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TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF LIBERIA
DIASPORA PROJECT

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

TESTIMONY OF
DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY

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: Mary P. Mitchell, RDR, CRR

1 The following proceedings were had and made of
2 record, commencing at approximately 3:02 p.m.:

3 (Witness administered oath and responded as
4 follows:)

5 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I, Dr. Patricia
6 Jabbeh Wesley, do promise that my testimony I have come to
7 give to the TRC of Liberia is the truth and nothing but the
8 truth, so help me God.

9 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Please be seated. Good
10 evening.

11 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Hi.

12 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: And welcome to this
13 public forum of the TRC. We are glad you could come, take
14 off time from your busy schedule to share these moments with
15 us. We appreciate it, because we believe the quest for
16 justice, the quest for peace, unity, and reconciliation in
17 Liberia should involve everybody. It is in our hearts and
18 our minds that we can find the solution to the problems and
19 the conflicts that has bedeviled our land over the last two
20 decades. So we say thanks and welcome.

21 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: I will use this time now
23 to introduce the commissioners to you. Commissioner Sheikh
24 Konneh. Pearl Brown Bull. Gerald Coleman. Dede Dolopei.
25 Massa Washington. John Stewart. And Oumu Syllah.

1 Can you kindly repeat your name for us.

2 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I'm Dr. Patricia
3 Jabbeh Wesley.

4 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Place of residence
5 currently?

6 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I live in
7 Holidaysburg, Pennsylvania.

8 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Date of birth, please.

9 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: August 7th, 1955.

10 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: What do you do
11 currently, Dr. Wesley?

12 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I'm a Professor of
13 English at Penn State University. And I'm a poet and author.

14 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: When did you migrate to
15 the U.S.?

16 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: 1991. March, 1991.

17 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you for this brief
18 introduction. You can proceed.

19 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I want to begin my
20 conversation by reading one poem entitled "Child Soldier"
21 from my first book of poetry. I'm going to read this poem
22 not because I want to entertain you, but because poetry has
23 been my way of finding healing. And because I saw too many
24 of our children killed while I was in the war.

25

1 "Child Soldier.
2 Child of Liberia, Kahieh,
3 murdered in Harper
4 while your dreams bloomed, afresh
5 at midday.
6 Just before the palm could bloom;
7 before the bamboo shoot could spring out.
8 The brushfire set your branches ablaze.
9 The palm branch sprang out,
10 but the fire threatened in the brush--
11 palm nuts burning in Pleebo
12 so the planting season
13 will bring us a great harvest.
14 The palm branches caught in the brushfire.
15 Kernels still white, their tender shells, burning.
16 Gbolobo's tropics lending its young
17 so warriors will reap
18 crops they did not plant.
19
20 Child of Liberia, Saye,
21 in Buotuo, you went
22 with doubting feet
23 that swayed to the rocking that broke
24 the dancers' feet.
25 Running, orphaned early,

1 Where Tapeta takes us to the Gbi forest.
2 Child soldier, cutting the rope
3 that ties us to oak branches; branches
4 to trunks. These oaks
5 without which history is lost.
6 Ghapu, Liberia's green palm,
7 you came from Bassa, trampling the coastline,
8 carrying adjustable ammunition
9 in our adjustable age.
10 I followed your footprint
11 along Sinoe's beaches, searching to know you.
12 Child soldier, called to war,
13 slashing your fathers, cutting off the root
14 that brings us water from river banks;
15 this root that calls the Cestos to the Atlantic.
16 Wlemunga, child warrior,
17 You for whom history waits
18 so we can end our anger.
19 You fell and fell until all lay silent
20 and bare.
21 Dying with eyes awake.
22 History will want to know.
23 History will want to know.
24
25 Child of war, Kortu, my child

1 who followed where the road led
2 so crookedly from Nimba to Cape Mount.
3 From Ganta to Monrovia's rocky hills,
4 trampling the Mesurado swamps.
5 Your feet dug deep, printing
6 stories along Monrovia's hillsides.
7 Too early beckoned,
8 you followed too hastily
9 to grave mounds of dead warriors
10 in Firestone rubber bush.
11 Graveyards follow your footprints.
12 Gravestones, invisible to the passerby.
13 Our war children,
14 who follow men who have lost all reason.
15 Our war
16 that will not yield to the
17 cries of newborns, abandoned.
18
19 This, my child, my Kahien,
20 called by our warlords--
21 our punishment for sins past--
22 who came demanding our sons
23 while we still carried them in young wombs.
24 Our sons, called by our war heroes,
25 blinded by gun dust calling

1 for more children
2 though we were quickly made barren by battle.
3 Calling out for you, Kahien,
4 a sacrifice to gods who seek
5 more blood at the hand of more blood.
6
7 My child, your nostrils
8 still full of early dawn mucus,
9 wetting your pants and bleeding,
10 wetting Liberia with your bleeding.
11 The adjustable automatic guns, handed you
12 at the killing of your father.
13 Our sons, our history made adjustable
14 in this adjustable age where
15 reason loses ground to insanity.
16 Child soldiers, our children.
17 Saye, Ghapu, Kahieh, Nimley, Kortu, Wlemunga..."

18 (End of reading.)

19
20 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I will continue my
21 discussion by telling you a little bit about myself. Prior
22 to the 1980 coup, I was -- I went to the University of
23 Liberia, and graduated in 1980. I was at the University
24 during that age of questioning of our history. And I came to
25 grad school and I taught at University of Liberia from '80 to

1 '83. And came to grad school '83, and got a Master's at
2 Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. I finished grad
3 school, I did my exam on a Tuesday, I was in Liberia on a
4 Friday, 1983, June.

5 I wanted to make a contribution to my country,
6 because I came to grad school on a war bank fellowship. I
7 wanted to give back to my country.

8 I went back home and discovered what was going on in
9 Liberia. I will not talk about those years.

10 And then I tried to build my life, my husband and I.
11 We had three children by the time the war started. I was a
12 professor at the University of Liberia for ten years prior to
13 the war. I wanted to give to my country.

14 And then the war struck. I decided not to leave my
15 country because I felt that Liberia needed everybody who
16 could be there to help during the war.

17 I lived in Pagos Island, Congo Town, where my husband
18 and I, right after grad school, built our home from scratch.
19 And I planted -- besides teaching at the University, I
20 planted a beautiful garden of all kinds of food in my yard
21 that I could have survived living on if I had not been forced
22 out of my house.

23 I had a hobby of raising animals. By the time
24 Charles Taylor took -- he capture Paynesville, I had 45 grown
25 pigs in my backyard. I had almost 100 chickens. I had

1 ducks. I had papaya trees. I have food in my yard. I had a
2 well. I could have survived on.

3 I supplied meat to my neighbors. I gave the Red
4 Cross nine pigs at a time during the month of July when
5 Monrovia was at a standstill.

6 I fed the refugees in the St. Peter's Lutheran
7 Church. The Catholic Relief Organization came to my house
8 regularly with the Red Cross for meat to feed -- free meat to
9 feed refugees. I felt I wanted to give to my country.

10 Those soldiers came regularly at night and shot up a
11 pig every now and then and took it secretly. There are many
12 things that happened in the war.

13 I -- I'm writing a memoir. I don't -- I'm not, I'm
14 not going to say the details of all the things. I'm going
15 to, I'm going to -- I'm going to speak from four things --
16 four points.

17 One of them, and it's what I read about, the children
18 that were traumatized by our war. Children don't know that
19 we are such crazy people. And so they didn't know what was
20 going on. When I went through the war, there were many
21 children who died out very early. And then the older people
22 died out. Okay. But today I want to speak to what I saw
23 happen to women also. The women, women like my mom, like my
24 stepmom, women like myself, like my relatives.

25 I know that many women's stories cannot be told--the

1 way they would like their stories told--by men. They'd like
2 their stories told by themselves. And I think this is an
3 opportunity for women to be heard.

4 And so I will talk a little bit about what
5 happened -- a little bit that happened to me, and a little
6 bit that happened to the women around me.

7 But before I talk to that, I want to, I want to say
8 to you that I am very proud of what you have done, that what
9 you are doing. I don't think I would have -- I could have
10 been on this commission. I don't think that's part of my
11 gift. I don't think I'm -- I'm capable of hearing the horror
12 stories that you hear month after month, week after week,
13 year after year you've been hearing on this Commission.

14 I want to say that you have three things that I want
15 to recommend -- I want to commend you for. One of them is
16 that you have a sacred, a sacred burden that you alone carry,
17 the burden of hearing these stories. You have a sacred
18 responsibility. You have a sacred -- it's very sacred,
19 because I know that the massacres and the rape stories and
20 all the terrible things that happened to our people, all
21 those stories are so sacred. They are not ordinary stories.
22 They are stories and larger-than-life stories. They are
23 sacred. That's not what is supposed to happen to people
24 while they are living. Those are sacred stories.

25 So you have the sacred burden and the sacred

1 responsibility. But you also have the sacred charge to carry
2 those stories the way they should be taken. So I commend you
3 for that.

4 But this is what I saw happen to us women. My
5 husband and I lived in Congo Town, like I said. And we were
6 in our home the month of May, we spent a lot of time visiting
7 the refugees, the Mano and Gio refugees in the churches. We
8 did what we could do.

9 And there was a time in July that we had to flee,
10 finally had to flee our house. On July 14th, 1990, one of
11 our neighbors, Edward King, who was Samuel Doe's chief
12 cameraman, was a very good friend of ours, and he got closer
13 to us. Because on June 27th, my husband went to town on that
14 day of the massive demonstration in Monrovia, June 27, 1990,
15 when Samuel Doe order his troops to shoot at random and kill
16 anybody that demonstrating in the streets.

17 And they began to kill people as the demonstrators
18 arrived at the BTC area, and they began to shoot people, and
19 they killed hundreds of people that day.

20 My husband tried to flee. He was caught by the SATU
21 soldiers and he was nearly killed. And they took his car and
22 everything out of it, they almost killed him on Camp Johnson
23 Road.

24 And Edward King, during those weeks, was the one who
25 tried to see if he could find our car. That day is a day

1 that I don't want to explain the details of.

2 But so on July 14, when Edward King was killed in his
3 bed in Congo Town, everybody in my neighborhood fled on the
4 15th of July. Because according to his wife, Samuel Doe's
5 soldiers jumped through his window and they came into the
6 room about 4 a.m. in the morning and they said, "We're going
7 to kill him," and they asked her to leave the room. And she
8 begged and he gave them thousands and they refused and they
9 kill him. And so our neighborhood evacuated.

10 The following week my husband and I -- that same day
11 we fled to Congo Town somewhere in a hiding place where my
12 cousin lived.

13 My first, the first time I saw a woman traumatized, I
14 don't know what kind of woman she was, but she was coming,
15 walking, and when they got to the New Defense Ministry, Doe's
16 soldiers stopped her and her four grown sons. And they took
17 her four sons and shot two of them. We were watching from my
18 cousin's gate, which was very close to that area. Came out,
19 and they shot her two boys. And they were taking the other
20 two to the beach. I don't know the difference between
21 shooting the two boys on the beach and shooting two on the
22 street.

23 So she fell on the ground crying and saying, "Please
24 kill me, please kill me." And they killed her, too.

25 We stayed in the compound with my cousin until July

1 26, 1990. Charles Taylor went on radio on July 26th and
2 declared himself president of Liberia. And he named his
3 cabinet when he was not even in Monrovia, he was in
4 Paynesville yet.

5 And when the 5,000 people who were taken refuge at
6 ELWA Hospital, we heard that they had to be evacuated all
7 from the grounds of the ELWA compound in a matter of minutes.
8 I'm sure you've heard those stories before.

9 And so my cousin asked us to return home because her
10 house will soon be unsafe. She was married to a Lebanese --
11 she's married to a Lebanese man, and so for a while she was
12 safe.

13 The day we're leaving, Samuel Doe's soldiers stop us
14 up right in front of my cousin's house. And they said they
15 wanted to know if we had U.S. currency. And they shook up
16 our things. Funny thing, there was a \$10 note right under
17 the gun. One gun pointed at my husband, the other gun
18 looking for the money, that was right on the ground. And I
19 was able to bend down and pick the money from under the gun
20 without the soldiers seeing the \$10. I don't know how that
21 happens.

22 But we got home to our house. In fact, that same
23 July 26th, before we left -- going backwards, July 26th, my
24 mom was the only one living in my house. And the soldiers
25 came there that early morning, Samuel Doe's soldiers. They

1 said, "We heard you people have pigs here, and you've been
2 supplying pigs to the Gio and Mano people in the churches.
3 So we here and if we don't find pig here, we'll kill you
4 all."

5 And my mom started crying and she said, "I'm the only
6 one in my house, my daughter's house. There's only one
7 mother pig left. The other pigs have been stolen, the others
8 have been taken away, but there's one mother pig and we don't
9 want you to shoot the pig, please."

10 And they said, "We're just telling you so that if you
11 start crying when we kill the pig, we'll come here and we'll
12 shoot you. So since you know we'll be shooting the pig, you
13 just be still."

14 So she went the way in the back and they shot the
15 pig. And the pig had 13 piglets and they slaughter the pig.
16 They were slaughtering the pig and they went into the house,
17 and they said, "We need all the big tubs here so we slaughter
18 the pig."

19 And my mom said, "I don't have any." And they
20 manhandle her. And they took all the tubs and all the big
21 things. And then she say, "I've been starving for weeks, can
22 you give me a leg of the pig." And they say, "If you open
23 your mouth again we'll kill you."

24 And they give the guts and all the parts of the --
25 ugly parts of the pigs to the squatter boys in the

1 neighborhood. And they took all our things that they could
2 take from the house and they left.

3 And she came that evening and I told her not to
4 worry. So but we went into the refugee -- we went into
5 Charles Taylor's camp. And I'm going to make things brief,
6 because I observe a lot. Because I, I am a writer, so I
7 observe a lot and I cannot go into many details.

8 So we fled. We left our neighborhood on the 1st of
9 August. We went home on the 29th of July to our house to see
10 if we could stay.

11 I will go backward again. On the 27th, after Samuel
12 Doe -- and Charles Taylor made his big speech and he declare
13 himself fake president and he did all he wanted to do, Samuel
14 Doe got angry and decided to wage the all-out war. He bomb
15 ELWA. He brought the weapons to the Congo Town opposite the
16 Chinese Embassy and near Defense Ministry, and those were his
17 points where he shot his rockets from into Paynesville.

18 We returned to our house, which is Pagos Island,
19 opposite the Chinese Embassy down the kwoi, the hill down the
20 valley. We went back home. And on the 30th -- on the 29th
21 we went home. On the 30th, we went to bed and we woke up on
22 the 31st, and we heard that Samuel Doe's troops have gone to
23 the St. Peter's Lutheran Church and they have massacred
24 almost 700 refugees. The same refugees we had been supplying
25 meat for.

1 We were devastated. We pack. Besides that, bombs
2 were landing in my yard at that point. There were 20 rockets
3 in the morning passing over my house coming from Charles
4 Taylor, 20 coming from Samuel Doe going to Paynesville, so we
5 evacuated.

6 We went into Charles Taylor's territory. And we
7 discover the carnage.

8 On the road we saw a woman who had her baby right in
9 front of my husband and myself, and snap off her baby's
10 umbilical cord and drag herself to the refugee camp.

11 We got into so-called Charles Taylor's territory and
12 we saw the carnage. We walked among the dead. We saw many
13 shot in front of us.

14 My husband was taken out of line many times for
15 execution. We saw people who rescue us and we went into Soul
16 Clinic Mission.

17 There were several killings that impacted me, besides
18 losing several cousins, uncles, my stepmother, my mother.

19 One of the deaths that I will talk about is the
20 execution of my foster brother, Colonel T.K. Dixon. He was
21 chief of CID for the Samuel Doe government. Colonel Dixon
22 was my stepmother's nephew that my father and her raised.
23 She never had a child. And so that was her son. And he was
24 closer to me than my brother.

25 That death hurt me a lot because during the war,

1 Samuel Doe was trying to kill him. So he fled to my father's
2 house in Paynesville. And he heard that Charles Taylor
3 wanted to kill him, too. So he was literally living on a bed
4 in my father's house.

5 And one day somebody informed Taylor's people, on
6 July 27, 1990, the day after Doe declare himself president,
7 that, yeah, Taylor declare himself president. They went and
8 they said, "Aren't you Colonel Dixon?" And he said, "No."

9 And so they left and came back that afternoon, they
10 brought police uniform, and they forced him to dress up. And
11 they took him out in the field and they made my parents watch
12 and they executed him.

13 That was very painful for my stepmother, who raised
14 me. She lived. Only one year later, she had a stroke during
15 one of the bombing raids. She cried for two years. She was
16 a motherless person -- or childless person I mean. And she
17 died.

18 Another death that struck me had to do with a
19 representative from my -- chieftain from the Pleebo/Sodoke
20 District of Maryland County. Maybe somebody has recorded
21 him, but I want to record him. He was a poor man, he was not
22 educated. He was one of the first chances, maybe the first
23 time a real Grebo person became -- not superintendent, became
24 a representative of our county. The first time in history.
25 All the history of Liberia from war and for some years, we

1 had always been represented by these people from Harper, who
2 were actually Americo-Liberians. And I don't have anything
3 against them, but when your district is never represented by
4 somebody from your district for 140 years, that is
5 discrimination.

6 My father ran in the 1970s. And they took the caucus
7 to Nimba County during Tolbert's government. My father won
8 the election, but never became a representative or a senator.

9 So that was the first person ever from the district
10 to become to represent his own people. He was a poor man.
11 He wasn't educated. But he came to Soul Clinic one day, was
12 sitting in Soul Clinic. I had to sleep on the floor, I had
13 to sleep on the bunk bed and on the floor. We had to live in
14 deplorable conditions. We didn't care, we were glad to be
15 alive.

16 Because daily we were reminded of being alive,
17 because we smelled the dead every minute of the day.

18 Charles Taylor's people have mountains of dead people
19 in the bushes near Soul Clinic Mission. Including all over
20 Paynesville.

21 So we were happy to be alive. We had the power to
22 smell the dead. Okay.

23 But his wife came into the camp one day when Oliver
24 Sinkeh was captured, in August of 1990. And she came crying
25 into our building and she said they put him on the truck and

1 they took him away, maybe he will come.

2 And we waited and we waited and we waited, and he was
3 never -- he never came. He was the brother-in-law of my
4 uncle. My uncle marry his sister. He was executed just for
5 being a representative. Okay.

6 But there's another woman's story I want to remember.
7 I call her Glayee. I always call her Glayee. I know she's
8 not Glayee, but we call her Glayee to protect her. She was a
9 Gio woman.

10 She came into Soul Clinic -- as I talk about women, I
11 want to record her. She didn't get killed. She came into
12 Soul Clinic during the time that FU was being captured. That
13 was in early August. And I'm remembering these dates because
14 I wrote 500 pages of what happened to me during the war. And
15 I'm working on my memoir, which is now 600 pages, from that
16 memory.

17 She came into the camp with two little girls. And
18 she has, she has cuts on her arms and scratches all over her
19 from barbed wire fence. And she told her story. She was one
20 of the lone survivors in the Lutheran Church. This is what
21 she said to us. There were a hundred of us in the building
22 when she told her story.

23 She was in the church, she was in the school
24 compound, actually sleeping in the classroom the day -- the
25 night Doe's people shot up the building. She said, "I began

1 to hear shots."

2 I'm talking about her because I was one of the people
3 who counseled with her for a while before the rebels took her
4 away.

5 She said they were sleeping in the church -- in the
6 school classroom on the floor. The whole room was covered
7 with human bodies sleeping. And then they started hearing
8 heavy shooting in the church and they panic. But before they
9 all wake up and start running, the troops came upstairs in
10 the classrooms and they began to open fire. So many of them
11 just lay flat. And they would go over them and shoot, you
12 know, so that if you are lying flat, you will still be
13 killed.

14 She said they shot and the blood were flying and the
15 flesh were flying. And finally she screamed in Grebo. She
16 was raised by Grebo people from Karloken area of Maryland
17 County. But she also knew Mano and Gio because she spoke
18 indigenous Gio. And that's why she took refuge with her
19 people. But she knew that if she cry in Gio, they will still
20 kill her. So she screamed and started speaking Grebo. And
21 she said, "Please don't kill me among these dogs tonight,
22 please don't kill me."

23 And she said suddenly the Krahn soldiers stopped
24 shooting. And they said, "What are you doing among these
25 dogs? We're going to kill up the whole church and you are

1 among them?"

2 And she said, "My friend fool me, yeah, my friend
3 there, she said we should come here, man, that we are both
4 Grebo people."

5 And so they told her they were going to kill
6 everybody, but because these -- the two of them were Grebo,
7 according to her, they wouldn't kill them. But they had to
8 figure out a way.

9 So she said the Krahn soldiers said they needed to
10 slash her, because they needed to spill blood from everybody
11 that night. That was the rule.

12 So they slash her. And they slash her friend. And
13 she had two kids. And they said, "We're going to take some
14 bodies and lay them around you. Lie flat, and we'll put some
15 dead bodies around you so it looks like you dead and because
16 all through the night there will be inspections to make sure
17 everybody is dead."

18 And she said they did that. And she said they told
19 them that, "Before daylight you should leave, but there will
20 be inspections of the room, so make sure everybody in those
21 buildings were dead." And they did throughout the night.

22 And by dawn, she and her friend ran out with her
23 babies. And across the fence she said was an embassy. And
24 the ambassador's wife was in there. According to her, I
25 can't remember whether she said Spanish Embassy, but some

1 embassy was behind it. And the woman there was screaming and
2 saying, "Is anybody living? Is anybody living there? Jump
3 over the fence." And the woman were crying and the yard boys
4 she hired they were crying, because she knew that hundreds of
5 people had been killed.

6 So she said -- after she trusted them, she threw her
7 baby over, she threw her other baby over, and she try to get
8 a chair and climb over. And that's how she survived.

9 We tried working with her because she could speak
10 Grebo, she trusted me a little bit, but she was completely
11 insane. One time she said she was going to burn down the
12 building. She had lost it. She was taken away by her
13 people.

14 Many women came into our building. One of them is I
15 call her Auntie Sarah. She's related to my mom. She came
16 into the building in August when they took over. She had
17 been tabay, she had been raped, but she wouldn't say it. And
18 she still has the scars on her today.

19 So there are many stories I will -- I cannot tell.

20 Now, I started this story talking about my intention
21 to contribute to my country. I will move away from this.
22 You can see that I haven't told too many of my own personal
23 stories. Because I am a very emotional person. If I started
24 telling you my own personal stories, I wouldn't be able to.
25 Because I was brought up to believe that I could be anything

1 I wanted to be. My father brought me up to give back to my
2 country. I believe in civility. And I did all that I could
3 do. I built myself a good life and all was taken from it.

4 My mother died early. Because when I brought her
5 here, she was torn between living here with me and living in
6 Liberia with her other children, who were younger. And so
7 she returned home after six months and died six years later
8 suddenly of high blood pressure that could be controlled in
9 normal times.

10 She lived in my house all through those other wars.
11 And she's always said, "I have coconut trees you planted, I
12 have mangoes. I even planted bread -- bread fruit in my
13 yard. People come there for that." She say, "I'm okay."
14 And then she died because of that.

15 A lot of stories I don't want to talk about.

16 There was a time that I was starving in Congo Town
17 after we returned home, that we had returned home and we were
18 eating pu-pu crab and all kinds of things. And we didn't
19 have rice that day. That was the end of 1990. So I got up
20 and I went to the Ghanaian port -- depot, the Ghanaian
21 peacekeeping -- the West African Peacekeeping Force office up
22 the hill above us in Pagos Island, opposite Chinese -- former
23 Chinese Embassy. That's where the peacekeeping beds was and
24 there were Ghanaian troops here.

25 When my kids were starving and I say, "I'm going up

1 there to go and beg for some food." Imagine me begging for
2 food.

3 And I went to the Ghanaian peacekeepers in December
4 of 1990. And they came out of the cage and I said, "My kids
5 have not eaten for two days since we got home from the
6 refugee camp. Can you please give us some rice." And the
7 Ghanaian soldier broke down crying. And he said, "For all I
8 know, you used to be a professor and you had everything, and
9 now you are begging me for rice." And he say, "I'm going to
10 get my dinner for you." And he got a little bit of white
11 cooked rice and he put it in a sandwich bag for my children
12 to eat.

13 One day I went out and I baked beans in oil root,
14 because I was starving. And I cooked, because you could find
15 palm nuts. And my whole family ate it. And we could not
16 breathe because they were poisonous beans. And we almost
17 died.

18 And I remember the day we left Liberia, we were
19 climbing onto the big truck, the peacekeeping force truck.
20 And I was the last, after I made everybody climb, and I fell
21 off the truck and I almost got killed.

22 And many times when the soldiers came at 2 o'clock in
23 the morning trying to get my husband to come out. And I
24 dared my husband to get out to meet the soldiers. I told
25 him, "I will watch you die here before you open that door."

1 Because they wanted to take him to kill him.

2 There are many stories I can't talk about.

3 I want to conclude. In my conclusion, I would say
4 that there are many things that were responsible for the war.
5 I sat here yesterday and I listened to Bai Gbala. And I
6 don't want to accuse him. And there are times when people
7 laugh about what happened to us. And I'm sorry.

8 Liberia, the problems that caused the war had to do
9 with our long history of inequality, underdevelopment for
10 over 140 years of underdevelopment. If you drove 15 miles
11 out of Monrovia, all you will meet is underdevelopment, lack
12 of schools, lack of hospitals, lack of any development for
13 indigenous people in the countryside. And people live in
14 big -- live in big houses, ride in big cars, calling
15 themselves government officials. For decades.

16 I read the article by Bennie Warner on the Web, in
17 which she says that the war was not caused by the history of
18 Liberia, but by greedy people. That was not the first time
19 greedy people wanted to rule Liberia. Greedy people have
20 always ruled Liberia for 140 years.

21 Discrimination against indigenous people or
22 undereducated people. Because some of the indigenous people
23 took part in discriminating against their own people.

24 The history of Liberia must be reversed. We cannot
25 go to college before we learn our history.

1 So that's what I think.

2 All the factions in the war, Prince Johnson, Charles
3 Taylor, and Samuel Doe, were equally responsible for the evil
4 that happened to our people.

5 My conclusion is that it is wonderful that these
6 stories are coming out. But these stories should not only
7 come out for the sake of coming out. That those who
8 perpetrated, the leaders of -- the ringleaders that
9 perpetrated the violence against our people must answer to
10 these questions. They should be given a chance to appear
11 before a court of justice to answer to these charges
12 positively or negatively.

13 You cannot be accused of evil, such violence, and let
14 it go. You have -- they have to answer.

15 Charles Taylor is being tried by Sierra Leone, not by
16 Liberia. We have to answer the Liberian question. We have
17 to allow our people to be heard. Because we have to bring
18 these people to trial, the ringleaders.

19 I thank you. And before you ask me questions, I have
20 a set of books for you, for the Commission.

21 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you very much for
22 the set of books, for your testimony, and for your
23 recommendations to the TRC.

24 This is a time, this is a process for shared
25 experiences. And we can't help but we appreciate that you

1 could search your inner self, garner the courage to come and
2 contribute in the way you did. First, by reading out a poem
3 which speaks to the future of our country. Because our
4 children are the future, and if we don't understand their
5 plight and take care of them now, their future will be bleak.
6 So we thank you.

7 Commissioners will ask you a couple of questions. We
8 are very much time-pressed, Commissioners, please be as
9 direct with your questions as possible. Thank you very much.
10 Oumu.

11 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Thank you very much for
12 coming to share your experience today. Because you come here
13 today to not only talk about what's happened to you -- I say
14 your coming here today was not only to talk about your own
15 experience, but because you got Liberian heart, you share
16 with us what you saw, what happened to the children, what
17 happened to the women. Thank you for that.

18 Now, the lady you talk about, the survivor for the
19 Lutheran Church massacre, do you remember her name and the
20 children that were with her, her children?

21 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: We call her Glayee.
22 She also had a Grebo name, but I cannot remember.

23 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: What about her
24 children, do you remember the children's names as well?

25 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: No.

1 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Besides the Glayee, any
2 other name you remember?

3 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: No. In the refugee
4 camp -- I call it refugee camp because it was a place of
5 refuge, some kind of refuge, and people -- people were not
6 trusting of everyone. So people assumed names that were not
7 even their names. And you didn't ask too many questions.
8 Especially the stories -- the story was very real, so there
9 was no need to even probe into people's lives.

10 And she didn't stay too long. She was too
11 traumatized. And she didn't stay long with us. But if you
12 read even my books, I put her -- she's, I have a poem called,
13 "Elegy to the St. Peter's Church Massacre." She's in that
14 poem. And because those things happened and I think they
15 should be remembered.

16 Maybe other people that were in that place with us
17 will remember.

18 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Now Mr. Dixon, the
19 relative that was killed at the time by Taylor people, did he
20 have -- he had children? What was his age at the time?

21 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah, he had two
22 little boys with his wife. And his wife's name was Ann.

23 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: What was his age at the
24 time, Mr. Dixon age?

25 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I think he was in his

1 40s. He was a well-known government official. He was -- he
2 was chief of CID. So he was well known. And he used to live
3 in Paynesville. He even fled from his house. I think they
4 set his house on fire.

5 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Thank you for coming.
6 And we'll say -- I say you have my sympathy for the death of
7 your relatives and other people that you saw. Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Patricia, thank
9 you very much for coming and for your courage. And I'm not
10 surprised, because since I've known you, you've been a woman
11 of conviction since the early '70s. And thank you very much
12 for coming here to throw some light on what you saw.

13 I would just like to ask just one question. And that
14 is, of all what you saw, can you remember any names of those
15 who either were directly involved in the execution or
16 ordering the execution of people? Any name that who may
17 possibly still be around today?

18 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Okay, I don't, I
19 don't -- I know one woman who wanted to kill me, her name --
20 the only name she went by was Rebel Queen, Rebel Queen or Man
21 Slasher they used to call her. And she was in the Soul
22 Clinic area. Okay. She was a Mano woman, with very fair
23 skin. And her other name was Kaul. Okay.

24 And the guy -- a guy who was commander, Commando they
25 used to call him, for our area, part of the commander for our

1 area, was a former student of mine from the University. And
2 I came to -- his name was Harrison Dahn. He was commander of
3 the Soul Clinic area, bordering Paynesville, before you get a
4 red light.

5 I remember, because he came into the camp one day and
6 he saw me and he said -- and he was, you know, very nice, and
7 he said, "Oh, my professor, oh, my professor." So he say, "I
8 will come to sister in Soul place and I will give you some
9 rice." Because we were starving.

10 So I went to where he described. And he was in his
11 mansion and I had to go through a gate. And before I got to
12 the gate I was arrested. And they said they were going to
13 shoot me. And they were carrying me to shoot me and then and
14 they were calling me names and trying to tell me to take off
15 my clothes. And, and then one other guy in another office
16 said -- and he was laughing, he say, "I want to see the woman
17 you going to kill before you shoot her."

18 And I say, "I want to see Harrison Dahn, that's
19 Commander Dahn, he was my student at the University."

20 And they said, "Well, you will be let go when we
21 finish killing you, then you can be our professor, too."

22 So then this other person in the other room say, "I
23 want to see who it is." And when he came out, he saw me.
24 And he was my former student, too. And he said, "This is my
25 professor." And they had a big fight over me. And he said,

1 "You have to kill me." He said, "Shoot me. Shoot me and let
2 her go." And because he was one of them, they didn't shoot
3 him. So they let me go.

4 And I went in and -- and Commander Dahn only give me
5 ten cups of rice. And my husband told me never to go there
6 again if I was going to die for ten cups of rice. And so I
7 remember Harrison Dahn.

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

10 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: And there was a woman
11 who came into the camp, she was -- I think you probably heard
12 her name, she was Charles Taylor's Minister of Health. I
13 think you remember.

14 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: (Inaudible.)

15 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah. She came to
16 the camp and -- I think this is funny, she was my friend and
17 she had a gun and she was in military clothes. And so I went
18 to her and I say, "Oh, you got gun." And the soldiers, the
19 rebels pushed me with their gun and almost knocked me down.
20 And they said, "This is the Minister of Health that you're
21 trying to come close to." And I ran for my life because, you
22 know, I didn't want to die.

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

25 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Thank you very

1 much, Dr. Wesley, for the courage to come out and speak.
2 You've just shed light on one of many puzzles and unsolved
3 mysteries of the Liberian conflict. You mentioned Edward
4 King, who was a photojournalist assigned at the Executive
5 Mansion. I knew him as well very well, since we were all
6 journalists, very nice man. But he had served many
7 presidents before President Doe.

8 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: The question I
10 want to ask is, you just revealed that it was the soldiers,
11 Samuel Doe's soldiers who killed him in his bed. At the time
12 we heard it was the rebels who killed him, it made a lot of
13 sense then, since he was -- a photograph I saw with the
14 president.

15 Now when his wife told you about the circumstances
16 surrounding his death, did she say anything concerning what
17 the motive was for killing him? Because this was a man who
18 covered the Executive Mansion and who was -- he was not a Gio
19 or Mano person.

20 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Well, if I -- when
21 that incident happened, his wife didn't stay around long, she
22 ran away fast. So we didn't have time to sit down and talk a
23 lot about it. But when it happened, the neighbors who were
24 first on his side -- the people who buried King were also our
25 friends. I remember when they were going to bury him, put in

1 the trunk of their car, okay.

2 And they -- when the people came through the window,
3 broke through the window to her house, according to the
4 information she gave, and at first we thought were rebels.
5 But we knew -- if it were rebels, then it must have been some
6 brave rebels. Because by that time, Charles Taylor had
7 barely taken control of Paynesville. And any rebels coming
8 to Pagos Island would have had to pass the radio station or
9 go through ELWA. In that area, the Charles Taylor rebels had
10 not yet taken over. Those soldiers were patrolling our
11 island regularly. Because our island is secluded. And
12 there's a big swamp between us and Gardnersville. And so --
13 and the river also. So they were afraid that the rebels who
14 come through there, so they were patrolling.

15 And but the soldiers had access to King because he
16 was their cameraman. So they had access to him. So for
17 him -- for them to come even to his house in the daytime
18 wouldn't have been difficult.

19 And at that time, King was very close to us because
20 he was worried about our car. He kept saying that we
21 wouldn't have anything to drive if we had to run away from
22 the house. Well, what we all didn't know was that we're not
23 going to go driving away, we're going to go walking, you
24 know.

25 So he kept trying to get a car. He was up and down

1 in the mansion yard. And he would come every time to our
2 house and say, "I'm going to get that car for you," you know.
3 And we saw the soldiers going up and down Monrovia with our
4 car. And my friends used to joke and say, "Oh, there is
5 Pat's car," you know, it's got, you know, guns pointed from
6 every window, you know.

7 And so King, we knew, we -- we were sure, because
8 they had a military uniform, too. They were not, you know,
9 ordinary clothes, from what we heard as neighbors.

10 It's possible that that was not as we heard. But I
11 would think, you know, logically speaking, that it wouldn't
12 be -- I don't know why Taylor's people would come for King.

13 Now, if you know at that time, the same reason Doe
14 wanted to have my brother killed, you know, Doe was getting
15 rid of people he didn't trust. All his men were getting rid
16 of people they couldn't trust, you know.

17 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: You were displaced
18 at the Soul Clinic with your family?

19 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Mm-hmm.

20 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: You said it was
21 around the period July to August?

22 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: From August 1 to
23 November.

24 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay.

25 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: To November 1. You

1 were there?

2 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: I didn't see you
3 then, but I was there, too. I was displaced there.

4 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Which dormitory were
5 you in?

6 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: When we got --
7 when we got there, the place was full. You know, Uncle Ralph
8 Lapkins, the guy who owns the place, was my father's mission
9 friend, they went to school together. So he was expecting
10 our family and we never came. But when they got there, there
11 was no space. So we slept outside on his porch that night.
12 And the next day they found us a place in the village at
13 Ganangana's house with several other families.

14 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yes. I was in the
15 boys dorm with a hundred people.

16 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Anyway, you were
17 on a mission itself. If you can recollect, there was a
18 rubber bush behind the mission.

19 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah, that the killer
20 bush.

21 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: And there was a
22 river, yeah. A lot of killings took place over there. And I
23 was in hiding, so I didn't get a lot of information.

24 But can you estimate or would you know about how many
25 persons died over there? Because the stench and the news

1 kept coming every day people were being killed.

2 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I think they killed
3 thousands. I think they killed thousands. I mean, just
4 because you went into the camp didn't mean you would survive.
5 Did anybody talk about Mr. -- the one General Jones that was
6 taken from the camp from among us?

7 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: I'm trying not to
8 be in your story.

9 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah. Yeah. What?

10 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: I'm trying not to
11 be in your story.

12 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Oh, okay. Thank you.
13 I can't remember. I think it's about thousands. Thousands.
14 Because there were people who were supposed to be executed,
15 and all kinds of miracles happened.

16 There was a girl in my building called Thelma.
17 Thelma had a little 1-year-old. Okay. And Thelma was
18 supposed to be executed. And they took her to the rubber
19 bush from the gate, okay. And then she begged them to give
20 her two requests. And one of the requests was that they will
21 shoot her baby before they will shoot her.

22 Because people will be killed and they will leave
23 their babies crawling over the dead. Right at Soul Clinic.

24 So she said to promise her they will shoot her baby
25 before they will shoot her.

1 Then she asked them to let her say the 23rd Psalm.
2 And she was naked. And she said the 23rd Psalm while her
3 baby was crying at her feet. And when she opened her eyes,
4 they had fled. And she look around, when she got to the end
5 there were nobody around. And she put on her clothes and
6 grab her baby. And she said there was a mountain of dead
7 bodies. Mountain.

8 And there were other people. So people who came near
9 death. We know because we smelled the dead. And we were --
10 I lived in the boys dorm that was next door to that.

11 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Can you, can you
12 remember any of the names of the commanders who were in
13 charge of the area at the time?

14 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Which area? In Soul
15 Clinic?

16 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: The Soul Clinic.

17 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I don't know. I
18 don't know any commander who was in charge of Soul Clinic. I
19 know we were mostly listening to Uncle Ralph.

20 But we also knew that if people came around, like
21 they kill people in my building, you know. When they took
22 the foreign nationals out, they kill a father in my building.
23 And so I don't know -- I know one guy who was working for
24 Uncle Ralph, probably you know him, too, he was the manager,
25 one of the managers, but he was working for the mission. And

1 his last name was Dahn I think. And he was married to a
2 Krahn woman who was constantly taken away. They would take
3 her for a week at a time to kill her. And they would bring
4 her back and they would take her and they would bring her.
5 And I'm sure they were raping her. But one day he decided
6 that he wanted his own people to kill him instead of taking
7 his wife. And I think that stop after maybe a couple months.
8 So I don't know any -- any, other than the name I called, I
9 don't remember the real --

10 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: My last question.
11 There were many University professors who were killed during
12 the war because they were University professors. There were
13 this interesting perspective that if they killed all the
14 educated people, the University professors and the University
15 students and everybody who was working government, then they
16 could, you know, assume the positions.

17 So can you, do you remember any of your colleagues
18 from the University who were killed and maybe --

19 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah, now you're
20 touching something.

21 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: -- because we are
22 also charged with providing an official counting or listing
23 of the dead. So if you can help us, maybe not here, but
24 maybe later in the back you can do a listing for us if you
25 can remember, we appreciate it.

1 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: They executed my
2 friend Albert Sanweh. Albert Sanweh was in -- Albert Sanweh
3 went to CWA with me from ninth through twelfth grade. Albert
4 Sanweh was my classmate from ninth through twelfth grade. He
5 was a student at the University. He did agriculture. He got
6 a Master's in agriculture. He was teaching with me at the
7 University. He was our friend though.

8 And I remember the day his wife came through Soul
9 Clinic -- his wife was a Mano woman, she was a girl in
10 medical school, some of you may remember her, I can't
11 remember her name.

12 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Jonetta Johnson?

13 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah. She came
14 through Soul Clinic and she said "Patricia, Pat, I'm going to
15 Soul Clinic, Albert has the baby with him," or something she
16 said. By that time she was talking to me, Albert had already
17 been killed.

18 Albert was at Soul Clinic with Dr. Victor Ward --
19 Mr. Victor Ward, who was another very good professor friend
20 of ours. I had lived in Fendell when I came from grad
21 school, the University gave us a house in Fendell. So I knew
22 them very well, knew Mr. Ward very well. And Albert was in
23 Fendell only because he was waiting for his wife to come.
24 His wife were helping at the hospital. And he was also
25 helping Mr. Ward, who could barely run every time they took

1 Fendell. And they came and they said why he and Albert was
2 still at Fendell. So they killed them.

3 There's a Ghaniain professor that was in the English
4 department. I can't remember his name right now sitting
5 here. But he was really close to us, was a professor in the
6 English department. He was taken out on DuPont Road and I
7 heard he was killed. His family got away.

8 I know there are other professors, now I may not be
9 able to recall, that were killed.

10 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay. Thank you
11 very much. And I'm sorry.

12 VICE CHAIR DEDE DOLOPEI: Thank you so much for
13 coming. And have my sympathy, especially for the death of
14 your foster brother who died.

15 Like my colleagues say, you came here today not to
16 tell your own story, because you are alive, and like you say,
17 you've written and some of these stories are in there. But
18 you came to tell the stories of those who died and are not
19 able to walk to come to halls either in Monrovia or in the
20 U.S. to tell their stories.

21 This is an act that you don't normally find among
22 people. And so we want to applaud you for that. And to say
23 thank you for coming to help us to document some of the
24 things that happened to people, who if you had not come here
25 today, we wouldn't have known.

1 Thank you so much. And we pray that God will
2 continue to guide you, he will continue to bless you, and
3 continue to keep you in that grace, that grace of
4 selflessness. Thank you so much.

5 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Thank you for your
7 testimony that you have shared with us. We are deeply
8 grateful. As a nation of people, we have just left a
9 dominion of evil, where there's been no regard for the rule
10 of law, where there's been no love and understanding, but
11 just search for resentment, releasing the inner pains of
12 historical problems in our country. Particularly we got into
13 this dominion because of our search for social economic
14 justice through the barrel of the gun.

15 Now, the TRC's mission is to see how we can lay a
16 path forward. And in a way, I see you as an expert witness.
17 So I would like for you to please help us. Because your area
18 of interest which you just shared, women and children, is a
19 key concern for us also.

20 So my first question is, in your opinion, what is the
21 best protection mechanism or institution for children in a
22 healthy nation?

23 Number two, women's situation today is very -- has
24 been very deplorable during this period. So as we try to
25 reconcile that, I would like for you to share with us, should

1 our reconciliation be complete or partial, when we consider
2 our cultural norms in Liberia where women were not treated as
3 equal with men.

4 And last, you mentioned a situation where you talked
5 about your county not being represented by a true Grebo, but
6 by so-called Americo-Liberian Grebo. I was wondering, did
7 that Americo-Liberian Grebo speak Grebo language, who was
8 being represented? Those are the three concerns I have.

9 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Okay, I will first
10 speak to your last question, I will go backwards, and then
11 you can refresh my memory. Okay.

12 I didn't say my county had not been represented by
13 the -- did you say true Grebos?

14 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: No, something about
15 a Grebo that you said.

16 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I didn't say that.

17 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay, I'm sorry.

18 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Okay. The
19 representation of a county is by district, isn't it. So if
20 your county is this big and these people live here and these
21 people live here and these people live here, these people
22 should be represented by people from here, these people
23 should be represented by people from here, these people
24 should be represented by people from here.

25 But when representation is from the coast, when a

1 person from Harper who has never lived in your district,
2 never lived for a day or a week in your district, runs for
3 office without even the knowledge of the people in the
4 district, and is representative of your district and has
5 never seen the people, that's what I'm talking about. And
6 that's happened in Liberian history over and over. That's
7 why you still have it.

8 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Okay, I understand.

9 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: People -- a man from
10 Harper, the year my father ran, he ran against Sam Kameh,
11 that had never, never, never lived in the Plibo-Sedeken
12 District. Plibo-Sedeken District is from Plibo to all the
13 way Kuidoke. And he was representative.

14 So this was the first time, not because this man,
15 Joseph Sampson, came from my hometown, but because even if he
16 had come from Kuidoke, or another town, because there are
17 several towns within the district, it was the first time
18 somebody from that district was represented by people from
19 that -- somebody from that district. That's what I meant.

20 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: I understand now.

21 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Then the one with --
23 the other one with women.

24 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah, okay, now you
25 have to ask the question.

1 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: I was just
2 concerned, you know, we have a situation in our culture
3 before the war, where about women inequality, I think you
4 know, I don't want to go into detail.

5 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah. Well, let me
6 tell you.

7 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Should we go back
8 and try to deal with that, too, or should we just reconcile
9 the suffering that they experienced in the 23 years?

10 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I don't know how you
11 can go back and correct the past, except you get those women
12 that were married to their husbands for 30 years and the
13 husband left them after they had all the children and threw
14 them out of their house, if you can get those men and put
15 them in jail, maybe that would help. And but that's not --

16 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: What about the
17 culture of polygamy?

18 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: That's about what has
19 happened in our culture. But I see some of you are lawyers.
20 I think we can deal with the present and the future.

21 I think one of the things that we need to do is to
22 enact laws that protect everyone, not just women; everyone.
23 Okay.

24 In this country we are in a diaspora. And many
25 Africans don't know they're in a diaspora. I had a friend

1 who was married for 30 years. And her husband decided to
2 divorce her. And we tried to beg him not to do it because he
3 was not in Liberia, where a woman gets -- suffers all her
4 life and the husband kicks her out. He thought it was. And
5 we talked to him.

6 Guess what? When they were done with him, he became
7 poor. Because the law protects people equally. If both of
8 you contribute toward the home, contribute your life together
9 for 30 years, you should split the property. And what the
10 woman deserves goes to her.

11 So in other words what I'm saying, we need to deal
12 with the laws today so that people get equal treatment.

13 I don't believe that women should be given
14 preferential treatment over men. I don't believe that only
15 women suffered in the war. I believe that most of the
16 victims in the war were young boys. Young boys. I believe
17 they need to be rehabilitated. Because if we don't have
18 strong men, we don't have a strong society as well.

19 So we cannot spend all the resources only on women.
20 But in order to develop our country, I think we need a
21 national philosophy. And I've been listening for it. I
22 mean, I want to come home. Like most people want to go home.
23 But I want to come home where we have a philosophy -- there
24 should be a national philosophy that encourages our people to
25 take control of their life, to take control of their own

1 world, to work hard.

2 You know, I used to come from teaching at the
3 University, get in the pigs' pen, clean the pigs' pen, go to
4 the supermarket, get food for the pigs, rack it to the
5 middle, take care of. And my neighbors used to laugh at me,
6 and they have nothing to eat.

7 We need a philosophy that makes Liberians take
8 possession of their country. Work hard and you will live
9 well.

10 So I don't believe that we can do it all -- you can
11 do it all, or the leader can do it all. I think we need to
12 do it together.

13 And one recommendation I didn't bring forward is the
14 Buduburam Camp. I think we need to do something to take the
15 refugees home. And I think we need to work at it. I think
16 they need to go home, but I think we need to give them an
17 incentive to go back home. We are losing our citizens who
18 have no life in Ghana.

19 COMMISSIONER GERALD COLEMAN: Thank you. I guess
20 that covers the children issue also.

21 COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Dr. Wesley, after
22 hearing your presentation and recommendations, surely the
23 admonition that you gave to the TRC Commission, that we
24 really have a sacred burden we carry after hearing these
25 stories and recommendations, even the Pleebo era when one day

1 the rule was bad, we went all over the place, surely we do
2 carry with us a sacred burden. We do carry with us a sacred
3 responsibility, we are aware of that. And we hope that a
4 sacred charge that you have placed upon us we'll be able to
5 implement it through our final reports.

6 I'm interested in your recommendations, listening to
7 you. You called the names of Charles Taylor, Doe, and Prince
8 Johnson and others. And I want you to please repeat again
9 what recommendation that you put forth to this Commission.

10 And also the recommendation I just want it to be
11 repeated about Charles Taylor is now being tried in Sierra
12 Leone court and what you want for him to be for Liberia,
13 those two recommendations. Could you please just repeat it.
14 Because as you say, we have sacred charge and sacred
15 responsibilities, so I want to really get it down for written
16 on my pad.

17 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Thank you very much.
18 Charles Taylor is being tried in The Hague for human rights
19 abuses he committed against Sierra Leone. Sierra Leonians.
20 Not against Liberians. So I believe that it is our
21 responsibility as Liberians to indict Charles Taylor. Maybe
22 he's not guilty. Maybe he is guilty.

23 If Prince Johnson is not being tried, he also needs
24 to explain some things.

25 Just like the leadership of Samuel Doe. Those who

1 were also serving under him. Because it's only civil to do
2 it.

3 Maybe they are not guilty. Maybe it's you and myself
4 who did it wrong. They need a chance to explain their own
5 problems. Do you understand what I'm saying? They are
6 presumed innocent, but they need to answer.

7 So maybe after all of the gathering of the facts. I
8 don't have any romantic expectations at this point. I
9 believe that this process should go on until it's completed.
10 But after that, forming the recommendations -- part of your
11 recommendations should be what happens after all of us have
12 stood here to tell our stories?

13 These people need to come and stand before the court
14 of justice, international court, and say I didn't do it, and
15 prove they didn't do it. That's what I want.

16 COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Thank you. You
17 talk about Colonel T.K. Dixon, who was the chief of CID. My
18 mind you just refreshed, just like you say, some of these
19 sacred burdens. I dealt with Colonel Dixon on several
20 occasions in the '80s up to 19 -- the early 1990, when I
21 served as a lawyer of Obou Law Firm in Monrovia. So many
22 times we had to go to CID with our clients, or to get them
23 out or to carry clients there. So may his soul rest in
24 peace.

25 Also, at least we know how Professor Ward was killed.

1 He was my chemistry professor at LU 1970. You've given us at
2 least a lot. And we'll read your books and your paper. And
3 I'm sure those books will be placed in history among our
4 history books for future generations and for us to read.

5 A teacher is always a teacher. Because the statement
6 is, a teacher has the best patience, because if a student try
7 and fail, a good student -- teacher will continue to have the
8 patience until he learn. You say you want to go home. I
9 urge you.

10 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: I will be there in
11 July.

12 COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: I petition you to
13 go home. I, too, I was here, I left to go home 2004. And
14 the letter that I wrote was to say to give up my job to
15 contribute to the devastation and rebuilding of my country in
16 Liberia from a 14-year Civil War.

17 I taught, too, management supervision and law
18 enforcement and criminal evidence at a school here. And I
19 had an opportunity to travel. I went home. And you see I'm
20 contributing my part to history. And although the burden is
21 heavy, but you have admonished us, and the charge we have to
22 keep, and surely we will with your prayers, we will continue
23 to succeed. Thank you.

24 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KONNEH: Thank you, Madam

1 Witness. For me, my colleagues have said all. But I think,
2 and you will agree with me, that God has his own purpose for
3 which he made you to survive. And one of the purpose --
4 purposes was for you to come here today to give us these
5 revelations. Though are painful, but it contributes a lot to
6 the end objective of the TRC.

7 So we want to thank you for coming. And say have our
8 sympathy for your family, relatives and friends that got
9 killed in the war.

10 We'll continue to pray to God and thank him for
11 making you to be among the survivors. Thank you very much.

12 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Thank you very much.
13 I hope when I come to Liberia in July I can see you.

14 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KONNEH: Hopefully.

15 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: We are confident this
16 will not be your last interaction of the Commission. We know
17 that you still do have a lot to contribute. Your testimony
18 was brief. There are elements of it you expect to appear in
19 your memoir, but we appreciate what you had to offer.

20 I think my colleagues have spoken so well of our
21 impressions and satisfaction with what you have contributed.
22 You said a lot in terms of recommendations we've taken note
23 of. And I'm confident they will be taken into consideration
24 when we conclude our work.

25 Is there anything else? Or you think you said enough

1 already?

2 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Well, I will conclude
3 and say that everybody has a gift. Everybody. And everybody
4 has their strength. And sometimes I hear people who say I
5 should go back to Liberia and make my contribution. And I
6 say I made my contribution. When there was no salary, I
7 worked at the University of Liberia. And I taught thousands
8 of students for ten years. And I put my writing on hold for
9 years. And I felt that -- I said I taught African literature
10 for years. There's no literature among African literature
11 from Liberia. And when I meet Africans, they laugh that we
12 didn't produce a significant writer from Liberia.

13 And I decided that coming to this country, I will use
14 that opportunity to put Liberia on the map of African
15 literature and war literature.

16 And I felt that was my contribution for this time.
17 And I'm very glad to say that today people are studying
18 Liberian literature. Writing chapters about Liberia, about
19 the poetry. Trying to find a way means to say Gbolobo, what
20 it means, people are doing dissertation in Liberia.

21 I feel that everybody has a gift. And when they see
22 that opportunity, they should use it.

23 I'm not saying I'm perfect. And I'm not an
24 administrator. If I went to Liberia, you make me minister, I
25 will go to work, get my laptop, and write my poetry right in

1 your office. So everybody has a gift.

2 But I'm coming to Liberia in July for research and to
3 teach literature. I'm going to Ghana to teach poetry, too,
4 in July.

5 So I will be coming home and I will be looking for
6 you. Thank you. Okay, I got my card here, thank you. So
7 but I'm very honored by all of you.

8 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you very much.

9 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: And say hi to all my
10 friends in the government. All of them are in the
11 government.

12 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You're coming in July?

13 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Yeah.

14 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: They will be there.

15 DR. PATRICIA JABBEH WESLEY: Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 (End of testimony.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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

DATED: July 14, 2008.

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