer rather than baseball? Were there other sports or activities in town?

TG: Oh, yes, everything. But soccer was extremely popular both as a high school sport, but they didn't have the youth leagues in Kearny, so nobody really could start in an organized soccer

league until they were in high school, but they did have little league and basketball leagues. Actually, they had what was called a church league in Kearny, and the teams were mostly sponsored by the churches and they did baseball, basketball, and I think probably touch football or something like that. There were two orphanages in town, both Catholic. One was Boys Town Kearny, affiliated with Boys Town in Nebraska, and one was Sacred Heart which was another Catholic orphanage, and they had teams in those leagues, so particularly I remember baseball. So, sports were available, all kinds.

NM: I understand that you played soccer in high school. Did you play soccer when you were younger in Kearny?

TG: I didn't really start until I was in high school, because there was no organized soccer up to that point. A lot of us that were, you know, on the team. We just kind of started when we're in high school.

NM: Because you were growing up in the 1950s, were there a lot of friends who had fathers who had served in World War II? Was that something that was common?

TG: Absolutely.

NM: Could you tell us about it?

TG: Well, you know, the World War II vets, and, some of them to this day, came home and didn't share their experiences by and large, and it was just, it was so common and so ordinary, that you'd never think to ask. So, I knew I had a number of friends whose dads had served, but where they were, what they did, is very hard to remember. I think there was a friend of mine whose father was a letter carrier who had served, seen considerable service in Europe and died of a heart attack probably about his late forties. I remember one experience, I don't even remember the boy I was with, but I was over at a house on Friday night, and I'm pretty sure his father was a veteran, but every Friday night his father got a bottle of whiskey, sat down at the table, and drank the whole thing. I only saw that one time, but it was a little scary to me at that age, twelve or thirteen or something like that, but I suspect, and it's something I suspected more so later, that this was probably a guy who'd been in the war, and who knows what demons he had inside of him because of those war experiences. Sometimes you knew what branch of the service somebody had been in, but often you didn't, and as a group of returning veterans, we had twelve of twenty million or whatever it was in uniform. There was very little talk about it. Now, when I was younger, they had what were called the projects, and they had veterans' housing, and that was setup several places in Kearny, and I believe they were old leftover War Department buildings or the type of buildings that were made for bases and stuff like that, and they converted them into these little row of apartments, pretty humble, more like what you would expect to see today in a trailer park, but a place where a returning veteran, especially one with a family, could come back and live with his family and get back on his feet and get established. After a while those were all closed down, and they went away. I don't remember when, but I'm certain that they had that type of housing into the mid '50s, anyway.

NM: Was the community growing in the 1950s? Was there construction? This may have been hard to realize as a child, but was there expansion?

TG: I think a lot of the growth in Kearny predated the '50s. However, there was construction in the '50s, and sometimes, it was interesting back in those days, an individual would build his own house, and he was not necessarily a contractor. The houses were relatively simple compared to the ones that we have now, and I remember we lived in, my mother still lives on a dead-end street and that street is probably a good quarter of a mile long. It's very long, but I remember when the end of the street, we were maybe the fifth house from the end, and then, the end of the street another tenth of a mile or so they built out, and they put houses on both sides. So, there was some of that construction going on, but Kearny was not in the '50s, it wasn't an up and coming developing town like some of the places that are a little further out where they were doing huge housing developments at the time.

NM: Could you tell us what your schools were like growing up? Could you tell us about the school experience was like? What was your favorite subject?

TG: At what level?

NM: At any level in your youth, whether it is elementary school, middle school, or high school.

TG: I can't even answer that. I wasn't an especially good student at that level. I probably never was, but I kept getting better as I advanced in my education. You know, Kearny, it was practically an all-white town. We had three or maybe four black families in town, and they initially lived up in one of the veteran's projects. We had a couple of Japanese families who were really among the wealthiest residents in town since they were Noritake China importers primarily in New York. That was pretty typical, I think, at that time period, the demographics were, but people didn't mix, and there wasn't as much tolerance or really, you know, I'm not sure how to describe it, but it's not like it is now. In elementary school, I mean, my mother was president of the PTA, so I had two older brothers that preceded me. I could probably tell you the name of most of my teachers. I went to what was called Emerson School, old building, since been torn down. For junior high, which was seventh and eighth, I went to Lincoln School which I believe was completely torn down then rebuilt in the same location and has been expanded considerably. Then, I went to Kearny High, of course. I have many memories of that, especially of high school, but I'm trying to focus in to figure out what direction, you know, you want me to go in.

NM: Could you talk about playing soccer in high school, as well as any other extracurricular activities that you participated in?

TG: That gives me some direction, so let me digress from what you asked me. What's very important in my life, and the friends that I kept when I was in school, was a club which was called the Presbyterian Boys' Club, although it was non-sectarian, it was open to all, and it still exists now for many years known as the Presbyterian Boys' and Girls' Club, and so, that was open for weeknights and on Saturdays. It was just a place for kids to hang out, you know. I probably hung out there too much and I should have studied a little more, but it was a lot of fun.

They were a primary sponsor of the sports leagues I talked about before for young kids. They had a gym where we played basketball. They had pool tables, they had ping pong tables, a model railroad that was quite elaborate, a couple of bowling alleys. It was all located in a church, so that really had a substantial effect because I spent so much time there, and most of my friends all the way through high school were, you know, guys I kind of hung around with, were mostly guys from this club, and we kept, we still went there in high school, and sometimes we volunteered, you know, you'd be a supervisor or something like that by the time you got to that age. It was a wonderful opportunity. It was run by a benefactor who had no children, but was married, and he was an engineer for Bell Labs who had, I'd have to guess at this point in time, but something over a hundred, maybe two hundred patents, a very, very bright guy, but his life centered around this Boys' Club, and he would, like on Friday night, he'd tell ghost stories. They had a wood shop about half the size of this room, he'd turn off all the lights, and he'd tell ghost stories and various things. Actually, they had trips. They had a tumbling team, but people call it gymnastics today. Eventually, they had a trampoline and they had a trampoline team. They had a singing group called the Fithian Choristers. Jim Fithian, F-I-T-H-I-A-N, was a professor at NCE in Newark and his sister actually led the choristers. They had a drama company, this was all within the boy's club, and they put on one play a year. I participated in the tumbling and trampoline teams, and we'd go on trips, you know. Once in a while we put on shows at like orphanages or places like that. I think it was every other year we went to a juvenile farm for, I think, kids who were sent there by the courts for criminal activities. It was up in Upstate New York, right across from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and we'd do a tumbling and trampoline show for them, then spend the night at a hotel, and then come back the next day. By participating in these activities, you got coupons for going to practice and participating in the show and all that, and the coupons were supposedly worth a dollar each, but the benefactor of the club, you see, he'd set a price which was almost arbitrary, and then he'd have trips. He didn't always go on these trips, but I remember every year they had a winter sports trip, and they went up to Vermont, did mostly skiing. I remember once I went to Virginia Beach, and we stayed at a five-star resort, you know, and I forget five days, maybe a week. A couple of trips to Florida, they were less organized, but through the club. We drove on those things. I mean, it was at that time there was a different executive director, and he drove and another basically a kid that was eighteen or something drove on that trip. They had bus rides. They had trips where you'd go up to Bear Mountain and watch the ski jumping, or go to West Point, stuff like that, day trips. Sometimes they had a mystery bus trip where you just showed up on a Friday night and you went somewhere, you know. It was an activity that when I think back about it, is probably why I didn't have as many school activities, because I was involved with that, and there were so many great things going on. In school, not too much, I'm trying to think. I played soccer, and I didn't have the advantage of parents who had been to college to steer me in the direction of participating in a lot of other activities. If I had it to do all over again, I'd look for the three things that the best schools in the country look for, and that's athletics--unless someone is disabled and unable to participate--leadership, whether that's in athletics or student government or whatever, and excellent academics, you know. If you have all those, you can go to the military academies or the Ivies, or lots and lots of real good schools, including state schools, but I wasn't really focused at that time. Interestingly, my parents' expectations for all of us was that we would get a high school diploma. So, I didn't have the same guide posts as I might have, you know, now to offer someone else if they asked me what to do to get into one of the best colleges in the country, which by the way I think I did, anyway.

NM: You mentioned the activities that you did with this organization. What about things like going to the movies or other things that you did in the community? Were there theaters in Kearny or did you travel to Newark for entertainment? What was your social life like, growing up during this time period?

TG: There were two theaters in Kearny, the Lincoln and the Warner, and I don't think either one of them is there now. I'm pretty sure they're not there anymore but, yes, sometimes we went to movies. It wasn't a big part of my life. Shopping, and there was also shopping in Kearny, but I think my mother basically took us to a clothing store that was in Newark. I remember being in the department stores in Newark--Hahne's, Kresge's, and one other.

NM: Bamberger's?

TG: That's it, and I remember being there during the Christmas season, you know, when the department stores were all dressed out for that, you know. It just comes back again--the Boy's Club had movies one night a week, so they were a little bit older, but they showed a film there, and sometimes they showed films you wouldn't see in theaters, like I remember seeing movies of car races in Europe, things like that. There was no TV coverage at that time of events like that, certainly no live coverage, and so, you'd get these films of like Le Mans or something.

NM: Was attending church common during this time?

TG: I believe it was for most people, yes. We went to Knox Presbyterian Church, which was not the same church as where the Boys' Club was, and, you know, my mother and father were both Sunday school teachers. My father was a deacon in the church, and I'm sure my mother had offices. I went to Sunday school from the time I was born because she was teaching Sunday school, so there I went, you know. I basically grew up in that church. There were activities with that too if you're looking to see what life was like in the '50s. When you get into high school, there's a youth group--I forget exactly what it was called--and I remember one weekend, the minister had a retreat somewhere down the shore, and we went to his house. It was probably November or so it was a little cold for beach activities, but it was a nice getaway, one of those things, and occasionally there were other church activities where you'd go out and go somewhere, you know. Then, when I got a little older in junior high or so, I'd go to Sunday school and church every Sunday.

NM: You mentioned in high school that you had all these activities and academics may not have been the highest priority. When did you start thinking about attending colleges? When did that come on the horizon for you?

TG: Well, this doesn't reflect in the questionnaire, because it was a little more complex than I wanted to get into, and something else we'll get to later on, I'm sure that didn't pop up, because it's kind of unique to me. I graduated from high school and my guidance counselor in high school steered me towards a job which was working for Aetna Life Insurance in Newark, and at the same time that I started that job, I started going to Rutgers-UC [University College] in Newark, and I took two courses that year--English and economics. The next year when I was

here [at Rutgers College in New Brunswick], everybody I knew was struggling day after day with freshman English, but I took that last year and it wasn't nearly as intense as it was for them here. So, anyway in that, in those courses I got one A and one B in English and two Bs in economics. That's what helped me immensely to get in here, and I was kind of a late acceptance, somewhere later on in the, you know, late spring or something, somewhere between April and June, and so, I will say I became, I didn't necessarily become a good student, but I became more serious about it at that point in time. So, I worked for fifteen months, from the time I graduated from high school until the time I started here in New Brunswick, and a couple of nights a week went over to Rutgers, wherever it was, in Newark. It wasn't downtown, it was off-campus somewhere that I went for these classes and took my night courses.

NM: While you were working full-time, how did you learn about these courses at the University College in Newark?

TG: Well, it was no secret. If you're in Kearny, you knew that you could go to NCE, which is now called the New Jersey Institute of Technology--it was then Newark College of Engineering--or Rutgers, and you could go there part-time and go at night. I'm sure there were other educational resources available, and there certainly were for those that could or did go full time, but I didn't consider that when I was graduating from high school. So, there were a lot of local colleges, and some of them I think, Fairleigh Dickinson, which was relatively new at that time and had a reputation of being, you know, that's where you went if you couldn't go anywhere else at that time, but I think that they also had night programs if I'm not mistaken. I can't tell you where I learned of that, it was just widely known that that was available. I'm sure my guidance counselor in high school must have steered me in that direction. One of the things she told me about the time I was graduating from high school is if I'd applied myself I could have gotten into any college in the United States, but I didn't, so I didn't, you know.

NM: Could you tell us about these courses you took at the University College? Were there other people working full time in these courses with you? From what I understand, you were working in Newark during the day and taking these courses in the evening.

TG: I don't remember too much about my fellow students, however, I have to presume that the great majority of them were working full time, that's why they were taking night courses. I can tell you a little more about the professors, particularly the English professor, but the English professor was a journalist. I think he may have worked for the *New York Times*, and he was very dynamic in my opinion. I really took to him, and he especially, he emphasized a couple of things that he really liked as examples of writing, and one was the King James version of the Bible and the other was Winston Churchill, and he made me, certainly not an expert, but one who is interested in Churchill. I remember writing a paper for that course about Churchill, when you had flexibility as to what the topic would be, and that seemed to come fairly easy to me and was pretty enjoyable. At some point in time, I think in high school, I learned how to write, and there is no greater asset in my opinion that you can have than, no matter what career field that you follow, than the ability to write cogently, and it certainly is. It has helped me when I was in the service. It was a help to me, a great help to me, when I was in my profession as a prosecutor. I believe hand in hand with that, comes the ability to speak. It's a slightly different technique, but at least if you have a mastery of the use of the language or some mastery of the use of language,

then they both connect, and I don't pretend to know grammar or punctuation at this stage of my life, but I do believe that anytime I could write on, you know, a lot of topics if I wanted to, so.

NM: At what point did you decide that you want to attend college full time?

TG: Well, as soon as I had some academic success, which would be at the end of the first semester in night school. I thought that would be a great way to go. I knew that my parents would sacrifice to pay, and if there were scholarships that I was eligible for, I had no idea what they were or how to go about finding them. So, after I had that first, you know, taste of success, I applied to New Brunswick for the fall semester, and I think that they may have withheld my acceptance until I finished the second semester in UC, whenever that was. The dates of school back then were a little different than they usually are today. You usually started school something after Labor Day, and you finished in college, it was right around Memorial Day weekend, but it may have been another week past Memorial Day. I think everything has been moved up to mid-August now, moved up commensurately in the spring. So, I started applying. It was the process that was unbelievable compared to applying for college today. You know, you filled out an application, it is a couple of pages, whatever it was, you sent in your things, you sent your money, and you didn't have to write essays or do all the projects, or have oral interviews or whatever they do now to make it a real process.

NM: Were you the first to begin attending college full time in your family?

TG: I was definitely the first in my family to attend college full time and to graduate from college. Strangely enough, my cousins and my niece and practically everybody who followed me except for one of my brothers--we're all English majors. Go figure, I don't know the reason for that.

NM: Can you tell us about this transition from working full time to being accepted to Rutgers and the process of moving away from home to New Brunswick? I am assuming that you lived in New Brunswick.

TG: I did, yes. Of course, some of these things test your memory because five years from now I intend to be here for my fiftieth reunion, so we're going back almost fifty years when we talk about the time I first arrived here in the fall of 1962. Well, you know, it's always a little different when you leave home for the first time, I think everybody knows that. However, I had this background of going on trips with the Boys' Club and doing this and that and the other thing, something I'm sure we'll get to later. I was also, while I was still in high school, I signed up for the Navy Reserve, so I was actually a member of the Reserves when I came to campus with eventually a two-year active duty commitment hanging over my head. I've been away, you know, a little bit with that on the two week trips that you go on here and there. So, I don't think I was quite as much, you know, afraid or intimidated to be in a situation like this as some others were, and basically it was, it's really hard to remember, but there certainly is a real transition to that. You get hit with more difficult and demanding, you know, homework requirements than I'd ever seen or thought about before, and, you know, just kind of everything goes with it. You know you're competing with a lot of people that they were better students than I was anyway, and you know a whole list of things. I mean it's a big transition. Now interestingly enough,

when I came here, because I was a very late admittee, I was in a dorm called Clothier dorm. Is that still here?

NM: Clothier?

TG: Clothier, okay, was still under construction, and so temporarily they had accepted kind of extra people with the thought that Clothier would be available for the second semester, and they put those extra people in modular housing in what was then called University Heights [Busch Campus], which now I'm sure that's where the Livingston Campus is. So, you had to take a bus and go up there and pass the stadium and out there. This modular housing, it was like a built in--you had a bunk built in, you had a closet built in, you had a desk that you could kind of pull out, and they were lined up one next to the other, but it was more like a true dormitory that there was no, it wasn't a private room. So, it was kind of an interesting experience only lasting for a semester, and then, I moved down to Clothier, and the rest of the time I was here, I lived in the fraternity house. So, you had to take the bus every morning, and, you know, get down here and get to your classes. I mean the busses ran till midnight or something like that. It wasn't a problem, they were always available. I don't think I ever had to walk there. You knew that you were kind of out there and a little remote from the rest of the campus here, and I think, you know, if we were down here for classes or something, we could take our meals here. I don't really remember, but they had meals up there too. It was a little inconvenient, but it wasn't, you know, since I didn't know the difference, it worked out fine, and after one semester I was back down here. I am not hitting on anything as far as attitudes.

NM: Did your positive experience with your professor, the journalist, lead you towards an English major when you got to New Brunswick?

TG: I think that certainly had something to do with it, yes.

NM: Were there other factors that led you to pursue an English major?

TG: I think when I first went into college, I was thinking about majoring in political science. By the way, just as an aside here, I remember very, very few names of the professors that I had in college, and I'm more likely to remember high school teachers and teachers in the Kearny School system, and I also, they asked a question about who your commanding officer was, and all these military things, and with very few exceptions, I don't remember them. I hopped around quite a bit, so it would change frequently, but I don't think there's any doubt that that was a, it was a real plus for me that. I actually failed a semester of English in high school and was put in a remedial English class which is really funny, because that was a class where you wrote papers and stuff like that. So I'd write the paper and hand it in, and the teacher would look at me and say, "What the hell you doing here?" and everybody else in the class was there because they should have been, but that particular course, [the failure], was taught by a teacher who wanted me to have a notebook, she was very unorthodox. She wanted you to have an English notebook that was this thick, and it had to all be organized and you had to have all kinds of stuff in it. You had to constantly write stuff and stuff like that, and a lot of people just either didn't bother or had trouble with that. If you were a good student, and you wanted to succeed in there, it took a lot of work to do that. I either did not, or would not do the work, so, you know, so I had that, but I got

beyond that. I thought that English was interesting. Then, I started taking literature courses. I like to read, and I liked to read then. Basically the way I'd size it up is, I look at this and say, to be an English major, "Sit down and read books," which I do anyway, and then, especially when you get into more advanced classes, you have to write a paper, and you don't have to take a test. You know, "this is definitely for me," [laughter] and I wrote my papers. The best course I had in high school was typing, and I learned how to touch type in one semester, and at the end of that semester, the teacher in the course said, "All you boys are out of here. The girls are going to stay, because they might become secretaries, but if you learn how to type, you're gone." That's just the way it was, and so I learned how to type. There's no such thing as a word processor, but I could start a paper, and I usually did a five page paper, eight page paper, something like that, I'd start them at somewhere between eight and ten at night, hand it in at eight the next morning, no sleep, but that's the way I wrote the paper, and there you go, and that's most of what you have to do as an upper class English major is read stuff and write papers on it. Maybe first semester I was here in New Brunswick or second semester, I had a political science course, and the teacher was awful. He was one of those that, you know, he had a heavy accent, so it was very difficult to understand him, and it was taught more as a philosophy course, and I really didn't get it, so. I mean, I did okay in the course, it was an introduction. You could have taken two semesters--I only took one semester. Then, I went off looking for something else that was more of my taste, and, you know, a teacher that I could relate to a little bit better, but that kind of took me off the course for political science, and, you know, then I put on the other stuff. I took several psychology courses. I thought I might be interested in that at some point, but fortunately I didn't pursue that, because that wouldn't have suited me either.

Gerald Carlucci: While at Rutgers, I know that you were in Chi Psi. Can you tell me what attracted you to Greek life and Chi Psi particularly?

TG: You had to finish a semester before they had rush, and then it was a big deal in the winter time, about a week long, and first, you'd start going around all the houses and winnow it down sort of, and it was sort of where, you know, where am I interested in and where can I be accepted into, because it's all one blackball system with no exceptions that I knew of. I did know a guy from Kearny who was a Chi Psi, and he sort of sponsored me into that, and his name was Jim Ross. He was a junior or senior at the time. The things that helped me there is that he was my sponsor, I had played freshman soccer back when they divided it up that way, and I had--the grading has to be different now than it was then--but I had basically a low B overall average, which is pretty good, and, of course, I loved the house. The same house as exists there today, and I'm not sure completely what the demographics are, today. By demographics, at that time it was one of the jock houses on campus. "Deke" [DKE] was the big jock house with most of the football players, and there were a couple of others, but Chi Psi was pretty much of a jock house. At one point in time, we had five of the nine starting wrestlers including one guy who was a heavyweight who was only beaten three times in his entire high school and college career, and twice were in the nationals, by Jim Nance. We had majority of the wrestling team, and we had a number of lacrosse players, several football players. There was at that time, it may still be today, a lightweight football series--they called it a 150 pound football. There were only eight schools in it. You had to weigh in like a wrestler on Friday night at 155 pounds, and by game time you could be 175 and nobody really cared, but we had players that played 150 pound football. We had crew members. That wasn't necessarily everything that attracted me to it, but they were a

good bunch of guys. I was able to squeeze my way in there, and that was a very enjoyable experience for me.

GC: Can you talk about pledging?

TG: I think today they've gotten away from some of the antics that they used to do. You had to memorize a lot of stuff on all the brother's names and hometowns and majors, and I don't know there was other stuff too that came along with that, and that was probably a good thing. There were certain duties. I don't remember how long it lasted, it was eight or ten weeks, you know, and we were all scored based on what we did or didn't do or something like that. So, there was a list of your seniority was based on your number in the pledge class, and there was one final week, it was "Hell Week." I knew of high school fraternities in high school, I went to one although I wasn't a member of one, just immense paddling. At the end they would give somebody forty swats on the butt, and I'll tell you some of those guys, some of them I think really got hurt, you know, but at one point in time, halfway through, they gave us one paddle, and then there was no more after that because they'd gotten away from that type of thing. There was all kind of stuff, we had one night where they give you a meal they called the "black supper" or something like that. It's not really a meal, but it's all really spicy, salty stuff that you can't even eat, you know, but I mean, I don't remember that part, I remember the subsequent part, but it wasn't especially [bad]. You had little jobs to do, whatever they were. You had to ring the dinner bell, and they may still have that there. I don't know, answer the phones, you know, horseshit like that basically.

GC: I was told by a Chi Psi in the 1960s that your fraternity was somewhat elitist in the sense where you had to wear coats and ties to dinner.

TG: That's right, we did wear coats and ties to dinner. We had a cook whose name was Elizabeth or Betty Marlow. After she retired she lived to be close to a hundred, but she was wonderful. So, we had meals there, six days a week, and I think that we did not have a meal Saturday night or anytime on Sunday, everybody went out, but otherwise the breakfast was informal, but lunch basically was more formal, and she was a great cook. On big events, like big weekends, her mother came and helped her. Betty was a very religious African-American lady. Sometimes some other members of her family came over, but I mean her presence here really added to that experience, but we did dress for dinner except not on Friday nights, and there were some formalities. We sang after dinner, there's a little song book, and we had to read songs after dinner. Of course, people were coming and going. There were athletes who were coming back from practice late, but it was pretty formal, and that was, you know, I mean that's a fond memory for me. People just don't do that anymore, dress up for dinner or going out or anything like that.

GC: They still continue on with that tradition to this day.

TG: As far as being elitist, I will tell you that it was known as a WASP, [White Anglo-Saxon Protestants], fraternity. That was the reputation that it had. There was my pledge year, and in the next pledge year, we pledged a guy named Willy Melendez, who's Puerto Rican, his father was Army, a career Army guy down at Fort Dix. The next year, we pledged a Jewish guy. They all became brothers, and the last year when I was--actually, I left mid-year--and the last year I

was there, I came down for rush week, and I sat around for the meetings and stuff like that, but I refused to vote, because I wasn't going to be there, and they pledged an African-American guy, Bruce Hubbard, but this is very, very rare in Chi Psi nationally at the time, and he became a major executive in New York and a very big proponent both of Chi Psi and Rutgers. So it was probably one of the best moves, you know, we ever made. Although way back then at that time, it was a little, you know, considered a little daring or certainly progressive.

GC: This is during the Civil Rights Movement.

TG: Yes, but I'm inclined to think it picked up some after the time that I left college, and certainly there was a nascent anti-war movement when I was still here. The first ground troops went into Vietnam in March of 1965, and so I left here in January of '66, so it was still kind of a way out there, "over there" type of thing, and there were some protests. I remember, you know, one guy in my class who was a Weatherman. There were some little bitty things at that time, but it really hadn't heated up. Civil rights--I don't remember any civil rights demonstrations or anything of the sort on campus. That's not to say that there might have been something, but there certainly, I don't think was anything that was really very, very big.

GC: You mentioned one of your friends was a Weatherman?

TG: No, a guy who was in my class was a member of the Weather Underground, the so-called "Weathermen" after a Bob Dylan song. I do remember, I have a vague memory of being present one time when a group was demonstrating, you know, or they had signs or something like that, but I certainly was not a participant in it, but, you know, those things are always, they're curious enough to make you stop and take a look for a little while.

GC: Was that here on campus?

TG: Yes, over by, if the gym is still the same place as it always was, right down College Avenue a few blocks.

GC: Do you remember anything they were saying, or if the crowd was big?

TG: I don't think the crowd was very big, you know. It's funny, it's pretty obvious today that, you know, if you get forty people out to protest, and you call the TV stations, they'll come out, and they make them look like they're eight hundred people there, it's just distortion from the way that they take pictures. We may have been coming out of a wrestling match or some other event, and that's why I would have been there, but I think it would have been a real small group at that time, because that movement didn't really pick up until later on when things heated up in Vietnam very much in 1967 and 1968.

NM: David, do you have any questions about Rutgers?

David Freschl: Did a lot of your Chi Psi brothers wind up joining in the war effort as well, or want to?

TG: Well, you know, that's a very interesting question for you to ask because there was no "want to." It was a draft, and everybody was eligible for the draft, and when I was at Rutgers, Vietnam wasn't a big issue, because as I say, they went in, and, you know, every time they've ever had a war they think they're going to be back by Christmas, and it will all be over, but it never seems to happen, especially now, but going in the military was an accepted fact of life. In Kearny, it's a better question to ask. In Kearny, if you weren't going to go in the military, you didn't tell anybody about it because everybody in Kearny was expected to go in the military. Then people would be 4F, which was ineligible for draft because of some physical disability, and they'd get out. Sometimes, there were obviously things you could do to get out of the military, but as I say that's, the way that I grew up in Kearny, if you're going to try to evade going into the service, you didn't tell anybody about it, because their reaction would be, "What the hell is the matter with you?" So, it was pretty much something everybody was expected to do. Now, when I first came to Rutgers, they had, and I'm sure they still have now, Air Force and Army ROTC, and they made a big pitch when you're here for freshman orientation to join one ROTC or the other. They even made the preposterous statement that if you didn't join ROTC that they wouldn't accept you later on into officer candidate school if you applied for officer candidate school after you graduate--a complete lie at the time, and always a lie, you know--but they wanted to recruit people for ROTC. As I mentioned before, I was already in the Naval Reserve so I wasn't about to go in ROTC too. I maybe had other plans. So, a lot of my fraternity brothers were in ROTC, and you could, if you'd signed up for ROTC, you're kind of obligated to hang in there with them for the first two years. Then, after two years you made a decision whether or not you were going to continue on with ROTC or drop out which you could do at that time. If you continued on presumably then you were, unless something else interceded, you were accepting a military obligation as an officer in that branch of the service. So, my college roommate eventually joined the Army and became an officer after college. I had any number of fraternity brothers who were in one ROTC or the other that went in and did their tours in their respective branch of the service, but I think it was something everybody had to deal with at that time. It wasn't something that was an option like it has been for all these many years, and so, you either had to, you know, if you didn't do anything, then they would call you for the draft. There were exemptions from the draft. If you were married and had children, you're probably going to be exempted. If you were a teacher, you could be exempted. The famous exemption for Vietnam was a student deferment which wasn't an exemption, but if you kept going to grad school and kept up a certain amount of courses, I mean you could delay it forever, and you could do things if you were knowledgeable enough and you had the means to do it or your family did, like all you had to do is get braces on your teeth, go into the draft physical, smile at them, and they'd say, "You're out of here," because they don't have the means to contend with people with braces on their teeth. Afterwards I knew, I actually ran into one of my fraternity brothers in Vietnam, because I knew he was coming over. I don't know how we communicated in those days, you know. You didn't have email; you didn't have cell phones. So, basically everything was a written letter and, or, maybe there were other means of communication. Anyway, I ran into this guy and talked to him. He went out on his first patrol, and the next time I saw him he was in the hospital and I went up and visited with him because he had been wounded and he immediately went back home. He was there about ten days to two weeks, but it was a factor and those who weren't involved in ROTC or something else eventually had to face it although there were various outcomes. Does that answer your question?

DF: Absolutely.

NM: There are a few things I wanted to follow up on and one of them has to do with your time at Rutgers. Was there a lot of interaction with Douglas College?

TG: Yes, and no. There were very few crossover classes although I heard of one guy--I don't know if I knew him or not--who majored in home economics or something, so he had all of his classes at Douglas because it still was the same university. I remember taking educational psychology at Douglas and I may have taken another course over there. Of course, you know, there were mixers--everybody knows what that is--a dance ceded with men and women. Douglas girls would come, that was before they all called themselves women, but Douglas girls would come over, as well as girls from other colleges, and other places, and stuff like that. It was more separate, and that was probably to the detriment of the Douglas students more than anything else, because they didn't have as many social opportunities as the guys. They were always, you know anywhere where there are a bunch of guys there are always girls around, whether it's military, police officers, firemen, college students, there are always girls that focus on that group, you know. So, I had interactions. I dated a couple of girls at Douglas, but as far as really a connection, they were over there, and we were over here. Now, some of my fraternity brothers dated Douglas gals, some of them eventually married gals from Douglas, but predominantly as I look back, as I think about it, I'd have to say that I think most of the guys in Chi Psi at that time, if you had a girlfriend, then you're girlfriend was somewhere else other than Douglas, although some of them did have girlfriends from Douglas.

NM: You mentioned that your favorite professor in the English department was Dr. McGinn?

TG: I was hard pressed to remember anybody, but he is definitely a character that you would not forget. I believe his first name was Donald. He was an old man, which when I had him means, he was probably about fifteen years younger than I am right now, but he had a very unique style of teaching Shakespeare, and that was that each semester of the two semester course he went through three of the tragedies and read them aloud in class, and added a lot of commentary, annotation if you will, to help you really understand what's going on in the background. Because I'm not sure if anybody is any sort of Shakespeare scholar, but his plays are so simple and so extraordinarily complex, and that's what makes them all so great, because they were all written to appeal to the rabble, the illiterates, down on the ground, who couldn't read and couldn't understand, you know, any subtle humor. So, it was a lot of coarse humor, a fair amount of body humor in Shakespeare. I think as an assignment, I think he had us read some other stuff, but he really didn't touch on it too much. I was just discussing that when we had dinner on Labor Day with a friend who is a judge in California, and his wife is a teacher friend of my wife's, and he and I remember the same thing from our Shakespeare. He's a Shakespeare aficionado now, if you will, and very serious about it, but we were talking about how both of our Shakespeare professors gave us the opportunity to memorize, you know, certain Shakespeare things, some of the more famous passages, and in our case here, Dr. McGinn gave extra credit for that. So, I didn't memorize all of them, but I did memorize some, and I believe that I might not be flawless, but I remember most of them to this day, you know. So, he was a character. It was unusual because usually in college, they say, "Okay, we'll, you know, we're going to read this in this semester, these fifteen plays, and next semester we'll going to read these fifteen, and I only have

three class sessions on Hamlet and two on Macbeth," you know, but he was extremely thorough about the few that he introduced you to, and he was a dynamic character. Around exam time, he'd be gone because he was giving a PhD--he was sitting for PhD candidates all over the country who had written their thesis on Shakespeare--and first thing when you walked in class and things may be different now, but the first thing when you walked into class, in his introductory remarks, he said, "A 'C' is a perfectly good grade. There's nothing in the world wrong with a C, that if you get a C in this class, you've done just fine, and you'll be with a great majority of all of your fellow students in this class, because that's mostly what I give." I think if you wanted a B or something like that--he'd give them all--but, you know, you had to do all the memorization if you wanted to kick it up to a B. I mean at that time, it was called the "Gentleman's C." If you got through college with a C average you were fine, and, you know, I've since learned that most of the CEOs of major corporations in corporate America were exactly that in college, they weren't your greatest scholars necessarily, but well-rounded people.

[TAPE PAUSED]

NM: Please continue. Previously you mentioned that you joined the Naval Reserve. Could you tell us about that, and how the requirement for two years of service affected your decisions?

TG: Well, at that time, it was a six year obligation with two years of active duty. I actually joined less than three months after I turned seventeen which is the minimum time to serve when I had to have my parents' consent, and while I was still in high school, and the idea was that probably that sooner or later I was going to go in the Navy for two years, but then I started working, and I started going to school at night. Then, I got accepted here. Well, as long as you were going to school full time you could get a deferment of that two year active duty period. So, I went on about four two week, you might call them, summer camps. So, I went to Great Lakes for boot camp, a two week boot camp in December around Christmas time and I went to one at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, one in New Jersey, Perth Amboy, and one out of Chicago where we cruised in the Great Lakes, and I became a third class petty officer with a specialty as a disbursing clerk or paymaster if you will, and I undoubtedly would have applied for Navy OCS to become a Navy officer but I'm color blind. So it's not something that affects me much except that sometimes it's hard to--they only test you for red and green, and they don't want you flying an airplane or piloting a ship if you're color blind. So, I couldn't become what's called a line officer in the Navy. In order to become a Navy officer, I would have had to wait until I graduated, and then go to Navy OCS, and then serve as a naval officer in the supply corps or something like that, and in any event, at some point in time, I think my junior year in college, they had recruiters and there was a Marine Corps officer, selection officer, and they couldn't care less if you were color blind. [laughter] It just wasn't that big a deal to them. So, I wound up transitioning into that program. I went through OCS in the summer between my junior and senior year at Quantico, Virginia, and then when I graduated, I was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. An interesting sort of auxiliary story to that is the commissioning ceremony was held in the Marine Corps room at the 21 Club in New York City, and after I was commissioned, my whole family and the recruiting officer had lunch at 21 which I assume is still one of the best places in New York where all the entertainment people still go. The guy who ran the 21 Club, the owner of the 21 Club was Bob Kriendler, a Rutgers graduate who was a Marine Reserve colonel and had served in the Second World War in the Marine

Corps. So, Colonel Kriendler's idea was whenever the unusual happened--which is that a Rutgers graduate got commissioned in the Marine Corps--that he would swear them in and have them and their family at the 21 Club and upstairs in the 21 Club he had a Rutgers room, and he had a Marine Corps room, and he was, I think that he was, to say the least, a very active alumnus, so they'd have meetings there of whatever, the trustees or whatever he was. Everybody wanted to go to 21, because, you know, it was "the" big place to go in New York for celebrities at that time.

NM: How did becoming an officer in the Marine Corps affect the two year requirement in the Naval Reserve?

TG: In order to enter the Marine Corps commissioning program that I was in, I was discharged from the Navy, and then enlisted in the Marine Corps. So, there was a complete separation of that, and any further obligation I had with them was then terminated.

NM: Was that a relatively smooth process?

TG: It actually was, and the reason is like all sales, you know, if you go to your insurance salesman and you say, "I'm with Allstate, but I want to be with State Farm," I guarantee your insurance salesman, if he's a State Farm guy, is going to take care of that, because that's, then he's going to get a commission from you going over to them, much the same in the military that, you know, it's no problem, and the recruiters know how to take care of all that stuff, and it wasn't like the Navy was fighting saying, you know, "You've got to stay here."

NM: I understand that your brother joined the Army while you were at Rutgers University.

TG: Let me think now. Dan graduated slightly before I did, because the high schools in New Jersey, and my high school had January graduating classes at that time, so he graduated I think in January '61. He worked for about a year as a draftsman, and then he didn't actually join the Army, he upped his draft, which means you lock in--instead of signing up for the Army for three or four years and saying, "I want to pick my duty station. I want to pick my school," which you could do at the time, draftees were drafted for two years. So, approximately in '62, he went into the draft board in Kearny, because they were all local draft boards, and said, "I'm ready to go. I want my draft." A lot of people did that at that time, so then he was inducted in the Army as a draftee, and that would have been '62. I'm not sure, but my best guess is it's '62 to '64 that he served, something like that.

NM: Did your brother use the GI Bill benefits afterwards?

TG: Oh, yes, well.

NM: I understand he attended NCE.

TG: Now, that's interesting. The Vietnam era as it exists today, actually goes from maybe 1961 to 1975, although precious little happened in Vietnam until 1965. They were advisers there. There was a Chi Psi who was an Air Force pilot from Rutgers who was killed in Vietnam, one of

the first people killed there in about 1962, and I remember from all the pictures on the wall, his name was Edward Kissam. I'm not sure if my brother had the GI Bill or not, but I suspect that's now considered Vietnam era for purposes of joining veterans' organizations like the American Legion or getting benefits, but what GI Bill they had when he was in the service, I don't know. I think he must have had that, because he did go out and come out and go to engineering school, but I'm not sure whether he had the GI Bill or not to tell you the truth.

NM: Can you tell us about the training that you received and the process to eventually become trained as an artillery observer? Could you tell us how you joined the Marines and how you went into that specialty?

TG: Well, the first thing that every Marine Corps officer does today at least is attend a six month school--I presume it's still that--at Quantico, called the Officers Basic Class or Officers Basic School. It's intensive, it's one of the reasons why the Marine Corps is as tight knit as they are, because there's no other service that has anything like this. Today, all Marine Corps officers go through the basic school. Back then, those that were going to be pilots did not or need not, although some of them did later, went into aviation specialties. So everybody no matter what your job is going to be, you go through the basic school. Now, when I was in they were already well into the commitments for Vietnam, the Marine Corps was expanding considerably, although I can't swear to the figures, from about 170,000 total to maybe somewhere up around 270,000, and that makes a big difference in an organization like that. One of the things that they had done in order to get people out in the field more quickly was they reduced the length of that school from six months to five months, and to do that, they added basically half day Saturday or most of the day Saturday before your weekend started. So, that school covers military traditions, military law, military history, platoon tactics, squad tactics. You fire every weapon during that school and study every weapon that's available to the Marine Corps infantry, and believe me, that's a whole heck of a lot of weapons, mortars, and recoilless rifles--which are antitank weapons, shoulder fired--and as well as all the machine guns and various, a sundry of pistols and rifles and stuff like that. So, it's a very intense school, and it really trains you well, and when you're done with that school, then you go out somewhere else, you know, to either go to another school. In the Marine Corps they always push everybody, or they say the best thing you can do is be in the infantry; in the Army they do that to some extent also. Those that are going to become infantry officers when they're done with the basic school, they go out to what they call the Fleet Marine Force or the operating forces. You get a chance to not select, but request, certain specialties, and one of the specialties I requested, I think my first was artillery which is the supporting arms which is the next, you know, if you're Marine infantryman, then they'd say that's the next best thing, and so, I was part of a group that was, you know, destined for artillery. So, we were sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, the Army Artillery School for, I believe, it was about a ten-week course called the Officers Basic Artillery Course. Now, shortly prior to that time, Marine artillery had been trained at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, but because of Vietnam, and because they knew practically everybody in the basic school class I was in was going to Vietnam right now, as soon as you finish going to schools, so, they sent us to the artillery school at Fort Sill which was phenomenal, I mean, and again it was the same type of thing. We were intensively trained on what's called fire direction. You have about half this many tables, and you had plots and maps. When you first walk in, they give you eight or ten slide rules and they all have to do with plotting artillery, and that's what they, even on the lowest level of the artillery battery, that's

where they used to plot artillery. Now, in artillery school, I think toward the end they brought them, and they said, "This thing here is a computer, and someday in the future, computers are going to direct artillery," but it wasn't then, so, and they teach you, because they expect you're going to be a forward observer, there's a lot of time spent at the gunnery range or the ranges at Fort Sill where you actually direct artillery fire, and I must say I did enjoy that. I was actually, I thought, relatively good at it, and they teach you all about the weapons, the different types of weapons, and how they work, and, you know, just everything there is about artillery. Then, I went to another school from there, I kept on driving and went to Coronado, California, which is actually, Coronado is separate town, but it's in the San Diego area, and there I went to a three week school that was called Naval Gunfire Air Spotters Course, and that was just basically, it was a school where if you knew how to call artillery, you were trained to call naval gunfire from the ground or supposedly from the air although we didn't really do any aerial fire direction, but we did fly to an island where we directed naval gunfire. So, those were the three schools I went to before the time that I went overseas.

NM: Do you enter active duty before you completed your undergraduate degree here?

TG: No. I had finished all of my course work. At that time it was unheard of for anybody to graduate from here mid-year. I had that UC time before, so I went down to the registrar's office about the time I finished my exams or got my grades and said, "Guess what? I've graduated." They said, "That's not possible," and I said, "Well, I think if you have all the requirements and all the credits, it really is possible," and, you know, they took a look at it, but they kind of "shined me on" which may be a phrase from the '60s, I don't know, but, you know, I wasn't getting anywhere. They had an official here at the school, maybe it was director of alumni relations, I think his name might have been Kramer, and he was a Rutgers graduate who had just recently retired as a colonel in the Marine Corps and come to work for the university. So, I went over to see him. I said, "Guess what?" I said, "I'm ready to be commissioned to the Marine Corps, and I've got all my course work done, but I can't convince the registrar's office that, for all practical purposes, I have been graduated." He said, "Let me look at that," you know, [laughter] and he took care of it right away, and so they conceded that for all practical purposes I have graduated, and they could give the certificate of that part to the Marine Corps, because you had to be, unless you came up through the ranks in a whole different way, you had to be a college graduate then and now to enter into a commissioning program in the military, and so, you know, they signed off on it and everything. They certified that I had all my graduation requirements. Then, I went down to, I reported down to Quantico on St. Patrick's Day of 1966. I actually did take a day of leave and come back for graduation, and so, my parents were here for graduation, guests of mother, my family, and, you know, I flew down. I flew up in the morning, and flew back in the evening, so

NM: Was it Vincent Kramer?

TG: I think that was his name.

NM: Yes, we have interviewed him as well. If you go on the website you can check out his interview. I just wanted to clarify the dates of when this is happening. You went over to Vietnam as an artillery forward observer, and then you end up at Camp Pendleton.

TG: After I came back from Vietnam.

NM: I moved forward, sorry. Was it a foregone conclusion that you would be assigned to a unit in Vietnam?

TG: I would answer that yes.

NM: What was the process of finishing your training at these various schools, and then being assigned to the 1st Marine Division?

TG: That entire training took from March 17th till sometime in early to mid-December in '66, and then you got, I think it was two weeks leave at home, and then we flew to San Francisco, and I joined up with a bunch of guys I had gone through training with in San Francisco, and then they all flew us over from Travis Air Force Base. It was all commercial air, stewardesses and regular airplanes, they were just chartered by the US Government, and in the Marine Corps, you fly from, made a couple of stops. We stopped in Hawaii at three in the morning, we stopped on Wake Island, and we stopped in Okinawa. In the Marine Corps when you went to Vietnam, you stopped in Okinawa first which was a major Marine Corps base, and there you stowed all your uniforms and stuff like that, left them there, and took, you know, a few, I mean, you could take one change of civilian clothes to Vietnam with you in case you got an R&R or something like that, but that was about it. I think I left Kearny on December 27th. I went to San Francisco; we were there for a day or two. Then, we flew to Okinawa, we were there for a day or two, and they put up a list of the manifest on the bulletin board. Somebody came on New Year's Eve and said, "Did you check the list?" I said, "Well, not in the last hour." He said, "Well, you're on the list for tonight." So, I rushed back to where I was staying, I threw all my stuff together, which wasn't much, and then I caught an airplane which was a military airplane, and you know, we flew all night. About eight in the morning, New Year's Day, I got into Vietnam. They had 5.2 inches of rain that day, which is typical of the monsoon period, and, you know, in this particular thing, the 1st Marine Division, all the incoming officers met with General Herman Nickerson, German born, absolutely brilliant guy, and he gave you a briefing, welcome, you know, briefing, kind of told you as far as he could what to expect and a couple of things about what you're going to encounter there, and then they sent you out. You got assigned to a unit. Well, my unit, we flew into Da Nang, and my unit that I was going to was in Chu Lai. They were both air bases, but they all had a lot of surrounding people in the countryside around them, so you had to pretty much fly to Chu Lai. It was fifty miles, but it took me three days to get a "hop" down there. So, on January the 4th, I got a flight down to Chu Lai, that was my birthday. I think right away, that same day, you know, somehow somebody picks you up, and they take you out to the artillery battery's position. To the best of my recollection, I only spent one night there, and then, the next day I was out in the field with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. That's why I listed it here that I was assigned to the artillery, but all of my time in the field I spent with the infantry, and so, I went on patrols, and of course, as a lieutenant, when I went on small patrols, I was often the senior officer, so I was technically in charge of the patrol, but I usually deferred to whatever squad leader, whoever was there and said, "Just go ahead and run your patrol, and I'm here if you need me. I'll be looking out for artillery, but if you need anything check with me." We did operations. An operation is a much bigger deal than a patrol. Every day you did patrols, and that

could be squad size, maybe twelve to fourteen people or sometimes platoon size or sometimes company size, platoons about thirty-five or forty, company is about one hundred twenty, and then sometimes you went on operations. These operations would be much larger, and they could be regimental or battalion sized. Battalion is four companies and a regiment is three battalions, and, you know, you go out and basically look for trouble, go to areas where we thought that there was enemy activity. Sometimes you'd run into something, sometimes you wouldn't.

NM: I wanted to back up just a little bit and ask about when you first came to Vietnam. What were some of the things that struck you about the environment?

TG: I arrived during the--I forget the name--there are two monsoons in Vietnam, monsoon means rainy season. I think the average rain fall in January is forty-five inches for the month, and it tapers off leading up and going down from there, but it's still very substantial in December and February, November, and March. The ground is never dry. When you walk anywhere, if you're on dirt, it's always mud, it's always squishing under you. I don't remember, I really can't remember being cold in Vietnam, but I probably was sometime or other, but it's tropical, so it's a fairly warm place, a lot of rain, a lot of runoff. Of course, since it's been like that forever, it, you know, it doesn't really affect things that much, the rivers get real swollen, and, you know, I mean those are just the outside, very green, quite beautiful actually, but, you know, when I arrived they went to the big, basically, the division headquarters, and that's where, you know, we were, and that's a big, relatively safe place. I don't remember, you know, impressions otherwise of arriving there.

NM: When you arrived, was there a school that was meant to train you about Vietnam specifically? Was there a short program to get you acclimated to the Vietcong, the North Vietnamese, and other threats you might encounter?

TG: No. We had some of that training way back at the basic school in Quantico. They had Vietnamese villages set up in a lot of training areas for Army and Marine Corps in the United States, and they would try to orient you towards, you know, since they knew where you were going, what you're going to find there, but I don't recall anything on arriving in Vietnam that I would call training except when we finally got out to the field with the infantry, you know, with other guys would tell you things, or you know, but as far as what you suggested as far as identifying the enemy, I think we already knew that already, and, you know, except they were always hard to identify just as in the present conflict that's going on today. You know, one day he's just a guy walking down the street, the next day he's got a suicide bomb on him, you know. You're not sure how you really know.

NM: You were in the 11th Regiment of the 1st Marine Division.

TG: In the Marine Corps, they're called the 11th Marines.

NM: The 11th Marines.

TG: 7th Marines were called the 7th Marines, or the 7th Marine Regiment.

NM: So, the 11th Marines is the artillery regiment.

TG: You're right, 11th Marines is the regiment.

NM: Were detachments of the 11th Marines sent to provide artillery support to the other regiments?

TG: It's more structured than that. The 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines has four batteries. Anyway, I was in Golf (G) battery, they're all designated by letter. There are three batteries per artillery regiment, so let's say it's Golf, Hotel (H) and India (I). Well, the Golf battery is the supporting arms for the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. Hotel would be for 2-7 and India would be for 3-7 and that's the way it's always been, that's the way it basically always will be, but those are the smallest artillery weapons, those are 105 millimeter howitzers. They have other artillery weapons like 155 guns that are at a higher level, but still within the 11th Marines, and the Army had some huge 175 millimeter guns. Marine Corps had a lot of heavy mortars when I went to Vietnam, although, I think they've gotten rid of all of them since, and, of course, down on the infantry level, they have lighter mortars. So, there's a battery, but basically that battery was a 105 howitzer battery, and they supported 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.

NM: Could you tell us about this relationship between the infantry and the artillery? How did that work? Was it combined briefings?

TG: There's no doubt that they did that, but I was never on the level where all of that happened, because, you know, the artillery and all the supporting arms are there to support the infantry. That's the only job they have. So, obviously the lieutenant colonel that's in charge of the artillery battalion would meet with the lieutenant colonel who was charge of the infantry battalion and maybe with the captains who were the company commanders, and they'd work very closely together. For one thing, a lot of stuff in the military really has to be plotted out, like if you're doing, at night, artillery does what they call H&Is, Harassment and Interdiction fires. They'll look at the map, and if they see a trail crossing or an assembly area, or somewhere where they think that the enemy might be that night, then, during the course of the night, they'll fire some artillery out there to try to break them up or kill them or whatever, you know, they can do. Well, the infantry is out all night long with patrols, and they're going through those same areas. So, everything has to be coordinated. So, every day the infantry draws up, from every level, they draw up patrol maps. There's a different name for it, I don't remember what that is, but they will do a patrol map, and then, that will go up the chain of command, and they'll make sure not only that they're not shooting artillery on the guys that are out on patrol, but that two patrols aren't coming from different directions down the same path, shooting at each other, so, and it doesn't always work perfectly, but that there's a lot of coordination. Does that answer your question?

NM: Yes. You mentioned some of the types of missions that you would go out on patrols and support. Could you tell us if there is a typical mission, what would that entail from your position as an artillery observer?

TG: Well, first of all the artillery guy--I found out real quick--is always the map guy, and to this day, I am pretty darn good with maps. Let's say you go out with an infantry company, maybe

one hundred twenty people, and you go on patrol. I had binoculars, which we called field glasses, but I would walk, literally walk, with a compass in this hand and a map in this hand and a terrain map, not, I mean, not like a road map, and actually Vietnam was a pretty good place to do this. The desert, where they've been for the last twenty years is awful, but they have GPS now that do the same thing. The map, you'd always cover your map with a glass, plastic, some kind of wrap and seal it up, because otherwise, if it rained, which it did a lot, it would be worthless, so, but that's the way the artillery guy always walked, because all the infantry commanders would always come up and say, "Where are we?" and I had to give them some basic information on that, so, and you did that by, we had both in basic school and artillery school, we had training, we had land navigation training, training on taking your compass and pointing to this mountain top and that mountain top, triangulating, and working back to figure out what your position was. Today, with GPS, they do the same thing, but with a GPS, and it's much more accurate, much, you know, easier to do. So, that's one of the things that I did, but that basically, it would depend on the size of the operation that I was on. Usually, you know, your main contact was the company that you're with. So, I got sent out from my battery, and I served with all four of the companies in 1st Battalion, 7th Marines and at different times, and they'd switch me over. We only had two officers who were FOs [Forward Observers], and we had other FO teams that were headed by enlisted men, so they, whenever there was an operation, they usually sent somebody to the company that was going on an operation. An operation, you would frequently go by helicopter, I'd say most of the time, and they put you in there to an LZ, [landing zone], and in all of our training, they said, "These LZs are going to be hot and you come out shooting," and I don't believe I ever came out of a hot LZ. So, they were all, you know, we cannot move. We'd regroup and assemble, and then, we'd go walking off somewhere. One time I remember that we went to an operation, I was, for instance, if anybody a student of Vietnam, I was in the My Lai area long, long before Lieutenant Calley and everybody else was there, and before that incident happened, but it was the prior year, but we were displaced and moved up north, and then, the Army Americal Division came in which was the one that had, that did the massacre in My Lai. [Editor's Note: On March 16, 1968, hundreds of unarmed civilians were murdered by US Army soldiers in the Americal Division, an event that, when made public over one year later, turned public opinion against the war.] So, you know, you'd walk around. I remember one instance we finished up an operation. There had been a little stuff going on as I remember, but I don't have real specifics, things like that, and then they had us walk back to our base some twenty-five miles through what we used to call "Indian country." It was an area where the Viet Cong were known to operate openly, and when you do that, not everybody realizes this, but your, this is a company spread, and the whole purpose of that walk was that we were bait to hope that somebody would take us on, and meanwhile we were there, we'd be the first ones hit, but everybody else was standing by somewhere else with helicopters ready to go. So, if they decided to hit us, they'd just bring in a massive amount of other units, you know, to fight the fight, so, and on that whole walk, nothing happened. One night we settled down, and there was some sort of firefight just before, you know, we were camping for the night, but it wasn't much, and a lot of those things in Vietnam were little bitty things, you know, or hardly anything at all.

NM: When you would go out on these patrols, how long would the typical operation last, in terms of time duration?

TG: I can only tell you from my experience, and others would have vastly different. I know that there were patrols that lasted for weeks, or operations that lasted for weeks and possibly months. Generally, well to me, a patrol means it's a one day thing, and I didn't usually go out on night patrols, because it was difficult to call artillery during the night unless you had pre-planned targets, and that's one thing we did. If you had a permanent base, you would call artillery around it, so that you had preplanned targets, and then, if you were getting attacked, you can just call the battery on your radio, and say, you know, "Fire target number seven," or something like that. The operations that I went on, maybe, I think, maybe ten days was the longest I was ever out on an operation. Some of them, we went out, and, you know, you went out to start something or to see what was there, and it was one day and we were back, you know. Up to that point in time, I'm not really sure how many I went on anymore, but five days, seven days, ten days--it would depend on where you were going and what you found. There were always objectives, you know, like hills that you're supposed to take. Most of the time when you got the hill, there was nobody there. So, you know, sometimes you had firefights, sometimes you surprised them, but mostly what I saw were pretty small units except for the very first time. That was a pretty intense fight.

NM: Was it common to engage in firefights with the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese where you would you have to call in artillery support?

TG: It happened a few times, but whether it was common in my experience, not too often, where I really called in artillery support. Sometimes when I did, I'd just get everything lined up ready to go, and then they'd put me on hold because they were bringing in air. When you say the Vietnamese or the Viet Cong, I'll tell you, I doubt that I had much experience with the North Vietnamese, but you never really knew, because you never really saw them unless they were dead. I have tremendous admiration for the enemy in Vietnam. They were resourceful, they were smart, you know, they were savvy, and they knew what they were up against, and they were up against the greatest military might in the world, and with the relatively limited resources that they had, you know, that they were able to put up a good fight, but they always picked the time and place, and sometimes, they just knew that you're coming, and sometimes what you might call the militia forces, like I was in one place one time, and we had a meeting every day at--this is absolutely ridiculous--but we had a meeting at four in the afternoon every day, and they were like forty-five people in the meeting and it was the worst possible scenario. To this day, I hate meetings, and I did then too, but, so we had this meeting with too many people, you know. They had a cook there, and the guy from the supply thing and how could you ever get anything done under those circumstances. So, we'd have this big gathering and meeting, and every afternoon when the meeting went on, they'd pop a few shots over our heads. I knew what was going on, the last thing in the world they wanted to do is hit us, because if they hit us, they really would have made us mad, and we would have gone out, and found out what was going on, found them, and they would be dead, so they'd pop a few shots over our heads, and they could go back and report to their superiors--you know, and these are like local forces, really rag tag troops--that they'd have a fight with the Marines up on the hill, [laughter] and we'd call it in, and said, "We took a few shots," but they weren't really shooting at us. As far as I knew, they weren't trying to kill anybody up there. One day, we had a brand new captain come in there, and he came into this big meeting, and he was the company commander, and they popped a few shots over his head, and the guy dove under the table, and all the rest of us laughed our butts off at the guy, and he was never able to successfully gain any position of leadership in the unit, because he wasn't

smart enough to figure out that nobody was really shooting at us. They were just playing a game, and I'm sure that US forces played the same type of game every now and then, you know, small unit things. "Oh, yes, we got out there," you know, but those are little things. The big operations, yes, sometimes it was very intense, but the enemy would strike, they liked to strike in the middle of the night, and they finally learned that the way to strike was to get inside and really mix it up, so it was one on one, so that we couldn't call artillery against them, or we'd be killing as many of them as us, and they'd get in there very stealthily and do something like that and walk out with a big victory. I was never personally involved in an action like that, but I knew others that were.

NM: You said that the enemy was resourceful. Did you ever encounter booby traps or other types of improvised weapons on your patrols?

TG: Oh, absolutely.

NM: Could you tell us about them?

TG: Sure. As things are today in Afghanistan, since they knew that they couldn't really defeat us militarily, so what they now call IEDs [Improvised Explosive Devices], we just called them booby traps. One of their main sources, you know, of inflicting damage and really harassing and frightening, you know, US troops. So, I've been around when a lot of guys took booby traps. I was not wounded in any way, so sometimes I think that some of those guys were stupid, because, you know, I remember we moved into one operational area one time, we had a little firefight on the way in, and I don't think any of our people were hit, but we did kill a few Viet Cong, and then, we went up and set up on the hill. Well, the first mistake is that the commander set up on a hill where Marines had set up before. That's really a tactical "no, no," and the second thing was, you know, things had quieted down, so everybody was going off to relieve themselves in the bushes. Well, you didn't go to the bushes to relieve yourself, you know, and, so these guys are going to the bushes, and they're taking a pee, and then, you know, booby trap goes off, they get blown up, you know, and it happened to several guys that day. I didn't know what the hell was going on. You know, didn't they get the message the first time, you know? I knew I had the message before the first time on that one, you know, but it seems there were a number, a handful of guys, you know, four, seven, something like that, the booby trap's right there, even after they had it going off, you know. Other examples are, you're marching down a field, and you're marching on a trail, and usually you want to stay off the trails, but at least in the trails it's a worn path, you can see, or a good point man or scout, can see if there's any indication of a booby trap there. So, I remember one time going down the trail that makes a ninety degree turn basically. We're on the path, and a booby trap goes off on the front past the ninety degree turn, and then, some hero wants to run from the back and run across the field to get them. Before he gets halfway across the field, he's blown up by a booby trap, because he didn't stop and think. The best thing to do, if all these guys have walked along, made the right turn, and walked out, you know you're safe to do that, so why would you want to [do something else], you know. In the Marine Corps, they talk about people that are John Wayne, why would you want to do something like that and be John Wayne? When you're exposing yourself to an unknown area, when you can carefully stay within, you know, a known area, and sometimes, they could, I mean they could be brutal, there's probably guys in Vietnam that tried to intentionally get wounded, so they could get

out of there, but, you know, it would have to be just badly enough for them to Medevac you out of Vietnam, but not badly enough, you know, to really do a lot of damage to you. They had, one of them that was the scariest type was called the "Bouncing Betty," and, you know, you tripped it somehow or other, it was buried in the ground. It would jump up to waist level and then it would explode. So, the guys that caught them would catch them right in the groin, and it could kill you, but it could really disable you for life, you know. This same incident that I was talking about, where all the guys went in the bushes and got blown up by booby traps, when we came there what we found was a bomb making factory, and, again, the enemy was very resourceful, and they had basically picked up an unexploded five hundred pound bomb that we dropped off from one of our aircraft, and it was in, I don't remember if it was in a hut or a cave, it seems to me it was in a cave of some kind, and I went in there and took a look at it, and they had opened up the bomb, they disarmed it, they'd open it up, and they were taking the explosive from out of there and making a lot of small, you know, anti-personnel devices out of it, so. They could also make anti-tank devices. While we are talking about that, there's another thing--just personally, once I figured out what was going on there, if I ever had a choice, I always walked. So, there would be incidents where you're walking, and you have a tank, which was actually pretty neat. Marine Corps has very few tanks, but you'd have a tank with you, and it happened a few times, or you'd have some other type of weapon or a truck, you know. Part people were walking, some of them were driving. Well, if I ever had a choice, I always walked, because if you're on a road that, first of all, the weight of the vehicle is what triggers some types of land mines, and the second thing that they could be triggered by somebody who is watching you go by, because they put explosive in a booby trap or device of some sort in a culvert in the road, or they bury it in the road, and they'd wait until they had a rich target. The better the target, the more there was a weapon or the more weaponry that was on it, the better off they were. So, I tried to stay off the vehicles as much as I possibly could and walk because the chances of, especially if you're on the road, the chance of a land mine would significantly decrease.

NM: Did you return to Chu Lai with the companies after the patrols were over?

TG: We had base camps.

NM: Okay.

TG: Chu Lai was an airfield and they had. I think Chu Lai, and I know Da Nang had Air Force and Marines flying out of there. I think, Chu Lai, some fifty miles to the south, was primarily a naval airfield, meaning Navy and Marine Corps Air. I'm not positive of that, but, so, surrounding the base, we had a lot of base camps, and they were company size base camps. A company in that instance is maybe one hundred fifty people. When you go out into the field, you've got to leave a fair, significant number of them behind to guard the base camp. So, you don't take all of them, but you take most of them. So, these base camps surrounded certain areas that were strategic areas around the Chu Lai airfield. That's where I was always assigned to one of those outlying camps. Same thing when we moved up to Da Nang, the division moved to Da Nang in possibly in May of '67, and we did the same thing, we had certain camps that we setup, and those we defended, you know, but we were often out in the countryside, doing our own stuff. I'm not sure if I answered your question. We were never going back to a rear area, never.

NM: As an artillery observer, how often were you transferred to different companies? Who would you be working with at that level? Did you develop any personal relationships within these companies?

TG: Sure, my recollection is that I worked with each of those four companies, but I was there for a period of time. I was only in the field for something less than a half year, I'm not sure, so, you know, maybe four different companies on average, maybe, it seems to me like six, seven weeks in each spot. I started out with the Charlie Company, and that's what I still consider my home infantry company, but we had a commanding officer there, a captain who was very, very good, and he would, basically about once a week he'd get the officers together for ten or fifteen minutes, and everybody knew what was going on, everybody knew what was expected of them, and the communication was good. I went other places where I saw different styles and different successes, if you will, in terms of leadership, because I saw some, like the guy that dove under the table, was a motor transport officer who was sent to the infantry to take over a company to get his combat time so he could be promoted. In all probability, he was never promoted in the Marine Corps after that because he just didn't have leadership skills to lead a company of Marines. When I was with Delta Company, it was really interesting, the commanding officer was a second lieutenant, and he and I both made first lieutenant on the same day which was ultimate disrespect to this guy, because he wanted to make first lieutenant, so he could have more of a like, "I'm in charge over you kind of thing." I do remember his name. I can put it down--it was Joe Franzia, and he was, if any of you have ever run across, he was the heir to the Franzia Winery in California. Of course, they long ago sold that winery to Gallo, but I remember Joe, big Italian family, they got together. He went to Hawaii for an R&R, and his parents brought the whole family. They brought about forty people over there. You know, they all got together in a hotel. He had a girlfriend, I guess, that came over and all that, but he was an exceptional leader and just had all the characteristics, and he took over a place that wasn't too badly run, and he made it, as a second lieutenant, made it a place that was really superbly well run, you know, and he and I didn't always get along on everything, but I have all kinds of respect for him, especially. It was very unusual in the Marine Corps for a second lieutenant to be designated a company commander unless you're like in a really active, like I supposed happened in Tet after I left, you know, in an active confrontation, they're dropping like flies all around you, so you get promoted not in rank, but you're getting promoted in responsibility all the time because you just keep moving up and everybody else goes out. [Editor's Note: The Tet Offensive of 1968, in which every major city in South Vietnam was attacked by the Vietcong, is seen as the point when American public opinion began turning against the war.]

NM: In your area, did you notice increased activity? Did you notice anything different toward the end of your service in the field in Vietnam?

TG: You may not understand completely what my tour was in Vietnam. I spent the first half as an artillery forward observer. I spent the second half as an intelligence analyst at division level. Let me take a five minute break, and then we'll come back and talk about that.

[TAPE PAUSED]

NM: I thought that all of your service was as an artillery observer but at some point you transition into intelligence. Could you tell us about how that transition took place?

TG: It's actually a very interesting story. Bear in mind that there are about forty thousand people in a reinforced Marine Corps division, which was what I was in Vietnam. A division wide questionnaire came out, and it didn't say what they were looking for, but it said that they wanted everybody to research their records for somebody with these qualifications: a captain or lieutenant who is in infantry or artillery who had combat experience, and who is a graduate of an Eastern all men's university with a major in liberal arts, preferably in English. There were two people in the division that were called for an interview based on those qualifications, and I got the job which was at division headquarters as an intelligence analyst. All of us had no previous experience in intelligence, intelligence analyst and briefing officer. So, I think when I started out I was the only one, but then they expanded it to two. I replaced a guy who was an English major from Princeton, and when they expanded us to two, my cohort was a Naval Academy graduate, and so as long as this particular guy was in charge of intelligence, they continued that tradition and why I'll never know, but anyway. I was, among other things, the general's briefing officer, so every morning I'd stand at a board, something like that. I had an assistant, a sergeant, who flipped charts that we prepared, long before anybody ever thought of PowerPoint. They had slides then, but not that it essentially would work. Anyway, the sergeant would flip the charts, and I'd basically spend up, stay up all night preparing the intelligence brief, which only took a few minutes, and basically it said, you had an incident here, you had an incident there, there were reports of this, reports of that, and so forth and so on, whatever was going on in the division area, and that's essentially what I did for the rest of my tour. One of the things that helped me having been an English major was that you waded through vast quantities of material trying to sift out the things that you thought were important, and every night you wrote the brief, and then you'd practice. I would rehearse it at least once with the sergeant who was my assistant, and then, we'd give it to a meeting which included all the high power officers in the division. That included the two generals whom I name there and as a division commanding officer, because there was a switch and colonels and, you know, other high ranked, the guys that were in charge of like operations or intelligence or supply or something like that for the division were all at that briefing. There was a briefing by, a good friend of mine to this day, that I went all the way through basic school and artillery school with, is a lawyer in Columbus, Georgia, and he was the logistics briefing officer, he had much the same job as I had. To answer your previous question, yes, I did know that there was a substantially increasing reports of activity going on, you know, of stockpiling of weapons, the infusion of personnel, and so forth and so on, but on my low-level, I wasn't, I'm not sure that I was really quite as aware of the significance of that as higher ranking officers might have been, and I don't know what their impression was on it.

NM: Approximately what month did this transition take place from artillery observer to intelligence?

TG: Although it's a little vague in my mind, I believe it was June of 1967.

NM: So you did that for about six months.

TG: Yes, I think it was actually just a little more than half of my entire tour in Vietnam.

NM: What would a typical day in this new position be like? You said that you were gathering information, synthesizing it, and putting it into a short report. Were there any other responsibilities that you were charged with?

TG: Well, at first, it was basically a night job. I was actually quite fortunate, because most of the people who worked in division headquarters worked from the time they started in the morning, whenever that was, until nine or ten at night. There wasn't much else to do, but there was an officer's club and a movie every night at the club, and some people were big gamblers. I've never been a gambler. When I first started out, it was exclusively nights, and I think I started about six o'clock when things were slowing down over at the intelligence, the G2 section, which we called "the shop." Actually no, it's coming back to me. When I was first there and working at night, I worked in the bunker actually. It was a command bunker for the First Marine Division, and occasionally you'd be on the radio. This friend I talked about that was a Chi Psi at Rutgers came over and I listened to the radio reports from his patrol as the firefight was going on, because we had access to all that stuff, and then, we moved down to the main office which was more like a regular building type of thing, once we had two of us, instead of working in the bunker at night. One person would work twelve hours in the day basically, and the other would work twelve hours in the night, and during the day, you did this, going through all the reports, sometimes there were agent's reports from the field. We had a number of other resources. There was an Army officer in our section, who was an intelligence specialist, who had agents in the field that he got reports from, and there were certain, you know, classified means of gathering intelligence, and, of course, sightings and observations were a big thing, whether they came from the Air Force aerial photography, infra-red photography came from helicopters, and, you know, other type of aircraft. They had, basically in fighter jets, they had fighter jets that were exclusively dedicated to the gathering of intelligence. They just had huge cameras on them, just took a whole bunch of pictures of the area. Then, they were analyzed later by people who would know what to look for in those things. So, we got our information from all those things. I wrote a daily report. When I worked days, I wrote a daily report that came out about four in the afternoon, strict format, but if there was any new, like if it had been reported that there were large concentrations in a certain area or something like that, that would go in the report, and then, the report was similar to the general's briefing which we did first thing in the morning, six o'clock, seven o'clock, I don't know, but it wasn't like when you were working during the day, if you wanted to go to the PX which was a couple of miles down the road, you could do that. If you wanted to go out and run, you could do that, you know. It wasn't like it was a strict, it wasn't like you were at a monitor on a strict shift for that period of time. So, that's essentially what the job entailed. It was actually pretty boring, but it was extremely safe, so there's a definite trade-off there.

NM: In the process of synthesizing these intelligence reports, would you have to determine what is credible or what is not or is that done at a higher level?

TG: Since we made the reports, it was our job to figure out, I guess, what was significant and what wasn't. Sometimes when we went through like the field agents' reports, if you see the same type of activity reported in the same area over and over again, then that's a sign that at least potentially that might be significant, or it might be a repetition of the same report from the same

agent. I don't know, but you sort of analyze all the material, and you filter it down into some sort of usable form as best you can, and the whole purpose of military intelligence is to get that information out to the guys who were in the field who could presumably use it or benefit from it or act on it.

NM: At the end of your tenure in Vietnam, since you have this intelligence position, was there increased activity in the Khe Sanh area?

TG: Oh, there is no doubt--that was building up for a long time. I'm sure, I'm pretty sure I was there when they had, there was like Hill 727, Hill 927, that's all their elevation in meters. Some major Marine Corps offensives, by the way all of that stuff in the Khe Sanh area, and at the DMZ was Third Marine Division. When I did all this I was in Da Nang. We had moved up to Da Nang and I was there a month, maybe six weeks, before I went over into intelligence. So, oh yes, Con Thien is the name of another firebase that was under constant attack. To the best of my recollection, Khe Sanh was going on, but yes, because that was all the buildup to Tet, things really got very hot and heavy up there. Frankly, the North Vietnamese thought that they were going to do Dien Bien Phu all over again, but they weren't successful in doing that, and those guys, including a few friends of mine, really got pounded, and a lot of people got killed up there. Khe Sanh was one example. That was a firebase where they were just under constant siege for, I think for months. Part of it was a feint. They put all that pressure and a lot of their artillery on the firebases at the border, in order to draw US forces from the rest of Vietnam to the northern border of South Vietnam, all the while they were sneaking their guys down the Ho Chi Minh trail in the mountains in Laos, and assembling them for Tet, which was a South Vietnam nationwide unified effort, so as bad as all that stuff was, they were trying to draw us up there, so they'd catch us with our pants down when they hit in the south.

NM: Did you ever have to work closely with local Vietnamese, either the South Vietnamese Army or local village militia? Did you have to interact with them during your operations at all?

TG: Well, at all, definitely. The Marines were actually very good at that. They had the combined action platoon concept, and historically in the present wars, the Marine Corps has also done a real good job of integrating with the local forces. Personally, I didn't have that much contact, but we did on our major operations. We operated with South Korean Marines, Vietnamese Marines, Vietnamese Army, but, you know, we'd be in our company, they'd be in their company. The combined action platoons were usually down in the villages, and they were twenty, twenty-five people and half of each, and they actually lived and worked inside the village. A lot of our patrols, not a lot, but a number of our patrols were, they call them MEDCAPs, I think, but anyway you'd come out there with your Navy corpsman, who was the medic of the Marine Corps, and you'd go out somewhere, and he'd look at, you know, look at the children, look at the adults. In Vietnam, in most Asian cultures, you turned your attention to the elderly first, because if you're shown to be respectful toward the elderly then everybody else follows along behind that, and of course Americans are suckers for kids, so they treat the, you know, kids, but you can always find, so they'd go out, and they touch up like minor wounds and scratches and stuff. Some of the kids had jungle rot, it just infested their whole body and stuff like that, and the corpsmen would do what they could, give them medication, antibiotics and stuff. So, we did that on a level. I don't remember that they were here interacting with villagers,

but not really with the popular forces or the Vietnamese forces. I once went to a combined action platoon. I was up on the hill, down the way with the company, and there was a combined action platoon that was in town, and they were overrun at night. I didn't go down, I wasn't part of the group that went down to try to rescue them, but others did, and by the time we got down there, most of them were killed, Marines and the local popular forces. A couple of them survived. Everybody thought it was an inside job because the place was pretty well-fortified even though it was in the middle of the ville, and somebody thought that there must have been a guy who was inside who let them in, you know, but they had a ferocious battle there, and we could hear what was going on. So, that type of thing was done, but personally--a little bit.

NM: You mentioned that there are other units from other countries. I know that the South Koreans had a very large presence. What were your impressions of these other forces, in terms of their quality and their conduct?

TG: The South Koreans were very good. They were well disciplined, well-trained, they're absolutely fearless, you know. They'd camp for the night and build up a huge bonfire, which is a military "no, no," you know, but it was kind of like, "Come and get us if you dare," type thing, and I saw that happen. They were reputed to be very good troops, and since I was an officer, sometimes I walked around and see a South Korean enlisted man, you know, a hundred fifty feet down the way, so he'd salute me and I'd look around and go, "Who is that guy saluting?" you know, but they were very good. I believe there were Chinese. I don't remember Filipino Marines, I do remember contact with Australians in their Aussie bush hats, very, very good. I think the Aussies have always been very good military people, but their presence was relatively small, and they had relatively limited jobs to do whatever they were doing. We'd run across them. In our units when we went on patrol, we always had Vietnamese with us. Sometimes, we had what was called a Kit Carson Scout, a former VC that had come over to our side, either had been captured or, you know, surrendered and come over where the getting was better, and sometimes, we had others as advisers, you know, to help us, translators, and stuff like that.

NM: We are getting into a lot of the things that go on in the military besides combat. There is a huge logistical and intelligence presence.

TG: You know, it's a good point that what General Nickerson told us on the first day I was there, and what I come out to find later, is that most of it is downright boring, and you have to keep yourself motivated and keep your guard up, because just when you're bored to death, you know, something might start happening, but most of the patrols you go on nothing happens. You'd go on the same or similar patrol, day after day after day, and you'd look for something, nothing happens. Even though you're actively participating, you know, you get to the point where you wonder whether anything is going to happen, so.

NM: Could you tell us about the transition out of Vietnam? When did that take place? Did you know what your next assignment would be, or was it simply that you finished your time in the theater?

TG: No, I knew what my next assignment would be, although I didn't know exactly what it'd entail, because it was odd. I left Vietnam on January 12th, 1968. I went to Okinawa, spent a

little bit of time there. I returned to the US on January 16th of '68. All these dates are extremely significant since Tet started on January 30th, and I was at home watching it on TV when it happened, and they couldn't have sent me back even if they wanted to because the rules where you had to be home six months before they could ever send you back. I knew what my next assignment would be. After I was assigned to intelligence, they hustled up to get me a top secret clearance, and actually I received a top secret cryptographic clearance, which is higher than top secret, and then when I was in Vietnam, they never gave me access to that material, because, by the time I got the clearance, they said, "It's too late, you know, to put you in there." For that clearance, they actually did a background search where they sent people around knocking on doors in Kearny and other places, and saying if they knew me, and who else they knew that knew me that they could be referred to. When I came back, I was assigned to the Fifth Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton, and that was a planning staff, very unusual unit, and nobody really knew what it was. When I was in Vietnam I said, "This is where I'm going." Everybody would say, "What is that?" You know, "I don't know." Anyway, in that unit there were approximately ninety people, and you probably know enough about the military, there were four full colonels, and I'd say about half of our entire staff, or close to half were officers, and the other half were, you know, clerical types, and sometimes high ranking enlisted men. We created contingency plans, and in this I was assigned to operations, G3, in the military, and we created contingency plans for countries in certain parts of the world, and I was, I guess I did the artillery annexes, so you'd study the country and the geography, and the political part of it, and you'd come up with a plan, and if US forces ever had to go into this country, even if they were our best friend, that this is what we'd face, and this is what we'd do, and this is how we might setup, if all went, you know, well. So, the G3 section where I was, there was a Navy officer who did the naval gunfire annex, there was a Marine Corps pilot who did the aviation annex. I was responsible for the artillery annex. We had, you know, people designated infantry to do their infantry type of things. We basically wrote these books that went on the shelf and were very rarely looked at unless they were needed.

NM: Were these plans specifically for the Marines and the Navy, or were they Department of Defense wide?

TG: It's pretty much how the Marine Corps would operate in that locale. Of course, you need the Navy to get there. We go on their ships, and usually they're always Marines floating around on Navy ships, and they're ready to go at a very short notice.

NM: You were on that duty for the next twelve months.

TG: A little more than that. I arrived in California on February 4th of '68. I immediately went to my unit and reported in, because then your leave stops, and you can save it for another day, and so basically the next week or so I started working there, and I was there until I was released from active duty. The official date is September 15th of '69, so that's a good year-and-a-half, and actually I started law school on like September 7th or something like that. I was going to law school in San Diego, so they just said, "Go ahead, come back and see us every now and then," you know, because, they knew I was getting out. It was a very good place to work. They were very reasonable about stuff like that.

NM: When you returned from Vietnam, and you are in this clandestine unit in Camp Pendleton.

TG: It wasn't clandestine. The work we did was classified, but there was nothing that, I mean, we were there. We had the most enviable position on the base, because there were two, two-star generals on Camp Pendleton. One was in charge of the base, and one was in charge of the division, and our commanding general was in Hawaii, he was a three-star, so they could never do anything. They couldn't come over, and say, "We need your guys to do this." That just didn't happen, but it was a very small independent operation that was just planning stuff, pretty unique assignment.

NM: Only a few weeks after you leave Vietnam, the Tet Offensive occurs. Based on your background in Vietnam, was this something that surprised you, or did you expect something to happen?

TG: I think the fact of continued fighting in Vietnam didn't surprise me at all. Personally, the intensity, the planning, the execution of the Tet Offensive by the North Vietnamese, who really did the Tet Offensive, was stunning. It surprised me that they could pull off everything that they pulled off. I mean they literally, they took over the--did they take over the US Embassy--they got in the US Embassy in Saigon. They took over the Citadel at Hue, and Hue-Phu Bai was a major Marine Corps base up there, and Marines fought that fight. I know I talked to people later who were back in division headquarters that I had just left, and they said that the first thing that they did was come in, and they took all the lieutenants and captains like me, and said, "Okay, you're a company commander. Go to First Battalion, Fifth Marines." You know, "You're going to First Battalion, First Marines. You're company commander," and so these people were just ripped out of there, every spare person they could find. They went down to the legal section. In the Marine Corps, all the lawyers are trained infantry officers. They've all been through the basic school like us, and they asked the lawyers if they wanted to volunteer to be company commanders, and they didn't insist that they must, but they gave them that opportunity. So, it was pretty amazing. The coordinated effort was, I mean, it was stunning that they could do that. They lost, and it wasn't that long of a battle. It was about a month, and they lost big time in terms of casualties, in terms of ground that they lost. They killed a good number of civilians, and they killed a good number of Americans during the offensive, but militarily it was a disaster for them, but just like some of our adversaries in the world now, they weren't worried about the military part, it was really the political part that was much more important to them, and Tet won the war for the North Vietnamese because of the political effect of it.

NM: What is interesting is that you returned to an assignment in the United States, and while still on active duty, you begin to pursue law school. When does that law school come into the picture?

TG: For me it was just a matter of days before I left active duty, about a week before I left that, and basically, since it was local. That was really a good place to work. They just said, you know, "Go ahead. Go to your classes in law school. Go ahead, get oriented and stuff, and, you know, when you're not doing that, come back and see us. You know, we'll just carry you on the books," but in the military, since you're on duty twenty-four hours a day, so, you know, they can be as flexible or inflexible as they want. I did have, in that unit there was a friend who was a

contemporary of mine who went to law school. The whole preceding year, he went at night, at the University of San Diego. He's now a San Diego judge and, you know, I was thinking about it, and I had taken the LSATs before I went into the service, and so they were still valid at the time I was applying, and anyway, I told this guy I was thinking about going to law school, and I applied to about three law schools, and he said, "Well, definitely apply to the University of San Diego," where he was going. So, I did. That's where I wound up.

NM: So, law school--or at least taking the LSATs--was something that you had thought about previously?

TG: Yes, it's a funny thing. I had always kind of thought about being a lawyer, but if you'd asked me when I was an undergraduate in college or in high school or something like that, I would have said, "That will never happen," because I'd never make it, you know, so, but it was always something I kind of had in back of my mind, yes.

NM: You are in in the United States at a time when anti-war activity is at its height--especially in schools in California, Wisconsin, Rutgers University--after the Tet Offensive. When you returned to school, was this something that you noticed?

TG: There is no doubt that there was huge unrest, and when I started law school in '69, and there was huge unrest in, you know, University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, Berkeley, you know, Rutgers, colleges and universities all over the country. I went to the University of San Diego Law School, a Catholic diocese law school. Because it was in San Diego, a third of our class were former military officers, primarily Marine Corps and Navy. One guy from Rutgers, oddly enough, who, I don't think he served in the military, or maybe he did later on. We might of had two people in my class from Rutgers, but the third of us that were ex-military officers, you know. You didn't have to say much, but we made it plain in law school that we weren't going to put up with any of the foolishness, and that as a group, if anybody started any of that foolishness, they were going to have to answer to us, and so, as far as anti-war, there was none, none whatsoever.

NM: At the University of San Diego, was the law school on the same campus as the undergraduates? How did the two compare in size?

TG: I don't remember what the size is. The law school we probably had a hundred twenty in my graduating class. It was not a new law school, but it was an up and coming newer law school at the time, very well established today. We had our own separate building, and our library was in that building, the library, law library is now moved to another building, but both of those buildings constitute the law school I think today. Personally, I never really mixed with the undergraduates at USD. It was dirt cheap compared to today, but it was relatively expensive for the time, especially I think the undergraduate school. I got student loans, part scholarships, and I had the GI Bill as well. I stayed in the Reserves during those years. So, I was pretty flush. I had a brand new car that I bought when I got back from overseas. So, I was in pretty good shape financially to do this all on my own. I didn't specifically want to ask my parents for the money, but the University of San Diego is a diocese school. A lot of Mexican families at that time sent their daughters to school there. It was co-ed, but a lot of girls went there, and a lot of wealthy,

you know, wealthier kind of southern Californians also sent their daughters there because they thought that it was a safer place than, and more in tune with their values, than let's say San Diego State or a lot of the other schools, Cal State, Long Beach, and Orange County, and stuff like that. So, I didn't, I was unaware of any, you know, public unrest, anti-war type unrest at the University of San Diego.

NM: In law school, especially after you leave active duty, did you assume that you were going to return to New Jersey or did you think that California might be a nice place to live?

TG: When I was fourteen I made up my mind that I was not going live in New Jersey. I took a trip to Florida when I was fourteen. I said, "This is it. Who wants to live there with all that snow?" Gloom, you know, I just remember that in the winter, January, you get thirty days of it. Every time you look up it's a gray sky, you never see the sun, it's really depressing. When I was in the Marine Corps, I always asked for West Coast duty which for me would have meant Camp Pendleton, and I wound up, that's where I wound up, so I think when I started law school there I pretty much knew that, I mean it was possible I could have come back east, but I didn't think so. I thought I was going to stay where I was.

NM: It seems that a lot of the skills, in terms of synthesizing information from military intelligence, would be applicable to a law school student. Did that assist you?

TG: There's no doubt about that, and I would go back further though on the acquisition of the skills to being an English major.

EG: The sun is up. [Editor's Note: The interview occurred on a rainy day.]

TG: Yes, you can still hear some noise though, that sounds like rain drops. Anyway, I go back to being an English major, same type of thing, you read stuff, you write papers, and then, my experience in the Marine Corps, particularly in intelligence, and in my job at Camp Pendleton when I went to that planning staff, and, yes, I thought law school was much of the same with, you know, you supposedly read a heavy volume of stuff, and just like college, some of it I read, and some of it I didn't, and, but you boil it down, and the big difference in law school, and of course since I knew how to write, I was way, way ahead of everybody else, and in California when you take the bar exam, and therefore when you take your law school exams, they allowed you to type if you knew how, and, you know, I'd say fewer than twenty percent of people did, so, my answers, and first of all in law school, you have one exam at the end of the semester. The first year they might have a midterm exam, but it either counts for nothing or it counts for ten percent maybe of your grade, it's really nothing. It's just a chance for the professors to say, "You don't know anything about anything, and you're going to be out of here in a couple of months if you don't learn," you know. So, it's one exam at the end of the semester. I knew how to write, and law school is all about spotting issues, and saying, you know, they give you a factual scenario, you look and say, "Well, the issue is this," you know, you can solve it this way, you can solve it that way, you might solve it another way, but if you spot the issues, and you write something about how those issues are treated in law. Absolutely, all of my life experience just kind of led to that to being able to handle the stuff, and oddly enough, I suppose for a lot of reasons, but in terms of class standing, I was way higher in law school than anywhere else I'd

ever gone to school including high school, you know, but there was also, you know, maturing and life experience and all that stuff.

NM: You mentioned that a lot of your cohorts were military. Do you know if any of them used the GI Bill?

TG: Absolutely, I'd say we all did. I can't imagine that you would not take advantage of that, because between my pay from the Reserves for one weekend a month was something in the neighborhood of two hundred dollars, and my GI Bill which was something in the neighborhood of two hundred some dollars, you know. In the early '70s, for four hundred fifty dollars a month, you could live on that, no problem, way before all the inflation we've had now that makes it seem like just a pittance, but, you know, I had a new car that was all paid for, no problem.

NM: When you were in San Diego, where did you live? Did you live in San Diego or outside of the city?

TG: I lived in an apartment in San Diego, off-campus, with a friend of mine from the Marine Corps who was studying, was getting a master's in chemistry.

NM: Around this time, you actually meet your wife or your future wife. Was this while you were in the military or while you were in law school?

TG: On active duty in the service. There's a whole bunch of former Marines that are married to teachers that are now retired teachers, you know, sort of the circle that we ran in.

NM: Was she another reason that kept you in California as well?

TG: I suppose you could say that, but I never really thought about that before. Actually we were dating, but we weren't, you know, that far along when I started law school, so conceivably I could have gone to law school somewhere else. We got married between the second and third year of law school.

NM: Is there anything that you would want to add for the record about your experience at Rutgers or your experience in the Marines that we have not gone over?

TG: Not that I can think of.

NM: I wanted to ask you about the process of going into the job market and your experience with that. I know that in the 1970s the economy was not too great for people who were trying to embark on a career.

TG: I don't remember what the economy was at the time. Having served in the Marine Corps as an officer, I felt very confident about my abilities to do things, much more so than I did earlier in life. First of all, when I was, during the time when I was waiting for bar results, I got a job, November of '72, working as a clerk to a judge in San Bernardino County, which is east of LA, and I went out there, you know. There was a lot of competition for the job, and he was a very

nice guy, and he talked about how his staff was his family and all that stuff. I went out there for one day, and I started poking through the work, you know, a room like this filled with files. You had to read all the files and figure out what's going on for appeals or something, or whatever it was, you know, and basically, I was there one day, and the next day, I went back out and said, "This is not for me, and so, rather than, you know, jerking you around and having, you know, leave me on until I pass the bar, I'm out of here. You can get somebody else to do it." So, I resigned after one day, and then, it took a while longer, but I applied to various [positions]. It was frustrating, because it was about a year, and I hadn't thought about this in a long time. I applied to various, you know, DA's offices, who I was in touch with in California, sometimes public defender's offices, and finally through the Marine Corps Reserve, I ran into a guy who was a higher up in the LA County DA's Office and also a Navy Reserve captain, but his son-in-law was one of my compatriots in the Marine Corps Reserve, and basically that, it got me favorable treatment when I applied for the job in the DA's office. Frankly, I thought I was going to work in DA's office for a few years, and then move on to something else, but I stayed there. It was intensely interesting, and the pay was actually pretty competitive with a lot of the other legal jobs.

NM: What was your specialty in law school, or what did you see yourself as?

TG: You don't so much specialize in law school. However, I knew one thing. When I started law school, I wasn't sure that I wanted to be a lawyer, but I was sure that if I'm going to be a lawyer I want to be the deputy DA, a prosecutor, and once I got, you know, into the, in fact where I was succeeding in law school, you know, that's what I really wanted to do. I looked into other jobs because I had all but forgotten if the job market was soft then and it may have been, because you know people were getting hired, but then again I made inquiries here and there, and, you know, had interviews here and there, and it took a while before I, you know, wound up with something that was really, that I thought was really good for me. I've lost track of the question.

NM: It was just if you were considering different types of law, but you answered that.

TG: I would have, but, you know, I got what I wanted.

NM: Could you tell us about embarking upon this career in law? I would like to learn more about your career.

TG: Sure. If you started at the LA's County's DA's office at the time I started, they gave you a week of orientation. When I left the office, it was up to three weeks of orientation, and then, at that time, they assigned you to what was called the county run. Los Angeles is a very large county, not as large as some others in California, like San Bernardino County is bigger than Connecticut, but Los Angeles is unique. It has a high population, it has a lot of low income people. They're actually, there are detectives who do strictly art theft, intellectual property, cattle theft, you know. It's got mountains where they have ski resorts, deserts, you know, heavily urban areas, so it's a pretty unique place, so when you joined the DA's office, the first assignment they used to give you back then is what's called the county run, and that's where they just have a number of positions where they need an extra person for a week, and they send you to this court and that court and here and there, and I think part of that is to have the supervisors in all those

locations take a look at you and see whether or not they think you're going to adopt or adapt to this particular business, and then, after, in my case about three months, I think I got my first assignment. One of those supervisors specifically asked for me to be assigned to his court, and then, you'd start going through. In my case the career path was I did about a year or so in a little outlying municipal court. Bear in mind what I was going to say about the county is, now when I left the DA's office, there are about a thousand attorneys in the DA's office and lots and lots of offices, you know, in the desert, in the county, and all over the place. So, my first assignment was in a strictly misdemeanor court. Well, you did felony preliminary hearings, and then, the trials, and most of what you did were misdemeanors, and then, my next assignment for about six months was to juvenile court where you did a little more heavy crime, but in a different setting with juveniles, and then I had another basically a misdemeanor assignment. Then, I went to felonies from there, and that's one standard progression, but if a new deputy DA gets assigned to downtown LA, then they're doing preliminary hearings. They're not doing misdemeanors, because LA has a city attorney that does that. My office did all the felonies in the county and a large number of the misdemeanors, but not all of them.

NM: How large was the office when you came into the job?

TG: My guess would be it was somewhere around six hundred attorneys then, but I can't really be specific about that. I don't remember if I ever knew.

NM: You had a long career in law. Are there any trials or hearings that you took part of that stand out in your career, just thinking back about it?

TG: Sure.

NM: Could you tell us about some?

TG: How much time do you have? [laughter] We had a variety of experiences. A lot of prosecutors' offices, you move up the chain that I was just talking about when you get to be assigned today to maybe a sex crimes unit--they may have different names for them today, and that was actually my first felony assignment, I was assigned to do rape and sexual assault cases--and then, in those prosecutor's offices you might stay there, you might move up, and if you move all the way up the chain, you get to try murder cases. In Los Angeles, it's such a big city and/or county, and there are so many murders that actually you don't wait that long. If you express a desire to do murder cases, you'll start doing them earlier, so when I started in sexual assault cases, I was doing rapes, child molests, there were a lot of kidnappings involved, and there were quite a few cases that I tried that there were kidnapping for robbery. Actually, it was a kidnapping with the intent to commit a rape or sexual assault, but it involved sometimes only a token robbery, like using force and fear, they took the wallet, the money, you know, something or other from the victim, and that constitutes a robbery. Well, kidnapping for robbery in California is a life-term case. I tried about nine of those, and I had convictions of life terms in about seven of them. After three years or so, I wanted to transition. They also move you different places on not such a fixed scale, but you go to one place and you'll stay there from two years to maybe as long as seven years. I wanted to transition out of that because I thought at that time in sexual assault prosecutors were in, that concept was in its infancy, and you would have

better career prospects if you branched out. Well, the LA County DA's Office, you'd try a whole, throughout your career you do a whole bunch of different types of cases. So, I've done a sprinkling of murder cases and robbery murders, burglary murders, rape murders, jealousy murders, you know, not that many of them, but maybe about twenty trials. I might have handled thirty or thirty-five homicide cases, I'm not sure. I've done fraud cases. You know, I just did the whole gamut of things. One of the most interesting cases I had was the case that involved, I'll try not belabor it too long. You want me to tell you about that particular case?

NM: Please.

TG: This is a case where there were two men. One of them worked at a trade school. Everyone involved in this case was African-American. At the trade school, which was a travel trade school, they worked with something like Pell Grants, and there's another senator whose name is on some of these educational grants. Anyway, so, it was a trade school, but people could get federal government loans to attend the school. At that time it was about seven thousand dollars. So, this one guy went out on the street, and he got all his friends, and he'd go to you and say, "Hey, would you like to make two hundred bucks?" and, you know, his friends down the street would say, "Two hundred bucks? Sure, why not?" You know, "Well, this is what you need to do. Give me all your information, your name, your social security number, date of birth, everything I need to know about you," he says, "and then, I'll have you sign this application, you'll get your two hundred bucks." Well, the grant was about seven thousand, and actually some of these people were happy to have their credit ruined for the rest of their life if they ever had any to begin with, and, but most of the time they didn't really know what was going on. "Oh, sure, why not?" This guy would get people to sign up, and he was hooked in with the South Side Compton Crips. Compton is pretty famous, and I worked in Compton for more than three years. So, he had all this. Well, this one girl got a check, very sweet gal, you know, never married, mother of I think three children, about late twenties, she got a check, and she didn't, you know, she didn't quite realize everything that was going on, and I'm not sure exactly, it's been a while, but she went basically and she cashed the check. She was so naive, and she lives in the ghetto in LA, you don't have to be naive if you live in the ghetto, but a lot of people are. She calls a check cashing service and says, "I have a check for seven thousand dollars. I'd like to come over and cash it. Will you cash it for me?" The guy says, "Come on over. We got the seven thousand dollars," hangs up the phone. Then, we know what happened, although this part was never proven. He picks up the phone and calls one of his friends and says, "Oh, I got some real sucker coming over here, and she's going to walk out of here with seven thousand dollars. How much for you, and how much for me?" So, she comes over, she cashes the check, she's walking home, she gets robbed at gun point, and it's all, we know, we can never prove it, but it's the guy in the check cashing store that set it up, and so, in retaliation they're very angry, and the guy that's running the show is very angry, and he's got a friend named Jerome Coulter. Well, Jerome Coulter is in a wheelchair, and he's the leader. He's in a wheelchair because he was shot. He was the leader of the South Side Compton Crips, and he is one just evil, evil person. They moved through a couple of motels, but they get these girls, they link them up, and they say, "You've got to come over and explain what happened here," and they get these girls in a motel room eventually in the night, and they say, "Well, you've got to pay somehow for this, so you know, we're going to make you pay here," and they, present at this meeting are my two victims, and three other ladies who were with the bad guys, and these two bad guys, and Jerome Coulter

has a big gun, he always carries big gun everywhere he goes. So, two of the girls were smart enough to say, "Wait a second, we don't like this at all. We're out of here," and they say to the third girl, "Come on with us, and we'll leave them to them," you know. The third girl stays, and then there's a succession of sexual acts that occur in that hotel room--girl on girl, guy and girl, the whole thing, and everything you can imagine, and it goes on for hours. Then, when they're done they take the girls, and they put them in a car, one in the trunk, one in the back seat, two guys and the other girl in the car, and they drive off to, from this area which is in North Long Beach, that's right on the border of LBC, right on the border of Compton, and so, they drive over to South Side Compton, and they go to an area that's completely controlled by their gang, and they tell these two girls, they let the one out of the trunk, and they tell them, "Kneel over there on the curb and say your prayers," and Coulter is sitting in the passenger seat of the car, he can't drive because he's a paraplegic. The other guy comes around and gets the girls out there, and then, so Coulter takes his gun and goes "bam" to the first girl, and then, it was almost like he, in my opinion, like he gave up to, the other guy's name was Eric Robinson, and he sort of turns over there, and goes, "bam, bam, bam" and as that happens they're driving away. [Editor's Note: All shots were fired by Coulter.] Well, the first girl dies right there on the street. The second girl is wounded in three places. When this case goes on a year-and-a-half, two years later she's still got bullets in her that they can't remove. She's like hit--this reminded me of a Marine I saw in Vietnam who died. She's hit like up here somewhere, [upper chest], down here, [abdomen], and somewhere in the leg, and so the car drives away. She crawls, literally, up to a house. This is in a very, like an enclave in Compton, it's a very nice area, right off the college, and there's at least one lawyer I knew who lived right back there, and there were some like college professors and really the finest people in town lived over in this section. So, she crawls up to the door, and she's able to knock on the door and says, "I've been shot, I need help," and of course people behind the door said, "Well, there's no way in hell that we're opening the door to you, but we'll call the police," and they call the police and because this one girl survived, she's able to lay out what happened in the whole case, and the most fortunate part of that whole case from my point of view and from the point of view of justice, is that the reports are made and Compton Police Department, which has since been disbanded, comes out there, and they're talking to this girl, and this girl says, well, all the sexual acts and the kidnapping, basically, using her terms, those are my terms, but all these things happened in this motel which is in the city of Long Beach, and Compton Police Department, which is terrible, says, "That's a Long Beach case." Long Beach Police Department is excellent, and at this particular point in time, Long Beach was, that part of Long Beach was under the jurisdiction of the LA County Sheriff, which has the best homicide division in the county of Los Angeles. So, it was handled by LA County Sheriff's Office, and so they did an investigation, they found this all out. To briefly end the story, the next day, all three of those defendants were on airplanes. They flew somewhere like, because of the Crips' dope distribution network, they flew somewhere like Ohio or Indiana or something like that. The girl is arrested first, and she says, "I waive all my rights, and I'll wait for trial until those other guys are back," so she can blame the other two guys. Robinson is arrested in a shootout in LA, but he's not injured in that shootout, so he's back for trial, and they find Jerome Coulter, he's in Little Rock in his wheelchair, always carries a big handgun with him. So, knock on the door, says "Little Rock Police." Somebody inside opens the door. They say, "We're here investigating a homicide," has nothing to do with this guy Coulter, absolutely nothing, but he knows it's going on. He knows Little Rock PD are there and they're talking about homicide, so he takes his gun and goes, "boom," and kills himself, saving us the death penalty trial we would have otherwise

have had. Since Robinson wasn't the shooter, we didn't pursue the death penalty against him. It would have been unlikely anyway, and he had a relatively minor criminal record, and that's all the criteria that go into that decision, and so he's currently doing life without parole in California, and the girl that stayed behind who was an aider and abettor in all those sexual acts that took place is doing forty-two years in a California prison of which she serves eighty percent, so she's going to serve a little over thirty some years. That's not necessarily--I find the scenario of that case to be very interesting. It was emotionally draining. Every night during the trial I was with that victim in my office until seven, eight o'clock at night, and she was terrified, and it was extremely, you know, you go through the whole day, you handle your other cases, you have a trial that lasts all day, and the trial lasted, it started before Thanksgiving, and it lasted until I think late January, there were breaks for Thanksgiving and Christmas and stuff like that. So, it was a fairly long trial, but very interesting case. There's a lot of others, you know.

NM: Thirty years in a prosecutor's office, we could probably spend a long time talking about your cases.

TG: I've got a lot of interesting stories. I just pull them out one at a time, usually. [laughter]

NM: Are many of the cases plea bargained?

TG: Oh, absolutely.

NM: Could you tell us about the process, generally?

TG: There are a lot of different ways that it can occur. Generally, in Los Angeles County, during felonies, during most of my career, although there were variations on this, you'd get a case, and you'd evaluate the case. It was such a big office. Unfortunately, we did very little vertical prosecution. That case I just told you about was one that I took from the beginning and took all the way through to the end all by myself, much better that way. So, somebody else actually files the case, the police bring it in, somebody signs off, but they type up the charging papers and the case is filed, then it goes to a lot of different steps in the process and different deputy DAs handle cases with the exception of sexual assault cases which for a long time have been handled vertically, but even that doesn't always work because people get transferred and people leave, and people come--who knows. So, in any event, most of my career I was a, you know, felony prosecutor, a supervising felony prosecutor, so I or the supervisor of mine would make an offer in a case, and the offer would be, "Okay, if you've got four counts of assault with a deadly weapon, if you plead guilty to one count of assault with a deadly weapon or two counts, then, we'll agree that the sentence for this is five years. The maximum sentence you're facing is eighteen years," or, you know, I'm just making up stuff now, and then, normally you'd make that offer to the defense, and the defense says either, yes, or no. Usually, they say no, and they'll try to counter it, and normally you don't take counter offers. It isn't really a negotiation process like you're negotiating over paying money for a contract or something like that. However, there are a lot of times you sit down and you discuss it with opposing counsel. I have every bit of respect, I have a lot of friends that are public defenders, and private lawyers, and stuff. We all get along, and we all know it's a job, you know, so, and I think I could have done that job especially in the beginning as easily as I did mine, although it's a much harder job. Anyway, so, when you sit

down and discuss it, what, hopefully, what will happen that can really make a difference, I mean if the defense lawyer just says, "You don't have any case, we're going to trial," you know, sometimes that happens, "Okay, well, that's what we're here for, you know, we try cases." A lot of times the defense lawyer will say, "Did you know?" or "I want to give you a piece of information. Your main witness in this case is such and so is something." Now, it wouldn't be that he has a criminal record and a lot of convictions because we'd already know that, we know that when we file the case. So, if they give some piece of information that mitigates or changes it, then we might consider a different offer, we might send an investigator out to talk to his witness. I was always in the habit when I was in trial if the defense had witnesses of walking up to the witness in the hallway--which I'm perfectly allowed to do--and say, I introduce myself, and said, "I'd like to talk to you about the case. Would you like to talk to me?" Sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't, you know, but there's no bar to that, and actually the defense attorney couldn't tell them, "Don't talk to the prosecutor," because that would be illegal, you know, or ethical misconduct on his part, and my witnesses are the same. I can't tell them, "Don't talk to the defense attorney." If I do, I'm in trouble with the bar. So, there can be a negotiation process. Sometimes you get into trial and you find new facts that cause you to take another look at it. It's a constantly evolving situation from both sides, you know. I've seen cases where people could have gotten offers between three and five years and wound up going to trial and getting eighteen years, twenty-seven years, you know, just, you never know how a case is going to play out. I had a rape case once, real quick story. It was a victim and four witnesses, they were all her friends. Literally every day, they were all Spanish speaking Mexicans, literally every day, this lovely lady who was the victim would bring in another one of her friends. She practically had to put them in handcuffs to get them down to the courthouse, and every day I'd have somebody new to put on, you know. By the time I got to the end of that case, it was ten times stronger than when I began, because she went out, and she did the work and convinced her friends to come in and help her as witnesses in the trial. So, things are always evolving, and we certainly aren't, you know, immune to realities so, you know, you had to do what you can. Sometimes there are cases that are just, this is a trial, and that's all there is to it, okay, and, you know, generally we'll go to trial. There are a lot of other DAs that have other opinions or there are deputy DAs would pick and choose their cases, so they don't, quote, "lose cases," you know. I don't have any respect for those people, but they've got great win-loss records, you know, but they're not doing the job. In my opinion, they're not doing the job they're paid to do.

NM: Is it hard to go from one case to another and to keep track of multiple cases?

TG: Let me start with the last part. I once had a period of fourteen weeks in which--my recollections are gray--I think I tried twenty-eight cases in fourteen weeks, all felonies. This is in Compton. I think one of them was a residential burglar which I almost took as a joke at that point in time. Homicides, child molests, rapes, assault with a deadly weapon, all that stuff, one after the other. Half of them were jury trials, half of them were trials before the judge, which is a lot easier to do and a lot less stressful. Twice during that fourteen week period, I was in trials simultaneously on two cases. In other words, this trial got a day off, and while they got a day off, I started picking the jury on another trial or started a judge trial on another trial, and during that entire period I had one work day off, and honest to God, it's as close as I've ever come to PTSD, you know. It was really amazingly stressful, so, you know, and very difficult. I had great results in those cases, I mean, I don't remember what the numbers were or something, but the

great majority of the cases I tried during that period of time were guilty verdicts, but it's hard to balance that, and, you know, you never become a master of it. Some people say that they are, but the thing that's so fascinating about working in criminal law is that it's really intensive, at least the trial part of it with people. The people are your witnesses, and you can't do anything about them. They're not educated, they're not polished generally, some of them are, and it can be very difficult even for them to express. You have witnesses, and you give them a transcript of the preliminary hearing and say, "Well, read that and see what's in there," and you find out after a little while that the person is illiterate that you're talking to. If you're going to have them study that preliminary hearing transcript you're going to have to read it to them or have somebody else read it to them, you know. It just runs the gamut. It's always challenging, it's always fascinating. I've had people say, you know, these cases are all the same, and when they do that, I'd say, "You're ready to go out to another job," because there's always something different. Dope cases, you know, they're a dime a dozen and we did a lot of dope cases and most of them don't go to trial but they do have similarities. So, I thought it was challenging and stimulating, you know, and always kind of interesting, because every time, and one of the things I said, every time you think you have seen everything, you see something new which you could never have imagined before, you know. The cruelty that people exhibit towards one another is just absolutely, you know, kind of endless and astonishing.

NM: Approximately how many cases were you involved on, or did you try, throughout your long career?

TG: I didn't keep specific records as some people do on their trials and the results of their trials. In some cases, like the one I had just told you about where I tried twenty-eight cases in fourteen weeks, it was just, you know, there are too many other things to do than just keep a list of them. I believe that I have probably tried around two hundred fifty jury trials and about probably about two hundred of those were felony jury trials. Court, trials before the judge you don't really keep track of the same way, but they were probably fewer because very few criminal defendants or their lawyers are willing to risk going to trial before a judge where it's all or nothing, because you might get a hung jury and that might benefit you substantially. It all depends on what you mean by "handled" cases. How many cases did I ever touch? I'd say twenty thousand, but sometimes you'd sit there, like when you're in misdemeanor court, and you go in for pre-trial day with a judge in the afternoon. You sit down, and you have a pile of sixty-eight cases, and in that afternoon you go through, the attorney's come in, they say, "Okay, what are your, pick your ten cases out of the pile. What about this one," that goes to trial, you know. So, that's not really handling a case, or spending any time with it. Sometimes you spend more time on those things. Generally, on an average day in court, when you go to court, towards a lot the end of my career I was the supervising district attorney, in the courtroom I had two other lawyers working for me. So, I'd go to court every morning, handle the calendar, I'd handle some of the motions like search and seizure motions, or, you know, motions that are just done transcripts and stuff like that, and, you know, usually I'd say you'd have eight or ten cases every day, but the same case will come up a half a dozen times, maybe as many as eight times before it gets to trial, maybe more than that, depending on what it is. So, it's, you know, it's hard to say. Somewhere close to ninety percent, maybe eighty-five percent of our cases, in almost every prosecutor's office in the country are disposed of before trial, which means plea bargained, so if I figure, you know, how

many cases I tried, I've handled at least as many, you know, how many times would that be, you know, a bunch of times more that I've handled otherwise.

NM: Would you like to share for the record what your wife and your son does?

TG: Sure, my wife is a retired teacher. She taught for thirty-nine years, primarily first grade, but a little bit of kindergarten, sometimes one and two combinations, and she really enjoyed teaching. She retired about six years ago, and she's, I think it's in the form there, but she graduated from Purdue in 1966. She was born and raised in Indiana, and late in her teaching career she got a master's from Grand Canyon University which is in Phoenix, Arizona, done--I'm not sure if it was really mostly on the internet--but they did. That's a legitimate accredited university, and there was a professional staff there, and she had meetings with other students who were seeking their master's and wrote papers and, you know, had study materials and stuff, but she didn't go on campus for classes, and the real impetus behind that, something she delayed for a long time, was that it gave a really substantial boost in her salary for the last few years that she was teaching and into retirement, so. Anyway, we've been married for over forty years, and my son is twenty-seven. He's adopted, although I don't always say that when I'm talking to people. He had little interest in going to college. We've signed him up. Of course, we've always tried to get him to go back or to go, but he's not too interested. The job he has now is, I'd say it's a holding pattern, I don't see any real career advantages there, but he works at an RV resort which is in the city of Newport Beach, and that's the city we live in even though our mailing address is Corona del Mar, and primarily his job there was to do recreation activities. He shows movies and organizes games and stuff, a lot of times for children. They have an annual, I think it's the Fourth of July horseshoe tournament, he's one of the judges at that. He's been there about four years, and more recently they started giving him more time at the gate when people drive in and out, so there's a charge to go into this resort. So, that's better because that gives him more hours, but as I said there's no real, I don't see any career aspects to that job. We would still like to see him go to college, but I'm not sure how he'd do that now, so.

GC: As a prosecutor, did you feel like you made a difference? Were you frustrated at times?

TG: It's all of that, yes. You're obviously making a difference, because in some cases, you're removing people from the street for life who are very dangerous people. It's all a system that, you know, kind of clanks a lot, it doesn't start with the prosecutor's office. It starts with the police or somebody who reports something to the police, and so to that extent, you make a difference with those people, but there are always new people up and coming that want to take over, and it's very unfortunate that in our society there's a sub-strata of people that part of their life expectation is going to jail and/or prison, and it doesn't give them any incentive to take advantage of all the things they could take advantage of to get out of there. So, you know, I think you make a difference, but I'm convinced that, you know, I'm nowhere near the end of my life, but sort of in the sunset years of my life, I can look back and say, "You know." But I doubt if anybody makes that big of a difference in whatever they do, but sometimes teachers, you know, and, of course, if you're a scientist or a doctor, you come across a big discovery, yes, maybe, but otherwise most people are just a cog in the wheel.

NM: Is there anything you would like to add before we conclude?

TG: Not that I can think of, no.

NM: Well, thank you, Mr. Gray for coming in today and giving us some of your valuable time, and Mrs. Gray as well thank you for staying here.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Alexandra McKinnon 10/3/2012
Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 10/5/2012
Reviewed by Zach Batista 9/16/2020