

**Richard H. Dalrymple Oral History Interview**  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
Administrative Information

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**Interviewer:** Christine Musa  
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**Biographical Note**

Richard H. Dalrymple served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mali from June 1975 to May 1977 on a pit silo project.

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Oral History Interview

with

Richard H. Dalrymple

October 11, 2019  
Belvidere, New Jersey

By Christine Musa

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

MUSA: [00:00:01] Today is October 11th, 2019. This is Christine Musa. I am interviewing Richard Dalrymple, who served in Mali as a Peace Corps volunteer from June 1975 to May 1977. He worked in a pit silo project. Richard, um, tell me a little bit about why you were interested in the Peace Corps and what made you join.

DALRYMPLE: [00:00:37] Well, I was about to graduate from college. I, uh, my number was put in the, the draft lottery. I wasn't picked, so I figured, well, there should, I should be able to serve my country in another capacity. So I thought of different options. And the option I found the most interesting was Peace Corps. So I sent my application in, and I was accepted, uh, to go to Mali. I gave different options that I was interested in, uh, and Mali was not one of them, so I was surprised. I didn't know where Mali was, but, uh, I had a very rich experience living there.

MUSA: [00:01:18] What did your family think of, and, uh, your decision to join, and friends, too? What was the reaction?

DALRYMPLE: [00:01:28] Uh, my, my parents were somewhat uneasy. Uh, I was going to the middle of Africa. They didn't know much about Africa. And so I opened their eyes about that part of the world. And, uh, uh, it's important that all Americans learn about, uh, the underdeveloped world and how important it is for us to support development.

MUSA: [00:01:59] Did you have any exposure to other cultures as you were growing up, uh, that may have influenced that decision?

DALRYMPLE: [00:02:06] Absolutely not. There were no, uh, exchange students at our high school. Uh, we live in a very rural area. Uh, so, uh, we had very little contact, uh, outside of the U.S. Uh, I never had traveled to any place other than Canada. Uh, so, uh, in general, the area we live in is very, uh, uh, uneducated about, uh, the rest of the world and the problems they face.

MUSA: [00:02:39] And where was that? Where did you grow up?

DALRYMPLE: [00:02:43] Well, I grew up in, uh, Harmony Township, right outside of Phillipsburg, New Jersey, along the Delaware River.

MUSA: [00:02:49] In Warren County, northwest?

DALRYMPLE: [00:02:51] Warren County, New Jersey. Went to Belvidere High School.

MUSA: [00:02:55] Um, how did you even find out about the Peace Corps to apply then?

DALRYMPLE: [00:03:01] Uh, they had recruiters at our school, and I also met some foreign students who were attending my university, and they told me about Peace Corps. So I had signed up for ROTC, and, uh, I had a somewhat of a traumatic experience. I was, uh, wearing my Air Force uniform walking across the campus of the university, and a lady was

walking by and said, you murderer! Uh, so the Vietnam War, uh, uh, evoked a lot of, uh, negative reaction. So I thought, well, if I'm drafted, I'll go. But as it happened, I was not drafted. And therefore I figured, uh, I would do something constructive with my life. And, and John Kennedy's words still were ringing in our ears.

MUSA: [00:03:58] Hmm. Um, now you went into your training, which took place where?

DALRYMPLE: [00:04:05] In Bamako, Mali.

MUSA: [00:04:07] So you went straight overseas?

DALRYMPLE: [00:04:09] That's right, that's right. Well, we had a, a brief, uh, introduction, uh, in the U.S. with the people we'd be working with. But then, uh, we went to Mali and then we had a, I think, two month training in mainly language, but then also in, uh, the project we were going to be working under, it's called a pit silo project. In the U.S., we know, we know what silos are. Uh, it's a means of storing forage, uh, during the winter and to feed cattle. Uh, but in Africa, it's virtually unknown.

DALRYMPLE: [00:04:53] So our godfather, let's say, of the project, a man named Jim Diamond and his wife Betty, uh, worked in, in Chad and started a project there. And Jim Diamond was an agricultural specialist. And because of the success in Chad, he was sent for a feasibility study in Mali and considered it would work also there. And Mali had just been through a very severe drought. Uh, and approximately a quarter of the cattle in the country had died during this drought and sheep, etcetera. So the country had a, uh, a very devastating period.

MUSA: [00:05:43] Did you, um, have many other people in the training program with you?

DALRYMPLE: [00:05:48] We were about 15, uh, volunteers and we were assigned to different regions. Uh, our training, apart from language training, was also learning how to make a pit silo. Uh, and, uh, the, we received

good support from the U.S. embassy. The ambassador came out and looked at one of our demonstration silos. And so after, uh, after the two months training, we were, we were deployed and, uh. I was the most isolated of all the volunteers. In a two-year period, I only came down once to the capital, uh. And it was in a place called Gourma-Rharous, which is between Timbuktu and Gao. And, uh, it was a very, we had what was called a counterpart. So I worked with the chief of the livestock sector. Uh, so he was responsible for vaccinations and, and then this new technology, which we introduced. So I spent two years working with him.

MUSA: [00:06:57] And briefly describe what the work actually involved.

DALRYMPLE: [00:07:03] Okay. In the U.S., we have, uh, they're trench silos, not pit silos. So people will, uh, uh, cut, cut grass or alfalfa, different kinds of forage, and put it inside of a concrete trench and then cover it with a tarp and it will stay there under the, under the snow. During the winter it will ferment and it can be used for fodder. Now, in West Africa, uh, you have a very severe, uh, rainy season, and the grass grows very rapidly. And then there is a complete dry season, a very severe dry season, which starts around, uh, uh, February, March, and goes through May. May is the hottest time of the year.

DALRYMPLE: [00:07:56] So during the rainy season or right after the rainy season, when the grasses are high, we would go, uh, and cut wild millet grass and we would put it in a, we called it a pit silo. It was three meters wide and two meters deep. We would cut it with, uh, machetes. We'd have a log next to it. We cut the, the grass into small pieces and it fell into the, into the pit and, uh, until it was full. And then we'd cover it with grass mats and then cover it with dirt. We put salt also on the, the grass to, to help preserve it. And so it would ferment and as, as it fermented, it went down. So it got compacted. And so when we opened these silos and during the hottest time of the year, uh, it was as green as when we put it in.

DALRYMPLE: [00:08:54] And what this enabled some people, uh, some of the farmers to do, or the herdsmen, they could keep, they, uh, between 2

and 4 or 5 cows during the length of the dry season and feed them, whereas the rest of the herd would be sent south to greener pastures, Ivory Coast, different places where they had green grass year round. That, that's called the transhumance, the movement of cattle south. So this enabled some villagers, uh, to have enough grass, uh, forage to feed 2 or 3 cows, which was mainly aimed at young children, okay? Babies needed milk so the cows would continue producing milk. So it had a nutritional aspect, uh, uh, the project.

MUSA: [00:09:47] Okay. Um, what was, what was it like when you first got into the country and then got into your village?

DALRYMPLE: [00:09:57] Uh, Bamako is a shocking place to, to go into the first time. Uh, uh, it, it had open sewers. So, in fact, I slipped into one, one time walking, walking along the road on a rainy night, and, uh, it. But it was a fascinating place. Uh, art, uh, the, the art of the Bambara people, the art of all of Africa is fascinating. Whether it be masks, you have further north in Mali, the Dogon people who are cliff dwellers and make a living, uh, by planting things, uh, uh, above the stream bed on the rocks that will bring mud from the stream bed, put the mud on the rocks, and they plant onions. And so they're a fascinating people.

DALRYMPLE: [00:10:53] Um, there are so many different races. There's the Fulani people in the, the northwest of Mali. There are the Tuaregs. Uh, there are the, uh, Bambara. There are the Fulani, Fulani and other, other smaller groups. And like I mentioned, the Bozos are fishermen. So some people made a living from the fish on the Niger River. Uh, Mopti, the center of Mali, uh, is the site of what they call an inland delta. Uh, huge pirogues, canoes, would come loaded, they're as big as a tractor trailer almost, loaded with dried fish. And that dried fish would be shipped down to Senegal and shipped off. So it was a very vibrant economy. Um, but they were devastated by the drought, uh, from 1972, '73. And, uh, so they were still recovering from that when I came there.

MUSA: [00:11:53] And when you got to your village, what was your housing like? What were your accommodations?

DALRYMPLE: [00:12:02] I was one of two volunteers who were actually given a Land Rover to facilitate the work, because we had long distances to travel. Uh, we were in the fringe of the Sahara Desert. They called it the Sahel. And, uh, I lived in a mud house. Uh, it was about, I'd say about, uh, eight feet high. It was maybe six feet high when I went in, when I first moved there. But because I was a foreigner and they wanted to treat me very well, they actually raised the entire house another couple feet so that it would be cooler in there.

DALRYMPLE: [00:12:47] And I would take a bucket bath. That's how I washed. And I also, uh, had a water container. And people in the U.S. maybe don't know, but, uh, I had a clay calabash. They called it a calabash, a large, uh, piece, uh, bowl like pottery with a bottle neck on it. And I would keep my water in there, and the water would be kept in a corner on a pile of sand. And the sand was always kept wet. So the sand, the water would evaporate, and that would make the water in the container cooler. So I always had cool water, and I always had a cool, uh, uh, bucket bath, uh, to, to keep clean.

MUSA: [00:13:43] How did you adjust to the weather there? I mean, it was hot, I presume.

DALRYMPLE: [00:13:48] Uh, the weather was, uh, very hot. Uh, but, uh, I adapted the more local Tuareg kind of dress. I had a *boubou* and, uh, a *boubou* allows air to circulate around. So you didn't feel it as much. And I had baggy pants when I wore baggy pants, so I didn't feel it so much. Uh, and when we traveled around, I like to say what, what was a treat for me. Because you think up there we ate mainly rice or millet. Uh, but, uh, always in the morning we had what was called *bouillie*. It was pounded millet into a flour and it became lumpy. And, uh, uh, you had it with sour milk and it was, uh, uh, a wonderful, uh, breakfast. And I had withdrawal symptoms when I left Peace Corps because I loved the *bouillie* so much.

DALRYMPLE: [00:14:46] Uh, when you traveled into the interior, if you arrived in a camp, whether it be Tuareg or someone else, they would always have,

uh, if you arrived at night, you would be offered fresh milk, fresh from the cow. And if you arrived in the morning, you would have, uh, uh, what you call buttermilk. Buttermilk. The, the milk would be left overnight, it would curdle. And in the morning it would be cool. And it was very refreshing to have buttermilk in the morning.

MUSA: [00:15:21] Now the, the, um, food that you had, uh, for regular meals, you said rice or millet. What was served on, on top of that or? It wasn't just straight grain, was it?

DALRYMPLE: [00:15:33] Oh, this is for the main meal?

MUSA: [00:15:36] Yeah, the regular meal.

DALRYMPLE: [00:15:37] Well, we would, we would usually always have, yeah, rice. Rice or millet. Uh, uh. In some countries they call, uh, call it *fufu*, uh, a mass of millet, which we would have, and then you'd have a hole in the middle of it with the sauce in the hole and, uh, or a cavity in the middle. And so you'd have, you'd break off pieces of the rice and stick it in the, the, the sauce and then eat it with your hands. We always ate with our hands.

DALRYMPLE: [00:16:05] Uh, people would ask because we also, also always had a, a plastic tea kettle. And people said, what are you, my, my people who were from the U.S. would ask, what do you use a plastic tea kettle for? You can't put it on a, uh, on a stove. It'll melt. So. But, uh, I had to explain that a plastic, uh, teapot was used when you went to the, uh, the bathroom. Uh, because there was no such thing as toilet paper there. So you, you had to use a plastic teapot, pour water in your hand, and clean yourself after you did your business.

MUSA: [00:16:46] Um, who, who prepared your meals for you? Did you do that yourself?

DALRYMPLE: [00:16:52] No, I did not. That's interesting. Um, uh, the head of the *élevage* service, that's the livestock service, came to my house one day and he had a young, young boy with me and he said, uh, this boy

is going to help you at your house. He said, he's going to, he's going to help you. He'll do all the cooking, he'll do the cleaning, and he's going to take, he'll take care of you. Okay. So I, uh, he, he was a, a young, young man. He was, he was probably about, he wasn't that old maybe, maybe 13, 14 years old. But he did cooking. He did everything. And, uh, then later he went to, uh, uh, Bamako to go to higher school. And then his little brother came and brought the smallest brother. So I had two kids there, and they'd always eat with me.

DALRYMPLE: [00:17:44] And I figured I'd do something good to the one boy. So I went, I said, I'm going to take you to the local school, and I'm going to enroll you in the local school. And, uh, then later you can follow your brother's footsteps, maybe, and, and, uh. But I wanted him to have a good education, so I said, I, don't worry, I will take care of myself when you're at school, but I want you to go there. And so he started going to school. And then the next day, his father came to me and was very angry. And he said, you're taking my hands away from me. Uh, my child, he does not need to go to school and learn English and or French. Uh, all he needs to know is the Koran. The Koran teaches him right from wrong. That's all he needs to know. And so I, uh, I had to back away because that was, uh, the custom in his area. The older son went to Bamako, but he didn't want the younger son. He wanted someone to be there to help him when he gets older. So, uh, uh, that, that boy continued to work with me for the rest of the time I was there.

MUSA: [00:19:00] What was your interaction with other people in town? You were in a village setting.

DALRYMPLE: [00:19:06] I had very good friends, and a number of them were Tuaregs, the nomadic people from the desert. And it's interesting, the, the Tuaregs lived on the outside of town in tents generally. And I would go up to their tents at night and they would always have, uh, tea. Uh, there was a tea ceremony. It was three little shot glasses, uh, of tea you would drink in, in sequence. So you'd, they would have a small little Arab teapot. Uh, they would make the first batch of tea, and they had different categories, qualities of tea. And one was *quatre mille onze*, 4011, 4012, 4013, where the Chinese, uh, classes of the, of the

quality of, of, uh, of tea. So if you had a *quatre mille onze*, that was the best.

DALRYMPLE: [00:20:00] And so, uh, we would have tea. Uh, you would make the first batch, and then you'd pour it around in little shot glasses, and you'd drink that, and they'd make noise drinking it [slurps] like that. And, uh, uh, then you would have the second batch, which got sweeter every. And you would have three batches. So you'd have three glasses of tea for one, one round. We would do this on the outskirts of town. Uh, and it's amazing. The Tuaregs, uh, the cows would be on the side. And after the tea, you could have milk. And like I said, at night you could have fresh milk. Uh, and each cow had its name, and so they could call the cow. They would, I remember just one being named Tess. They called Tess, Tess! And Tess would come over and let them milk her, and then, uh, then they would share the milk. Uh, and they didn't have them tied down. These cows just came in and knew where they were supposed to be.

MUSA: [00:20:59] Very interesting. What, what kind of, um, uh, language, uh, interaction? Did any of them speak English, or did you learn the local language? And you said there are several tribes. So you were mostly with the Tuaregs?

DALRYMPLE: [00:21:17] Yeah. Uh, I, uh, spent a lot of time studying in French. And when I left.

MUSA: [00:21:24] In French, of course.

DALRYMPLE: [00:21:25] Yeah, and when I left, um, uh, Peace Corps Mali, uh, I later got a job with UN and people complimented me and said your French is the best we've ever heard because I, I really focused on French. Whereas other volunteers who were less remote, who lived around the capital, would go on weekends to the Marine house where the Marines, U.S. Marines at the embassy, would have parties and they would, they were able to speak English. I wasn't able, and so I also read French books, uh, and uh. And then I, I learned some Bambara when I went down. So, uh, but basic things and I always, uh, I say

some of the things to our kids to this day. My daughter, I always say, [speaks Bambara]. And that means little by little, the bird builds its nest. And so little things like that, uh, little bits of wisdom I try to pass on to my kids.

DALRYMPLE: [00:22:21] And but in, in there were Arabs were I lived in my village and then there were Tuaregs. Uh, the Tuaregs consider themselves, um, uh, uh, descendants of people from Mecca. So they had come from Mecca and, and entered into Mali at one point. Uh, uh, the Arabs were generally the storekeepers. They were the richer people in the, the town. Uh, the Tuareg speak Tamashek. Uh, in Tamashek I can say just a few words. Uh, uh, uh. Um. *Matola hut* is hello. [speaks Tamashek] How are you? So things like that. I learned basic Tamashek. And then there was the prayer. Uh, I'm probably pronouncing it wrong, but [speaks foreign language] Those were the prayers they would say. Uh, and, uh, certain times of the day, the entire village would go out behind, on the parade ground, and then they would pray.

DALRYMPLE: [00:23:30] Uh, some things were kind of funny. I, uh, because there were cultural differences. I was walking, got up one morning, walked along the Niger River, and it was a beautiful day, nice and cool. And I saw these two ladies sitting on a bank, uh, just sitting on the bank looking at the river. And so I walked by and I said, uh, bonjour, madame. And, uh, they didn't say, they didn't respond. And so I went back to my house and I, one of my friends came by and I said, you know, I saw two ladies there, uh, and I, they were sitting on the bank and I said good morning to them. They didn't say anything. She said, oh, you know what they're doing? They're, they're, um, defecating. So they had their robes and they were facing the river. And I just said good morning to them. And they were not going to respond.

MUSA: [00:24:20] Oh, goodness.

DALRYMPLE: [00:24:21] They were too busy with other things.

MUSA: [00:24:23] Wanted to be invisible, I guess.

DALRYMPLE: [00:24:26] Mm hmm.

MUSA: [00:24:26] Um, the, um.

DALRYMPLE: [00:24:33] So can I. Is it on? Oh. I'm sorry.

MUSA: [00:24:38] We're getting back to the, uh, project itself. Tell me more about, uh, how that, uh, all progressed.

DALRYMPLE: [00:24:48] Okay. I mentioned earlier that these silos we were making were three meters wide by two meters deep, and they would feed 4 to 5 cows for three months. We had to do some, we had to modify the plan of the silos, because sometimes we had to work in sand. So we actually had to make mud bricks, uh, to put around the, uh, the circular silo to ensure that it wouldn't cave in. So, uh, we would use, uh, sometimes along the river, a reed that grew in the river. We would send people out in pirogues, large canoes, to collect *bourgou*. It was called *bourgou*, a kind of a river sugar cane, but a very small stem. And they would bring that in by, by pirogues. And we would have a log next to the silo and chop the, the silage into small pieces until it was filled up.

DALRYMPLE: [00:25:47] And uh, so that worked very well. We had to use that so that the sand wouldn't fall, wouldn't collapse. And we were going, progressing very well until we came to this one village. And we said, now you have to take the pirogues out and go get the *bourgou* grass and then bring it back in, and then we're going to chop it up and make silage. And they said, we're not going. And we said, well, you have to go out and get the grass, otherwise we can't make a silo. We're not going. And then we asked and then the, the translator asked him them why. And uh, apparently the week before they were out in the pirogue and a hippo came and broke the pirogue in two and killed everyone in the, in the pirogue. So there are these kind of obstacles that, that you have to understand, uh, that, that prevent you from doing your work.

DALRYMPLE: [00:26:38] So we did nevertheless do 22 silos during the first year, and we did 14 in the second year. The second year, we had a, a budget cut. Uh, USAID has less money, and we were more or less left on our own. We had money for fuel, but that was about it. And, uh, so, and then the second year, also, uh, the government began requisitioning, uh, our, our vehicle, our Land Cruiser, Land Rover, uh, to do other livestock related work. So, uh, and, uh, I was obliged to keep the fuel in a small room on the side of my house. That's where we kept the fuel. And we had a tragic, uh, event because the government, the head of our, our region would come in and want to borrow fuel.

DALRYMPLE: [00:27:40] So we had, I had two barrels, uh, 50 gallon drums of, of fuel and one was almost, it was less than half full and the other one was completely full. And so they came at night. And so on the side of my house then they had, uh, come in and they had to lift the one barrel up on top of the other one to be able to siphon it properly. And while they were doing that, they, they had set down their kerosene lamp and the barrel fell down and the gasoline caught fire. And so the side of my house just was filled with fire. They ran out, I ran out, and I was telling the neighbors, we were getting a crowd. Go away, go away! Uh. It's dangerous. Please go away. And they didn't go away.

DALRYMPLE: [00:28:29] Uh, and amazingly, they knew what to do, and I, I just. We don't have, we didn't have fire extinguishers, but they knocked a hole in the side of my house, mud house. They knocked a hole in there very quickly. And then they started throwing sand inside that room. The sand and more sand and more sand and that sand put out the fire. It was amazing. And when we did go in there after the fire was put out because it couldn't get oxygen, the fire couldn't go on, we went inside and the barrel that was full of gasoline was bloated. Uh, if it had gone any longer, much longer, it would have blown up and there would have been many people either killed or injured.

MUSA: [00:29:13] Ah.

DALRYMPLE: [00:29:13] So. But it shows you how people in developed countries, uh, knew better than I, uh, from the West. They knew better than I how to act, to react to a fire like that.

MUSA: [00:29:25] Yeah. How to deal with those issues.

DALRYMPLE: [00:29:27] Mm hmm.

MUSA: [00:29:27] With the resources available.

DALRYMPLE: [00:29:29] Right.

MUSA: [00:29:29] Now what other kind of problems did you run into, um, while you were in country with your project? Just possibly personal issues?

DALRYMPLE: [00:29:40] Uh, misuse of materials. Because I worked with the government, as I mentioned, the government will often borrow fuel, and it would take a long time, uh, to return if it, if they did return any of the things. Uh, they also used the, during the second year of the project, vehicle for other purposes. They would take borrow the car and then they'd go out for a week or more. And then I would be there. And at times I'd be forced, we were also allocated in, in my, in my region, with a small boat with an outboard motor. So I was able to continue work by going up and down the river with this boat. And we still were able to keep going with the, uh, the silage making.

MUSA: [00:30:25] Who provided the car and the boat? That was the, um.

DALRYMPLE: [00:30:30] It was financed by USAID.

MUSA: [00:30:32] Okay.

DALRYMPLE: [00:30:32] Okay, and they, they did provide us with strong support the first year, but then they had funding difficulties the second year. And that, that affected our ability to do work. But we still did 14 silos, uh, the second year compared with 22 the first year.

MUSA: [00:30:48] Did the silos you build the first year get used again the second year?

DALRYMPLE: [00:30:53] Yes. They kept, you could keep going. And later, I later got hired by the UN. I was sent back to Mopti, to Mali, and I worked in Mopti. And I was really thrilled that some people would come up to me and I said I was a Peace Corps volunteer. And are you one of those people who were making those silos? And they wanted to know how, if I could help them make silos a number of years later.

DALRYMPLE: [00:31:17] Uh, there are several also interesting happenings that happened, uh, while I was there. Uh, one was the moon landing. I would sit out at night and, uh, around the campfire. The Tuaregs would be there and they'd talk about things and I'd talk. Somehow or another, the, the, the moon landing, the U.S. sending, uh, people to the moon, to walk on the moon, came up. And they, and one of the Tuaregs said, that's not true. I know what happened. I know what happened. He said, you Americans, you took your mobile, they called it a mobile. You took the mobile, and you flew up to Canada and you got rocks up there. And then you came back and said you were on the moon. So that's the way they, they perceived it. They said, you can't go up to the moon. It's not possible.

DALRYMPLE: [00:32:02] Another time, uh, we were out and there was a solar eclipse. And, uh, it's an amazing thing. I mean, it's here. Everybody is told a solar eclipse is coming. Everybody knows about it and they're waiting. But here it just happens. And all of a sudden people are up on the rooftops banging on pots and pans and they're making a lot of noise, banging on pots and pans. And so we're wondering what, what's happening here. And then I went up and asked one of my friends and they said, well, you know, the cat has swallowed the sun and they have to make a lot of noise for the cat to vomit it back up. And so sure enough, the cat vomited up the sun and everything was back to normal. So things like that, uh, are fascinating to hear how people who are uneducated and, uh, let's say underdeveloped, how they view the U.S.

DALRYMPLE: [00:33:00] Uh, there was a tragedy while I was there, uh, due to, ah, I guess I'd say incompetence or negligence, but, uh, uh, uh, the country, uh, had an air, uh, a commercial airline called Air Mali. And Air Mali would fly from Bamako to Timbuktu and to several other, to Gao in the north, other places. And, uh, I got to know a Tuareg who spoke fluent English. He had studied, I think, in the U.S. But many people from these kind of what we call primitive societies, they come to the U.S. or they go to England and they learn the language, and then they want to go home because they, they love that life, the life they grew up in.

DALRYMPLE: [00:33:56] Anyway, uh, this man who I met, uh, went and got on a plane from Timbuktu, and the plane took off and it crashed about 200 yards from the runway and caught fire. Uh, the water truck wasn't ready. So by the time they got the water truck ready to go and to go and try to put out the fire, it was too late. Everyone inside had burned to death. So it shows you how, how, uh, let's say incompetent in some respects they were in, in, in making, in security issues and, uh, uh, ensuring that, uh, planes are, are, are, things are in readiness for any kind of emergency.

MUSA: [00:34:50] Safety precautions.

DALRYMPLE: [00:34:51] Safety precautions, right.

MUSA: [00:34:54] Now. Um, you were there for two years. You didn't have a break in between, did you, the first and second year?

DALRYMPLE: [00:35:03] No, I didn't have a break, but I did have a vacation. So after the first year, I figured, well, I'm going to go on a on a trip. So I took a trip to, uh, Ivory Coast. Ivory Coast at the time was called the Paris of West Africa. Uh, the president later built a basilica in his hometown, Yamoussoukro, which he made sure was about one meter or more bigger than Saint Peter's. So it is considered the largest basilica in the world. But not many people go there because it's just not, the population won't, uh, isn't great. So, uh, I went to Ivory Coast. I took a train down, uh, from the border with Mali and went to, uh, to Abidjan. Abidjan is the capital.

DALRYMPLE: [00:35:59] And I, the first night I spent, uh, in a poorer part of town called Treichville, and it was dirty. It wasn't nice. And I figured, well, I'm going to live it up. I'm only here on vacation once, so I decided I'm going to blow my money for 1 or 2 days and stay in the Hotel Ivoire, the Ivory Hotel, which was one of the nicest in town. So I went there and I had, uh, a bottle of wine and a bathtub and was enjoying myself. And, uh, uh, then I went out, walked around, and there was a big crowd in front of a building, and I was asking, what's happening here? And it turned out that the president, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, was dedicating a hotel, and there was a Rolls Royce parked in front. And so there was a crowd in front of him. He was saying something.

DALRYMPLE: [00:36:52] So I was kind of pushing my way through the crowd with my camera. And, uh, when I came out of the crowd after taking a picture, my wallet was gone. And so, interestingly enough that when I finally developed my, my film, I had a picture of the guy pickpocketing my, uh, uh, my, my pickpocketing. And I had my money in my front pocket because I had been pickpocketed earlier, earlier in Bamako with, in my back pocket and moved it to my front pocket. And here's a picture of a man turning around with his hand reaching toward my pocket. And I don't know how he got it out without me knowing. Fortunately, I had another, um, pouch where I had my passport and, uh, other important documents. So I was able to get home, get home to to Bamako.

MUSA: [00:37:48] Wow.

DALRYMPLE: [00:37:48] So it is, um, you have to be careful of scammers in Africa, in the capitals, uh, and you have to be careful of. But in general, the people are very kind and are very happy to see any foreigners.

MUSA: [00:38:05] Did you, um, have any regrets about going, or any special, um, appreciation for the country having gone there? I mean, pluses or minuses?

DALRYMPLE: [00:38:22] No, I, I love Mali. It's kind of a second home to me, and it hurts me to see what it's going through now. Uh, to a certain extent, I

understand the turmoil, uh, because historically, for example, Africa was carved up in the 18, 1884, I think it was, the Berlin Conference. They cut up Africa. And, uh, so I understand how that has affected the country. The Tuaregs, for example, their homeland is part in Algeria, part in Mali, part in what was Upper Volta, part in Mauritania. That was their homeland. And they're not allowed now to go from one part of their homeland to another because they're going across national borders.

DALRYMPLE: [00:39:19] Um, so, um, uh, I, uh, understand, uh, what the country is going through right now. They've had, uh, an overthrow of government, and right now it's dangerous. Uh, the Tuaregs were given when I, when I went back working with UN to Mali, there was a Tuareg minister of rural development. So there they were power sharing. Um, but since then there have been opposition groups. And, uh, uh, Mali is not a safe place to travel to today.

MUSA: [00:39:55] You felt safe when you were there, though.

DALRYMPLE: [00:39:58] I felt safe when I was there.

MUSA: [00:40:00] Looking back on your full experience, um, you know the Peace Corps has its three goals. How do you feel about having introduced, uh, or helped the country with, uh, solving a problem?

DALRYMPLE: [00:40:19] I mentioned earlier that when I came back to Mali, I lived in Mopti and uh, uh, with the UN, uh. Someone came up to me and said, are you one of the people who did pit silos? So he wanted me to come and show him how to do it. Uh, I also, when I came back to Mali, came up with this idea of a nonprofit restaurant. Uh, so, uh, it, it was a bar too. You could buy alcohol there, but it was mainly a restaurant. It was based on a another kind of a worldwide restaurant called L'Eau Vive. There's one in Rome. There was one in Vietnam, there's one in Burkina Faso. And I went to the one in Burkina Faso at the time. And they have a restaurant. They sell food, but the profits of that restaurant go to help the poor, okay?

DALRYMPLE: [00:41:16] So we started a little restaurant when I went back to Mali and the profits went to help, uh, the poor. And we hired people. We hired a woman, uh, to cook the chickens. We would go out into the bush, buy chickens at a dollar each, bring them to our restaurant. She would cook them up, and we'd sell them for \$3 each or more. And then she would get, uh, a commission on each chicken that she cooked up. Uh, and she was these, these were destitute Tuaregs for the most part. There was a young boy who was an orphan. He used to take, uh, um, serve at the tables. There was another, another boy who also helped, uh, uh, while he was the bartender.

DALRYMPLE: [00:42:01] Uh, but anyway, all of the money went back into the, into the bar and it was helping with community, community projects. We were planting trees. We were doing things, um, uh, good for the community. We made trenches for, uh, sewage trenches. Um, and so, uh, uh, being there, uh, and living with the people, uh, makes you feel their problems or experience their problems. And then, uh, a lot of times you can, uh, with very little assistance, you can help them improve their lives.

MUSA: [00:42:43] Now, you worked with women with this restaurant, and presumably you worked mostly with men with the silos.

DALRYMPLE: [00:42:49] Right.

MUSA: [00:42:49] Was there, uh, were there any, what were the gender roles in general?

DALRYMPLE: [00:42:56] Uh, in terms of the livestock? Uh, the men would, would lead the cows south for the transhumance, the migration south, went during the peak of the dry season. It was the women who would milk the cows for the children, okay? So the babies, uh, well, the mother would breastfeed as much as she could, but as the children got older, they needed more milk. They would milk the cows. The women milked the cows a lot of times. Uh, so. And, uh, uh, they would also go to the wells, to get the water from the wells. And to a certain extent, in some places they did, um, uh, small scale gardening. They had little gardens

where there was, uh, water available. So I remember eating tomatoes, lettuce, and, uh, simple onions, uh, that, that were grown in, in wadis. Wadis are, are uh, wet areas.

MUSA: [00:44:04] Mm hmm. Um, the second goal of the Peace Corps is to help the, uh, country where you served understand Americans. Uh, do you think you, um, helped them understand what our culture is about?

DALRYMPLE: [00:44:24] Uh. They liked Americans. I mean, there was no animosity when I was there. I had no negative vibes from anyone. Uh, so, uh, and then I often came across people later in my career, uh, working in Africa, etcetera, who would come up to me and say, do you know Mrs. Susan or Miss Susan? Or do you know Mister, Mister Bob? And no. He was my teacher. He was my teacher when I was in, in, um, in grammar school. And I, I'm proud to say that my son, uh, kind of followed my footsteps as a Peace Corps volunteer. And he was assigned to Mozambique, and he was a chemistry biology teacher in Mozambique. And so he had some of those strange same experiences people ask about, uh, the teachers would ask about Mrs. This or Mr. This, and they were my teacher growing up.

DALRYMPLE: [00:45:33] So, um, yeah, they had a very favorable, uh, um, opinion of the U.S. and the aid that was given to, to help them. And so I was very gratified to hear that. I never had any, any really, uh, anger about the U.S., for example, with the Vietnam War or anything about other U.S. politics. So they were very appreciative of their contacts with Americans.

MUSA: [00:46:06] And the third goal of the Peace Corps is to help Americans understand other cultures. Uh, we'll get into your experience after your Peace Corps service. And you did not come right back to the United States, did you?

DALRYMPLE: [00:46:23] Uh. Uh, yes, I did come back to the U.S. for a short while. Uh, but before I did, before I did, I, uh, I visited. Well, the, uh, the UN resident coordinator came and spoke at the Peace Corps office in Bamako, and I was present when he spoke and talked about the role

of the UN in development and how we could assist, uh, complement each other. And so after he spoke, I went to the UN office and I asked if there were any, uh, employment opportunities after my Peace Corps service. And he was sent, he sent me to the director of the World Food Program. And, uh, first he sent me to the files, vacancy announcement file. I went through them, but they were all expired.

DALRYMPLE: [00:47:18] And so, uh, I went to the head of the UN World Food Program, and he was actually looking for people. So, uh, I ended up filling out an application, and I think I was, uh, smart when I, when I left Bamako at the end of my Peace Corps assignment, I traveled to Dakar in Senegal and met a Belgian on, on the train out. And he, um, uh, arranged for us to take a cargo ship. We boarded it on a cargo ship and went to Spain. From Spain, I went to Rome, the headquarters of the World Food Program, and there I met, uh, uh, an official there. And he had received, uh, my CV, my application, from the man in Mali. And, and then about six months later, I received an offer from World Food Program, and I was able to continue my work for another 30 years living overseas.

MUSA: [00:48:29] Wow. So you went to many countries. You served, uh, the UN. Your Peace Corps experience led you to this UN job, which led you to life in multiple other countries?

DALRYMPLE: [00:48:42] That's right. And, uh, occasionally we would come in contact with Peace Corps volunteers. Uh, and, uh, because the World Food Program had programs which were called food for work. So the World Food Program would provide food for, uh, villagers to build assets. They were called assets. So that could be, uh, planting trees. Uh, they could be fruit trees so that they have assets in the village to, to have fruit for, to improve nutrition. Uh, they could be trees for, for lumber. There's a particular tree that I became very passionate about. It's called moringa oleifera. Uh, in India, it's called the drumstick tree. And they also refer to it as mother's little helper, because you can eat the leaves. They're very high in iron, vitamin A, and a number of other micronutrients.

DALRYMPLE: [00:49:40] And this tree grows about two and a half to three feet in the first year. And within three years you can harvest the leaves of this tree, which has leaves somewhat like the mimosa tree, which you'll find in the U.S. The little leaflets you take apart and then you dry them, and then you can pound it into a powder and you sprinkle that on your food. Uh, and in countries like Malawi, because of the British influence, uh, the main staple there is cornmeal. They don't have protein. All they have is starch. And because the British were more interested in growing tea than, uh, nutritious foods. So, uh, there we, uh, provided, uh, uh, a mixture of soybean flour and, uh, corn, cornmeal. And it improved, uh, the, the nutrition to the extent that, uh, cases of kwashiorkor or marasmus went dramatically down.

DALRYMPLE: [00:50:48] So we worked with volunteers in some countries doing that, uh, and uh, uh, you. It's important to see impact. They talk about sustainable economic development. Uh, there was a company called DSM that was producing what they called sprinkles, but they were pharmaceutical, a pharmaceutical powder that you sprinkle on your food. And, uh, and it improves the nutrition dramatically. The problem with that is these are pharmaceutically made things. And what they were trying to do was open markets. So you're not teaching people, helping people to help themselves. You're trying to create a market where you can exploit those people. So our moringa tree you grow in your backyard. Once it gets big, you can feed your family and you can, uh, avert, uh, severe malnutrition amongst your children. And it's, you're in control. In other words, it is, it is, uh, no one is profiting from it except you and your family and your village.

MUSA: [00:51:54] Hmm. And, um, going on to how you, um, have conducted any kind of educational activities after you've come back. I, I'm aware that you have given talks, um, to civic groups. Uh, can you elaborate a little bit on what you've done?

DALRYMPLE: [00:52:19] Well, I have spoken to, uh, at least one university, Lehigh University, about what we call sustainable economic development. And I have focused on things like this moringa tree to show them. And they have international students attending that university, as does Lehigh,

uh, Lafayette College, another local college. Uh, and so, uh, international students will go home and, uh, and so, uh, we. I tried to impress on them the fact that you can, you can, uh, uh, resolve the problem of malnutrition in impoverished countries with very little, uh, uh, financial, um, investment. So very, uh, and you're putting it, you're empowering people. You're putting the solution into their hands, not handing out. You're not handing out food. You're, uh, finding ways for them to either grow their own food or improve the food that they have already.

DALRYMPLE: [00:53:29] So technology is important. Uh, but appropriate technology is even more important. I often think of a time when I was in Mopti, in Mali, back in Mali again, and went to a, uh, a garden, uh, a vegetable garden where they were growing things to improve nutrition in the area. And one of the guys in the garden came running up to me and said, sir, sir, can you help us? I said, why? Well, our pump doesn't work. And, uh, I went to look at the pump. It was a solar pump, okay? And it wasn't working because the termites had eaten into the resin and bitten into one of the, uh, the circuits. It stopped. And they said, we have money. Where can we buy another one of these solar panels?

DALRYMPLE: [00:54:24] It was a German project. The Germans went home after the project was ended, but there's no way they could find that part of what they needed. And so, rather than solar panels, a better option would have been a converted bicycle into a pump that they, with their own technology, can fix it. Rather than trying to write to Germany and try to get a high tech solution to a solution that can, uh, rather than a solution that can be appropriate. Appropriate technology is the key to development.

MUSA: [00:55:01] Yeah. How, um, how do you feel the Peace Corps has affected your life?

DALRYMPLE: [00:55:11] It affects the way you think, as I just described. Uh, you don't want, um, big companies coming in and building dams such as the Akosombo Dam in Ghana, uh, that destroy homes and destroy livelihoods and just create power, maybe for the big cities. You want to,

uh, uh, find appropriate ways to address problems. Even here in the U.S., uh, we could be doing a lot more. Uh, recycling is a big issue in our area, and it's not being done as it could be done. Um, uh, now they have single stream recycling and it all comes, it's all mixed together and it gets, I'm not sure how it, if, if it is separated or how it's separated. So people make a, they do try to separate the plastic from the glass when they give it to the company, but the company just dumps it all in one single stream.

DALRYMPLE: [00:56:13] So uh, uh, certain things can, um, can be applied here as well. One thing that I remember, uh, because the Sahara Desert is being deforested. It's moving. I think I heard something like, like at least ten, ten, 15, 20 kilometers a year. It moves south, the desert. Uh, and so, um, uh, uh, how do you stop that? But you have to build, uh, uh, barriers, tree barriers and, um. Uh, a lot more can be done.

MUSA: [00:56:57] How, how about, um, your personal life? Has it had an impact, this Peace Corps experience? Uh, led to anything specific?

DALRYMPLE: [00:57:11] Well, we live in a, uh. I mentioned after Peace Corps I was hired by the United Nations, and I spent 30 years living in at least 15 countries. And, uh, my wife is, uh, from Bhutan and our, our children, my son, uh, my youngest son, uh, was a Peace Corps volunteer in Mozambique. So he came back also with strong views about development. Our daughter works with a non-government organization in Holland which focuses on the environment and conservation. So it has, uh, our family is very sensitive to the problems related to global warming.

MUSA: [00:57:58] Hmm. Um, is there anything, um, that you would like to add to the interview before we finish?

DALRYMPLE: [00:58:07] Uh, maybe just to say that the, uh, the ideals and the vision of John F. Kennedy is living on, uh, still. It's very sad to see that Peace Corps funding has been affected recently. Maybe the funding is not what it should be. Uh, it is a sound investment. Uh, it, uh, uh, creates friends for the U.S. Uh, and, uh, opens the door.

DALRYMPLE: [00:58:38] I often talk to young people and say, you need to get out of the box. Uh, the area we live in is very rural, and you may have even gone. Well, first of all, you have to go to college in some form. Uh, whether it's a local college, a community college, or another college. But you need to have a higher education, and you need to, uh, uh, yeah. Uh, try as much as you can to reach out, uh, in other directions and, uh, and in areas which count, like conservation, like, uh, uh, green energy, uh, things like that to, to focus on, on, on a better world for us and making us a better example, uh, for the world.

MUSA: [00:59:32] Well, I, uh, I think that will finish the interview. Appreciate your time. Thank you.

DALRYMPLE: [00:59:40] Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]