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TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF LIBERIA  
DIASPORA PROJECT

PUBLIC HEARING  
HAMLINE UNIVERSITY  
June 13, 2008  
St. Paul, Minnesota

TESTIMONY OF  
JAMES YARNCIE HUNDER, SENIOR

TRC Commissioners:

Chairman Jerome Verdier  
Vice Chairperson Dede Dolopei  
Oumu Syllah  
Sheikh Kafumba Konneh  
Pearl Brown Bull  
Rev. Gerald Coleman  
John H.T. Stewart  
Massa Washington

Court Reporter:

Sherrri Flagg, RPR, CLR

1           The following proceedings were had and made of  
2 record, commencing at approximately 9:30 a.m.

3   \*           \*           \*

4           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER:  Shall we all rise,  
5 please.

6   \*           \*           \*

7                                   JAMES YARNCIE HUNDER, SENIOR  
8                                   first duly sworn, was examined  
9                                   and testified as follows:

10           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER:  Welcome and good  
11 afternoon, Mr. Witness.

12           THE WITNESS:  Good afternoon, sir, ladies and  
13 gentlemen.

14           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER:  Thank you.  We are  
15 pleased to receive you at the TRC and are encouraged that you  
16 would take time out of your busy schedule to come and share  
17 your experience with the people of Liberia through the TRC  
18 process contributing to our search for lasting peace and  
19 reconciliation in our country.

20                           The TRC was established to provide a forum where  
21 Liberians can review the past in the hope that we can  
22 establish the truth of what happened and, by that, we can  
23 understand the root causes of our conflict and together find  
24 a way forward.

25                           It's in that spirit that we welcome you and say

1 that we'll introduce the Commissioners to you who will ask a  
2 little bit about yourself and then you proceed into your  
3 testimony. For the benefit of our records, can you confirm  
4 your full name again.

5 THE WITNESS: My full name is James Yarncie  
6 Hunder, Senior.

7 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Your date of birth,  
8 please.

9 THE WITNESS: My date of birth is April 25, 1950.

10 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Occupation?

11 THE WITNESS: Law enforcement.

12 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Where do you reside in  
13 the U.S.?

14 THE WITNESS: I reside at 1516 Emerald Street,  
15 Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

16 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: When did you migrate to  
17 the U.S., sir?

18 THE WITNESS: I left Liberia April 12th of 1985.  
19 I arrive here April 13th of 1985.

20 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you. And I will  
21 now introduce the Commissioners. At your immediate right is  
22 Commissioner Sheikh Kafumba Konneh, Commissioner Pearl Brown  
23 Bull, Commissioner Gerald Coleman, Commissioner Dede Dolopei;  
24 at my immediate right, Commissioner Massa Washington,  
25 Commissioner John Stewart, Commissioner Oumu Syllah, and I'm

1 Jerome Verdier.

2 Sincere thanks and welcome once more. You will  
3 now proceed with your testimony.

4 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members  
5 of the Commission. I first would like to start by expressing  
6 my thanks and appreciation to the Commission and to the  
7 Advocate for Human Rights and all the supporters and sponsors  
8 of this great historic event for such a great opportunity  
9 being afforded us to come and share our experiences, both  
10 personal and otherwise.

11 I also want to say that the -- we are thankful for  
12 this opportunity allowing us to confront our past with the  
13 hope that, through this opportunity, we'll be able to have a  
14 better tomorrow for Liberia and Liberians. If you will, I do  
15 have a prepared statement.

16 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You want to read a  
17 prepared text?

18 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

19 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Is it your own text?

20 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

21 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Will you share a copy  
22 with the Commission?

23 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

24 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Was it prepared from  
25 your certain knowledge?

1 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

2 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay.

3 THE WITNESS: My own knowledge.

4 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: We'll have Sheikh Konneh  
5 signature it and share a copy of it.

6 THE WITNESS: It reads thus: Honorable Members of  
7 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Members of the  
8 Advocate For Human Rights, Members of the Clergy, Members of  
9 the Press Corps, Friends of Liberia, Ladies and Gentlemen:  
10 My name is James Yarncie Hunder, Senior. I was born in PZ  
11 Town, Todee District, Montserrado County, Liberia. I  
12 personally live in Winston-Salem, North Carolina where I am  
13 employed with a prominent security company. I am the founder  
14 and president and current president of the Liberian  
15 Organization of the Piedmont and the southern regional Vice  
16 President of the Union of Liberian Associations in the  
17 Americas.

18 I am pleased to have the opportunity to appear  
19 before you today. I hope that this statement about my  
20 experiences, about experiences of my family and the  
21 experiences of my fellow Liberians is of value to the  
22 Commission in its very important work to bring unity and  
23 healing to our nation.

24 The events that have brought us all to this point  
25 have its roots long before the Rice Riots or the coup of

1 1980. I was a child of about five years old during the 1955  
2 political crisis in Liberia known as "the plot that failed,"  
3 which took place under President Tubman. During this saga,  
4 my father was a supporter of David Coleman, a Tubman rival, a  
5 clan chief in Todee District. My father was Gbodowah Hunder,  
6 also known as PZ. I may add that my father, Gbodowah Hunder,  
7 got that PZ name from his affiliation and constant  
8 relationship with a famous PZs Two At a Time, he used to  
9 serve coffee and cocoa to them. So he became known as PZ and  
10 so it became very popular.

11 My father learned that Tubman had implicated him  
12 in the 1955 plot to overthrow the government and sent his  
13 soldiers to bring my father back alive or bring Tubman his  
14 body. My father had a Mandingo friend who was a soothsayer  
15 who gave him a talisman. When he kept his talisman with him,  
16 the soldiers pursuing him would become confused, to his  
17 relief. One day my father was sitting on his porch when  
18 soldiers came into the village, grabbing chickens, food,  
19 animals and things. The soldiers came and asked where PZ  
20 Hunder was. My father pointed to his left and said, "He went  
21 that way." The soldiers, supposedly under the influence of  
22 the magical talisman, became confused and my father was not  
23 harmed that day.

24 After this incident, my father went into hiding  
25 for two years. When he came back to the village, he again

1 found himself on the wrong side of the Tubman administration.  
2 My father was related to paramount chief, Kpannah Goba, who  
3 happened to be a Tubman supporter. Paramount Chief Goba made  
4 every effort to convince my father to join Tubman's campaign  
5 but without success.

6 My father and Chief Goba had a falling-out. Goba  
7 was made to retain his position as paramount chief and later  
8 became a member of the Liberian legislature. But because my  
9 father did not support Tubman's policy or administration, he  
10 lost his position as clan chief and never again sought any  
11 government jobs.

12 My father was very impressed by the soothsayer's  
13 magical power, which he credited for saving his life. So he  
14 decided that one of his children should become a Moslem and  
15 train as a soothsayer. That is how, as a young boy, I was  
16 sent to a Moslem school. I went to live with my foster  
17 parents, Lassana and Mamusukullah Trawally-Keita, who at the  
18 time owned and operated several diamond mines in Bassa camp  
19 near Weasua. I was forced to learn only the Koran, but I  
20 dreamed of going for formal schooling. I secretly learned to  
21 read and write English and was taught by a person in the  
22 camp.

23 Thereafter, with the assistance of my kind and  
24 loving stepmother, I escape and went to live with my foster  
25 sister and her husband, Mamade and Fanta Trawally-Jalloh, in

1 the Bong Mines Industrial Camp. There, at age of 14 I was  
2 enrolled in formal school at the Zaweata Elementary School.  
3 I later moved to Monrovia and entered in night school,  
4 Student Union High on Broad Street, where my brother,  
5 Fredrick D. Hunder, taught at night.

6 My high school education prepared me for  
7 employment with the Special Security Service, SSS, at the  
8 Executive Mansion. The SSS is responsible for the protection  
9 of very important personages, VIP: the president and his  
10 immediate family and other special dignitaries.

11 Upon completing the required -- the requisite  
12 requirement for employment, I was admitted at the National  
13 Police Academy for six months' basic police training. I  
14 graduated on July 23, 1971, the very day President Tubman  
15 died in the clinic in London, England. All graduates were  
16 ordered to report to headquarters for special assignments  
17 alongside of the law enforcement agencies so as to maintain  
18 peace and stability during such an unprecedented event.

19 President Tubman was immediately succeeded by his  
20 long-time vice president, the Reverend Dr. William Richard  
21 Tolbert, Junior. Upon completing six weeks' VIP training  
22 course in Cestor Village in Congo Town near Monrovia, I was  
23 fully assigned to the SSS. By virtue of my frequent  
24 assignments to the president, I became known and privileged  
25 to accompany President Tolbert extensively on local, national



1 and international travels.

2           On the day of the coup, the coup d'etat which  
3 toppled the Tolbert administration, the morning of April  
4 12th, 1980, I was Assistant Second Shift Commander. My shift  
5 had ended at 11 p.m. and I had gone home. I did not know any  
6 of the coup plotters and did not know of any plans by the  
7 military to stage a coup until the next day when I was  
8 awakened by gunfire from the direction of the military  
9 barracks. The shocking news of the coup was later announced  
10 on the various radio stations.

11           Following Samuel Doe and his People Redemption  
12 Counsel, PRC, forces taking complete control of the Executive  
13 Mansion, it was announced that all SSS personnel were to stay  
14 away from the mansion and its environs until further notice.  
15 It was not until a few weeks later when 13 former cabinet  
16 members were executed that the SSS was ordered to report for  
17 duties.

18           Any SSS personnel previously assigned or close to  
19 the late President Tolbert was removed from the Executive  
20 Mansion for security reasons. I was reassigned to the post  
21 stockade along with two other SSS personnel, Captain Edward  
22 Swaray and George Kimber. The stockade is one of the maximum  
23 security prisons next to Camp Belle Yallah, where high-risk  
24 political prisoners were being kept. I was under strict  
25 orders to report any clandestine activities of any inmates or

1 personnel having contact with the prisoners.

2 I was later warned by a close coworker that my  
3 assignment to the stockade was a setup so that I could be  
4 arrested for passing secret information from high-risk  
5 political prisoners since I knew all the prisoners. The  
6 conditions in the post stockade were terrible and almost  
7 uninhabitable. Individual cells were usually -- were  
8 constantly -- excuse me, individual cells were often  
9 overcrowded, poor sanitation, verbal and physical abuses were  
10 the norms. The soldiers used constant harassment and  
11 intimidations to force the prisoners to demand money from  
12 their family members which they often were not received.

13 I was assigned to the stockade when A. Benedict  
14 Tolbert, the president's son, and Varney Dempster, former SSS  
15 and LNPF director, which is the Liberian National Police  
16 Force Director, were kept there. I also pitied the prisoners  
17 and started carefully running errands for them, even though I  
18 knew it was risky. I ran more errands for more than others.  
19 Passing communication from A.B. Tolbert, Varney Dempster and  
20 other inmates to their friends and family was almost a daily  
21 routine.

22 I made sure to know the contents of the messages  
23 before delivery. Almost all the communications were  
24 requesting money from families/friends to pay guards for  
25 favor to avoid harsh treatment and to purchase decent meals

1 usually prepared by a female political inmate, Ms. Angeline  
2 Sherman.

3 I remember the last note I received from A.B.  
4 Tolbert was on a whole roll of toilet paper which I flush  
5 down the toilet before going back into the office because I  
6 suspected at that time a soldier saw me taking the note from  
7 A.B. Tolbert. A moment later the post stockade commander,  
8 Colonel Reeves Bouy, summoned all operatives including his --  
9 excuse me, Reeves Bouy summoned all operatives into his  
10 office for inspection because he suspected that personnel  
11 were in the habit of passing information to prisoners.

12 I learned the next day that both A.B. Tolbert and  
13 Varney Dempster were secretly removed from prison and taken  
14 to the military Camp Schefflin, where they were gruesomely  
15 butchered and buried in shallow grave. I do not know who  
16 took Tolbert and Dempster out of prison and I do not know who  
17 ordered them killed, but no prisoners ever left the stockade  
18 without Colonel Bouy's permission.

19 I also was a liaison between the stockade and  
20 Special Security Service when the former PRC Vice Head of  
21 State Thomas Weh Syen and four other high-ranking PRC  
22 officers were arrested for alleged counter coup against Samuel  
23 K. Doe in August 1981. I befriended and won the trust of  
24 many prisoners. I would start up conversations with  
25 prisoners for the purpose of obtaining any verifiable

1 information detrimental to state security. But not once did  
2 anyone ever admit, reveal or indicate any signs of  
3 involvement in any attempt to topple the Doe government.

4 My assignment was to clandestinely seek and report  
5 to President Doe, through the SSS director, any information  
6 detrimental to the PRC government. Like others, I frequently  
7 spoke with former PRC Vice Chairman Thomas Weh Syen. One  
8 night Weh Syen asked me if I would do him a favor and if I  
9 was brave enough to deliver a message to CIC Doe. I replied  
10 that I would. Weh Syen said that he had a message for Samuel  
11 Doe: "Tell Doe if he causes my blood to be shed, he's going  
12 to pay in worst manner. I did not wrong him, I did not go  
13 against him, and I never planned with anyone to kill him. So  
14 if he ends my life, his blood will be shed or worst."

15 The next day I went to the Executive Mansion and  
16 convey the message to my boss, the SSS Director Thomas  
17 Gbeku-Wright, who immediately arranged for me to meet Doe in  
18 his fourth floor office. I gave the message to Doe just as  
19 given by Weh Syen. Doe asked me: "How did he, Weh Syen,  
20 look?" I said, "Sir, he looks okay to me, but he wishes for  
21 your kind interventions." Doe said, "You are dismissed to  
22 leave now."

23 Later on that same day, the post stockade  
24 commander, Colonel Reeves T. Bouy, summoned all the stockade  
25 details, soldiers and SSS, in his office. Colonel Bouy said

1 that it was mandatory all stockade operatives must meet back  
2 in his office that night. I was suspicious and very fearful  
3 that something real bad was about to take place in the  
4 stockade.

5 We were later joined by a special squad from the  
6 Executive Mansion, from the Executive Mansion Guard  
7 Detachment, another area. Very surprisingly, nothing  
8 specific was being discussed and Colonel Bouy asked his  
9 bodyguards if the convoy was prepared. Colonel Bouy ordered  
10 the convoy to proceed to a nightclub on Gurley Street where  
11 we disembark and follow him into the club. Once seated,  
12 Colonel Bouy ask the bartender to serve everyone drinks of  
13 their choice. So the party began.

14 After some time, Colonel Bouy abruptly requested  
15 for the bill, paid and started to head out to the cars. The  
16 convoy was heading back to the post stockade and by this time  
17 I became very, very suspicious of what was coming. Upon  
18 arriving in the stockade fence, after a brief delay in his  
19 office, Colonel Bouy ordered us into the main inner fence of  
20 the post stockade where the squad leader, name unknown, like  
21 I say, I didn't know most of these people except for a few,  
22 one or two that I could remember from the Executive Mansion.  
23 I don't even remember his name now, but I remember his face  
24 very well--ordered his men into position.

25 Colonel Bouy ordered the jailor, name unknown, to

1 release former PRC Chairman Major General Thomas Weh Syen and  
2 his four co-conspirators. It immediately became apparent to  
3 Weh Syen and his co-conspirator that they were about to face  
4 their fate because they could vividly, as I was told,  
5 remember the false release of their fellow inmates, when A.B.  
6 Tolbert and Varney Dempster were prematurely released under  
7 the guard of darkness about the same time and they were never  
8 returned nor heard from anymore.

9           Suddenly Weh Syen and his co-detainees each broke  
10 into loud cries and hollering in English saying: "My people,  
11 they coming to kill us, oh! Doe is killing us, oh!" They  
12 were repeating their cries in the various vernacular  
13 continuously as the special squad was ordering them to shut  
14 up and line up. I wanted to leave the scene that moment, but  
15 the gate was shut and guarded. The most unbearable moment  
16 came when the squad leader ordered his men to shoot. The  
17 condemned prisoners began to cry even louder but only to be  
18 silent forever by the barrage of bullets when Weh Syen and  
19 his co-conspirators were savagely and unceremoniously gunned  
20 down without being blindfolded or even administered some  
21 spiritual right.

22           I stood there -- please excuse me.

23           (Brief pause.)

24           I stood there helplessly, in total disbelief that  
25 I had just witnessed the murder of another human being. I

1 can still picture the scene like it is just happening. It is  
2 a memory that I will take to my grave. As if it was not  
3 enough to watch the gruesome murder of fellow Liberians  
4 without due process, I was even more heartbroken when the PRC  
5 government announced the same day that Weh Syen and his  
6 co-prisoners were killed as they were escaping through the  
7 attic of the post stockade. Not only did the Doe government  
8 murder fellow citizens in cold blood, but they shamelessly  
9 lied to the Liberian people without any remorse.

10 In 1984 my then wife got a scholarship to the  
11 Nancy B. Doe Fund to study nursing at Chicago State  
12 University, so my wife and one of our children were in the  
13 U.S. and I stayed in Liberia. Sometime the same year while  
14 the director of the SSS, Nathan Nelson, was with President  
15 Doe in his hometown Tuzon, Grand Gedeh County, I was  
16 instructed to represent him, Nelson, at a funeral.

17 On my way back from the funeral, I instructed my  
18 assigned shift driver to pass by my friend Edith Dinklage's  
19 place and get something to eat. As we drove into Edith's  
20 yard, there was a strange man sitting on her porch. She walk  
21 up toward the car, to our car, and said, "James, I am sorry,  
22 the food is not ready yet."

23 I said, "Well, I will come back another time."

24 But just before we attempted to drive away, Edith  
25 said to me, "Oh, please meet my friend. He is a businessman

1 from America." I said, "Hi, nice meeting you." And the  
2 person on the porch said hi. As we started to drive from the  
3 house, I heard a conversation over my military walkie-talkie  
4 describing the car I was in, the entire area which I later  
5 found out was under surveillance, and I heard someone say the  
6 subject is still on the porch. I immediately tried to reach  
7 the Joint Security Chief office without success.

8           Thereafter, I contacted Director Nelson and  
9 briefed him about the happening. He instructed me to report  
10 to the SSS office and turn myself in to Deputy Director Sam  
11 Ajavon. Deputy Director Ajavon was immediately joined by two  
12 high-ranking military officers who began to question me about  
13 my connection with an Edmond Johnson and an ex-U.S. marine.  
14 It was during this interview that I found out what was going  
15 on. Edith's residence had been under constant surveillance  
16 since Edmond Johnson and his co-conspirator and his alleged  
17 co-conspirator ex-U.S. marine, name unknown, left their hotel  
18 and took residence in Edith Dinklage's home.

19           This I had no knowledge of. Though I honestly  
20 told him that I did not know the man in question, I was  
21 arrested and turned over to the National Security Agency for  
22 questioning about my role in the conspiracy to stage a coup  
23 against the PRC government. I was charged with secretly  
24 supplying the conspirators with arms from the SSS office.  
25 And I want to make clear that in the SSS office, we don't



1 carry high-power sophisticated weaponry; we carry sidearms  
2 and a few arms like carbines, those kind of things, those  
3 kind of arms that we carry in the motorcade. We don't carry  
4 bazookas or anything like that. I don't even know, I haven't  
5 seen one.

6           While at the NSA, I later found out that other SSS  
7 officers, Samuel Crump and Edward Swaray and our mutual  
8 friend, Edith Dinklage, have also been arrested for allegedly  
9 conniving with Edmond Johnson and the ex-U.S. marine to plot  
10 a coup against Doe. After extensive investigation for close  
11 to three months, being held in the NSA interrogation room, by  
12 His grace--and I repeat by His grace--we were each set free  
13 but without any explanations.

14           We were banned from the Executive Mansion for  
15 several months before resuming duties. I suspected that I  
16 was constantly under surveillance since my release from jail  
17 from my previous experiences working at the post stockade and  
18 experiences of fellow Liberians who were falsely imprisoned  
19 and savagely murdered under the guard of darkness. It was by  
20 His grace that I was spared and survived to tell some of the  
21 stories and to openly, once and for all, set the record  
22 straight that former PRC Co-Chairman Major General Thomas  
23 Weh Syen and four other PRC members were gruesomely murdered  
24 within the confine of the post stockade and that the PRC  
25 government lied on August 14, 1981 that they were killed

1 while trying to escape from prison.

2           Honorable Members of the Truth and Reconciliation  
3 Commission and all those assembled here, I thank you for your  
4 undivided attention and I look forward to being able to offer  
5 more questions -- more answers, rather. I look forward to  
6 offer more information about truth reconciliation later when  
7 I speak on behalf of the Liberian Organization of the  
8 Piedmont in particular and the ULAA southern region in  
9 general.

10           If the Commission or Commissioners have any  
11 questions, I would be happy to answer them. I thank you.

12           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you very much,  
13 Mr. Witness, for revealing to the Commission your direct  
14 personal experiences as it relates not only to the Weh Syen  
15 episode but to other events during the period of your stay in  
16 Liberia. You mentioned Weh Syen was executed along with four  
17 other co-conspirators. Can you give us the names of the  
18 others who were executed.

19           THE WITNESS: Mr. Chairman, I am not -- I tried, I  
20 tried to get those names. It's been so long. But right now  
21 I know I recall Nelson Toe. I just -- there was another, I  
22 just can't recall. But I remember Nelson Toe. For what  
23 reason, I don't know. But I tried to block this from my  
24 mind, really.

25           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay, I understand.

1 THE WITNESS: I really tried.

2 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I understand.

3 THE WITNESS: But this opportunity, I think this  
4 is the greatest, at least to help me get it out.

5 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: We all understand.  
6 Thank you very much.

7 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Mr. Witness,  
8 I want to thank you for your statement. I also appreciate  
9 your willingness to come and testify. We believe it will  
10 help us in our reporting.

11 Can you refresh your mind and tell us what really  
12 do you know about A.B. Tolbert and Varney Dempster, how they  
13 were brought to the prison compounds where you were and how  
14 they were taken out from there, if you have any knowledge?

15 THE WITNESS: I want to be sure I answer your  
16 question.

17 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: A.B. Tolbert  
18 and Varney Dempster, you were in the post stockade when they  
19 brought them?

20 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

21 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: And you were  
22 there when they were taken away from there?

23 THE WITNESS: Well, you mean -- not on the scene.

24 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: You were not  
25 on the scene?

1 THE WITNESS: No, sir.

2 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Well, what  
3 information did you get, after you heard that they were  
4 executed, how they were taken out?

5 THE WITNESS: Oh, okay, yes. I did hear this in a  
6 general conversation from soldiers. I don't know if any of  
7 them were -- took part in getting them from the jail to  
8 Schefflin, because that's how I found out, just from a  
9 general conversation and trying to question them to find out  
10 what happened. And they said they were taken that night to  
11 Schefflin and they were killed in Schefflin and placed in a  
12 shallow grave. I was just trying to get bits and pieces from  
13 them. But you -- at the time one had to be careful or in my  
14 case I had to be very careful because my being there was  
15 actually kind of checking myself out being very careful of my  
16 own security.

17 So at that time talking to the soldiers, you've  
18 got to be careful what kind of questions you ask because you  
19 can be implicated easily. So I did not try to --

20 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Get detailed  
21 information?

22 THE WITNESS: Exactly. So I just wanted to know  
23 what happened to them. And they said, well, they were taken  
24 last night and taken to Schefflin.

25 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Is this

1 Colonel Bouy still alive?

2 THE WITNESS: I have no idea.

3 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Reeves Bouy?

4 THE WITNESS: I have no idea.

5 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: What's his  
6 full name?

7 THE WITNESS: Reeves T. Bouy, I remember that very  
8 well.

9 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Reese?

10 THE WITNESS: Reeves, R-E-E-V-E-S.

11 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Thank you.

12 THE WITNESS: I have no idea if he's still living  
13 or not. I hope he's living today to be able to help us out.

14 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Mr. Witness, thank  
16 you for coming to tell your story. You were with the post  
17 stockade until when, what year, you know, working there?  
18 What year? Were you there in 1981, December 23rd, when  
19 general amnesty were given to the True Whig Party, people who  
20 were dead, and they released in prison compound for people on  
21 that date? Were you still there '81?

22 THE WITNESS: '81 I had to be there because that  
23 was my first assignment. That was my first assignment after  
24 they recall us, after they say now we can now come back to  
25 the mansion, the SSS people. Yes, I believe I was there.

1           COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: You testified  
2 that, you know, you were given errands and helping many of  
3 those who were there. If time would now permit you now and  
4 you have to come back to tell this story for the Piedmont in  
5 North Carolina, would you be able to give us, according to  
6 your recollection, some of the people who were put in prison  
7 during that time since you know you were there, that your  
8 memory would recollect? Because we are writing history.  
9 Some of them have died, but some may still be around. And it  
10 would be good, if your memory can serve you well, we saw that  
11 you wrote a prepared statement because we can understand why.

12           So if you're not prepared now to do it, when you  
13 come back, maybe you can recall some of the names or if you  
14 know some now, you could at least do that.

15           THE WITNESS: I'll do my best.

16           COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Thank you.

17           COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Thank you. I just  
18 have three questions: The first one is linked to the  
19 statement you made with regards to the historical issue of  
20 1955.

21           THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

22           COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: With the plot that  
23 failed. Do you have any other information besides that that  
24 could help us? Because we've heard that this plot has been  
25 very controversial with regards to -- did your father tell

1 you anything with regards to whether there was validity in  
2 such a plot, or was it just one of those things concocted by  
3 the administration at that time? Did you hear anything or  
4 did he say anything on that level?

5 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. From  
6 my father's explanation to me regarding the incident, all he  
7 said to me was that -- I can't really infer whether it was a  
8 real plot from him or what he said. But what he said was  
9 apparently there was an apparent plot, according to him, or  
10 either some of the politicals were using that to get -- you  
11 know, to kind of exclude him or what, I don't know. But  
12 that's what he said to me.

13 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: The second one is  
14 the issue of the security. With your background in the  
15 security sector, I'm concerned about the situation of  
16 Liberia's security prior to 1980. How strong was it? How  
17 focused was it? How disciplined was it, and loyal? Because  
18 to see how quickly and easily the coup took place surprises  
19 me.

20 So I'm wondering your opinion, because even in  
21 your testimony you said you didn't know anything about it, it  
22 was just sudden. So how could four or five simple low-level  
23 soldiers plan meticulously such a beautiful takeover and the  
24 Liberian military security system completely taken off guard?  
25 In your research or thinking or review, have there been any

1 additional points that you would like to share with us on  
2 that?

3 THE WITNESS: Thank you. The four or five person  
4 that were killed were not the -- they were part of the  
5 original PRC, but I'm talking about the PRC post stockade.

6 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: I'm talking about  
7 the group that staged this coup.

8 THE WITNESS: The 17 members, whatever, yeah.  
9 Okay. Well, from my experience as a Special Security Service  
10 personnel at the time, our responsibility is to the VIP from  
11 the president, his relative, the elders that may deserve some  
12 protection, SSS protection. As you know, the government has  
13 different agencies, they have different responsibility. They  
14 have one that is responsible for intelligence gathering and,  
15 like the NSA and in our case at the time, it was NSA, the  
16 CID, different agencies. But NSA was dependent upon to pass  
17 on -- they did the clandestine intelligence. So if there is  
18 a threat, they pass it on to Doe's concern.

19 And our job as SSS personnel is to protect the  
20 president physically and -- but we -- we're supposed to --  
21 we're supposed to work hand-in-hand, identify the threat. So  
22 it's based upon the threat that we are able to maximize our  
23 protection. But I don't know where the breakdown was. I was  
24 not aware of their decision-making, so I don't know. I don't  
25 know why the breakdown came about.



1           But what I did hear, rumor among ourselves, SSS  
2 personnel, was that the president was so trusting. He felt  
3 -- William Tolbert felt that he was not doing anything wrong.  
4 He thought he were doing everything to develop the country.  
5 He thought he were doing everything to improve the mindset of  
6 the Liberian people. So to him--now, that was a rumor  
7 between ourselves--he was not doing anything wrong so we were  
8 not fearful.

9           So as a result, security, especially when it come  
10 to the SSS, was kind of a -- not too strong, it was lax, it  
11 was -- I remember so many instances where we went out and you  
12 would tell William Tolbert: "Mr. President, I think we  
13 should go this way or that way." He said, "You do your job,  
14 I've got to go to my people." That's the kind of person he  
15 was. So it was difficult kind of doing that.

16           But in terms of why it was necessary to accomplish  
17 that? Maybe if he had been that forceful and very strong  
18 when it come to security, very, very concerned, maybe it  
19 would have been tighter. But, again, I don't know.

20           COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: So, in summary, it  
21 seems that we have a very incompetent, inept security system  
22 in our country. Because if you have a security system of  
23 professionally trained people, irregardless of what the  
24 president says, they do their job, period.

25           THE WITNESS: And we did.

1 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: And you didn't.

2 THE WITNESS: Well, we did. The coup at the  
3 time --

4 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: The man was killed  
5 so certainly the job was not done. So, I mean, it's a  
6 thought for us to look into as we talk about reforms and  
7 rebuilding the society.

8 THE WITNESS: Yes, I agree with that. I agree  
9 with that, that from our mistake, we should be able to build  
10 upon those mistake and move forward.

11 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Another last one:  
12 You mentioned something about an ex-U.S. marine. Do you  
13 happen to know the name of this person?

14 THE WITNESS: The what?

15 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: The ex-U.S. marine.  
16 In your discussion when you mentioned all the other names,  
17 but you said just "ex-U.S. marine" in your testimony. Who  
18 was that person?

19 THE WITNESS: That was very intentional because I  
20 never got to meet this guy other than seeing him on the porch  
21 that day.

22 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: I see.

23 THE WITNESS: I heard and read in a newspaper, you  
24 know, later on, okay, but I were really not concerned about  
25 it, about his name. I read his name, I read the story in the

1 newspaper one time, but I didn't go to take it down because  
2 I, you know --

3 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: It almost cost you  
4 your life.

5 THE WITNESS: I was just trying to put the thing  
6 behind me.

7 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay, thank you.

8 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Thank you for  
9 coming to share your experience with us.

10 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.

11 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: This court that  
12 killed the five persons including Weh Syen, you said you did  
13 not know all of them but you knew a few of them.

14 THE WITNESS: The gentleman that was supposed to  
15 be the commander -- because when I say "suppose," he was  
16 making loud, making most of the command. I can't remember  
17 his name, but I knew him from the mansion. He was from the  
18 mansion, from the Executive Mansion.

19 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: So he was the only  
20 person you knew?

21 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I remember him very well. I  
22 remember him very well. And some of the other guys were  
23 strange, I didn't know them. They were from kind of -- I  
24 don't know. I didn't know them. But I remember that guy,  
25 that guy. I don't want to call the wrong name, you know. I

1 can't remember his name.

2 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: You also talk  
3 about Edith Dinkler?

4 THE WITNESS: Edith Dinklage.

5 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Is she still alive  
6 today?

7 THE WITNESS: Unfortunately Edith died here in  
8 Maryland or Washington somewhere a couple years ago.

9 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Okay. So she  
10 survived the incident?

11 THE WITNESS: She survived the incident, yes,  
12 ma'am. But she died here in America.

13 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: And then where are  
14 the other two who were released with you?

15 THE WITNESS: The other two that were released?

16 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Yeah.

17 THE WITNESS: I do not know, ma'am. Edward  
18 Swaray, I heard -- I heard he was killed in the coup, not --  
19 I'm talking about this last --

20 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: In the war?

21 THE WITNESS: Was it the war? Yeah -- no, during  
22 Doe capture, during that time, before Doe was captured, I'd  
23 heard that he was killed. I don't know. That's rumor. And  
24 Semi Krahn (ph), I heard also that he was killed later, he  
25 and his wife were killed. I don't know, I have not seen

1 these people since 1985.

2 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Thank you very  
4 much, Mr. Witness.

5 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Can you tell us,  
7 by all means if you know, what were the circumstances  
8 concerning the arrest of Mr. A.B. Tolbert who was son of the  
9 late President Tolbert? There have been all these different  
10 version. One version states that he ran to the U.S. embassy  
11 for asylum but was turned out; another version states that he  
12 went to the French embassy but he was temporarily taken in  
13 but later on turned over based on threat from the military  
14 governor, Samuel Doe, at the time.

15 What did you hear concerning his arrest?

16 THE WITNESS: Thank you. What I heard was--now, I  
17 can't prove this--what I heard was that it was rumored that  
18 he went and sought political asylum at a French embassy. As  
19 you know, his --

20 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Wife.

21 THE WITNESS: -- his wife -- I can't remember her  
22 name now. Tessay (ph), his wife Tessay was from the Ivory  
23 Coast. And so there, of course, would have -- the president,  
24 the late elect president, Houphouet-Boigny with the French  
25 government and Tessay being his daughter, of course there

1 were a lot of interests that are in there.

2 But I heard also that the military, Doe and the  
3 PRC people, demanded the French government to -- the French  
4 embassy to turn A.B. Tolbert to them or they made some  
5 threat. Now, whether it was diplomatically acceptable, I  
6 don't know that part. But that's what I heard was a rumor,  
7 and that's how he was later turned over and brought to the  
8 post stockade.

9 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: You stated earlier  
10 that he gave you a message contained on a role of toilet  
11 paper tissue to whoever. Can you share with us what was the  
12 content of the message? Because his message was given to you  
13 just a day before his alleged execution.

14 THE WITNESS: Unfortunately -- it was not the day  
15 before. The day -- yeah, the day before his -- he went away  
16 or whatever it was. Unfortunately--I say "unfortunately"  
17 because when I received -- unlike most of the instances where  
18 I received messages and stuff, it was secretly done. I mean,  
19 this was a risky, risky, risky thing, you know, for my own  
20 self. So I tried to do it in a way like when I was talking  
21 to them one on one -- and I didn't spend much time. In all  
22 my time there, I didn't spend a whole lot of time with one  
23 prisoner, you know, because the more time you spend, I mean,  
24 the more you are liable to be suspect of something. And  
25 there was commenting and it was rampant, so I had to be very

1 careful about it.

2 But this very day when he gave me that note, I  
3 wish I had kept that because I think that would have either  
4 help us some way. But, again, it were very risky. If I had  
5 done that, perhaps Doe say, "You will not live to tell the  
6 story."

7 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: In other words,  
8 you didn't read the message on the tissue paper; you just  
9 flush it?

10 THE WITNESS: No, ma'am. I left him, I went and  
11 flush it. I saw this guy, I knew this guy saw me receiving  
12 that note. And I'm glad I did because just -- Reeves Bouy  
13 never called me in there before, you know, but just  
14 simultaneously he called this meeting. So I'm glad I did.  
15 And we went through inspection that day, so I wouldn't have  
16 been here -- if that note were found on me, that was it.

17 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: When these  
18 individuals from the previous government of President Tolbert  
19 were arrested and imprisoned, including some of his relatives  
20 and other friends, was there any time where members of the  
21 ruling People Redemption Council, the PRC, visited any of  
22 these people in prison; or did any of the advisors who were  
23 now some of them cabinet ministers, did any of them visit  
24 these prisoners? And what could have been the subject of  
25 their visits?

1           THE WITNESS: Very good question. Yes, I saw  
2 several, I saw several there that visited. If I can recall,  
3 Podier, Nicholas Podier visited; and Pennue, Harrison Pennue;  
4 Quiawonkpa, a couple of times I did see him. But I was never  
5 privileged as to how -- what they were talking about because  
6 I wouldn't go stand up there to hear what they were talking.

7           Most of the time not -- what I did was at that  
8 time, it depends on who -- who came to visit. Say if it was  
9 somebody that knew Reeve Bouy very well and he was high PRC  
10 officials, Reeve Bouy will accompany that person inside to  
11 see the person whoever he can receive.

12           But, again, if it's somebody else, most of the  
13 time it was remain in the stockade office area where they  
14 have a wide open waiting room where the visitor would sit,  
15 and then they would call Reeve Bouy or his assistant will  
16 send for the prisoner and they will interact outside there.  
17 Then other instances Reeve Bouy will get the prisoner, will  
18 send for the prisoner, the prisoner will come into his office  
19 and this PRC, all, whoever, will meet in his office.

20           So it depends on -- as I say, it depend on what  
21 the commander wanted to do. But I did, on several occasions,  
22 see various visitors.

23           COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: My last question  
24 is two in one, one is a follow-up to the same question: You  
25 just named that some of the PRC members from the ruling



1 council themselves visited the prison when some of these  
2 ex-government officials were in prison. Was there any time  
3 as well that other members of the Doe government at the time  
4 visited the prison, like the civilian cabinet ministers? Did  
5 any of these guys visit like Tipoteh, Baccus Matthew, George  
6 Boley, Chea Cheapoo; did any of them visit the prison during  
7 this time when these people were incarcerated, before some of  
8 them were executed?

9 THE WITNESS: Madam Commissioner, never, to my  
10 knowledge. I don't recall, I don't remember. If that  
11 happened, I think I would have retained that memory. But to  
12 that specific question, I never, for the duration of my  
13 assignment there, never saw George Boley, never saw Tipoteh,  
14 never saw -- who else did you ask? Baccus Matthew, no,  
15 ma'am, I never.

16 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay. Part two to  
17 the last part of my question: It has been rumored that in  
18 the early days of the coup when the civilian activists joined  
19 the government, you know, a lot of them were incorporated as  
20 ministers and some of them were also advisors to the PRC. Do  
21 you know anything about a couple of them having a list of  
22 former Tolbert officials who were supposed to be picked up,  
23 incarcerated or held responsible for what had happened to the  
24 country?

25 Do you know if they had list or who are on the

1 list and why were they making list of people? Were they  
2 targeting people and why and whether some of these people on  
3 the list are Doe's -- are among those who were executed, like  
4 the 13 government officials?

5 THE WITNESS: I did hear rumors as to -- when it  
6 come to specifically about the 13 officials, cabinet members  
7 that were arrested. But before I stretch on that, a lot of  
8 the people, according to what I saw--and keep in mind that I  
9 was later on asked to come back to work after a while. So I  
10 didn't know a whole lot that was going on. And then besides,  
11 we were being, ourself, trying to protect ourself or myself  
12 for so many reason. So I didn't try to poke into a lot of  
13 thing so --

14 But I did hear that -- and most of the information  
15 that I got was what was expressed or announced on the radio,  
16 where they were asking former government official to report  
17 and thing like that. That's the kind of rumor -- not rumor  
18 but that's the kind of publicity I heard.

19 And then specifically when it come to the 13, I  
20 heard--I can't prove this--I heard that the 13 was --  
21 actually should have been three. And, again, I can't prove  
22 it, but it was just rumor I heard that the 13 should have  
23 been 3 or maybe less, I don't know. But that individual,  
24 which I can't remember right now, said that it should have  
25 been three list on the name. And Doe mentioned to, if I

1 recall correctly, was James A.A. Pierre, Richard Henries and  
2 Frank Tolbert. They were the three names that were mentioned  
3 to me that were convicted by the tribunal for execution.

4           And this person went on to say that when the list  
5 was presented, the list was presented in a way that the three  
6 names were up here (indicating) and also a whole lot of space  
7 down there. So I wish Doe was educated enough or at least to  
8 understand that. I don't know if it was a true lack of  
9 education that he didn't catch that or maybe somehow it just  
10 -- (INAUDIBLE). So the list of three names and the space was  
11 there.

12           So whoever did--I don't know--included other names  
13 down the list, the ten others that were not convicted by the  
14 tribunal and sign it, I mean, and presented it to Doe, okay,  
15 for his signature. And apparently he did not read through  
16 the list because -- I say this because I heard after the  
17 execution, he were asking for some people that were on the  
18 list. I mean, what is this? He ask for -- according to the  
19 person who told me this, according to that rumor, he asked  
20 for Cecil Dennis, to bring Cecil Dennis to the mansion  
21 because he wanted to confer with him on foreign policy  
22 matter. He was already dead, executed.

23           So that's why I'm saying perhaps it was lack of  
24 education or whatever, pressure, or he just didn't read  
25 anything carefully. But that was my honest telling you from

1 rumors what happened.

2 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Who did your  
3 source probably hint to you could have been interested in  
4 expanding the list from 3 to 13?

5 THE WITNESS: Could you repeat it?

6 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Who could have  
7 been interested in expanding the list of Liberians to have  
8 been killed from 3 to 13, or who were those who were  
9 interested in seeing other people to be killed? Or the  
10 soldier didn't tell you?

11 THE WITNESS: I'm not sure, ma'am. I don't know.

12 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Thank you very  
13 much.

14 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.

15 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: Thank you very much,  
16 Mr. Hunder.

17 THE WITNESS: Sure.

18 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: You talked quite in  
19 detail about the post stockade. I would just like to ask one  
20 or two questions.

21 THE WITNESS: Sure.

22 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: Firstly, there are  
23 Liberians as well as others in this hall who may not have an  
24 idea of what the post stockade conditions looked like at the  
25 time. Can you, for us, describe the rights of passage in the

1 post stockade. If a prisoner was brought into the post  
2 stockade, what were the rights of passage before being locked  
3 up? Was he flogged, he or she? Was there a place called  
4 "Interview" where you'd be put and what were the conditions?  
5 Can you describe the size of the cells, how many persons were  
6 kept in the cells?

7 THE WITNESS: Mr. Commissioner, during my  
8 assignment at the stockade, prisoners were -- each prisoner  
9 that I'm talking about already -- most of them were already  
10 in there when I got there, so I don't know how were the  
11 condition they went through before getting there. However,  
12 there were some lower-ranking people that were brought in  
13 later on that I saw how, at least when I'm there -- because  
14 sometimes I'm not there.

15 So what I saw at some time, they were searched,  
16 they were brought into the room, into the office area. The  
17 stockade, when you enter the barrack from whatever the street  
18 name is now --

19 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: Lynch Street.

20 THE WITNESS: Lynch Street, when you enter the  
21 barrack from Lynch Street entrance, the stockade was much  
22 more closer toward Lynch Street. So when you enter the  
23 barrack from the Lynch Street address, the stockade is on  
24 your left. At least it was; I don't know whether it is now.  
25 It was on the left and you make a left into the fence. You

1 have two fences: One was the perimeter fence. You entered  
2 that where they had guards, okay. You had to have some  
3 permission, you know, before you enter there. And, beside,  
4 who really want (INAUDIBLE) to the post stockade? So you  
5 enter that main fence and then they had an inner fence. The  
6 inner fence was with bricks and they have glasses and thing  
7 at the top of the fence, the brick fence. This is a high  
8 fence and the stockade structure, the installation is very  
9 high, like that (indicating), very high.

10 And so going back to the Wey Syen escape, there  
11 was no way, no way anybody could attempt getting out of that  
12 fence through the attic.

13 But beside the point, to answer your question,  
14 that's the way it was. And like I say, for those that I saw,  
15 they were brought in, searched and things. But it depends,  
16 it depend on the gravity of the violation, the crime or  
17 whatever it is, and it depend on also who the arresting  
18 officer were. It depend on who gave the order to arrest you.  
19 Whatever the order was, that's what they're going to carry  
20 on. So if the -- say some PRC guy ordered somebody arrest  
21 and he is on the scene. The chances for that person to be  
22 flogged or mishandled, yes, it were high if he's there and  
23 he's arguing for something.

24 So it depends on where you were arrested. If you  
25 were arrested somewhere else and brought in there, you know,

1 by somebody else, then maybe they search you and put you  
2 inside. But whoever effected arrest and who ordered arrest,  
3 if that person -- depending on his mood at the time, it could  
4 be different.

5 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: But were there  
6 floggings carried on as a matter of routine during the time  
7 you may have served at the jail or anything like that?

8 THE WITNESS: I saw some people being flogged, but  
9 it was not a routine, again, in my presence I'm talking  
10 about, when I'm there so... But I would come to work and I  
11 used to be there from 8 in the morning to 3 or 4. So most of  
12 those thing the soldiers did, they didn't when some of us  
13 were there who they think were tall or something like that.  
14 Most of time, you know, were happening in the evening, you  
15 know, when we're not there. I'm not saying they were afraid  
16 of me but, you know, I don't think so.

17 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: Now, there were  
18 reports that people were executed right in the post stockade,  
19 as you confirmed by the execution of Weh Syen, and some were  
20 buried right in the post stockade yard. Can you confirm  
21 that, attest to that? Were burials carried out right in the  
22 yard of the post stockade?

23 THE WITNESS: You mean other than Weh Syen?

24 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: For whoever you may  
25 know of. After they were executed, were the bodies taken out

1 or they were buried right on the grounds of the post  
2 stockade?

3 THE WITNESS: Wey Syen, when they were executed  
4 that night, there was an armored truck out there that  
5 collected the body. And where they took them, I don't know.  
6 I didn't try, I mean, no, to find out. But they moved the  
7 body that night because they were executed -- as soon as you  
8 get out of the post stockade--you know what I'm talking  
9 about?--you get out of post stockade -- John, you would know.  
10 As soon as you get out of the post stockade and right on the  
11 right-hand side, on your right when you make that bear right,  
12 there was a center area right in between the post stockade  
13 structure and the high fence. Right in between there were  
14 where they asked them to line up. And they didn't even line  
15 up because they were just crying. You know, it was a  
16 gruesome, gruesome, gruesome situation and I tell you --  
17 anyway.

18 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: The size of the cells,  
19 when you say the size of the cells, how many persons were, at  
20 any one time, detained in those cells, each cell, each  
21 individual cell?

22 THE WITNESS: Some of the cell were kind of within  
23 two, three people at some cell. But I don't remember the  
24 exact figure, but some cell were crowded and some they have  
25 two, three. You know, so it depends on the -- they have



1 various charges and value in term of -- I think A.B. -- I  
2 can't quite remember quite correctly, but I think A.B. and  
3 Varney were in one room, I think. Don't hold me to that, I'm  
4 not too sure of that. But either he were by himself -- so  
5 depending on the gravity, depending on what -- how they don't  
6 want anyone to join and share, to talk to anybody else. So  
7 in that way they were excluded. But in most instances, they  
8 were crowded.

9 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: My last question:  
10 There were rumors of executions of Mr. Baccus Matthews at the  
11 time he was detained at the post stockade right prior to the  
12 coup. As a Service Security Officer, did any such come to  
13 your attention, did any such come to your knowledge that  
14 these people were to be executed and then the coup happened  
15 and they may have spared their lives, or did you receive any  
16 such report?

17 THE WITNESS: No, sir. I heard rumor that -- from  
18 the outside but not from the security setting and not from  
19 the mansion for the people that I associated with. And I did  
20 not hear that in front of Baccus Matthew and his group or  
21 anybody else prior.

22 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: He and several others  
23 were detained there apparently, yeah.

24 THE WITNESS: No, sir, I don't recall that. I  
25 don't know that. I never got that information from the

1 mansion. But I heard, when I leave work, like a rumor, you  
2 know, that day that there were going to be some execution.  
3 But from the mansion side, when I go to work and I tried to  
4 follow to get as much information as I can get and being the  
5 shift commander at the time, some information come down to  
6 us. But it depends on the classification of the information.  
7 Some were very compartmentalized and some were more  
8 accessible to shift -- just for shift purposes as to the  
9 movement of the president, where he went to the --  
10 agenda-wise, and then the motorcade people will kind of relay  
11 that to us.

12 But classified information, we're not -- at least  
13 I were not -- it was not available to me. But it was a rumor  
14 that there were going to be an execution. But that never  
15 happened, that I know of.

16 COMMISSIONER JOHN STEWART: Thank you very much.

17 THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.

18 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Thank you very much for  
19 coming to share your experience with us. I will ask three  
20 questions; you can choose to answer the three at the end.

21 Kindly tell us the trial that the ex-government  
22 official were convicted and was killed, who was the judge at  
23 the time, the tribunal?

24 THE WITNESS: The tribunal?

25 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Tribunal, the judge,

1 who was the judge at that time?

2 THE WITNESS: Oh, gosh. Frank Sembeni (ph), he  
3 was the judge, Frank Sembeni.

4 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Where is Frank now?

5 THE WITNESS: I don't know. I don't know. But I  
6 did hear, like I said to kind of reiterate, that his  
7 conviction, his recommendations were actually three officials  
8 that he recommended for execution for rampant corruption and  
9 (INAUDIBLE), they added to that so...

10 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: And then you also said  
11 that at the time you were at the post stockade, you had good  
12 relationship with the inmates and you talk with them. Can  
13 you remember the name of any political prisoner that was  
14 there at the time and never saw him again?

15 THE WITNESS: Let me get the question straight  
16 now. If I remember any -- well, of those that I befriended,  
17 if I remember any of their names?

18 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Yes.

19 THE WITNESS: Oh, there were several actually.  
20 Somebody for the Commission I can remember later on, but for  
21 the purpose of this moment, the people who were in there  
22 again, Frank -- excuse me, A.B. Tolbert, Varney Dempster,  
23 Angeline Sherman. I think her dad, Charles D. Sherman, he  
24 was there, Leanard DeShields.

25 At one point I think one of them--I stand

1 corrected on this--some of them were immediately sent to  
2 Belle Yallah and later on came to -- brought in to --  
3 transported to the post stockade, you know, from the family  
4 member getting -- you know, it depend on who you know, how  
5 you make your case, they might, you know, give some order.  
6 The PRC leaders may give the order to get the relative from  
7 Belle Yallah to the post stockade, okay.

8           So a couple of them were to the Belle Yallah  
9 prison camp and then they were later on joined into the post  
10 stockade. I can't recall. A list of them, really, a lot of  
11 them.

12           COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Thank you for coming.

13           THE WITNESS: Thank you.

14           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Mr. Witness, the post  
15 stockade, was it a military or a civilian facility?

16           THE WITNESS: Military.

17           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Were civilians  
18 occasionally detained at that military facility?

19           THE WITNESS: I don't know the answer to that  
20 because I wasn't assigned there for -- that was not my  
21 assignment. It just came about after the coup and -- and  
22 where they send me, where I was assigned. But, yes, I think  
23 people were sent -- civilians were sent to the post stockade  
24 not -- I don't think they were just sent all exclusively  
25 political prisoner that were assigned there. People were

1 sent there. It depend on the situation. In the civilian  
2 government, I think it was political prisoners that were  
3 sent. But in the military government, they were not all  
4 political prisoners. You had people for different reason,  
5 you know.

6 The post stockade were used as a form of a threat,  
7 as power, you know. If somebody sent to the post stockade,  
8 you know, and you hear somebody say that -- you're threatened  
9 that you're going to be sent to the post stockade, it can be  
10 for various reasoning, you know. But during the military,  
11 they were not just political prisoners, it was for anything.

12 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: If I got you right, you  
13 said that the Weh Syen execution was different from that of  
14 four other PRC members?

15 THE WITNESS: No, sir. They were all executed  
16 within the -- just the same together.

17 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: And were PRC members  
18 along with Weh Syen?

19 THE WITNESS: They were all -- they were all PRC  
20 members. Weh Syen was the Vice Head of State of the PRC.  
21 Nelson Toe, which I remember very well, I don't know for  
22 whatever reason -- I guess I'll say this: Nelson was so  
23 young, he was so young.

24 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Perhaps the youngest.

25 THE WITNESS: Perhaps the youngest. If I can, you

1 know, maybe if from that picture you can tell some of the  
2 names that were executed that night, maybe. But I remember  
3 Nelson Toe very well because this guy was so young, and I can  
4 hear him crying, you know, including Wey Syen. As people  
5 thought Weh Syen was a brave man. I guess when it come to  
6 that kind of moment, it was different. This man cry before  
7 he left, all of them cried for their life.

8 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you very much.  
9 Are there any more follow-up questions?

10 THE WITNESS: Mr. Chairman, let me ask this  
11 question: Am I allowed to shed light on any information that  
12 was shared by a previous witness?

13 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: If it's  
15 within your knowledge.

16 THE WITNESS: There was a name that were mentioned  
17 by a previous witness, a person for -- Samuel Gee, the name  
18 Samuel Gee came up. I knew Samuel Gee very well. At no time  
19 Samuel Gee was at the camp, if I heard that correctly. He  
20 was not at aid-de-camp.

21 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: What?

22 THE WITNESS: Samuel Gee was an SSS officer. I  
23 think he was major.

24 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I think the witness he  
25 had to say Gee or William Gee. I'm not sure he mentioned

1 Samuel Gee.

2 THE WITNESS: He said Samuel Gee.

3 COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Samuel Gee, the  
4 brother of Patrick Tuazama.

5 THE WITNESS: It could be distant cousins. I knew  
6 Patrick Wey Syen, too, and I knew Samuel Gee. As a matter of  
7 fact, Samuel Gee was before my shift commander.

8 COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Samuel Gee, the  
9 Samuel Gee that that man is talking about is a Mano man, it's  
10 not somebody from Todee.

11 THE WITNESS: I knew him professionally.

12 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: He was an  
13 SSS, I agree with you. He was never --

14 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: The point is he was not  
15 an aid-de-camp.

16 THE WITNESS: I just want to correct he was not an  
17 aid-de-camp.

18 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I want to tell you thank  
19 you very much for taking out the time to come and share all  
20 of this with us. Definitely you have contributed to our work  
21 because as we go about in our investigation, we get pieces of  
22 evidence and you have come to fill in some of the gaps. Now  
23 that your testimony is over, is there anything lastly you'd  
24 like to say before you leave?

25 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir. I want to close by

1 thanking -- I want to close by thanking this -- the member of  
2 this Commission, but to first thank those Liberians that had  
3 the privilege to meet in Ghana through which the idea of the  
4 Truth and Reconciliation Commission was birthed. I think  
5 this is a wonderful opportunity for us Liberians to make use  
6 of this renewed opportunity that is given us through this  
7 Commission to allow us Liberians to come together to talk  
8 about our past no matter how hurtful it is, no matter how  
9 gruesome it is, to talk about our past in honesty, not lip  
10 service, but in honesty so that we can gradually -- because  
11 if we think that no matter what the TRC does, to say that  
12 there will be an immediate healing, that's just not true.

13 But this is an opportunity for us to gradually --  
14 after all this hard work, to gradually heal and forget about  
15 our past and move forward, move Liberia forward for the sake,  
16 for the benefit of our posterity.

17 And lastly, I want to thank again, the Advocates  
18 for Human Rights for what they are doing and continue to do  
19 to come to our aid and all your partners and sponsors who  
20 helped to make this event a reality. I want to thank all of  
21 them and, Liberians, we owe them that much. But here is an  
22 opportunity that we have and we should make the best of it.

23 And to you, the Commissioners, I ask of you that  
24 this wonderful work you're doing here in Liberia, after you  
25 shall have completed your hard work and compiled your report



1 and make your submission to the government, I know the  
2 Commission will be served but you owe it to yourself  
3 individually as a Liberian, all of us, to make sure that the  
4 government implement those policies, those suggestions, those  
5 recommendations being made by your Commission. I thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you very much.

7 You may leave now.

8 (Time noted: 12:45 p.m.)

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## REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, SHERRI FLAGG, a Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages of typewritten material constitute an accurate verbatim stenographic record taken by me of the proceedings aforementioned before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, on the 13th day of June, 2008, at the time and place specified.

DATED: July 20th, 2008.

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