



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: M-L. Lambert (Part 1 of 8)



Role:	Associate Legal Officer
Country of Origin:	England
Interview Date:	23 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Donald J Horowitz John McKay
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

M-L. Lambert describes her personal relationship with convicted genocidaire Hassan Ngeze, who she worked closely with at the Tribunal. She speaks at length about her responsibilities researching and drafting judgments for Military 1, reflecting on the difficulties of assessing the credibility of witnesses and evidence in a post-genocide climate. She talks about the harrowing evidence presented to the court and recounts the case against Colonel Bagosora who was accused of masterminding the genocide against the Tutsis.

The transcript of Part 1 begins on the following page.

Part 1

- 00:00** Note: The portion of interview preceding this segment was lost due to the missing video files. The interview continues here.
- 00:10** Donald J Horowitz: Okay, we've had a little break, and . . .
- 00:12 Yes.
- 00:13** DJH: Actually chatted a little bit in the break . . .
- 00:15 Mm-hmm.
- 00:15** DJH: . . . and I'm going to come back to Mr. Ngeze and, and we were talking a bit about one's reaction to somebody who's been convicted of . . .
- 00:24 Mm-hmm.
- 00:26** DJH: . . . difficult crimes and yet . . .
- 00:26 Yes.
- 00:26** DJH: . . . you get to know them personally.
- 00:27 Mm-hmm.
- 00:28** DJH: And you told me a little story about Valentine's Day.
- 00:31 That's right.
- 00:32** DJH: And, and, and yeah, you, you s-, you've s-, agreed to tell the story on-, on-online, on- . . .
- 00:37 Yes, I have.
- 00:38** DJH: . . . online here.
- 00:38 Yep.
- 00:38** DJH: But also, I'd like to understand what it meant to you, in, in a way. Okay.
- 00:45 Well, we were talking about, you know, the use of the word 'unsettling' before and how I found the experience of working for Hassan at times unsettling. You're drawn to him as a person, because he's charming and charismatic, yet you're aware that he is charged, has been found guilty for multiple crimes and then those crimes, or some of them, were upheld on appeal.
- 01:06 So he's a convicted genocidaire, and you're engaged with the Rwandan process and, and the victims, so you understand what that means. I think, you know, Hassan and I had, you know, what was an affinity to each other in some ways, and that I was very

engaged with the academic side of the appeal and, and explaining that to him, which is I think why he really valued my counsel.

01:30 I received many thank-you notes and, and, and letters from him during that process and afterwards. But it was an interesting moment. On, on the 14th of February, 2007 where we turned up at the UNDF and there aren't many young ladies floating around the detention facility. And . . .

01:50 DJH: By 'we,' you're talking about the defense team, or?

01:52 Well, myself and the co-counsel, a Tanzanian . . .

01:54 DJH: Mm-hmm.

01:54 . . . gentleman called Dev Kapoor. So we arrived at the detention facility, we go through the security checks, and just as we are walking in to the interview room where we told – we're told that Hassan was waiting for us, the co-counselors, you know, asked to go and see, briefly, the commanding officer.

02:11 And I am left, which is rather unusual, with Hassan for a, for a few moments on my own. And you know, Hassan had a, always had a very sort of gripping handshake. Always the sort of handshake that goes on for slightly longer than you're used to and he, he grabbed my hand and shook it, and he said, "Lucy," you know, "What is the day today? What is the day?"

02:31 And I could see what day it was. I mean, when I was aware of which day it was, it was Valentine's Day. But also, Hassan was wearing a sort of three-piece black suit with a waistcoat, a red shirt. It had a rose in one lapel and a big fluffy red heart with 'I love you' on it on the other side of his jacket, attached with a paperclip.

02:49 And so I said, you know, trying to be professional, "Well, Hassan, it's a Wednesday." And he said, "No, but what other day is it?" And I said, "I'm not sure." He's, "Lucy! It's the international day of love! It's the international day of love! It's Valentine's Day." And I said, "Oh, that's rather nice."

03:04 And just as I was working out how I would change the subject to something more legal, co-counsel arrived and had the same response as I did – although I didn't articulate it – which is, "Hassan, you look rather dashing today. Look at you! You don't normally dress like this."

03:18 And he goes, "There's two reasons. There's two reasons." And grabbed co-counsel's hand and co-counsel said, "Well, what might that be?" He goes, "Well, the first it's, is, it's Valentine's Day, the international day of love. And the second is that Lucy is here."

03:33 And at that moment, I realized perhaps that Hassan's enthusiasm for me ventured further than just providing him some, you know, articulated or clear legal advice, and perhaps that I was also a young lady in a detention facility providing a, another kind of distraction, which I found interesting.

03:54 I mean, he was my first client. So I mean, it's just an anecdote that springs to mind about what it may have been like, working for him. Yeah. Mm.

04:02 DJH: Mm-hmm. And sometimes a bit unsettling, I think is the word (___). Yeah, okay.

04:08 Is the word, yeah. Exactly.

04:09 DJH: Well thank you for sharing that.

04:10 (___) a pleasure.