

Interview No. 67
Southeast Asia History Writeup
Elmer and Norma Renken and Alden Jones
August 30, 1977

Jones

This is Interview No. 67 for the Southeast Asia History Chronology. Today is August 30, 1977. I'm here at Dierks in Elmer Renken's home. Elmer's going to tell me his impressions and recollections of his experience over there. First, to get your voice on the tape, Elmer, what is your position and your work here at Dierks with the company?

Renken

I'm presently plant engineer at the wood products plant here at Dierks and our products are plywood, lumber and charcoal briquets.

Jones

When we came into town, we thought we got a smell of a pulp mill. Is that anything from your plant here?

Renken

I don't think so.

Jones

I couldn't remember that there'd been a pulp mill here.

Renken

No, although we do have water, we keep our logs under water storage to prevent blue stain. They give off some odors.

Jones

I see. We might have been downwind from that then.

Renken

It's decaying wood.

Jones

Okay. Well, Elmer, how do you remember how it happened that you went over to the western Pacific area back there in, when was it, 1970 or so?

Renken

Yes, I went over on Thanksgiving Day of 1969 with Bill Sim. I was in Canada managing the Lumby plant, a small lumber mill.

Jones

One of the old MDM operations.

Renken

Right, right. Merrit Diamond. We lived in _____. And Harry Morgan called Bill Sim, who was the regional lumber manager

of our mills in British Columbia at that time, to go to the Far East and, I believe, this was just about the time that Harry became interested in the Far East and at that time, you know, the company was organized, we had a Weyerhaeuser International, I believe, under Vice President Wood, wasn't it?

Jones

Ivan Wood, right.

Renken

Ivan Wood. And Harry'd gotten interested in the Far East and asked Bill to go out there as a manager, pretty much - I didn't understand the organization completely at that time.

Jones

I never did and I spent nine months there.

Renken

Yeah. Well, when Bill left Canada, of course, I told him that I would like an experience like that. I'd been in Canada a couple of years. So shortly after he was down there, I made known to him and to Harry that I would like to go out there. They decided to put a new lathe in that veneer plant at Milbuk, so I was going down there as a project engineer to install a surplus lathe, that we had from Longview Tech Center, in Milbuk with trays behind it and so forth, and with the idea I would probably become the manager. My first instructions were to go to Sabah and be the manager of Sabah. But then the lathe thing came up and they got a man from Coos Bay, Eslick --

Jones

Chuck Eslick.

Renken

-- Chuck Eslick to go to Sabah. So my instructions were changed. I went into Milbuk. I arrived there in December of '69 with the intent of installing that lathe and then they would look at their management problems in the Philippines. I supposedly was going to have about six months to install that lathe and then possibly to take over the management job. But the management being what it was - the problems we had in the Philippines at that time - it was decided to lay it on me, the first of the year.

Jones

Who had been the manager there, Elmer?

Renken

Okay, Jackson Beaman was what - Far East manager at that time. And Erwin Anderson was the Milbuk resident manager. Weselsky was manager of Basilan. I believe Weselsky and Anderson were reporting to Beaman, but then also Bill came in, as operations

manager - whatever his title was - and they started reporting to him. But Bill had - checking with Harry - had the authority to make me general manager of the Philippines in January, starting right away, first of January in 1970.

Jones

Okay, so you went in to the Far East and then to Manila, I suppose. Did you spend any time there, before you went on down to Milbuk?

Renken

Yeah, I think it was kind of interesting. We lost our Thanksgiving in 1969. We boarded the plane for Tokyo Wednesday night about 9:00 on Thanksgiving of '69, and of course, with the International Dateline there wasn't any Thursday. We were in Tokyo the next day, on Friday, so we never saw Thanksgiving of '69. From there, they had a claim on some veneer at, oh, I don't know - Formosa?

Jones

Taiwan?

Renken

Taiwan, right. Taiwan. Bill went to Taiwan to settle that claim. And his wife and my wife and I went on to Hong Kong. We met the people in Hong Kong, and then flew over to Manila from Hong Kong. We arrived in Hong Kong on the 27th of November '69. No, 4th of December '69. Of course, precluding this was all the checkout in Tacoma, getting the shots. For the first time in my life the doc slipped a flu shot to me before I knew I had it. I wouldn't have taken it before then. But it was probably good. About the first thing that happened to Norma and I down in the Philippines was we each took the flu. Of course, they had a new strain of some kind. I got it rather mildly, but Norma developed an extreme case of diarrhea from it. We just about lost her. That was probably the first big event that happened to us when we got down there.

You know, we visited on the way out, got acquainted with our people, like Bill Hayakawa in Tokyo and Charlie Khong and met those fellows in Hong Kong; in the Philippines, in the Manila office. And I guess it was right in December there, wasn't it, Norma, that we were taken up to Baguio and were told we could eat the vegetables up there. I think eating is a big thing in the Far East and I'll talk about it to quite an extent.

Mrs. R.

A week after we got there.

Renken

A week after we got there, why, we took a trip up to Baguio, which is a resort area, you know, it's up 5,000 feet. It's cool. And we were told that the vegetables up there were all right to eat, so Norma ate a lot of fresh vegetables, which we hadn't eaten up to that time, because Dr. McGill had said to be careful of them. They were all right supposedly.

But we found a name of a good doctor. I called him and asked him to come out and look at her. He came out to the Intercontinental Hotel and I was unimpressed. He looked like a hippie, hair down to his shoulders. But he looked at Norma and took her temperature and asked a lot of questions that made sense and then I asked him, "What will you do with her if you take her?" Because my other alternative was to get her on an airplane and to fly her back to the United States. Later, Jackson Beaman told me that that would probably have been the last of her because people in the United States aren't familiar with those diseases. Well, it turned out that this doctor was an extremely good doctor. He had studied at Yale for years and put in a couple years in the United States and he told me that the first thing he'd do is take her down to another hospital and immediately start intravenous and get some fluids in her and get her back on the road. That's what happened.

Then we learned that when you're in the Far East and particularly in the Philippines, they expect you to provide the patient with a watcher. They have a bed beside the patient. Every room will have two beds in it and one is for the watcher, one of the relatives. If you aren't going to be there to watch, you'd better hire somebody to watch. So, I hired two nurses who had also been in the United States, and they - I had a job to do, so I asked them to be the watchers. They stayed with Norma around the clock, two nurses worked 12-hour shifts, and they brought her out of that.

An interesting little sidelight there is that the bed was there so, you know, Norma kept telling me, "I could sleep there" and I would rather have slept out in the guest house, of course. But on a Sunday I went down to the hospital to be with her after she was better and they came up and asked me what I'd like to have for dinner. They serve your watcher meals right along with the patient. We told them we wanted deep-fried shrimp and that confused them. We said, you know, "You just take shrimp and cook them in cooking oil." So we waited awhile and here came the shrimp, a big plate of shrimp about three inches long with heads, whiskers, legs and everything cooked in oil. It turned out they were very tasty.

We got through that episode and Norma generally got to feeling good, although we're not sure that she is completely free of maybe dysentery. That's a real tough one to shed completely. But she really hasn't suffered from it in many years.

Jones

It was a bad introduction to the Philippines, wasn't it?

Renken

Yes. Okay, one of the - we had two major problems in the Philippines. I had two major assignments. One was that up until the time I had arrived there, all of the veneer that they had produced for our fancy panels was unsatisfactory. They had had claims and I was told that if we couldn't make better

veneer out there that we might as well dump it in the Celebes Sea, because by the time they got it back to Marshfield, we had put so much money into it that it wasn't good.

Jones

What was the general nature of the deficiency?

Renken

As you know, our product was the core for our - what did we call it? Forestglo fancy paneling. It's the core. The core was one-sixth peel, one-sixth of an inch, and it had to be sanded and it had to be very smooth or the thin veneers will telescope any discrepancies in the surface through and the panel will have to be rejected. Even the lathe checks have to be turned all the same way. We had a Fisher splicer, where we spliced pieces of veneer together and then it went through a Timesaver sander to make it a real flat surface, to make a good panel. It had come through thick and thin and the lathe checks were not oriented properly, so it was unsatisfactory.

Well, Bill Sim had arranged for Nick Davis, who had had a lot of experience at Longview in the plywood business, to come down and help out, as quality control. And I have to give Nick the biggest share of the credit for solving our veneer problems. He went in and worked with the in-house people, in-place people and we just, we made up our mind that we were not going to ship any defective veneer. We were going to get the quality under control before we shipped, made another shipment. And we did. We never had another veneer claim, while I was there, on our veneer except one \$2,000 claim where we had sold reject veneer to Taiwan and it was, shouldn't have entertained any claim but Bill Hayakawa, to keep a customer, gave them \$2,000 because they thought our reject was too much of a reject. But we didn't have any more claims then.

One of the things we did was, I found that the mechanical and electrical ability of the Philippines was far from what I'd been led to believe. I had a chief electrician, Herman Tubungbanua, who had graduated from, he was a graduate engineer, electrical engineer, and I told him, you know, we needed a thickness, automatic thickness sensor and spray system so we'd know whether we had thick and thin. Suggested to him that he take a couple of roller bearings, ball bearings, and make a feeler and actuate a limit switch and spray our thick and thin. And he did it within three weeks at a cost of about \$1,000, at which time Black-Clawson wanted \$27,000 for a thickness sensor and we would have been six months getting it. So that was a major breakthrough. We lined up our veneer right and within two months were producing an acceptable product on which we never had another claim. That was the big hurdle in the veneer mill.

Of course, our problem was that we were making a core for a finished product, so we were really making - our finished product was a raw material for Forestglo paneling. Therefore, there wasn't a lot of money in it and, as we had to pay over \$27 a

cubic meter for wood, our raw material cost was higher than our selling price. So, the veneer mill ended up just being an operation to meet the manufacturing requirements of the Philippine forestry laws.

Jones

The agreement that we had with them, in connection with our concession?

Renken

Right. And we never did really make much of a profit with veneer. But we kept it on, as meeting part of our manufacturing agreement. As you know, that plant was originally proposed to be a plywood plant. An 8' lathe was installed and never used. It was quite obvious we didn't have the log supply for a plywood plant after we got in and studied it and that, at the price of logs, we could not have made a profitable venture out of a plywood plant at Milbuk. So the logs were shipped to Japan.

Logging was another problem. Of course, you get into people problems. I don't know if you want to talk about that.

Jones

Yes. Let's do.

Renken

I believe one of the problems when I got there, the management organization wasn't defined well enough that people knew who they were working for, what their authorities were and their responsibilities were, and we found the logging manager not talking to the resident manager. And this is part of the reason why I was put in as manager, as early as I was, because we had an untenable situation in logging and production was way down. The first thing we did was relieve the logging manager and he went back to the States.

Jones

Who was that, Elmer?

Renken

I'd have to look at my notes.

Mrs. R.

Carlile, wasn't it?

Renken

Yeah, Carlile.

Jones

Carlile?

Renken

Yes, Carlile.

Jones
Okay.

Renken

He ~~was~~ relieved and Anderson was put in charge of logging, reporting to me. And Anderson had had experience in logging in the States, was very competent and he turned logging around. We got our production up, even in that high country up east.

Jones

Up in the Kraan area?

Renken

Kraan area. High, rough logging. But we turned that around, got our allowable cut up within a few months and I believe I can say - I don't have production figures anymore - but, within a few months, we were up to our allowable cut and I believe we sustained it until I left. We logged all we were allowed to log and either shipped it or made it into veneer.

At the same time I took over Basilan, Don Weselsky reported to me. Don, of course, had always met his allowable cut over there and had a lot of experience in the Philippines and didn't require a lot of my time. I didn't spend much time over in Basilan. Just enough to keep him directed and coordinated correctly, get him some new equipment and so forth. He always met his allowable cut over there. Of course, over there, you know, all we did was - the sawmill had been shut down when I got there and we just produced logs and those were shipped to Japan.

The only lumber we produced while I was there was one of these little portable Mighty Mites that you took the saw to the log and we'd cut up enough wood and lumber to make our own houses and so forth. That's all the lumber we produced in Milbuk.

There were some interesting problems concerning people that we ran into. For instance, in the veneer mill when we first got there, we had a veneer mill superintendent by the name of Silaya.

Jones

How do you spell that?

Renken

S-i-l-a-y-a, who was pretty much typical of many of the supervisors and people in authority in the Philippines, meaning that he was on the take. He took advantage of his position. He was, as far as competency in veneer business, maybe mediocre. But we immediately had a problem in that he was - Jackson Beaman had hired him, so, and thought he was all right, but I found out that he was requiring his employees to give him some money back to hire them and buy him a radio and he was married but his wife wasn't there, so he had problems with some of the - female problems. It was quite obvious that he had to go, and

probably one of the first moves of one of the key people that we had to make. So we fired him and immediately got better results.

We also found that our purchasing department was on the take and although it was very sensitive and we had to work very carefully, I guess we didn't zero in on that problem and have enough evidence to move our purchasing agent, a Weyerhaeuser-Philippines corporate purchasing agent out, for about a year later. Even his assistants were on the take. They were taking kickbacks. We found it was costing the company 100, 200, 300 percent more for a lot of our equipment that we were buying in the Philippines, due to dishonesty in the purchasing ranks.

We found an honest man to take over that work and....

Jones

Was he a Philippine national?

Renken

Philippine national. What was his name, Norma? But anyway, we found somebody that we thought we could trust. He was a certified accountant and had demonstrated his integrity. So we put him in charge of purchasing and he moved to Davao, where most everything we needed could be purchased for the two operations. And we set up controls where they had to get written estimates from at least three vendors before we purchased something. I think we pretty well wiped out kickbacks and paybacks in our purchasing in the Philippines.

Of course, immediately - this is a problem in the, was a problem in the Far East. I was offered bribes many, many times. I always remembered - and if you talk to Bill Sim, he might tell you about it - when he went to Singapore, that a Chinaman there approached Bill and said he'd like to be his purchasing agent and they could both retire within two years. And of course Bill declined. But I'm sure that our purchasing agent in the Philippines, before I got there, he ended up a wealthy man. When we fired him, he went out and built himself a \$130,000 house and went into business for himself. So he made money off of it.

They would use all kinds of approaches from tires to scrap to you-name-it. There was a way that they wanted to kick back money or favors to you for one to them. Right from the outset, I made it pretty clear and demonstrated that there would be no dishonesty. For instance, the supervisors commonly got cooking gas from the storeroom.

When I started setting up controls, one of the things was storeroom issues. I set up, that nothing went out of that storeroom without a storeroom issue. I think my wife went over there and they weren't going to issue her a storeroom issue, a slip to sign. I went over and grabbed the guy by the neck - and who was that, Bilani - and said, "Hey. Everybody. That includes

me, my wife, every supervisor and everybody. When they draw something out of the storeroom, they are charged with it. It has to be charged to an account."

Well, in the storeroom, we kept some things around, because of our location in the jungle, that we used in households and one of these, although we didn't use it, was bottled gas. One of our informers gave me a note one day from our storeroom supervisor telling another supervisor, well, he would have to pay for that and charge it out because even Mrs. Renken had to sign storeroom issues. So we got our point across.

I have always - a common practice, of course, here is to accept maybe a jug at Christmas, or little trinkets or a jar of jam or something, at Christmastime. So I told him, you know, that was about the only thing. Our tire company, when they found out I would accept a jug, a fifth of whiskey for Christmas, then the next Christmas I had two cases of whiskey. I said, "No. That's not what I meant." We used the two cases for a big staff party and said, "From now on, you know, one case maybe, or nothing." Bribes, payoffs - and of course, this is part of doing business in the Far East and part of what we've been hearing about in the United States for the last three years - us not being able to understand that way of doing business. Out there, it's just considered the way you do business. At that time it certainly was. And certainly you didn't do business, unless you did some people some favors. I have had to - I'll talk on this subject, not to incriminate myself.

Jones

No. Tell your story.

Renken

Of all the favors that we - and we had to do some people some favors, just to stay in business. For example, one Saturday afternoon, they came over to my house and got me. The forestry inspector had boarded a ship we were loading logs on and he wanted a payoff. I believe he had some IRS people. He was not - he stopped loading of the ship - was not going to load another stick unless he got his, a certain payoff. His demands were unwarranted. When I boarded the ship, it was practically under a state of siege. That is, some of his people were standing around with Thompson submachine guns to emphasize their point. Of course, the Japanese shippers just stayed out of it completely and they don't want anything to do with it. It's up to us to clear it up with all the agencies we had, so that they could continue loading and then release the boat. But their demands were excessive and we had quite a heated discussion, quite a negotiating session. Pretty soon we got the ship released and it went on its way. I think an interesting - I don't know. Do you want this kind of stuff on tape?

Jones

I do. I certainly won't be able to use everything, but I want to be able to make a selection and be discreet and diplomatic in what I use. But what was his original demand?

Renken

I believe it was, and my memory really does fail me, but in this case I believe he was claiming that we hadn't paid the full amount of taxes, when in fact we had. And we had quite a time convincing them of that. But quite often they would demand a share for him and his people, you know. I believe in that case, though, I forced that one down and, if I recall right, we didn't give him a thing.

Along that same line, another interesting episode was that one Saturday afternoon I was taking a nap. And one of the guards came running over to me. "Hey, the mayor had just come into Milbuk and he had a 50-caliber machine gun and he was going to collect the income tax." I got up disgruntled from my siesta, went down to the guardhouse and there was the mayor of our municipality and Moslem, with IRS people from the Cotabatu Province and to impress us with their demands and their might, they had taken a 50-caliber machine gun, mounted it on the back of an army surplus 4x4 and said they were there to collect the income taxes that Weyerhaeuser-Philippines owed the Cotabatu Province, and particularly the municipality of Palimbang.

Needless to say, I got very angry and told them that I was going to charge them with threatening, upsetting the community and all kinds of things. We, in fact, had not paid our taxes yet, but we could pay our taxes either to the federal government or we could pay them to the province, and if we paid them to the province, the province got a share of them. But if we paid them directly to the Philippine federal government, the province wouldn't get a share of them. So, they came down really to impress me that we should pay them in the province so the municipality, the mayor, would get his share and the governor and the province would get their share, before it went to the federal government. And needless to say, he impressed me. But it was our policy anyway to do that. It was a completely unnecessary act, on the part of the mayor.

Jones

This had been your practice previously, of paying to the province?

Renken

Yes, it had. Yeah. And we got our name in Cotabatu newspaper over that one, that we were evading income tax and it was completely a false charge. And also, they would bring up - they had enough power and could do a thing like that - even with the idea that they would get a kickback to get you off the hook. But in this case, I just backed them down again. We had numerous cases like that, of course, on payoffs.

I think the most interesting one, the funniest one, was that we did favors for customs inspectors to come in and clear our ships. And these people were headquartered at Dijungas down on the southern tip of our area. They weren't in Davao or Cotabatu, they were down at Dijungas, which was the main headquarters for customs people in our area. Well, in order to expedite getting a ship out, which meant hundreds of thousands of dollars, we would quite often fly their agents in from Dijungas or Davao, wherever one happened to be, because they were clearing ships all around. We did not have a resident custom agent. So we'd fly them in and of course, we'd probably feed them and entertain them and then take them back.

That sort of thing, of course, we had to hold to a minimum and I was holding it to a very minimum and they were getting very disgruntled. Surprisingly enough, they asked me if I would meet with their boss, one of them did. So I went to Dijungas to meet, I thought, with higher authority in customs and I was surprised to find that all of the customs agents and their leader were in a meeting. And we openly talked about the procedures and so forth about what it would take to keep ships being cleared for export. With, hey, I was just too hard to get along with.

I ran out of cigarettes during that meeting. And the interesting thing was that the chief customs agent reached in his drawer and handed me a package of tax-free cigarettes. And of course, that's what most of the people smoked. The chief himself gave me some tax-free cigarettes. I smiled and we negotiated and we went back and we kept the ship exporting logs and veneer.

I think another interesting account on the customs problem was, that to get equipment into the Philippines, of course, is a real problem, getting it in through customs, getting it all cleared, thousands of paperwork. I remember particularly a, we needed a D8...

Jones
Front-end loader?

Renken
No, the scalper, the, oh, what's the name of that?

Jones
Bulldozer?

Renken
No, on the back of a D8 they've got two...

Jones
Oh, they've got the claws, the rippers?

Renken
...the big, big rippers. Okay. We needed a ripper for a D8, so we ordered from the States. We had all these packages and everything, and counted it very carefully. So that ripper had

five items. We got through customs with it, all the haranguing and extra-special favors. Ended up with five items, but we were missing the main cross-bar for the ripper that held the tongs, the rippers themselves. We looked high and low for them, checked back to see whether they'd gone to Sabah, back to the States. We went for months trying to locate the rest of that ripper. Unfortunately, five pieces were shipped and we'd signed for five pieces, but we didn't have all of it.

We went to the underground in Manila to find out if it had been - it was quite often the case, a part would be pulled off a ship and go on the black market in Manila and we'd have to go find it and buy it again. But it wasn't there. Then we got the tipoff that we should look in the customs warehouse in Davao. So we slipped a man in the customs warehouse in Davao and, sure enough, there it was. After us haranguing customs for five or six months, there was this part. A national, this Eddie...

Mrs. R.
Curaba.

Renken

...Curaba slipped in the warehouse, found the part and approached the customs agent, that he had been talking about that part before, and of course that agent wanted a kickback to get it out. And we were very angry because he hadn't even told us he had it before that. And Curaba managed to bring enough pressure on him by telling him that he was going to prosecute the customs agent that he immediately released it and we had our ripper altogether. And quite often today, when I talk to some of our purchasing people in the Far East, we talk about that one.

Another interesting one was, we had, as I said, we were getting quite a bit of equipment, you know. We increased production down there and got some new Cats and yarding machines. So we said, "Hey, you know, you need to package things carefully." We got a ship to bring us in about 10 pieces of equipment, landed it directly in Milbuk, got an agent over there, a customs agent. We thought we really had a good, clean shipment. The ship had sat in Manila for a little while, but when we looked at our equipment, it all looked like it was coming in intact and we carefully checked every piece to make sure we had it. And this yarder was crated with plywood, but the yarder itself sat on 12" I-beams. And when we looked at it, the plywood was all intact and we were sure everything was there.

So, we cleared the ship, cleared the shipment, and about two or three days later when we took the plywood off of that yarder, we found that some Filipino had slipped up under that 12" area between the skids and the plywood, had climbed up inside the crate, had taken off the injectors, generators, all the accessories off two diesel engines, and had stolen them. But the worst part was, that in order not to leave any tracks, he put all of the bolts and nuts into ports in the engine. The water

ports, and of course, we had quite a complete overhaul job to do, plus having to go to Manila and buy back the injectors and generators and so forth. So those were some of the problems of getting equipment over there.

Jones

Just no end to them.

Renken

As I say, we turned the veneer mill around. We got logging producing maximum cut and, as you know, that was quite a chore. I think we logged some of the roughest terrain in the world, plus having up to 200 inches of rain. I believe our record was 35 inches in one month by the 15th of the month. I believe it was August, but I don't know what year. We had 35 inches by the 15th. Of course, we had gigantic landslides, we lost a Filipino who died under one of the landslides. With that kind of water, you're going to lose some roads and have some big landslides. We lost D8s over the side, rolled them down the side of the mountain. Had a D6 covered up, had to dig it out. It was just plain tough logging. I think F. K., when he was down there, reminded us of it and confirmed it. That was about as tough logging as he'd ever seen. I think you could agree with that, too. Rock was no problem for roadbuilding, after you were away from the seashore, of course.

Oh boy, I'm sure rambling on, aren't I? Better pause there.

When I was offered the job of general manager of Weyerhaeuser-Philippines, Corp., it was understood that I would stay in Milbuk, which is in the southwestern tip of Mindanao, that I would head-quarter there "where the action was," quote Harry Morgan, and that I would also have to run the Manila office and be general manager of the total Philippine corporation. This was quite a chore, as our only communications was radio to Manila and radio to Davao and Basilan. So I was the general manager, you might say, down in the jungle with communications of two-way radio. We had good radio operators and typically they would use any frequency that would get us through. One day I started to chew out a man for talking on our frequency and was immediately hushed by our radio operator and told that I was on his frequency. So they got us through one way or another. Sometimes the weather stopped communications. So immediately a great problem was created in communications.

And, as you know, communications is still a byword and the lack of it and problems with communications today when we're here talking to each other and have telephones and computers. We didn't have that out there and I think one of my greatest problems was lack of communications with my boss and my boss' boss in Tacoma. That was a huge problem. One day I remember, when John Wilkinson wanted to talk with me on a telephone, he sent word the day before and I had to fly 180 miles over to Davao, place an overseas long-distance call which cost us, I think about \$15 a minute at the time.

Jones

This was to Singapore or Jakarta?

Renken

To Hong Kong. He was in Hong Kong. So I flew over to Davao and he and I conversed about some important matter for a matter of minutes. But it took me over a half a day to make a few-minute telephone call to my boss about an important matter. One of the problems in communications was that when we were on that radio, of course, the whole world was listening. So any sensitive subjects couldn't be discussed. I developed a code with one person in Manila so that I could send confidential messages up there, but only one person. And I used a rather crude code, but at least I think it was kept confidential. That way I could communicate with my Manila office, which was our main office. But even that had its problems.

I would make occasional trips up to Manila. I put our attorney, Mejia, in charge of the Manila office, administrative-wise, and of course we had our chief forester up there. These were my key people and let's just say that communications was a big problem and it caused some real, real episodes that would have not needed to exist. Possibly if I'd been in Manila, it would have been better, because we could always make long-distance calls from there. But that was a decision of work, about being where the action was. I think my term in the Philippines was one of the most successful, from the standpoint of good production, turning the veneer mill around and good log production, during my period of time. We hit a pretty good market which of course helped. So that was a problem.

Communications, of course, in the Philippines from a language standpoint was not great. Seems that most Filipinos speak English. In fact, English was their more common language. Many of the tribes had to go to English to speak to each other. They always had a problem with their genders. I remember that I got feedback from Tacoma that my wife was giving orders and - Bill Johnson brought this one back. But what it amounted to was that a Filipino quite often would use the wrong gender in the pronoun, such as he might say, "Mr. Renken she did this" or "Mrs. Renken he said this." So, Tacoma just heard the he, you know, or just heard the Mrs. Renken. And we had a few incidents there. People didn't understand.

Of course, in communications as you probably - when you came to the Philippines, you probably brought the mail and we gave you some letters to mail, when you left.

Jones

Standard procedure.

Renken

Standard procedure because if you put them in the Philippine mail, a person might not get them. I remember we bought a real

fancy pantsuit. Mrs. Hunt was down there and they purchased some souvenirs. Among other things, she wanted a nice embroidered pantsuit. I think it left our Manila office, but it never got to the United States. A lot of lost mail, a lot of problems in that way. They burnt the post office while we were there.

Of course, we arrived in the Philippines - shortly after we arrived, the Communists were quite active and I guess it was about the time you were sick in Manila when they stormed Malacanang, wasn't it? Yeah, about the time Norma was sick up there, in January of 1970. You know, the Vietnam War, the Commies were doing everything they could to disrupt any free country. And one night it even got to where they had penetrated the gates of the palace in Malacanang, when Norma was up in the Intercontinental Hotel.

The Filipinos had pulled back or had abandoned their homes and had moved into the hotel. It was filled up with people who were going to make their last stand out there in Makati, which was private land and which they could defend. There was something like Lebanon just went through, you remember, at the Holiday Inn. That happened, like I say, in January and February of that first year. Of course, it gave us some apprehensions of whether we were in the right place, you know. And of course, that unrest, that political unrest of the Communists and so forth, that led finally to Marcos declaring martial law in 1972.

I think one of the interesting things about the Far East is that the distances between points is rather - it is, well, you don't believe how far it is. For instance, one time they called a Far East meeting in Singapore. I was in Milbuk and it was the Far East managers' meeting, about the time Bingham came out there, and we were trying to zero in on our Indonesia concession. And we had to travel 2,500 miles one way to get to

that meeting. We went to Manila, to Hong Kong, to Bangkok, to Singapore, 2,500 miles for a meeting of the Far East group. And I imagine that took us the better part of a week. Those kind of things all came pretty hard.

Transportation in the Philippines was interesting. Of course, they used the caribou, horses, calises. We could drive from Milbuk out on our logging roads, in jeeps or trucks, but probably the farthest distance we could get from Milbuk by vehicle, land vehicles, on our logging road, might have been 20, 25 miles and then you were just up in the mountains. To go out, we always went by airplane, flew to Davao and then took commercial to Manila.

Transportation was a problem. Of course, the Filipinos around there used the boncas and vintas. A vinta is a small, a small one- or two-man boat with outriggers. The bonca is the small one, the vintas are the larger ones. Some of the smugglers would put two, three or four hundred horsepower engines on large

vintas and were able to outrun the Philippine navy. And of course, there was always a black market for almost anything you wanted to buy in the Philippines, including guns.

Well, I think, you know, as far as organization, I've about explored that one. Of course, we've witnessed the struggle for power between Jackson Beaman and Bill Sim. The Harry Morgans and somebody else could talk about that one. But pretty much, you know, I was, you might say, a pawn in that episode. I tried to play it smart, but didn't always come out the winners.

I think another thing I want to say is that I liked the Philippines and came under a lot of criticism and everybody in the Far East goes through or went through at that time. With the reorganization problems and everything going on, everyone was pretty jumpy and there was always a lot of friction between Americans out there. They might form in groups or cliques and, having to live away from home and close together, it just created an environment that created a lot of friction that ensued before I got there and was there after I left, I know.

We tried to handle it and did our best, but finally, I felt that with logging - with our supply of timber running down and our veneer mill not making any money and things being what they were, I felt that I could no longer control that corporation from my place in Milbuk. And I asked - you know the reason why I left the Philippines - I asked that I either go to Manila where we could live and I could be at Corporate Headquarters, to start doing the work that I knew the general manager of that corporation needed to do. Or go home. John Wilkinson was my boss at that time and he discussed this with the people in Tacoma, came back and said, well, I could go home. And that was all right with me and, as you know, then Andy Macs took over. And he certainly, I think, was the appropriate man for the job to be done.

Jones

Now what was that date?

Renken

We came home - I was released down there, I switched on payroll on June 1, 1972.

Jones

June 1, 1972?

Renken

June 1, 1972 is when Dierks picked me up on their payroll.

Jones

So you'd been over there about two and a half years.

Renken

Yes. After that decision was made, that I was going to go home - that's where I wanted to go - I just said, "Hey, you know my

story." The people in Canada wanted me to come back up there. We had been out of the States for over five years and I felt it was time to get back to the States for a while. So I said, "Hey, something in the United States. Whatever you think is best." So I got word to Meet Otto _____ at Dierks, Arkansas, as plant engineer. That was one opening. So I came down here, thinking, you know, okay, I'd work here a while and then probably go someplace else. Now, I've been here five years and doesn't look like I'm going anyplace else.

Jones

Elmer, are you Canadian or U.S. citizen?

Renken

I'm a U.S. citizen, yes.

Jones

And you were U.S. when you were out at Lumby, were you?

Renken

Yes, we went up there as a landed immigrant. I guess I'd like to talk about the food a little bit.

Jones

All right, let's hear about it.

Renken

You know, it, I think, was one of the most interesting subjects because you do have to have food to survive. Of course, we studied - we went to a doctor in Canada, an English doctor who had been in Africa, and he gave us a lot of information on surviving on the Tropics, which I think was some of the best information we got. He had been with the British Army in Africa. But we knew that, you know, anything that you couldn't peel or boil was dangerous and we certainly found it out firsthand with Norma. So good food and water was very difficult, and I suppose we got overly cautious as a result of Norma's episode. We finished out pretty well, but looking back at pictures of ourselves now, we know that we weren't really doing as well as we thought.

Of course, in Tokyo you can partake of about anything they put on, in the bigger hotels. Hong Kong, I wouldn't trust their water yet. I used to brush my teeth with the hot water side and not drink any of their water. Some of our people drank their milk in Hong Kong. I was afraid of it. We never drank any of it. We didn't eat any of their fresh vegetables in Hong Kong or Singapore, which was supposed to be clean, particularly after Norma was sick.

So, we - as quickly as we got back to Hawaii and the United States, we really wanted milk and fresh vegetables. Because we just got to where we wouldn't eat anything like that. I, we have been places where you just couldn't drink the water at all and brush your teeth with beer or Seven-Up and you foam at the mouth while you're doing it. You just avoid the water

in most places unless you know that it had been boiled for at least 20, 25 minutes, which is what it takes to kill amoeba.

So, eating, although we dined in some of the finest restaurants in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Manila, you know, I can't really say that I thoroughly enjoyed over perhaps ten meals in the Far East during that two and a half years. And some particular dishes of the various meals, I would say, you know, I enjoyed them terrifically. I remember oysters au gratin, in a Hong Kong hotel, that were just delicious and chicken curry and so forth.

One of our interesting eating experiences was that we had a Chinese buyer of our logs in Manila that, he bought our miscellaneous pieces that we couldn't ship to Japan. And his son got married, so he threw a wedding feast to which we were invited. And we sat at a round table that must have been 16 feet in diameter with a lazy Susan on it that just left a place for your plates where you sat around the table. And then the waiter stood in one position and loaded dishes on this lazy Susan and then they would go to the host. The man, of course, insisted that Norma sit beside him. He would get one of these dishes and he would tell Norma, "Now you have to eat this. This is delicious."

Well, it ranged from snails to bird's nest soup to shark fin soup to some good shrimp. And I was sitting on the other side of Norma so, you know, I could pass up some of these things. But Norma had to try everything. Needless to say, by the time she got through that, she wasn't feeling too well. We did both eat bird's nest soup and, you know, the story of bird's nest soup that you can tell sometime, I guess. Comes from Sabah, you know.

Jones

No, I don't think I do know.

Renken

Oh, is that right? You know, birds' nests at one time were Sabah's major export. They were a major export of Sabah. And that was right - south of our operation, there were a bunch of cliffs where swallows make nests. Of course, the portion they eat is - a swallow lines his nest by regurgitating something that he eats. And he'll line his nest with that and it'll end up so that it feels like porcelain, maybe an eighth of an inch thick or so.

Well, they take those nests with grass and leaves, and stick that lining around there. But they strip out that lining, clean it out, and then they cook that into a soup, the Chinese do. And that was a major export of Borneo back in the late 1800s. But we had bird's nest soup a couple of different times. I fail to see the delicacy in it. Oysters au gratin in Hong Kong, now I'd like to go back. They were a good appetizer.

But we survived. We had a difficult time getting meat. They imported them from Australia. By the time they got to us, it was pretty well dried out. I guess the best meat I had was one time one of the local people killed a deer and that venison was just like ours and it was very tasty. It was fresh, good, fresh meat. Unfortunately, there weren't too many deer. We had wonderful lobster meals a couple times come from Basilan. The lobsters were huge, you know, like the main body of them was over two feet long. The crabs weren't - they left something to be desired as compared to - they were a mudcrab more than a Dungeness. They weren't good.

We had some good fish meals, but what the Filipinos thought was good food and what we thought, were two different things. And I'm sure the Filipinos will never be known for their cuisine. They aren't - you don't see many Filipino restaurants around the United States like you do Chinese or Italian food or Mexican food. Filipinos will never be known for their cuisine, I don't believe.

Jones

That must be the reason why then.

Renken

But food was quite a problem and for a year or so after we were back in the United States, we quite often, when we were in a restaurant, wouldn't drink our water. We'd gotten into a habit of not drinking water. If you'd have to, you'd drink pop. And you could get pop or beer most any place. So that covers food.

As for people, I just want to say that I think that a lot of the people in the United States, and our corporate officers, underestimated the ability of the Filipino and the Chinese people, particularly. The Filipino natively is a good mechanic. He has mechanical aptitude born in him. And I believe that mechanical aptitude is born in people or not and Filipinos have it. They were great little mechanics. They could just build and make almost anything. That's displayed by all their arts and crafts, you know. They're just great people in that respect. The electricians, you know. They were great.

The loggers were great. They were small. It took two of them to lift a choker barrel instead of one. But they'd overhaul an engine and do a beautiful job. They were slow sometimes, some of them were fast, like we have here. Bill Johnson, you know, was concerned whether we should buy D9 Cats, but after going out and observing our operators, he said we had some that could handle them just as well as people in the States. Then he bought us some more D9s and I'm sure they used them effectively.

They were great little mechanics. They were dextrous. We just got to think an awful lot of them. We made some very personal friends. We of course didn't see colors. Filipinos range from

almost white to almost as black as our Negroes and you get so you don't see color, as much as we moved around. There were people just like us. And I believe that the only - and there are people down there that are educated and not in exactly the way that we do business, but they were learning. And they had some really highly intelligent people. I still think the two doctors we had are the best doctors we've ever gone to, Filipino doctors that were trained in the United States. I think they were great. And some others that we went to.

But we ended up with a very close relationship with the Filipinos and, if anything, I think I tended to identify with them more possibly than I should have, although I don't have any regrets about it at all.

Jones

What are some of the other things you remember about the indication of the developing Moslem insurgent situation? You spoke of the mayor of Palimbang showing up with a machine gun to collect the taxes and so on.

Renken

As you know, Milbuk was a place where we had our veneer mill, and our logging operations were in the municipality of Palimbang, P-a-l-i-m-b-a-n-g, Palimbang, which was in the province of Cotabatu, which is one of the provinces that make up the Philippines. Now, of course, any time you have a predominance of one religion or one power group, you don't have any problems, such as in Indonesia, where they are mostly Moslems. But unfortunately, Palimbang was pretty much divided about 50-50 and before I arrived there, a Moslem mayor was elected in some manner, I don't know how. But a Moslem mayor was in charge of the municipality, which may have been mostly Moslems, except for our workforce, which was mostly Christians, which numbered, at that time, about 1,200 people. So, I suppose there were more Christians in the municipality but, because the Moslems were more entrenched, they managed to have a Moslem mayor of that municipality.

Okay, the province of Cotabatu was predominantly Moslem and they had Moslem-elected officials in Cotabatu City. So we were in a Moslem-controlled, you might say, province. Of course, I, before going down there, knew the Moslems existed but I didn't understand some of the problems that were going on in the world until after I got down there and people started filling me in, on some of our government problems, which turned out to be some of our greatest problems in the Philippines. I always remember when Charley Bingham first came - first time I saw him - he asked me what I saw as our two major problems for Weyerhaeuser-Philippines in the coming year. And I told him the political situation and unionism. It wasn't production of logs and veneer. This we could handle. But those were the two major problems, and, of course, I could see them after I was there and got my ears to the ground.

At first, there wasn't much indication of real problems. I had been there about a month and we arranged for me, as general manager, to go meet the mayor of our municipality. In order to do it, I had to get on a vinta with an outboard motor and go up the coast and land at our municipality mayor's, I guess they call it the...

Jones

Not the county seat, like we do?

Renken

No, it wasn't the county seat. I forget. What'd they call the municipality?

Mrs. R.

Palimbang?

Renken

Yeah, but you referred to it as - I don't know. That'll have to come later. Anyway, I had to visit him by going by vinta, outrigger up there. And it was a big affair, you know. We landed on the beach and walked up to the municipal building, and the mayor wasn't there. But right away they sent a runner for him. Here he comes in one of the colorful jeepneys, with armed guards hanging around it, and another jeep behind it. It drives up and out steps the mayor and he's rather a frail individual, and right away shows an arrogance, denoting his position and his authority.

After the amenities of introductions, he invites us to a meal. So we go over to an open restaurant with flies and all. And all the while, he's putting on his show, showing his force with his armed guards. He would issue orders for one to stand guard and one to eat, and send a runner here, send a runner there, and halfway talking to me and halfway talking to his people like he was very important and had a lot of instructions to give and so forth. He really put on quite a show, something like what you'd see in Mexican movies of the little local dictator.

He had a Chinaman as a cook in this little restaurant. He served us chicken and rice and I ate of it. The chicken was prepared - I'm not sure but what the whole chicken, that the Chinaman just didn't get at it with a cleaver and chop it up into bits. So you had to pick out between the, what you wanted to eat of it. But it tasted all right.

So this was just an introduction, meeting, telling him we wanted to work with him and what it was all about. That was my first introduction to the mayor. And it turned out to be quite an acquaintance in the two and a half years. But that went fine and he didn't press anything except that he wanted us to pay his income taxes in the municipality, so that he'd get his share. And the mayor never did really put any pressure on us for kickbacks or payoffs. I'm not sure how he supported himself. I think he had a way of twisting things out of the general population

to support himself, but he never really did come on strong for me to support him.

I offered him my support. I told him, you know, the Philippines was a democracy like the United States, and I tried to play the middle role between, you know, Christians and Moslems. And did a very good job of it. I decided I had to be honest, fair and square with the mayor and anything I told I'd do, do. And I kept him at his word. And one thing I found out, that once they made a commitment and told you something, they would stick with that. But they were very careful with what they would tell you. The Moslems. They were very careful with their commitments. But once I had a commitment out of the mayor, I could depend on it. And I couldn't say that for a lot of other Christian politicians in the Philippines. They might take whatever course was best for them rather than to stick with their word. But I found the Moslems to generally - if they told you they were going to do something, they'd do it.

Well, we enjoyed I guess almost a year of fairly good relationships, the mayor trying to get more strength and us working within the political system. And it eventually evolved that, you know, after we got out of the Kraan, that we needed to go up to Wasag. There had been a road up the coast past our municipal building in the years before I had gotten there. So, you know, it was a major decision when we decided to open that road. We had to go through the landowners and get permission and get the mayor to support it, which he was happy to do because that gave him a road to the rest of his municipality. Other than that, he had to travel by vinta to serve his municipality. So with the road, he could use his jeep.

So, he gave his blessings to the road and we built it. We had a grand opening, which I remember very well. The mayor came down and prayed to Allah that the road would be a blessing to everybody and they prayed by putting their palms up, you know, so the Lord giveth. The Catholic priest came out and anointed the road with water and blessed the road. We made a big celebration out of it and pledged that that road would always be used for the good of everyone around there, which of course later we found out isn't true.

Relations about then were very high, things were going good. And then as elections, local municipal elections came closer and closer, the mayor felt a need, I believe, to strengthen his political base and make sure he stayed in power, so he started lining up his constituents and they were almost divided Moslem and Christian. And so, of course, he had to make sure that he got re-elected. I believe this was the start of our trouble in Milbuk. He found one Christian town that wouldn't support him and went out and annihilated and killed about 18 people in that town, a little village, little gathering, where people gathered, Christians would gather together. His whole police

force was put in the Cotabatu jail over that episode, but after a while they managed to get them all out and get them pardoned and that blew over.

One case of our troubles was a Moslem group, two or three families had turned against the mayor just before - no, this was after the election. In retaliation, the mayor's people went out and, about 3:00 in the morning, set fire to the house where several of these people were sleeping and, then as they came out of the house, he fired on them with automatic weapons. And I remember that Saturday morning, all at once we had a rush call and we flew five injured people, Moslems, in our airplane up to Cotabatu hospital for treatment. He was ruthless in this respect. Some of his people did this. Of course, the mayor would deny any connection with it.

The local election was interesting. I guess he - enough people had died by gunshot wounds suddenly. By the time elections came around, I guess the mayor felt that he had the election lined up okay. But I was very concerned that we might have a major uprising between the Christians and the Moslems. And all the while, you know, I am playing the role of a manager that must live with everybody and hey, democracy will work type thing in this. But, in order to ensure that elections went right, the mayor's people sat on the ballot boxes with machine guns. We saw this. And of course, he was re-elected. As a precaution, I asked Nick and Pearl Davis to fly out of Milbuk. I flew all the Americans out of Milbuk, except myself, in case we had a real confrontation there between the Christians and Moslems. And it didn't develop into one, principally because the mayor had complete control.

We took the Milbuk ballots up to the municipal building and the mayor confiscated our bus on election day, or the day after election. He confiscated our bus, until after he counted the ballots. If the ballots, you know, would have been against the mayor, the trouble would have started and right there we would have lost that bus and our driver. But, somehow he managed to get the votes all lined up in favor of him. We got our bus back and went back to work.

Well, of course, the hard feelings weren't over and, as I say, some of the people that he knew didn't vote for him, he went out and wiped out, virtually wiped out a family. The friction between Moslems and the Christians takes on all kinds of forms. One of their ways of gathering power, of course - you know that the Moslems will - just like in the Far East now. They don't recognize a central government or democratic government. The Moslems in the Philippines to this day still say that they are a free people and they don't have to conform to national law. Their law is the Koran and the Datu in charge of it. That's their law.

This was brought out later on in one of our tense situations when we were in Wasag, some of the Moslems came down and harassed

some of our people at Wasag, our landing for the logs. And our Christians, they kind of harassed some of them. So we had a big meeting in Palimbang with some of the Datus. And Datu is anybody that's got a following, you know, any leader. And of course, he's generally been to Mecca and wears a white hat. But one of these Datus, you know, looked at me as another Datu. I'm sure that's how he - I was a general manager of a bunch of Christians and an employer, so I was their Datu.

And I always remember, he could not speak English but I had an interpreter. But the interpreter told me that he said it looked like I could control my people and I could make my people do what was right. And I said, "Yes, I try to, but only what is company business. I have no control over my people on their own time or what they do. That is Philippine government business." And he says, "Well, I can control my people. Why can't you control yours?" And I told him again through the interpreter. And then he said, "Well, I can control my people. You know, I kill them or something." And I always wondered what the something was. And he went away from that meeting feeling, you know, that I should have been able to control the Christian populace. Palimbang, which was out of my - you know, I didn't want anything to do with the government. I just was interested in running a business. But you precipitated into it, because you're the Datu for the Christians.

Well, the tension mounted between Christians and Moslems - and it mounted and got worse. And one way the Moslems would harass Christians, for instance, the Moslems would move out into an area of farming. People would have one or two hectares, five hectares. And I remember one woman sitting in the Philippine Constabulary building in Milbuk one day crying. She told me her story.

The Moslems had moved out by her and then they wanted her piece of land. She wouldn't sell it to them, so the Moslems killed one of her caribou. She wouldn't sell, she and her husband wouldn't sell. They had two or three children. And then the Moslems - when they wouldn't sell after they killed one of their caribou, they killed another caribou and then tore up the field. She still wouldn't sell. Then they killed one of her children and she still, she and her husband, refused to sell or move. Then they killed her husband and at the time I saw her in the police station, she decided that she'd have to sell to the Moslems.

It turned out she didn't have any relatives around there and I said, "Hey, where do you have relatives?" They were over near Zambo. So we offered her a plane ride to Zambo to her relatives and I implored her not to sell. I said, "Your husband and child died in vain and if you sell, this just encourages them to do some more to some more of our people." So that's what she did and we flew her out of there. And then, of course, the Moslems moved into her farm because - law and order were probably like the West. It was the gun. And of course, the mayor had most of the guns.

I believe that that election and the local Moslem leader, Ali, you know, he wanted to gain more power. And at this time, somewhere in '70, it had to be in later '71, I believe that's when they started getting support from Libya and some of the Moslems in the Middle East. Because then it took on, the whole province of Cotabatu soon became a battleground. Probably the first thing we knew that there was something big stirring like foreign support was intelligence. Army intelligence, through my chief of security, got us to watching for submarines. Supposed to be secret information. Submarines unloading arms, which later proved out to be true. We never saw any.

And then we found that down south of Milbuk, a group of Moslems had moved in that were foreign. And we had walkie-talkies on the plant, these little ones like on Channel 15, and our local people started picking up dialects that they'd never heard before on our walkie-talkies. They kept telling me, "Hey, there's foreigners, strangers in around Milbuk," which was hard to believe. But I developed through all this, quite a close relationship - at about this time, Marcos put a Christian governor into Cotabatu Province. I got to working with that governor, just for preservation, and he confirmed that the foreign elements were coming into Cotabatu Province and supporting our local Moslems. Well, then trouble really started.

They made demands like getting a bigger share or getting money for logging, land squabbles. Pretty soon they, the mayor knew, you know - he used the term that he killed the goose that laid the golden egg - he knew he would be out of business. So, you know, he wanted to keep the company in business. And I used this and I worked with the mayor very closely to try to keep Weyerhaeuser-Philippines out of the local trouble, which was damn near to an impossibility. But the mayor wanted to keep it that way because that was his source of revenue. And he wanted to keep it that way.

But I think the mayor was under pressure from higher-up Moslems - I know he was - to gain control of our province and get jobs in our company. We hired as many Moslems as we could. But they weren't very good workers and we were running only about eight percent at the most, Moslems versus Christians, working at the veneer and logging. We'd try to get them jobs and then they wouldn't work. And we had all kinds of squabbles.

And probably one of the first instances was that they decided to block the road from Wasag to Milbuk. We got word of it one afternoon and this episode is outstanding in my mind. So, we heard that the mayor was going to ambush our logging crew. So, we took some Philippine police force, federal forces. We went out and met our logging crew. I went with them. And there wasn't any shooting incident at that time. Later on, there was a shooting incident. It got to where we'd require a Philippine Constabulary escort with our logging crew. And interestingly, the mayor - you know, he and I'd agreed that he was going to

leave our company alone, and he did. So, they let our company people and the buses pass, but then the Moslems fired on the army and the army returned fire and the fight was on.

A little while after that happened, is when they annihilated this Christian village. And when they did that, a lot of Christian farmers around there came into our, the Milbuk compound which, you know, had a guard around it. They came in there for security because of the Moslems. They were afraid of being killed by Moslems. Two or three or four different instances where they just came into us for security because the government couldn't protect them, their lives. I remember, I've got pictures of them sleeping in our - the clinic filled up, into the veneer mill. At one time they panicked while I was back on vacation. I believe that was Christmas of '71. Lloyd Roberts had all the problem and he can tell you about that. They panicked and came in, even commandered a barge and went over to Zamboanga on the barge. Just evacuated their families from Milbuk because of the Moslems.

One night we got word that they were going to attack Wasag, attack our logging crew, so we got our logging crews in all right, no shooting. And they left two guards at Wasag, and they had radio communications. So I, after the guards said, "Hey, everybody pulled out. What do you want us to do?" And I asked those guards not to worry about our equipment in Wasag, but to hide the radio and just go out in the jungle and, if they had to, work their way back to Milbuk. I said go out in the jungle and spend the night and we'll come up there with the Philippine Constabulary the next day. So, they broke off radio communications and we didn't know anything, what had happened to them, until the next day. We got a runner in saying that they had got two Moslems.

Well, it turned out that I'd told them to hide the radio and they did. But instead of hiding in the jungle right out of Wasag, they'd walked up the logging road. They were going to walk away from the logging dump. They heard the Moslems land in outboards, when they landed on the beach. So my guards figured they could walk up the logging roads, away from Wasag, and they would be away from the Moslems. Unbeknownst to them, the Moslems had circled Wasag and were coming down the road in a wedge formation and our guards, walking up the road, said "Stop. Who goes there?" And the Moslems opened fire on them and my two guards opened fire on the Moslems and rolled in the ditches. And they killed one Moslem on the spot and another Moslem went about 100 feet into the brush and died. And the rest of the Moslems left Wasag that night.

The next morning we went up there. We had two dead Moslems on our hands. I went to the municipal mayor and he said he didn't know anything about it, didn't want to know anything about it and that the judge should go up there. And I thought you were supposed to call in a coroner or something. What do you do with these people? And I told the mayor, "They're Moslems.

They have Moslem hats. They're your people, you take them." "No, no. They're not my people." So he wouldn't take them. The judge came up and he wouldn't do anything with them.

We didn't know what to do with the bodies because Moslems have to be buried in a certain way, you know. And we actually, I instructed my men not to touch those bodies and they didn't. I notified the governor of the province. No one would claim the bodies. No one would do anything about them and the bodies laid there and rotted. Dogs chewed on them and my men complained about the stench. And finally, after many days, they poured gasoline on them and burned them. That was horrible and kind of typical of what was going on.

Jones

But your two guards escaped with their lives?

Renken

Yeah, our guards - one of them got shot and nicked his elbow, the elbow bone was nicked a little bit and the other one had a hole in his pants and one in his hardhat. They had a close call, had a close call. That was one of the more violent things that I was involved in. We continued to have harassments. I kept imploring the mayor and he kept working with us to keep Weyerhaeuser-Philippines operating, and we did. And it was a struggle.

And pretty soon, as the insurgents built up more strength, it became more and more difficult and the governor of the province sent down more army patrol boats as this little battle just got worse and worse. More insurgents and more constabulary. We had to provide a place for the constabulary to live, for some of them, the officers. And sometimes helicopters would come in. The commander of the province would come in, when we had real problems, and settle it down. It finally developed back and forth.

While I was on vacation, I understand they had quite an episode. The Christians all pulled into Milbuk, into our compound and the Moslems confronted them and there were some killings back and forth that I didn't want to know too much about because I think some of our people, some of our employees were involved. Incidentally, the Moslems that attacked Wasag that night were former employees of ours. When this battle started - I call it a battle or conflict - our Moslems quit us. They had to, they weren't safe to work for us. They had to pull back.

Jones

Elmer, do you have a date on this Wasag skirmish that occurred there?

Renken

Yeah, I'll find it in here for you and you can put it in your notes. I've got it down here someplace. This problem started

in the '70s, as I say, and developed. For instance, on February 11, 1971, some Moslems killed some Christians and we had panic all night, due to shots in the barrio next to us. And people moved into the, stormed into the, veneer mill and retreated into the veneer mill behind our security guards. They were in a panic yet, up until Friday the 19th. Well, the 20th the evacuation was still on, tension, no work, stopped work on us. The PC arrived, Philippine Constabulary, arrived on Monday the 22nd and kind of got that incident under control. And then we go on up, there was a shooting at our fish pond right north of Milbuk there, a little skirmish between Moslems and Christians. One man was killed. We get on up into November of '71, when the mayor retaliated and one Moslem was killed, five wounded, five were flown to Cotabatu. The next day three people were wounded with gunshots. Then again on Monday, two more victims were flown to Cotabatu.

Jones

That's what date?

Renken

That's November of 1971.

Jones

November the - ?

Renken

That's in, that was in and around the election.

Jones

November the which?

Renken

November the 15th, 1971. I believe that their election - you know, they set the Philippines up on elections on the odd years. Ours in the United States are in the even years and their elections are in November of the odd years. Kind of interesting. But I don't have the exact date of the election. Here's where I went on vacation, in December of '71, and Roberts can tell you about the problems he had with them evacuating to the plant and going on barges over to Zamboanga for safety.

While I was back on that vacation, Frank Roulette called me up. He didn't know who else to call. I was back in Seattle and he called me New Year's Day, I think it was, and told me of all the troubles in the Philippines. So, I was pretty concerned and wanted to get back. The concession guard was killed on January the 15th.

Jones

Seventy-two now?

Renken

Nineteen-seventy-two. I met with mayor - the mayor's name is Druz Ali, Mayor Druz Ali, D-r-u-z A-l-i was his last name.

We had a very interesting episode. The mayor's son, he had sent him off to college and he had killed a classmate in college, retreated to Cotabatu to live and was, of course, untouchable. But the mayor's son, I think he graduated or almost graduated. And he kept hitting me up for a job but he wouldn't work. So he resorted to harassing us and one of the things he did was stole a bunch of our logs. And we understood that he had hooked onto our logs with a tug. I tried to make a case out of it to prevent him from doing that, because they can take quite a toll on your logs. They'd come in to the log pond at Wasag and gather up a bunch and pull them up to Cotabatu City. So, we understood that they were marshalling the logs. We got in our Cessna and flew up and sure enough, here's a group of logs and I immediately protested to the mayor. And he said, oh, those were his logs. And of course, we knew they weren't. And that his son didn't know where he got the logs, some excuse anyway. He wouldn't stop those logs from leaving and give them back to us. So they headed up the coast behind one tug. And we kept flying over them and taking pictures of them. Another tug met them from Cotabatu so then they had two tugs on them. They pulled quite a raft of logs. They pulled them crossways and I would guess a raft of logs a couple hundred feet long laying parallel to each other. So we arranged with the constabulary and the forestry department to meet them in Cotabatu when they arrived, and we were going to get our logs back. So I called Max...

Jones
Sagrado?

Renken
Sagrado down, you know, to handle those kinds of sensitive negotiations with the police and with the governor. And, you know, Max was a good head. So he came down and went to Cotabatu. He sat in and talked with them and the forestry department, you know - obviously from the marks, they were our logs. So Max kept his ear to the ground and was going to confiscate them. And then we found that the mayor in no way was going to give up those logs. He sent for more armed Moslems and they were going to ensure - and Cotabatu was predominantly Moslem. So we were in the wrong camp there. And then the mayor was going to carry the harassment on down to our logging operations.

So Sagrado made the decision to back off and let the mayor have those logs, the mayor's people. Unfortunately, our captain of our Philippine Constabulary had done all the work for us, the legal work and the arrests and so forth, and when we backed off and wouldn't press charges, why, of course, he lost face and the mayor was powerful enough to have him shipped out. So we lost our captain who had done all our work for us. It was a rather disgraceful and distasteful experience.

Just before he left, one of our barrios had a fiesta. To show you the kind of tensions we were under - we were invited to this fiesta. Of course, the Philippine Constabulary had to

be there and the mayor came to the fiesta. Now, this is at night and they've got music and we're dancing on sand. And I told Norma, "You know, anything could happen tonight." This is just after we had agreed to let the mayor have the logs. The Philippine captain who had lost face was angry and he was ready to shoot the mayor. The mayor was ready to do battle with the Constabulary. My security force was there to protect me and other people and our employees. That fiesta that night was a tense situation. We felt we had to make the show so we didn't look like cowards and there wasn't all that much wrong. So we sat there with our guards guarding us, the Constabulary guarding everybody, and the mayor's people ready to open fire on - guarding him, and ready to open fire on anybody. And I believe if anybody had popped a balloon, why, the shooting would have started right there.

Jones

Now, where did this occur, Cotabatu City or Palimbang?

Renken

No, this was the barrio just outside of our Milbuk there.

Jones

Oh, right there.

Renken

Right there. In Milbuk. That was a very tense night. We got through it all right, no problems, except that our policeman did lose face.

Jones

Elmer, do you remember a story that someone told me when I was at Milbuk and I kind of think it was a story you told me of some our people coming through the barrio and there was some person with authority there that you people were afraid might cause some trouble, he might shoot some of your people coming through, and someone had been designated to make sure that he didn't?

Renken

That's right. You know, we were, we never figured, you could never figure out, you know, I kept my ear to the ground and we tried very carefully to avoid anything, any kind of problem. But anytime we had visitors, if there were unrest, we were uneasy. And sometimes when some of you people came there, unbeknownst to me, I found out later that even Jackson Beaman had some trusted Moslem friends protecting some of you people. He told me that in later years. I didn't know it. He had some people watching out for us, that I didn't even know of at the time. We of course kept our ear to the ground. And I remember on one trip - and I forget who this was who was coming in. It wasn't - oh yeah, the time that Morgan and Bingham - were you with that group?

Jones
Yes, I was.

Renken
Okay. That was a tense one right there, and we really - right then, my chief of security, Dorothea, and the mayor were really having a battle. They were ready to kill each other, if they got a chance. And we were tense, and it was real, even though Tacoma didn't think so, you know. And I remember that we almost called you off and that we were afraid that they'd fire on your plane coming in. So, you remember that the pilot brought you in from the north, slipped you in from the north. And then we guarded you all the way through that barrio.

But, you know, after the insurgents were there, they fired on our airplane once when we landed. And when we landed, people were all excited. They'd heard the gunfire. About an hour later my plant engineer brought bullets to me that had gone through the veneer - the trajectory was just right that it landed in the veneer mill and we had two 30.06 bullets that were fired at that airplane. But, yeah. At the time that F. K. came through, we were secure but even then, you know, people knew. And I got some last-minute questions from Bingham whether it was safe. And you know, everything settled down and it was safe. But you'd never know when it was going to flare up.

Jones
There was just one little incident. And if you remember this, I'd like to hear you tell it again. But there was this person with some authority in the barrio and he had some kind of a little business establishment there, right alongside of the street where we had to pass through the barrio. And I don't remember if he was, I don't remember what kind of a store he had. Seems to me that it was a watch repair shop or something like that, I'm not sure.

Renken
A radio repair.

Jones
Was that what it was? And there was someone designated to see that he didn't shoot anybody, cause trouble. A person that would stand right beside him and if he made a move, to take care of him.

Renken
Oh, that's right. No, the radio repairman was kind of a little, he was also a reporter. And he was playing - he was one of our good informants that was playing the mayor and both sides of the street. The person you're thinking of is Silaya, who was a radical labor person and he wasn't doing his job. And I had fired him and at that particular time, yeah, Silaya had threatened my life and we were afraid that he would retaliate against some of you people. We just put somebody right beside him so in case he made a move, why, he was dead. Yeah, that

was Silaya. But he was labor. And he filed unfair labor charges against me that were still against me when I left the Philippines. He was the one who put up the sign, "Drink and go home," "Imperialism," and all that kind of stuff.

Jones

How do you spell his name, Silaya?

Renken

S-i-l-a-y-a. And I don't know what his first name is. But he was kind of a radical character that - and a little demented, you know, which is another reason why we put a guard on him. There were those kinds of people down there.

I see we got two men killed in Bayango, oh, on January 29 of 1972; one killed in Malikbani on the 26th of January; February 4, 1972 two houses burned in Sinankangan, that we saved yesterday.

Oh, you remember Sinankangan was the little barrio right north of us? You went around that hill and there sat a barrio? Okay, when it really got hot there - well, that was Moslem - and the Christians went in and burned it, and oh, that made me mad, you know. So, we took our fire truck out and we saved two houses. They burnt the town down. I saved two houses, or our fire brigade did and doggone if they didn't come back that night and burn them anyway, you know. Then we got - Governor Mehia came down. Okay, one was killed then on the 5th, one Christian. You know, it had to be an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth with the Moslems. The army encountered - one policeman was dead. This was February the 7th at Wasag.

Okay, here's the Wasag attack. The day it started, one policeman was shot and then Wasag was under attack. "On Tuesday, no word came back." The date of the Wasag attack when our security guards killed the Moslems was - you know, that really scared me when our security guards actually killed some Moslems. But it was plain and simple that they had attacked Wasag. They'd attacked the army the day before and they attacked Wasag that night. And our security guards - it was clearly a case of self-defense. And the fact that the mayor didn't want anything to do with it indicated that, and nothing came of that. But the body of Sani Kamid was found on Wednesday the 9th. And Willie Johnson arrived with Wilkinson on the 10th, when we had that situation.

John Wilkinson and I talked with the mayor and the governor. Okay, by this time, you know, in '72, I knew I was leaving and I took John Wilkinson, army or not. But John Wilkinson came down and he wanted to talk with the governor of the province and the mayor. So John and I went out to talk to him and show them that I had developed relations with those people. But that was right after the Wasag attack.

Jones

Okay. And the Wasag attack was on what date now?

Renken

On the night of Tuesday the 8th, February 1972. A day after the Moslems had attacked the army, between us and Wasag.

Jones

Along the road there then?

Renken

Yeah. A group reported five kilometers from the nursery. About this time, you know, the insurgents were really picking up. Here's a sad one. "February, Monday the 21st, 1970 (1972?). Four children shot near judge's house." The Moslems killed four Christian children.

Jones

This was at Palimbang?

Renken

At Palimbang. The judge was a Christian and that guy was, boy, he was under a - terrible, terrible sight. Max, came down to try to help me out there. He went back to Manila. "Baliango. Three-hour fire fight." This is one where we stood out on our front porch and not a mile - in the other direction. Not toward Palimbang but south of Milbuk. We stood there and listened for three hours to the PCs and the Moslems, including these insurgents, carry on. And every time the - all the Moslems had was small arms fire and our PC had M79s, grenade launchers. And every time one of those would go karoom, all the people in Milbuk would cheer. Finally about noon they came back and said it was a draw and I forget what they - I think we had one guy, one of the police was wounded is all.

Jones

Now this other fight you're talking about, the PC and the Moslems, how far away from Milbuk was it on the coast?

Renken

Three-quarters of a mile to a mile.

Jones

Not far from the airstrip then, down there.

Renken

No, that's right. Just from the airstrip maybe a half a mile. Later on, we went down there. That's called Baliango, B-a-l-i-a-n-g-o. Later on, after this skirmish, we got ready to pay our income taxes. We got the governor down to Milbuk and the mayor, all together - everybody together in one place - paid our income tax, made a big show of that and put a lot of pressure on the governor to get those people away from Milbuk. And somehow, politically, he did, because they, the insurgents, the

foreigners cleared out of our area and then our informers told us that Baliango was clear. No one in there anymore but local native Moslems that were friendly.

We went down there and visited that place. They had trenches with the spears in the bottom of them, you know. They had lookout stations, they had foxholes. They had somehow tried to - well, the PC may have wanted to invade them, but they were ready for them. They were ready for an attack. We went down and saw those things afterwards, you know. It's kind of interesting. We didn't know that much was going on down there. We just knew that they had problems. The governor's name was Cajelo, C-a-j-e-l-o, and he was Christian, put in there by Marcos to control Cotabatu.

And the thing we know is, I heard all this underground. Tacoma wasn't interested in it. Bingham said, "Hell. If the government won't protect us, Elmer, you can't protect us." I said, "That's right, but the governor is telling me he can't protect me and all of our people are looking for us and our security force to protect us." So we took some measures to get arms to protect ourselves, and the governor was telling us to do it. And we noticed, as we went up to Cotabatu and the airport, all at once pretty soon here were revetments for aircraft being built there, here on the airstrip. Then we got the real big picture that, hey, the Philippines, Marcos, was preparing for an invasion by Middle East imported Moslems which, as you know, later on happened.

But I got the governor down there and then we got those people out of Baliango, or he did, I should say. We scheduled a conference with the Datu of Wasag. He's the guy that told me, you know, it was his people, he'd kill them or something, you know, to make sure they did what he wanted.

About that time, boiler No. 1 had a blister on it and we had to fix that. All this time, we had operating problems.

I lost 40 pesos at the cockfights on Sunday the 19th.

Jones
Nineteenth of which month?

Renken
March.

Jones
March?

Renken
Nineteen-seventy-two. Yep. Second battle of Baliango on March the 28th, 1972. We got a second battle here, I guess. They went down there two times, didn't they, Norma? And that's pretty unnerving. The captain even got in - of the PCs, you know - he got in a Cessna, army Cessna. He wanted to use ours and

I told him he couldn't. He got in the army and about that time an army Cessna arrived, so he gets up with their machine gun and sprays that whole area. And the troops later said - his troops said they shot at him, as much as they did the enemy. But that was just like - closer than from here to the mill, you know, we were sitting there listening to the shooting going on. I sat there just like this wondering whether I should fly Norma out of there, out of Milbuk that day. I think we had the rest of the Americans out of there. I always figured I could hit the jungle with the rest of the people and I had promised all those people that, "Hey, my wife will go out but I won't." Because they looked to me for leadership.

Okay. I went down to Baliango and looked at it personally on Wednesday the 5th, so it had cleared out by then. The mayor visited us and we started trying to establish good relations again, which you do. You'd forget these things and go on. On Saturday, April the 8th, they reported two Manobos were killed, then on the 9th one killed at Tubulo. Norma, you had the fever on April the 12th, 1972. Okay. Some people fired at a boat tank. You remember our oil was stored down there at that boat tank? They fired on that on the 15th of April. Norma sick. Income tax day. Governor Cajelo, Bueno, Druz Ali and so forth. We had a big demonstration, "We want peace" in Milbuk.

Jones

And that was April 17th?

Renken

April 17th, we had a big conference. The governor and the military colonel, Moslems, we got them all together there on the 19th and on the 21st Baliango was clear. The Moslems pulled out, which was just a political thing, you know. Okay, I had some ear infection there. Talk about doctors. The guy went in there and drained my ear, did a beautiful job. By this time, I knew I was leaving. I got sick. Bingham came in in May, with John Wilkinson on May 5th and they left. I took Lloyd through things and Andy Macs came down. Had my big party at the veneer mill on Saturday night on the 13th. There were like 2,000 people in that veneer mill giving me a farewell party. Just, you know how they were on parties and fiestas.

Jones

A real bash.

Renken

We filled that veneer mill.

Jones

Must have, with that many people.

Renken

Andy Macs came down. We met at Zambo and Basilan, flew around, took him up to meet the governor, introduced him there with Roberts. We left Milbuk on May the 18th, 1972, went to Manila,

had a little office party, up in Manila with Andy Macs. We left Manila on Saturday the 20th, May of 1972. The next day, the 21st, we were with our children in Seattle and we haven't looked back.

Jones

That's quite a story. That's a tremendous story. Just one question. I remember at the time Harry and Bingham and I, you spoke of us, but George Weyerhaeuser was with us also that night.

Renken

Oh, that's right, yeah. George was there. That's right. That's what our big concern was about.

Jones

Right.

Renken

One of the big concerns.

Jones

Right. And either on that day or the previous day or sometime, you had received a threatening letter.

Renken

Yeah, from this Silaya.

Jones

From this Silaya?

Renken

Right.

Jones

Now, did you retain that letter or is it in the company files?

Renken

I burnt all that kind of stuff, as far as that's concerned.

Jones

You did. Okay. I just thought that as an indication of the buildup of things, that I thought I'd like to have the letter.

Renken

Yeah. You know, I was in contact with pretty confidential, the governor's people in the Philippines, and not much with the United States Embassy. As a matter of fact, I unequivocally can say, you know - and I was accused of being C.I.A. - I had no connection with the C.I.A. I had no connection with the American government. The only time - other than for medical there - the only time we worked with the conflict, was one time when Wilkinson, just before I left, established and went and visited with them. But in no way was I, you know, any part of any government scheme. Yeah, that's the kind of incident there.

I guess - you know, some funny things that happened, I suppose, are pretty interesting, too. And I'd like to relate a couple of them. I suppose Zile's told you about coming down the hill and - have you talked with Zile?

Jones

Yeah, I did.

Renken

He came over one day to tell me a good one, you know. A lot of people had never had a chance to drive. Well, Zile just jumped in one of those Dodge Powerwagons we had and asked one of the men to take him down to Wasag. He'd been up above. He said they got to going down faster and faster and he said, pretty soon the driver looked over at him and says, "Brake very important, sir. Where's the brake?" And, of course, Zile right fast showed him where the brake was.

I remember Zile coming home one night, too. He said he picked up - there were always hitchhikers, you know - he said he picked up a couple of Moslem women. And he said he was driving along. One of them was pretty nice-looking. He said about the third time he looked, glanced over his shoulder at her, he said she was sitting there with a big old knife on her lap.

Jones

They were riding in the back? Back of the pickup, or in the jeep?

Renken

Yeah, they were riding in the back of his jeep. Yeah, about the third glance back there, she had a dagger laying in her lap.

I think one of the funniest things I remember is, when the PC arrived there and all the strife was going on, we let the captain stay in the guesthouse that you stayed in. He was a character, you know, and a good little man. He had a .22 pistol that was converted to full automatic fire. A .22 and we've got a picture of that. Fired like a machine gun, 20 times, you know. He carried a carbine. But he was taking a siesta one afternoon, and Norma said that all at once she heard a big explosion. Now this was a calm afternoon. A big explosion and ratty-tat-tat and carbine shooting right next door.

So she goes out to see what's going on and here's the captain shooting at people in the water right out in front of the guesthouse. Well, of course, the immediate conclusion was that somebody came in there that he thought was going to attack or something. What it turned out to be was some of his own people had taken some grenades or some blasting powder and gone out in front of the guesthouse and were dynamiting for fish. They just wanted something to eat. Well, he didn't know it was his own people, but when they disturbed his nap with that explosion, he just

jumped up and started firing at them with his carbine to teach them not to do that anymore. And he found out later it was his own PC people. We had quite a laugh over that. We had a lot of funny experiences like that.

Jones

Do you remember another one?

Renken

I don't know. What are some of the funniest, Norma?

Mrs. R.

I thought Bob told him about the bus and the new driver.

Renken

Yeah, going downhill without the brakes.

Jones

"Where's the brake?"

Mrs. R.

Well, the dancers. Gary - the Manobos up there making a war dance.

Renken

Yeah. Yeah, that was...I didn't talk much about it. Of course, you know all about them, if you're writing a book. They put on a pretty fierce-looking show. Mike Lyders came up once and we had a little celebration for that group. That night the Manobos came down and put on a dance, and we can still remember old Mike Lyders. This Manobo with a spear got up and got himself in a trance in front of Mike and Mike turned white and backed away. He thought he was going to get a spear right in his gizzard, you know. We just laughed and laughed.

Mrs. R.

We had a lot of fun. I can't think of them now, but we had a lot of good times, in spite of all the problems.

Jones

They were mostly good people, there at Milbuk.

Renken

Yeah, they were. I might add that, you know, as I saw it, the Moslem thing had to get bigger and evacuations that were taking place and the moving, trouble starting over there at Basilan, you know. At this time, I told Weselsky, "You'd better get it all lined up, because you're going to be next." And he sat over there and kind of wondered why we had the problems we did. But, like I told him, it just had to spread and it did spread all through Southwest Philippines and of course you'll get the story, the Basilan affair and on and on. It got worse and worse.

What discouraged me is, I was there and I knew this was happening and I was quite often criticized for taking precautions like

we did there. You know, I was laughed at. And that, of course, hurt. But the one thing that I'm proud of is that, you know, none of you people ever got hurt. Except for those Moslems, none of my employees got hurt, while I was there. Since then, you know, some of our key supervisors have been killed and some other things. Maybe they could have been avoided, maybe not. But I knew this was developing. I knew we had real problems. Tacoma could not understand these problems.

Bingham, you know, said, "Hey. If the government can't protect you, let's get out. What you should do is get a fast boat." Well, you know, that isn't the kind of a person I am. I had - I felt responsible for what - 1,000 families employed by us, and I wasn't about to run out on those people. And if it would have come to it, my wife and all the other Americans were out of there, but I wouldn't have left them. I was basically allied to the Christians because the Christians generally wouldn't kill, out of vendetta, like Moslems would. So, yeah, I was committed to the Christians and I had an awful time playing an impartial role. If it came down to it, I would have used everything I could, to keep those Moslems from annihilating our group of Christians in there - which they were about to do, and later got some of them, you know. And Tacoma couldn't understand that and rightfully so, you know. But that's the communications problem again, I guess. If we could have kept in contact closer, they would have understood it.

We don't talk - as Norma said, you know - I have given one presentation of my slides to a group of people, on the Philippines. We don't discuss any of the whole affair with anybody. This is the most we've ever talked about it, because I think some of it's not the best to talk about, for the good of the company.

Jones

Understandable. Okay. Well, I certainly appreciate your generous sharing with me your experiences on those critical things. Seems like it's been real good coverage. This has been one of my longer interviews.

Renken

Oh, is that right? Yeah, I'm pretty windy, I guess.

Well, no. It's been full of information all the way.

Renken

Well, we can condense two and a half years into three hours. It was a tremendous experience. You know, you see the movies and that of an American and of course, we've got, we were there, we experienced it, we experienced a local election with shooting people, the health hazards, you know, the monkeys, the parrots. I had everything, I suppose, except the pith hat and the white suit. I never got me a pith hat and a white suit. I tried to play it smart. I didn't play it as smart as I should have. I lost the battle.

Jones

You did your duty as you saw it, Elmer.

Renken

Yeah, I sure did. And we made a lot of good logs, lot of money and I never shipped any bad veneer. So, I'm not at all anything but proud of what I did for the company and a lot of people right there in the Philippines.

Jones

Right. I was going to say, in addition to making money and veneer, you made friends over there.

Renken

Oh, we want to get back to see them, you know. It would just be a tremendous - we still correspond with some of them.

Jones

Great.

Renken

After we got back - of course, they're always ringing you up, you know. We were cautious not to make any commitments to bring any back to the States or help them. I don't think you should do anything for somebody they can't do for themselves. We had gotten pleas for money, shoes, earthquake/typhoon relief and we just ignored it. Because we can't help that much and once you start it, it's an endless battle. Some people got in trouble trying to do that.

Jones

Okay. Well, thank you very much, both you, Elmer, and Norma.

Renken

Okay. Thank you too, Alden.

s1/Jones#67

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