

**Tony Barclay Oral History Interview**  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Tony Barclay  
**Interviewer:** Russell E. Morgan, Jr.  
**Date of Interview:** February 19, 2020  
**Location of Interview:** Potomac, Maryland  
**Length:** 34 pages

**Biographical Note**

Tony Barclay served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya from January 1968 to December 1970 as a high school teacher.

**Access**

Open.

**Usage Restrictions**

According to the deed of gift signed October 4, 2022, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. This interview is in the public domain.

**Copyright**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

**Technical Note**

This transcript was created by Sonix software from the MP3 audio recording of the interview. The resulting text file was lightly edited and reformatted according to a standard template.

**Suggested Citation**

Tony Barclay, recorded interview by Russell E. Morgan, Jr., February 19, 2020, page #, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

## DISCLAIMER

This transcript was generated automatically by Sonix software from the audio recording. The accuracy of the transcript cannot be guaranteed. Only the original audio recording constitutes the official record of this interview and should be used along with the transcript. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy or would like to recommend corrections, they are encouraged to contact the library reference staff.

Oral History Interview

with

Tony Barclay

February 19, 2020  
Potomac, Maryland

By Russell E. Morgan, Jr.

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

MORGAN: [00:00:02] Today is February 19, 2020. And this is Russell Morgan. And I'm interviewing Tony Barclay, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya from January 1968 to December 1970, where he served as a high school teacher. Welcome, Tony.

BARCLAY: [00:00:20] Thank you, Russ.

MORGAN: [00:00:22] Well, can you say a little bit about why you joined the Peace Corps?

BARCLAY: [00:00:27] I had been an African history major in college. That kind of happened by accident early on is what I opted to do. And by the time I was a senior, I was very, very curious to experience Africa firsthand, live and work there. And Peace Corps offered the, the easiest and obvious way to do that. So I applied to Peace Corps in the winter of my senior year.

MORGAN: [00:00:57] Where did you go to college?

BARCLAY: [00:00:58] I went to Yale.

MORGAN: [00:00:59] And, um, how did you hear about the Peace Corps?

BARCLAY: [00:01:03] I had a very good friend who had graduated the previous year who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania working on a rural settlement scheme. And he and I wrote back and forth quite a bit. I certainly knew about Peace Corps from its, from its origins, as I think almost every undergraduate did in a college like Yale. I would say, though, that probably only ten or 12 out of the 1,000 who graduated in my class actually went into Peace Corps. I was very, very keen to do it.

MORGAN: [00:01:37] You mean only ten or 12 actually applied?

BARCLAY: [00:01:41] Yeah, but I think all who applied probably did it.

MORGAN: [00:01:44] Yeah. Interesting. Why do you think that?

BARCLAY: [00:01:48] We can talk a little bit more about deferments and the draft, but in 1967.

MORGAN: [00:01:53] Well.

BARCLAY: [00:01:53] Deferments for graduate school were pretty routine. One year later, they were not.

MORGAN: [00:02:00] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:02:00] So I think that, um, if someone's real motive was to see an alternative path to military service, that was less important and probably I'm just guessing, but someone who went in 1966 or '67 went in very often because Peace Corps service appealed to them. It did to me.

MORGAN: [00:02:22] Interesting. And what was your reaction when you were accepted?

BARCLAY: [00:02:27] Well, I wrote an application to Peace Corps, and I'd been working on the college newspaper, and I said that I would like to go and start a newspaper in a secondary city in Zambia. So I got a letter back from Peace Corps and they said, we don't have a program in Zambia, and there is no demand in Africa anywhere for 22 year olds to start newspapers. So we are assigning you to teach in eastern Nigeria.

MORGAN: [00:02:57] Oh.

BARCLAY: [00:02:58] And I looked at that and I had some questions in my own mind. This was the spring leading up to the Biafran War. And I had two classmates who were graduates who came from eastern Nigeria.

MORGAN: [00:03:12] Hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:03:12] And they said, it won't happen. You have a civil war about to, about to break out.

MORGAN: [00:03:18] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:03:19] You better look at an alternative, which I thought probably I would like. I was more interested in East and Central Africa anyway. Anyway, I called a friend who had been a teacher of mine who'd been in the Ford Foundation in Kenya, and he said, well, obviously go to Kenya. And I said, it's not obvious, how do you do it? He gave me the telephone number of the desk officer at Peace Corps, and he said, just call her. She's a friend. So I did. And after she had put me on the list, she said, you know, I'm not supposed to do this, but I just did. So there's a great good turn in my life done by someone at the request of a friend. Not the way you're supposed to do it, but it's how it happened.

MORGAN: [00:04:04] Well, that's very interesting. I think a lot of people have had serendipitous experiences like that that just, just happened. And it

fortunately worked out for everyone the right way. So. You went to Kenya. Where did you do your training?

BARCLAY: [00:04:22] We were trained at in New York City and just outside, Teachers College at Columbia. And as I think other groups were, maybe your own.

MORGAN: [00:04:34] Indeed.

BARCLAY: [00:04:34] And we were trained there. And our training included a month in the countryside at an old hotel, learning Swahili 8 hours a day.

MORGAN: [00:04:43] Hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:04:43] And then the last two months of training were in the New York City school system. We each apprenticed to a teacher.

MORGAN: [00:04:51] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:04:51] And we also lived with a host family, in most cases in the projects in New York City.

MORGAN: [00:04:59] Mm hmm. So you lived with a host family in New York City?

BARCLAY: [00:05:02] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:05:02] Oh really?

BARCLAY: [00:05:03] In East Harlem for a month.

MORGAN: [00:05:04] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:05:05] And it was a fabulous eye-opening and rewarding and very close experience.

MORGAN: [00:05:12] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:05:12] It had very little to do with anything I experienced later in Kenya, but it was, it was a, uh, it was worthwhile in its own right.

MORGAN: [00:05:21] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:05:21] Just to understand a part of the United States that might have been not too far away from where I lived, but very, very different.

MORGAN: [00:05:30] Where were you originally from?

BARCLAY: [00:05:32] I grew up about two miles from the Yale campus.

MORGAN: [00:05:34] Oh, in New Haven?

BARCLAY: [00:05:36] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:05:36] Ah, okay. So in this training process at Columbia University, there was a deselection component. How did that go for you or what was your experience in that, in observing it and participating in it?

BARCLAY: [00:05:52] I can tell a story.

MORGAN: [00:05:53] Oh, please do. I think everyone who's gone through it has a story.

BARCLAY: [00:05:58] Yeah. We were given, what was it? The Minnesota Multifactor Personality Inventory, something like that.

MORGAN: [00:06:04] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:06:05] And we had this guy who was the resident shrink who sat up at a desk in the teaching classroom at Teachers College and, uh. He tried to make light of it, and I don't think anybody was very amused. But he said this is an instrument that we use just to help screen and we'll look at other things. When we left for Kenya, those who were sworn in, I think we were just about exactly 50 people.

MORGAN: [00:06:36] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:06:37] In our group. It was education IV I think, you know, the fourth, the fourth cohort going to Kenya. And we were trained with about 30 who went to Uganda.

MORGAN: [00:06:48] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:06:50] I guess, but I have no memory of it, that several people above the number of 50 were deselected. But there was one instance I remember very well. Well, two things I remember very well. Let me tell you the deselection story then I'll tell you one other.

MORGAN: [00:07:07] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:07:07] Because they're very, they're good stories to tell. One of our group who became a good friend of mine during training and who remains a very good friend to this day, his host family turned out to be the, um, backup singer for Aretha Franklin, who lived in a penthouse apartment in Harlem. And while he was there as a guest in this apartment, due to some domestic problems that his host had, all the furniture was repossessed except for, I guess, one chair and a couple of mattresses or something like that. It was so bizarre, I think so far outside of what Peace Corps training thought they were doing, that we were asked to write up our experience. What have we seen? What have we learned? What impact did it have?

BARCLAY: [00:08:05] And my friend said, the only way I can capture this is I'll write a one act play. And the shrink decided that based on that play, he should be deselected. And we had a rebellion and we basically told the training group, if he doesn't go to Kenya, none of us will go.

MORGAN: [00:08:25] Good for you.

BARCLAY: [00:08:25] You know, this is, this is ridiculous. I don't know who this guy is sitting up there. But, um, you know, that was actually, I read the play. We all did. We thought it was pretty entertaining. And what else could

you make of that? Because Peace Corps' placement in host families was putting up a notice in churches and saying, we'll pay you a stipend of 100 bucks a week.

MORGAN: [00:08:49] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:08:50] They didn't screen. They didn't interview. So there you have it. So he was not deselected.

MORGAN: [00:08:56] Wow. Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:08:58] And I really think that many, if not all of us, would have said, you're messing with him for all the wrong reasons. I mean, there were a number of other experiences people had, and it just wasn't. It wasn't managed very professionally.

MORGAN: [00:09:11] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:09:11] The other experience from training. While we were at language training in Monroe, New York, the Hotel Monte Carlo. I don't know if you went there?

MORGAN: [00:09:20] No, no.

BARCLAY: [00:09:21] Uh, it was kind of on the edge of the Catskills. We rented a bus to take everyone who wanted to go, and everyone did, to Washington to participate in the first large antiwar march.

MORGAN: [00:09:33] Of course, yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:09:34] In October 1967. Our training director told us we couldn't go.

MORGAN: [00:09:43] Hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:09:43] And we told him there was room for him on the bus. And he couldn't prevent us. We had hired the bus. The bus was going to show up, you know, at 5:00 Saturday morning or whatever. And if there was

any punishment meted out, then some of us just wouldn't come back. I mean, we were a little bit of an ornery group.

MORGAN: [00:10:04] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:10:05] But, but these, these were two things that everybody said, come on, this is, this is a free country. We have freedom of speech and Saturday's a day off anyway. Instead of playing touch football, we're going to participate and exercise our right of free speech. I don't want to paint the training director as authoritarian. He was smart enough to ride with us on the bus.

MORGAN: [00:10:27] Interesting. Well, so then you went over to Kenya and you had some training there, and then you went out to your.

BARCLAY: [00:10:34] We had no train, we were, we were, I think, sworn in in New York.

MORGAN: [00:10:37] Oh, really?

BARCLAY: [00:10:38] I think so.

MORGAN: [00:10:39] Okay.

BARCLAY: [00:10:40] Right at the very end, right before Christmas of 1967. And so when we got off the plane in Kenya, in Nairobi, the Peace Corps director, whom you might remember, Bob.

MORGAN: [00:10:52] Is that Bob Poole?

BARCLAY: [00:10:54] Bob Poole met us at the foot of the stairs and he had done his homework and he greeted each one of us by name.

MORGAN: [00:11:02] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:11:02] He'd seen the photographs, you know, the story. And he said, oh, welcome, welcome to Kenya, Tony. I'm sending you to Kapsabet

Boys High School in the Rift Valley. There's another fellow from Yale who's already there. And I thought that was a bit wow. Peace Corps' diversity was, you know, limited at the time. Bob Poole had been a Yale football player.

MORGAN: [00:11:28] Ah, okay.

BARCLAY: [00:11:29] And for some reason, uh, in fact, well, I could talk more about my assignment. But this was someone in your own Peace Corps group, Dan Fitts, who was extending and coming back for a third year as I was starting my first.

MORGAN: [00:11:45] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:11:46] So we were in Nairobi for probably three or four days and then sent in multiple different directions. In my case, I, whatever I had, might have been, it might have been a small truck or a couple of suitcases. And I got in the back of what was called the Rift Valley Peugeot Service and rode up 200 miles to Eldoret. And the headmaster of my school met me there and so took me around the town of Eldoret, which was 30 miles from the school. And I really, you know, I don't think I had sort of a game plan of how I was going to live. He said, don't worry, we have a nice house. You'll share the house with Dan. Everything is kind of set up there.

MORGAN: [00:12:34] Okay.

BARCLAY: [00:12:35] And you couldn't ask for a softer landing than I had. You could not ask for one.

MORGAN: [00:12:41] Very nice. So. So when you got there, were you given your assignments or how did that, how did they decide what you would do?

BARCLAY: [00:12:49] They knew I was a history teacher and that I actually had majored in African history. And 1968, the year I began to teach, was the first year that African history was on the form for Cambridge curriculum.

MORGAN: [00:13:09] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:13:09] They had just switched over, so there was actually something I knew that was useful. I think many Peace Corps volunteers have to find that out. Sometimes that's a long, a long process. But in this case is that we know what you want, want you to do, and we want you to teach history to Form 4 and Form 3. And what else? Basically anything not science. Eventually, I taught geography, English lit, and so forth, and it was a, it was a well-established school at that point. It had been started.

MORGAN: [00:13:45] How many students were there? Ballpark.

BARCLAY: [00:13:50] Uh, probably I would say just under 300. All boys high school, boarding school. All boys.

MORGAN: [00:13:57] Okay.

BARCLAY: [00:13:58] It had been started in the 1920s and had been upgraded to a secondary school in probably the late 1950s or early 1960s. It was in what is today Nandi County or Nandi district then.

MORGAN: [00:14:19] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:14:19] And a majority, uh. [phone rings] Let me just see if. I think the red light.

MORGAN: [00:14:28] Okay, yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:14:29] So at that time, out of the 300 or so boys, I would say probably 80 percent were Kalenjin from Nandi County, Uasin Gishu County to the north. A few from Kericho. The other 15 or 20 percent were from other communities. Kikuyu, Luhya, a few Luos. Most of those came from the Rift Valley, from other districts in the Rift Valley. And at the time I went, I think we probably had 12 teachers to cover all the classes. And there were, each class that I taught in was roughly 35 to 40, 40 plus each. Each of the forms or classes was split into two

streams. And they were I think, as I recall, ranked by performance. So there was an A stream and a B stream.

MORGAN: [00:15:29] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:15:30] It was pretty traditional.

MORGAN: [00:15:32] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:15:32] And I had been to a boarding school in New England before Yale. So guess what? And Dan Fitts had grown up, his father taught at Phillips Andover.

MORGAN: [00:15:40] Oh, no kidding.

BARCLAY: [00:15:41] So I showed, he showed up and he said, I heard you were here. Welcome. And he said, you're going to find quite a bit of this quite familiar. We had a headmaster at that point who'd been in Kenya for several years, but he had been from a public school in London and Oxford. And so there was an English, if you will, orientation. And of course the exam system that was the foundation came out of the, as they call them, the Cambridge exams. Out of the 12 teachers we had when I started, there were, I would say, if we were 12, I think we were. There were eight.

MORGAN: [00:16:23] Are these all men teachers as well?

BARCLAY: [00:16:25] No, there are a couple of women.

MORGAN: [00:16:26] Oh, there were.

BARCLAY: [00:16:27] Yep.

MORGAN: [00:16:27] And were they foreign or?

BARCLAY: [00:16:29] Um, they were, eight of them were European or white. Two Kenyan Asians, and one African couple.

MORGAN: [00:16:40] Hmm. Okay.

BARCLAY: [00:16:40] That changed over the three years that I taught there. And in the middle of my second year, we were fortunate to get a really outstanding Kenyan headmaster, who came from the district, who was very widely known and respected. And he might have been a year or two older than me, but he carried himself with a lot of dignity and authority, and he did a really great job. And the school, which had a good reputation, built a better one in his time, particularly by 1970. Did well, the kids did well on their exams. And, uh, I taught 32 classes a week.

MORGAN: [00:17:25] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:17:25] But with that many classes and 12 or so people on faculty, everybody did. If you showed up to your classes, which most people did, and I thought it was my sacred duty so. And I can remember walking across the school grounds back to my house carrying exercise books stacked up, because there were assignments to grade and essays to do and so forth. And we, we gave the kids a lot to do. And I was teaching things that were new, that really we didn't have a textbook. So I did have a challenge about to my teaching from the students in the second week. I looked back over a partial diary from the early days there and, uh. And one of the students came up to me. He said, sir, um, I think I could speak for most of us in the class. We really have any, we have some doubts about your ability to teach us.

MORGAN: [00:18:26] Oh.

BARCLAY: [00:18:28] And I said, my first reaction in the back of my mind was, well, they're on to me. You know, this is all new. And, you know, I worked at the side of a very skilled teacher in a New York public high school. And I said, what's the issue? Well, last, last year, when we were in Form 2, our history teacher wrote the notes on the board and we just were able to copy them.

MORGAN: [00:18:52] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:18:52] And now you're just writing a couple of words and we discuss it and we have to make our own notes. And I said, well, that won't, that won't be changing. Bear with me. I'm not, I'm not going to do what that guy did. I don't regard that as teaching.

MORGAN: [00:19:08] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:19:08] And this might be a little unfamiliar, but you know, work with me and I've heard you, but I'll be happy to explain to the class why we're doing it this way next time we meet, which will be tomorrow or the next day. But you've got to listen, absorb, make your own notes so that you have your own thought process about what you're hearing and what we read.

MORGAN: [00:19:30] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:19:31] And when it came to written material, often it was stuff I would type on my little Olivetti and then we'd run it off on a mimeograph machine and, and carbons and everything like that. So we were. I knew the material, I'd read it and I had a few resource books but. And one more anecdote you might enjoy.

MORGAN: [00:19:51] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:19:51] About language. We had a really terrific group of Kenyans and a couple of Tanzanians who taught us Swahili through the whole training period in the U.S. They'd all gone to school in the U.S. Some were hoping to stay on or planning to stay on, and they were hired by Peace Corps, in some cases multiple times, as language teachers.

MORGAN: [00:20:17] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:20:18] So when we finished training, we were all given a FSI test. And I think the expectation was, well, everyone's had three months, a month of immersion and then 2 hours a day for two more months. Some of it must have sunk in. And one person in our group got a zero plus.

MORGAN: [00:20:40] A zero plus.

BARCLAY: [00:20:41] But he was able to go to Kenya and eventually his Swahili got quite a bit better. And I did okay with that. But when we got to the, when I got to the school, um, one of the things the headmaster, English headmaster, told me is the boys do not, are not permitted to speak their vernacular language. It's not right, because we have different groups here and different languages. And so Swahili is all right and English is all right. But they may not speak Nandi. So we were walking out of a school assembly early in my time and I heard the voice talking and I finally I talked to Dan, who had been teaching there for two years, and I said, are they speaking Swahili? And he said, no, no, they're speaking Nandi. They're not supposed to. I said, what a relief, because I didn't understand a word. What a relief.

BARCLAY: [00:21:38] But the Swahili was not something that I used in the classroom. However, it made my contact with people, particularly around the school and outside the school, a whole lot easier, because in many cases, these are people who weren't speaking much English. And on the school grounds and campus, English was the language that I taught in. But, uh.

MORGAN: [00:22:02] So what were your living arrangements then?

BARCLAY: [00:22:06] There was a house that must have been built almost at the time the school was built in the 1920s.

MORGAN: [00:22:13] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:22:15] A three bedroom house with, uh, a small kitchen just outside it. And, you know, living room. Dining room. Two big bedrooms, one small one. And bathroom. Running water. Electricity.

MORGAN: [00:22:34] 24 hour electricity?

BARCLAY: [00:22:36] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:22:36] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:22:36] It was on the school generator for a while. And then they went onto the main grid.

MORGAN: [00:22:42] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:22:43] And then the road that ran by the school was being paved. So, as I say, this was not just a soft landing on arrival, it probably got softer. So I never got defensive about it except to say, look, I was asked to do, carry a very heavy teaching load and really focus on doing that and doing that well. And I was able to.

MORGAN: [00:23:09] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:23:09] And I know a lot of my friends who are teaching in schools that didn't have the same facilities or resources. They faced challenges that I didn't face, but they weren't able to. The culture wasn't necessarily there to promote dedicated teaching. Maybe you could say the infrastructure wasn't there. Leadership wasn't there. So their experiences were different in lots of different ways. So I just think in terms of what Peace Corps sent me there to do and what I was asked specifically to do. Um, I. Yeah, I had all kinds of, if you will, comfort and support to focus on doing it.

MORGAN: [00:23:53] I take it you how to cook and.

BARCLAY: [00:23:55] How to cook.

MORGAN: [00:23:55] Did you pay for that through your Peace Corps salary or how did?

BARCLAY: [00:23:59] Our Peace Corps stipend was 715 shillings a month, which was \$100.

MORGAN: [00:24:07] Okay.

BARCLAY: [00:24:07] And then Peace Corps paid the school, I believe, \$15 a month towards the rental and maintenance of the house. So that kind of just passed through. And it was, the funds were put in our bank account at the Commercial Bank of Africa in Nairobi, and you could take a check from that account and go down to the local store in, um, in the town of Kapsabet, where I was.

MORGAN: [00:24:35] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:24:35] Or in Eldoret, if I went up there shopping. And in terms of moving around, we were encouraged by Peace Corps to hitchhike.

MORGAN: [00:24:45] Hitchhike?

BARCLAY: [00:24:46] Yeah. It took some patience because sometimes there'd be long waits before you'd see a vehicle. The number of vehicles on the road in 1968 was a tiny, tiny fraction of what you'd see today.

MORGAN: [00:24:59] Is that hitchhike instead of taking like a local bus or something?

BARCLAY: [00:25:02] You could take a local bus.

MORGAN: [00:25:04] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:25:05] But if you wanted to hitchhike, that was fine. There were no.

MORGAN: [00:25:08] No restrictions.

BARCLAY: [00:25:09] Yeah. And so sometimes I can remember going off for a weekend. I'd get all the way to Nairobi hitchhiking.

MORGAN: [00:25:19] Wow. Well.

BARCLAY: [00:25:21] That's 130 miles.

MORGAN: [00:25:23] That's a good question. Um, what? So you taught these basic courses. Did you have any other responsibilities in the school?

BARCLAY: [00:25:32] I did. I, um, I ended up being the director and producer of several plays while, uh, which we put on with the local girls school across the road supplying the female cast.

MORGAN: [00:25:47] The cast.

BARCLAY: [00:25:47] That was a lot of fun.

MORGAN: [00:25:48] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:25:49] I coached basketball. I coached track and field, you know, working with some others.

MORGAN: [00:25:54] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:25:54] And this is the part of Kenya where all the great runners come from.

MORGAN: [00:25:58] Oh, really?

BARCLAY: [00:25:58] So in, uh, the beginning of my teaching, someone pointed out to one of the guys in the classroom, and like several of them, he looked like he was probably about as old as I was, maybe early twenties. And they said, Julius won't be here all year because he's going to the Olympics. And I thought, well, that's fine.

MORGAN: [00:26:17] That's nice.

BARCLAY: [00:26:18] We're all proud of him. And so he did. He went to the Mexico City Olympics as a member of the team, and then actually went to Munich in '72 and won a gold medal. So.

MORGAN: [00:26:29] Wow, he must have been a hero when he came home.

BARCLAY: [00:26:31] He was, yeah, he was. Kipchoge Keino was the best known of the runners then.

MORGAN: [00:26:36] Yes, of course.

BARCLAY: [00:26:38] Came from the same general area. But yeah, so track and field was important. Sports were important. They had organized sports. So we had a rugby team, we had track and field.

MORGAN: [00:26:50] Really?

BARCLAY: [00:26:50] They had, they played field hockey, which men do in the Commonwealth.

MORGAN: [00:26:54] Yeah, sure.

BARCLAY: [00:26:54] We played, had a basketball court, all the pretty simple stuff. The annual tuition boarding costs for the boys were probably close to what I was being paid every month, \$100 plus or minus. And that was a real stretch for a lot of families.

MORGAN: [00:27:15] Their families paid for that?

BARCLAY: [00:27:17] Families did.

MORGAN: [00:27:17] There weren't scholarships or anything like that?

BARCLAY: [00:27:18] There were some scholarships, but it was pretty informal. And, uh, you know, I got a sense from getting to know the kids, getting to know the boys, of what a deep commitment there was to education in Kenya. And that continues to this day.

MORGAN: [00:27:38] Uh huh.

BARCLAY: [00:27:38] That it was and, you know, there were high expectations that boys would go through. They would take their Form 4 exam and some would go on to upper secondary and university. But coming out of this

school in that part of the country, if you came out with a good record, you might go to work in a junior manager job in the tea estates or get a job in government, get a job, go to teacher training college. So, you know, families had high expectations for what their, uh, what their boys could achieve. But we were, we were a boarding school, kind of a self-contained community.

MORGAN: [00:28:20] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:28:21] And so I'll just jump ahead for a moment and say that, uh, in the middle of my second year, I wrote to Peace Corps and said, what would be the opportunity to go and teach in another country?

MORGAN: [00:28:35] Oh, in another country?

BARCLAY: [00:28:36] Yeah. I mean, this has been a great experience. And I was told, well, you'd have to go back and go through training and be trained all over again.

MORGAN: [00:28:43] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:28:43] I thought, what a waste of time.

MORGAN: [00:28:45] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:28:46] So I kind of. And then the headmaster said, the Kenyan headmaster said, you know, we really would like you to stay for a third year if you'd like to do that. I'll write to Ministry of Education and tell Peace Corps we want you to stay.

MORGAN: [00:28:59] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:28:59] And an interesting thing happened at the turn of that year. I wasn't sure if this was an official policy change, or whether the rule just got relaxed so that several people kind of failed to observe it, including me. But I've talked to a couple of friends from my time there and they

said no. Country director of Peace Corps said as of late 1969, if you want to get a vehicle and run it at your own expense, you may do so.

MORGAN: [00:29:36] Really?

BARCLAY: [00:29:37] Now that's, that's probably a very short slice of time in the whole history of Peace Corps in Kenya. But I asked my friend and I said, did I break a rule? He said, you didn't break rules as far as I remember. It was okay. So you got, you bought a used VW bug from a teacher who was, was leaving. And I'd had, you know, a lot of friendly contact with a lot of the boys at school. They'd say, sir, you know, come meet the family. I'd say, how are we going to get there? And they said, well, you know, we'll walk home. It's about 24 miles. You want to walk?

BARCLAY: [00:30:18] And Peace Corps in 1968 and '69 particularly looked at the school vacations as time when we should not, as the volunteers, teachers, we should not be idle. We need something to do. So they would say, all right, we have a project to do vaccinations, smallpox and BCG vaccinations. And we need eight or ten volunteers to go to Kilifi on the Kenyan coast. So I spent three or four weeks there on one school holiday.

MORGAN: [00:30:54] Okay.

BARCLAY: [00:30:54] The end of 1968, I went to the north, to Samburu district.

MORGAN: [00:31:00] Oh yeah, yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:31:01] And spent right through Christmas doing vaccinations there. So, and those were very worthwhile experiences that got me to parts of the country I wouldn't have seen.

MORGAN: [00:31:14] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:31:15] It was basic. I mean, you could learn to do vaccinations. It's not a high skill thing. You just have to be careful and put up sometimes with a terrified kid. What are you doing to me? Or a skeptical parent. But

that was, those were both great experiences. Anyway, so I said, you know, I'm just, I'm not around a lot during the school holidays. But in 1970, as I say this, I bought this beat up old Volkswagen and several kids said, well, now look. Not only are you welcome, you've been welcome, and we want you to meet the family, but it's about time we could get a lift home, right? And through that.

MORGAN: [00:32:02] Entrepreneurs.

BARCLAY: [00:32:02] Through that, my third year, by far, was the richest part of the experience. These two guys who were cousins, one was in Form 4 and one was in Form, I've forgotten exactly, but they were like two years apart, but closer than that in age. Who'd grown up on the same hillside in a beautiful part of south Nandi. Green rolling hills, right on the equator. Six and a half thousand feet. A wonderful climate and a wonderful family. And that family are my closest Kenyan friends to this day. I see them every year.

MORGAN: [00:32:44] Nice.

BARCLAY: [00:32:45] These two guys I helped bring to the States to get scholarships. One came as an athlete, one came as a scholar. But this great friendship developed with them, their siblings, their parents, their cousins. And I'm in touch with a lot of them. They've been here to visit us in the States. They've come back after, uh, after college and after getting graduate degrees they went back to Kenya. So and there are several others. And this is now 50 years plus. These are, these are lifelong friendships or as close to that as you could get. And that exposure to the community outside the school, given the way the school was organized, was just made so much easier by that, by having wheels.

MORGAN: [00:33:42] I can easily imagine that. Well, tell me, looking back on your tour service, what do you think were your major accomplishments?

BARCLAY: [00:33:51] Well, I think it opened my eyes in a very lasting way to, you know, the breadth of human experience and another society. And it, it

fueled and rewarded my curiosity. I think I became a more open, curious person when I was there, and that shaped my career.

MORGAN: [00:34:16] Hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:34:17] I'd grown up in a very traditional upper middle class family in Connecticut, the son and nephew and grandson of attorneys. My mother's family had been in the state of Connecticut since they founded it. My father's, my father's father had come to go to college at Yale and so forth. And, you know, they were very deep rooted in a medium sized city in New England. And nobody was forcing me down that lane. But I think just learning a bit about Africa, beginning to read widely about it, and seeing the change that Africa was experiencing, I said, let me go see what that's. Let me play some role in helping as a teacher.

MORGAN: [00:35:05] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:35:05] As a volunteer. And when I came back, what I knew was I needed to find a career that was going to continue to spark and reward my curiosity.

MORGAN: [00:35:20] And what did you decide to move into then?

BARCLAY: [00:35:22] Well, my first first thought was, I guess it's time to go back to school. I'd been out of school by 1971 for four years since graduating.

MORGAN: [00:35:33] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:35:33] And I was glad not to have gone to graduate school right out of undergrad. I think I wouldn't have had the energy or, as I say, the curiosity to do it. So I thought, well, hmm. So I had these two friends who'd been in two different schools and masters in international relations. And I said, you know, what do you think? Do you recommend it? And they were both, I would say, a little better than lukewarm, but not like, hey this is great.

MORGAN: [00:36:00] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:36:01] They said, you should look into it. So that was the first thing I did. I wrote a, uh, wrote applications and got letters admitting me to these two schools, both well known to this day. And then I went through the course catalog and I thought, but what is there here that I want to study and learn more about? I don't know that this is for me. It's a generalist degree. And the same person who told me to call the desk officer that switched me from Nigeria to Kenya, well, I consulted him. He said, I think you should be an anthropologist. I think that's the sort of person you are. Why don't you go to Teachers College, because they have this applied anthropology program? And since you have permanent lifetime admission to Teachers College, since you were trained there, they'll let you enroll in a couple. Try them out.

BARCLAY: [00:36:53] So I did. And then I said, you know, this. This is fascinating stuff. I get this. I, the reading sparks more interest. I want to read and learn more. And I started talking to faculty in this very small program and they said, did you major in anthropology? I said no. Good, they said. We generally do better with people who have been something else. They've been journalists. We have a defrocked Catholic priest over here. We have all kinds of people with diverse life experience, and they're getting anthropology now at a time when they can probably make the most of it. And I said, would you, uh? I said, well. They said, do you want to be an academic? And I said, I really don't think I do necessarily. I don't know what I would do with this training.

MORGAN: [00:37:46] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:37:46] And they said, well, that's fine, because it's a small program. We have several PhDs every year, um, and so far a minority have chosen to be in academics. Others have done different things. That's fine with us. And a lot of anthropology departments, including the main department at Columbia, had a very traditional view that that's what you did. You went to teach, you went to get a, a scholar's position.

MORGAN: [00:38:15] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:38:16] And this applied anthropology program based at Teacher's College just had a different, a different view. It's the right place for me. So I spent two and a half years doing coursework there, and then I went to Kenya to do my research.

MORGAN: [00:38:29] Oh, really?

BARCLAY: [00:38:30] I went to Kakamega District, what was then Western Province, and I did my research over 18 months looking at.

MORGAN: [00:38:42] And what was your research focused on?

BARCLAY: [00:38:45] At that point, in the very early seventies, by that time, the Kenyan government had sponsored with some external funding from the UK a new sugar factory, and they set up a cane farming system. Instead of using a plantation as the main source of supply, they realized that they couldn't and shouldn't take thousands and thousands of acres of land away from small farmers. They should engage the small farmers as contract suppliers of sugar cane and they would get an income.

MORGAN: [00:39:22] Hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:39:23] And this was, it was a fascinating project because you had cash incomes coming in to literally, by the time I'd finished the research, it was 5,000.

MORGAN: [00:39:35] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:39:36] Small holder, small farmer families. Within a few years it was a multiple of that and everyone was publicly, and maybe not locally, but the government, everyone was very enthusiastic. It was a new model. This is the way to lift a society, a rural society that's been quite poor and poor people couldn't produce much or earn much. They have a guaranteed market, they have a cash crop. It was much more complicated than that, but I think the tools that I got in my training and being very, very comfortable in rural Kenya and having Swahili as a foundation.

MORGAN: [00:40:20] Right, right.

BARCLAY: [00:40:20] And then learning Luhya on top of that, which is a related language.

MORGAN: [00:40:24] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:40:27] And then having some other good fortune, which was I found a very kind of well-located place to live, a shop that had been sort of converted into a house. Um, I got, I made friends at the sugar company. I made friends in the district government. Everybody knew I was there because, one, you had to explain yourself a lot. And everyone said, well, this is interesting to know how this is really going to change things.

MORGAN: [00:40:57] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:40:58] So stay out of local politics and stay out of trouble. And, um, yeah, if you want information, we think, you know, go interview people. If you want to look at the land records and see who has a title deed and who didn't because of whatever. So I had access to everybody at any level of society. And I think without Peace Corps and three years in the country before and Swahili, I would never have done that. It turns out the provincial commissioner, which is a, like a governor of the province, well, his nephew had been my student and I had just gotten his nephew a scholarship to the University of Wyoming.

MORGAN: [00:41:42] That's where it starts.

BARCLAY: [00:41:43] This is not unusual in Kenya that all the, you connect dots or dots get connected.

MORGAN: [00:41:48] Is it still existing, that, uh?

BARCLAY: [00:41:51] The factory actually shut down about two years ago due to some chronic mismanagement and corruption.

MORGAN: [00:41:59] Oh.

BARCLAY: [00:41:59] And it undercut the livelihoods of thousands of people.

MORGAN: [00:42:02] Of course.

BARCLAY: [00:42:03] Yeah. Did I see that coming in 1974? I saw some weaknesses because it was very top down. The farmers were told what to do, when to do it, and they really made no decisions as farmers except.

MORGAN: [00:42:20] Were the managers Africans, I mean Kenyans I guess?

BARCLAY: [00:42:25] At that time when they started, there was a large cadre of people who, who knew, you know, engineers and managers. It became, it became Kenyan run, you know, within a few years. And it did well for a long time, but it was a mono crop situation. Eventually the soil begins to exhaust from the same crop year after year. And then there was a lot of, uh, a lot of games being played and, you know, procurement fraud and other things. It's a very sad story. I've been back there a few times, but not for the last ten years, not since this really sad chapter.

MORGAN: [00:43:10] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:43:11] I get back to my Peace Corps site, which is closer to Nairobi, more frequently. And I'll just add a word. The school that I taught at, and I have to say it makes me feel great, but this is not my achievement, is now regarded as the best boys high school in Kenya.

MORGAN: [00:43:31] Really? Isn't that lovely.

BARCLAY: [00:43:33] It is harder to get into than the Ivy League.

MORGAN: [00:43:36] Wow. Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:43:37] That is, 65,000 kids put it down as their first choice and 400 got in.

MORGAN: [00:43:45] 65,000!

BARCLAY: [00:43:46] Yeah.

MORGAN: [00:43:47] Not hundred. 65 thousand.

BARCLAY: [00:43:49] Yeah, the kids put down what school do you want to go to.

MORGAN: [00:43:51] Yeah, yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:43:51] It's a national school.

MORGAN: [00:43:53] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:43:53] And the number one and number three student in Kenya on the exam come from that school.

MORGAN: [00:43:59] Wow.

BARCLAY: [00:43:59] And number one is named Tony. So I think we've got to get him into a great college here in the U.S. someday. But it's gratifying to see that and I, uh. One of my students, ex-students, several of them have been on the board of governors of the school, generous to the school. I think what I do feel is, I don't know where all the students are. I taught several hundred in three years.

MORGAN: [00:44:27] Of course.

BARCLAY: [00:44:27] But there's a good number where I've been able to see where they've gone in life and to have an influence on that. And if I, uh, if I'm, if I'm there, I could run into one of them on the street in Eldoret and they'd say, *mwalimu*. Teacher.

MORGAN: [00:44:43] Exactly.

BARCLAY: [00:44:44] And I'd say, please just call me Tony. Well, I couldn't call you by that, by your first name. Yes, they can now. So it's just, I've been back in Kenya every year except for two since 19-, since I went there.

MORGAN: [00:44:57] Wow. Every year.

BARCLAY: [00:44:59] A lot of that is because of the career that I chose after.

MORGAN: [00:45:02] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:45:02] After the PhD in anthropology, I went to work with DAI, a development consulting firm here in Washington.

MORGAN: [00:45:09] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:45:09] A lot of DAI's work, when I joined them in 1977 and the next couple of years, was in East Africa, in Tanzania and Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan.

MORGAN: [00:45:21] Convenient.

BARCLAY: [00:45:21] So that was, I think, you know, one reason they thought I could help them and join the staff. So I always had, you know, once I realized I could put Kenya on the travel itinerary for good reasons, legitimate reasons, it was there. And it kept me in touch with the place, with the larger society, made me feel a part of, of another country as more than a sentimental second home. I mean, I'm very deeply identified with it.

MORGAN: [00:45:53] So Peace Corps has three, these three goals of provide technical assistance, better understanding Americans, and understanding of other people by Americans. Have you been able to help on that third goal in any way?

BARCLAY: [00:46:11] I suppose to some extent, probably not as significantly as with, with the first two.

MORGAN: [00:46:19] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:46:20] I don't want to make this an excuse, but my professional life kept me on the road overseas for more than 100 days a year for all the 30 years I worked at DAI. Now, I loved that.

MORGAN: [00:46:37] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:46:38] When I speak about curiosity being rewarded, having an opportunity to see many things in many places, develop relationships with many people. Developing, I think, some aptitude to be, not to know it all, but a little bit of a quick study to bring a lot of questions to any new experience. And then understand here's what I can see is what I can identify with. Or here's what I don't know. Like, if I'm here for two weeks, don't, don't kid myself that I really understand.

MORGAN: [00:47:12] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:47:12] But I'm absorbing a lot of, of, uh, a lot of information and gaining a lot of insight everywhere I go and appreciating, you know, what is, what is related, what is similar and what is really different.

MORGAN: [00:47:28] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:47:28] And that kind of work, never academic per se, more professional and more of a consulting managerial role. It was a huge motivator for me and something I, you know, we built a company that today is much larger than when I left it. Doing better, doing even better, I'll say, because I really had a big hand in building it.

MORGAN: [00:47:53] Sure.

BARCLAY: [00:47:55] And I think Peace Corps experience shaped so much of that. And then I would say anthropology probably shaped some of it, which was, um, it just gave me a lot of intuitive views of, of what binds an organization together, what motivates people, why differences matter. You're not trying to fit everybody into a, into a glove or into a single

model, you recognize. And one of the things I'm proudest about DAI today is very much a multicultural, multinational company. Employees and employee owners from all over the world. And that's, I think, just a really great thing. But that goes beyond even my time there.

MORGAN: [00:48:41] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:48:42] So but my time here in the U.S. and trying to bring Kenya home to Americans.

MORGAN: [00:48:47] Yeah, yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:48:48] My experience, or through the lens of my experience. I've done some. Written occasional pieces for my school newsletter and things like that here.

MORGAN: [00:49:00] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:49:00] But I think I remain internationally focused most of the time. And, and the pull was strong and I always responded to the pull.

MORGAN: [00:49:11] The pull.

BARCLAY: [00:49:11] Because I know it was great, great opportunities to, uh, to keep learning.

MORGAN: [00:49:18] Well, let me ask this. Your background now in anthropology and in being an outstanding manager and developer of a consulting firm and having world views and so on. The Peace Corps has been in business now a little over 50 years, 55 or whatever is it is.

BARCLAY: [00:49:34] Uh huh, right.

MORGAN: [00:49:34] What's your feeling about the future of the Peace Corps? Is it, should it be, should it continue to do the same things it's been doing for 55 years? Should there be some new direction? What's your personal feeling?

BARCLAY: [00:49:49] I, you see, I look at Peace Corps and what kinds of, what it asks volunteers to do, what it assigns them to do. And you look in, in many countries, probably not every single country, and you say the nature of the assignments has evolved considerably in these, in these 50 plus years. The host country, the host country institutions, the partner organizations, whether they're in government or NGOs, have different needs, different expectations of volunteers today. I think some of the things I see volunteers experiencing, they contrast a little bit with what I've told you in the interview, are that sometimes you arrive and instead of everyone saying, here's your house, go to work, in some volunteers' experience, people say, oh, nice to see you. What are you doing here?

MORGAN: [00:50:45] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:50:45] Or there's, there's a defined assignment that actually whatever the efforts were on programming from Peace Corps side, it doesn't match reality. And you have to, you have to respond, you have to scramble. You have to kind of recreate a role that might be very different for yourself. And I think that's a fair challenge. It's not one that every volunteer, then or now, finds easy because it can be pretty stressful.

MORGAN: [00:51:14] Yeah.

BARCLAY: [00:51:14] And you could even be in a, come into a community where there's a high level of suspicion and no matter what you do, you're unlikely to completely overcome. It might just be a place where you can't perform or deliver very much as a volunteer. But I think, um, I think the, uh. What I know of Peace Corps programming today, it's, it's a bit more targeted and specialized. The education program in Kenya is largely focus, has been largely focused, as I understand it, on working, uh, working with hearing impaired or deaf children. That's been a big piece of the education program, not the only piece. A lot of education geared to youth at risk to HIV. Now, those are, those are real priorities in the country that weren't, of course, on the radar 50 years ago.

MORGAN: [00:52:06] Right, right.

BARCLAY: [00:52:06] So if I go back to Kapsabet Boys High School, which now has 1,700 students, this being the most popular school in Kenya, and there are no Peace Corps volunteers there, nor should there be. There's a huge cadre of competent Kenyan teachers.

MORGAN: [00:52:26] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:52:26] There's a very strong culture of learning. It's things that you really would. It's, it's immensely satisfying to go back and say, wow.

MORGAN: [00:52:34] Right.

BARCLAY: [00:52:34] Because some volunteers, frankly, whatever institution you worked in, whatever organization you were attached to, you know, nothing is under your permanent influence or let alone your control. And you could be there some years later and say, gee, what happened to that? And I guess I'm, I feel very lucky. But what I, my sense of the Kenyan education system or Peace Corps' role has changed a lot. And I think that would be true across most Peace Corps programs. It should be.

BARCLAY: [00:53:04] Having said that, at the Peace Corps 50th anniversary celebration, I had just been elected as the incoming chair of the National Peace Corps Association board, and after much more distinguished and better known people, I was asked to just say a closing word, and I said I thought the Peace Corps was a quintessentially 21st century idea, that is still very valid as an idea.

MORGAN: [00:53:33] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:53:34] For reasons that go back to the three goals. Those three goals still matter. It's, it's, I think I have no doubts that there are, if we call it technical assistance or enhancing an organization or role modeling and being a force for good in a rural community or an urban community.

MORGAN: [00:53:55] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:53:55] Young Americans have, carefully selected and trained, have a huge amount to offer. By doing that, do they help people understand and appreciate the United States through, that'd be a different lens than the news media would give them? Yes. And do they have an impact when they come back? And as I say, I don't have much to show for that, but I know so many volunteers, including the ones who come back who are now in the early parts of their career. And you look at their volunteerism in the communities where they live here in the United States, it's probably stronger than it was in the sixties or seventies. That would be my, that would be my hunch.

BARCLAY: [00:54:38] So I think it's, it's, it's a natural sort of response of saying I've been part of something else. Let me share it with you or let me, since I've had this experience of helping others in a volunteer role, now I'm back in my own context. Maybe it's outside of the school where I'm teaching or outside of the government office where I work, whatever. I should be doing more of that.

BARCLAY: [00:55:02] So one thing that I have done, I guess I should say, is a little bit of bring it home, which is ten years after retiring from DAI, which was teaching in graduate programs and at Columbia at SIPA and then at Georgetown in the School of Foreign Service.

MORGAN: [00:55:24] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:55:24] And, you know, really trying to share and teach out of my own experience, going back to when I started and then the professional experience that I had. Teaching ways of approaching and understanding and solving problems that are, the problems are deeply ingrained in the places where they show up and to look at them and think about them in in a different way.

MORGAN: [00:55:55] Mm hmm.

BARCLAY: [00:55:55] To sort of understand they're not probably up to, they're not going to be solved through a single discipline or a single model. And how do you, how do you understand and begin to map out a problem and make some wise choices about what to do. That was really a large part of what I did and so was a large part of what I tried to teach to a generation that was in many cases, obviously younger, but in a significant number of returned Peace Corps volunteers were right there.

MORGAN: [00:56:28] That's great.

BARCLAY: [00:56:29] And so and some of them have gone into domestic work as well as international work. So what I found that was a good way of connecting some dots from the beginning through the end of, or the later part of my career. I guess my career is not coldly over.

MORGAN: [00:56:45] Well, we want to thank you very much.

BARCLAY: [00:56:48] Good.

MORGAN: [00:56:48] It was a lovely interview and I'm sure people will appreciate this. And thank you again for your time.

BARCLAY: [00:56:53] Hey, well I'm glad to do it, Russ. Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]