

**Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Liberia Diaspora Project
Oral History Interview - Diaspora Public Hearings Participant
Project Organizer: The Advocates for Human Rights, Minneapolis, MN, USA
Funder: Minnesota History Center, St. Paul, MN, USA**

Interviewee (A): Patricia Jabbeh Wesley

Interviewers (I): Ahmed Sirleaf, Kelvin Richards

Date: March 2, 2011

I: So, Doctor Wesley, the information that was sent to you by form that was just basic demographic information. I will go over some of them. There is also a release form that will permit us to use this information, because we are going to do a transcript of the interview and put it on our website, and eventually on Minnesota Historical Society's website, the transcript and the audio so that you know, future generations can access this information. And just before I do that I will give you a quick background to this interview. It is not about you telling your story that you testified to the Liberian Truth Commission (TRC), Diaspora public hearing, in Saint Paul Minnesota in June 2009 (sic.2008). It is rather about your experience at the public hearings, people you met there, your expectations, just the circumstances around it, because that event was considered a major historical event in Minnesota and so the Minnesota Historical Society is interested in documenting that.

A: Okay.

I: Alright. So the form we sent you earlier was just basically to confirm your full name, some information, date of birth, stuff like that, telephone number, email address, sex and... just demographic information like that. And so you don't have to do all of that with us, we have most of this information. Again, I said we will mail you that so you can return them to us, but I just need to confirm your full name here in this audio.

A: I am sorry; I will be coughing every now and then. I have a sort of cold...

I: It is okay, it is that time of the year, isn't it?

A: Yeah.

I: And your first name is Patricia, is that correct?

A: Yeah.

I: So, should we say the middle name is Jabbeh?

A: Yes. I put my maiden name in the middle.

I: Yes. And then your marital name is Wesley.

A: yes, with no dash in it

I: Okay. So Doctor Patricia Jabbeh Wesley is what we have here, for you. Do you have any nickname Doctor Wesley, or do you just go by...

A: I have a lot of nicknames!

I: (Laughs)

A: One of my nicknames is Marie.

I: Marie.

A: and I have Grebo names (Laughs)

I: Marie, we have Marie here.

A: And then my Grebo name-- I have a Grebo names.

I: Tell me the Grebo name, please.

A: (Laughs)

I: One Grebo name, I am a traditional man.

A: Oh yeah, well my main, Grebo name that people know me to be is, which really it actually started as a nickname when I was a child, but became my name, Grebo name is: Dawanyenoh.

I: Dawanyenoh. How do you spell Dawanyenoh?

A: It is D as in David, A, W as in William...

I: Yes.

A: A

I: W, H

A: D-A-W-A, N as in Noel, or Night yeah, Y as in yes, E, N as in Noel, O. Dawanyenoh means stranger woman...

I: Oh, stranger woman. D-A-W-H-N-Y-E-N-O...

A: No, D-A-W-A...

I: Okay, D-A-W-A-H-N-Y-E-N-O, that's correct.

A: Mmm.

I: Okay, so, so Doctor Wesley today is March 3rd, is that correct... March 2nd! March 2nd, that's correct. And we are doing this interview ... Let me just note that here, March 2nd, 2011. So let's just go into the questions and talk about your experiences and your observations at the public hearings and the rest of the paperwork as I said we will send them to you and you will return them to us. So the first question is, why did you decide to participate in the public hearings in 2009 (sic. 2008)?

A: Well, because as a scholar and as a writer, one of my lifelong interests and projects is to understand the traumatic experiences of Liberian women and... who survived the civil war. So, prior that, I had visited Minnesota on two occasions. One of them was as a writer in residence for the, you know, the associated schools, they have some schools, I think they are five or eight schools in the Minnesota, Minneapolis area.

I: Mhm, the ACTC, the Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities.

A: Yeah they had appointed me as a poet in residence for a week.

I: Okay.

A: In 2004 I guess. And so in 2005 when I began to work at Penn State, that was before I went to Penn State, when I was there the first time, but this time in 2006 I had gotten a grant from Penn State University that is my employer to carry out this research project which is all, which is still... which is still being done, being conducted. Well, I visited Minnesota and interviewed a cross-section of Liberian women under the co-sponsorship of the Liberian Women Initiative.

I: Right.

A: You know. And so I had recorded some of these directories that would be proposed for collection. And, well the main thing, the main reason I was able to go was because The Advocates kind of encouraged me and supported me in coming. This time I was being invited as a guest, an expert witness. And I was not going to get up and just go there because the same project I am talking about, the same oral historical project, was about collecting women's stories, was scheduled to continue in Accra, Ghana and in Liberia so that same year I already had my ticket ready to go to Monrovia and to Ghana to continue on my research so I didn't, I knew that if I were, I could testify to the commission in Monrovia so I didn't need to go to Minnesota. But on the invitation of The Advocates I was convinced that my voice was needed, and I have a lot of respect for what The Advocates is doing as an organization so I decided I would attend. Especially since they were sponsoring my visit and I needed a sponsor. And so I went. And so there were many things, many factors that encouraged me to be involved. I also knew that Liberians in the diaspora had no chance of having their voices heard in that kind of important forum. And this was a chance for me to experience the stories as well as contributing to the voices in the diaspora. There were many factors that encouraged me to attend.

I: Ok. So what did, of course without breaching any confidentiality, but what stories did you hear from the women, just quickly as a follow up to your earlier comments

A: Well, there were several stories which, memory wise, I can't specifically name names, but there were several stories that moved me and one of them continues to be my Marie Vah's story, which I had a whole hour of recording of, I have it on video camera and camcorder recording of her story. I encouraged her to take part in that [hearing]... The Advocates contacted me for information on how we could all encourage her to take part. And I was proud that she was the one to take part in the larger forum that was out there. And then there was another woman who took her story in length, about her life in rebel territory. I think she was connected to a lot of important people who were involved in the war. On one of the sides, you know. I can remember she was a younger woman, hardly in her, maybe probably in her early forties. And then I... some of the stories are very emotional and... Sally, what is his name, the

Sally family, I forgot his first name. The guy whose entire family was killed I think. And the father was a very rich business man.

I: Oh Syllah, yeah. Ali Syllah, yeah.

Dr.W: Yeah. I was... I had never..., even just recalling the story I'm tearing right now. I remember one thing that he said was: When we returned, there was nobody. You know, everybody was dead, you know. Something like that, everybody was gone and it meant that they were all taken, you know. So there were some stories. When I came back from The Advocates sponsored diaspora hearings I did a blog, which you are invited to visit. And Doris Parker's story was also an influence; of course she is my friend. And I was also impressed that the Advocates got the other side of the story. The story of people who were either allegedly involved or directly involved. I listened to Gbai Gbala h and I was very outraged. And I was glad that they had an opportunity to tell their story. But we didn't have to believe their stories but they had an opportunity to tell their stories. And that kind of opportunity is what I'm also looking for that we will get stories of women on the other side of the battle. Who were directly involved You know if I had money I would like to get the story of the first lady then of Charles Taylor, Agnes Taylor Reeves, she lives in London. I would like to get here story because I saw her in the camps when I was literally a destitute in the war struggling with my family. So, what I saw was that The Advocates were able to get different people from different perspectives together, and some of the stories of, some of the rebel leaders or people who were connected to the rebels telling their stories, and denying their stories. Those were very impressive ventures that I saw The Advocates going into you know, and I thought that was great. That's what scholarship and the recalling of history is about and true history to be able to recall the stories of people on all sides with different opinions, you know. Even when they disagree... So that was, what I saw I was impressed about, yeah.

I: I know you are a scholar, and this is what you do every time as you indicated. (Interrupted by A I am first a poet, you know. A Grebo woman]. You have been recording stories, listening to oral compositions from victims and others you know, who experienced different trauma in the Liberian conflict. But did you have any particular type of preparation coming to Saint Paul in June 2009 to testify and also listen to other testimonies?

A: It was 2008 (laughs). I got you there, it was 2008.

I: Say that again?

A: It was 2008.

I: 2008. Yes, thank you, it was June 2008. Right, so did you, what type of preparation did you do, either mentally or even just sort of physically or material wise in coming to testify?

A: I think I... No, I don't think, I think I did all the preparation I've got in life, in my career as a professor, I've always been a teacher, from 1980 I've been a teacher and so my experience as a teacher and as a poet and usually as a public speaker and... all of these and my own research prepared me for that. And also my spiritual life as a Christian you know. So I didn't have any, the only thing I know I did before beginning my research I had to certify with my institution, and get the permission to video record the stories of people who have gone through the war. So that's the only thing I had to fill in forms and be approved to record oral history. So I didn't have... I think I qualified to do such because I have a long experience, I've taught for almost thirty years and I've written and I've traveled and spoken around the world so I had no

kind of preparation. I don't think anybody can be prepared for the emotional impact of listening to those stories. And I didn't need any counseling, I remember after the testimony people wanted to counsel us and I thought I needed to counsel them! (Laughs). Because I went through the war first-hand. And I saw women's bellies split open. There are a lot of things that I didn't talk about, because I had shut some of them out. But some of those stories they came out as I did my own research. Especially when I went to Monrovia in 2008 and I recorded women's stories who were telling stories of their friends being split open and their babies thrown away right in front of them. And then my own story, thing I saw began to resurface in my memory, and I was like... You know you don't know how much you shut out you know until... And I was so terrified that my younger brother, who was then my foster brother, we were living with them during the war, he was my camera man, he's a grown guy, he's thirty. And he was like: Sister, why are you crying? You know we went through the war and then he was telling me stories of certain places we were standing in when that same kind of thing happened when they split women open, and I was, how I saw it, I was strong and I didn't cry, and why was I crying now twenty years later? And so I told him, oh I have forgotten, you know. So, you don't need, when you've gone through that kind of trauma, you don't need too much preparation because you've been there. For every time you are confronted with that you definitely will be impacted, and you just have to deal with it like we've always dealt with other trauma in the past. And so I didn't have any preparation other than my regular experience as my preparation.

I: Alright so, this is Kelvin. I'm going to ask you, procedurally, how did you think the public hearing went? Like, did you expect the process to go in that way, or were you thinking that it was going to be different, and were you satisfied, how it was handled?

A: Well, I think that was the best. I didn't know what to expect, I had never been to such a public hearing. So I didn't know what to expect, and I think, as an expert witness what The Advocates should have done, I think The Advocates invited certain people that they called expert witnesses, and I think they should have you know, given them some kind of preparation saying we know you are going to be doing this, is it possible for you to bring anything that will refresh your mind during the testimony? You know, that will help you to say exactly what you want to say. I think that's the only kind of preparation they should have. Because during my testimony I remember the... some of the commissioners were very impressed at how I could remember dates and special things that happened, and that was because I'm working on a book, memoirs, that have documentation of many of the major things that I experienced. So I could point out and say on June 14th Edward King was murdered in his bed, you know because all those dates, I lived those dates, but also I am writing about those things so I could remember. But there were certain things that, if I had had time to really reflect on it, I would have remembered certain names. Like a guy, whose name I missed, Ka (?), who was the commander in the Soul Clinic area, and Harrison Gaye, that I called in my interview I called him Harrison Dan, but he was Harrison Gaye. And you know, so there were certain names that I got wrong you know, because it is traumatizing to sit in there to a story, but if you are an expert witness, then you definitely should have something in your hands that you are referring to. I would have, you know referred to certain names if I would have had something in my hands you know, to... they should have allowed some expert witness to come in there with laptops but they were taking from everybody who was going in, so there were certain things that you couldn't (?). But everything went very well; I think I was very, very impressed.

I: I know that you have already mentioned some of the people that testified or their testimonies, but what did you remember? What, who was there, that you didn't expect that you saw there, or who you expected but you didn't see there, or generally, who was there? Did you interact with people, who were those people, what was your general impression?

A: Well, people I knew before, I knew one or two people on the commission and I was very excited – I didn't recognize him when I first saw him, Stewart, John Stewart, my friend in college, and even when he was excited about seeing me I didn't remember him for a while, but then when I realized who it was I was very excited. So was glad to see him. I was glad to see my friend Doris Parker as usual, because we worked together on many projects. And I was glad to see... let's see, I was glad to see, what is his name? This guy came to visit; he was the former ambassador, Barnes.

I: Yeah, ambassador, Liberian ambassador to the U.S. then. Nathaniel Barnes?.

A: Yeah, and Ambassador Barnes I think she's a lawyer.

I: Yeah, Harriett Badio, the lawyer?

A: Yeah. I was glad to see her. I think that (???)

I: She was, yes.

A: And then The Advocates employed Jennifer and I was very glad to see her. And let me see, there were many Liberians that I was glad to see, like Marie Hayes and some of those women (?) with Doris [Parker] that I saw. I saw Dolo, what is his first name?

I: Emmanuel, Emmanuel.

A: He was a student at my university when I was in my twenties, he was sitting in my class and I was glad to see him. And yeah, so there were... I can't remember many names now but there were people in the Liberian community that I had not seen for many years. And I was surprised to see Gbai Gbala you know, up there talking and... I was upset to see him talking, you know. Because I lived in Monrovia when Bar Bara was Gbai Gbala you know (laughs).

I: Why were you upset? Who was...

A: Because those are the people that ruined Samuel Doe's administration. And that enjoyed the administration and that helped to cause the war, that's my opinion. And for him to be up there and deny everything and pretend he didn't know, he said he didn't know that any of these things that were happening you know, happened. We cannot say that the war will not have happened if Doe were not President, I think anybody, the war would have happened with anybody being President because Liberia had been prepared for that war in the seventies or early seventies after the war. So it was just a matter of time. So while the Doe administration made the war come faster and more violent, probably another person, Gbai Gbala was a key figure in the administration you know, in the things that we experienced in Liberia prior to the war. That's why I was surprised and I thought he was brave to be there. You know, very brave. I'm also surprised; I don't think the commissioners were empowered to do what they were asked to do. I felt that from the body language, from what I saw, I think it's a that, if you want to have an independent, how do you call it... reconciliation commission, a commissioned body by the United Nations, it should be a commissioned by the United Nations and it should only include half of the citizens of the country that, where the investigation is taking place. And I believe that it should be like half or a quarter of them Liberians, the rest of them international specialists with no interest, no, no vested feel or interest in the country that they are investigating. So I felt that it was not a body empowered, and it was appointed by the President of Liberia, and they were

powerless to, even if they made a recommendation, that it wouldn't be you know, seriously taken. Because these were people, they were not independent people; they were people looking for jobs, people who didn't have their own resources to be independent of Liberia and the Liberian government as their major employer. So I felt like they were given a huge task, and I think I told them in my statement that they had a big burden and a task, you know, and I felt like it was like giving somebody a responsibility that you know they will not be able to completely because the power, because of the larger power that would choose them. So my recommendation is that I think it would be, if they are going to appoint an independent reconciliation commission in a way to see the war crimes or whatever committed against the other country, they should appoint an independent body, a body independent of the nation and it should be appointed by the United Nations. And you know, because (laughs) if you appoint people to investigate like Libya right now, and then of course there comes in a power who may not be directly Libyan you know, related to the Libyan leader in a way, but is also from the formal or winning lead, and he's President and he wants to investigate you know, the crimes committed within a certain time. People are connected; it's not going to be easy to articulate any recommendations from that commission. I saw that the commission, there was something about their interactions that didn't seem like they were together.

I: I just want to ask, even though you have a legitimate concern, could you still say that the process itself, the healing process, the idea that Liberian folks would come together and talk and share their experiences, could you say it was fruitful? Did it help the reconciliation process? And even though you stated early that you disagreed with some of the folks that were testifying, and it made you angry, but the process of coming together and listening to folks you disagree with, could you say that at least it was helpful because you have a bunch of people from different viewpoints come together in the same room and either giving their accounts or, you know what I'm saying? Could you say it was helpful?

A: Well, it depends on where you were in your healing process. I believe that all Liberians are healing wherever they are. But I also feel that there are hundreds of thousands of Liberians, who have not even started healing. So it depends on where you are in the process. I was upset. But I am not; I was already healed by the time I got there. But I was upset because people have violated human rights. You know who are living in this free country and they still denying their past, they played in violating the human rights, and abusing people and brutalizing the country. So I was upset that there was no justice and there will be no justice for those who have been brutalized. So that's why I was upset. And I feel like that a healing process... I feel like if ever there is such a hearing again, at the end of the hearing, if The Advocates sponsors it, or any group sponsors it, they should have a memorial service, they should have a service that is interdenominational and interreligious during which time they will bring the people together and they will have a memorial service to memorialize those who have died. Not to call names out, but to give people the opportunity to either write the names of their families that were dead, and go up and put it in a box, just to have... or bring flowers or do something. I felt that it wasn't complete. Maybe that's not their job to do, but I think next time they do that they should they should call in some group that can facilitate that as another leg of the healing process. Because when people went there, and they told their stories and they cried and they were counseled, some people were counseled, they went back home and asking the question: What's going to happen now? So it's just a recommendation. It was not such a huge project that couldn't accommodate some kind of memorial service. The problem with Liberians and with Africans is that we do never; we never pay tribute, or memorialize or commemorate the people we should commemorate. You know I feel that maybe it could be one of the projects for The Advocates one day, to have a big conference, and that at the end of that conference people come together, they don't have to agree, they just say we are in a memorial service tomorrow. In this big, big

hall, and there will be opportunities for you to bring flowers, to go up and say something and drop it in memory of your dead relatives. That you know, that gives people an opportunity to cry, to express their emotions, to put something down and say: Wow, a little flower. That brings closure to some of the people who have never seen their people's graves you know.

I: Along those lines, did you think there were significant traditional practices or traditional ways of memorializing or even rituals that should have been done or should be included in this recommendation, that you see were ignored, either in the diaspora process or in Liberia itself?

A: (laughs) I don't think anybody paid attention to tradition. I think that some of the people who went up did not talk because traditionally, that is what they do, but there was nothing public about any tradition. Even in Liberia, you know, I don't remember, I didn't follow everything that they were doing even when I was in Monrovia the horror stories were in the papers, and I told myself that I would have gone to one of these sessions and I never went, you know I was extremely busy with my own project. But no, I didn't see anything you know, traditional that was... I don't know what The Advocates would have done, because the purpose of that was one thing, so if you started having people come together to dance and party, you know, and would have maybe caused more trouble. Liberians are religious people, so that anything religious, even if it were not complete, because if you can remember when the war was approaching, Liberians spoke with one voice, there was the Muslim Council, the Christians, you know proves that all the different religious groups that were in the street, demonstrating and asking Samuel Doe to step down so the war would not come, reach the city, you know.

So I don't think it would have been a violation for somebody to have a general, religious service. I know some of the pastors would have fought against it but I would be... their problem is that the organizers would not definitely be from any particular group, you know, so I know that maybe traditional things could have been brought in, I don't see how it would have been possible. I think people there were they wore their traditional clothing and (laughs), you know. And people cried openly without fear, I think they should allow people to cry openly! And I think the idea of putting people in a room to counsel them is un Liberians, it's Americans. I think that when people were crying in the audience they should be allowed to cry in the audience, they should be taking a part and say: If you want to cry, cry! And if you need to go into a room, there is also a room. You know, in this culture if someone, a family person dies and they have to sit down and tell you, and you cry loud in the hospital they think you're going to be shooting people. (Laughs). But in our culture, no, you put the popowlee down.

I: Yes. Is there anything that you regret talking about at the public hearings, when you spoke, that you would like to rectify here or, you know?

A: I didn't regret anything I said--I was very thoughtful of everything I said, I don't know if I regret anything I said. I just, when I read some of the transcripts are a little different from what I said, that's the only thing I regret, when people do oral transcripts they spell things differently, and they put colloquial in people's mouths you know, and I didn't like that you know, I felt like there were times when they tried to put Liberian English in my mouth. I mean I like to speak Liberian English, but when I am talking formally to a council I don't talk like that you know. That's the only thing but I don't regret anything I feel like... It was, I think in The Advocates and all of us have learnt a lot, and that if we ever had a chance, we should hope we don't have to investigate something else, but if we ever had a chance, this was just a beginning you know of the learning experience, you know. So I don't regret anything. I congratulate The Advocates; I think that was... if they hadn't done that the whole process would have been incomplete. If they hadn't had the diaspora hearings, hadn't sponsored the diaspora hearings, I think the process would have been incomplete.

I: How so? How...Why was the diaspora so significant in your opinion?

A: Because, because the cream of Liberia's crop is in the diaspora. And the cream of Liberia is still in the diaspora. Even those who have gone home to contribute are not fully living in Liberia. And also because most of the hurting people who will never return are in the diaspora. They may not be in the American diaspora, but they are abroad. And to not have... it was just one percent of representation of the diaspora, but the different voices are significant. And also because there are a lot of Liberians still seeking asylum in this country whose stories would not have a positive end if the diaspora hearings had not taken place. I have referred to people, lawyers, to The Advocates site. I have cut and pasted stories from the diaspora hearings for lawyers who are seeking asylum for Liberians. So, I feel like that kind of resource would not have been available without the diaspora hearings. So it is an invaluable service that was rendered to our people, to our country, to our children, and our children's children you know, in the future. I mean come on, my great grand children can access those kinds of... that information to say how did we get here? So that is an invaluable research tool.

I: So what was the perception, I know you were very, expressed gratitude for The Advocate's involvement and its work, but the involvement of non Liberians generally, how did you feel about that? Did you feel that...?

A: What do you mean by non Liberians? The people who were not working for The Advocates?

I: Right, Advocates staff who were non Liberians and volunteers who were non Liberians, we utilized a huge volunteer pool from around the country, you know just...

A: I think when I'm grateful, I'm grateful to all of them as advocates. I'm an advocates.

I: Yes, you are.

A: I may not have money, you know (laughs), but it's OK to advocate. I, so I believe that those people want to think that they are advocates. I'm thinking the volunteers, I was very impressed. These people were... I made some friends there, and I was very impressed at how much they were contributing to human rights and to Liberians, and how much they were also learning, you know. So, yes, I think this is what makes America great in a way that people can give back in so many different ways. You know, without any compensation, you know, and so it is an amazing thing. And sometimes, I wish that we Liberians would learn that. Because when you talk to Liberians about doing things they always want to see what they will get. I have to get their stories and they say what you are going to pay me when you write the book, like I'm going to make money from an oral narrative book (laughs).

I: So Doctor Wesley, just two more questions, we are nearing conclusion here and we are very grateful for your time, you are always very reflective and thoughtful. That's why your voice was very, here we thought. Just as we conclude here, what do you feel now about the public hearings and the TRC, the whole enterprise two years or three years later? Do you see any reconciliatory effect for instance for Liberians in the diaspora, the Liberian communities in the diaspora, or for Liberia in general. What are your feelings about what has happened since and two years later?

A: Well I think the purpose of the hearings mostly is for the person telling their story, really. And the fact that you have a forum to express grief you know a grievous offense. It's an outlet that

heals anger. I believe that telling our stories heals. So I think indirectly, if this was not the purpose of the hearings, people have got some kind of healing from that process. So I'm very glad at all that. And I'm disappointed that at the end of all of, not just the diaspora hearings but all of the total project, that the recommendations and... I don't know how many recommendations were followed and were carried out by the government of Liberia. So I'm not sure. But in the same light, I am very glad that those stories were recorded. Because it means that 50 years from now somebody can revisit those stories and make the corrections that maybe would not be made in our time. So it's always good to do that.

I: That's very true.

I: Just to pick you back on the question, so have you been part of any reconciliation activity or process in your community since you went back after you testified, and what steps are you taking now to further community cohesiveness?

A: I am not in, unfortunately... I have had various times when I have thought about that kind of project. I remember I was on NPR on two Ohio state public radio, a year ago in February last year. And somebody in Michigan called in to the radio station, it was a live program. And they wanted to know whether I could lead a group to organize reconciliation and healing projects for war refugees, not only from Liberia, this person was from another African country that had suffered war. So I am not part of any... I wish there were, if you know of any group or any... I believe that any diaspora hearings, any healing of diaspora Liberian victims must be led by Liberians who have experienced the conflict. Even if it is sponsored by an organization such as The Advocates, it should be led by Liberians. Because we know culturally that Liberians may respect Americans, but they don't open up a lot to Americans to do research with them or, they don't open up. So it should be from the grassroots (?). I am not part of any such group. Any time you go to a, you join a Liberian organization and you try to work, you can see how much damage the war has had on Liberians by the lack of cohesiveness, lack of harmony and the fighting, the infighting. I believe that such an organization you know, would bring people together and would have them to heal. I believe that is a problem here and that is a problem in Liberia.

I: Doctor Wesley, this has been a fascinating conversation. Are there any final thoughts or comments that you would like to make as we part?

A: Well, I want to know what is the next project? (Laughs). What is next for you or... I am on my way to Liberia in the summer; I just got a grant that will take me to Liberia at least once a year for three years.

I: Well, we as a human rights organization are working every day on projects. I know that one or two of our volunteers have interest in taking sabbaticals to go to Liberia, to teach at a law school, to help with rule of law projects or train judges and public defenders and so on. There is a new interest in what is happening in the Ivory Coast and refugees flowing over to Liberia, there is the whole dynamics where money turned a whole lot. Recently, there was some incident at the Buduburam camp in Ghana where there were allegations that a Ghanaian police authority used excessive force sense of force on the Liberian refugee population and there was a loss of life and people were hurt and all of that. So we have done some things with the UNHCR, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, I know our deputy director Jennifer has been in touch with the UN offices responsible for Ghana and that region in Geneva and they have been in phone conversations. So we are constantly monitoring and we are constantly trying to continue our advocacy work and how we can continue our human rights work in that

region and places that we have worked already, not just in Liberia but with the refugees in Buduburam for example, so we will keep you informed about any projects that we are engaged with that need your participation and we do welcome ideas so if there is something that you think in connection to previous work, if you think there is something that the Advocates should be involved with, you are certainly welcome to suggest or get in touch.

But I thank you very much on behalf of the Advocates for Human Rights and the oral history project that The Advocates is doing on behalf of the Minnesota Historical Society, this has been as I said a very fascinating conversation listening to your insight and the experiences from what happened in the hearings of June 2008 here in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Thank you so much Doctor Wesley for your time today.

A: Thank you so much young man (laughs).

I: I appreciate that. We learned a lot from you actually.

A: Actually, I appreciate your hard work and I look forward to hearing more.

I: Absolutely, thank you so much. You have a wonderful afternoon.

A: Thank you.

I: Bye, bye.

A: Bye.