Alfred Zeon

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF LIBERIA
DIASPORA PROJECT

PUBLIC HEARING
HAMLINE UNIVERSITY
June 12, 2008
St. Paul, Minnesota

TESTIMONY OF
ALFRED ZEON

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:
Elizabeth Gangl
Registered Professional Reporter

The following proceedings were had and made of
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record, commencing at approximately 11:31.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Please stand for the oath.

ALFRED ZEON,
being first duly sworn to tell the truth, testified as follows:

TESTIMONY OF ALFRED ZEON

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Mr. Witness, good afternoon and welcome.

THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I want to say how pleased we are that you have come as a Liberian --

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: -- to share your experiences and make your contribution to our search for lasting peace, healing and reconciliation.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Having said that, I want to introduce the commissioners to you, following which you will see that you will there by yourself and you can proceed with your testimony.

THE WITNESS: Sure.


THE WITNESS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I would like to ask just
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a few questions. Firstly, can you restate your name, please?

THE WITNESS: Yes. I'm Alfred K. Zeon.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Alfred K. Zeon.


CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Where do you live, please?

THE WITNESS: Presently?

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Yeah.


CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Your date of birth, please?


CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: July 15, 19? '58.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you, sir. Your vocation? What do you do?

THE WITNESS: Right now I'm on the medical field.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You --


CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Home aid, medical assistance, right. Can you tell us when you migrated to the U.S.?


CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay, thank you very much. Before, I would like to just introduce Commissioner Oumu Syllah --

THE WITNESS: Excuse me. Did I say 2000 or 2002?

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CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Commissioner Oumu Syllah is at the end, the extreme of my right.

THE WITNESS: Nice meeting you.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You may proceed now.

Please.

THE WITNESS: Okay. Before I proceed, I want to ask a question, one question before I proceed. I'm here to testify, you know, concerning the Liberian war, so what I want for you, what I want to understand is, is this testimony is from 1970 -- I mean 1989 to 1990? Or is this from, you know, whatsoever, like 1847 or so?

(Laughter.)

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: we'll be happy if you can restrict yourself to the statement you gave to our --

THE WITNESS: Oh, okay.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: -- yes, some time back.

THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: If during question and answer you want to reflect on the past --

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: -- and say anything of that nature, yeah, then you can do it.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay.

THE WITNESS: Well, I'm, as I said before, I'm Alfred Zeon. I started working for the Liberian government in 1981 as cadet at the executive mansion. I worked for SSS. And when I graduated in 1982, I was sent for intensive
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training. And when I graduated from my training, I was then
promoted to, you know, agent for Special Security Service.
So I know that how I, you know, I'm a former employee of the
Liberian government, you know.

What I want to say here is Taylor, as you all know,
when Doe took over, Taylor, he appointed Taylor as GSA, you
know, director, and Taylor took money and came to this
country. He embezzled money and he came to this country.
But later we heard that Taylor was, I mean Taylor break jail.
And when Taylor went back, I mean when Taylor left from here,
he went to Libya before going to Berkina Faso. We heard,
we're at the mansion, and I'm a Special Security personnel,

we heard that Taylor was training, okay, and there was a
troop dispatched to Ivory Coast to find out whether it is
true. The people went there, they came back, and they say,
yeah, it was true, that people were training.

But the Liberian people, when Doe took over, Doe is a
man, I know he just say that, you know, when anything happen,
he will overcome this. So when we heard that this is true,
that people were training, the information reached Doe, but
he said that maybe, you know, Quiwonkpa came, and he didn't,
so, see, so when the war come the people wouldn't succeed so
they didn't take it to be, you know, and that's serious.

Well, when Taylor enter Liberia, as I said before,
I'm a Krahn man, all right, I said I'm a Krahn man, I'm from
Tuzuon. I was, I was living SKD complex. When the rebel
came, they enter the complex, I mean they around the complex
there, they arrested me because people point at, you know, at
my house, they said this is, a Krahn man live around here,
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and I was arrested. The man that came first was a Mano man, and a commander, they call his name but I don't know, either Cooper, I don't know, Cooper or so. And when they arrested me, they tied me but, you know, the man that I, Mr. Flomo, he's the area, you know, in the whole area, so he wondered who arrested me. He call the, he call the civilian around to appeal to the rebel that this man is not a bad man. So they say, okay, but what you say, old man. So he went around, you

know, asked the people in the community, and they collected, there were $500, Liberian dollars, they give it to Cooper. When Cooper told me, say, okay, the man should go, and let him go, but leave the area is what he told me. Within that time the mean commander came, I don't know his name, he's a Gio man. And when he told, he said bring that, that damn Krahn man was there, bring him here.

So my, my nephew, my children, my wife, they were all there, and then I decided to escape. But then before I could escape, my nephew, they call Washington Zeon, he came and say, he went straight to the man, the commander, like he was appealing, crying. And right before him, right before me they shot him dead, you see, and I, I couldn't do anything. My children were quiet, my wife, the whole community, the people were surprised.

So I, I entered the house and jumped through the window. So when I was running and then there was, well, they saw me running, and they say, well, yeah, they asked -- excuse me for a minute -- yeah, they asked who went there, and they start shooting at me, behind me, and I kept running. But the house is not far from the bush so I ran in the bush.
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But then before I could get to the, I mean, approach the bush, see, they shot me on my arm. You see, this is the mark here (indicating). Because I was trying to look behind to see the position so that at least I will know how to maneuver. The bullet entered my arm and entered here, you know, (indicating), and the bullet stuck here and this whole, I was bleeding throughout. Then I ran, I slept in the bush, then I ran, I went to BTC, who was one who took the bullet out from this arm (indicating).

So when I, after a certain time when Doe went to Freeport -- because I was sick, I couldn't do anything, my children were hungry, you know, and so I went, the people came all the way to Matali, so I went and asked my brother, Amos Zeon, he was a captain in the SSS, too, I ask him, I say, please, give me your truck so that I can go and move our things a little closer because the rebel, you know, taking over Matali. And he told me, he say, well, if you take the truck, you got to bring it back faster, but what happen, when he say that? Well, we need to go somewhere. I say where? He didn't answer me. I took the truck, I went to Matali, I brought my things.

Later when I carry the truck back to the mansion, I was told that they went to Freeport, you know, and, and that was it. I didn't see him until now. So I, when this happened, I was confused. And then I decided to, you know, leave Liberia. Well, how do I leave Liberia? I can't go across Taylor land, I can't go across Prince Johnson land because Prince Johnson took over Freeport. I couldn't go, I couldn't do anything. So one day I just said, well, I have...
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to leave. Then I decided to go to the port to appeal to
ECOMOG so that my family and myself can leave.

When I got, when I went across the bridge, I went
past the remains of the new bridge. When I got there, one of
my friends, I can still remember, Samuel Bakla, he worked for
SSS, too, but he jumped Prince Johnson later. I saw him.
But then he was, he was armed, so I was afraid. But when I
passed, before I could make an attempt to look back, I was on
the ground, they knocked me down, they start beating me
again. See, I was crying when the ECOMOG man came with his
Jeep. He came and he stopped the Jeep, and he came, because
people were coming around to see what's going on. So when he
came, he stopped the car, he say what's, what's happening?
He's a Ghanian man. He say what's going on? When he came
they were beating me. So he told the fellow, he gave warning
shot, you know, and the people left. So when he came, he
asked me, he say, "What's your name?" I say, "I'm Mr. Zeon."
He say, "You are from what tribe?" I say, "Krahn tribe." He
say, "Well, then, why are you even being here?" So I say,
"Well, I want to leave. I want to leave the country with my
family." So he say, "Okay. Is that why you're here?" I
say, "Yeah." He say, "Okay. Where are you from?" I say,
"I'm from the barracks." Because, I mean, I have no home
again. I need to leave this country. He say, "Okay. I'm
taking you back to the barrack. Go and pack your things, get
your family prepared. I will come back with the truck and
take you so that you can leave the country." So he put me in
the Jeep and took me to the barrack. When I got there, I
told my family, we're packing our things. In the night he
brought his truck and he put me on the truck, my children and
myself, and he took us to the port. And then he give us
Farina and started to say you guys can go, get on the ship.
That's how I left the country.

And what I want to say here is that we, what I went
through, through the war, you know, I felt it too bad until,
you know, up to this time I don't know actually if, if there
is anybody that can really stand, I mean, for the Liberian
people to really unite, because what I went through, what I
know that people went through this, I mean during the war, we
really need to come together as Liberians, you know, to
resolve this problem.

As I said before, I'm an ex-Special Security
personnel, I'm not a politician. And so the Commissioners
here, what I want for you guys, what I want to, you know,
recommend or suggest to every one of you here is that the
Liberians are still all over the world, I mean in Ghana, in
Guinea, Ivory Coast and all this stuff. People are still
facing problems, the Liberian people are still facing
problems, and what I want to say here or recommend here is
that I want for you guys to appeal to the UN so that they can

reopen Liberian focus, because there are some people that
don't want to go back now.

Number two, what I want for you guys to do is this
lady who is now the president of Liberia, you know, from the
beginning of the war she was not, you know, like a neutral
person. This lady make a comment that Charles Taylor should
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level Monrovia, she is going to rebuild it. That statement alone, I know that she's not neutral. Okay. Now she's the president. So what the Liberian people need now is to come together so that we can reunite. We are peace-loving people, you know. But this lady need to appoint, you know, elders, most especially from Nimba County, from Grand Gedeh, you know, to help the reconciliation process, you know, and the people should go from village to village or town to town to preach reconciliation.

But if you, if they sit down in Monrovia and say, well, this is the commission, and people go from here and there and they don't do any -- involve Krahn man in it, involve Gio man in it, you know. Let the people go from town to town and tell the Liberian people that we need to be reunited. We are peace-loving people. Why -- I mean, Charles Taylor is gone already, he's not there, even though he brought, he brought a war but he's not there again. What next we should do? The next step is to appeal to whosoever, you know, is fighting the war, to forget our past so that we can rebuild our country.

And what I want to say here again is that Prince Johnson, Prince Johnson, you know, he was a rebel leader, Prince Johnson was a rebel leader. And now to me it looks very ugly for Prince Johnson to be in the Liberian government as a, as a, he should have, as a member who has voice in the Liberian government is ugly. If, if the people want peace, Prince -- I know that the people voted him to take that position, I know that Nimba County want him in there. I'm not against it. But it is not right that a man who killed
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thousands and thousands of Liberians and then he's now in the center of the house, it's very ugly, you know.

I mean we should reason, as Liberian people we should come to our senses and say, look, this is not right. This is right, this is wrong. Together we can, we can rebuild our country. You know, we know that you guys are asking this man a question. I mean, what I, what I, what I talk about when I say now what it is, it is really Liberian to decide. Not American people. We are not American. Even though it's true that the, the Americo-Liberian from here, they established Liberia, but before they could go there, we were there before. So why can't we solve our problems? Let us reunite people.

I'm a Krahn man, but right now if I go back home, I mean, I have a lot of Gio friends. I mean it happened, I mean that's past. We all have to forget. Even though it's hard, but we have to do it for the sake of our country.

So I just want to thank you for coming here, you know, and the process, you know, I really like the, I really appreciate the process, you guys. If, if you know that, if someone come and express himself how upset, you take that into consideration and then you compile a report. I mean we will be one coming together again. And we want to go back home. But I can't go back home now when that woman is there. She's not ready yet for peace, you know.

So I want to thank you again, and I'm available any time. If you people call upon me, I will come here to testify or do what is in the, the right, what I feel is in the right of the Liberian people, I will come and voice it
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out. So I just want to say thanks, and I'm hoping for any
questions or so.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you very much,
Mr. Zeon, for your testimony and all the information you've
given us.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: We also want to extend
to you sympathy for the loss of your relatives, two of them;
one at the Freeport and the other who was shot in your
presence. Will you give us their names?

THE WITNESS: Yes. My nephew that was shot before
me is called Washington Zeon.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: What was his age?

THE WITNESS: He was 14 then, I guess.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay.

THE WITNESS: And my brother that went to the port
with President Doe is called Major Amos Zeon.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Major?


CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: SSS or AFS?

THE WITNESS: SSS.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: His age, if you
remember?

THE WITNESS: Hmm?

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Can you tell us his age,
if you know?

THE WITNESS: I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: He was older than you?

THE WITNESS: Yes.
CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: At least five years?

THE WITNESS: More than five years.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Ten?

THE WITNESS: I guess, about ten, about ten or so.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Just about ten years older than you. Okay. A few gaps. Let's fill them before Commissioners can ask questions. You joined the SSS in 1981?

THE WITNESS: '81, I joined. I, I was not SSS personnel. I was a cadet at that time.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You joined the SSS as a cadet?

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: 1981.

THE WITNESS: When I applied, I was in school when I applied as a cadet.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: And you remained after the outbreak of the conflict?

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Until you left in 2000?

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay. Where were you when the rebels first captured you? Did you say SKD Stadium or SKD Boulevard?

THE WITNESS: I lived around SKD Stadium.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You lived around SKD Stadium.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: At the time you were a personnel of the SSS?
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THE WITNESS:  Sure.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER:  And you remained until the rebels came and captured you?

THE WITNESS:  Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER:  Okay. Then you took your brother's truck to move your things. Did you say from SKD to Matali?

THE WITNESS:  No. This is what happened. When the war came, we move, my brother and myself, he was living Matali. So when this war came, I went and took fastest -- we have three brothers. I move faster, left and I move his things from, from where he live to Matali. You understand what I'm saying? And so I have, I have the other brother things with Major Zeon in the house at Matali.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER:  So all of you moved to Matali?

THE WITNESS:  Yeah, so when, when this happened, when I went to BTC, my wife and the children, they went to Matali to my brother's house, the oldest brother's house.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER:  So you got a truck and you went to Matali --

THE WITNESS:  I went to Matali.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER:  -- took all your things. You took it to the mansion or to BTC?

THE WITNESS:  NO. BTC.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER:  Took all your things to BTC.

THE WITNESS:  Yes, I was moving the things to BTC.
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And I went, I went in the morning to get a truck from him, and I moved some things to BTC. I was leaving home.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay. What was your rank?

THE WITNESS: My what?

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Your rank.

THE WITNESS: My rank? Oh. I was a second, second lieutenant at the time.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you very much.

Sheikh?

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Thank you, Mr. Zeon, for your testimony. From your statement we gather that from, that by 1980 you were mature person who have had some knowledge and experience about the government attitude towards the citizens before 1980 coup, and after 1980 coup you were also a part of the government now when you became a cadet and then agent, and you remained there until the outbreak of the war. In your view, can you tell us what precipitated the war? What caused the war? If you can.

THE WITNESS: Well, what I think that brought about the war is hatred. Hatred.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Can you elaborate?

THE WITNESS: Yeah, hatred. And beside that, people want to re -- you know, to reach out, to come back and retaliate, because Taylor -- when Doe took over, Taylor, I mean Doe appointed Taylor as GSA director. Taylor fled the
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country. I think the Liberians, or most of the people here know that Taylor took some money and he fled the country.
So, and the propaganda used was that Doe is, is not educated, he cannot handle the government, you know, the government is corrupt and stuff. So the only people they will use was Taylor and -- I mean Taylor, Taylor is a Congo man. You sitting there, you know that Taylor is a Congo man. So Taylor went there with the intention of, I mean to, to unseat the, the Doe government because of what happened in 1980.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Before you started your statement, you were given an oath to tell out what is true.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: And nothing but truth.

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: With that oath, your testimony should be beyond tribal, factional, and sectional notions.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: You have talked about Taylor, you have talked about Johnson.

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.
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that many attempted coups were staged in the ten years of the
Doe government as compared to less than five attempted coups
in the 133 years' domination of the previous power. What
brought this change? What degenerated that government into
ethnicity and all the things? Can you, because you were SSS,
closer to the office of the presidency, and you were
interacting with people, as the result of this you even got
the information of the attempted invasion before it happened;
what can you say under the oath?


when Doe took over, you know, the Liberian people were happy.
Quiwonkpa, Doe, Pennue, and what have you, they all adjourn
and unseated the Tolbert government. Okay. Now what, what
actually happened in Liberia is that when Doe took over, as
we all know, that Doe took over and he became president
because he was the only high-ranking officer at the time,
master sergeant. Doe didn't -- I will tell you now, I will
tell you truth, and nothing but the truth. Doe said that he
didn't know that he was going to be president, okay? When

Quiwonkpa then took over, when Doe then took over, they took
Doe, they said Doe should come and be the president. He was
confused. He didn't know what to do at the time. Okay. But
because he was the master sergeant at the time, so Doe
accepted that. President. He accepted the position. Okay.
When Doe took over, then that he's not that experienced, he
brought, he brought people, even the lady that is, that is
president today, I think some of them working in the
government, brought in people to help him. Instead of
helping Doe, they started to undermine his government. You
understand what I'm saying? They started to undermine his
government.

What does Doe know about economics? What does Doe
know about, you know, setting on a budget for the country?
He doesn't know. That is why he brought people closer to him
to help him. But instead of helping Doe so that we can
rebuild our country, they started undermining him. Okay.
And so what happened here is that people, when they started
undermining him and he started to, you know, like to say,
well, if you are not doing your job, give this person a
chance, you know, people started going against Doe. And
besides that, Doe -- at the time, Quiwonkpa was then
commanding general. When Doe and Quiwonkpa got into that
conflict, when Doe told Quiwonkpa, he say, look, well, I want
you to leave the barrack. Go and be the secretary general at
the capital building. Quiwonkpa refused. Because with the
power of the Army people behind him, he know he had the voice
to do anything. So Doe said, no, I'm going to release you
from the barrack because I don't know, I don't know where you
stand. According to information I am getting, things are
going on that I'm hearing, they are not, you know, I mean,
they are very discouraging. So, please, we are, you know,
stage a coup and were successful. So please go back, I mean
I want to transfer you to the capital barrack. Let somebody
else take over the Army as a commanding general. And he
refused, because he know that he has, you know, the support
of the Army people at the time, because as the commanding
general you have that, that power. So this is where the
confusion came from, because people started using Quiwonkpa
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Now tell me if you are a president and someone threaten your life and they didn't succeed, then what do you do? Do you call the president and say, well, thank you for, for making an attempt? So, I mean, this is why people talk about coup, coup, coup in Liberia, and I don't really support the idea of coup, coup, coup to Doe, because Doe didn't know his left from right, that's why he brought people, and the people betray him. So Doe was holding here and there, grabbing here and there, to see that we, that we build our country, but he didn't have that support, and so he had to fight all at home, and that's what happened today.

Now when Doe went -- if you, if you, if you stage a coup, or if you plan to overthrow Doe and you are not successful, what do you -- you got security on the ground, so what they do next?

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Taylor's.
CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I say Taylor's.
THE WITNESS: Oh, okay.
(Laughter.)
THE WITNESS: What, what happened here is that before Doe, before Doe take any action when there is any, he will call the elders. He will call from county to county for people to be at the executive mansion and he will say, well, this is what this person has done, this is what this person has done, what do you want me to do, if anybody can tell me what's this here. Doe will ask, this is what this person have done, what do you want me to do? And the elders will
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come and they say, well, this is what he's supposed to do.
This is, I mean why you think that is right? Do it. You
know what I mean.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Why is this?
THE WITNESS: Say what?
VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Why is this?
THE WITNESS: Who?

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: What is he
supposed to do that would tell him what to do?
THE WITNESS: Oh, okay. What happened, Doe called
the elders at the time at the executive mansion when he
asked, the children and my friends that went with me that
stage the coup, they want to kill me, so he called the
elders. And they told him that if you are a leopard and that
Gio come to you and say, I want to kill you, and the Gio
admit it, what do you do? You see? So then what happen here
is that the elders of the land who Doe, that were getting
told, you know, I mean asking Doe to say, look, do this, do
that, they were giving the wrong information.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Excuse me. Was it
all the elders or just the Krahn elders?
THE WITNESS: No, not Krahn elders. Doe didn't
call on the Krahn elders. Doe go Nimba County, Bassa and
call all the elders, not only Krahn.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay.
THE WITNESS: You know. So as time goes by,
people started getting fed up with Doe government, you know,
they started getting fed up. Well, this man here, he killing
people, he's executing people, he's doing this and that.
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Well, as I'm sitting down here, I know that Doe is a man who is hard to understand, but equally so he has life in him. So if you threaten my life and then you say, see, what do I do next, so then what happened? And people started going against Doe. So Doe start and Doe taking step that he think that will be simple for him. So that's what happened. And so this war that came about in Liberia, you know, it shouldn't, to me it shouldn't have been a war that will take plenty people's lives. If they wanted to, I mean, unseat Doe, it will have been done in a way that Doe will leave. Like -- excuse me, sir, let me go ahead.

Like what the man was saying here, the man that just left from here, that they ask Taylor to open a corridor. After that open corridor, I mean Doe and his people going to leave, but it didn't happen. Prince Johnson refused -- I mean Taylor refused. What Doe said when the war came, he say when people wanted, when Taylor said no, Doe say, okay, I won't, I -- give me this time that I leave, I want to resign, but let's, let's stop the war, and they refused. It was when Doe said, well, let the people come and do what they want to do. You understand what I'm saying?

And so Liberian war we caused, we, we ourselves should be blamed for the Liberian war because the hatred start there. When the people said, I mean, when Quiwonkpa said, I mean when people start putting words in Quiwonkpa ears, and different, different people that went with Doe, and that was where the division came from, you see. And so, sir, the war came because people said that Doe is not capable of
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taking care of the country.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: History tells us that 17 men overthrew the True Whig Party government, and designated Samuel Kanyon Doe, then master sergeant --

THE WITNESS: Excuse me, I can't hear what he's talking about.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Okay.

History tells us --

THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: -- that on April 2, 1980 --

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: -- 17 men of Armed Forces of Liberia --

THE WITNESS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: -- staged a military coup --

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: -- that dethrone the True Whig government.

THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: And among these 17 men, Doe was the highest ranking order.

THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: And for this they declare a Redemption Council, People's Redemption Council, and he was made the chairman, not the president.

THE WITNESS: Sure.
Alfred Zeon

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: The chairman of this council.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: And by that connotation, he chairs the meeting of the council, supervised its operation. Now in your statement, you're saying that he was the president, and he was the one that people was after him, he was the one who called people and they betray him. If at all there was any coup, was it going to be the council against the council or against Samuel Kanyon Doe?

THE WITNESS: If there was any coup staged at the time?

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Yeah, at the time.

THE WITNESS: It was going, because the, the people in the council, they themself wanted to stage, so it going to be against Doe.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: So it was the people within the council that wanted to stage the coup --

THE WITNESS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: -- against him?

THE WITNESS: Some of the people in the council wanted to stage a coup. Like, example, Quiwonkpa.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: And you said the action of executing Quiwonkpa or any other persons by Doe were mandated by the elders of Liberia?

THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir. I didn't say Quiwonkpa. I did not say Quiwonkpa. When Quiwonkpa came
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from Sierra Leone and enter Liberia, when the announcement was made that he, you know, they are taking over the country, when Doe was then still at the mansion, Quiwonkpa, when Doe announced that he was still at the mansion, Quiwonkpa fled and went in hiding. The people that went to get, the people that saw Quiwonkpa, when they went, they kill Quiwonkpa. When they brought Quiwonkpa at the mansion and put him right down at the grandstand, Doe came downstairs and asked a question. Why did you kill him? Why did you bring him here? You see? And he cared about, he was mad at those that kill Quiwonkpa. I'm not saying that he was supporting you; he didn't like the idea of quiwonkpa dying. But, you see, there are orders that from people that say, well, look, do this, do this, and if you do it, that is an order. But if you don't get the order and you take an action, that mean you are undermining your, your, your commander. You understand what I'm saying? And so I didn't say the elder came together to tell Doe, say he should execute Quiwonkpa. No.

1  COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Or any other person for that matter?
2  
3  THE WITNESS: Yes. The --
4  
5  COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: They didn't tell him to kill anybody?
6  
7  THE WITNESS: They didn't say -- I say, what I'm saying, what I said is the Paramounts said that if you are a leopard and deer comes to you, okay?
8  
9  COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Who is this spokesman?
10  
11  THE WITNESS: Say what?
COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Who was that spokesman?

THE WITNESS: Oh, I don't know. I don't know the elders. I don't know, I didn't know the elders at the time. I was not then at the time near Doe. Others or, let's say, civilian, or how do you call it, SSS civilian man. I'm not near Doe. I don't go around Doe.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Well, how you got to know this?

THE WITNESS: Huh?

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: How you got to know this?

THE WITNESS: When do I get it? Yeah, but I, I got it before I get it -- - if Doe is giving speech, the security go and make, you know, and we form that security guard.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS: Okay. So I know that this is what, you know, Doe have said and this is what happened. But I don't know the elders.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Thank you.

THE WITNESS: I only know that this is Dwanyen or Mr. Bai Gbala or Joe Brown, I don't, I don't know them. I just know their names.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Thank you.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Mr. Zeon.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.
COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Thank you very much for coming to tell the truth, participating in the TRC, and just, as you say, you've just told us certain things you didn't know, but I assume you heard.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: You say you from Tuzuon.

THE WITNESS: Tuzuon.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: You're a Krahn man.

THE WITNESS: Krahn man.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Doe was from Tuzuon.

THE WITNESS: Krahn man.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: And he was a Krahn man.

THE WITNESS: Sure.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Sure. 1980, the True Whig Party government was overthrown for rampant corruption, misuse of public office, nepotism, et cetera, right? You know that.

THE WITNESS: I don't know.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Yeah. And you continue to say there was some, like this Americo-Liberian perhaps government then. Now I saw you, you're from Tuzuon, you are, also your brother also was an SSS embassian.

THE WITNESS: Sure.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: And most of the people who were in, around Doe, the security, what tribe were
they?

THE WITNESS: Gio, Krahn, Bassa, Belleh, Congo, you know.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Okay. Yes. I also see from the PRC composition, the paper that we saw here yesterday, it did compose of people like Larry Borteh, who were Kru, Alfred Kollie who were from Lofa and Jeffrey Gbatu from Nimba, just to name a few. We want to say the True Whig Party government was overthrown because of those conditions, and it was time, as they say, to put an indigenous Liberian, okay? One who spoke a, who spoke a dialect. Because we've learned, and you could tell us whether it's true, that Doe's father came from Ivory Coast, because of the border between Liberia and, and --

THE WITNESS: Ivory Coast.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Ivory Coast.

You've just under oath, whether or not Doe father came from Ivory Coast, can you tell us this fact?

THE WITNESS: Thank you. Yes, his great grandfather, not Doe's father. We, our great grandparents are from Ivory Coast.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Okay, thank you. Yes, you --

THE WITNESS: Likewise, you know, we have family in Liberia, we have family in Ivory Coast.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Okay.

THE WITNESS: Okay? And I think all the, the tribes that border Ivory Coast have people in Ivory Coast and in Liberia.
COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Yes, Mr. Zeon, because of the matter of time, and I won't be cutting you off but, and I won't talk too much to give my other colleagues time, so the question, yes, he is from Ivory Coast.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: You talk about because you want explanation now that we see the situation, I want to along this Americo-Liberians, because who you consider to be Congo? In your sense, you were with SSS, and who do you consider to be Congo?

THE WITNESS: That's the Americo-Liberian.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: The Americo-Liberians.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: So just like -- that mean those who came from where? Americo-Liberians, who are Americo-Liberians?

THE WITNESS: The freed slaves from America.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: The freed slaves from America.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: So then we seen now that those freed slaves from America who came between 1821 to 1947, we got independence, some still came up to 1870 to 1879, they were still coming. Now they have all died out. I don't know who be living from 1870 until now, over a hundred years or more in Liberia. Do you agree with
Alfred Zeon

me?

THE WITNESS: Oh, yes.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Now just like, so there will be their descendent because they intermarried, they did, so those people who there now in Liberia are considered Liberians because they were born there under our, they acted, the Constitution of Liberia, once you're of Negro descent and born in Liberia, you're Liberian. Because if you just give the statement that Doe's father came from Ivory Coast, his great grandfather came from Ivory Coast, then his father, they, too, were descendents now of Ivory Coast and not Liberia, so that if he came and his father born him in Liberia, he's considered Liberian, you consider him Liberian and an indigenous Liberian, right?

THE WITNESS: Sure.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: So then what do you consider those who came from America, their parents died, their mothers were born in Liberia, their grandparents were born in Liberia, they were born in Liberia, to be considered Liberians?

THE WITNESS: Did I say they are not Liberian?

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: No, I ask you, do you consider them to be Liberians?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: All right. Now we have the situation, the Amerco-Liberians came from America in the 1800s. We have a situation now from the 1980s, from the first coup on Tolbert, to the 1990s, that Liberians from
Liberia have started coming to America, and we just heard you say that you want the United Nations to still come and intervene because those who came from America now, I mean from Liberia who be considered indigenous Liberians who are now in America, to continue to remain in America because of the situation in Liberia. What do you think when they go and they are bearing children here and they, those who have come here, what do you think that when they decide to go back to Liberia, well, how would they be considered; Americo-Liberians or what?

THE WITNESS: Thank you. I'm a Krahn man. I came here, my son is born here, he's a Krahn man. Okay? If a Gio man comes here and have his daughter or son, that person is a Gio man also. Now what happened here is that if you are born here, you are a citizen of this country. But don't forget that you are, your parents are from Liberia, okay? Now if you try to compare Americo-Liberian to what are we saying now is that people, the slaves from Africa that were brought here before, did you want to tell me that they are only from Liberia? These people are from all over, okay? They are not from Liberia alone. So if the people went back and settled in Liberia, I am not saying that they are not Liberian --

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Okay, thank you.

THE WITNESS: -- but we refer to them as Congo people. That what I say. I didn't say they are not Liberian.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Thank you. And for clarification today, let me tell you the difference between Americo-Liberian and Congo. Congo people, that's why
Alfred Zeon

you have the nickname Congo Town. The Congo people were people who never came to America. They were people who ex-slave -- I mean people who they caught for slave trade but they were captured, each vessel were captured on the boat, on the sea, high sea, and they returned them to Africa. They came from places like Congo or, and Belgium Congo and other places, and that's why you have Congo Town. So people mistake that and consider them to be Congo. But the Congo people never came to America, they never was ex-slaves.

Anyway, to go further, the second thing. Don't you think during that period, after 130 years, or hundred years saying of the rule of the so -- the Americo-Liberians, and people really wanted an indigenous president, leader, after having someone like Momolu Dukuly, a Mandingo who served as minister of foreign affairs, at that time they called it secretary of state, Augustus Caine, who served as minister of education, Massaquoi, who serve as ambassador, in fact, just even Jackson Doe, who was, say, vice chairman, I think he even served as education minister somewhere, yeah, education minister. We're talking about those people now. Purely indigenous. Do you think on April 12th, when they had this overthrow and wanted to establish an indigenous government, do you think it was fair to the indigenous people that Mr. Samuel Kanyon Doe was the best person to bring as president or representative of the indigenous, from the 15 political subdivisions of Liberia, in your opinion, your opinion? Do you think he was the best person to bring out as an indigenous leader for the indigenous people?

THE WITNESS: Thank you. While it is true I'm not
forced to answer any question here --

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Yes, you may do, yes.

THE WITNESS: I may answer some questions that I think, you know, for being the best interest of our discussion. As I stated before, I said Doe, at the time he was master sergeant. Doe didn't force himself over there as the president. Okay? People that, that studied the coup, they said that because he was the higher-ranking officer at the time, you know, he should take the position.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Thank you very --

THE WITNESS: So what I -- that question you are asking, if Peter Brown were there, if Jackson Doe were there, to go, I mean to lead the people, I mean he's educated. They going to say you come and be the president.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Yeah, they could say that --

THE WITNESS: Okay?

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: -- but they were not saying that. I just --

THE WITNESS: Yes, but the question, listen now, the question is for, if Quiwonkpa is for Doe, is for John Brown, who overthrow him is Alfred Zeon's question.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Okay. Well, Alfred Zeon, you're setting out, you're thinking now, okay, what should be the best way follow for Liberia, but in order for us to look for the best way follow for Liberia, we have to confront our difficult past, acknowledge it to see what mistakes we made to make the lessons, so in the future,
Alfred Zeon

that's all. It's not that personally attacking any Alfred
Zeon or any group.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: You know, yes.

Because it's possible that's why Quiwonkpa didn't take it,
and that's why, when they told Quiwonkpa to go to be
secretary general of the council, the People's Redemption
Council, he refused because he knew his limitation. He was a
soldier and knew that leading men more than just holding a
gun.

Thank you for participating in the process and being
candid.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Zeon,
for your testimony so far. Again, I appreciate your kindness
and your outrightness in sharing with us the things that you
have shared with us. Normally I would not ask the kind of
questions I want to ask today, victim of a war, so I'm, first
of all, sorry for the loss of your family. But because of
your acknowledgment that you were also a soldier or member of
security group in the government, I feel it necessary to ask
you some other questions. So please help me if you can.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: First of all, to the
best of your knowledge, do you think the members of the PRC,
by themselves, carried out this coup without any outside
support or interference? Again, I'm saying this in lieu of
the fact that we learned that they were not prepared for true
leadership of the country. They confessed that.
Alfred Zeon

Number two, there are many facts that tell us that
some of them were paid up to $25,000 to kill Mr. Tolbert. So
when you consider all these additional facts, I mean, have
you gotten to know anything new that could help us to
understand the root cause of that period of history?

THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir. Well, what you just
stated, that some people were paid $25,000 or so, I have no
knowledge.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay.

THE WITNESS: What I do know is that Tolbert at
the time arrested men like Baccus Matthew, Oscar J. Quiah,
Chea Cheapoo the top, top, you know, Liberians were arrested,
and at the time the people were about to get, you know, get
rid of these people, because if you get rid of these people,
that means we did, the indigenous Liberian wouldn't have any,
like, you know, we don't have any elders or book people to be
there again. So the people came together and said, well, I
mean, if we sit here and this happen, that mean we are done.
You see, that's how the people came about and how they
organized themselves. And besides that, I was not there when
they had a plan, and so I cannot give you whether, I mean,
this is true or not true, I was not there.

What I do know, that what I will say, but because
they wanted to get rid of, you know, the top brass, the
native top brass, I mean, that what brought about this
change.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Thank you.

THE WITNESS: The world can't sit down here for
this to happen.
COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: That's very informative.

THE WITNESS: And one of the reason I think, what I heard, one of the reason that it took that step.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay. So, thank you. That is in itself very informative, because what you're saying is that there were a higher-level echelon of leaders, maybe the progressives, et cetera, as we call in history, who felt that they were going to be eliminated --

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: -- and therefore they stimulated the military to serve their purpose, and that is to carry out this coup, and they must have done it with maybe financial support, et cetera. Anyway, that's a beginning. Thank you.

Another point. We've heard here recently, and I'm sure you may be aware of it, that the lack of our government at the times, inability to respond to a certain paperwork with regards to Mr. Taylor's extradition in America may have led to him being liberated. Now when you consider that, do you have anything you want to say about that? You understand what I'm trying to say? We just heard that this man was in jail, he should have stayed there. If he didn't get out, this whole second scenario wouldn't have happened. But it was found that our government didn't follow up on simple paperwork, which goes back to the issue of, you know, efficiency and responsible leadership, et cetera. So I don't
know if you want to say anything about that. And I'll pass on that.

THE WITNESS: Well, I was not here when the man was, you know, because they were interviewing me on the other side, so I didn't, I didn't get that.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay.

THE WITNESS: So what I want to say here, this is the great United States of America. We consider this country to be, you know, a hero for us. So if a man can break into jail in, I mean in America and say, well, where the people come and say this man break, I mean it's, assuming that, it's very discouraging, you see. And so I was not here when Taylor, when they sent Taylor out, when they released Taylor from jail, and I don't, I don't have any, no comment to make about. It was very -- that was not a good idea for a man who say he stole X amount of money and they say he come to America and they say he break jail. I mean it was very, very discouraging.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay, thank you.

Another one is what would you have to say about the fact that much of this problem was linked to decisions made by the leaders at the time? For example, the decision that Doe may have made to go after the Manos and the Gios as a result of the failed coup of Quiwonkpa between 1995 and 1990 --

THE WITNESS: Thank you.
Alfred Zeon

love or forgiveness, that it's natural. So what would you have to say about that issue?

THE WITNESS: Well, first of all, I will say that we are all Liberians and, you know, Doe, as the president of the, I mean the head of state at the time, the decision that he took at the time may be wrong.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay.

THE WITNESS: You understand that? It is not all decision that is made by Doe that is right. Okay. But equally so, if you say Doe was going against Gio and Mano at the time then, of course, I will say something to that, because Doe didn't just go, you know, to go and attack Gio people or Mano people because he feel like. No. It was an action taken by those people first before Doe could, you know, come up with this, you know, decision. Do you understand what I'm saying?

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Action/reaction, yes.

THE WITNESS: Yeah. So I mean he's reacting to someone as this action that, you know, he has taken before.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay. Thank you.

Next one -- by the way, who was this good ECOMOG soldier that saved your life?

THE WITNESS: Oh, no, I'm sorry, sir, he told me not to call his name.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: No problem. Okay. Next, the last one is, considering the complexity of the Liberian civil war from 1979 to 2003, then considering this natural law that I just gave you about action and reaction...
Alfred Zeon

and how our war developed into three phases like a domino
effect, you know, Doe tried to deal with the classism and the
identity crisis of Liberia, staging a coup; next, Taylor now
tried to deal with Doe's action, staging another coup with
his people; and then next, LURD and MODEL, now trying to deal
with Taylor's action, staging a third coup. So when you put
all of this together and you look at TRC's mandate to look
into the root cause of the crisis and recommend something,
what would be your recommendation to us --

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: -- if you were to
say the root cause is this, you know, like that?

THE WITNESS: Okay. See, what I want to say here
is that we, we at the time, you know, were innocent about how
people run government, you know, and all of these things.
The root causes of this war, like Doe overthrowing is that
what I get first.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: So you would agree
with that as the root cause?

THE WITNESS: Yeah, like the educated people, they
were trying to get rid of the educated people. Okay? Now
what I believe, after Doe took over, what happened next was
Taylor came back to revenge.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Cause and effect.

THE WITNESS: Because he felt that Doe is not
capable of taking care of the country. That's number one.
Number two, he felt that Doe killed Congo people. He
executed 13 or, or, ex-minister or so, and one of the
mistakes Doe made from the beginning, that I can tell
Alfred Zeon

anybody, he shouldn't have executed people at broad level
like that, you know. I'm a humanist. If you execute my
parent, you know, the next thing, my son is coming after you.
So that was a great mistake by the PRC, then PRC government.
Now how do we solve this problem?

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: That's the key
thing.

THE WITNESS: Now what I said from the beginning,
we should reunite as a Liberian. As I told you before, they
shot me. I showed you my mark, right? But, I mean, I'm done
with it. Almost 15 to -- I don't know how many years ago --
I'm done with that. Where I live now, I have Gio friends.
In fact, in Liberia I have Gio friends, you know? When I was

in Ghana, I build my house. The people that rented in my
house, they bore, that rented in my house is the man that I
saw in the village that took arms. I saw him. And I told
him that. He say, yes, sir. I say, okay. He lives with me
in the house. And so what I'm saying here is I'm from
Tuzuon, people that die from me from Tuzuon, if I stand here
to count them, you wouldn't believe it. You know. But it
happened. They have happened and they are past.

So we look, we, we supposed to come together to see
how best we, the Liberian, can unite to rebuild our country.
Now what I said from the beginning, that this lady, she
should appoint Gio man, you give the Gio man the head of the
reconciliation process, or Krahn man, but don't leave these
people out and go to, to, to, and go appoint someone from
Bassa or from Kru or from, let's say, Vai area. Select
certain Gio people, certain Krahn people before you bring in
Alfred Zeon

the Bassa and the people. The conflict is between the Gio and Krahn. That I will say. I'm not disputing the fact. The conflict was between the Gio, the Mano and the Krahn. So let the people be involved first. Then the rest of the, the tribes can follow.

So if this woman wants peace, first of all, the statement she made from the beginning that if you level Liberia, she should apologize to the Liberian public, that's number one. Now come out and say it. I mean we need to, you know, heal our wounds. We are, we are wounded. Let the woman be the person to unite the people. But if she can't do it, and I still think that because she is a Congo lady, I mean lady, and she's part, because one lady came from Liberia, she be we are Congo people, we still rule the country. That is not what we here for, the Congo people will still rule the country. I mean it's very discouraging. We don't need these kind of people there again, you hear me.

So --

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay. In conclusion --

THE WITNESS: In conclusion, sir. One, I'm willing, you understand, I, Alfred K. Zeon, is willing not to, if you want, if you send, you want to send me from here to Ghana, to Ivory Coast, to Guinea, I will go. I'm not going to Liberia now. Because if, if I go to Liberia right now, there is no job. I have family, I mean, I'm not a farmer, that I will tell you. I don't know how to, to hold cutlass now, you understand what I'm saying? So if the people want for us to come back home, there should be peace
Alfred Zeon

there first before sending the people that fled the country.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay. Thank you.

But one point we could deal with as a reality right now.

Here in America, here we are over two hundred something thousand maybe possible Liberians here, and amongst that group they are Krahn, they are Mandigos, they are Mano, there's Gio, et cetera. So what is being done on this foundation to prepare for what you're talking about, the ultimate return home? Because even I see here such a small turnout, even though Minnesota has the largest population of Liberians.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: So that's the challenge I think we need to deal with first --

THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: -- before we can talk about going back home now.

THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir. This is why, when the people are saying Liberian people are coming together to do this, to vote to do this, vote for what? If you vote and you are president, what are you, what is your contribution to the Liberian people? Now you have top brass who happen to have a president in this country, the Liberian community here. These people should call the Liberians together, you understand what I'm saying, and say, look, we have to forget, I mean forget about the past. Let us come together and unite as Liberians. But if you call a meeting and say, well, if you go to, like Martha Sinoe, who was president for I think almost, I think four years or what kind of years, what an
improvement that we are getting from the people. We, we the Liberians ourselves are the problems for, I mean, for what happening back home. We are not united. If Gio man comes and becomes president, when you call a meeting and, and people will come together, that's it, what they discuss, that's it. If Krahn man become president, what they discuss, well, that's it. And we are not going anywhere. So the question you ask that, what are we doing here, that question is, it becomes, I mean you're supposed to put that question to the president of this community, Liberian community here.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Because of time, I say thank you very much and transfer it now.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Thank you, Mr. Zeon, for coming, and our sympathy for the death of your relatives.

THE WITNESS: Sure.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: You said at one point that Doe and, during your explanation, Doe and Quiwonkpa had a problem.

THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: What was that problem?

THE WITNESS: The problem they had?

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Um-hum.

THE WITNESS: Well, I said it before. I said for security reason Doe ask Quiwonkpa to leave the, the barrack.
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VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: What was the security reason?

THE WITNESS: Security reason is that rumors was going around that Quiwonkpa is planning to do something. Because the, during the days, the early days of the coup, if Quiwonkpa, if you see Quiwonkpa, the amount of Army people that will be behind Quiwonkpa, you, you -- I mean, Quiwonkpa and Pennue, you understand? And Doe called Pennue and warned him that what he's doing is wrong. He called Quiwonkpa and talked to him. Quiwonkpa say, well, they are my bodyguards. So he say, well, one bodyguard, carry X amount of bodyguards. You understand what I'm saying? And so from there, you know, the tension started to, to build, and so Doe was afraid because, security reason he was afraid.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: So simply because these people had X number of bodyguards behind them, he thought there was a security threat?

THE WITNESS: Yes. I mean he's a human being. Doe is, I mean he was then the head of state, and so if Quiwonkpa had a plan that he want to do this, he have the right to do anything that, to reshuffle his government. And so he reshuffle, and Quiwonkpa didn't, I mean, he said no. So if you, if you take me to be the president or leader of you and I tell you, I say do this and you say no, that mean I defy a directive.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Okay. My second question is you said something about Doe reacting to an action by the Gio and Mano people that mean he to start to get rid of them.
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THE WITNESS: Yeah, what I said, what I said is, I said before Doe take any action he can call people together, so he call the elders.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: No, no, not the elders. Somebody asked you a question about the killing of the Mano people, and the Mano and Gio people --

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: -- and you said Doe was reacting to an action. How come he went against the Mano and the Gio people?

THE WITNESS: Yeah. What I said --

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Quiwonkpa.

THE WITNESS: I said that --

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Action by Quiwonkpa.

THE WITNESS: Yeah, I said that if at all you are, you know, you are a big man or you are, let's say a leader, and someone plan something against you, and the person didn't succeed, then what do you do next? So then he says, so he was reacting, that's what he said, so I say yes.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Okay.

THE WITNESS: So that mean the Gio and the Mano, from the beginning the Gio, we share common border. You are from Liberia, you know. We have Nimba, Krahn in Nimba County, you see. And so what is the cause of this? You know, that's official, it's level of the people, the Gio man, the Gio man and the Krahn man, they were friends before. We share the same common border.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: So, excuse me, so
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Quiwonkpa went against Doe?

THE WITNESS: Sure.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Okay. That was

one Quiwonkpa.

THE WITNESS: Hmm?

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: That was only one

person. It was Quiwonkpa who went against Doe. One man, one

Gio man.

THE WITNESS: Well, Quiwonkpa has followers.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: He had what?

THE WITNESS: I say he had -- it cannot be one man
to say I'm going to overthrow.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: So all the people

who came to overthrow at that time were all from Nimba?

THE WITNESS: No. No. One Krahn man, I think two

or three Krahn man, you know, that's Robert kind of Toe or so

from Toe Town, and what happened here is I am not, as I said

before, I am not a policy maker for Doe, I am not, you know,

I was not there when Doe took the decision or so, but what

I'm trying to say here is that, you know, when the people

take over they should have, you know, come together, but then

they start the, the divisions started among themselves.

That's what I'm trying to say.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Now you were a

security personnel --

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: -- from the very

onset.

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.
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VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: From 1981 clean down to when Doe went to the port and got killed.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Were you aware of most of the killings that were going on in the country, and did you --

THE WITNESS: To a point.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: -- at any point did you get instruction to commit any of those?

THE WITNESS: To a point. From 1980 I was cadet. I was a student. You understand what I'm saying?

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Um-hum.

THE WITNESS: So I was not SS personnel at the time until I graduated from school. Then 1984, before I went for a training, okay? So from 1981 to '84 I was not SS personnel, I was not an agent. I was just a cadet.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: So from --

THE WITNESS: From school I go, when I go, I do the filing work, I leave. That's it.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: But '84 to '90 --

THE WITNESS: From '84 to '90? Go from '84 to '90?

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Yeah.

THE WITNESS: Okay. From '84 to '90, when I was an agent, as I said before, I was a plainclothes personnel. Doe had people that, at like advance training, the directors, you know, these are the people that come around closer to Doe. But if I go to work, my assignment is go on the field. You understand what I'm saying? Go on the field. So when I
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go and sign in, I'm going for intelligence. I am not in the mansion to, to know what kind of decision Doe is running there. I'm not Director Nelson. I'm not Director Brown. I'm not director, I'm just a single personnel.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: So what did your, your duty entail?

THE WITNESS: My duty entailed is that if there is any information, if there's any information, like if we hear information that, you know, this person is planning such and such a thing against the government, we go there as plainclothes personnel to find out fact, whether it's true or not, and so if you come back and you submit a report, they go there and they investigate. They do counter, you know, investigation before action is taken.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Okay. Finally, were you related to Doe?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: And what was --

THE WITNESS: He was my cousin.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Your cousin?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Okay. You said that a whole lot of people died from you --

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: -- from Tuzuon. I don't want it now. Could you please give us a list? Because at the end of our process we are supposed to have a listing of all of those who died in the war. You talk about only two, your brother, and I think your nephew.
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THE WITNESS: No, my nephew died from my house.

He didn't go to Freeport.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: No, I know, but they died, they died during the war.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Okay.

THE WITNESS: So the list of people from Tuzuon? Or the list of the people that I know?

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Your relatives.

THE WITNESS: Relatives?

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Oh, yeah. You say so many of them died during the war.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Yeah, okay. So we appreciate if you could please give her a listing of all of those.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Thank you.

THE WITNESS: I will do that.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Mr. Zeon, thank you very much again for coming, and from your testimony here today we can clearly see that this war produced no winners, we are all losers, and let me extend sympathy to you for your loss, the loss of your relatives and friends. I have a couple of questions, well, not a couple of questions, one or two questions.

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: One or two of them are follow-up questions --
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THE WITNESS: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: -- because some of
my colleagues asked them already. And please pardon me, the
questions are not intended to, to question you or to show
suspicion, but it's just that you seem to be in a unique
position as a former SSS person, a member of the Krahn tribe,
and also someone who is, you know, was close to the
president, so I will ask certain questions just for the sake
of clarification. I hope you don't mind.

My colleague asked the question before about Nimba
citizens being killed. A follow-up question to that. In
your response you stated that the late President Samuel Doe
at the time didn't trust Nimba citizens because of the
Quiwonkpa situation, but then also from other testimonies and
from other research we've done, we gather that his, the
personal physician to the president, Dr. Wongay, was from
Nimba County, and that also his butler was from Nimba County.
Johnny Kpor was from Nimba County, and he was a reported
lawyer to President Doe. In the end, as a matter of fact, he
was killed because he was, quote-unquote, too loyal to
President Doe.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: And there were
other citizens from Nimba County who, you know, according to
information we have received, stuck by the president even
gen when some of his own tribesmen deserted him, of course, for
fear of their lives. Chief Jerry Gornyor, who was the town...
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crier who blew the whistle on this whole rebel incursion, you know, is from Nimba County. My question here then is Nimba County citizens were targeted from information we have received. When the war started, they lost their jobs in government, they were, they were fired from their positions in government, and some of those who were in the Army were disarmed and a lot of them faced grave danger, some of them were killed. I'm just wondering, I know you said you were not one of those who was part of the policy-making team for President Doe, but you are in a unique position. Why was it necessary to target Nimba citizens or people of Nimba County? Why?

THE WITNESS: Thank you. I was not AFL personnel at the time. I didn't take uniform at the time. I didn't go to the front at the time. But what I want for you to understand is that, you know, before a security man takes action, there should be information before, in order to take action, or before they go to do anything. Now as you said that people were targeting Nimba County people, the war started in Nimba. You understand what I'm saying? The war started in Nimba. I was not there. My friend, who was called Tommy Belleh, he's a Krahn man, he and myself grew up together, he was in Butuo. The very first man when the Gio people entered they killed was Tommy Belleh. They chop him, they stab him. You know, at the end of every year the Gio people, sometime they move across to have feast. And so when these people went there at the time, when the Gio people were coming in mostly at the time, they thought they were coming to have feast. You understand what I'm saying? And so that
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night when Tommy Belleh went to take a bath, they, they stab him to death. That's how the war started.

Now when the information came, they sent Army people there, you know, to find out whether it's true. When the people went, they came back, they say it's true. Now what happened is we have AFL. AFL go to the front. When they reach in any town they would say, oh, you come, you come help us, I mean, you know. People will start, they say they are welcome there. Well, they welcome them and maybe give them food, you know, if you go to the front. That is information I got from there. So, I mean, then the people who sat down, ambush come, and then the people fall in the trap, the AFL, they will fall in the trap. They did it, I think, two, three times. Like welcome the Army people, they say, well, the people come to, you know, to help us. Then they set ambush. While people eating, Army people eating, then guns start firing from, rocket guns start firing from here and there.

So according to the information I got, the Army people there, they didn't know, they didn't know the rebel from, you know, a civilian, because the people, they were not in uniform. So if you said that people went to Nimba and they start killing people, then I don't know how it was, I was not at the front. But this is the information that we got. They didn't know who was who.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay. You spoke of this person who was a rebel, you lived around the SKD Stadium at the time, and his name was Cooper, you said, who shot your nephew.

THE WITNESS: Cooper was the Mano man, he came...
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COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Yes, and he --
yeah, he arrested you and then shot your nephew.

THE WITNESS: No.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Is he the same
person who killed your nephew?

THE WITNESS: No.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Who killed your
nephew?

THE WITNESS: The next commander that came is a
Gio man. I don't know his name.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay.

THE WITNESS: But Cooper is the one that came
first. He arrested me with his group. Then they, Mr. Flomo,
Joseph, the man who was I'm living, they call him Joseph
Flomo, he told the people, you are pleading with this Mano
man to let me go. He say he's not bad man. And so when the
other man came and said they should get rid of me, and my
nephew was trying to, you know, to go and appeal, he started
crying, you know, please leave my pa, please leave my -- no.
I mean it was very -- I don't know. I don't know if that's
how they kill people on the other side. I don't know. And
they just shot him right before me.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: So you don't have
any information on this person who shot and killed your
nephew or some of the people who were with you?

THE WITNESS: I don't know, I don't know, I don't
know that. The only person I know at the time because I
heard him, is Cooper. Cooper. That's what I remember. The
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the first commander, and he was a Mano man, according to people. Flomo was talking to them. He say he's a Mano man.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Around what time of year was this?

THE WITNESS: It was 19, 19, 1990 --

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: You can think about it.

THE WITNESS: No, it happened before Doe died.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay.

THE WITNESS: So that's 1990. Ah, it happened before Doe, before Doe could go to Freeport, so it was 1990.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay. My colleague asked a question about killings that were happening, that were going -- my colleague asked a question about killings that were taking place in and around Monrovia.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: I want to, you know, reiterate a question as well. During the early '90s, when the war started, like between the period from, from January, February 1990, all the way to, up to October, November 1990, there were a lot of killings going on in Monrovia, especially in a single area, in the Congo Town area. The rebels were not there yet, the soldiers were in charge, and we are receiving information that death squads loyal to President Doe and the Army were active in those areas. A lot of people died, civilians, you know, a lot of civilians, and there were also heads popping up through different part of the city, like the three heads that pop up on Somalia Drive, of allegedly members of the Gio and Mano
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tribe. Now what do you know about these death squads and what do you know about some of these killings that were taking place, like the Lutheran church, the Methodist school, and can you just shed some light?

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much. See, when I took oath and what I'm saying here is what I, what I see and what I've seen, and what people told me is what I will say. I won't lie. When this war started in Nimba County, when the people came, when the Army people went to the front, some of them came back and say, well, it is not easy there to admit, they decided, the people decided to go against the Gio people in the Army. You understand what I'm saying? Before me, okay, before me, one of my, my best friends, he's a Gio man, he's a lieutenant. You hear me? He was living 72nd. I think all of you should know 72nd. This Gio man, we all used to be together under Colonel Tarley, Washington, or General Jalle.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Joseph Jalle.

THE WITNESS: Joseph Jalle. This Gio man -- I live Jacob Town, next to 72nd. They have a group of people in the camp that are, Army people that go to the front and come back, they are desperate, you see, and so this Gio man, he say, he was a lieutenant, first lieutenant, I don't know, they say John Hill or Red Hill, but it's behind Jacob Town area, that man's head was found in that area, and I cry for that man up to this time. He's a Gio man. So while it is true that, I don't know whether, you know, that the Krahn people or whosoever, but what I do know that since he's a Gio man, there is a Krahn man that killed him there. You
understand what I'm saying? Because this man, he was not a very, he wasn't a bad man. We all, all played together, we do things together. As I said, I had Gio friends, you hear me? How would this man leave 72nd and he go kill his own self, I don't know, they say John Hill or Red Hill, you see? So if the people say that they are killing the Gio people, I myself, I know that it was wrong. They had no right killing that man. If the people come and he join Gio people, okay. He's an officer.

So I mean that's what happened. That's what I know. What I do know is I didn't take part in the war so I don't want to, I didn't take arm, you know, against anybody, so I mean I was, I mean like -- I don't know what to say.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: My last question. You were in the barracks at one point with your family during the heat of the war just before the late President Doe went to the port and was killed there. And according to various accounts, the situation with Liberians in the barracks, including civilians, was, was awful, and also the Camp Johnson Road area. Can you just describe for us briefly what was the general situation, condition of people who were seeking refuge in the barracks and surrounding areas and how were they treated?

THE WITNESS: I was living in the barracks. Well, at the barracks, that was the only place that we could go at the time. They have Gio people there in the barrack. Up to this time when Taylor came, they have Gio people in the barrack. They have, you have whole lot of tribes in the barrack, you see. But what happened here is this is BTC.
You know BTC. Now the people came, they were almost to the mansion. Prince Johnson people who come from this way are almost getting to the bridge, so the only corridor we have from, from the bridge to the place. We came to a time that people withdrew and they came even to the fence. You understand what I'm saying? And so what happened between these people and, and what happened, what go on here, I don't know. Because, because of my arm at the time I was not well, I was in a house.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: No, I'm actually hoping that you have given us at least a factual picture of the humanitarian situation --

THE WITNESS: Oh, no.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: -- of these people who were seeking refuge in the barracks.

THE WITNESS: Yeah, okay. There was a whole lot of sicknesses in the barrack. This former CID, the Mandingo man, CID director.

COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Bangalee Sesay.

THE WITNESS: Bangalee Sesay. I saw Bangalee Sesay when he died. Cholera caught him, he was like this (indicating). And so people were dying in the barrack from bullets, you know. If you are going out, you got to be careful because bullets coming to you, bullets from all over. So what I told my children is we should be indoor. But actually BTC was like, you know, ghost town, because people
were, if you go here, you hear people crying, if you go here, you hear people crying.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: So the BTC -- sorry, that's my last question, just follow-up. So the grounds of the BTC then would contain mass graves of, you know, people who were dying there --

THE WITNESS: Sure.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: -- and had to be buried because they couldn't come home?

THE WITNESS: The beach, yeah, the beach area, Like Thomas Bangow was buried right there in the beach.

COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Thank you very much, Mr. Zeon.

THE WITNESS: Sure.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: And, again, as my colleagues said, please accept our sympathies for the death of your nephew and other relatives.

Just as a follow-up to the question my colleagues just asked. There were in Monrovia at a certain time death squads operating, a time when Monrovia was just the area in which, which was controlled by the AFL, just a small area at the time, Sinkor, Waterside and those places. That was before Prince Johnson came in and even went to Waterside. As a security man, can you say if you would know the identity of some those who were involved in the death squads? There are reports that there were a number of people, some of whom were in positions of authority, members of the death squad. Do
you know anything about that? Can you say who were some of those who were involved in these death squads?

THE WITNESS: Well, if you say death squad, then, of course, if the people, if the war is fighting and you talk about death squad, then I don't know about it. Taylor was the commander at the time. Taylor was the ranking man that people were following at the time.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Who were some of those under his command?

THE WITNESS: Who?

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Who were some of Taylor's top lieutenants, people who were under his command at the time?

THE WITNESS: Taylor --

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: That would still be alive today.

THE WITNESS: No, I don't know. Because what I do know is Taylor, Taylor was the only man that, according to information, that rebels afraid of, so it was Taylor that was, you know, he was heading the people that was frightened, you know, and so if you talk about death squads, I was not outside and see death squad leader or so. The only time when I was in 72nd, the man I talk about, that's the only man I know about, and I don't know who did it, because it was like in the back, they carry him like from 72nd to the Bassa people area before they, they killed him. And so I don't know who did it.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Who were some of those, to the best of your knowledge, involved in the
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10 massacre at the Lutheran church?
11 THE WITNESS: Lutheran church?
12 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Yeah.
13 THE WITNESS: I have no knowledge about the people that, that went to Lutheran church. But what I do heard is that, is that Taylor, Taylor, Taylor was among them. He was the leader. Now what, but as I said before, while it is true I'm a Krahn man, I'm a security man, going myself, we don't agree to that. When I hear that thing, no, I don't.
19 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: There are reports that --
20 THE WITNESS: So.
22 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: There were reports that the late president, Samuel Doe, was a part of the, the group that went to the Lutheran church. Did you hear anything about this? Can you confirm or deny this?
1 THE WITNESS: You say who?
2 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: There were reports, there are reports, stories, rumors, reports, unconfirmed, that the late President Doe was among those who carried out the massacre at the Lutheran church. Can you confirm or deny this?
7 THE WITNESS: Is that, that Doe left the mansion and went there to, to -- I have no knowledge of that.
9 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Now --
10 THE WITNESS: There is no, I don't think there was no reason for Doe to leave the mansion to go and do that. I have no knowledge of that.
13 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: You told us that
you're from Tuzuon.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: And during our hearings in and around the country, we did go to Grand Gedeh and have hearings, and some of the revelations that came forth is that Tuzuon, they still, talking about reconciliation, that even in Tuzuon there is a need for reconciliation because, if you recall, the late Willie P. Neebo, who was the first Minister of Lands and Mines following the coup, and when he died and was buried, according to tradition they say when a big man dies somebody has to be buried with him. And somebody who came and testified before this Commission, this body, that his first cousin, who was a security officer on duty at the home of the president, was buried alive along with Willie P. Neebo. Did you hear anything about that? Or do you know anything about that, of that rift that currently exists within Tuzuon as a result of that?

THE WITNESS: I heard it, but I was not in Tuzuon. This man is a Gbabon man. We have 16 different tribes, subregions. When I say Krahn, Krahn is just Krahn, but we have 16, 16 sub, you know, regions --

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Groups?

THE WITNESS: -- sub tribes. So this man is a Gbabon man. He is from Zle Town, he was Zle Town, Paul Town area. He was assigned, I mean with, I don't know, the police or so, I don't know, but I heard that this man got missing in Tuzuon. I heard it. But who am I? Single, lieutenant, I'm not even assigned in Tuzuon, so I don't know about it. I
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heard it but I was not there.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: So there's still a problem today between, within Tuzuon? There's still some division?

THE WITNESS: No. Listen. Tuzuon, this man is from Zle Town, he's from far off like about ten towns in between. Tuzuon and Zle Town. We are Gbobor, they are Gbabo. You understand what I'm saying? So this man is not from Tuzuon, so there is no division between --

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Within Grand Gedeh, within Grand Gedeh. I mean let's say not from Tuzuon, but from Grand Gedeh.

THE WITNESS: Okay. If you say Grand Gedeh, then of course, yes. Then I will agree because there are some things that happen that people, you know, dissatisfied with.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: So to the best of your knowledge, you talk about reconciliation as a way of starting the ball rolling, not necessarily between Krahn and Gios, but even amongst ourselves, say within Grand Gedeh itself, what kinds of efforts that you would know are being made to address this problem of division? Now you remember Nelson Toe, who was a member of the PRC, also from Grand Gedeh, Harris Johnson, also from Grand Gedeh, and these were all executed --

THE WITNESS: Executed.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: -- by Doe.

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: So is there any effort, so to speak, to reconcile, as a first step towards
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reconciling, between you and Krahn and then the larger Liberian nation?

THE WITNESS: Okay. We are trying to, to rebuild, according to what I said, we are trying to rebuild our, our country, right? The Krahn and the different sections of Krahn, when it comes to reconciliation, you know, Tuzuon people, the Gbobor people, I know that from the onset of the war people against the Gbobor people in Tuzuon, within Tuzuon itself, I know. But, one, we are trying to preach reconciliation now. To me, I think it should be on a tribal level yet, because Krahn man, at this time we are united. From the beginning of the war, as soon as people hit, when the people were hit we were united, we were together. The people were together fighting. So I don't think that the Krahn people are divided now. However, I'm not in Liberia. If this is going on, I have no knowledge. But the reconciliation process should be, you know, between, right now it should be between Gio and Krahn now, Gio, Mano and Krahn.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Have you heard, did you hear anything about the massacre in Glaro?

THE WITNESS: Glaro?

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Yeah. And River Gee. It's right next door to Grand Gedeh, Glaro.

THE WITNESS: No, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know about that. I'm not Gedeh, so that's why I don't know.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Okay. This was a massacre in which over 500 persons were killed.
My last question to you is as a refugee in America, how have you found it, what particular challenges have you faced since coming and what do you look forward to?

THE WITNESS: Well, to admit, while it is true this is not my country, I'm pleased being in America now, okay? What I do know is that if you are serious, you come here, you learn better and you go back home, you live better. But right now if, if things happen in this country and if you don't, you don't put yourself together, if you don't organize yourself now, it may be too late for you. But as a refugee in the country, I got here, the people gave me, they offered me a scholarship. They said I have the time to go, I mean I'm willing, they are willing to give me scholarship, like student loan and stuff. You understand what I'm saying? And so the American people here, they are not treating us bad. We know that if we learn here, that will be part of us and our ticket back home.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: How are your children coping?

THE WITNESS: Hmm?

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Your children, how are they coping?

THE WITNESS: How are they coping? Oh, they're fine. My son just graduated from Duluth University on the other side there, and the other three are in, they are in, they are wonderful. One man is, the oldest is now doing like, how you say, mechanical engineer or so. So I'm pleased
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being here. And I'm not hurt, I have not been, you know, nobody have come to me to hurt my feelings here since I've been here.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: So you feel no bitterness?

THE WITNESS: Hmm?

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: You feel no bitterness?

THE WITNESS: Well, the bitterness I'm feeling now is maybe the bitterness should be from my own, my own Liberian people, not the American. American people have nothing to do with my, my, what happened in my country. It is myself that brought this problem. We ourself brought the problem. So I cannot blame the people, the people who accepted me here, I can't lie and say, well, they are treating me bad. No.

COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Thank you very much, Mr. Witness, for coming to share your experience to us, and I am so sorry for what you experienced during the conflict and the death of your relatives.

In the testimony you said when the 17 men took over the PRC government, they asked former President Doe to chair, and because he didn't know better, because based on his experience, he had people around him we should consider the traditional leaders or his advisors. Would you kindly name some of the people that you knew at that time were Doe's
Alfred Zeon

advisors?

THE WITNESS: No, what I said was that when Doe took over, he didn't know that -- I said he invited Congo people, like the higher-up people that work in his government. You understand what I'm saying? So if you talk about the advisor, I ...

COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Are the traditional leaders, you say, because Doe consulted people at times of decisions --

THE WITNESS: Oh, yeah, Doe would call people together to ask their view, you know, say this is what happened and what do you want me to do, okay? The paramount chief, the paramount chief, the clan chief, he will call these people together. So if you know one of the chiefs in your area, that person should be the one of the, the elders. So I don't know, you know, that John Brown is the paramount chief of that day. But I know my paramount chief from Tuzuon.

COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: So does that mean that he didn't rely on the advice of his advisors, only the paramount chiefs?

THE WITNESS: No, that what I'm saying, that the elders and the paramount chiefs, the elders of the nation, the chiefs, the big, big people, he called them together. That's what I'm saying. So if you say who are some of these people? I don't know them.

COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: In your recommendation you say it will be better for the government to appoint a Gio man and a Krahn man to help the reconciliation process, but
looking at the history of our conflict and the tribes in Liberia and the impact of the war on every sector in terms of family, individual family or society, how can you -- do you have any comments? Because knowing that this war didn't affect only one, the Gio people or the Mano people, but yet every sect of Liberia was affected, how can you reconcile that?

THE WITNESS: Well, if you listen to my recommendation, I said that they should have put Gio people or Krahn people before bringing the other tribes in is what I said, because the, the conflict was between Gio and Krahn. You understand what I'm saying? I didn't say they should leave the other tribes out. No. That's not what I said. What I'm saying is that the main people that brought about the conflict, they should head it. They should go out ahead of it, then Bassa man follow, Kru man follow, you know. But if you leave these people out and say, well, Kru man come in and head the commission, now Krahn man is deep, Gio man is deep, you understand what I'm saying? You got to put these people together first. That's what I'm saying. I'm not saying they should leave the other people out. If you are Krahn man here and this man is not Krahn man, he's done. If he is Gio people here and this person is not Gio person, that person is done. So put them together first and let them agree, let them reconcile their differences. Then, of course, they'll approve. I'm not saying that they should leave the other people out.

COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Okay. Now in terms of this Diaspora, you know that the Liberians that are here,
Alfred Zeon

based on other experience, we heard that more often when you
call tribal meetings, you see lot of people coming, post a
national event, calling all Liberians in to gather to some
occasion, it's difficult for people to come. How do you
think, as an individual, you can overcome these differences,
knowing that we all are from one country?

THE WITNESS: Well, what I said before, the
leaders here should try to put the Liberian people, bring
them together, make them understand that we are to be
reunited, we are to reconcile. So what I'm saying here is
that this level of the leaders, you understand what I'm
saying? We have leaders in this, in this community. Let the
people try to bring the Liberian people together. I am
willing, you know, to reconcile but, you know, it's hard. So
we need people to encourage. I'm a victim, I need someone to
encourage me. That's why Gio man is a victim, Gio man needs
somebody to encourage him. You understand what I'm saying?
So, I mean, I will be willing to take part in any
reconciliation in a meeting or process.

COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: And my last question
would be that when the former President Doe was killed,
things became difficult, you were hopeless, you decided to go
across the bridge, and on your way you met a friend but then
during that process you were shot. Did the friend do
anything to assist or to stop the people from torturing you
or from beating you then?

THE WITNESS: No, you misunderstood. That's not
what I said.

COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: A classmate or so, did
Alfred Zeon

Do you meet anybody across besides the ECOMOG soldier that you knew?

THE WITNESS: Well, what I said, I said this man is an SS personnel, Bakla, Samuel Bakla. I saw Bakla, but I didn't go to him because he was heavily armed, and it was not when they shot me. They shot me before I even go there. You understand what I'm saying? I only went there to find means so that my family and myself can leave the country. You understand what I'm saying? So I didn't say it was when I was shot. No. Bakla, what I said is I believed that Bakla said, Bakla told his friends that this man is a Krahn man. That's what I said. Because he's the one I saw there. But I didn't speak to him because he was in arm.

COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: But besides you, did you see them torturing any other person?

THE WITNESS: I was -- no. I was not stationed Prince Johnson side. I came from BTC to go and find means that, so that I can leave. It was within that process, you know, they started beating me and stuff. Then ECOMOG man came and then gave warning shot, then the people left me.

COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Thank you for coming.

THE WITNESS: So that's, that's what happened.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you, Mr. Witness. And I will ask you very, excuse me, direct questions now, and I will be happy if you can give very direct responses. I heard, but I would like you to confirm, that you were an intelligence officer?

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You didn't carry arms
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and you didn't go to the front at any point in time?

THE WITNESS: During the war? I'm saying during the war, intelligence officer, as an intelligence officer you have sidearm. You don't take heavy arm. You don't take things like BAR or M-16 or so. You had your sidearm. I had my sidearm when I was security at the time.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: And then you said there was intelligence reports received by the executive mansion that Charles Taylor was training and planning this war.

THE WITNESS: Sure.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Did the intelligence review who all were collaborators or supporters of Charles Taylor?

THE WITNESS: Let me, let me say this. No. Let me say this. When intelligence report came, they sent people there. When these people came back they said that, yeah, it's true. But the leaders we had at the time --

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I understood all of that.

THE WITNESS: So they said that, you know, the Quiwonkpa government overpower anybody at any time.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: The intelligence --

THE WITNESS: So they didn't take it to be that serious.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I understand. What I wanted to know, whether besides the name Charles Taylor --

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: -- the intelligence
Alfred Zeon

seemed to be credible because eventually the war came and we all got to know that Charles Taylor was training, whether in that intelligence report was a review in terms of who assisted Charles Taylor, who were supporting him, who were training with him. For example, was Prince Johnson's name amongst those who came up?

THE WITNESS: He was collecting money here.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Intelligence people --


CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: -- were collecting money here?

THE WITNESS: Yeah, people were supporting, collecting money here to, to stage a coup.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: But you didn't name any of those people or --

THE WITNESS: I don't know, they didn't name any. If they name any names to the directors, I don't know. But the information we got is people are collecting money to stage coup.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay. That is sufficient. The late president was your cousin?

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: How close were you to him? Did you see him often? Once in a year, every month? Since you were in the mansion, was it possible to sit with him and talk things over sometimes or anything like that?

THE WITNESS: Well, at the time I was considered
as a boy in the family, okay? So the only people that see
Doe often, they were men like Thomas Bangow, you know, the
big, big brothers like Jim Whizney. But for me, before I see
Doe, if I go to work and the assignment in the lift, the
elevator --

  CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: So sometimes in a
  year --
  THE WITNESS: -- and I take him up, bring him
down.
  CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: -- you never saw him at
  all?
  THE WITNESS: That's all. When he get in the
elevator, I'm not allowed to speak to him until he opened his
mouth to me.
  CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: So it's possible
sometimes in an entire year you didn't see him at all?
  THE WITNESS: You say entire year? No, what you
talking about? Not entire year. I'm a security personnel
so, I mean, they can assign me, like if there is no manpower,
they call me. If I'm at home, they will call me and say we
need you to be either on the sixth floor or either on the
fourth floor.
  CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Up to today's date, have

you understood why President Doe went to the Freeport?
  THE WITNESS: Up to now I have no idea. That I am
still asking. Why did he leave the executive mansion? Up to
now I have no idea. Up to now. I'm telling the truth and
nothing but the truth. I have no idea.
  CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You said --
Alfred Zeon

THE WITNESS: Whether he was leaving the country or not, I don't know.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You say when the body of the late Quiwonkpa was brought to the mansion --

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: -- Doe was very mad at those who killed him.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Can you tell us who killed him?

THE WITNESS: The leader of the people at the time was late Thomas Pennue, Thomas Pennue was one of those, but I was not there when they brought Quiwonkpa, of course, but Thomas Pennue was there when this happened.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Nobody living was involved that you know of?

THE WITNESS: Thomas Pennue, Elijah --

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Maybe Taylor?

THE WITNESS: Gbasai Gaye -- no. But Thomas Pennue followers at the time, or maybe Gbasai Gaye or so.

But what I am saying here is the captain at the time when they kill Quiwonkpa was Thomas Pennue, and later when they brought Quiwonkpa to the mansion, while it was true I was not there, it was like I was on the scene, you understand what I'm saying? So I don't know whether it's part of Doe that killed Quiwonkpa, but Thomas Pennue was, was the captain at the time.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: My memory may not be correct, but I can recollect that there was somebody on the
Alfred Zeon television who was with Quiwonkpa's body and he claimed he did the killing.

THE WITNESS: Yeah, that I witnessed. That was Edward Slangar. I witnessed that. But I was not there to say, yeah, that's Edward Slangar killed Quiwonkpa, but what I do know --

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: But he professed, he said he did the killing.

THE WITNESS: Huh?

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: But he professed at the time that he did the killing.

THE WITNESS: Yeah, according to the, according to the television, yes.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: The late president, do you think he died a frustrated man?

THE WITNESS: Doe? You say what?

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: The late President Doe.

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I remember in your testimony there was a time he wanted to resign --

THE WITNESS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: -- because he was disturbed over what was happening and all of that.

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Do you think he died a frustrated president?

THE WITNESS: What I do believe is Doe died for the sake of his follower, for the sake of his, I mean the Krahn.
Alfred Zeon

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Yeah.

THE WITNESS: Because this man that was sitting
down here, the people went to the mansion two, I think two or
three different times to get Doe out in my presence. You
understand what I'm saying? I was there. Because when the
people were fighting and know there was no way out, you hear
me, the people brought cars to the mansion to let them go.
So Doe told them that, do you want me leave these people? If
you want for me to leave, take these people and leave them,
take them from here, and they said they cannot take
everybody. They did, I think, two or three times.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: And there were 500
persons Doe said should leave the country as well?

THE WITNESS: More than even 500.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: More than 500?

(Laughter.)

THE WITNESS: More than even 500. You understand
what I'm saying? And so ...  

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay, Mr. Witness.

Thank you very much. We're out the time, Commissioner Bull.

We can ask him --

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Yes. Just this T.

Thomas Pennue, is that the same T. Harrison Pennue?

THE WITNESS: No.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: That's a different

Pennue?

THE WITNESS: That's a different Pennue.

COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Okay.

THE WITNESS: The Pennue I'm talking about, he was
Alfred Zeon
the third person to, third butler who got Doe out. They got
three, how you call it, Jimmy Burrow was what to the late
president? Butler.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Butler.

THE WITNESS: That's the third butler, because he
had three. One, two, three, four. There were four.
Because ...

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay. Sheikh, very
briefly.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Mr. Zeon, let
me make some clarification. This Commission was never set up
by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

THE WITNESS: Hmm?

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: This
Commission was never set up by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

THE WITNESS: Um-hum.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: It was set up
at the outcry conference where all the world factions,
political parties, civil society organizations, international
communities were all present and came out with the idea.
Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf came into the presidency when this
Commission was already set up and the Commissioners nominated
and appointed, so I don't want you to leave from here with
the notion that it was Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf who have picked
these people. So it was beyond her administration.

THE WITNESS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KAFUMBA KONNEH: Thank you.

THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Is there anything you
Alfred Zeon
would like to say that you think you didn't say before you
leave?

THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Please do.

THE WITNESS: Okay. I'm sorry for the time. But
my people that was killed, you understand, you understand
what I'm saying? People that was killed, there were so many,
and I just want to appeal to you, I mean to the Commission,
that the Gio and the Krahn should forget what their
differences are. You understand what I'm saying? If Alfred
Zeon, sitting down here, can talk about reconciliation, then
I feel that Gio man should be willing to talk about
reconciliation. The people that die from our house -- you
are Liberian. When we talk about family, you know what we're
talking about family. And I'm saying that Doe and myself
from the same house. So you know how many people that die
for me? So if I can sit down here and talk about
reconciliation, then the Gio man or Mano man or Basso man
should be willing to reconcile so that we can, you know,
rebuild our country. That's what I have to say.

And if this lady you talk about, Ellen
Johnson-Sirleaf, I want for you people to please appeal to
this lady to unite the Liberian people.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You mean the president,
right?

THE WITNESS: The president to, you know, I mean,
let her try to put the people together and not to get rid of,
you know, this so, so, so group because you are from here and

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there. No. Because if she's doing that, we would not reconcile. Because information from back home that I'm hearing is very discouraging, you know, so I won't take myself and say I'm going back home now. No. So, please, let us start that process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I want to thank you very much for coming and sharing your experience and for the recommendations you have made. We are sorry if the impression was created by our interaction that you were made to put up defenses for the late president, but ours is an inquiry commission, and so at times we are very probing and we ask sometimes very intrusive questions, but we appreciated that you were able to answer our questions. So thank you very much, and you can leave now.

THE WITNESS: Thank you, too.

(Applause.)

(Session ended at 1:40 p.m.)
Alfred Zeon

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 12th day of June, 2008, at the time and
place specified.

DATED: July 2, 2008.

______________________________
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