



# Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

## Official Transcript: Justine Ndongo-Keller (Full Interview)



<b>Role:</b>	Chief of Language Services
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	Cameroon
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<b>Location:</b>	Arusha, Tanzania
<b>Interviewers:</b>	Donald J Horowitz Lisa P. Nathan
<b>Videographer:</b>	Max Andrews
<b>Interpreter:</b>	None

### Interview Summary

Justine Ndongo-Keller describes various roles within the Language Services Department at the ICTR, clarifying differences among interpreters, translators and reviewers. She stresses the importance of effective, high-quality translation for the Tribunal's overall success, as well as the significance of review in the translation process. An original member of the language services team, Ndongo-Keller also provides a perspective on the department's evolution. She comments on the personal toll to individuals in language services from extensive exposure to materials about the genocide.

*The transcript of the interview begins on the following page.*

## Part 1

- 00:00 **Donald J Horowitz: This is an interview of Justine Ndongo-Keller and I am Donald Horowitz, Judge Horowitz and I will be starting. And Lisa Nathan will join in the interview at various parts. Is that all right with you?**
- 00:17 Yeah, that's okay.
- 00:19 **DJH: Good. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us.**
- 00:22 My pleasure.
- 00:23 **DJH: We know that your days are busy ones, and we're here to learn of your experiences and your thoughts, and your reflections on the ICTR, on the inte-, international justice and on being a human being dealing with the issues that you have to deal with, with your job and also with the aftermath of a terrible tragedy.**
- 00:47 **DJH: While we, we have been reading and speaking with others a good deal about this, the people who may view your interview, now and well into the future, maybe 25, 50 years from now, may not know a lot about this situation, so we need to keep that in mind as we talk, or about the legal system that we have in place now.**
- 01:11 **DJH: So at times during the interview I may ask you to explain some terms, professional terms or legal terms or how some aspect of the tribunal works in some more detail. It will help if you think that you're speaking to an intelligent person but not someone who's trained in, in your profession or in the legal profession. Understand?**
- 01:35 Sure.
- 01:36 **DJH: Okay. So, we're interested in understanding why you think some things and so we may be asking you "why" a lot. Sometimes when people ask you "why" they want you to change your answer, we don't want you to change your answer. We want it to be your, your answer. We just want to understand better.**
- 01:54 **DJH: So let's begin if we can with your role at the ICTR, your – give us your job title first and tell us what you see as your role.**
- 02:06 Okay. I'm Justine Ndongo-Keller and I'm the Chief of the Language Services Section at the ICTR. I joined ICTR in August 1996. I started working in Kigali first in Rwanda as a translator interpreter, then in March, on the first of March 1997 I was sent to Arusha because the trial were going to start.
- 02:40 Basically, in Kigali we were doing translation. We were translating, you know, preparing documents for the beginning, you know, the commencement of the trials.

- 02:52 DJH: From what languages to what languages?**
- 02:54 I basically work from English, for the ICTR, from English into French. Some other colleagues do it from French into English, then we have other colleagues working into the Kinyarwanda language which is the language spoken in Rwanda.
- 03:14 So some colleagues when I joined in 1996, I met a small group of people that were already there working into French, a few of them, and other working into English, and a handful working into the Kinyarwanda language as well.
- 03:30 DJH: Okay, and when you, you were translating documents at that time in Kigali?**
- 03:37 Mostly witness statements, and then we were servicing investigators' meeting as well, and coordination meetings because the team will want to coordinate the job that they would have done on the field, you know, during the week or during the month. So we'd be interpreting during these meetings of investigators.
- 03:59 DJH: Okay, so you would be, if I'm understanding you correctly, there were sometimes you just – you were doing documents.**
- 04:07 Yes, written translations, yes.
- 04:08 DJH: Written translations. And other times when you are actually in meetings as they were going on.**
- 04:13 Yes.
- 04:14 DJH: And were you doing simultaneous translation?**
- 04:16 Consecutive translation.
- 04:16 DJH: Consecutive translation. Could you explain the difference between consecutive and simultaneous?**
- 04:22 And simultaneous. Consecutive in-, interpretation is where, whereby a person or somebody will speak for about ten, 15 to 20 minutes, then you take notes and then you have to give it back whatever you've heard in the other language. You know, you take notes then you interpret, and the person speaks again, you take notes and then you, you, you bring it back, you give it back to whoever is listening.
- 04:49 DJH: And simultaneous . . .**
- 04:50 And the simultaneous interpretation – you, you, you are in a booth, you know, just like you saw in the courtroom, and it is simultaneous. As the other person is speaking, the speaker

is speaking, you are translating into the other language. So there's a gain of a lot of time that, you know, you, you save by working in the simultaneous mode.

**05:10 DJH: And is the simultaneous mode tend to be more literal translation because you're not having to remember, even with notes, 20, 15 or 20 minutes?**

05:21 It comes back to the same because literal will be putting too much emphasis on the, the form whereas we're talking about the content, the merits of it. You are translating ideas so whether it is the consecutive mode or the simultaneous mode, it comes back to the same thing.

05:41 The question is, "What is the person saying? Are you conveying the same message to whoever is listening, to the listener? What the speaker said, is it exactly what you are telling the other person?" Yeah. It comes to the same thing because we are – i-, it's communication. Do, do – at the end, you know, has the other person understood what the speaker was saying, yes.

**06:06 DJH: Okay, and so you were doing – when you said you were at meetings with the investigators, were these meetings of just the investigators or also investigators and the people, the witnesses or the people who were . . .**

06:21 It was – what we were doing at my level was basically investigators. But they will go to the field with what we call at that time Language Assistant; people from the country who spoke either French and Kinyarwanda or English and Kinyarwanda. They will go to the field and interview witnesses, you know.

06:44 The, you know, "Something happened here. Were you there? What did you see?" Or victims, people who were known to be victims, you know, by investigator. I don't know, you know, how they came to know about these people because basically we are technicians. We take it to where, from where they, they stop.

07:03 So, they will go to the field, interview witnesses, come back with the witness statement. We'll translate them. This is written translation and then they will have this coordinating meeting, coordination or coordinating meeting with the Prosecutor, and then we will be servicing the meetings.

**07:21 DJH: You'll be servicing the . . .**

07:23 Meetings.

**07:23 DJH: Meetings, okay. Did they sometimes when they're going out to meet these witnesses or, or victims, did they sometimes bring back recordings like tape recordings . . .**

- 07:34 Yes, oh yes. Yeah.
- 07:35 DJH: Okay. And then you would translate.**
- 07:38 W-, there, there, there's a, there was a transcription first.
- 07:41 DJH: Yes.**
- 07:41 They will tran-, transcribe, you say that in English?
- 07:47 DJH: Yes. Yes, that's the right word, yeah. Transcribing the cassette . . .**
- 07:48 They will transcribe the, the, the cassette from the Kinyarwanda, sometime into French then whoever is translating from French into English would take it from there and do the translation. But we needed it to be put in a written form first in the, the first language, the original language, then we will do the translation later.
- 08:11 DJH: Okay. So if it came back the tape was in, tell me the na- . . .**
- 08:17 Kinyarwanda.
- 08:18 DJH: Kinyarwanda.**
- 08:18 Yeah.
- 08:19 DJH: Then it would transcribed into Kinyar-, Kinyarwanda . . .**
- 08:22 First, then into English and into French.
- 08:22 DJH: First, and then you translate it into English and French.**
- 08:25 Yes.
- 08:25 DJH: Okay.**

## Part 2

- 00:00 DJH: All right, and you, so you were doing this in Kigali and near, and near Kigali for how long?**
- 00:07 Yeah. I was in Kigali for seven months.
- 00:10 DJH: Okay, and at that time you were a translator, essentially.**
- 00:14 Translator, yeah. Basically we were doing translation, yeah.
- 00:18 DJH: Okay. And then you were transferred I think you said to . . .**

- 00:21 First March. We came on mission first around early November and we were here up to about mid-December. Then we went back, went home for Christmas, then when we came back then we, we were sent here – officially on the first of March.
- 00:40 **DJH: Of what year?**
- 00:42 '97. 1997.
- 00:43 **DJH: Okay, so you were there in '96.**
- 00:45 Yeah, end of '96. We even, we came also at the beginning of the year. I remember coming back home from the Christmas holidays around the sixth, I think or the fifth. I don't remember exactly. Virtually the next day, we had to come here. And then we were here for about two months, then they decided that we had to stay because trial had to start. So we left on a Wednesday to just go and pack and came back on a Friday.
- 01:12 **DJH: Okay, and when you say we, approximately how many?**
- 01:15 We were one, two, three colleagues. The, there's a gentleman called François Bembatoum. He's the chief interpreter now, plus an American lady. She went back to America. She's back to America now. (\_\_\_\_\_).
- 01:33 **DJH: Okay, (\_\_\_\_\_).**
- 01:34 (\_\_\_\_\_), yeah. But there was two other colleagues, they had to go back to Kigali and continue working there – Mrs. (\_\_\_\_\_) and Mrs. Ololade Benson. So five of us came here on that mission in January and February but only three of us were sent here to come and work here.
- 02:00 **DJH: Okay. And when you were in Kigali, and I'm about to finish I think on that part of it, were you really busy or was it sporadic?**
- 02:10 Oh, we were very busy because there were many many witness statement coming, you know, from the field mission. And we had to translate all of them. And then they were waiting for all these translation for the trials to begin and to start.
- 02:25 **DJH: So you had a – would it be fair to say you had a fair bit of pressure on to get this done?**
- 02:29 Yeah.
- 02:29 **DJH: Okay. And you had five people in Kigali?**
- 02:32 We had – doing translation?
- 02:35 **DJH: Yeah.**

- 02:36 At that time we had (\_\_\_\_\_), an English interpreter from Britain. We had Olivier, (\_\_\_\_\_), that was his name from the Un-, the, the United States, (\_\_\_\_\_) from the United States, myself from Cameroon, François Bembatoum from Cameroon. Then our chief was a gentleman from, where was he from? From the West Indies, the French West Indies called (\_\_\_\_\_).
- 03:19 Then we had Ololade Benson from Nigeria and (\_\_\_\_\_) from Nigeria and – he’s here, he’s here now, (\_\_\_\_\_) from Nigeria. That was the team.
- 03:36 DJH: Okay.**
- 03:36 That’s about five English and three French.
- 03:41 DJH: And were you all trained, specially trained or had that in your background?**
- 03:48 Most of us, yeah. Because these are people I had known before working as a freelance interpreters. I had met them before like (\_\_\_\_\_), (\_\_\_\_\_), François Bembatoum, (\_\_\_\_\_). We had been working in the sub-region of Africa and basically all of them have, have been trained, had been trained as translators and interpreters.
- 04:14 DJH: Okay, let me go back just a little bit. How did you happen to become a tran-, a tran-, before the time you were in Kigali, before you got involved with the ICTR? Had you been a translator before that?**
- 04:26 Yeah, I had been working for 16 years as a translator interpreter. I was trained in France and then in Great Britain. My mother, mother tongue is French because normally I speak French, that’s why my English is so bad.
- 04:44 DJH: No, (\_\_\_\_\_).**
- 04:46 I was trained in England and in France as I said. And when I went back home I started working as a translator, senior translator interpreter at the Presidency of the Republic in Cameroon. Then five years later I was sent to open the Regional School of Translation and Interpreters in Buea.
- 05:06 DJH: In?**
- 05:07 Buea. It’s a small town down the Mount Cameroon, mountain.
- 05:11 DJH: Oh, in Cameroon.**
- 05:12 In Cameroon, yeah.
- 05:13 DJH: Okay. Okay.**

05:13 So we opened the school in 1986, January 1986. I was a lecturer in that school and the director in charge of studies as well. Sorry. I was there for five years, you know, from '96. Basically September 1985 we started the classes, in January 1986 up to December 1990 when I joined the National Assembly. Then in 1996 I joined the ICTR.

**05:51 DJH: What, what led you to want to join the ICTR?**

05:56 I have to know, to say that I don't know how it came. I didn't ask for a job. I had done some Spanish and some Portuguese while I was at school and there was the mission, the United Nation Mission for Angola. I had a colleague who had been given a two months contract to go and work with the mission in Angola, the UN mission in Angola.

06:25 So she came home for a few days and she said, "But you know Justine, you have, you have Spanish and you have Portuguese. You know they need interpreters in Angola. Would you give me your curriculum vitae?" I said okay. So I gave it to her. So she took it, and the next thing I heard was I had, I received, was an offer to come and work with the ICTR.

06:51 So – but I had been working with the UN on a freelance basis; working with the WHO, the World Health Organization, with FAO, with UNESCO. So I suppose they had, you know, some information concerning my education and my profession. That's how I received this offer. So I took it.

### Part 3

**00:00 DJH: Let me go back to 1994 for a minute. That's when these events occurred . . .**

00:06 Yes.

**00:07 DJH: . . . the, and the ones in Rwanda, the events. Can you remember what you were doing at that time?**

00:14 I was home. I was home in Cameroon. I was working at the National Assembly then. I was the Chief Interpreter at the Cameroon National Assembly and we all saw it on television, you know, the killings on television. I have to say that at that time I did not quite understand what was happening. We just saw this killing.

00:36 I remember that there were prayer sessions in the, in churches in Cameroon. You know, they were saying on, at the, on the radio, "You have to pray for Rwanda," you know. "Killings are happening or occurring there. People are killing others." I did not quite understand what was happening until a Cameroonian was appointed to go to the (\_\_\_\_\_).

01:04 At that time it was the United Nation Mission for Rwanda, Peacekeeping Mission for Rwanda by the name of Booh Jacques. He had been our Ambassador in Paris and then Minister of Foreign Affairs in Cameroon 'til he was appointed there as a special envoy for



the UN along with General, General Dallaire, the Canadian who was to, to, to head the, the, the mission military-wise.

01:37 That's how, you know, we really became interested and knew that there was a conflict between a group called Hutu, another group called the Tutsi. Then we received a lot of refugees coming from Rwanda but in Cameroon we never knew who was what – who was Hutu, who was Tutsi. We didn't know. We just knew that there was a war going on in Rwanda and people were fleeing Rwanda, running, leaving Rwanda and going to neighboring countries.

02:06 We received quite a lot of them in Cameroon.

**02:09 DJH: And did you meet any of them or talk to any of them at that time?**

02:14 Not really.

**02:15 DJH: Okay.**

02:15 Not really.

**02:17 DJH: So when you were asked to join the ICTR a few years later, were you surprised or what did you think?**

02:29 I was surprised when I received the offer.

**02:32 DJH: And what did you (\_\_\_)?**

02:33 Then also I was thrilled, you know, to, to be, to come and work with the UN but a bit worried because of what I had seen on television and my entourage was saying, "But you're crazy. Did you see what was happening there? How could you, how can you decide to . . . ?" Especially my husband.

02:51 He was like, "You're not going there because, you know, all the killing, what we saw on television." And I'm like, "But you know people live there. After, let me go for two weeks then I will see. If it's not what it should be then I will come back." So that basically what we had agreed on, but I stayed (\_\_\_) and I'm here today.

**03:12 DJH: All right, and when you went there apparently you felt safe enough, yes or no?**

03:18 It was safe, but you know there was – you know, you, you feel safe because you know you're guarded, but in the background you have all these things that have happened and are still happening in town. You hear about killing here and there. You know that people have been killed. People have been attacked but you feel safe because you know that you have your radio and you can call anybody at any time and they will come and pick you up.

03:43 Because you're from the UN, you have this "security" quote unquote, more or less around you but there is something in the air that make you not to feel that safe. But it is – and even today, whenever I go to Kigali I still feel there's something. I don't feel too comfortable. I can't put a finger on it. I can't put a name on it but it's, it's in the air.

**04:10 DJH: But you, but you decided to stay nevertheless.**

04:13 I decided to stay because I liked what I was doing and I was comfortable, and it was difficult at that time but some people had to stay behind to do the job so I guess most people stayed because they like the place, because they like the job or they like the money as well because it was, it's well paid. We have to acknowledge.

**04:37 DJH: Okay.**

## Part 4

**00:00 DJH: So, we had you in Kigali and then you, you came to Arusha.**

00:06 Yes.

**00:07 DJH: And in Arusha, what was, what was your role? What were you doing?**

00:12 Basically working in the courtrooms, you know, interpreting during the hearings on the court sessions and continuing with translation as well. Now, we were working on the simultaneous mode for French and English and our colleagues with the Kinyarwanda had to work on the consecutive mode because you – we, we have to understand that these are colleagues that were not trained to be a translator in the profession of translation and interpretation.

00:44 They were, I don't know how they were selected because I met them, you know, when I got to Kigali so they had to like sit by the witness, listen to what he had to say in Kinyarwanda, give it back to us into French and then we will be interpreting, you know, to the judges and the defense in, in English.

**01:06 DJH: Did there come a time when the people who were working in the Rwanda language, or you got to give training to people or they were specially trained to become interpreters?**

01:18 Then we were working on the consecutive mode, and the, the presiding judge at the time was becoming a bit restless because it was time's ticking, you know. It was taking too much time. The witness would speak, you know, then he will have to be consecutively interpreted into English or French. It was taking so much time that, you know, he began to say these people needed some training.

- 01:53 Not because they were not good interpreters. The problem is they had not had the proper training. So we happen at that time, our chief Joel Kenneth had left and was replaced by a gentleman called (\_\_\_\_\_) from the UN, from the headquarters from New York. So he came and then we started discussing, "How do we improve?" You know, because many a time we had to be called, you know, in the courtroom.
- 02:26 The judge was not happy because it was too slow. It was, something has to be done. Then, he came up with the idea of training, this training. So I happen to be a trainer because I had been at the school of translation and interpretation in Buea, so he asked me if I could do the training.
- 02:48 And at the time, he had, we had, he had brought on board a gentleman by the name of (\_\_\_\_\_), a Rwandese, you know, so a gentleman from Rwanda working into French from English. So he had the Kinyarwanda language, so he was on board.
- 03:09 So we started the training. Myself, I was heading the training unit with a colleague that had been teaching in the school of translation in Cameroon in Buea by the name of (\_\_\_\_\_) and (\_\_\_\_\_).
- 03:26 So, the first trip we went to Kigali was myself, (\_\_\_\_\_), a lady from France, and (\_\_\_\_\_), a gentleman from Rwanda (\_\_\_\_\_). We selected a few candidates then we started the training on the spot in Kigali. Then we tested them. We tested them not for them to come here and start working but to come here to Arusha and be trained again.
- 03:59 So we were working like from Monday to Friday, and Saturday and Sunday we'll do the training. So we trained these two people. So they were the first to go into the courtroom and work into the simultaneous mode, but there were only two of them so they could only service one courtroom.
- 04:16 And then we needed even a third one to be with them in court because normally teams are, you know, each booth should have at least three people, not two because the shift are 30 minutes each.
- 04:26 DJH: Ah, so they go 30 minutes each and then they rest . . .**
- 04:28 And then they would rest and somebody else takes over.
- 04:31 DJH: Okay.**
- 04:32 And then you're supposed to do two session, then you rest. Two session: one session is like from Nine to Twelve, and then the, the second session will start like from Two to Five or Three to Six; then the next morning you're supposed to rest.

- 04:47 DJH: And then you come the next ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) . . .**
- 04:48 And then you come the next afternoon. So after each two session, you rest for one session. It's a UN rule for interpreters.
- 04:56 DJH: Is that true in both simultaneous and, and consecutive?**
- 05:01 Yes. Yes.
- 05:02 DJH: Okay. ( \_\_\_\_ ).**
- 05:04 So, we had these two then we, when we brought them on board, we went back to Kigali again, tested some people, trained them then, I believe if my memory does not fail me, we managed to have about, to get about six of them this time. Now, we could – we brought them here. The, there's a room downstairs, the S355 it was basically, you know, put in place for that training.
- 05:37 Even right to this time, when they want to use that room they ask for me, for my permission. I mean, "Justine could we . . . ?" I say because we asked, you know, for that room to do the training. So we trained them. And then we did four such of training session, and now we have a team of 12, 13 Kinyarwanda interpreters translators.
- 06:02 In between, we brought in a gentleman that used to be a lawyer in Rwanda by the name of ( \_\_\_\_\_ ), a second one called ( \_\_\_\_\_ ), a teacher in a university in, in Rwanda who came and were doing translation and re-, revising whatever these people were translating because they had this legal background that, yeah.

## Part 5

- 00:00 DJH: Now, you used the word revising, so, tell us, and we've seen, s-, sometimes we walk in the hall here and we see a door at it says somebody is revising . . .**
- 00:09 Is a reviser.
- 00:10 DJH: Tell us about what that, what that means.**
- 00:12 Okay, so basically in the Language Services Section we have translators. They do only translation. We have translator-interpreters. They do both. Their main task is to interpret but they can translate as well.
- 00:29 DJH: So translating would mean from written . . .**
- 00:33 Translation is written only.
- 00:34 DJH: Okay, and interpreting is oral.**

- 00:36 Is oral.
- 00:37 DJH: Okay.**
- 00:37 But we have people who can do both – translation and interpretation. Then we have revisers. Revisers are people who, when a translation is presented to them like I have done a translation, it has to be revised. These are people who, when they produce it takes, it can be certified. We know that there’s no mistake. There’s no problem. We can certify.
- 01:04 But translators, when they translate it has to be revised by a reviser. Somebody goes behind the translation, takes the original, takes and the translation – I showed you a sample already.
- 01:15 DJH: Yes.**
- 01:16 To see that the ideas, the meaning, the form, everything, the idiomatic language, presentation, references, every single thing has been properly, you know, is properly done in the text. It’s only when the text is revised that the section will certify it, and they will become of public consumption.
- 01:39 DJH: Okay, it becomes official ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) . . .**
- 01:41 Official, yes. And it, on the, you know, you mark “Certified by the LSS.” And it can be used.
- 01:48 DJH: But today . . .**
- 01:49 Because sometime if the, the translation is not revised, it comes out as a draft and we put “Draft” on it, yeah.
- 01:58 DJH: Okay. Today, how many staff p-, how many people approximately are interpreters, transcribers and revisers? Those are the three categories, yes.**
- 02:10 We have 17 French interpreters, that is from English into French. Including myself and the Chief Interpreter, that’s 19 – because I’m basically an in-, an interpreter. And we have 11 French translators; six English translators; four French revisers; three English revisers and three Kinyarwanda revisers; 12 Kinyarwanda interpreters and six Kinyarwanda translators.
- 02:54 DJH: Okay, so it’s grown a fair bit.**
- 02:57 Yeah, we’re a team of 123.
- 03:01 DJH: Your whole staff is.**
- 03:02 All staff because we, I have a unit in Kigali with nine people and a unit in The Hague, at The Hague with four people.

- 03:11 DJH: Okay, and you are the Administrative Head of all three branches, if you will.**
- 03:16 Yes, yes. We have units. We have the translation unit, the French Translation Unit, the English Translation Unit and the Kinyarwanda Translation Unit; then the Interpretation Unit, then the, the Docs Control – the Document Control Unit where we have document assistant, the control assistant, reference assistant, proofreaders, yeah.
- 03:42 DJH: And so document control, explain to me what that ( ) . . .**
- 03:46 The document control assistant is the one that receives all documents that come in, distributes them for translation and make sure that they are translated and send them back to whoever asked for the translation to be done. The reference assistant is the one that when the document, the assistant docs control receives the document, he gives it to the reference assistant.
- 04:11 She goes on the database on all the, the, the software that we have, TRIM, et cetera, and looks for all the references that are useful, will be useful for the text to be translated because she needs to send these references to the translator. Because i-, the tr-, the translator does not have to look for the references like the footnotes.
- 04:37 If it referring to a, a judgment that, that was delivered in Papua New Guinea, for example, is the job of the reference assistant to go and look for that text and send it, you know, electronically to the translator so that the translator can translate.
- 04:58 Then the proofreader – the translation is done, the reviser has revised, the typist because we have a pool of secretaries, the secretary has, you know, inserted all the, the, the correction that were done by the revisers.
- 05:15 Now it goes to the proofreader. She is in charge of the presentation, the, the commas, the semi colons as everything be presented because we have a UN book on the way text has to be presented. She checks how well – grammatical errors, the typos, every single thing that will make the text to be clean and usable. That’s the job of the proofreader.
- 05:42 DJH: Okay.**

## Part 6

- 00:00 DJH: So let’s go back to how, how, when you, after you came to Arusha, you were translat-, y-, an interpreter, I’m sorry, to begin with. And then you apparently have risen in the ranks. When did, how and when did that happen?**
- 00:19 I, I, I have a, a diploma in translation, another one inter-, in interpretation but I have a PhD in the training and, of interpreters and translators from the University of Sorbonne in France where I did my studies.

- 00:40 I did all, a part of my university studies I did in Cameroon up to the BA, and I went to France to do translation-interpretation and I did a doctorate degree there, then to England as well to do the interpretation.
- 00:55 I started just working like anybody here; translator, interpreter, training. Then I started the training unit. I was heading the training unit. Then we had (\_\_\_\_\_). I talked about him. He left. Mr. (\_\_\_\_\_) came on board. He left. Then there was somebody else by the name of (\_\_\_\_\_). He came on board. He left. The post was advertised then I put in my application and was interviewed and I got the job.
- 01:24 DJH: In what year was that?**
- 01:26 That was last year in, the interview was in May last year.
- 01:32 DJH: 2007.**
- 01:32 2007, yeah.
- 01:33 DJH: Okay. And before then, you were in-, interpreting, trans-, translating.**
- 01:40 Translating and training, and training, yes.
- 01:42 DJH: And training. Okay. All right, and now you are responsible, fully responsible (\_\_\_\_\_)**  
...
- 01:49 Of the section, yes.
- 01:51 DJH: Of the section. How shall I say this? I'm interested, we're interested in knowing your experiences not just as a translator and not just as a, as the section chief but as a person who's been through the, sounds like the entire process, you've served in all of, almost all, if not all, of the capacities.**
- 02:21 DJH: Your general impressions of, first of all, the job of the translators and what, and, and the limitations that have been there and the positive abilities, the, the opportunities, if you will.**
- 02:42 I have to say that at the beginning it wasn't easy because . . .
- 02:45 DJH: Was not easy? Yes.**
- 02:46 It was not, it was not easy at the beginning because we did not have the necessary tools at least to do our job properly – because you have to understand the way the tribunal was set up, you know. There was a resolution of the U-, United Nations Security Council creating the tribunal, et cetera, et cetera. Then judges were appointed, you know.

- 03:14 Then at one point they said it has to start because judges were appointed I believe way back in 1995. And then new people have to start working, et cetera. So we were recruited, you know, you have to go to Kigali fast because you know work is piling and there's nobody to do the job. Then we got there. No dictionary. No . . .
- 03:36 So we had really to start doing, buying, asking, "We need this to do the job," because it was an office that was opening. There was nothing. So, th-, then the months in Kigali were not easy ones but then we came here and we started building it up, you know, the, the library, you know, was put in place. We could order some dictionary, you know.
- 04:02 Some of us could, had gone back home and had, had brought their own, you know, working equipment, you know, if I can say that. And then it kept improving. I have to say at the beginning it wasn't bad because it was an, an office, you know, and the tribunal was just starting and everything had to be done from the beginning, you know, from scratch, yeah.
- 04:27 DJH: Okay.**
- 04:28 And then, the computer, we had computer because before we were writing; we translate writing. Then they brought computers, you know. It has been improving, improving, improving. And right now, honestly, we don't, we don't complain. Yeah, we have, I mean, the necessary tools to do our work properly, yeah.
- 04:47 DJH: There was a question I meant to ask you which I haven't, so I will just – have you ever done or has your, your group done any telephonic transla-, interpreting or translating?**
- 05:01 No.
- 05:02 DJH: Okay.**
- 05:03 Not that I know.
- 05:04 DJH: Okay. Sometimes, as you know, in other courts . . .**
- 05:09 Interviews. I know that colleagues have, have been interviewed on the phone.
- 05:13 DJH: Okay . . . but . . .**
- 05:13 Yeah, for other organizations, but translations or interpretation, no.
- 05:18 DJH: Okay.**

## Part 7

- 00:00 DJH: So, tell, tell us if you will, about some of the experiences that you or your staff have had and how it has affected them and, and (\_\_\_\_\_) . . .**



- 00:17 When you say experiences, what do you mean?
- 00:21 **DJH: What I mean is these are people as well as interpreters and they're translating sometimes very difficult subjects.**
- 00:30 (\_\_\_) I know, okay.
- 00:30 **DJH: Yes. And you've been here (\_\_\_), the whole time essentially.**
- 00:34 You know, the truth is you cannot – what we've been doing here will change anybody's way of thinking, you know. Any – th-, there's a, there's a, you, you leave this place and you're different because of the kind of thing you've seen, the kind of things you've heard. And it makes you reflect, you know, on, on, on the capacity of a human being to do wrong, to, to, to – how would I put it?
- 01:15 To, to, to be wicked, to, to – I will say in French la capacite de faire du mal, la capacite, a human being versus another human being, the kind of thing that one can do to the other. It's just unbelievable. So you, you start asking yourself if you were put in that situation, what would you do? Ho-, how do you behave in, in such a situation because you hear horrendous, horrendous, terrible things that you, you just . . .
- 01:52 I, y-, I was talking to colleagues from the ICTY in, in The Hague and they were just telling the same story. That, "Justine, you hear things here, then you leave. You, you take your car, you're driving or you're like okay, maybe the witness was adding, you know, he was making up a story. It can't be true. But then the next day somebody else comes and tells you exactly the same story."
- 02:16 And you're like, if this group could have done this, how do you know the other one will not do it? Even yourself sitting here, if you had the opportunity, you know, of – and then, you know there's a, there's a – you, you alone, you may not be able to do something but when there are ten, six, 20, 100, 1,000 people, you know, ready to kill, what do you do if you are amongst them, you see?
- 02:43 These are the type of question you start asking yourself, then as I said, I always say that when we got here, the setting, Arusha was not a friendly place to be because there was nothing. You know, we could go for a week no lights, you know, no electricity. And then the roads, there were potholes everywhere. It was difficult.
- 03:10 We didn't have cars, you know. It was very difficult when we started in 1997. Things started improving around 1998, and you know, now you have – we, there was no shop to go. Nothing. So it's not like you could take your car and just like, I would say decide to drive to have some air, or invite a friend for coffee, you know, in a café or something like that.

- 03:33 So it's like basically you came to work. You did your work. You heard all these things and then you went back home. And then you were alone because, at the beginning, not everybody brought, brought their families here because we didn't know about the schools, we didn't know about what was happening, et cetera.
- 03:50 But it improved with time. And then you hear so many things that at one point, you get used to them. And it's like they gloss over you now. You don't hear them anymore. You're, you're numb. You're vaccinated, you know. You're immune to what you're hearing. And as I always said, that's when problems start.
- 04:14 DJH: Tell me what you mean by that.**
- 04:17 For me personally, it's not normal to be a human being and to be, not to feel anything because – but at the same time it's a kind of protection. I, I will say a natural protection because you need to protect yourself and be able to live normally, you know, after hearing all these things, you know, because if they keep coming back, then you won't sleep, then you will . . .
- 04:45 Personally, I noticed I put on a lot of weight, you know, because I could just – at one point I will be eating and eating and eating and eating just like to forget about something, you know, to compensate. You know, I can't – it is very difficult to explain, you know. And I would be irritated at home when I go home with, with my, my children, and you know, shouting at them.
- 05:10 I would realize that there's something that is happening here and then, sometimes they would laugh at me and say, "You know, we were just looking at you when you came back from work, you know, and say she's going to shout again," you know. It's not normal but then when you rewind, then you, you, you, you're like, "Yes, these are all these things."
- 05:34 Then you have to stop it and by stopping it, this, I don't want it to disturb me. I don't want it to change the way I live. I don't, I will just listen; repeat what they're saying and go back home. But this is not normal as well, you know.
- 05:48 Then at that time, it would have been good if we had somebody we could talk to, because you swallow a lot and you don't know what it's doing in your system because all these thing that we hear, all these thing that you see, because they, we had – they will bring a video where people are killed there, you know. You watch it being done.
- 06:11 They'll bring a vi-, video, of a mass grave, you know, with, with layers of, you know, skulls and, you know. And then you are interpreting, and then you hear what the women say. Some women that had been raped and, you know, et cetera, et cetera. Ju-, just as a technician, you're not going to the "Who did what, did they did, wa-, were, were they right to do it, was it wrong?"

06:35 That's not the problem. The problem is what you see and what you hear, and what it does in your system – what are the consequences? I believe that in ten years today, some things may still be happening to me that will be related to all these things that you know, I had to, to, to swallow, you know, to, to, to see, to hear and, and I, I c-, I will say to, to live with, you know.

07:03 And then I may not even know that this is what is affecting me, you understand?

**07:07 DJH: Yes.**

07:08 Yeah, that's, that's the, that's the problem. You know, I can speak for myself. I don't know how it affects others, you know, yeah.

**07:15 DJH: Well . . .**

## Part 8

**00:00 DJH: You obviously are speaking for, for yourself, but you also have colleagues here, and I'm sure some of them have talked to you and you don't have to use their names. Can you tell us what patterns or the kinds of examples that, that others may have had with respect to this?**

00:20 I have to say that most of the time, those who were in a, in a family setting, it was a bit easier for them. Those who were alone, be them, they women or men, it was a bit more difficult for them. When my, a cousin of mine joined me with my two girls, it was easier for me because I could go home to, to my family, you know, and talk and some weekends we'll leave, you know, just go to some place, sit and you know, in a lodge or in a place.

01:01 I believe that some people were affected in a way – you know, you, you may be affected and you don't know that it affects you, you see. Nobody will come openly and tell you that, "Justine, you know what I heard yesterday," but I know that women were very affected. The women colleagues were affected by the, the, the narration, the stories narrated about rape, you know.

01:43 I remember one day sitting in a booth with a colleague, and she just started crying, you know. This woman was describing how she was raped and then I just saw tears and we all had to leave, you know, and, and men were, had sit there and they were working. But again, that same colleague, a year later she will sit and hear about rape and she will be there, interpreting. No more tears, no more – just repeating what she heard.

**02:17 DJH: The numb stage that you were talking about.**

02:18 Yes, the numb stage, yes. The numb stage. We all went through that at one stage or another.

- 02:26 DJH: And what happens past the numb stage?**
- 02:31 Past the numb stage, you continue to live. As I said, you don't know how it affects you but I – because I try to reflect on it, I know that at one point it comes out some way, somehow. I don't know how it will come out as far as I'm concerned, or maybe it has affected some other people already.
- 02:56 But what was good was that at least about two years ago, some people were brought here. We went for a, a group, you know.
- 03:08 DJH: Group therapy. Yes.**
- 03:09 Group therapy where people could talk, you know, just air it, you know. Remove it. Let it come out. Just to talk how it affected them.
- 03:20 DJH: And they were professionals who . . .**
- 03:21 Yes, three professionals came from Nairobi that listened. But then again, people will not talk publicly, you know. They want to have a one-to-one session with who, whoever is there and then you will know exactly what will transpire. But at least they, they, they could – things like breathing, how you could breath, you know, just to de-stress, you know, because the stress was too much.
- 03:52 To de-stress, you know, sleeping disorders, you know. These are the type of thing. You go home. You don't sleep. You don't know why and this is not a problem that you, you ha-, you've been having. You know, how to de-stress, how to try to sleep, et cetera, et cetera.
- 04:08 I don't want to touch on the issue of alcohol because some drink, but I don't know if it's related to what they've been seeing or hearing. I don't know if they had that problem before coming here, you know, so I don't know.
- 04:28 DJH: Yeah. And had you – and I don't mean just you – had somebody in authority in the, in the language section had asked for that help that came or did, did the superiors, the, the people above decide, you know, those people, the interpreters (\_\_\_\_) . . . ?**
- 04:49 I really do not know how it came about. It wasn't only for us. It was for the whole tribunal.
- 04:54 DJH: Ah, okay.**
- 04:54 Yeah, it was for the whole tribunal. I don't know how it came about.
- 04:58 DJH: So they had different sessions.**
- 05:00 Different session, yeah, went into that group therapy, you know, the people who listen to them.

- 05:05 DJH: Was it just one session at that time with the, with the inter-, with your . . .**
- 05:08 Yes. We went to, there's a lodge not too far from here called (\_\_\_\_). We were there for three days.
- 05:15 DJH: Oh, okay. So it was quite a long . . .**
- 05:17 Yeah, it was.
- 05:18 DJH: Okay. (\_\_\_\_) . . .**
- 05:18 We were there for three days, then there was another session just to go somewhere and relax, you know, stay with colleagues and joke about anything, do some games, you know, yeah. We had two such sessions.
- 05:30 DJH: Yeah. Two such sessions.**
- 05:32 Mm-hmm.
- 05:32 DJH: And did that help you to sha-, when they were gone? The people, the interpreters, the (\_\_\_\_) . . .**
- 05:39 Yeah, it did help a lot. Yeah.
- 05:40 DJH: . . . share, I mean, not just individually but – so they felt a little more open with each other?**
- 05:44 Yeah, it did help, yeah, it did help.
- 05:48 DJH: Has it lasted, do you think or . . .**
- 05:50 Yeah, I believe.
- 05:51 DJH: Have there been more, or just that?**
- 05:53 No, we only had that one.
- 05:55 DJH: Okay. Now I heard the other day that last year, there was a permanent psychologist or person who was brought on staff. (\_\_\_\_) . . .**
- 06:06 No, he's here. Yeah, he's here now, yeah.
- 06:08 DJH: And is, is, has that person been made available to . . . ?**
- 06:15 He is. The way I see it and there's an e-bulletin now that, bulletin that he sends, you know, on several issue, career development, alcohol, how to deal with it and blah blah. It's a

weekly, you know. He sends it, he writes it, sends it to us for revision, we revise it for him and then it goes out, yeah it's readily available.

**06:36 DJH: (\_\_\_\_), if somebody on your staff for example is having problems, you know, as you described, could that person seek this, this, I don't know, psychologist, I'll call it? (\_\_\_\_) . . .**

06:51 I should think so, yeah. Yes.

**06:52 DJH: Okay. And could get maybe some one-on-one time with that person?**

06:57 I sh-, yeah.

**06:58 DJH: You think so?**

06:59 Mm-hmm. Definitely.

**07:00 DJH: Do you know, again without using names, do you know if any of your staff has done, has taken advantage of that or has used that?**

07:07 N-, no.

**07:10 DJH: They wouldn't have to tell you if they (\_\_\_\_) . . .**

07:12 Yeah, yeah. But I would go if, I see him if I had a problem. If I wanted to talk or, you know, yeah I would do that.

**07:18 DJH: Do you know what his qualifications are? I mean, has that been . . . ?**

07:23 He did. He did send something. I don't, it's, it's, it's, it was available to us. I don't, I cannot tell you exactly what, you know, but I know that he's been working such settings before.

**07:35 DJH: Is he African or . . .**

07:36 He's from Latin America.

**07:39 DJH: From Latin America?**

07:40 Yeah, mm-hmm.

**07:40 DJH: Okay.**

07:42 He's called Jorge Sierralta.

**07:45 DJH: Okay.**

07:45 Yeah.

## Part 9

- 00:00 **DJH: Well, we had a little break and I'm going to come back to a few things that I passed over ( ) because I didn't want to interrupt the flow of your conversation. One is, you talked about some of the effects of having to translate the kind of material that, that you do.**
- 00:21 **DJH: And I wondered if it had any effect, or you would know, on the length that somebody will be an interpreter or a translator here. In other words, what's the average length of time people work, if you know that or, or you can . . . ?**
- 00:40 No, I can't give an answer to that with, you know, certainty because some people came, spent three years here and left. Some have been here for ten years, for 11 years. Some, right now, some are leaving because we're closing.
- 00:59 **DJH: Yes. That's different.**
- 00:59 And, but normally people stay on, especially Africans. You know, those, the Africans. They stay on for diverse reasons and – I could have left, you know. I've had many opportunity to leave but it, it's, you know, Arusha is addictive, you know.
- 01:23 **DJH: How is that?**
- 01:24 It's, it's funny. You know when we first got here, I was like I, I, "I'm not sure I'll be able to stay here a year," because, I mean, why should I leave, you know, a home where I was very comfortable and come here suffering. Then, you get used to it, you know. You stay, you start liking what you do and, you know, people are friendly because, compared to where I come from, Tanzanians are very soft and very friendly.
- 01:50 Because back home, people are very rough, very welcoming people but you know, they do fight for their right and, you know, tell you what they want to tell you if they had to. Then the, the, the places, you know, you could go to these lodges, the parks, you know. It, it, it had become a nice place to be.
- 02:13 I, personally, I don't like big, big, big cities, you know. If you go beyond a place like Paris it's already too much for me. And whenever I said it people are very surprised because I love downtown Manhattan. You know very much it is a big place, New York. It's a big city to be but left that, that aside is after t-, one or two colleagues who want even to stay behind.
- 02:44 After the tribunal, you know, had closed down, to stay behind because it's green, you know – the mountain, the Kilimanjaro, the lodges. And then it's becoming a, a, a big conference center. Many conferences are being organized here, so for a translator and interpreter, there were some work to do, so, that's it.

- 03:05 But I can't give you an average to say like five years or four years or whatever. Some people came, they even stayed only for a year, and they left. Some people left because they went to Europe. They found a job in some other organization.
- 03:20 **DJH: I was wondering if you had formed any opinion if any of them left because just of the difficulty of the material that they were translating here.**
- 03:27 Some left because it was difficult, yeah. Some just decided that it was too much and they, they left. But most people left when they were offered something else.
- 03:40 **DJH: Okay.**

## Part 10

- 00:00 **DJH: Are there any standards, professional standards that are applied to the work of the, of the Language Section? And if so, could you tell us about those?**
- 00:13 We have – there's a minimum that is expected from a translator and interpreter. Those who cannot perform, we put in place an improvement plan to see how we can help them improve their performance.
- 00:33 We've had one or two desperate cases whereby there was nothing we could do but as a whole, you know, we've been able to bring whoever was really having difficulties at the beginning because it's, it's new material, it's new stuff.
- 00:51 This is legal material. We all had to adapt, you know, to adjust. Most of the time people have really tried, you know, and come up to a certain level that is acceptable. We have evaluation sheets for translators, for interpreters.
- 01:08 I can give you people a sample, you know, to see how they are evaluated and you will see that even the evaluation for the Kinyarwanda is different from, from the, the evaluation sheet from English translator or French translators – because it's translation but into three different languages.
- 01:27 And the way these languages are – how, how can I say this? These languages are – let me say perform, you know, the way the translators will have to, to work with these languages is different. You will see that with the French translation, accuracy is rated 35% because word phrasing is very important. The presentation is very important.
- 01:54 You know French people, with the famous, famous Academie Francaise. Whereas the English is more to the task, you know, the meaning, you know, we, you, you, you don't have time to be wasting with all these, yeah. So, so you'll see that accuracy with us is 35%, presentation 20%. English translation accuracy is 40%, presentation is somewhere around 15, you know.



- 02:22 So it differs with the language. And Kinyarwanda will be 45% because we want to be sure that whatever is written is really what is said because we don't have the means to verify but we have the revisers who will tell us that at this level, it can only be 45% to be sure that whatever is coming in French is exactly what is written in Kinyarwanda.
- 02:45 So we have those rating sheets to do the evaluation.
- 02:49 DJH: And any language has its own sort of idioms.**
- 02:52 Yes.
- 02:53 DJH: And do you try to do idiomatic translation as well as interpretation?**
- 02:58 Yes, yes. That is what I always tell to the newcomers, those who join the group, is that you need to be able to understand exactly what the speaker is saying in, you know, the, the, the, your language – because if I'm working into French and you keep asking, "But what is it? What are they saying?" then there's a problem. There's no communication.
- 03:27 You need to be able to understand what the speaker is saying in your language without having to break your head, you know, trying to, to read, you know, between the lines or trying to, to find out what the person is saying because it has to be clear enough for you to understand.
- 03:44 DJH: You mentioned the other day that there were national and interna-, that there were international standards for interpreting, things of that sort (\_\_\_). You're obviously well aware of those and I assume that you apply those as, as appropriate.**
- 03:57 Yeah. Yeah, we do. But we have the UN rules that apply, you know, across the line for all UN language services. Then we have all our international organization to which we all most, you know, translator interpreters, they belong – what, you know, set rules that we try to follow. But we work with sister organization like UNESCO, like, especially UNON in Nairobi.
- 04:26 Whenever we need people and you know, we're stuck, you know there's somebody like with Italian and we don't have Italian here. A witness come like about a month ago, we had a witness speaking Italian. We had to bring some people from Nairobi so we ask UNON, they, they loan.
- 04:43 DJH: Ask UNON?**
- 04:44 UNON is the United Nation Organization – it, it's, it's the, the regional UN office in Africa.
- 04:55 DJH: Okay.**
- 04:56 Yes. In Africa which –but in there you have UNEP, the enviro-, environment, United Nation Environment Program. You have Habitat, you have many UN organization, you know,

housed in that UN setting, you know. You have many UN regional offices. There's one in Bangkok for Asia. The, the other one is in Vienna for Europe. There's one in Geneva. Then there's one in Nairobi and the New, New York headquarters.

**05:32 DJH: Okay, and so you brought in somebody who knew Italian (\_\_\_\_) . . .**

05:35 From Nairobi. From UN Nairobi.

**05:37 DJH: Okay. And if there's another language you would seek out . . .**

05:39 Yeah, yes, so we exchange also with ICC, with ICTY, you know. I went to test some people for ICC when they were recruiting. They brought me in for a week, so we tested the candidates with them and then, you know, say these are the people you can employ. So we train some people in the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

06:01 I was there for two months to do, to train some interpreters and translator, to be, and that was interesting because we did – because it's the same setting; these are criminal tribunals. We did some training with the, the, the local language which is Krio. Krio.

**06:23 DJH: Oh, creole.**

06:24 Krio is K-R-I-O. It's a kind of Creole of English that they speak over there. And funny enough, we speak exactly the same Krio in, in Cameroon. We call it pidgin English, pidgin English. So I, I was able to train some people in the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown as well.

## Part 11

**00:00 DJH: You've used some sort of short hand. You've s-, you've talked about ICTY.**

00:06 Yes.

**00:07 DJH: And you've talked about ICC so maybe you could tell us what those are.**

00:12 Yeah.

**00:13 DJH: ICTY.**

00:14 ICTY is the International Criminal Tribunal for the ex-Yugoslavia and then ICC is Inter-, International Criminal Court. Both of them are in The Hague.

**00:25 DJH: Okay, and my pretty much, my last question is you – and Lisa will be asking you some more – you see in the world what's going in places like Darfur and other places and unfortunately, there may have to be tribunals in the future or something to, to deal with those issues.**

- 00:54 DJH: I guess my question would be simply if you had some suggestions, if there were going to be some sort of tribunal, that would be helpful in the future for those, particularly as it relates to the work that, that you do and, and the people who work with you do, in terms of training or in terms of dealing with the emotional issues, of things of that sort of if, if you'd like to – if you had any suggestions, we'd be happy to hear them.
- 01:31 DJH: And if you'd like to think about it and tell (\_\_\_\_), or tell Lisa . . .
- 01:35 No, I, I, I wanted to say that how I wish we didn't have to make a suggestion because there was another, you know, a, a place where they, they, that we did what everybody thought will never happen again. But still, since it's happening what I can say is that if it was – they w-, they needed people like us, we will need to have a, a, a psychologist from the beginning.
- 02:06 It would be good to have a person, a person like that there that will be able to listen to what people have to say. And maybe even before listening, you know, it's good to be cautioned, you know, like when you're watching a movie and they tell you that careful, what you're going to watch is going to be like this. Maybe if you don't have a heart, don't watch it.
- 02:30 Then you know. If you decide to watch it, you will bear the consequences.
- 02:35 **Note: Gap in Interview (Approx. 5 minutes in duration.) Gaps occurred due to interruptions during the interviews, technical issues, or corrupted data files.**
- 02:43 Now I was saying that it will be good to have from the forego, from the beginning somebody – a, a, a psychologist that could be there to listen to people, to tell them what to expect, what the, the kind of stuff they were going to be listening to, they're going to be seeing.
- 03:07 And I could give you some terrible examples of things that, you know, I personally saw. Just in court like that is okay, they're going to – you know there was this journalist from Reuters. He was in Kigali when the massacres were happening and he made a footage of killings, you know.
- 03:28 You see somebody there and the next sequence that you have, the bodies lying somewhere. There was a lady with three daughters and, you know, the camera will come back and one is no longer there, you know, and this woman is talking and begging, then the camera comes back. The second child is no longer there, you know.
- 03:51 Then there's a pile of corpse, you know, terrible things then eventually she herself is on the floor. You see, these are things that, you know, will – or this girl, 19 year old girl, that said you know, people who came, come in the night, they would be drunk and this, and they will be raping her, all of them.

- 04:09 You know, and then the type of questions that they will be asking her that, “How many times, how did you do it, how?” You see – but yet these questions have to be asked, you know, by judges and by the defense to, to, so that the truth can come out. You have to know that these are the t-, type of things you’re going to hear.
- 04:31 So, as maybe to prepare yourself, I don’t know if one can be prepared to hear such things, but at least you know what is coming ahead and you could make a choice to hear them or not to hear them. I don’t know. I mean, it’s just, you know I’m thinking aloud so, I don’t know.
- 04:50 **Lisa P. Nathan: Were you able to incorporate any of those ideas here – as I don’t believe you’re now hiring new interpreters but over – well, and you’ve only been the chief here for less than a year – but did any of that happen formally or informally, letting new people . . . ?**
- 05:09 Informally we tell them that, you know, “The kind of stuff that you’re going to hear is sometime not going to be easy.” But I have to say that at this stage of the tribunal, you don’t hear such hard stuff anymore because, like we’re, we’re in the closing stage, you know, and the stage of the closing of, like the presentation of the prosecutor case or the defense case.
- 05:40 We’re not like at the beginning when witnesses have to come and say, “I was there, I saw it when they did this and they did that.” So it’s kind of less stressing, and you know, they’re, they are under less strain and stress than, than we were – even if it can be very, very difficult at some time.

## Part 12

- 00:00 **LPN: Could you go back – you talked earlier about the first days in Arusha and you touched very briefly about when you first took on the job in Kigali and your husband was like, “No way,” but you came for two weeks and you decided to stay.**
- 00:15 **LPN: Can you tell us more about that time? Did you have any preparation for what, for that aspect of it – for the things you were going to hear?**
- 00:23 No. At all. Not at all. All I knew is what I had seen on TV, you know. The corpse and corpse that were littering the roads, you know. And that’s all I had, that’s all I had.
- 00:36 **LPN: So what did you find?**
- 00:37 Because I was recruited from New York, you know. They just send me the contrat, I signed, they send me the laissez-passer and I took off, so I didn’t know what I was going to do. I didn’t even know where I was going. I just decided to gamble and go.

- 00:55 LPN: So what were the conditions in Kigali? You explained a little bit.**
- 00:58 They were very hard. It was difficult to find a, a place to stay so I stayed in the hotel almost for about a month and a half, the Meridien Hotel at that time. In the evening there was nothing to do. I will just sit in my room, watch TV, eat some chocolate. I don't know, you know.
- 01:22 Then when the colleagues from Nigeria arrived, we were able to spot a house that we shared because – we were sharing it not because we wa-, we wanted but we had to, to feel secure and then you know, it was like a sense of togetherness, you know. To be together and know that if something happens, you know, at least there's somebody that will know that is something is happening and will be able to help, yes.
- 02:01 LPN: So . . .**
- 02:02 And, and then it's like virtually we were saying that, you know, "If there's a problem this is what we will do," because at that time it was very difficult in Kigali. You know, you could hear, you know, shootings, you know, here and there.
- 02:17 LPN: How did you, when you would hear shootings, what would you do? Would you ever find out what was going on? Did you . . . ?**
- 02:24 No, they will just tell you that, "Oh, there's shooting on the hill," you know, because Kigali is very hilly with small hills. "Oh, it's behind the hills, some people are shooting behind the hills there," yeah.
- 02:37 LPN: So when you first began actually working there and you started to see the material, what was that like? Can you explain?**
- 02:45 It was very bad because even translating, only translating, sometime I will leave the office, just walk, you know, outside the office to have some air because it was too much, you know, to take because it, it, it, you know, it's the description, to the letter, you know, of certain things that had happened.
- 03:06 Very difficult because you're not used to it, you're not expecting, you know. When you do your studies, that's not the kind of stuff, you know, you, you think you'll be translating. But then – then again, at one point we just start translating them.
- 03:23 LPN: Did it feel different to you when you were in Kigali doing the, the translating than when you were in Arusha?**
- 03:30 I would have preferred doing the translation not having to see some of the things that I had to see when I came here doing interpretation. And there you have facts, you know,

because these, these are evidence, you know. You have these pieces of evidence that you have to tender in the courtroom to, to, to put up your case.

03:54 Like the prosecution is accusing, you know, these people of having done this and that, so you have to come up with your evidence that, you know, proof that this happened, that you have like a footage, a video, a cassette or witnesses that came, come and narrate facts, things that they have lived or, you know.

04:17 You know, the, the question is not are they telling the truth or are they lying? It's what you hear whether it is the truth or not, so it is what goes into your ears, you know, and that what you can, you can – that goes into your system, you know.

**04:34 LPN: So, from your time . . .**

04:36 You, you see but it's the same thing because it is like your senses, your eyes, your ears and your mouth. You speak those things, so it's like you repeat it because you're interpreting.

04:49 When you read them because that evidence that is tendered into court, they give you like a copy. Maybe if it, if it's a document on paper, or if it's a cassette you watch it, or, and then you hear.

05:03 So it's like your three senses are, you know, always, you know, being used to the fullest all the time, you know.

## Part 13

**00:00 LPN: When you were in Kigali and you got to know some Rwandans I imagine during your time there?**

00:11 Not really. One or two. Knowing is, would be a, a very strong word to use. Yes, I met them.

**00:21 LPN: Okay. And you have some Rwandans on staff now.**

00:25 Yeah, obviously if I ha-, I had stayed longer, I would have, you know, known a few of them but I was there just for a few months of which two here, because seven months but we did two here; officially I was there. If I had stayed longer I would certainly have met a few of them, known a f-, few of them. But I work with some here and some are my friends, yeah.

**00:51 LPN: So, what would you like – when you, you were in Kigali, and you, you return there sometimes as well from what you said that you're a little bit nervous when you go there. When you do go there, do you ever go to site visits with the investigators?**

01:11 No, I've never done that but some colleagues have done, and in fact next week we're having a team going with the chamber to the sites, yeah.

- 01:22 LPN: And they go because, why do they . . . ?**
- 01:25 They go because the judges want to go and see the places, the site where it happens, it happened yeah.
- 01:31 LPN: And they, and they bring interpreters.**
- 01:34 Yes.
- 01:34 LPN: So – I imagine there’s a guide.**
- 01:37 There’s a guide that will be explaining that, “This happened here, this is how it was.” And then interpreter will be interpreting into French and if there’s an English judge, an English-speaking judge, there will be some other interpreter doing it into English for him.
- 01:53 LPN: But you have not participated in that. No.**
- 01:56 No. Even I have to say that I’ve not participated in any site visit, and I haven’t even gone to, because we have the United Nation Detention Facility here. I’ve never been there.
- 02:10 LPN: Intentionally, that you – would you say . . .**
- 02:13 Yes, more or less.
- 02:14 LPN: Can you say why?**
- 02:16 I had – when we, when Mr. (\_\_\_\_\_) came onboard, I told him that I didn’t want to do that. Because I didn’t want – but it’s not, it’s not something that is peculiar to here. Even back home, I have always said if I had a family member in jail or in prison I would not have the strength to go and visit them. I can’t, I just can’t. I don’t believe I can put up with that.
- 02:52 LPN: With actually seeing . . .**
- 02:53 Seeing somebody locked in prison because they have done something – the, the setting itself. I told him that I will appreciate if he didn’t send me if, you know, he, it w-, if it was possible. Okay, we were many of us, some people went. I never went. I guess he took that into account.
- 03:14 LPN: So we were talking before about the Rwandans. Is there something that you would like the Rwandan people to know about the ICTR?**
- 03:26 Not really. I mean, just that we’re doing is, a lot of work here. We as technician, we don’t have a say. I would say that we, we try to do our job in a neu-, neutral way, you know, because we are just interpreters. We cannot and we do not take side. We do not even, no matter what is happening in the courtroom, we do not take part.

- 03:57 You know, even when we are criticized, we say nothing. We take it, you know, and then if there's a problem because there's always the original, you know, like if somebody said, "This is not what I said," you keep quiet. I-, it's one of the rules, you know, that you have to follow in this job. You don't, you don't know what happened. You don't want to know.
- 04:20 You repeat what the people are saying. You may have your own personal feelings or ideas but they are not supposed to come out when you're doing your work. Maybe, after you finished, you may have some conversation or whatever, but we don't, we're not allowed to do that. So it will be very difficult for me to, I guess we just do our, our job the best we, you know, the best we can and then . . .