

Russell E. Morgan, Jr. Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
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Creator: Russell E. Morgan, Jr.
Interviewer: Evelyn Ganzglass
Date of Interview: March 20, 2019
Location of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 47 pages

Biographical Note

Russell E. Morgan, Jr. served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya from 1966 to 1969 as a secondary school teacher.

Access

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Suggested Citation

Russell E. Morgan, Jr., recorded interview by Evelyn Ganzglass, March 20, 2019, page #, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

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Oral History Interview

with

Russell E. Morgan, Jr.

March 20, 2019
Washington, D.C.

By Evelyn Ganzglass

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

GANZGLASS: [00:00:04] This is Evelyn Ganzglass. I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Somalia from 1966 to 1968. Today is March 20th, 2019, and I'm interviewing Russell Morgan, Jr., who was a Peace Corps volunteer in neighboring Kenya from 1966 to 1969. So undoubtedly somewhat similar experiences.

MORGAN: [00:00:29] Yep.

GANZGLASS: [00:00:29] So my first question to you, Russ, is why did you join the Peace Corps?

MORGAN: [00:00:35] Well, that is a very good question. I think when I was young, let me just say to begin with, I was born and raised in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and my father was a doctor and I was the oldest of three children. And I had a lot of independent time to do things like read or, we didn't take any international trips, but we

traveled along the East Coast. I, we got National Geographic and I found that just intriguing. And I would look at the pictures, I'd see things. And for whatever reason, Africa had a special appeal to me. I can't explain why, except it looked neat. And I liked all the animals and it look like wild times. And maybe that would be something I could do at some point.

MORGAN: [00:01:29] Also, I read Hemingway books and they had that adventuresome spirit. So from doing all those things, the idea of doing something international, I don't know. I'm not sure I was conscious of it, but it just seemed to be growing inside me.

GANZGLASS: [00:01:46] So you didn't apply when you were young, when you were a little kid. So where did you go to college? What did you study in college?

MORGAN: [00:01:55] I, because my father was a doctor, he thought I should be a doctor too. I mean, that's how things were in the early sixties. And I went to Moravian College, which was in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. I majored in biology, chemistry, and physics, and I sort of limped my way along through there. I wasn't quite sure I'd be doing exactly getting into medical school. And in fact, when I graduated, I was accepted at Columbia University to go into graduate work in biology and chemistry, and I thought I would do that. But that was 19, May of 1965.

MORGAN: [00:02:35] During my time in Moravian, I was taking a number of other courses, including a political science course, which took a field trip down to Washington. It must have been 1963, somewhere in that ballpark. And ironically, one of the stops was at the Department of Justice, and we went into the Attorney General's, passed it, and they said, oh, well, we can go in and stop and see the Attorney General. He's in. And so our group of like ten people went in there and, lo and behold, here's Bobby Kennedy sitting behind his desk doing nothing, I mean, not doing nothing. But he was sitting there. And, you know, he was very gracious and he said things. And I had my camera and I said to my friend, you know, when this is over, I'm going to just walk up

and shake his hand and say, can I take a picture and turn, and you take the picture. And we did that and he took the picture and I have it today. And he said, well, what are you going to do with your life?

GANZGLASS: [00:03:34] Huh.

MORGAN: [00:03:34] And I, I had already had the Peace Corps application at that point. And so I said to him, I'm thinking about going into the Peace Corps. And he says, well, my goodness, you couldn't do anything better in your life. And it was just.

GANZGLASS: [00:03:49] That did it.

MORGAN: [00:03:49] Was that serendipity or what? You know, just, just too wild to, to meet him in person. So. But that was, sort of at that time and simultaneous with that and my graduation in May of 1965 was the Vietnam War. And of course, people have different opinions on that. I wasn't in favor of going into war. I had friends who had been in ROTC and they were saying, oh, you know, you have to go to war and you got to do this. My father, who had been in World War II, thought it was totally unpatriotic not to go into war. And I just couldn't buy that argument. Um.

MORGAN: [00:04:31] So I went down, we had a place in New Jersey, and because I had gotten into Columbia University, I had a deferment. I was deferred. But then all of a sudden, graduate school deferments stopped. And I got a notice that I had to report to Fort Dix. And I was down in New Jersey. I'd switched my draft board thinking that would be clever. And sure enough, I went up to Fort Dix because I was, you know, you get this special delivery letter and I was living on a sailboat. I didn't even think they'd find me there, but they did. And I was lined up with maybe 200 young men my age and some guy's screaming, you know, like at 10:00 in the morning to take all of our clothes off down to our underwear, and that we're going to get in the Army now. And I said, you know, this is not my idea of what I'm going to do in life.

MORGAN: [00:05:31] After that, and then I had to come back the next day. And I had already by that time applied, that was when I graduated, I had already applied and I told the Peace Corps I'd rather defer go to graduate school because it was deferred and then I could be a more productive Peace Corps volunteer. Well, with this situation, what I did was I ended up, um, getting out, putting my clothes back on, getting in my car, driving down Garden State Parkway. And the first telephone booth, in those days there were booths, we didn't have cell phones, I stopped and I called Peace Corps in Washington. And it was like 4:00 in the afternoon. And I got a hold of a young woman who was a secretary and I told her my situation. I said, you know, is there any possible way that that deferment could be changed and I could be accepted now? Because I don't want to get into this Vietnam War thing.

MORGAN: [00:06:26] And I'll never know who this woman was, but the story is so phenomenal, that she said, well, I can't do it, but I'll look up your file. And in those days they had the paper file so, you know, looking through all these damn things. And I thought, well, this is going to be like a needle in a haystack. But she said, call me back tomorrow, you know, after 9:00. And if I find it, I'll go and talk to the director and then we'll see. Well, you know, I couldn't sleep all night. The next morning, you know, I was watching till my watch got to 9:01 and I called. I got through to her and she put me in contact. She said, well, wait one second, I'll transfer you. And I got transferred to the staff person who said, yes, they found my file, and yes, they could accept me now. They needed biology, chemistry, and physics teachers. And in fact, would I be interested in going to Kenya to teach there?

MORGAN: [00:07:21] And it was like, holy mackerel. I mean, it was unreal. It was an unreal experience. And with that, they said, we'll send your draft board a notice that your deferred, you're going in the Peace Corps. Take it up there and go and you'll begin training, and of all things, you'll begin training at Columbia University.

GANZGLASS: [00:07:44] That's where we trained as well.

MORGAN: [00:07:46] Really? Yeah. So I went to Teachers College and, you know, I'll never know who that woman was, but her competence in finding my file and whoever made that decision changed my life, you know. And it was one of those stories that had it not been, I don't know where I'd be.

GANZGLASS: [00:08:06] So you got deferred from the military.

MORGAN: [00:08:09] I got deferred and I went and went to Columbia University. And I guess it was about September, beginning.

GANZGLASS: [00:08:16] And you were trained at Teachers College.

MORGAN: [00:08:19] We were trained at Teachers College, and they had, you know, the series of things.

GANZGLASS: [00:08:22] So was, the whole was secondary, what was it? Secondary school teachers or what were you?

MORGAN: [00:08:26] Yeah, they were all secondary school and they mixed Uganda and Kenya groups together and we stayed at the Hotel Paris. Yeah.

GANZGLASS: [00:08:36] Same place.

MORGAN: [00:08:36] Same place?

GANZGLASS: [00:08:38] On 97th Street and.

MORGAN: [00:08:40] And it's still there I think.

GANZGLASS: [00:08:41] West End Avenue.

MORGAN: [00:08:42] Yeah. And, um, it was during the blackout too, when I was there, which was a wild time. But it was quite an experience because they had both countries and I'm guessing, I'm trying to remember the

exact number, but maybe it was three. Let's say it was in the ballpark of 300 people were in the combined class.

GANZGLASS: [00:09:03] Wow.

MORGAN: [00:09:04] It was a very big class. But halfway through it they had the de-, the first deselection process, which was cruelty beyond belief. They would hand people two, one of two envelopes, a yellow or a blue, and people with the one color stayed in that room. The other color went down the hall. And simultaneously everybody opened it up. And you either heard screaming of joy that it said, congratulations, you will continue. Or it said, we regret to inform you that we cannot continue your training as a Peace Corps volunteer. And my coming from this little town of Bethlehem and being in the presence, and going to Moravian and being the presence of people from Harvard and Stanford and Michigan and everything. And I saw them blowing away. I didn't know what was going on. It was like, wow, why? Why me? Except I loved it.

MORGAN: [00:10:04] And, you know, they also had at that time psychologists doing reviews that was like out of a movie. They'd even take you into a dark room and lie you on a bed and ask you what your family structure was, all that crap. And I did a volunteer job at Bellevue Hospital, which was at the time when LSD patients were there.

GANZGLASS: [00:10:27] Ah.

MORGAN: [00:10:27] Young kid, and I was in the children's ward. Oh my God. I was involved with art therapy to try to extract from these students what, what was in their brain. And some of them had reenacted Psycho. One kid had killed his mother walking up the stairs with a knife. I mean, a young girl tried jumping off a roof and, you know, just weird stuff. Again, coming from Bethlehem, I didn't know where I was.

GANZGLASS: [00:10:55] This was part of Peace Corps?

MORGAN: [00:10:57] This was part of my training.

GANZGLASS: [00:10:59] I mean, you were, oh.

MORGAN: [00:11:00] Yeah. We had to do projects. And then I taught at one of the public high schools around 97th Street, where they told me, Russell, you teach science and stay on this first floor. Don't go down into the basement where the lockers are. Just stay away from that.

GANZGLASS: [00:11:20] So you were both at Bell, you said, at Bellevue?

MORGAN: [00:11:23] Mm hmm.

GANZGLASS: [00:11:23] Yeah, Bellevue and taught in the local school.

MORGAN: [00:11:25] The Bellevue was sort of like a public service kind of a component, to try to get you exposed to, I guess, their idea of real world identity. Well, it was real world. I didn't realize it was going to be people whacked out.

GANZGLASS: [00:11:38] It was probably more of a culture shock than Kenya.

MORGAN: [00:11:41] It was something else. I mean, I never saw any, well, it taught, it certainly convinced me that I wasn't going to take drugs. I mean, my father was always anti-drug, obviously, being a surgeon and, you know, seeing that. But seeing these kids, I mean, it was just unbelievable. And it wasn't like one or two. I mean, it was a whole ward of these young people and they were like anywhere from nine, ten years old up to like sixteen.

GANZGLASS: [00:12:06] And they had all taken drugs?

MORGAN: [00:12:07] They all taken drugs. And LSD was the most prominent at that particular moment. So given all that, you know, we went through and then they had a second deselection process. So I think the final whittling down of this 300 was to a level of maybe 120, and of those maybe 40 went to Uganda and 80 went to Kenya. But we were all

teachers, that was the common denominator of the training program and that's why we had gone to Columbia.

GANZGLASS: [00:12:40] Do you think the training helped prepare you for Kenya, language training?

MORGAN: [00:12:44] I do. Yeah, I do. I mean, I think, you know, I'm not good in languages. I hadn't done well in French in college or, I took Latin and that was even worse. But, um. You know, I diligently had a little notebook, wrote down phrases. I tried to do it.

GANZGLASS: [00:13:02] You learned Swahili?

MORGAN: [00:13:04] I learned Swahili. Yeah. And, you know, I just was cleaning out some things the other day and saw my little notebook with my little phrases that I, for some reason, kept in a file. I think that teaching the techniques, the pedagogy of teaching, was important. I, I had really never consciously thought of what are the steps for preparing lesson plans and all that kind of stuff. I mean, I understood the biology and the chemistry and the physics aspects, but the teaching I hadn't thought of. And so I thought that was very, and I enjoyed going to a, you know, a place like Columbia. I mean, there was no question it was a step above where I had ever been before in the quality of the teaching. So I think, yes, when I got there.

MORGAN: [00:13:48] And so, you know, we finished it in December and January, bingo, in the airplane over to Nairobi. And we landed in Nairobi, stayed at the hotel there in Nairobi for maybe three days at the most for an orientation. And then we were given our schools and I took a bus. I was in a, first in an area called Kitui, which was maybe 2 hours north of Nairobi, but in a, the Wakamba area, the tribal region, and it was a traditional, the boarding school. It was all, but this was all boys. In that region, they had boys' boarding schools and girls', and they were more because it was closer to Nairobi and everything had been developed more.

MORGAN: [00:14:41] I went to this one boys Kitui secondary school and the headmaster was British. And after a two, two and a half hour bus ride, dusty and everything, I get off with my suitcase and he met me. And he took me to the school and they had for teachers a private house and everything. And we got to it and I put some in and he says to me as he's, before he leaves, you know, by the way, I know you're an American and you know science from the American perspective, but I have to tell you that this is a British school. Even though independence has occurred, we're still using the British system. And these students have to get through the Cambridge. And quite frankly, he said, I don't think you know how to teach in that capacity. So I know, I'm, I have to keep you. You're here and it's nice that you're doing this. But what you're going to do over the next two years is I'm going to put you in charge of the first form science, and I want you to keep the lab equipment clean.

GANZGLASS: [00:15:43] That's it.

MORGAN: [00:15:43] And that's it. And, you know, at the beginning, it just struck me as, huh, okay. But, you know, after a week or two, I could see, you know, I'd finally, you know, I'd gotten acclimatized, I guess, and I began to see it. I thought, this is crazy. This is stark mad. Why am I spending two years here keeping test tubes clean? And I took a couple of trips with students on weekends. They invited me to go with them on a bus, a local bus up to their home. And I, oh my God, I saw things that. I went to circumcision ceremonies for boys and girls long before anybody talked about it. I mean, I have photographs and stuff that just, in my mind, not physically. And I got them to write stories and I taught English. He let me teach an English class, I guess American and British English were close enough.

MORGAN: [00:16:39] But I got to the point where I said, this is crazy. I tried talking to him about doing other stuff and he says, no, you know, really, I think this is the right approach. I disagreed. And for the first time in my life, I don't know what came over me, but I said to myself, this is crazy. I've got to go somewhere to try to change this. And so I decided, we had a couple of days and I took another bus up to Meru,

which was the regional headquarters in that part of Kenya. And in each of these regional headquarters, they had people who were in charge of various components, one of whom was in charge of education. And I had never really thought about racism or power of being white or any of those things. Where I came from, we had very few.

GANZGLASS: [00:17:34] [inaudible]

MORGAN: [00:17:35] Yeah, I was. I was the only white person in Bethlehem. I mean, there were Hispanics and there were Southern Europeans, and there were a few Black people, but they, they were mostly people who I hadn't been exposed to. Um. So here I went up to Meru and I decided, well, I'll go and just see if I can meet them. Well.

GANZGLASS: [00:17:57] This was Kenyan officials, not Peace Corps?

MORGAN: [00:17:59] These are Kenya officials. Yeah, these are Kenyan officials, because I figured they made the decision, which was the right decision to make for me. Because I'm sure had I gone back to Nairobi, to the Peace Corps, it would have gone into your bureaucracy. I decided to go directly to the source, and when I got there, I walked, you know, it's a, you know, head of whatever, the Department of Education chief person. I knocked and I went in and I saw the secretary and I explained that I'd like to meet with him if the director if I could. I saw his name, so I used that. And I said, I'm in Marsabit [sic], but I'd like to talk to him about my, my assignment and maybe an alternative one. And she said, oh yes, just wait a second. I'm sure he'd love to meet you. And I'm going, what? You know, okay.

MORGAN: [00:18:49] And it was like, you know, here I was. I was going to get ushered right in to meet with this person in charge. Well, I hadn't had a speech prepared or anything. It just, it became extemporaneous. But I went. Five minutes later, he was off the phone and he came out and he said, oh, nice to see you. You're a Peace Corps volunteer. Why don't you come in? And I went in and I explained to him this contradiction I was living in. And I said to him, quite honestly, you

should get an African student who's just graduated from education school, bring them down there, let this fellow mentor him. He'd be perfect. And put me somewhere where you can't get anybody. Put me where you really need to use me.

GANZGLASS: [00:19:32] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:19:33] And I said, I don't care where it is. I'm here for two years. Use me. He says, so you want to go to some place I can't get anybody? Well, do I have the place for you. And it was almost like a joke. We started laughing and he said, I'm going to send you up to our furthest school in Kenya in Marsabit because I can't get anyone to go there and particularly to teach biology, chemistry, and physics. And it was like, oh my God, what a blessing. So he authorized it. He contacted the Peace Corps. They contacted me. And he also let the teacher know. The teacher, the headmaster at my school, seemed very happy about that, you know.

GANZGLASS: [00:20:15] He wanted to get rid of you anyway.

MORGAN: [00:20:16] I think he wanted to get rid of me anyway. So, um, that was it. And by that time, because I was a little bit lonely, I had bought a small baboon. I had my own monkey. And in Swahili, the word for. Well, its name was Kanini. So I took Kanini and myself and my, my, two, my one suitcase and whatever else I had and got on the bus and went to Isiolo.

GANZGLASS: [00:20:48] How far is that?

MORGAN: [00:20:49] Well, from Marsabit to, from, no, from Kitui to Isiolo was about a two hour ride in itself. But the thing was at that point it was when the *shifita* were shooting convoy, shooting people all over in that northern frontier district, because it was a conflict between Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya for the property, or for the territory.

GANZGLASS: [00:21:15] And just to say, the *shifita* were what?

MORGAN: [00:21:18] They, they were bandits who, who would put landmines in the road and, or come across a group of people and just shoot them. And of course here I was. You know, I hadn't gone to Vietnam, but I was going to go into this. And it was, all right, wow, do we have this right? What's the picture here? But the, so you would go up to Isiolo and there they assembled a large convoy of lorries with food to go up to Marsabit, or the next town on the Ethiopian border was Moyale, but most of them went to Marsabit because it was a district headquarters and that's where the school was in the town and everything. But that was almost like a six, eight hour trip. It depended on the weather. In the rain, it could even be a ten or 11 hour trip because these were all just mud roads. I mean, there was, there were no bridges, no nothing.

MORGAN: [00:22:12] And the funny part was they had this big gate and the police and the army would presumably give a special signal that presumably no one knew about, but everyone did know about, that when the convoy was going to leave. And that was to not give ahead notice to the *shifita* because word would get out. And what happened was they'd line up all these lorries and then the police would be in the front and with their machine guns. And I mean, it was the real thing. I mean, it was. I thought, oh my God. Well, I was put in the front seat. They said, here, you go in the front seat of this lorry. The students were actually up on the top because they had bags of sugar.

GANZGLASS: [00:22:59] Oh, the students were going to the school too?

MORGAN: [00:23:00] They were going through the school too, yeah. Or a lot of them from down country. Yeah, exactly. And they took my monkey, they thought that was the greatest thing. So my monkey's up on the top, I'm inside, and I'm next to this woman. There's a driver, then the woman in the middle. It's all one seat in this lorry, in the lorry. And then me. And the woman's there breastfeeding and, you know, hello, how are you? Okay. Oh, well. And the driver is eating this khat, you know, chewing away on this. It's sort of like a narcotic to give him some strength to get through this. Well, suddenly a whistle blows and the gate goes up and we all start moving and it's tarmac for maybe

five miles. And the police are in front and we're going maybe 35, 40 miles an hour. And, you know, we were bouncing along.

MORGAN: [00:23:51] All of a sudden we come to the end of the tarmac and the convoy stops. This is a very first time. And the police pull over and they wave us on and we're the first vehicle. And I said, what the heck's going on? And he said, well, the police don't want to go now. They, they, they'll follow up. And I said, yes, but what about if there are land mines in the road? Well, that's why we're going to go about 50 or 60 miles an hour so they don't hit us. They'll hit underneath the truck if they blow up. So we take off. And if you can imagine.

GANZGLASS: [00:24:25] Explain that again, if you go slowly?

MORGAN: [00:24:28] You're in front of the truck, your front wheels would blow up and you'd be right there and you'd get blown up. But if you go 50, 60 miles an hour.

GANZGLASS: [00:24:37] Oh, if you go so quickly.

MORGAN: [00:24:38] So quickly you go over and it gets just, theoretically, this is all theory, right? We didn't test it, but that was their theory, that justified going 60 miles an hour.

GANZGLASS: [00:24:48] Oh, I see.

MORGAN: [00:24:48] And I'm telling you, these corrugated roads, you just can't even imagine. You're just dust, bouncing. I mean, it was like a free for all. And this woman still trying to breastfeed. I don't know how she did that. More power to her. But, and we'd go, you know, for about an hour and then we'd come to a river and the road went down into the river and up the other side. At that point, we'd have to stop because the military would come up and they had these massive Bedfords, which would then go across through the river and go up the other side, which was pretty steep. Well, the first two or three would get up, but then, as you can imagine, the water would be dripping off of these vehicles. And everybody, I didn't notice, but all the other people knew

it. And by the fourth or fifth vehicle, one would get up and it would start sliding back. And this was all funny, funny.

MORGAN: [00:25:40] But this, it took then a chain to be put on each of these vehicles by one up on top to pull them up. And everybody had to get out, walk across the stream themselves and get back on at the top. So this took another hour easily. And there were two or three of these streams we had to cross to get up there.

GANZGLASS: [00:26:02] Wow.

MORGAN: [00:26:02] So, you know, the whole experience just getting there was something else. And then when you got there, you're on this desert and you look ahead and here's this spectacular green mountain, which was the northern frontier district area, and Marsabit at the top. And back in the thirties and forties I guess, someone named Osa Johnson had done a movie up there about Lake Paradise, which was a beautiful lake in, crater lake, in the top of the mountain where elephants and other animals were. And the town was down a little below that. And it was made up of all these tribal people. And the students who I taught were all from that area or from down country. Many of them were nomadic.

MORGAN: [00:26:52] So we actually adjusted the schedule of the school to relate to the rains because when it rained, then they had to bring the cattle and the, the goats and the camels and anything else they had up the mountain because it was too wet down below. So that's when we had the school.

GANZGLASS: [00:27:09] So you were the first Peace Corps volunteer there I guess?

MORGAN: [00:27:12] I wasn't.

GANZGLASS: [00:27:12] Oh, really?

MORGAN: [00:27:12] You know, there was one there before for a short time, and it was never clear to me. I kept asking about it and they kept saying,

yes, Mr. Johnson or somebody like that was here. And he was there for about a year. And then I don't know what happened. And I asked once or twice back in Nairobi, and no one seemed to know. So I don't know. But there was.

GANZGLASS: [00:27:40] Maybe he got lonely.

MORGAN: [00:27:41] Maybe he got lonely, or whatever. But I got up there, and at that point, they had no one else teaching biology, chemistry, and physics. And I learned quickly that it was a political school because of these, the star, or the Kenya flag had three stars for each of the three countries that had territory in this, or previously had territory. When the Brits came in, they just took a ruler and just cut right through the areas. But the Ethiopians, the Somalians, and the Kenyans all felt they owned part of this, but it was really Kenya territory. And for that reason, Kenya wanted to show the people that they were going to give them a quality education and they put more money.

MORGAN: [00:28:28] And as a science teacher, indeed, I suddenly realized I had to teach for this Cambridge exam. And it had aspects of being practical components, which means you had a table with the different specimens and things like that in biology, for example, and you had tags and you had to identify what that was. Or you had slides under a microscope and they'd have to look at it and say, here's what I'm looking at as part of the exam. Well, I mean, where are you going to get slides like that up there? I mean, it's like, are you kidding me? So lo and behold, I just, I just decided to go wild. And I had some friends who were in North Carolina where they did the preparation of slides. And I said, you know, as a contribution, can you send some of this stuff over? And I knew what, from the exam, what kind of thing.

GANZGLASS: [00:29:19] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:29:19] And they sent it over to Kenya and then I could get it sent up to my place with a police airplane. They would bring it up. Other people couldn't get any of this stuff at all. But, man, I could get the police airplane. And I could even get rides back and forth on it. I

mean, it became, it was still part of that old British, you know, because the police, most of them were still Brits and certainly all the pilots were Brits.

GANZGLASS: [00:29:47] Hmm. Even the police were Brits?

MORGAN: [00:29:49] Yeah, most of them were still because it was only, what was independence, '61. And this is. There were, there were definitely African police people on the ground, but the ones who flew up were more higher level in the system, you know, the local.

GANZGLASS: [00:30:06] So they gave you a ride back to Nairobi?

MORGAN: [00:30:07] I could go back and forth if I needed to go back and forth.

GANZGLASS: [00:30:10] To Nairobi or?

MORGAN: [00:30:10] To Nairobi. Yeah. And so that made a little bit of a difference. I did that on vacations. But anyway, I started up, I started teaching. Um. We got some money, and then it turned out that was when they built a science lab, and we had.

GANZGLASS: [00:30:28] This was Kenyan money?

MORGAN: [00:30:29] Yeah, yeah. They put, they built a whole building with a science lab and propane gas jets. I mean, just, it was, it was really nice. And the bizarre thing is just imagine this. Here these are nomadic kids who have never, you know, rarely seen electricity. I'm having to teach them magnetism to pass this exam. I mean, what a conflict in my mind. Why am I teaching magnetism? But it was their one chance to get out of this cycle. And I used to, I mean, it got sort of a little bit foolish at times, but I'd, I'd take a magnet and sort of put it underneath a table and put some metal chips on top as a way to sort of. I'd move it around and they'd see it. And I'd joke and say, voodoo. Voodoo, you like that?

GANZGLASS: [00:31:20] And you taught in English?

MORGAN: [00:31:22] I taught, yeah, everything had to be because all the exams were in English. So that's right. I would speak with them in Swahili, or if I go into town it would be in Swahili. Or I learned a few local dialects, Baron and Burji and [inaudible], that was all up in that area. I didn't learn Arabic because there definitely were, and there was Ethiopian. There were a lot of people from Ethiopia there. But the common language in the school, you had to speak English, and in town, you know, the traders and all those people, they all spoke English. So I got there and I, it was such a young school that I started teaching the fourth, yeah, the fourth. Fourth, uh.

GANZGLASS: [00:32:13] Form?

MORGAN: [00:32:13] Form. Thank you. Fourth form first and then the fifth form in my second year. And then they asked me, the headmaster said, would you stay one more year? Because to get to the Cambridge you have to do the sixth form and bringing in a new teacher and everything, the students felt that that might not be to their advantage. And obviously I was very interested because the war was still going on. And so that meant another year of deferment because I had heard some people had gone back from the Peace Corps and then got drafted. Oh my God. It was like, uhh. So I couldn't have been more thrilled that they did that. And so I stayed the extra year and I took that, that group through.

GANZGLASS: [00:33:05] And did they pass the Cambridge?

MORGAN: [00:33:08] I'm telling you, it was more than thrilling. More than thrilling. They, they easily. It was over 50 percent had passed the actual Cambridge in these courses.

GANZGLASS: [00:33:18] Wow.

MORGAN: [00:33:19] And I'll tell you about some of the graduates. I mean, it's freaky, but, you know, I just.

GANZGLASS: [00:33:24] So were they, just backing, where they prepared? You got them for science.

MORGAN: [00:33:30] Right.

GANZGLASS: [00:33:30] Did they know basic math and?

MORGAN: [00:33:34] Yeah, they had gone through primary school and they knew, they all spoke good English.

GANZGLASS: [00:33:39] Had gone there? Oh.

MORGAN: [00:33:40] Yeah. Yeah. They all spoke decent English.

GANZGLASS: [00:33:42] So was this a selective school or could anybody go to it?

MORGAN: [00:33:46] I think anybody could go to it as long as they could get accepted in there.

GANZGLASS: [00:33:50] Well, accepted means it's.

MORGAN: [00:33:51] And I don't know what the criteria, and some it may have been political. I'm sure it was, you know, someone whose parents were known.

GANZGLASS: [00:34:00] Connected, yeah.

MORGAN: [00:34:03] Um, I don't think they. This was all paid by the government. So they didn't pay something themselves that I was aware of.

GANZGLASS: [00:34:12] Well, they had to get there.

MORGAN: [00:34:14] They had to.

GANZGLASS: [00:34:15] And then did they live in dorms?

MORGAN: [00:34:16] Yeah, they lived in dorms. Yeah, it was a boarding school in the formal. We only had two girls and they stayed in a dorm with one of the female teachers, but all the rest were in our regular one. And it went, yeah, I can't. I can't remember how many total students there were. But in this picture of the class there may have been 40 or so in that grade, in the sixth form. Yeah. Coming up to that level. Now, some left along the way but not that many. And so I would, I took them through this exam. We did the practical parts, we did the written everything. I even had outside the, uh, the lab built a botanical garden because there was a whole section on botany and we could get the plants and grow them and then have the specimens ready for them to do. I mean, it was, it was like really fun.

GANZGLASS: [00:35:20] Great.

MORGAN: [00:35:21] I enjoyed, you know, and I was the only American up there. My nearest American colleague was down in Meru almost 200 miles away so.

GANZGLASS: [00:35:34] Did that bother you?

MORGAN: [00:35:35] No, I loved it. Maybe it's my, it obviously is my character. But, um, I was in a point in life where I enjoyed just seeing what I could do on my own. And I never liked the idea of going back, a lot of volunteers would go back on weekends to Nairobi, and I don't know if they'd bitch and moan or drank. I don't know. I just had a great time. I mean, students would take me out.

GANZGLASS: [00:35:59] Did you make any friends among the teachers?

MORGAN: [00:36:02] Oh, absolutely. In fact, I just got an email this morning from one.

GANZGLASS: [00:36:06] That's great.

MORGAN: [00:36:07] He's still there. Yeah. A Pakistani.

GANZGLASS: [00:36:08] Still teaching in?

MORGAN: [00:36:10] Well, he's retired, but he's still living. The school gave him his house as a retirement present until he dies. And but he's my age and he's still doing very well.

GANZGLASS: [00:36:22] That's great. A Pakistani?

MORGAN: [00:36:23] A Pakistani.

GANZGLASS: [00:36:24] So there were foreign teachers besides you?

MORGAN: [00:36:27] Well, he was Pakistani from Kenya.

GANZGLASS: [00:36:29] Oh, okay.

MORGAN: [00:36:30] They, they had brought a lot of Indians and Pakistanis over to the railroad and blah, blah, blah, in the forties.

GANZGLASS: [00:36:36] And so he was Kenyan.

MORGAN: [00:36:38] He was Kenyan. So, yeah, we, we did all that. I would go off, I'd go into town, I'd know the people there. There were, oh, it was too funny. There was a, uh, sort of like a Lutheran church, a British Lutheran church there, and a Roman Catholic, Italian Roman Catholic church in town. Those were the two churches. And we didn't have, they had food at the school, but on Sundays. This was a funny story. Oh my God. If the students went over, they would go over to the Lutheran, the British Lutheran Church, for services early morning on Sunday because they would give them breakfast. And then come back to the school and play football. And late afternoon they'd go to the Roman Catholic for mass because they'd give them dinner. And students couldn't have cared less. And we used to sit there and joke about it, but, hey, you know, free food, what can you do? Hey.

GANZGLASS: [00:37:41] It works.

MORGAN: [00:37:41] It's better, it was better than the school.

GANZGLASS: [00:37:44] That's good.

MORGAN: [00:37:44] So, you know, and I got to see a whole lot of things in a different way that I had never, I mean, I was totally dependent on myself. If I wasn't motivated, there was no one there who was going to push me. And I, if I took chances, I had to think them through. I mean, I suddenly was, I mean, the great thing about this Peace Corps experience was it gave me a chance to see who I was. I didn't realize it at the time. I mean, it wasn't a conscious, who are you? But as I look back on it, I, for whatever reason, I thought this was a great opportunity to experiment and to do as much as.

MORGAN: [00:38:23] I guess I also had a bit of a guilt feeling not going to Vietnam and feeling that, you know I should do as much as I can to help other people. I had a terrible experience just before I went into the Peace Corps that I'd broken up with a girlfriend and she, back in Bethlehem, married a guy. And sure enough, they got married and he got drafted in the Peace Corps [sic]. And two months later she came to my door crying. He had been killed. And I just said, oh my God, you know?

GANZGLASS: [00:38:55] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:38:55] And I've been thankful ever since. And even if it is out of guilt, I'm happy I did it.

GANZGLASS: [00:39:01] Well, did you get any support from Peace Corps while you were up there? Did anybody come and help you with teaching or?

MORGAN: [00:39:07] No, no, no, no. No one ever came. Except the director would come by and he was able to get on the same police jet, uh, police.

GANZGLASS: [00:39:18] Plane.

MORGAN: [00:39:18] It was turboprop.

GANZGLASS: [00:39:19] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:39:20] If a member of Congress who came to Kenya, quite frequently they'd either go out to the Serengeti, or they do both. They'd go out to the Serengeti and see the animals and blah, blah, blah. And they'd also fly up to my school because the view from my window out over the Chalbi Desert is just, was just spectacular. And they could go up to this Lake Paradise on the top of the mountains and almost guarantee to see some of the world's largest elephants. I mean, it was just a real experience. I used to see them every other day because I paid money to have a guy make a sham, a garden, a shamba, and the elephants would come in and just rip it right up. I'd sit there and watch him, boom.

MORGAN: [00:40:07] And at one point, my parents came over and my sisters, they flew up. And, you know, what a revelation it was. I mean, here is my father and seeing. The hygiene wasn't of its highest quality where I was living, to say the least. And, you know, it, it pushed him a lot to rethink, you know, this is, you know, because he, he. He was very upset about my going into the Peace Corps. He just thought I had, quote, sold out and not going into the military. And I think it made a real difference for him to see how happy these young people were who were getting educated and moving forward. It was, it was a real eye turner for him. Um.

MORGAN: [00:40:50] So anyway, I stayed there. I finished that. Um. During the, during the time I was there, there would be periods when we could take a vacation and I might do some things locally. But it was also a chance to maybe do some traveling. And I, um, I did a couple of trips that I just, I mean, they were just like unbelievable.

GANZGLASS: [00:41:14] Where did you go?

MORGAN: [00:41:15] Well, one of them was we climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. We went out and then we took a big safari all around. Now, as Peace

Corps volunteers, we weren't allowed. This is another thing I learned how to do. I had never learned how to maneuver and manipulate, but I had no choice.

GANZGLASS: [00:41:35] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:41:35] I wasn't going to sit in a bus and go around and see a game park in a public bus. So I had to, and yet we couldn't drive, or have a car rather. But sure enough, I don't know how it was, but we met some, this other Peace Corps volunteer and I, the closest one who was 250 miles away. He and I had gone down to Nairobi and we had, I guess, just taken a little trip somewhere. Well, no, we took the trip to, uh, Kilimanjaro. And when we were on there, we had a group of maybe ten of us, and two of those were Brits who had a car.

GANZGLASS: [00:42:12] So you got to know them.

MORGAN: [00:42:12] And we got to know them. And that was the beginning of a long relationship. And they were teachers as well, which was good. We were all in the same cycle of, you know, time periods. And I, the climbing Kilimanjaro was, I never thought I'd do it, and I did and.

GANZGLASS: [00:42:30] Really hard?

MORGAN: [00:42:30] Oh, just a killer. I'm not, I wasn't a, you know, I was not even a climber. I was hardly a walker. And this was like a, you know, four days up and three days down. And even with people carrying all your supplies, you know, the lack of oxygen and it got cold. And that last day, you get up at 3:00 in the morning and you'd go up this slag zigzagging up to the top. People were peeling off. They couldn't make it. You know, this good friend of mine, he just had to give up and I just couldn't. And I had a guide who kept saying, keep going, it's not that far. And when we finally got up, they take you up early in the morning so that you can see the sun rise, and oh my God, over the Amboseli. It was crystal clear. We're up there with the, uh, the snow and the ice and everything. And it just, yeah, very, very dramatic.

GANZGLASS: [00:43:25] It's worth it.

MORGAN: [00:43:26] Oh, absolutely. So we came down, we did that, and then we took another trip with the people through Amboseli to see the animals and all that. But then we also stopped where Leakey in Olduvai Gorge, and that's when Leakey was alive. So he's there and we're.

GANZGLASS: [00:43:43] You met Leakey?

MORGAN: [00:43:43] Yeah. Yeah. So we were able to go and see, you know, stuff like that. It was wild. I mean, you know. And the funny thing was, the more I learned about how you can push and get to see things, the more I did. I mean, it was like I was hungry to learn how to do that.

GANZGLASS: [00:44:03] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:44:03] And then the biggest one we did was we all decided, okay, now we're really going to branch out. And we had a vacation and we decided we'd go down to South Africa. And there were four of us in a VW, little Volkswagen mini thing. You know, the bug. Oh my God. With a roof rack and our tent on top. And the thing was almost hitting the ground. So we drive down to.

GANZGLASS: [00:44:32] That's a long drive.

MORGAN: [00:44:33] Oh my God. You have no idea. We drove first into Tanzania, then we went into Malawi. Then we went down and into Mozambique. And then we came back and over into Rhodesia. And from Rhodesia we went down to Durban, South Africa, and then drove back. And when we were in Mozambique, it was just before Christmas, it was the Christmas holiday, and there was this guy at the border of, then it was Rhodesia and Ian Smith was head of it. This guy was there, a young fellow hitchhiking. We thought, well, what the heck, you know, we'll take one more. And it turned out to be the son of the Supreme Court justice in Rhodesia. And he says, where are you

going? We're going to Rhodesia, you know. What's the capital of Rhodesia?

GANZGLASS: [00:45:23] Harare? No. It's Zimbabwe.

GANZGLASS: [00:45:26] Well.

MORGAN: [00:45:28] Zimbabwe is the country.

GANZGLASS: [00:45:29] It's not Harare? No?

MORGAN: [00:45:31] Maybe, you know.

GANZGLASS: [00:45:32] Maybe I'm wrong.

MORGAN: [00:45:33] But anyway. And he said, were you staying anywhere? I said, well, we don't know. We're going to. He said, well, why are you coming and stay? You're nice to pick me up. Why don't you come? We have a lot of bedrooms, have Christmas dinner with us. So, holy mackerel. We saw how the whites lived in Rhodesia. I mean, swimming pool, big Christmas dinner. We washed. We hadn't had a good wash in a while. And then they said, oh, you know, where are you going next? We said, well, we're going to South. Oh, you're going, you must go to Durban, you must stay with our good friend Gary Player. And we said, who's he? Oh, he's a famous golfer. You know, you go, holy mackerel. We get out here and we stay with Gary Player and his mother.

MORGAN: [00:46:14] Well, the funny part on that trip was then we came back up and we thought, you know, we had spent a little more time when we had to get back for school. So we come running, driving fast all the way back up to. There's a triangle where Malawi, Zambia, and Tanzania meet, and you have to go out of it and into this sort of no man's triangle land and into the other countries. So we went out of Malawi, got in it, and as we wanted to go into Tanzania to go up to Kenya, we were told we can't come in. We said, why not? They said, well, because you've been in Rhodesia. We don't respect that. And we

thought, oh my God. And the two Brits, though, could come in because they had British passports and Tanzania had some other relationship between other than the United States.

MORGAN: [00:47:05] So we had to stay in our tent in this no man's land while the Brits went in. They, they had an uncle in Mbeya which was there. He had to call the ambassador, the U.S. ambassador in Dar, who called the U.S. ambassador and the Peace Corps director in Kenya, who got the Tanzanian minister of whatever, Foreign Affairs, to give us a 24 hour permit to take a bus and get through Tanzania to Kenya. I mean.

GANZGLASS: [00:47:37] So this is between Tanzania, Malawi, and?

MORGAN: [00:47:40] And, um, Zambia.

GANZGLASS: [00:47:44] And Zambia.

MORGAN: [00:47:44] Yeah, it's a little triangle right there. And it's, I understand it's still, that's still the way it works today. But, and the funny part is we couldn't imagine what kind of hell are we going to get when we come back to Peace Corps. But, you know, it was like, hey, good, you're back. Get up to your school. So it was a lot of experience, um, from many points of view, I mean.

GANZGLASS: [00:48:10] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:48:10] As you can imagine. And when I finished, we had a great time. I left. Since I have seen the students passed, they went on. One, I'll just do two profiles. One of them I'm still close with today. Several of the students and in fact, they have already, most of them have retired. This is, I'm retired. They're retired. It's like, wow. But one went and became, finished his undergraduate in Nairobi and then wanted to be a doctor. And at that time, students got opportunities and scholarships to go to Russia.

GANZGLASS: [00:48:58] Hmm.

MORGAN: [00:48:58] So he went to Moscow and for two years he had to just learn Russian. And after the two years, he then went into their medical school, got a degree. And then he came back to Kenya and then he went up to the UK and got a specialty in surgery. And he has since become a private, a surgeon specializing in reconstructive surgery.

GANZGLASS: [00:49:28] Oh.

MORGAN: [00:49:29] But he's become involved with the, a world organization that takes human rights victims who have been abused and helps to re, reconstruct their face, arms, whatever they've had. And he's become the chairman of the board of the Kenya Red Cross.

GANZGLASS: [00:49:46] Wow.

MORGAN: [00:49:47] And he has done so many things. And he's the one who then was given the, the second Wofford Award.

GANZGLASS: [00:49:56] That's wonderful.

MORGAN: [00:49:57] Isn't it? Just wonderful.

GANZGLASS: [00:49:58] And you were his science teacher.

MORGAN: [00:49:59] Yeah, yeah, yeah. And his brother taught. This is so weird. His brother had come over here, not in the same class. His brother never came to Marsabit. He went to some other school, but he ended up at, um, Howard University in their communications division, doing some of their work. And he now, he's retired and lives right out here in, um, Potomac. And then another, but a second student became a doctor and did it by going to, from Nairobi undergraduate to directly to the UK. And he's become an orthopedic surgeon and lives in Frederick. I mean, it's, it's just too weird.

MORGAN: [00:50:47] And when I go back to Kenya, a group of us that will all get together and talk. I'll meet them in Nairobi. I've been back several times and it's just, uh, you know, a spectacular experience. While I

was over there, as I say, my parents came and I think it deeply, I think it really impacted my parents and my two sisters.

GANZGLASS: [00:51:09] How did it impact them?

MORGAN: [00:51:11] I think they, one, they saw how hard the, how difficult the life was for these people. I think they had no clue. I mean, they had, my father had come from a coal region and it was a very poor family. But nothing, nothing like this. I mean, this is poor. They had never eaten camel meat. I mean, I used to eat camel burgers and they'd have to beat it up with cut glass and to get the damn stuff and fatty and all that. But and then I thought they were super impressed with the motivation of these students and their ability to speak English and to communicate. I think, you know, there was an idea, well, these are natives, these are people in the bush. You know, they had no idea. They're African and God knows. Thank God they survived. But no potential.

GANZGLASS: [00:52:03] Didn't know them, yeah.

MORGAN: [00:52:03] No potential or, you know, that wasn't in their consciousness. Having met them, it was like, holy mackerel. Because some of them said, well, he's a doctor, you know, what? Why did you become a doctor? And they asked my father and he was like, oh my God.

GANZGLASS: [00:52:16] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:52:17] You know, this is real. And my sisters were there. They were only like 14 and 11. But, you know, the boys flirted with him and then they wanted to dance. Well, they had never danced with any black people. I mean, this was just like, holy mackerel. It was a new world. And they went back totally changed.

GANZGLASS: [00:52:39] Changed.

MORGAN: [00:52:39] Totally changed. There's no question in my mind. So I think that was, you know, a wonderful experience for me to see my family change. I enjoyed that, that I saw. I didn't realize my own change. It certainly happened. But I saw my family changed and I saw these students change.

GANZGLASS: [00:53:04] Well, you talked about your change of understanding who you, who you were. Did it change your attitudes towards developing countries or how else did it change?

MORGAN: [00:53:15] Yeah, I think, um. Well, it changed me in a number of ways. One was certainly understanding developing countries. I had not even been conscious about that. I mean, I know I had read about Africa, like you said, natural, geographical. But I'd never been there. And I hadn't even traveled far out of Bethlehem. And when I was in Bethlehem, it was with my own select group of people.

GANZGLASS: [00:53:38] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:53:38] You know. So I was, I was pretty insular. This was like, boom. And the fact that everyone accepted me, I thought was unique. And now I can look back on it. No, I never felt any bias in this, uh, my being white, my being American, at least at that point in time. Everybody looked to America as a, a wonderful place.

GANZGLASS: [00:54:05] Did they talk to you about the Vietnam War?

MORGAN: [00:54:07] Yeah. Yeah. The teachers and I would talk about, well, every morning. Oh, my God. They had this Zenith radio, a massive Zenith radio. And we had a, a generator so that we had electricity certain hours of the day. But the first thing they would do is have a listen to the BBC morning news and, you know, hear the beep, beep, beep. This is the BBC from London and this morning's news, in Vietnam, ba ba ba. And you know, I'd be listening to this and I thought, oh my God. And the students would say, well, why aren't you in Vietnam? Uhh.

GANZGLASS: [00:54:48] And what did you say to them?

MORGAN: [00:54:51] You know, I'm not sure I remember exactly, but I'm sure I said something to the effect that I didn't want to go. I just didn't believe in it. I thought it was. I'm sure they found that difficult to understand. How can you say you don't believe in it or not go? And it's your country that's out there doing this. And I'm sure that was a whole conscious raising on their part that you can say things like that.

GANZGLASS: [00:55:16] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:55:16] I wasn't aware I was doing that, but I'm sure that, I know I said those things, and I didn't feel guilty, you know? We had a lot of discussion. With the teachers, they just, you know, they would. There were only five of us and one was a Brit who was a missionary and this Pakistani and myself. And the headmaster was a Brit as well. But we would talk about this, you know, craziness when you hear these reports. And, you know, I had to somehow defend the United States because I was, that's who I was. I was the only U.S. person for 200 miles when people hear this. Um.

MORGAN: [00:55:59] So I thought, yeah, I think it, it helped me understand more about myself in that way and appreciate these different cultures. While I was there, and when you asked what kind of impact it had on me. While I was there, I also was asked, aside from teaching I took care of the dispensary. And so we had kids who were sick with, you know, maybe they had dysentery, but they also had gonorrhea and syphilis and other communicable diseases. I'm sure some may have had TB, but we had no way to know. I'm lucky I didn't ever get anything. They certainly had malaria. And our generator would go off. Darkness came maybe about 7:30. The generator would go off at 8:00. These kids, this is what really blew me away. These kids would go under their blanket with a flashlight and study for the next hour or two. That's how motivated they were.

GANZGLASS: [00:57:01] That's great.

MORGAN: [00:57:02] And I would go, holy Jesus. Good for you guys. Good for you guys, because I wouldn't have to go around, you know, look in the dorms. I was, that was another job as a teacher, a dorm proctor kind of thing. So, so it gave me a sense of, you know, there's a lot of potential here. And I told my parents this. I mean, you won't believe how, how committed these kids are to get out of here and get out of this environment in terms of taking their potential to do more in life.

MORGAN: [00:57:33] And then for my own self, seeing all these things, I, you know, I saw all these people with diseases and it often I guess subliminally struck me as, can we prevent some of this stuff? And see, my father being a surgeon, all I saw were general practitioners. Yeah, general practitioners coming to our house because it's a whole system, that general practitioner refers a case to the surgeon. Then the surgeon says, okay, well, we've got to operate. You know, it's like, that's it. You cut them open, you get rid of it. I never knew of any other approach to health care. And when I came back, I thought I might go into something like prevention of communicable diseases or something.

MORGAN: [00:58:17] And I went to New York. This is, this is a, talk about serendipity. I went to New York, and the American Social Health Association was at 1740 Broadway. So I drove from Bethlehem and then parked the car in New York and I got in the building, go up the elevator, and I get off on the wrong floor. And the doors shut. And it turns out there is this organization called the American Public Health Association. And for whatever reason, I asked the secretary, what is this? And she said, oh, this is a group that tries to prevent disease. And it was like, like a hammer just hit me right in the head. I thought, what? You mean there are actually people thinking about that? I mean, as I say, I had always thought about you cut them open and get it out.

MORGAN: [00:59:08] Well, I, I found out there were a whole bunch of schools that taught this. I ended up going to several of them and exploring. And I ended up at the University of Pittsburgh and, uh.

GANZGLASS: [00:59:24] Going to grad school?

MORGAN: [00:59:25] Going to grad school. And in fact, when I went out there, I met with one of my, my, uh, this, this one colleague from Peace Corps. He had just gotten into Purdue, into their business school. And in the morning I went up to the School of Education because I thought, well, maybe I'll, maybe I should still look at education. And I went up and there was this dour old woman, I hate to say this, but as the dean or assistant dean, whatever. And I said, you know, I've spent the last three years in the Peace Corps, I've been a teacher, went to Columbia Teachers College, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And after about a half hour of, you know, telling stories and doing all this, she said, you know, I got to tell you, you need to go back to undergraduate school to get your qualifications in order to become a teacher.

MORGAN: [01:00:15] I almost went over, I almost went over the wall and choked her. And I mean, I was so close, I could have killed her, literally. I thought, you son of a bitch, I'll be damned if I'm going to listen to you. And so we went.

GANZGLASS: [01:00:31] So you didn't become a teacher?

MORGAN: [01:00:32] Right. Oh my God, no. And I was so pissed. We went down in Pittsburgh and I met my friend. We had lunch at this place that served beer. And I was so pissed. We had a drink or two and I said, I'm going to go up to the School of Public Health next. And he says, well, you know, let me tell you, I just got into Purdue and the way you play the game is all these professors are looking for someone who likes to do what they do and they'll use you as their research assistant. Tell them what they want. And I said, what am I going to say? You know, I'm not going to say education. Well, then we started thinking about when I was doing the health stuff, all these communicable diseases. Well, and of course, after another beer or two, you start laughing. You know, I'm going to talk about, you know, syphilis and gonorrhea and things that. He says, okay, let's go.

MORGAN: [01:01:20] So boldly I walk up, I go in the door, and the dean's office is right next to the front door. And I just walk in and I say, can I speak to someone about, you know, what program I might apply to? And the woman says, well, what are you interested in? And I said, well, syphilis and gonorrhea and things like. I just came back from. The woman says, oh my goodness, just stay here for a second. And I thought, oh my God. And it turns out that the dean was on sabbatical, and the acting dean's specialty was international affairs and communicable diseases and syphilis and gonorrhea. Oh my.

GANZGLASS: [01:01:56] Perfect.

MORGAN: [01:01:57] Ended up, I ended up with an hour and a half discussion with him. I ended up getting a full scholarship, and I became president of the student class. And that was my launch into the public health arena. So I just loved it. And my whole career has been public health. And I, there's no question my Peace Corps experience, you know, pushed me in that way. Um.

MORGAN: [01:02:26] But going back to these students, you know, the potential of these populations of people around the world, people don't realize it. And you see that firsthand. And both boys and girls, I mean, even though we only have two girls, now there is a girls school up there and everything. But, you know, this is 1966, so it was a long time ago.

GANZGLASS: [01:02:52] Time ago.

MORGAN: [01:02:53] They, they, they both equally were committed to this. Um. I think, you know, as I think about myself and the ability of where, where all this is going. I think the Peace Corps, the value of Peace Corps for me has been this tremendous exposure to the world. And the ability to not be, well, I guess the fact I was alone was very good. It's impacted my character, I think, of not believing what other people say and wanting to find out for myself. And I do this even now. If someone reads a review of a new film and they say, well, you know, it's so-so. If I think it might be worth, I'll want to go see it myself. And

that that's just who I've become. And I know the Peace Corps experience has pushed me to in that direction, to think about.

GANZGLASS: [01:04:07] Yeah.

MORGAN: [01:04:07] Making the decisions myself and not being. And I mean, I'm sure when I was going over from Bethlehem to the Peace Corps, there were people going, oh my God, you're going to Africa, you know, the end of the world. I didn't know. But I was willing to take a chance and go. And I found when I went up to see that person at the, the Education Department, I had no idea. I didn't know. But I was willing to gamble. So that the, the ability to, to, to take ideas that you think are important and risk and explore them is something that the Peace Corps has, has absolutely reinforced in my life. Aside from all these wonderful cultural things. I mean, deep down in as me as a person that I think has been a real.

GANZGLASS: [01:05:00] Really important.

MORGAN: [01:05:00] A real value. Yeah. And I enjoy that. I mean, I enjoy, you know, well, you say, I mean, in fact, a good part of my life has been tell me it can't be done and I'll find a way to do it. I mean, to put it in a nutshell, that it would be a, you know. And my wife and I.

GANZGLASS: [01:05:19] Because you've done it before.

MORGAN: [01:05:20] Hmm?

GANZGLASS: [01:05:20] Because you've done it before.

MORGAN: [01:05:22] Of course, of course. I know it can. And my wife and I have conflicts over that particular aspect of life, because she has never had the Peace Corps experience. We got married afterwards. Now she's gone over. She's met with these people and she's truly moved a lot. But, you know, there's still this conservative, well, I don't know if it's going to work. And, you know, I'll plow. I don't do it recklessly. I like to think I've, you know, analyzed the situation and make good

judgments. And I think I have. I mean, I've been heads of organizations. I've had to do that all the time. And I've had to, you know, put myself in the meat grinder and I've come out the other end and I'm not sure as what, sausage or something. But that's okay, because I had a commitment to what I wanted to achieve.

GANZGLASS: [01:06:14] Yeah.

MORGAN: [01:06:14] And I felt that way with these students. I was going to, no matter what, I was going to help them do well in these exams. Yes, there were a lot of barriers. Yes, we didn't have all the equipment. Yes, we didn't have, they didn't have all the background. Yes, yes, yes. A lot of no's, a lot of negatives. But look at what they've accomplished. And I, I suppose that's, well, it is not I suppose, it is one of the things I feel most proud of in my life that. And I think Peace Corps investing in education is a wonderful thing because it has such a long-term benefit. It just, you know, it just keeps going. And, you know, I can pick up my phone now and I, I'm. Some of them have said, hey, why don't you come up there? We're having this big festival in Lake Turkana in July and, you know, you can come up and we'll go up. Leakey's son now has a place up further and we can go up there. Well, next year I might do that.

GANZGLASS: [01:07:17] That's great.

MORGAN: [01:07:19] You know, I'd do it in a heartbeat, in a split second. My wife, I don't know. We're getting older. And that's the only other thing, as you get older, you get a little more cautious, you know?

GANZGLASS: [01:07:30] Well, now's the time to do it, while you can.

MORGAN: [01:07:32] While I can, that's the way I look at it. But, you know, I think it's, you know, certainly helped me break down barriers that I might have been thinking about. Um. I'd like to believe in the sort of in the bigger world that this is all going to end up with people knowing each other better, understanding each other, and not getting into conflict. Whether that'll happen, I don't know.

GANZGLASS: [01:08:00] One has to keep.

MORGAN: [01:08:02] I mean, step by step.

GANZGLASS: [01:08:03] One has to keep working on it. I know you're involved with National Peace Corps Association. What have you done with the Peace Corps Association?

MORGAN: [01:08:10] I've, I've tried. Well, one, I've tried to financially support them. They need that. It's a very difficult org, I've been involved. I helped form the Friends of Kenya, which is now somewhat defunct because Kenya, they've pulled out of Kenya for the security reasons. And we used to have a number of events. So that was one special interest group. I'm, I think I'm fairly involved with their political work. I do, for years I've been going up on the Hill and leading groups to members of Congress, and then I've helped organize a number of events in Pennsylvania where members of Congress. It was just serendipity and coincidental that Congressman Dent from my old home district, I knew him. And so he was head of the Appropriations Committee. I mean, who better to know?

GANZGLASS: [01:09:03] Right.

MORGAN: [01:09:04] I mean, goodness gracious. And, um, when I'd see other people or go around, meet other people in the committee, they said whatever the chairman wants, we'll do it. So, you know, you throw out the number and it was very good. So I've done that.

MORGAN: [01:09:20] I've also been involved in, um, I was asked to head up the Ebola Relief Fund. That was maybe four years ago. Something like that, about '14, 2014-'15. Where because Ebola was suddenly a rapidly growing issue in West, in the three countries in West Africa, Peace Corps decided they would go in immediately and evacuate their staff. The trauma that put on those students, on those volunteers was unbelievable because they had to go back to their, they were told to go back to their community, get their basic things and come back to

the capital. And they're going to be flown out the next day. Well, I can just imagine. Well, I know. They had discussions with people in their community where they were working and the people said, what's going on?

GANZGLASS: [01:10:12] Yeah.

MORGAN: [01:10:12] And they said, you know, well, should I go back out there because I don't want to die? And the people that are there saying, what the hell? What about us? Well, the guilt was unbelievable. And the way I looked at it is, let's try to mobilize those people as much, as much as we can to help the people back in that country, even though they physically weren't there. And so we formed this Ebola Relief Fund made up of representatives from each of the three countries and their special interest group. And we raised about \$100,000, easily \$100,000.

MORGAN: [01:10:49] But we, we set it up as a sort of micro foundation because I've run foundations and I. But the difference was that because these Peace Corps volunteers who had evacuated knew the people in the community who were still there and trying to do things, it wasn't realistic to ask the people in the community to write a proposal. I mean, Jesus God, these people were trying to save lives. So we used technology, Internet and Skype and things like that, and had the volunteers work with the people in the community to write up the proposals. It was a really beautiful thing. Normally you wouldn't do this because you'd say it's conflict, but in this case the people are dying and there's no way they can write a proposal.

MORGAN: [01:11:38] And these people could call. They knew exactly what they were talking about. So they wrote the, helped them write the proposal. They were funded. And I'll tell you, we funded a whole, a whole amount of money and we had, and this is no exaggeration, 100 percent response in terms of the evaluation and the impact. It was, I've never run a project that was so. And I'm absolutely convinced it was because everybody knew each other. But it was a high speed thing. It only lasted about a year and a half.

GANZGLASS: [01:12:07] And you had people who knew those communities.

MORGAN: [01:12:10] Oh, absolutely. Right. And who would follow up. Once we funded it, it wasn't that you dropped it. You then kept on top of it and said, well, look, is there a problem? And, and there were frequently problems. You know, by the time they'd gotten there, someone else had given that aid. So what do we do with that money? Well, then let's regroup rather than, you know, we'll send it back. No, no, we don't want it back. Let's.

GANZGLASS: [01:12:31] Use it for something else.

MORGAN: [01:12:31] Yeah, there's a sequence or progression of the problem. They needed water first or immunization or.

GANZGLASS: [01:12:37] Whatever it was.

MORGAN: [01:12:38] So I've done that with NPCA.

GANZGLASS: [01:12:40] Excellent.

MORGAN: [01:12:41] And, um, I mean, I try to go over. I've known all of the directors personally. The previous one, Carrie [Hessler-Radelet] and I had both, since my background is in public health, she actually, at one point in time hired my deputy. So I knew her. And I know Jodi [Olsen] from other things. I had started another organization called Health Volunteers Overseas, and when she was out of the Peace Corps and at the University of Maryland, she was the chairman of their board. So, um, you know, I've been around long enough and kept involved in the political circles that I, I try to help NPCA. But I think, uh, it's, it's a very difficult group because it's diverse people. There are some people who have been in the Peace Corps, even some of my friends who say, you know, I really enjoyed the Peace Corps. It was a great two, three years in my life.

GANZGLASS: [01:13:36] That's it.

MORGAN: [01:13:36] That's it. You know, I'm off and I'm doing, you know, you have to respect that. You know, you can't say, well, Jesus, give back. It doesn't work that way. And on the other hand, the one fellow who lives in Texas. And I said, you know, maybe you'd like to go to this event down in Texas. It's close to you. And he says, well, I'll give it a real good look. So that's as much as I can expect. It's such a heterogeneous group of people. NPCA is trying to herd cats in it's truest sense. I've seen, oh, directors from the beginning. From the beginning, because, I mean, I've been around that long and I've seen it go up and down.

MORGAN: [01:14:17] I even formed with some other people a group called Encore, which was to take former Peace Corps volunteers and place them in settings to do, because of their experience now, these would be retired Peace Corps people, and they could go into short term activities and provide a much bigger impact.

GANZGLASS: [01:14:40] Mm hmm.

MORGAN: [01:14:40] If it was very targeted. Um. We got into competition with Peace Corps, which saw I think some of the same ideas, and they had been Crisis Corps before and we had called it Encore and now they call theirs Peace Corps Response.

GANZGLASS: [01:14:57] Response.

MORGAN: [01:14:57] And we ended up merging Encore into that because they had the money. I mean, you know, I was out there with other board members raising money for our group. And, you know, we raised a couple of hundred thousand dollars but.

GANZGLASS: [01:15:12] It's a good idea. Yeah.

MORGAN: [01:15:14] But it was so. Right now I've thrown out to Peace Corps an idea of a virtual Peace Corps. I've said to myself, and I wrote this up as a, as a proposal, and I sent it both to Carrie and then to Jody. And I

said, you know, 50 years of the same model, maybe it could require some standing back. Security has become such a big issue. People are now former Peace Corps volunteers who have this capacity, thinking of the Encore. Why not try to virtually link them up to people who they could help.

GANZGLASS: [01:15:53] [inaudible]

MORGAN: [01:15:53] Through training and all kinds and very focused. And plus it would cost much less. The security would be less. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Well. I personally think that the, that they're influenced by the political side of the budget. And they think, you know, if we do that and it is less, someone will say, well, why don't we cut back on the funding?

GANZGLASS: [01:16:20] Even more.

MORGAN: [01:16:21] And reduce Peace Corps funding. Because they could do more on this virtual side and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I don't quite buy that. I understand that there are people in Congress who would say that, but I think they could get a bigger bang for the buck. So I've pushed a couple of times. The other day at that event, Jody sat next to me and I said, you know, what about this virtual stuff, don't you think? She says, yeah, Russ, but, you know, ba ba ba ba. And lo and behold, about three weeks ago, I suddenly saw a flier come out from Peace Corps talking about, they didn't use the word. Well, actually, I guess they did. Virtual support through Response Corps. They're going to have selective assignments where people could do things electronically in this, you know, whether it's a teacher here trying to upgrade teachers in a country by giving them. But that would be a Response Corps capacity. And I jokingly said to someone on the staff over there, well, so we're breaking through a little bit. And they said, well, yeah, that seemed like one way we could.

GANZGLASS: [01:17:30] Well, some of it starts and.

MORGAN: [01:17:31] That's right.

GANZGLASS: [01:17:32] As a supplement, that's not the same thing.

MORGAN: [01:17:33] Exactly. And fine, you know, go for it. Go for it. I just think there's a lot that people could do virtually. And I just took one of their trips down to Puerto Rico, and that wasn't a real success. It just didn't get organized and everything. But one thing we did see was someone down there who was trying to help young girls who were, uh, had no families. I don't know what happened to them. They either died.

GANZGLASS: [01:18:05] Yeah.

MORGAN: [01:18:05] Or whatever. And this woman had done well with 14 young women, but there are 2,000 of them in the same category. And so I ask her, you know, what are you going to do? And she says, well, I don't know. Well, I'd like to expand it, but I don't have anyone to help me think through how do you take an idea, someone jokingly said, and sort of expand it sort of like a franchise. And in a sense, it would be somewhat like that. Well, I'm sure there are people who are in the social services who have that sort of cut on their ability to. They could do that. And that would be the kind of thing I would like to see happen, you know, pursue some of those things. And not, I just happen to think of it in the health field, but it could be small business. It could be women's development. I mean, you just. Agriculture.

GANZGLASS: [01:18:56] Yeah.

MORGAN: [01:18:57] My, my nephew, my son, my, my son. My brother-in-law was going to go in to do something. He's, he's an expert in herbicides for fruit trees. And he could help people anywhere in the world with guidance. He's sometimes a little short on the emotional side, but he could. If it was a video thing, he could easily say, let's look at this and why don't you try this and let's get back next week or in a month. Anyway. I think that that's, I think that's a potential using technology. And I'm going to be. [phone rings] Let me. Sorry, I.

GANZGLASS: [01:19:46] That's okay. We're, we're just about done there. Well, it sounds like you've really stayed on, on task, on mission.

MORGAN: [01:19:57] Well, I've, I've tried. I, you know, at one point, I actually several times had talked about, do I want to consider being a country director? And when I saw friends of mine who were, I said no. It has changed so much.

GANZGLASS: [01:20:14] We've talked about that as well.

MORGAN: [01:20:17] I don't want to, you know, it's different today with, your husband was just mentioning, you know, the cell phones. I mean, I've heard, you know, someone gets over there and the next day their parents are called Peace Corps. My son or daughter is in a place with the cockroaches, ahhh!

GANZGLASS: [01:20:35] Yeah. It's a whole different.

MORGAN: [01:20:36] Yeah. Or, and I know the security thing is a big issue.

GANZGLASS: [01:20:42] I mean, there were security issues then. They weren't as, maybe not as well known.

MORGAN: [01:20:47] Right.

GANZGLASS: [01:20:47] And maybe Peace Corps was willing to live with some of the, the risk, but not, not anymore.

MORGAN: [01:20:53] Like going up in the *shifta* area.

GANZGLASS: [01:20:54] Yeah. Right. That would never happen.

MORGAN: [01:20:56] That would never happen. And in fact, I went over there once and took, well, I was going back up to Marsabit and we were flying and the Peace Corps director in the country of Kenya said, can I go with you? And I said, absolutely, come on. And we'll go up there and I'll show you. Because I was, well, he went up, he saw the whole

thing. They saw places to put some volunteers. They ended up putting two women up there in rural women's schools, but only for a year and a year and a half. And then there was some *shifita* thing again going on, and they pulled them right away.

GANZGLASS: [01:21:31] Yeah.

MORGAN: [01:21:31] And they haven't gone back.

GANZGLASS: [01:21:33] It's a whole different world.

MORGAN: [01:21:33] So and then I had this other student who, when I was at, Pitt had a program of helping. You spend a year at Pitt Public Health. Then you spend two years in the Peace Corps. Then you come back and spend a year in graduate school finishing up, with the idea you've had that field experience and you're a better public health. And I was the mentor for that student, and he was pulled out of the coast of Kenya, sent up to Nairobi when they had problems. And he, you know, I keep in touch with him. He just got married. And it, his commitment to the Peace Corps is very thin. Very thin. So.

GANZGLASS: [01:22:16] Well, people enter for different reasons too now.

MORGAN: [01:22:19] Yeah. You know, and I haven't even thought about that much. I just, it hasn't been a.

GANZGLASS: [01:22:24] I do a lot of interviews and I hear the shift of why people enter. Some of it is the same, but some of it is different. Not that one is better than the other.

MORGAN: [01:22:34] Right. Right.

GANZGLASS: [01:22:36] So we're probably winding down on time now. Are there other things you want to talk about?

MORGAN: [01:22:41] No, I think, you know, I think that's pretty much where my head has been at.

GANZGLASS: [01:22:47] Well, let me ask you one other thing. We've talked about impact of Peace Corps on your life, friendships you've made. Can you reflect a little bit about Peace Corps' impact on Kenya or the community where you served, as well as Peace Corps' impact in the United States?

MORGAN: [01:23:08] Okay. I'll start with Kenya and then back the United States.

GANZGLASS: [01:23:11] Yeah.

MORGAN: [01:23:13] I definitely think Peace Corps has had an impact on Kenya with these individuals who, again in the education field, that was what I know. I think that they have, um, gone on and become, become key leaders in their own country. And they remember the value of Peace Corps. I mean, the young woman who was, one of the two women became head of education for the, for the district. And she constantly would send me a note saying, you know, this was really an important thing. Can we get some more Peace Corps volunteers? Um. This doctor who's become head of the, you know, the surgeon and everything.

GANZGLASS: [01:23:56] Yeah.

MORGAN: [01:23:57] He, it turns out his, his cousin is the equivalent to the head of the State Department, the.

GANZGLASS: [01:24:09] Foreign Ministry?

MORGAN: [01:24:11] In the Foreign Ministry in Kenya. And he's constantly telling her about the value of Peace Corps. We were going to have a 50th anniversary of Peace Corps in Kenya. I had organized all that. I had everything set up. And then all of a sudden there was the incident in the hotel or, no, in the embassy I guess, or wherever it was they had it.

GANZGLASS: [01:24:32] No, in the shopping mall.

MORGAN: [01:24:33] In the shopping mall. The first one, yeah, not the most recent. And that, that just quashed that. Um. I found that everybody, even if I didn't know them, when I talked to people from foreign countries and mentioned I was in the Peace Corps, it absolutely has a positive resonating effect. There's a great respect for people who've done that, a great empathy for the commitment that people have made. A lot of people don't realize, you know, I mean, I took three years, which when I look back on, three years is a lot of time. It went so fast. I was doing so much. But I don't know, it's, it's tough. I've tried to get my daughter to consider going in in two years. Uh, I don't know, Dad, you know, I'd like to, but.

GANZGLASS: [01:25:27] Have to move ahead.

MORGAN: [01:25:27] Yeah. Yeah. So there's a different set of parameters floating around, and maybe I would have felt that way. Again, I had the pressure of Vietnam. There's no question, um, that influenced my timetable. I know I still wanted to go in because I had already applied and I had to pull it out of that reserve area. Um.

MORGAN: [01:25:52] I think here in the United States. Well, let me also say a lot of my work was with international public health associations, including UNICEF and W.H.O. at the very top level. I mean, I would deal with their executive directors, and they knew I was in the Peace Corps. The head of UNICEF happens to be an American, or was at that time, Jim Grant, the head of American. He knew and he himself had been a missionary, a son of a missionary. And so he was committed. But a lot of the people who are in these international organizations at the very top level have been in some type of similar capacity, missionaries in the past, but maybe done some volunteer work on their own. And that's led them into those leadership roles. And I think they have a better understanding, clearly, of how to work with people of different cultures. And you need that in a multilateral organization like that.

MORGAN: [01:26:54] I'd like to see more, well, there are a lot of Peace Corps people in U.S. government agencies, and a lot of times I guess they

don't want to say anything about it. They just want to be there and do it. But they certainly help others in those agencies who haven't had that to understand, have a better understanding of why people culturally may look at things differently. And I think the benefit for the United States as a whole has been, uh, quarter million people going through this Peace Corps system over the last 55 years, going back out into their communities and in various ways impacting those communities with a greater understanding of these cultural issues, whether it's subtly or overtly.

MORGAN: [01:27:52] I mean, you know, if I bring Dr. Muhammad Said and introduce him to people, obviously they can't and tell them, well, he was a nomadic student. I mean, they go, huh? They can't quite get that. And yet others, I think you move around the country, people even back up in my home community, I pressure Moravian College, where I grew up. I keep in touch with them and with Pitt. And then I graduated with my doctorate at University of Texas, and I went to Harvard and did some work there. But I try to keep all those. And, you know, I think there's a great need to keep pushing that, God knows, because of the conflicts we have going on in the world today and our own leadership, which doesn't seem to understand it. So that's, that's where I come out.

GANZGLASS: [01:28:56] That's a good place to come out.

MORGAN: [01:28:57] To come out.

GANZGLASS: [01:28:58] That's a good place to come out.

MORGAN: [01:28:59] Yeah, I mean, I feel.

GANZGLASS: [01:29:00] On that hopeful note.

MORGAN: [01:29:00] I feel very happy about my life and what, what I've been able to do so far. I mean, I've done things I never thought I could possibly accomplish. I didn't even know that I could think about accomplishing them.

GANZGLASS: [01:29:12] Yeah, that's great.

MORGAN: [01:29:12] And I'm convinced that the Peace Corps, you know, helped me in getting a better understanding of who I am and what I can achieve.

GANZGLASS: [01:29:21] That's wonderful.

MORGAN: [01:29:21] Yeah. I mean, I feel good about that.

GANZGLASS: [01:29:24] Good.

MORGAN: [01:29:24] So and they can't take it away. No one can take it away.

GANZGLASS: [01:29:28] So thank you. It was a really good interview.

MORGAN: [01:29:30] Well, thank you. No, it was fun. And, yeah. That's.

GANZGLASS: [01:29:36] That's it.

MORGAN: [01:29:36] We'll sign off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]