

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

ROSEMARY DUNN

Secretary, Administrative Officer, Foreign Services and the CIA within the

US Department of State, World War II, Vietnam War

2000

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Dunn, Rosemary, (1923-). Oral History Interview, 2000.

Master Copy: 1 video recording; ½ inch, color.

User Copy: 2 audio cassette; analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Abstract:

Within this interview, Rosemary Dunn reflects on her experience as both a secretary and an Administrative Officer for the US Department of State's Foreign Services and the CIA between 1949 and 1988. As a member of the Department of State's Foreign Services, Dunn worked assignments in the United States and the Far East Division. During her time in the Far East Division, the narrator served as an Administrator Officer for General Stilwell, knew General Westmoreland and his wife, and faced attack during the 1965 Vietcong bombing of the US Embassy in Saigon, Vietnam. During the bombing, Dunn suffered injuries to her face and a broken arm, requiring physical therapy and recovery time before she could return to service. Rosemary also detailed her social life while abroad, her interactions with different service men and women, and any sort of restrictions set upon her while serving. The main components of the interview are focused on her time spent in Manila and Saigon. After joining the Foreign Services in 1949, Rosemary continued her work until she was forced to retire at the age of sixty-five in 1988. She mentions that even after retirement, she still maintained contact with many of her previous co-workers and friends and continues traveling the world to visit them.

Biographical Sketch:

Rosemary Dunn was born in September of 1923 in Madison, Wisconsin. She held her first federal job during World War Two as a secretary to Colonel Hulse at Truax Airfield in Madison, Wisconsin. She attended Madison Business College before being sworn into the Department of State's Foreign Services in 1949. After attending the Foreign Service Institute, Dunn went on to serve in the Diplomatic Courier's Office in Manila in the Philippines in 1950 for two years. She then rotated between returning to the United States to San Francisco, going to Lisbon, Portugal to work in the Economics Division, returning to San Francisco to work at a newspaper, and finally moving to Washington D.C. where she began her work as an Administrative Officer for the CIA. In 1964, Dunn went to Saigon in Vietnam and remained there until the bombing of the US Embassy in 1965. After completing therapy in Bethesda, Maryland, Rosemary worked short assignments in Bangkok, Thailand and Tokyo, Japan before receiving a Temporary Duty Assignment in Pakistan. By 1988, Dunn faced retirement because of legal age requirements but continued to travel and remain involved with the people she worked with and the friends she'd made throughout her travels as a member of the US Department of State.

Interviewed by James McIntosh 2000.
Transcribed by Joshua Goldstein 2011.
Edited and Abstracted by Kylee Sekosky, 2014.

Interview Transcript:

[Tape begins with approx. 60 sec. of conversation regarding the setup for the interview]

McIntosh: Off and running, talkin' to Rosemary Dunn. It's the 20th of December, the year 2000. Where were you born, please?

Dunn: In Madison, Wisconsin.

McIntosh: And when was that?

Dunn: In September, 1923.

McIntosh: What was the date of September?

Dunn: First.

McIntosh: Oh, you're fourteen days older than I am.

Dunn: Oh, wouldn't you figure that out [laughs].

McIntosh: Now, during World War Two, were you ever interested in joining the military?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: Did you ever have a government job during World War Two?

Dunn: Yes, hm-mm, I did. I worked at Truax Airfield.

McIntosh: What was your job there, please?

Dunn: I worked in the office of radio mechanics, and I worked for Colonel Hulse.

McIntosh: As a secretary?

Dunn: Yes, as a secretary.

McIntosh: Had you had any particular training at that or just high school?

Dunn: Oh no, business college.

McIntosh: Business college.

Dunn: Madison Business College.

McIntosh: That was a year course or two year course?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Okay, and so you were a secretary in a pool or just a CO office only?

Dunn: It was in a pool; there were several of us.

McIntosh: You were there for how long?

Dunn: About two years.

McIntosh: Okay and that was during World War Two?

Dunn: Right.

McIntosh: Then what happened next?

Dunn: Then I went up to the Armed Forces Institute up on Hamilton Street, [Madison, WI] and I worked there until 1949 when I signed up with the Department of Foreign Service [Foreign Services Institute], Department of State.
[Inaudible]

McIntosh: So what was your job up there? At USAFI [United States Armed Forces Institute].

Dunn: I was in a pool, again.

McIntosh: Oh, you didn't do anything special?

Dunn: No, no.

McIntosh: Pretty ordinary stuff.

Dunn: No, did a lot of—

McIntosh: No other education of any kind?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: But you were starting to get more familiar with military things then?

Dunn: Oh, yes. Yes.

McIntosh: I would think that you'd have a certain amount, a degree of expertise you must have had by this time.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: 'Cause your job was to send school books out all over the world, right?

Dunn: Right, mm-hmm, and to receive the tests scores from overseas, too.

McIntosh: Oh, that's right you ran regular schooling out by mail.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: That was your job?

Dunn: Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: How long were those courses?

Dunn: Some were six months, some were a year. We had both high school and college, they offered.

McIntosh: You could get up to, what, two years of college credit from that?

Dunn: Oh, yes.

McIntosh: UW [University of Wisconsin] or—

Dunn: Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: More than that? I've kind of forgotten.

Dunn: I've kind of forgotten, too. I think two years.

McIntosh: Now, how would you grade them? Did you have some way of—how'd you know they just didn't pick up the textbook and right down the answers? How could you check on that? What kinda—

Dunn: Well, they had the textbook with them.

McIntosh: Oh, they did?

Dunn: Yes, but then they had instructors. I remember Okinawa, particularly. They had instructors that gave the tests.

McIntosh: Oh, I see. So, they weren't privy to any advanced information.

Dunn: No, and then the tests were sent to the instructors at the bases. Let's see, Saipan—

McIntosh: The instructors would grade them or would you grade them?

Dunn: Yes. Oh no, we'd grade them then. They'd come in to the—

McIntosh: He just monitored the exams.

Dunn: Right, mm-hm.

McIntosh: Did he do anything other than that?

Dunn: He was the educational officer. Oh, yeah, I'm sure, but I don't know if you—with USAFI.

McIntosh: Did they give him any help with their courses? Is that his job or not? Or were his people supposed to—Was that his job or not?

Dunn: Yes, I believe so.

McIntosh: And most of these bases have libraries or something?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Some material that they could—

Dunn: Yes, because I received all these packages from the Far East and from our bases out there, in the Philippines, from Okinawa, Saipan and Guam.

McIntosh: And what year was this that you were doing this?

Dunn: Probably '48, '49.

McIntosh: '48, '49, okay, and it was the same job, you didn't change any particular task while you were there? It was the same job?

Dunn: No, just—hm-mm.

McIntosh: And then what was your next career move after that?

Dunn: I signed up with the Department of State.

McIntosh: How did that go? How did you go about that?

Dunn: I just sent in an application in, because one of the ladies in our division at USAFI had signed up for the Department of State, and she had given me the address, and she had been assigned to Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. So, I sent my application in, and at the time [laughs] I think they were so desperate, they sent me a GTR, which is a Government Transportation Request. They sent it to me immediately and wanted to know when I could report, for duty. And I remember—

McIntosh: But you hadn't even been interviewed for the job.

Dunn: Nothing. No, no interview, nothing.

McIntosh: Boy, that's desperate.

Dunn: Mm-hmm. So, they said—they wanted to know when I could report, and I said I wanted to go to a football game. The Badgers were playing a, kind of an important game, I said, "After that, all right." And I remember it was November, and I went into the department, and I went through class for three weeks—

McIntosh: Where was that?

Dunn: At the Foreign Service Institute.

McIntosh: I don't know where that is.

Dunn: In Washington.

McIntosh: Okay, they paid your transportation to go out there?

Dunn: Oh, yes to Washington. So, I was there three weeks, and I got my assignment.

McIntosh: Now—don't go any further here. Now, you had three weeks of examinations?

Dunn: No, of instruction.

McIntosh: Instruction.

Dunn: Mm-hmm, on how to be a diplomat [laughs].

McIntosh: How to be a diplomat?

Dunn: No, I know—

McIntosh: So when you have tea at the—

Dunn: Everything. They covered everything.

McIntosh: They assumed that you were gonna have some diplomatic responsibility to greet foreigners—

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: That sort of thing?

Dunn: Yes, yes.

McIntosh: Okay, was this a standard course that anyone went through?

Dunn: Yes, it was.

McIntosh: No matter which specialty you went into after that.

Dunn: That's right.

McIntosh: This is sort of a basic—

Dunn: All staff and all foreign services officers attended.

McIntosh: Had to go through this.

Dunn: Yes, attended the Foreign Service Institute.

McIntosh: Now, was there an exam after that? Or how did you know if they still wanted you after this?

Dunn: Yes. Yes, yes, yes. Yes, we had an exam. I remember that.

McIntosh: A written exam.

Dunn: Yes, mm-hmm.

McIntosh: And an oral?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Ah, there we go.

Dunn: Mm-hmm. Yes. That was after I got to Washington.

McIntosh: Right, I understand. Now, when was this?

Dunn: '49.

McIntosh: So, at the end of these three weeks, they called you into the office and said "You're one of us," or "You got a job," or how'd they go about that?

Dunn: They said your area officer is in such and such a room and you will go up, and he will interview you, and you will get your assignment. So, I went in and there are two area officers occupying this room, and on the wall here is the map of the Philippines and over here is a map of Africa. The Manila, Philippine man signaled me, and he said "Sit down," and he said, "I've got your folder here, and I'm going to tell you where you are going to be assigned, Manila in the Philippines." And I thought, "Where is Manila [laughs]?" It's on the other side of Hawaii, I know, and then they tell you where you're going to work and for whom, and I was working—would be assigned to the Diplomatic Courier Office. They have a regional office out in the Philippines. So, that sounded like a very interesting job.

McIntosh: I don't hear any question in there. Didn't they say, "Is this something you'd like to do?" or they just said "This is it"?

Dunn: This is it.

McIntosh: I mean, they offered you no alternatives?

Dunn: No, usually first assignments, you go. It's after that that you can ask to do assignments in certain areas.

McIntosh: Sure, after you've had some—

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Tickets.

Dunn: Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: I understand. Okay, they got you ready to send off into the wild blue yonder. Did they give you a pack of instructions of what you could not say or could not say or do from that moment?

Dunn: Yes, I remember I took the train from Washington to Madison, and I was in Madison for a couple of days, but this is before Christmas, and then I got on a train again and went to San Francisco and sailed from San Francisco to the Philippines on the 19th of December, 1949.

McIntosh: All alone?

Dunn: All alone, and I'm, what, I think twenty-four? That was the first time I'd ever been away I think [laughs] from home. And a very nice lady aboard ship said—we were pulling out, and the band is playing, and she said, “Are you alone, dear?” and I said I was. She said, “Those are my friends down there, and I'm gonna give you some streamers and you can throw them to them.” I thought that was awfully sweet of her. Anyway, I was aboard ship three weeks and arrived in Manila on the first week in January of 1950. And let me tell you, that harbor with all the sunken ships from the war would make anybody want to turn around and go home. Oh [laughs], just devastation. Even the docks were bombed out, but I met my contact and uh—

McIntosh: Your leader?

Dunn: Well, yes, and we talked to admin, and you get your housing assignment.

McIntosh: Just a minute, you talked to who?

Dunn: Our admin officer, administrative officer.

McIntosh: Okay.

Dunn: And then you're assigned your housing, and of course you're such a low grade and you're on the totem pole that you take wherever, you know.

McIntosh: Well, again there was no alternatives, were there?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: Did they just point and say, “This is yours”?

Dunn: That's it, that's it.

McIntosh: And what was that, that they pointed to? A two bedroom apartment or—

Dunn: [laughs] Oh, no.

McIntosh: No?

Dunn: A Quonset.

McIntosh: A tent? Oh, a Quonset hut? All yours or you shared this with twenty others?

Dunn: No, I shared with a roommate—

McIntosh: With one roommate?

Dunn: Mm-hm, she arrived two weeks after I did. We were on—

McIntosh: Had she been in school with you?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: Was she a novice like you?

Dunn: Yes, yes, and we're on a compound next to the embassy, which faces Manila Bay and there were several of us.

McIntosh: In other Quonsets?

Dunn: Other Quonsets—

McIntosh: Full of young girls?

Dunn: Yeah, and fellows, because the marines were there and the couriers were there, and then we had some USIS [United States Information Service] staff personnel there and way at the end the admiral had a Quonset, and when he came over from Sangley [Naval Station Sangley Point, southwest of Manila] by boat to spend the evening in Manila, that's where he stayed. So, we had the sailors down at the end of the compound.

McIntosh: Was this compound heavily guarded?

Dunn: Yes, we had—

McIntosh: Marines?

Dunn: No, marines guarded the embassy but not on the seawall.

McIntosh: Yeah, that's—was it Navy or Army?

Dunn: They were civilians—Americans though, American civilians.

McIntosh: Oh, really? Civilians? I'll be darn.

Dunn: Yes, and they were armed, because we were having trouble with the Huks [short for Hukbalahap, an agrarian revolutionary group] at that time.

McIntosh: Sure. And were you armed?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: Did they ever give you any training in the use of firearms?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: Just gave you a typewriter and head 'em off with that--

Dunn: Mm-hm, throw it, that's right, throw it.

McIntosh: Okay what was your assignment?

Dunn: I worked for the Diplomatic Couriers for two years.

McIntosh: But this involved, was secretarial work?

Dunn: Secretarial work, yes.

McIntosh: Being a courier means that you're traveling, carrying—

Dunn: They're carrying the State messages, uh-huh.

McIntosh: By hand?

Dunn: Oh, yes, in a road bag.

McIntosh: In a what?

Dunn: A road bag, a big heavy canvass bag, which was padlocked shut.

McIntosh: Around your wrist, like in the movies?

Dunn: Oh, yes.

McIntosh: Oh terrific, love it.

Dunn: [Laughs] the boys did—there were—how many fellas did I have? I had ten—I had twelve, and they covered the Far East, as far as India. And then later in my—

McIntosh: Wait a minute, where'd you go run with the key on your wrist?

Dunn: No, no, no, no. No, no, no, they do.

McIntosh: Oh, okay.

Dunn: I'm in the office in Manila and they're doing all this traveling.

McIntosh: Oh, okay. So you're the one who puts the material in the bag?

Dunn: No, that's in the office right next to me. That's the pouch room, and then they bring all their classified mail down there, and it's sealed, waxed and stamped.

McIntosh: What's your part of this?

Dunn: I'm working for the fella that runs this office.

McIntosh: You're just a typist or more?

Dunn: Mm-hm just a typist, yes.

McIntosh: I'm tryin' to turn you into something really [Dunn laughs]—turn this into a movie.

Dunn: No, no [both laugh].

McIntosh: All right. So how did you enjoy living in Manila, probably pretty grim there.

Dunn: Yeah, it was pretty primitive.

McIntosh: So, your only outlet was at the service camp, the Army or Navy service camps?

Dunn: Yes, we could go to Sangley. We had to go to Sangley to buy food. And we had to take a launch over there. They wouldn't let us go around the bay because—

McIntosh: You were not allowed alone, I'm sure.

Dunn: No—

McIntosh: Nor would you want to be.

Dunn: We weren't allowed to drive, because they had been shooting Americans.

McIntosh: I understand.

Dunn: So, we took the boat over to the commissary.

McIntosh: Which was, what, thirty minutes? Or ten minutes?

Dunn: Oh, no. It was an hour and a half to two hours to get—

McIntosh: On a launch?

Dunn: On a launch. I mean, this is just pokin' along.

McIntosh: That's a long way to go.

Dunn: Indeed it was a chore.

McIntosh: So, you only went over there about, what, once a week?

Dunn: We tried to make it every two weeks because it was—

McIntosh: Yeah, it's such a pain—

Dunn: All of Saturday is gone getting over to Sangley.

McIntosh: I'm sorry?

Dunn: All of Saturday is shot getting over to Sangley to do your shopping.

McIntosh: Right, two hours over—

Dunn: Yeah.

McIntosh: And then two hours shopping and two hours back, and the day is over.

Dunn: And then we were allowed to belong to the Army and Navy Club, which was right down at the end of our compound, which had a swimming pool—

McIntosh: Uh-huh.

Dunn: —and restaurant and bar and that was very handy.

McIntosh: You attend wild parties there with all the boys?

Dunn: Yes, they had some nice dances. Guess who I saw when I was doing the back stroke in the pool one time? Guess who I hit in the head? Jack Lindsay.

McIntosh: Oh, my God.

Dunn: Well, I mean I almost drowned him [laughs]. He popped up—

McIntosh: He sort of disappeared. You know, they never did find him. I don't know where the hell he is, New York somewhere.

Dunn: I think he died.

McIntosh: Did he?

Dunn: I think so.

McIntosh: Oh.

Dunn: Yes, in the pool, mm-hm.

McIntosh: So that was pretty good duty then?

Dunn: Oh yes, we all had a marvelous time.

McIntosh: You must been—had all kinds of attention over there I'm sure.

Dunn: Oh, yes.

McIntosh: Single women are just a chosen commodity.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: There's so few of you—

Dunn: Especially when the U.S. Navy came in [laughs].

McIntosh: I know. I'm sure that you were just—

Dunn: And then they'd come ashore, and then they'd arranged for parties in our ballroom. The embassy had a gorgeous ballroom.

McIntosh: You must have been a dancing fool.

Dunn: We were; we just had a marvelous time.

McIntosh: Boy, you're "Queen of the Hop." You can't beat it.

Dunn: Well, I found that to be [laughs] in a couple other places.

McIntosh: Yeah, our nurses on our hospital ship had the same advantage. It was full of men all over, and there were just twenty-four nurses.

Dunn: Right, right.

McIntosh: They were just fightin' off. They got better lookin' I noticed the longer—

Dunn: Yes, that's what they always said [laughs].

McIntosh: Anyway, that would sound like pretty good duty than.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: It wasn't difficult? You had no trouble, nobody tried to crash the compound?

Dunn: No, Whitey took a couple of pot shots at some fella, and, Lord, he shot himself in the foot. But, he was with some fellow, a Filipino, loitering on the compound, and he wouldn't leave. So, he was going to frighten him with a gun, a pistol shot [laughs]. As I guess he put the thing down it caught—the fool caught his foot. No, but we had to be careful. We had security measures. We couldn't go to Baguio.

McIntosh: You couldn't what?

Dunn: We couldn't ride or drive to Baguio because we—

McIntosh: To where?

Dunn: To Baguio, in the northern part of Luzon, which was in the mountains. It was very cool, and the ambassador had a residence.

McIntosh: Well, what was up there that you were gonna go up there for anyway?

Dunn: Cool off, and it had a golf course, and we could stay at the ambassador's residence.

McIntosh: But never up alone, you went with armed guard?

Dunn: Oh, no, not armed guard. Well, we flew up if we had to because of what—

McIntosh: So you had some time off or this is—you're talking about weekends off?

Dunn: Mm-hmm. Weekends.

McIntosh: You could fly up there for the weekend?

Dunn: Yeah, mm-hmm.

McIntosh: That's pretty neat.

Dunn: It was, it was very nice. They cut that off after a few years. I guess we were very fortunate. It was a lovely home.

McIntosh: But there was nothing in downtown Manila that was worth going to—

Dunn: No, we went to movies where they had rats and fleas, and—

McIntosh: But you were allowed—what were your orders about travel, you know, in Manila? You had to go in groups of two, you never go alone, or would take two of you could go together?

Dunn: No, they'd just issue advisories and say, "You're not allowed to drive to Cabiti," or to Baguio or down to Lake Taal. "Stay off the roads." That was for most of my career really because of the Huks.

McIntosh: Okay, but in pairs? You never would wish to be out shopping alone? Or was that permissible?

Dunn: You could. You could go downtown.

McIntosh: During the daytime?

Dunn: During the daytime.

McIntosh: You were safe then?

Dunn: Mm-hmm, yes. In the city it was safe, yes.

McIntosh: All right, and did you have a curfew? You had to be in at a certain time, or they didn't exercise anything like that?

Dunn: No, I get it confused with the curfew in Vietnam. No, I don't believe so, not that I can remember.

McIntosh: The food you wrestled up yourself, or they had a mess hall that you ate it?

Dunn: No, we had a servant. Actually, had two servants, a cook and an *amah* [housemaid].

McIntosh: You mean several Quonset huts had a food service that supplied, that took care of the people.

Dunn: No, individual. Each Quonset has two people in it, and then we had downstairs were the maid's quarters, and upstairs is where we were which was kind of a living room arrangement.

McIntosh: Oh, you had your own cook?

Dunn: Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: Pretty neat!

Dunn: Yes, and a wash *amah*. She'd wash—you'd take a shower in the morning and when you come home at noon, she'd have the towels hanging on the line [laughs] washing every day.

McIntosh: Did they steal from you?

Dunn: Some servants did, but not many. They're pretty well screened. Yeah, at that time in the '50s they were having a little problem with TB [tuberculosis].

McIntosh: TB?

Dunn: Mm-hm.

McIntosh: Still do.

Dunn: So, I remember the marines lived right across the street from us there, oh maybe twelve of 'em and two were sent home with TB.

McIntosh: Did you all get checked then?

Dunn: Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: I'm sure they x-rayed everybody right away to make sure nobody else had picked it up.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: But in case you needed hospital facilities, you would use what?

Dunn: Clark, Clark Air Force Base.

McIntosh: The Air Force Base? Yeah, that's a big base. That would be where you would be sent if you became ill or—

Dunn: Yes, if you were really ill.

McIntosh: So, if they had to take your appendix out or anything like that.

Dunn: Yes, mm-hm, yes.

McIntosh: So, you were in Manila how long?

Dunn: Two years, and then I came home.

McIntosh: Excuse me, was that a normal rotation, did they—

Dunn: Yes, two years.

McIntosh: Generally rotate you two years—

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: You knew that when you went over there that it was two year hitch.

Dunn: Yes, and you're not to come home, either. Not in those days, you couldn't come home.

McIntosh: Couldn't have a little leave and come home?

Dunn: No, unless a parent died, yes, but I understand today now, they are allowed and you can pay your own way home.

McIntosh: Not then.

Dunn: But [laughs] back in 1950 nobody had any money to pay the airfare home.

McIntosh: So all and all that experience there was pretty good.

Dunn: Yes, and then you wait for your next assignment, and you wonder where it'll be.

McIntosh: No asking there?

Dunn: Yes, Jack asked me if I wanted to go to—my boss asked me if I wanted to go to Paris.

McIntosh: So you said, "Of course!"

Dunn: No!

McIntosh: Oh, you didn't want to.

Dunn: He said, “I’m going to discourage you because it’s like a factory, and I would suggest a smaller post where you will enjoy it more.”

McIntosh: Like a factory—you mean it’s overcrowded?

Dunn: Yes, mm-hmm. It’s a huge embassy.

McIntosh: Yeah, I know, but Paris is Paris.

Dunn: Yes, so, because I could have had it if I wanted it. He would have seen—because I would work with the couriers there that was another regional office they had. So, then I waited just for the department to come and send me a message, and my assignment was Lisbon, Portugal.

McIntosh: Okay, you did all the typing for all these messages, right?

Dunn: Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: Was that a special typewriter? Did you type in code?

Dunn: No, I didn’t get that until later in life. You do go to code class, though, when you are in the [Foreign Service] Institute.

McIntosh: In the basic training?

Dunn: Yes, yes, yes.

McIntosh: You get so you’re expected to know the Morse code?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: You’re expected to know how to use the code machines?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: All right, so off to Lisbon.

Dunn: Mm-hmm, and I was there a year and resigned and came home and went to San Francisco.

McIntosh: Wait a minute, let’s not leave Lisbon here [Dunn laughs]. What was your situation in Lisbon?

Dunn: I worked in the Economics Section.

McIntosh: What kind of work?

Dunn: Oh, typing and shorthand, general—

McIntosh: You mean secretary?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: So, did you like Lisbon?

Dunn: Yes, it was lovely, but, ugh, the Economics Section, for the birds. The sex life—

McIntosh: Boring, is that the word you were looking for?

Dunn: Yes, the sex life of the gypsy moth, cotton reports, hog slaughter reports. I worked for the Labor Attaché, the Counselor for Economic Affairs. The Agricultural Attaché, and he couldn't spell *horse*. So, you're editing everything he writes that's going into the department.

McIntosh: How did he get in this business?

Dunn: That's what I'm wondering, and then he was assigned to Cairo, and I wrote to my friends in Cairo, and I said, "He's on his way. Teach him how to spell *camel*." [McIntosh laughs] Oh, wait. I have another one. There's one more.

McIntosh: Well, didn't you have—between this boring daytime wasn't there something interesting in Lisbon?

Dunn: Oh, yes, of course. Oh, it's lovely, and the most beautiful beaches—

McIntosh: I was going to say.

Dunn: —and we traveled, and you could travel quickly down to the Algarve or on up to Fatima.

McIntosh: You didn't have any of these restrictions in Lisbon that you had in—

Dunn: No, none.

McIntosh: You were free as a bird.

Dunn: Right, mm-hmm. I was only there three months, and I got a telephone call from my friend in Madrid, and she said, "Can you take off for two weeks,

and we'll drive to Rome?" So they said, "You've got all that leave. You might as well." So—and we had friends in Rome then.

McIntosh: So, off you go to gander into Roma.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: And for two weeks?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: That's a wonderful vacation.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Via Vento and all that?

Dunn: Right.

McIntosh: Okay, then?

Dunn: Then, ah—

McIntosh: You're not staying your two years like you're supposed to.

Dunn: No. So after—on your second tour, after you spend one year overseas, they will pay your way home.

McIntosh: Oh, you didn't do anything naughty.

Dunn: No, no, no.

McIntosh: They weren't sending you home 'cause you slept with a general or something.

Dunn: No, no, no. I came with my roommate. She was from Redwood City, California. So I came back with her, and we went through to California.

McIntosh: So it was okay, though. I mean you weren't in dutch with the State Department.

Dunn: Oh no, no, no. We just resigned.

McIntosh: Just resigned?

Dunn: Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: Resigned from the State Department?

Dunn: Right.

McIntosh: Did they let you do that?

Dunn: Yes. Oh, yes.

McIntosh: Without giving you a death pill or something to swallow?

Dunn: No, no, no. [laughs]

McIntosh: Just up and say, “I don’t like this anymore.”?

Dunn: No, we wanted to do something else.

McIntosh: Did anyone try to dissuade you?

Dunn: Ah, let me see—

McIntosh: Make you an offer that you couldn’t refuse?

Dunn: No, I don’t remember that they did. She worked for the ambassador too.

McIntosh: So we’re fed up with all that nonsense and off we go home?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Now you don’t have a job.

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: Important detail here.

Dunn: Yes, mm-hmm, and I had to find something quickly when I got to San Francisco. So Pat and I got an apartment –

McIntosh: In where?

Dunn: Got an apartment in the city.

McIntosh: Of what city?

Dunn: San Francisco.

McIntosh: You hit all the great spots.

Dunn: Oh yes, and she married a Marine that she had met when we were in Santo Domingo, or Ciudad Trujillo then. So then—after a year—and I worked for a newspaper there, the San Francisco Call-Bulletin. And what did Pat do? Pat worked out for the Navy out at Hunter’s Point, and then she got married and they moved, so then I had an apartment by myself, and I stayed with the newspaper until I decided to call Frank, and I’d known Frank in the Philippines.

McIntosh: Frank?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Who’s Frank?

Dunn: Frank was one of the fellas that worked for C.I.A, and I asked –

McIntosh: You said, “I’m looking for a job.”

Dunn: Mm-hmm, and he said, “I’m going to send somebody to see you”, and he did and the next thing I know, my neighbors are being interviewed by the F.B.I.

McIntosh: Whoops. [Dunn laughs] Did they complain to you, “Do you know what’s going on here?” That sort of thing?

Dunn: The F.B.I. asked them not to tell me, but of course they did.

McIntosh: Of course they did that.

Dunn: Yes, two of them did, I know. Then he said, “Why don’t your come ahead to Washington?” Well, in the meantime my friends from Manila are back in the department, and they had a house. So it was just like a transient barracks.

McIntosh: In Washington D.C.?

Dunn: Mm-hmm. The girls coming in and going out overseas, they come in for training, and then they go out and come in and go out. So I said, “All right”, and I went in—

McIntosh: Did they explain some that life is gonna be a little different now?

Dunn: Well, I didn’t know. I just –

McIntosh: Didn't tattoo you or anything, did they?

Dunn: No, no [both laugh].

McIntosh: On the inside of your arm like the SS [a blood group tattoo].

Dunn: No. And—let's see—

McIntosh: Well, there must have been some training involved here.

Dunn: I went in, and—

McIntosh: You hadn't even gotten the job yet. You just went down there to interview, right?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Okay, tell me about that.

Dunn: Then Frank, my friend, said, "Come ahead to Washington, and we will do all the processing," and you have to wait for all your security clearances, you know, and all these F.B.I. checks coming in. So when you start to work, they put you in a pool where you wait for—at that time, now, I don't know how they do it today—where you wait until your clearances all come in and—

McIntosh: The typing pool?

Dunn: Your background checks – yes.

McIntosh: So they give it to somebody—

Dunn: Everybody was there, yes. And you type cards, non-classified items. So then that comes time, and your clearances come through, and they want to know about your preference, where would you like to be assigned? Well, since I had known my roommate had worked with C.I.A., so she told me what to ask for [laughs], and so I asked for the Far East Division in the Directorate of Plans, which is operations, and I was. I am assigned to the Far East Division, and I was in on the Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos desk for a year.

McIntosh: How'd you get there? We're passing over some stuff here. Did they fly you over?

Dunn: No, no, no, I'm on the desk in Washington yet, and then I'm there for a year, about a year and a half. Well, in the meantime, my friend Frank is

working for Mr. Dulles [CIA Director], Allen Dulles [Capitol Hill; U.S. Congress]—so he asked me if I'd like to come up and work for him on the Hill.

McIntosh: Oh, you're gettin' into the big time now, kid.

Dunn: Yes, I'm getting right up there. So I said, "Yes, I'd like to". "Well, you come up and speak to the admin officer up here." So I did, and the next thing I know I'm on the director's staff.

McIntosh: Fantastic, what a rise.

Dunn: Yes [laugh] that was meteoric.

McIntosh: That's right. So now you're a secretary?

Dunn: Yes, to Frank – to Frank, my friend, who is an Assistant to Mr. Dulles. Then, I was there for a year—

McIntosh: Tell me what you did. This is secretarial work. I mean, did you type letters and move things around?

Dunn: Yes, type letters for Mr. Dulles' signature. That's what Frank did.

McIntosh: But, I mean, you were—you were listening to somebody who dictated it into a machine, and you took it off the machine and put it on paper. Is that what we're talking about?

Dunn: No. Frank would dictate to me –

McIntosh: Ah, ha.

Dunn: And then I'd do it, type it up –

McIntosh: Oh, now we're into shorthand.

Dunn: For his – for Allen Dulles' signature.

McIntosh: Ah, where you good at that?

Dunn: Yes, yes.

McIntosh: Wonderful, Allen Dulles was pleased with your work?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Did he invite you over for dinner or anything?

Dunn: No, not for dinner. We did go into his office for little get-togethers with his secretaries and the general secretary.

McIntosh: At holiday time you had a little –

Dunn: Yes, mm-hmm, a little party.

McIntosh: Was he a pleasant gentleman?

Dunn: Yes, he was. [Phone rings] Yes—and they all were. General Cabell was the Deputy up there at that time, and he was very nice, too. And then they had another assistant, another general that had come on staff, and it was a promotion, and Frank asked me if I wanted to work for General Palmer, and I said, “Sure”. So I worked for him for two years.

McIntosh: What was his title?

Dunn: He was an Assistant on the Intelligence Community Staff,

McIntosh: Oh, I see—

Dunn: —Part of the director’s office. While I worked there we had a study group that made a trip to Europe, and I went along.

McIntosh: Oh, that was nice.

Dunn: —That included the Department of Defense, State Department, Army, Navy, Air Force. So back in those days, we knew everybody ‘cause I worked with the United States Intelligence Advisory Board, and then you know all the chiefs of the services and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff because they met right outside my office in this huge conference room.

McIntosh: And you weren’t taking notes for them?

Dunn: No, did they have? I don’t know if they had anybody taking notes. It was so secret [laughs].

McIntosh: Yeah, they may not have wanted that.

Dunn: Yeah, ‘cause you needed the whole board, the director—they’re all high ranking officials on this board, the Intelligence Board.

McIntosh: Were you given any special clearance at this time, because you were hanging around some pretty important people?

Dunn: Oh, yes.

McIntosh: I would think that you had to have a special pass—

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: To get into wherever you were.

Dunn: Yes, and then you had to know the ciphers on some of the doors, ciphers, the cipher locks. We couldn't go back in certain areas unless you knew the combination on the cipher locks.

McIntosh: Those had to be memorized.

Dunn: Oh yeah! Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: So if you screwed up you might be stuck in a room for two weeks. [Dunn laughs].

Dunn: Couldn't get back there.

McIntosh: Right, was this in the Pentagon?

Dunn: No, it was at—by this time now, I'd moved from downtown. We were up on the corner of 24th and E—the admin offices there, then we moved out to Langley.

McIntosh: That building had been built then? That new one wasn't being built yet?

Dunn: No, Mr. Dulles was there and approved the plans, and you know that when we were moving in to that building, he never occupied that office up on the seventh floor. He'd been replaced by John McCone. We felt badly about that, because he was instrumental in getting that building.

McIntosh: Right, so you were with the general for how long?

Dunn: Oh, for another—about two years, then what did I do? Did I go downstairs to the intelligence—

McIntosh: Well, we must be up to about 1953 by now.

Dunn: Oh, I'm further than that now. I'm up to – that task group that I went to Europe with, that was in '60 getting a report ready for President Eisenhower. So that's '60.

McIntosh: Oh, uh-huh. Okay.

Dunn: Then in –yes, that's where I was, on the Intelligence Community staff, and I was Admin there, and I was also Admin on the director's staff for about a year, and I did—

McIntosh: Did they give you a car and a driver?

Dunn: No, but I could request one. At that time, the director's staff was still small, and when the admin officer retired, I took her place. So that was a nice job, and I had a secretary then. I remember that was when Kennedy was shot. We were up on the seventh floor so that had to be '63, yes. So the staff enlarged, kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger.

McIntosh: When Kennedy was shot, did that create quite a stir in the office?

Dunn: Oh, yes, because I remember the director had the TV on. 'Cause we were just down the hall from him, and we ran down and then watched it on TV as the newscasts were coming on. Oh, and then – I was in Washington and went to the funeral 'cause we were down on Pennsylvania Avenue. And then we walked all the way up to the top, up by Arlington Cemetery, and we were at the carillon when the jets flew over with the one jet down, flying. So in '64, I was out with Rita, and Rita was at work for the inspector general—no, executive officer.

McIntosh: Executive officer of what?

Dunn: The agency. [Central Intelligence Agency].

McIntosh: Oh, the agency.

Dunn: Yes, the agency.

McIntosh: —Let me stop you right there. What would you tell people when they asked you? You'd meet somebody, you're out to have dinner, and they introduce you. Blah-blah-blah, and “What do you do?” What do you say?

Dunn: Well, I took—for instance, when I went to the Australian Embassy for a party, I told them that I worked with the State Department, which in fact I used to.

McIntosh: —Which is in truth, really.

Dunn: Yes, yes.

McIntosh: Okay.

Dunn: Yes, so usually if it was—

McIntosh: I mean it was no particular secret that you were working with at C.I.A., or was it important to them that this not even be spoken of?

Dunn: Yes, back in those days it was. Nowadays, no, they don't make that much out of it anymore, but back then, yes. You wouldn't go to—

McIntosh: But they would chastise you if you told somebody or they heard you say, "I worked for the C.I.A." That would be grounds for dismissal or something?

Dunn: Yeah, you wouldn't [laughs] go around telling —

McIntosh: Or be shot at dawn or, you know, something similar.

Dunn: Yeah, you wouldn't go around telling people that you worked for the—

McIntosh: Right.

Dunn: Mm-mm.

McIntosh: Well, that might put your life in danger.

Dunn: Back in those days, ah, maybe in Europe —

McIntosh: I'm sorry?

Dunn: Maybe in Europe if they knew and—

McIntosh: They thought you may have some information?

Dunn: Yes, mm-hmm.

McIntosh: You say, "Hell, I just type. I don't know."

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: "I don't even know what I'm typing"

Dunn: That's right. It goes in here and goes out here. [Laughs].

McIntosh: Anyway, so you were fairly loose in Washington. You could do what you wished to, go where you wanted to.

Dunn: By this time you know chasing around with everybody in the agency anyway. I still have—

McIntosh: They didn't give you any rules? I mean, you didn't give any restrictions that you know of particularly, did ya?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: You could travel, you could go out of town whenever you want. If you had weekend off you could—

Dunn: Right, right, right. Only overseas did they tell us not to.

McIntosh: I understand.

Dunn: Certain places not to attend.

McIntosh: Right, I interviewed a guy who worked for the Army Intelligence and he was sent to Turkey for awhile, and they had rules and rules and rules about being on the street alone, about what his wife could wear, and the children.

Dunn: Oh, yes.

McIntosh: Boy, it was tough.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Well, anyway, so, now we're into '64, '65.

Dunn: '64. I went to Vietnam.

McIntosh: Tell me how that assignment – you woke up one morning—

No, I fell off the seventh floor, no she said to me, Rita—

[Break in the tape]

Dunn: Oh. Where am I now?

McIntosh: You're about ready to go to Vietnam.

Dunn: Oh, yes, and so I said, “I am going downstairs and I’m going to look for a job in the FE.” She said, “You’re crazy.” I said, “No.” Then, see, I was an admin officer—

McIntosh: Hit me with that term again?

Dunn: Admin, Administrative.

McIntosh: Oh, okay.

Dunn: I’m sorry. I shorten it like they do in Washington. Admin officer.

McIntosh: That’s right.

Dunn: So when we go overseas, to get overseas, you have to go back to secretarial. So I said, “I’m going down and look for a job in the FE,” Far East Division. “You are crazy”. I said, “Ask Mr. K, see what he says.”

McIntosh: Who?

Dunn: Mr. K. was the – Mr. Kirpatrick was the Executive Director of the Agency. She said, “Ask him. Talk to him”. So I talked to him, and he said, “Well, I have a couple of choices.” [Laughs] Laos–

McIntosh: Laos?

Dunn: Laos, L-a-o-s, Laos.

McIntosh: I know Laos. I just was thinkin’ that’s not a choice.

Dunn: That’s one – that was one.

McIntosh: Geezus.

Dunn: And Saigon.

McIntosh: In China?

Dunn: Saigon.

McIntosh: Oh, Saigon, yeah.

Dunn: So I said – well, I asked him what he thought. He said, “Well actually, you know you’d like Peer very much.” Peer de Silva—

McIntosh: Who was he?

Dunn: —He was our [Station] Chief out there.

McIntosh: You knew him from Manila?

Dunn: No, the guy I'm talking to knows him, and so he said "You'd like him," telling me I'd like him.

McIntosh: Got it.

Dunn: So, I left, and it was very quick [laughs]. I left again and I got there in June in 1964, and Ambassador Lodge was just leaving, and the new ambassador was coming in. I'm assigned to an apartment, temporary with a maid, and I'm met at the airport by somebody I know. Now, that was kind of nice. They canvass to find out if — so that you're coming in cold. So then—

McIntosh: Where'd they take you? I mean, what kind of apartment was this, upstairs or one story, big street?

Dunn: —Six story apartment building.

McIntosh: Adequate accommodation?

Dunn: Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: Where there all Americans in that building?

Dunn: Yes, they were all Americans. We were across the street from the French hospital.

McIntosh: What was your impression of Saigon upon first arrival— that you'd made a mistake?

Dunn: No, no I didn't think so. No.

McIntosh: Okay, I mean, I'm trying to think of it in terms of Manila now?

Dunn: Yes, there's no comparison. By this time now, this is fourteen years later, and it's cleaner, and it's not all bombed. There's some damage. You could see the bullet marks in the walls of some buildings.

McIntosh: Traffic moved along—

Dunn: Usually those little Lambrettas [Italian scooters], not too many cars, and they discouraged Americans from bringing cars also.

McIntosh: Did they give you a Lamabretta to tool around with [laughs]?

Dunn: No, they—for security reasons we were picked up in the morning—

McIntosh: By the motor pool.

Dunn: —And trucked in.

McIntosh: You had to call the motor pool in the morning?

Dunn: No, they just made the rounds, and then they bring you home at noon, two hour lunch, and then you're back until 6:00 o'clock in the evening, and then you are on your own if you miss that bus, which I was working late, and Betty, the ambassador's secretary, and a couple of others in the front office would be late, and we'd be standing down on the corner in the dark waiting for a taxi.

McIntosh: That was your option?

Dunn: Yeah. So, let's see now—we had some scares, and one was they threw a bomb under Meg's car parked out in front of the embassy. Well, they got that defused.

McIntosh: Oh, it didn't explode?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: Oh.

Dunn: Uh-uh. We could go to the Majestic Hotel up on the roof and look out, and you could hear and see the firefigts, and you could hear the thump, thump, thump—

McIntosh: The big guns.

Dunn: —mm-hm, and we were to go through the officers' club down at Bien-Hoa.

McIntosh: How far was Bien-Hoa from Saigon?

Dunn: About twenty miles—

McIntosh: Twenty miles, I knew—

Dunn: —and the grand opening of the new Thunderbird Lounge [laughs].

McIntosh: Run by which service, Army?

Dunn: Air Force.

McIntosh: Air Force.

Dunn: So there was a bus going to take us, cancelled. They bombed it.

McIntosh: Terrific, right after they built it?

Dunn: Right after they built it; that was the end of October.

McIntosh: Boy, you're having fun now.

Dunn: Yeah, then comes the bombing in Saigon.

McIntosh: Yeah, I was going to say. There was the sporadic—

Dunn: Yeah, I'm in Cholon [Chinese influenced section of Saigon], then enlisted men's barracks were bombed, and then the officers' mess about two blocks from me.

McIntosh: From your hotel?

Dunn: Mm-hmm, from where I lived. What was the general? He was trying to sell this car, and there was an ad in our newspaper, the embassy newspaper, everyday advertising this car for some exorbitant amount. Anyway, general went off to R&R in Hong Kong, and they put the bomb in the car, and it blew it up, and of course you couldn't find a piece any bigger than that and that was the end of his car and making any money on it, and servicemen were injured, and some were in the street with just newspapers wrapped around 'em, because they bombed when they were taking a shower. They were getting ready – they're gonnabe— it's Christmas Eve, and they were going have a party.

McIntosh: So the car was parked where?

Dunn: Underneath the building, under the—

McIntosh: Headquarters?

Dunn: Mm-hm, there are cars all along here. Over here is the Ambassador, which was another lodging that was right across the street. They put the bomb in this car here, and we had just come along. We had gone in to get

some liquor at the PX here at the Ambassador and then went on up. And, man, we heard this loud—shook the building. And my maid was going out to get a—pick up a skirt I was having made, and she said she wasn't going to go and I said, "No, don't. Don't do anything," then you could hear the sirens. Some of the fellas there were invited to Peggy's that night in our building, and the Allison's, they were having a party and some came but some did not and they came and they had all these scratches and cuts over them. And some came in just what clothing they could find, shorts.

McIntosh: How far was PX from you?

Dunn: That little one? That PX was about two or three blocks from my apartment.

McIntosh: You didn't have to get a ride. You could walk from there.

Dunn: Yes, and we walked from the embassy sometimes, too.

McIntosh: Oh you did?

Dunn: Mm-hm, so it was close. Our main PX was out a little bit further, out Cong Ly. I kinda of forget the names of those streets [laughs].

McIntosh: So your job at this embassy was anything different than you'd done before?

Dunn: Ah, no, just about the same. You know the usual—

McIntosh: Collating and typing.

Dunn: Typing, yes.

McIntosh: You were in a big office pool?

Dunn: No. I'm working for this one man, the chief.

McIntosh: Ah, you're up on top [unintelligible], and forget [unintelligible].

Dunn: Yeah, again. Because he belonged to the [State Department] Country Team so that meant he met with "Westy," General Westmoreland.

McIntosh: Did they take you along to meet him?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: Sure, on a first name bases.

Dunn: I went to parties.

McIntosh: Did you get on a first name basis with General Westmoreland?

Dunn: No, “Kitsy,” though, the wife [laughs].

McIntosh: Oh, that’s good.

Dunn: And all the generals.

McIntosh: I’m not a real fan of his, that Westmoreland, by the way.

Dunn: Who is?

McIntosh: I’m not, a fan of his, Westmoreland.

Dunn: No, my boss wasn’t either. General Stilwell, what about General Stilwell?

McIntosh: Stilwell? “Skinny,” no, that was the other one—from WWII.

Dunn: Well, this one was World War II, but he’s not “Vinegar Joe”. This is the other one.

McIntosh: Maybe his son, perhaps.

Dunn: Can’t think of his first name, ‘cause I knew him well, too.

McIntosh: Giles.

Dunn: Yeah. It’s Strickler from here, Gil Strickler from New Glarus [Wisconsin] worked in our office, and he was his Colonel then and he would come in, and say, “I got something hot for the Chief.” And I’d say, “Well, get the typewriter cover and put it over our heads, and then I’ll be glad to type.” [both laugh] “That isn’t what I want.” Well, then he’d go in, and then he’d come back, and he’d go up in the front of our office where we had a couple of operations officers, and when he wasn’t looking they’d take the bird on the top of his overseas cap and turn it upside down. Well, then he’d— away with his briefcase but nothing in it but a lunch or new car pamphlets, and off he’d go. He was going to see General Stilwell, and he’d go in. Stilwell had—they’d been in each other’s weddings so he’d go in, and he’d report to General Stilwell and Stilwell would say, “Oh, Gil, for crying out loud they turned that eagle upside down again on your cap.” Oh, how he laughed. Oh, he knew who did it, too. Then up in our front office we had a—

McIntosh: How did you happen to meet Westmoreland’s wife?

Dunn: —At dinner.

McIntosh: What was she hanging around the office for?

Dunn: Dinner.

McIntosh: For dinner – oh, they invited you out for dinner?

Dunn: When my boss had dinner parties, I was invited.

McIntosh: Oh, I see. And you were the one he took to dinner?

Dunn: At his home in Manila.

McIntosh: How nice.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: You mean in Saigon?

Dunn: Mm-hmm.

McIntosh: Was that enjoyable?

Dunn: Yes. I thought that was—

McIntosh: They got better food than you did.

Dunn: Oh, we had a very nice time[both laugh].

McIntosh: They could import stuff.

Dunn: Oh yes, and then the fateful day came, when I ran out to go buy a little ceramic elephant.

McIntosh: What time of the day please?

Dunn: Around 9:00 o'clock, just went down to the corner. I wish I'd stayed longer. I came back, and it was just about 11:00 o'clock—And we— I'm in my office, and then between me and the windows out there, Jorgie sat back up. He was our Deputy.

McIntosh: What was his name? Jorgie?

Dunn: Jorgensen.

McIntosh: Anyway, he was out in the outer office –

Dunn: He was on R&R up in Hong Kong so that office is empty. My boss' office is here. That faces with the window, Jorgie's office is a window, the exec is right here, and he has a window and he is having a little staff meeting in his office. This office is empty, and my boss is on the telephone in his office.

McIntosh: You're in his outer office.

Dunn: I'm in the outer. So all of a sudden we hear this crack, crack, crack, and it's a rifle fire. So we go—four of us ladies to that empty office—

McIntosh: To the window?

Dunn: —went to the window to see what was going on, and down below is a car parked—

McIntosh: How many stories below? You're on what floor?

Dunn: We're really what they call—the first floor which in French there is a ground floor.

McIntosh: First floor is the second floor, right.

Dunn: So then we have a mezzanine, and we're on the next floor.

McIntosh: So about three stories up.

Dunn: So right outside our window is a car. So I see this man shooting, with a pistol, shooting –

McIntosh: Shooting what?

Dunn: These – shooting people here, you know, and people are starting to scatter. So here are our guards on the embassy are shooting and missing this man in the black pants and the white shirt. Well, down the street here comes a Lambretta, or one of those scooters, and the guy is turning it, and this guy in the black pants is going to run and jump on it. He runs to jump, and the thing turns over, and he takes off and leaves him there. And then we look at the car, and I said to Evelyn, who is on my left, "Bomb." I could see the smoke.

McIntosh: You sensed they are trying to get away from the car.

Dunn: Mm-hmm. I saw smoke rolling out of the back seat.

McIntosh: Bad sign.

Dunn: And, wham, and then it went, and a grate on our window blew in –I think that’s what broke my arm. Evelyn got the full blast as did Ray, and the other girl on the end was killed, because I didn’t hear her talking.

McIntosh: Blew you all backwards in other words.

Dunn: Yes, it blew us clear across the room.

McIntosh: Where you unconscious?

Dunn: All I remember is just lying there, and I heard this moaning and I then I heard General – you could hear the plaster falling off the wall, clip-clop, stuff falling. And then I heard—

McIntosh: There was no fire though?

Dunn: No. But that was what frightened Evelyn, I’m sure, was fire, because I could feel her. She started to crawl, and she said, “I’m going to get out of here.” As soon as we hit I started to pray out loud because Reardon said – he heard—he was behind me somewhere, either walking behind us or in my office, you know, of course it was adjacent.

McIntosh: But you sensed what happened. I mean, you knew what had occurred.

Dunn: Mm-hmm. And so – somebody said, “Keep talking.” Oh, Ray said – she’s on my right, “Keep talking, Rodie.” So, I roared into another “Hail Mary,” and I said “Don’t move.” That’s what I told Evelyn, “Don’t move!” Well, then I knew my jaw was broken, and I knew there was something the matter—

McIntosh: Did it hurt to say that?

Dunn: [Laughs] And I knew something was wrong with this arm, and of course your face is just—it feels like fire. So, then I could hear the sirens, and I didn’t hear Barbara. Ray had spoken, and Evelyn had. Evelyn crawled out into my office, sat in a chair, took her slip off. She had a low cut dress on, but she’s is all cut here, and she was mopping this blood up, mopping her face and then—

McIntosh: You couldn’t move?

Dunn: Uh-uh, something had pinned me down and then I heard them coming. I heard the corpsman coming and that's when they must have lifted up that grate.

McIntosh: That had blew over—

Dunn: It had blown in on us, yeah. I think that's what broke my arm.

McIntosh: You were all pinned down.

Dunn: Yeah that's what I think broke my arm.

McIntosh: Oh, I'm sure.

Dunn: See, I had covered my eyes.

McIntosh: Good.

Dunn: And I thought I was the last one to go, because I couldn't hear anybody and then they put me on a stretcher and we went down steps and we went out into the street and—You see I have a picture of us lying in the street and there is a military man looking off. Evelyn's here and I'm laying here and he is looking off somewhere and I said "I wonder what he is looking for?" Well, they had run out of ambulances. So, they took Evelyn in a jeep to the Grul[sp] Hospital, the French Hospital, and they took me in a—what'd they call those, golly I can't remember what they call those—it wasn't an ambulance. It was a military vehicle of some kind and they took me to Saigon Station Hospital and I'd been there before, so I knew where I was. I knew that I was on the first floor and then I felt I was on the elevator and then I heard Pierre and he said "Rodie are you all right?" and I said, "Yes". He said, "I think you're going to need a new typewriter" and then I heard Edie, the counsel, who was on the first floor. I heard her talking and then a Corpsman came in and he told me his name and he said "I'm going to get some of the glass out of your face." I could feel him doing that and he wanted my blood type and he wanted to know how tall I was and I told him I was a blood donor. He said "well we are gonna give you some back." I think he said in my toe. Is that possible, because this arm was all cut?

McIntosh: Well, somewhere in your leg I don't know.

Dunn: 'cause I don't remember it.

McIntosh: A toe's not really a great place for a vein but—

Dunn: I know it wasn't in the arm. Then he said, "Now I'm going to cut off your dress." And I said [laughs]—

McIntosh: "I just bought them," couldn't you tell him that?

Dunn: I said, "Can't you unzip it down the back?" he said, "No, my God, it's unsalvageable." So, I ran my hand up and I can feel all that blood and all that dirt and everything on it. And then he said, "I'm going to cut off your slip." I said, "Oh, gee, I just got that from my brother for Christmas" [Laughs].

McIntosh: Oh my!

Dunn: Than he said—he's going cut off my panties and bra, and then I heard the Priest, and he said "Rosemary, this is Father Remark, I'm here to give you the Last Rites," and I said, "but I'm not dying, Father," and he said, "That's all right. We're doing it for everybody."

McIntosh: Right.

Dunn: And then I told him I had a luncheon engagement in [laughs] Chul-Lon, we were going for Chinese at noon and "You're not going to make it." "I wonder if somebody will tell them," and then that was it, because than I don't remember anything. Michael said—

McIntosh: Probably on some sedatives by that time.

Dunn: —Michael came and he said; I heard him when he said, or did I want him to do anything for me—and he said, "Could you tell I've been crying because they had you completely bandaged except for a place to breathe? Your whole face was bandaged by that time." Then I remember I must have been, where was I—I heard Commander Warren and she said, "Rodie, this is Edna Warren[sp]," that's how I met her. She said she wanted me to swallow something. Oh yeah, they put a trach [trachea tube] in and I couldn't swallow it I guess. So, they did the trach then—the next thing I know, it is the next day.

McIntosh: Was your face burned as well as sliced up?

Dunn: No.

McIntosh: Mostly it was probably the glass huh?

Dunn: About 60 stitches—

McIntosh: Seems like it would have been more than that.

Dunn: Mm-hm, and then they said that I was going to be evacuated to Clark, and I said that was a lie. “Well, no we think you need more attention,” and they had one Ophthalmologist.

McIntosh: He checked your eyes right then and—

Dunn: So, I remember going out in the ambulance, going to the airport.

McIntosh: This is still the same day?

Dunn: It’s the next morning,

McIntosh: Oh, the next morning.

Dunn: Now some of the eye cases, Evelyn and Ray, went the night before I did. I stayed in the hospital overnight and then I went to Clark.

McIntosh: That’s a long ride.

Dunn: Mm-hm.

McIntosh: It’s been several hours.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: You remember any of that much?

Dunn: Yes, I remember I wanted to know if there was anybody on the plane with me and Michael said, “Hal Paget [??] was on the plane.” Oh yes, then the rest were casualties of the Vietnam War, military types, going to Clark. So we got there, and I remember we were in the ambulance together and he was moaning and I thought, “He’s moaning. I might as well moan,” and we pulled in and I remember that and then the Major introduced herself and told me what they were doing and then they took me up to my room, and [gesturing] Evelyn is there, and Yvonne is here, and Ray is over there, and then the nurse’s station was right out to the left here. So she said— Evelyn said, “Rodie, is that you?” And so I put my finger up and I said yes it was, and she said, “What?” and so I had to do this all over again. I said, “Goddammit Evelyn, listen will ya? That hurts.” [Laughs] So, then I could hear her, but I never hear Ray talk. She didn’t speak even, all the way even after I got to Bethesda.

McIntosh: You were in the Philippines for how long before they moved you again?

Dunn: A week—A month.

McIntosh: A month?

Dunn: Mm-hm.

McIntosh: And then from there you went to the States?

Dunn: Mm-hm. I flew from Clark to—

McIntosh: You went to St. Louis, I know.

Dunn: —Hickum.

McIntosh: Yeah, Max told me that.

Dunn: And then Hickum to Travis, California, and they took us off the jets and they put us on props then. Then I'm flying with an—I have to go on board on a stretcher and then they let me sit up, after I get aboard. We are meeting Travis and I'm sitting across from this helicopter pilot and he's also wired shut. His jaw is wired shut also, so—

McIntosh: They had your jaw wired, then?

Dunn: Mm-hm, we're looking out the window and there's the prop going straight up and down, and I said to the pilot, "What do you suppose is wrong?" He said, "Don't ask me, I'm only a helicopter pilot." He was a big help. Then we went to Kelly Field, Texas, and then we went to Scottville, Illinois, that's where I met my family and then we flew to Maguire Air Force Base and then finally Andrews, in Washington

McIntosh: And they sent you to Bethesda for your—

Dunn: Bethesda, yeah.

McIntosh: —Bethesda for your final treatment.

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: How many transfusions had you had, do you recall?

Dunn: Two.

McIntosh: They put you under to do any surgery, corrections, or anything at all?

Dunn: Yeah, to set the arm.

McIntosh: They put your arm in a cast.

Dunn: Yeah, they had to put me out to put it back in.

McIntosh: That was the only—

Dunn: Then I had a—then this scar here swelled up and got infection in it and it got about that big so that had to be done, that was still at Clark.

McIntosh: Took a piece of glass out of there, that what made the infection, huh?

Dunn: Well, there's a scar that long, so it must have been from a cut of some type.

McIntosh: When they get infected like that, there's usually a foreign body in there and they probably lifted that out.

Dunn: [Gesturing] Yeah, still got a lot of 'em here and here, and then in Bethesda, we had the Ophthalmologists take over. So we go to the eye clinic every day and I get on the elevator and my partners would say, "You smell just like a brewery." Well, they're giving me—see I weighed a hundred and eight pounds with a cast on my arm. So they're trying to build me up, so I get three egg nogs [phone rings] laced with maybe booze every [laughs] morning, noon and night and that took care of my eyes.

McIntosh: What was the matter with your eyes?

Dunn: Trauma and glass.

McIntosh: Oh, they had to take that out, but they didn't do any particular surgery other than that?

Dunn: No, they did on the other two.

McIntosh: Yes, I understand.

Dunn: On either side of me. Right.

McIntosh: So, then you had your final therapy, your final surgical therapy was that Bethesda?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: How long were you there?

Dunn: I was there about a month and then I left there and came to Madison and went to veteran's Administration Hospital for the arm for rehab.

McIntosh: Okay, so, now you had to decide whether your career was over or did they decide that for you?

Dunn: Well, I just thought I'd stay at Clark and go back to Saigon, except our doctor came, and he said, "You got to go home."

McIntosh: Right.

Dunn: So, I went back and I went back to work six months after I had been injured and I called my boss and said, "I've been practicing my typing." He said, "Come on back and work for me." So, I'm back to Washington and I worked for him again and in about eight months later, he got a call from William Bundy from the State Department wanting him to go to Bangkok, and he said, "I'm not going to Bangkok without Rodie."

McIntosh: Oh, how nice.

Dunn: So, I thought "Oh, they won't let me go, I haven't been well like other girls." Oh, they didn't care. [Laughs] Come on.

McIntosh: Why not?

Dunn: Yeah, so, I went to Bangkok.

McIntosh: Things a little nicer there?

Dunn: Yes, mm-hm. I had a nice apartment and worked for him, and I was there eighteen months, and he was getting ready to retire, and he came home and he said, "You can come if you want or you can stay if you want, either way." So, I told him I'd go and so I did come home and when I came home, where did I work then? Oh Lord, I worked down on the French desk. Then I got into the Vietnam Accords, 'cause I was back in operations and admin and that was a very interesting job and getting people to go to Paris and then I was on French desk for year and decided I'd liked to go back to the Far East. So, I went to Tokyo.

McIntosh: Third term in the Far East, or Fourth.

Dunn: Mm-hm. I like it, and then I worked out there for two years plus and came home, and I'm lacking a couple months for my C.I.A retirement, Foreign Service.

McIntosh: Is that a number of years?

Dunn: Yes.

McIntosh: What is it? Six years?

Dunn: Five.

McIntosh: Full retirement or full benefits?

Dunn: You get a little bit more on your retirement if you're Foreign Service—

McIntosh: Which you had a lot of.

Dunn: —But under C.I.A. retirement system, I am lacking. So, one of the fellas worked up in N.E. said, "I got a TDA [Temporary Duty Assignment] for you and guess where, one of the most guarded spots in the world and guess where? Pakistan and I was sent to Lahore and I was there and I was opening the Consulate. I'm a TD wire and I'm opening the Consulate and let's see, I was there maybe six weeks perhaps for that, then I went on down to Karachi. No, I went over to visit Evelyn in Delhi then I went to Karachi, and I did everything there. I was caramel—

McIntosh: How was India?

Dunn: —Oh, nice. They had a big post in Delhi. They had nice living accommodations, too. In Lahore I was doing everything. I did all the commel [??] and the finance, the pouching, everything. It's a one man operation.

McIntosh: Yeah, I was gonna say, "You're doing it all."

Dunn: And then I went down to Karachi, and I did the same there, except that there we had a few more employees, then I went up to Islamabad, and I filled in—Well, girls would go on R&R, so I filled in when they went away and that's when I had the opportunity to go through the Khyber Passage twice and then up through the Royal Gorge in Kabul.

McIntosh: Did you enjoy that?

Dunn: Yes it was a trip.

McIntosh: I'll bet, road a camel?

Dunn: No, but there are a lot of camels we passed along the way. I had a visa for Afghanistan, and I got to the border and the return trip of the courier, what happened.

McIntosh: It's getting darker.

[Video Feed Ends]

Dunn: Oh. We had the return trip of a courier right, and I'm with this Afghan fighter and it is Ramadan, and he is not suppose to smoke, drink—So we start off, and we go through the Khyber and get to the border, and my visa had expired. I thought, "Oh God, I'll be stuck up here, I'll be ravaged." He said, "No problema." So we race back to Koshawa and we go to the Afghan Consulate, and I asked for the Ladies' Room and of course they don't recognize women at all. There is nothing for them. So, I have to go back to our staff house and I went back and they didn't know what was wrong, and I said, "I made a little mistake, please don't tell anybody, but I'm going to use the facilities," and we are off again. They had given me peanut butter sandwiches and an apple and water. Well, guess whose eating with me himself up there? Then we race through the Khyber, and we were going up through Afghanistan, and he said, "Better road". We are going up through the Royal Gorge and you know they pass on curbs and ugh, it is just as steep as can be. He wants to know if I want to take a picture. I didn't even want to look down there. So, we get through the Gorge and we are two hours from Kabul, and I'm going to stay with Eleanor, a friend of mine from Tokyo, and I thought she'd be worried sick. It's a wonder what happened to me—he took me right to her house. She said, "I was worried for a bit, but I knew you were all right with Altrul[?]." So I visited with her and I did get my time in and I—

McIntosh: Were you ready to retire?

Dunn: Well, then I hung around a little while longer, because I got another promotion, then I moved back downtown.

McIntosh: In Washington?

Dunn: Mm-hm, and I was down there till I retired, and I'm retired one block from where I went into the State Department, raised my right hand and was sworn in and had my passport picture taken.

McIntosh: What kind of retirement package did they give you?

Dunn: Well, we got an award. All of us got awards for injuries.

McIntosh: You get a disability for that don't you?

Dunn: No, I didn't apply for disability. I can operate that arm even though it doesn't stretch out the way it is supposed to. I don't think any of those

girls did, not Yvonne, not Ray, not anybody. Two of them were blinded completely in the next room.

McIntosh: How many people were killed in the building?

Dunn: See I don't know, and I have a newspaper clipping, and I was going to bring them to our class—I got them from *The Washington Post*, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Wisconsin State Journal*. People sent them to me.

McIntosh: When you retired, they give you a watch, a ring?

Dunn: No, but they do now. They give watches.

McIntosh: Call them up and say they forgot the watch.

Dunn: Judy got me that. I got one. It has the seal on it, but now we do have a good retirement organization, and we go around and play golf. We go up and meet the gang in North Carolina. Bobby and I, my friend Bobby and I met in the Philippines, and we travel quite a bit and she plays golf, so those fellas, we go up there and play golf. We used to bowl in a league.

McIntosh: Any place on earth you haven't been?

Dunn: Really South America.

McIntosh: Nothing down there.

Dunn: It wasn't on the round the world circuit when you meet your friends.

McIntosh: You miss all the work?

Dunn: Yes, I hated to get old, because then I couldn't go overseas anymore, but they do have age limits.

McIntosh: Interesting but traumatic experience it seems. You get together with other alumni?

Dunn: Oh yes, everywhere, got them all over. There was a time about ten years ago that we had friends that were assigned overseas, so that's how I got to Prague, to Athens, and stayed with them.

McIntosh: You always had a place to stay, you always knew somebody from the Embassy.

Dunn: Yes, and now the only one I have left is my niece. I'm just hoping for her to get an assignment.

McIntosh: Can't think of anything else, unless there is something else you didn't tell me.

Dunn: I don't think so. I think I have covered quite a bit.

McIntosh: Quite a career.

Dunn: It was.

McIntosh: The day they didn't make it?

Dunn: Yes, it was a close call.

McIntosh: Your boss that was injured—

Dunn: Lost vision in one eye and he was—

[END OF INTERVIEW]