

Sarah Connolly-Jordan Oral History Interview
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Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Sarah (Sally) Connolly-Jordan served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala from 1967 to 1969 on a rural community development project.

Access

Open.

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Oral History Interview

with

Sarah Connolly-Jordan

March 31, 2003
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

By Robert Klein

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

KLEIN: [00:00:01] Today is March 31, 2003. This is Bob Klein. I'm interviewing Sarah "Sally" Connolly-Jordan, who was in Guatemala 1967 to '69 in rural community development. We can start by going back, oh, maybe a year before you joined.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:00:22] Mm hmm.

KLEIN: [00:00:22] And you can talk about where you were at then.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:00:25] Well, uh, a year before I left, I was still living at home with my widowed mother.

KLEIN: [00:00:32] Home being?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:00:33] Home being Philadelphia, and had been thinking about the Peace Corps quite a bit. I was out in the working world and um.

KLEIN: [00:00:44] Where have you done a degree?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:00:46] I had done a degree at Saint Joseph's College in Philadelphia.

KLEIN: [00:00:52] Majoring?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:00:52] In education. I had taught initially for a year, but I had the travel bug, so decided that I didn't want to stay in the classroom, and I joined the airlines.

KLEIN: [00:01:08] Oh.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:01:08] So I was doing quite a bit of traveling and seeing the world and just thought that I would like to stop off in some place and really spend some time there rather than just in and out so.

KLEIN: [00:01:24] Let's go back to when you were in college.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:01:27] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:01:27] Did you do any kind of volunteer work?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:01:29] Oh, definitely, yeah. Yeah. Well, starting in high school and I will say the good nuns taught us many fine things back then, that was part of our curriculum to have to do, not have to do. Well, you did have to do it, but you did it and you liked it. But every year there was some kind of, some kind of volunteer work, even wheeling patients around in the Philadelphia hospitals and things like that. So, so yeah, the seeds of volunteerism, I guess we're born at a very young age.

KLEIN: [00:02:05] Through high school, did you do any travel?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:02:09] No, but I dreamt of traveling, so that was my, uh, that was my goal. Most of my classmates, I guess, were dreaming of getting married and having children and things like that. But I was different. I wanted to see the world first. So that was my primary goal and motivation. And actually joining the airlines was one way to achieve that, which I did.

KLEIN: [00:02:34] When you went to college, though, at that point, your initial intention was to become a teacher?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:02:38] That's right. Because my mother was a teacher. My aunt was a teacher. My brother was a teacher. The whole family were teachers. But I had this wanderlust. I was.

KLEIN: [00:02:47] Through college, do you particularly recall the presidency of Kennedy?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:02:56] Um. Actually, I was. Yeah, I do. Of course I do. Of course I do. I'm just thinking. Yeah, I loved them. I just loved them. And, you know, it was the first time I became interested in politics, interested in the country, interested in how we were relating with the world. And uh yeah.

KLEIN: [00:03:22] You grew up in a Catholic family.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:03:23] Oh, definitely.

KLEIN: [00:03:24] And of course he was the first Catholic president.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:03:26] That's right, yeah. And I might add, this is a little aside, I didn't vote for him because it was my first election and there was a part of me that was saying, I didn't want anyone ever to accuse me of voting for him because he was Catholic. But it shows how politically naive I was at the time. You know,

he actually, I mean, people can't believe that I didn't vote for him for that reason. I mean, it doesn't speak very highly of my intelligence at the time.

KLEIN: [00:03:53] Do you recall hearing of the Peace Corps in the early days when it first, '61 was when it started?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:03:58] Yeah. I mean, he, uh. Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:04:00] And your reaction?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:04:01] My reaction was, isn't that great? I loved it. I kept following it.

KLEIN: [00:04:05] You were, in '61 you were?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:04:07] I was still in school. I was.

KLEIN: [00:04:10] High school or college?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:04:11] No, college. Yeah. So that, uh, yeah. And then shortly after that, I got out and then I worked for the airlines.

KLEIN: [00:04:22] For how many years?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:04:25] Wow. Gosh, it's been so long ago. I forget. All told, I think I worked for the airlines for about 11 years, but I worked for them when I came back from Peace Corps. United Airlines, I worked for. And they were one of the few places, I guess, that they were, first of all, they were very good to their employees. And they, what really triggered me was that you could take a leave of absence to go in the Peace Corps.

KLEIN: [00:04:53] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:04:53] And I guess being young and single and on my own, so to speak, you know, having job security was a part of

my agenda. So that was like the clincher that said, OK, I can afford to do this. I will have a job when I come back and I'll be fine so.

KLEIN: [00:05:12] Where'd you travel as a stewardess, were you national or international?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:05:14] No, I wasn't a stewardess. My hips were too big. My hips were too big when I, that's what they told me back then. And I look at them today, I, but no, I worked on the ticket counter.

KLEIN: [00:05:29] OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:05:29] I worked at Kennedy Airport in New York and then followed up, came back to Philadelphia and worked in the center city ticket offices.

KLEIN: [00:05:38] But that enabled you to do a lot of traveling?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:05:39] Oh, I traveled all over. Oh, I was on an airplane every chance I got.

KLEIN: [00:05:44] Overseas?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:05:44] Overseas, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:05:45] Where did you go?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:05:45] Oh, Italy. France. Germany. Scandinavia. Vienna. Um. England. Ireland.

KLEIN: [00:05:58] In college, did you study language?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:06:01] I was always in love with languages. I, uh, well, in high school, a good Catholic high school, I had four years of Latin, three years of French. In college I had two years of

German. And loved languages. But I always felt they didn't teach it adequately. They taught it visually, not orally.

KLEIN: [00:06:26] Yes. Yes.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:06:27] And so when I actually did go in the Peace Corps and was learning Spanish for the first time at age 29, I found it very difficult to tackle a new language that I had never had any background with. The Latin helped out a lot but.

KLEIN: [00:06:44] So what was the process by which you decided that, OK, I think I'll join the Peace Corps?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:06:49] I just said this is the only way I'm going to be able to go and live abroad and be not and sort of taken care of in a way. But it was more than that. It was, it was an adventure. It was a real adventure. And it also was something that I believed in. I really heard the message, I guess, that I really thought that we ought to do, get to know the rest of the world a little bit.

KLEIN: [00:07:20] Do you particularly recall the application process?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:07:24] Yeah. Yeah, well, I went down to I think the Customs House here in Philadelphia. Took a test and filled out tons and tons of questionnaires, I guess. And other than that, I guess the next thing was, uh, I got a letter saying, can you join us at X, Y, Z?

KLEIN: [00:07:49] When you fill in the application, I think there's a place where you indicate where you would like to go. Do you remember what you had said?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:07:58] Well, initially I said I'd go anywhere. I really was open and, um, hadn't really given much thought. I mean, there wasn't any part of the world that I wouldn't have wanted to see. And my first invitation to join them, which came very

quickly, was to Ivory Coast. And I figured that was because I had the French language skills. But I had started to think after I had done that, that maybe, maybe I ought to think of a language that I could use when I came back. And so I switched. When I had to turn down the Ivory Coast, I then narrowed my countries to Spanish speaking. And then the second invitation came to join this Guatemala group.

KLEIN: [00:08:46] OK. And the invitation was to Guatemala and to rural community development.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:08:51] Yeah. Mm hmm.

KLEIN: [00:08:52] OK. About which you knew?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:08:55] I knew zilch. Having been born and raised in the city, I mean, rural, alone, the word was like foreign language to me. And that actually became quite a, quite a joke in a way. I think most of the volunteers were from cities or suburbs near cities, and most of us weren't brought up on a farm or knew anything about agriculture. So it was, it was rather comical to see us city slickers.

KLEIN: [00:09:26] How did your family deal with your decision to go?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:09:28] Well. They were, they were a little surprised, but not really, because I was always off on a plane going somewhere. My mother, though, who was getting up there, and this has to do with my Catholic background. The first question she said is, how are you going to get to Mass on Sunday? And I said, I don't know. And I really didn't. And she acquiesced. It was, you know, it was something that I just was ready to do.

KLEIN: [00:10:05] How about your fellow workers?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:10:07] They were just so excited for me. They just thought it was terrific. In fact, another woman in the airline business in

the city of Philadelphia, I forget, I think she worked for Sabena Airlines, which was the Belgium Airlines. She had already gone, and I wasn't that friendly with her. But it was not a, out of the ordinary for people to be doing this. So, oh, they threw me a great big party. I had a wonderful going away party. And one of the, one of my colleague's husbands who was a commercial artist, did a fantastic pencil drawing of me, which I still have to this day that I love, you know, showing me in the jungle, hanging up my laundry on a clothesline in the trees. And I treasure that. It was wonderful.

KLEIN: [00:10:55] Had you known anyone who was in the Peace Corps up through the years?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:10:58] No, never knew anyone who had actually been there. No.

KLEIN: [00:11:00] And did you know anything about Guatemala?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:11:04] No, except that I always had loved geography as a student, so I knew where it was. I knew my, I knew my globe well. I knew the countries. And I started reading up more in depth about it. And it really wasn't that far away as the crow flies. So it wasn't like going to Africa or places like that. I did know that we couldn't come home for the two years, but I thought if anything had happened at home, you know, I was close.

KLEIN: [00:11:33] Yeah. What, uh, where did you go for training?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:11:37] We went to University of New Mexico in Las Cruces.

KLEIN: [00:11:40] So you flew from Philly?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:11:42] From Philadelphia there. Had to meet a bus at the airport, which was identified. Um. And I remember sitting on

that bus like waiting for other people to get on. It wasn't just for us. I think there were other public passengers using this bus, but I could just spot. I knew right away who the other volunteers were. And in fact, one woman got on, a girl then. She came and sat next to me. She ended up being my roommate and she's still one of my closest friends. So from that moment on, we were all headed in the same direction. I remember being. For all my traveling, I had not been to the Southwest. So seeing the desert and the brownness, that's what really sort of got to me and depressed me really. The brownness was not to my liking.

KLEIN: [00:12:42] Do you remember what months it was?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:12:44] Sure, February. February of, uh, February of '67. And I guess, I guess the plane must have gone to El Paso.

KLEIN: [00:12:54] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:12:55] And then got the bus up to the university.

KLEIN: [00:12:58] In Las Cruces?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:12:59] In Las Cruces, yeah. And Las, I mean, the university itself looked like desert. And we were living in barrack-like dorms. The guys were on the first floor and the women were on the second floor, but we had quite a few married couples.

KLEIN: [00:13:19] You were on the campus?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:13:20] We were right on the campus. Oh, yeah. Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:13:23] Do you remember first gathering as a group?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:13:28] Uh, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:13:29] You're, I mean, now you're 29.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:13:31] I'm 29, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:13:33] Your impressions of the group, I mean.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:13:35] Well, I guess my first impression was, what have I gotten myself into? I just thought that I may have made the biggest mistake of my life. I just, it was just so many different people, I guess, from what I had been used to and brought up with. And it wasn't that I was frightened. It was just that, um, well, this is really going to be different. And yet in hindsight, it was wonderful because in quick, quick time you become truly bonded. And they were the most wonderful people in the world. Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:14:18] Was there a distinct group just for Guatemala to train together?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:14:22] Oh, yeah. We were all training for the same.

KLEIN: [00:14:25] So it wasn't a mix of people going to Central America?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:14:28] No, no, it was all for this specific project, which was, well.

KLEIN: [00:14:33] Yeah, go ahead.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:14:34] Well, within the training there was, it was called rural community development. And most of us did do that. But there were some isolated assignments, like some of the people that had artistic background were sent up into the highlands and worked with the Indians in the villages to set up co-ops. So there was somewhat of a mixed assignment, but the people that got those assignments were either trained as artists and also had some Spanish skills so that they were

more proficient in language, that they could pick up the Indian dialects because the object was to have a solid survival rate.

KLEIN: [00:15:24] But they were part of your training?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:15:25] They were still part of our same training group, because even in the towns it was, it was somewhat of a rural atmosphere.

KLEIN: [00:15:35] So what was, what were the components of training?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:15:39] Well, OK. First of all, language. Intensive language. I think that ate most of the day.

KLEIN: [00:15:45] How many hours a day?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:15:47] Um, gosh. Just trying to remember. I think at least 4 to 5 hours of language a day. Maybe I'm overestimating that. I don't know. But that was what we started out with in the morning. Language, language, language.

KLEIN: [00:16:00] Was it just classroom or did you have language lab with the earphones and speaking?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:16:06] Um, no, I don't. I don't remember the language lab. It's funny. I know we went to Guadalajara for two weeks halfway through training.

KLEIN: [00:16:15] Oh.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:16:15] And we were assigned to different Mexican families. And that was a good, good way to practice what we had been learning. But our teachers were excellent. They were from all different countries in South America and therefore they each had a little different dialect of their own. And we were shifted around among them so that we had, we were forced to almost

hear Spanish, and we spoke nothing but Spanish in the class, I mean.

KLEIN: [00:16:46] Just in the class though?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:16:47] Oh, yeah, just in the class. Oh, yeah. Yeah. And as well as the books and the grammar and all. But it was hard. It was very hard for me, the Spanish.

KLEIN: [00:16:58] The expectation was that in the work you were going to be doing, you would be working in Spanish?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:17:04] Oh, definitely. Oh, definitely. We were, we were assigned to people that were, first of all, extremely poor farmers. And we, that was the only way we were going to be able to communicate. Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:17:18] Was anything said that your ability to learn the language up to a certain level would be part of the selection process?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:17:25] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:17:26] And you recall how?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:17:27] Yeah, I think they used the guidelines.

KLEIN: [00:17:32] Foreign Service ratings.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:17:32] I think Foreign Service rating.

KLEIN: [00:17:33] One, two, three, four, five.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:17:34] Yes, you're right. And I believe you could even score zero. And it meant something. But I think survival rating, if I my memory was one, I think one, and I think five, which is the highest, was an educated native born. Yeah. Yeah. And

not many volunteers even got that far. But I think they wanted you to get to a one by the time you left for country of service.

KLEIN: [00:18:02] Do you recall if any of your trainees were Hispanic?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:18:06] There was one woman. I was thinking as I was talking about the five rating, because there was one woman, Ann Salemi, whom we don't know whatever happened to her, but she was a five. I mean, she was a five when she went in and very much way over us. She had been raised in South America at times and so.

KLEIN: [00:18:30] There were married couples in the group as well?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:18:32] Lots of married couples, yeah. Coming from their honeymoon, some of them, right to training.

KLEIN: [00:18:36] And with them, the expectation was that both would serve as volunteers?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:18:40] In the same location. Mm hmm, yeah, yeah, sure, sure. Oh, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:18:45] What else did you do in training?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:18:47] Well, then there was, um, oh, what do you call it?

KLEIN: [00:18:53] Cultural?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:18:54] Oh, cultural. Oh, yeah. Cultural and area studies, sure, which would be sort of like social studies. And the history. The history. The history of the country.

KLEIN: [00:19:03] American studies?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:19:05] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:19:05] You learn about communism?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:19:07] No, I don't remember studying. No, no. The emphasis was totally on the history of Guatemala and Latin America. And no, don't remember any indoctrination kind of thing, that's what I call that. But no.

KLEIN: [00:19:24] What about technical studies?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:19:25] Technical studies, we were taken out to the local agriculture parts of the campus and we had our gardens. We were planting things. And, you know, for these city slickers, you know, holding a spade and planting and all. It was, it was hands-on. I remember having to get up early one morning at 3:00 because the pigs had just had piglets and we went out and had to clip their ears to identify them. And that was quite a.

KLEIN: [00:19:56] You could handle it?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:19:57] A funny. Well, yeah, we did it, but I mean much.

KLEIN: [00:20:00] [inaudible]

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:20:01] Yeah, yeah. I did it. Much squealing like the pigs, but we did it. And then I remember having to kill a chicken single handedly and chopping off the head. And you know that was in case we were stranded I guess, if we're hungry and we had to get food to eat. And that was also quite, quite, uh, quite challenging I mean.

KLEIN: [00:20:24] But none of the training was very specific to the work you would actually be doing? I mean, it was sort of general?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:20:31] Uh, right. It was general.

KLEIN: [00:20:34] Did anyone come up from Peace Corps, Guatemala, any returned volunteers or staff?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:20:39] No, no, not that I recall. Not that I recall. Oh, wait a minute. No, no. There were. There were a couple of returned volunteers from Latin America. I can't say specifically Guatemala, but yes. Yes, there were. And I remember one woman, in fact, her name was Sarah, specifically. And she was giving us the inside on, you know, what women should wear and how we should behave and things like that. The cultural aspects of being a woman in a Latin country and what we could expect, not expect. And oh, we had home economics. I couldn't think of that because I'd never had home economics my whole life, but I had to sew. I had to learn how to sew and make dresses, because you weren't really supposed to wear pants down there, so. And we had to buy fabric and we made our own dresses and I hated that. I hated that and.

KLEIN: [00:21:43] Why?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:21:44] I'm just not very domestic. And that was, to me, a joke. I did it. I did it. But I, and I never made anything down there. I hired a local person to do anything I needed to be done. So it was so cheap.

KLEIN: [00:22:00] Were you the oldest, an older, one of the oldest in the group?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:22:06] Yes. When I arrived, I became the abuela, which means grandmother in Spanish. That was my first Spanish word. One young man who had studied Spanish came up to me and called, said, hey, an abuela, abuela. And anyway, that was the joke.

KLEIN: [00:22:23] That cut two ways.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:22:24] Right but uh.

KLEIN: [00:22:25] You were only 29.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:22:27] I know, I know. And I look back now, I was still a kid. But shortly afterwards, a 64 year old nurse came from LA, Los Angeles, and joined our group. So she took the title from me. And she's dead now. Mary Jackson, African American woman. Wonderful lady. [tape break for sirens]

KLEIN: [00:22:47] We were talking about training.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:22:49] Yeah. And Mary Jackson, I said that she took the.

KLEIN: [00:22:52] Became the grandma.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:22:52] She became the grandmother. And she was wonderful. Now she, because she was a nurse, and she actually was working in a town as a nurse. So she didn't do what we did.

KLEIN: [00:23:09] How did the group socialize?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:23:12] We would pile in a pickup truck on a Saturday night and be driven by one of the.

KLEIN: [00:23:18] In training.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:23:19] In training, yeah. Oh, yeah. In training. One of the, I call him a cow hand, I don't know what, but he looked like a cow hand to me. He was a fun guy, but he always seemed to be around. He was around when we cut the piglets' ears and he wasn't really an instructor, but he was there. And he would drive us in this pickup truck to the local bar where they played Western music, and we danced and we let off steam and drank a lot of beer and had a good time.

KLEIN: [00:23:48] Yeah. Where in the training did the Guadalajara experience come?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:23:55] I guess I was about midway through.

KLEIN: [00:23:57] Was there a selection, mid selection board? Do you recall that, with people disappearing?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:24:02] Yeah, we. Yeah, there along the way, we became conscious of so-and-so had left or so-and-so had left, but never really conscious.

KLEIN: [00:24:11] Did you all have to see a psychiatrist?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:24:13] Oh, definitely.

KLEIN: [00:24:15] And how did you handle that?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:24:16] Well, um, that was all new to me. But I will remember one interview. I don't know whether it was the first one or the second one or what, but I remember this one guy saying, and what romance are you running away from? And in a way it was true. However, I was stunned and I just remember turning and looking him straight in the eye and saying, none of your business. And actually, I think that's the right answer.

KLEIN: [00:24:59] If you say it with conviction.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:25:02] Yeah. Yeah. And, uh, so it was the first time I was ever, I guess. I guess a hot button or whatever I had reached me. And I realized it was now or never, you know, to come up with this or base it or whatever. And so but, you know, it was the truth. And, you know, so I. And that was the end of it.

KLEIN: [00:25:28] And you weren't concerned about selection? You felt you were doing well in training?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:25:33] Yeah, I felt. It was, there were moments when I thought, do I really want to do this?

KLEIN: [00:25:39] Mm hmm.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:25:40] I mean, I was really thinking this is so foreign to me. I mean, the farm work and, I mean, I was a city girl. I was born and raised and um. But they were, they were quick. They were in passing. I always loved adventure. So and I always wanted to do things that were different. So I thought, you know, this is different.

KLEIN: [00:26:03] Were you reporting back to family and friends about?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:26:05] Oh, I was a big letter writer. Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:26:07] Some of your doubts as well as the?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:26:09] Oh, sure, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:26:10] Yeah. How did the Guadalajara, how was that organized?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:26:15] Uh, well, it was organized by somebody, I don't know. But we all went down on a bus and it was a long ride. I remember that. And lots of joking and fun along the way. And when we got to Guadalajara, we were then dispersed. I guess our host families came and picked us up. And I was living with the town sheriff.

KLEIN: [00:26:39] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:26:39] Yeah. Excuse me. [tape break] To be the town sheriff.

KLEIN: [00:26:46] Uh huh.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:26:47] And one other guy in my group was assigned to the same town. I mean, they sort of had us.

KLEIN: [00:26:53] These were towns satellite to Guadalajara?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:26:55] Satellite to Guadalajara, yeah. Yeah. Neighborhoods or outposts or whatever. And Gordon, Gordon Frost was my partner. They set us up with buddies, you know, somebody that if we really had trouble, we could run to and we each knew where each other was. We would go within walking distance. And the sheriff and his wife and I think about eight children in about a three room house, three or four room. And I remember sleeping with about four of the kids in one bed. And believe me, that was culture shock. That was really culture shock. And uh, it was, that was rattling. That was rattling. Although, you know, I survived it. I survived it. It was OK. There was enough, there were enough good things occurring that were overcoming whatever.

KLEIN: [00:27:49] Were you able to use your Spanish or?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:27:52] I had to.

KLEIN: [00:27:53] Oh, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:27:53] I had to. There was no choice. Oh, yeah. And I was, I was communicating and used my hands a lot to motion and what I didn't know. But yeah, yeah, I was, I was surviving.

KLEIN: [00:28:05] And people were tolerant of that?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:28:06] Sure. Oh yeah. And they were laughing at some of my pronunciation and that always helps, you know, a laugh here and there is always.

KLEIN: [00:28:13] What was your agenda for the two weeks?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:28:19] Um.

KLEIN: [00:28:19] Other than language learning?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:28:20] I can't remember. You know, I think I. I think I went with a local school teacher. I sort of remember going to a school situation and maybe being her assistant or helping her out with certain things. Because the sheriff, of course, was doing his sheriff thing.

KLEIN: [00:28:37] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:28:37] And the wife was at home with the kids. So I think, I think maybe I was under the guise of the school teacher. The female teacher kind of took me out every day. And but I remember a local Saturday night, uh fiesta. Not fiesta, I don't know what, in the square. Everybody goes to the square on a Saturday night and they promenade around and you have to, if somebody wants to dance with you, they come and give you a cheap gold ring. And I remember being, getting a gold ring and being asked to dance in the town square. And that was, it was, it was strange. It was strange but fun. It was fun.

KLEIN: [00:29:24] Yeah. And during the two weeks, do you occasionally seek out Gordon so you could just sit and talk English?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:29:31] Yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah. You crave that. You craved it because talking a foreign language all the time is tiring. It's exhausting. It really is. It's because you have to think. You have to translate in your brain and then make it come out. And it can be very, very tiring but.

KLEIN: [00:29:51] End of the two weeks, back to?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:29:53] End of the two weeks, back to Las Cruces for the rest of the training.

KLEIN: [00:29:56] Big reunion?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:29:57] Big reunion, yeah. A lot of partying at the town bar that weekend and, oh, tales all the way back on the bus. I mean, we were laughing and comparing notes and things. I mean, it was, uh, it was probably was a real bonding experience there.

KLEIN: [00:30:16] How many were in the group at this point?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:30:17] Well, we started out with 60 some. We were pretty large group and, um, 13. I remember 13 were either let go or left during training and then another 13 dropped out or were let go in country.

KLEIN: [00:30:34] Oh, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:30:35] So I think we ended up in the low forties of people that actually stayed the whole time. And I actually, I know these statistics because I just did them going through that book.

KLEIN: [00:30:44] Yeah. That's OK. Let's come back. You're back in Las Cruces. Another 4 to 6 weeks of training?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:30:52] 4 to 6 weeks, yeah. It was 13 week training all together. Thirteen weeks, yeah. And then we.

KLEIN: [00:30:57] More of the same, pretty much same pattern?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:30:59] Yeah. Language.

KLEIN: [00:31:01] Technical studies.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:31:02] Technical studies. Just getting us used to rural life, I guess. Health issues. A lot of health issues. How to boil and how to use iodine tablets for our water. We were then starting to think of what we were to bring. [tape break] For us. And pressure cooker was something that we should buy because we didn't know what kind of veggies we were going to be finding or what kind of anything what we did. But you needed a pressure cooker. It would take forever to cook it. I remember being advised to take a cookbook, The Joy of Cooking, which I still have that same cookbook. It is so old and it's so brown, but it has meaning to me. I won't give it up. And that came in very handy because I had never really done much cooking. As I said, I'm not domestic, so I needed every bit of help when it came to the kitchen.

KLEIN: [00:32:03] Did you do any side trips out of Las Cruces as part of training?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:32:10] The only side trips, no, we was pretty intensive. And just weekends we were pretty much. I don't think, well, we didn't have wheels, we didn't have transportation. We were pretty isolated. We did a very important thing. We learned how to ride horses.

KLEIN: [00:32:30] Oh.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:32:32] That was part of the training, because we were told when we got in country we were going to be given the choice of either getting a horse or a bike for our own transportation, because we were, we knew we were going to be in the outpost.

KLEIN: [00:32:47] Well, that was the first for you.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:32:48] It certainly was. It certainly was. I had never, well, maybe a pony when I was a kid. Oh, I'll never forget the first day at this ranch. That's right. On Sundays we went to the

ranch and we'd ride a horse up the mountains, down the mountains. And I remember this woman, very western looking dried face. And where are you from? I said, Philadelphia. Go bring Pokey. So that's the horse they gave me, Pokey. And I remember getting on the horse and, oh, well, it took me a while to find that center of gravity. And especially going up the mountain and down the mountain, you keep thinking you're going to fall off. And but by the end of the afternoon and we were, we were gone a good two, two and a half hours.

KLEIN: [00:33:41] Wow.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:33:41] I remember. And it was rugged. It was rugged. And it was scary to be up high on a horse when you didn't know about it.

KLEIN: [00:33:49] You ever fall off?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:33:50] No, but one of the guys fell off. He was being cocky and he fell into a cactus plant. So, I mean, you know, it was, and we saw some rattlesnakes and thank goodness the horse didn't.

KLEIN: [00:34:02] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:34:03] But I'll just never forget as we were coming down, and of course you come down off the mountain and there's this flat plain, and then the ranch is beyond. Well, good old Pokey sees home and Pokey turns into Speedy. And I am, I am terrified. I'm terrified. I'm hanging on to him for dear life because I had gotten used to Pokey, but Pokey was heading home. And I made it. I didn't fall off. And I'm glad he, I glad he waited till the end to do that. But he took off and that was quite an experience.

KLEIN: [00:34:47] When you finally get down to Guatemala, do you have a chance to choose between the horse and the bike?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:34:52] Yeah, but I chose a bike. I had too much Philadelphia in me. I wasn't about to have a horse to take care of and.

KLEIN: [00:35:01] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:35:03] No, no, that was enough for me. Several of the guys did choose horses. You had to take care of the horses, too. I mean, it was, plus the horses. That was a funny thing because the horses were Guatemalan horses. They were little. One of the guys that did get one, I think his feet almost were touching, touching the ground. So it was, it was sort of comical in a way to see these big gringos on these little horses.

KLEIN: [00:35:32] Training's over.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:35:33] Training's over.

KLEIN: [00:35:34] Do you recall final selection? Was there much trauma?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:35:38] No, I would say that. I think anybody that made it to the last day was considered accepted. I don't remember any formal, like, diploma or anything. Maybe I have one buried somewhere, but I don't remember that. I just remember those that left or were deselected went very quietly without any, you know, it was just something that happened in the dead of night or something and no big deal.

KLEIN: [00:36:04] Did you get a chance for home leave?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:36:06] Yes, we were able to come home if we wanted to, and I did opt to come home. My sister.

KLEIN: [00:36:11] But you had already packed.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:36:13] Oh, yeah. Oh, we'd packed from there.

KLEIN: [00:36:15] Everything was in the trunk?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:36:16] Everything was gone. Yeah. And you were allowed to come home and then the next thing you'd meet up with the group, I believe in Houston. We all re-met each other in Houston before the flight to Guatemala. I think I had about three days.

KLEIN: [00:36:29] Any second thoughts when you came back to Philly?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:36:32] No, no. By this time, I was, I was fine. I was OK with it and actually looking forward to it.

KLEIN: [00:36:40] Mama didn't grab you and say, no, don't go?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:36:43] No, no, no, no, no, no. I think she was actually quite proud of me, you know, and my sister had been diagnosed with breast cancer when I was in training, and that was kind of tough. So I actually came home to see her. She had come home, you know, she was, she was doing OK then. So actually, she died shortly after I got out of the Peace Corps so. She was a nun. She was a nun, by the way so.

KLEIN: [00:37:07] Your other siblings?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:37:09] My other siblings. I had at the time two married sisters with children and a married brother.

KLEIN: [00:37:17] And they were accepting of what you were doing?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:37:18] Oh, yeah. Yeah. I think secretly they thought it was a little crazy, but then they always knew I was a little crazy. I always beat to a different drummer anyway, so they accepted it. I think they just were happy to see me happy, you know,

because I wasn't in the mainstream of married, raising kids, or that yet. I was the sort of the oddball single thing.

KLEIN: [00:37:42] Did you see that boyfriend during the three days?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:37:44] No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. He was, well, he was well gone. He was well gone when I went in the Peace Corps. No, no, no, no.

KLEIN: [00:37:55] So then you report to Houston.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:37:57] Well, we all re-met in Houston. I remember being hot as blazes.

KLEIN: [00:38:02] Do you remember flying out of Philadelphia now? This is like the beginning of the two years.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:38:05] No. No, no memories. It's funny how some people remember, you know? No, I was excited. I really was happy.

KLEIN: [00:38:16] So then.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:38:18] Houston, I remember waiting.

KLEIN: [00:38:19] Another reunion.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:38:20] Yeah. Another reunion. Everybody was chatting. You know, some had gone home. Some hadn't gone home. I remember it being hot as blazes in Houston. I thought Philadelphia got hot, but I was stinking hot. This was June. This was in June. And then we got in country and as I said.

KLEIN: [00:38:37] Was it a charter flight or a regular flight?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:38:38] I think it was a regular flight. Yeah, but we probably filled most of the plane. There were about 40 something.

KLEIN: [00:38:44] Were you met on arrival?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:38:45] We had to have been met, sure.

KLEIN: [00:38:47] Where do you fly into?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:38:49] Guatemala City.

KLEIN: [00:38:49] OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:38:49] And then we were taken to a court, a sort of a motel-like hotel, but it was low rise with a big inner court. And we were to stay there I think one to two weeks. I can't remember exactly how long. Again, for more orientation, to meet some of the local Guatemalan agriculture agents that we were going to be working with or under. And we were being told about resources, you know, Department of Education and this Department of Agriculture. Yeah. Yeah. In other words, I'm jumping ahead a little bit. But in retrospect, in retrospect, as I look back on my role there, I looked on it as one of a facilitator where as I connected. I connected people with agencies or the resources, and I was the middleman rather than the actual teacher or so. And that was really, that was really the thrust of our assignment too. That was what we were trained to do.

KLEIN: [00:39:55] During the two weeks, did you meet people from the ministry for which you were working and counterparts?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:40:01] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:40:02] Who you'd be working alongside?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:40:05] Yeah. Yeah. And then that was one. Earlier I told you before the tape, we were invited to the American ambassador's house. That was rather exciting. And we showed up with our jeans and sneakers or whatever. And he

never came to meet us, which I've never really forgiven on that. I thought that was rather shabby on his part.

KLEIN: [00:40:29] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:40:30] And we were served some refreshments. And by the way, that Ambassador was shot, right, by I'll call them terrorists while we were there.

KLEIN: [00:40:43] Oh.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:40:44] And, um, but. I'm going to say something politically incorrect probably.

KLEIN: [00:40:50] That's OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:40:51] But I thought the way he treated us, if that was the way he treated, you know? I mean, there was something grossly wrong with the demeanor or the body language or whatever. And his replacement, by the way, and this comes close to our term, the end of our two years, was exactly opposite. He was a wonderful guy, came, arrived with his kids, had us go up to the bedroom. The newborn baby was asleep in the drawer. I mean, you know, I thought, thank God they finally have somebody here who can relate, you know?

KLEIN: [00:41:27] Let's talk a little bit about. What was the particular political environment of Guatemala and its relation to the U.S., just in capsule as it affected you as a volunteer?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:41:40] Well. Politically, we met the AID people, you know, because I guess we were going to eventually get milk.

KLEIN: [00:41:55] There were no civil wars going on in the area, were there?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:41:57] No, there was, uh, I keep wanting to say terrorism. Well, it's an easy word right now. Yeah, there were things going on. Yes, there were uprisings in the mountains, in the highlands. See, we were not in that area.

KLEIN: [00:42:10] In Guatemala?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:42:10] Yeah. Yeah. There were uprisings among the Indians. There was a big like Che Guevara influence up there. But we were sent to far more conservative places away from that area.

KLEIN: [00:42:28] Do you recall if you were made aware of that?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:42:31] Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. And we were, you know.

KLEIN: [00:42:34] Any precautions about the way you behave or the?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:42:37] Oh, sure. Just just behave. Just sort of behave and don't get into any trouble. I remember one of my first experiences walking around with a guy, Dick Burke, on free time one day, and it seemed every corner there were military with guns and. And Dick, Dick's dead now, gosh. He had been, he was an ex-seminarian and he was a friendly kind of guy. He was a sweet guy, but he was just happy go lucky. And he, I remember him waving to the guys with the guns, you know, excited and making friends. And I, I almost wanted to slap his hand down. You know, he was almost like a fool. Be careful, you know, kind of thing.

KLEIN: [00:43:30] This was in Guatemala City?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:43:31] This was in Guatemala City as we were wandering around. That was the only sort of time when I thought his behavior wasn't quite what we should be doing, you know, being so silly or.

KLEIN: [00:43:43] Was there any talk of the CIA or any attempt to associate you with?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:43:47] No, not then. The only, the only thing that eventually came to pass, and I don't remember during those first two weeks, no, at all. But in time a director by the name of Boubion. I remember, he advised us that some American people were going to be in our regions running these, um, training seminars, things like that, and that we were to be very, uh, sort of disappear or not.

KLEIN: [00:44:27] Avoid them?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:44:27] Yeah. Avoid them. Yeah. And of course, we didn't. And, you know, and I don't even know the rhyme or reason and, you know, perhaps I'd have to tap another volunteer maybe to get another input into this. But I remember that these quote training groups that were really mostly Guatemalan people. But the Americans were the ones providing the transportation and the equipment and all that. They were fabulous training programs. And, I mean, we were just wanting them for our people whenever that occurred. I think that was a good year into the two years. So that occurred.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:45:13] And I even remember hitching rides back and forth to the capital with these guys, these American guys. And I remember turning point blank to one of them once and asking, are you CIA? And he said, if I am, I don't know it, or something like that. Some non-descriptive. So I didn't ask any more and I just. But I couldn't see. If they were up to something, I don't know what they were up to and it didn't affect me or my community or anything. Only, I would say only in a positive sense.

KLEIN: [00:45:53] Let's jump back to the two weeks at the end of the. What was the Peace Corps staff at that point, do you recall?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:46:01] Mr. [David J.] Boubion. I can't remember his first name.

KLEIN: [00:46:04] He was the director?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:46:04] He was the director. And then there was another assistant, a woman, Sally. Her name, first name was Sally. I can't think of her last name. And I think a couple of Guatemalan secretaries.

KLEIN: [00:46:16] Was there a technical officer on the Peace Corps staff?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:46:20] I don't think so. There was a doctor, Dr. Stubblefield, and his wife. He was a married guy, but he was in the Peace Corps office.

KLEIN: [00:46:29] And when did you get your assignment?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:46:32] Within those two weeks in the city. Yeah, we were handed out.

KLEIN: [00:46:36] Do you recall how it came about?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:46:39] Well, we were given a letter with the directions and where it was located and how we were to get there. And it was, you go to the bus terminal and you take a bus and you go on your own with your thing. I mean, that was frightening. That was scary. That was scary. And as we compared our assignments with each other, I found out they had sent me. Now remember, I was a single woman.

KLEIN: [00:47:06] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:47:08] And I was being sent to a site by myself, um, but they had three married couples within, I'd say the nearest one

was about two miles from me. Others were slightly longer, but the two mile one I could bike to. So I guess there were seven of us, three couples and me all got in the same bus, thank God. I mean, we were supporting each other, and it was about a three and a half hour ride by rickety bus from Guatemala City. Slow bus, stopping everywhere, all through the little towns. Then we got to Retalhuleu.

KLEIN: [00:47:47] Retal?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:47:48] Retalhuleu. And then we had to transfer to another bus. And all seven of us, thank goodness, were on the next bus because that really, we got off the main road, if you want to call it a main road. And then we were on dirt roads.

KLEIN: [00:48:05] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:48:06] And I was the first one that was dropped off at my site.

KLEIN: [00:48:10] Now, what was the site you were dropped off at?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:48:14] A one story barrack like structure with a water tower beside it.

KLEIN: [00:48:22] Was there a village there?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:48:25] No, there was no town. No, no. No town. It was just, there was a thing in the middle of nowhere. There was a football field, a soccer field, and there was a little tienda or store at the far end of the football field. That was the center of town. That was it.

KLEIN: [00:48:38] What was the building that was there?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:48:40] It was a school. It was a school. And oh, my assignment was to help out the school teacher.

KLEIN: [00:48:47] The school teacher.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:48:48] The school teacher. See, what they did in training or what they were trying to do was to give us roles. They wanted to give us an identity to go to places so that we'd be more accepted. And I guess some of the work ahead of time had been to go around and send out questionnaires and see if any of these communities wanted to have, host a Peace Corps volunteer there. I mean, I was paying my own way. I got a salary and I bought my own food and all. But did they want anybody to come in? And the school teacher there, the sole school teacher, he was a smart guy and he had two sisters living in the United States. So I think he saw an opportunity here to maybe get some assistance, get some help. And I was to live with him and his wife and his three going on four kids in this structure.

KLEIN: [00:49:42] Had there been any volunteers in the area before?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:49:44] No, no, we were all first timers. This was a brand new introduction. The people had never had volunteers before.

KLEIN: [00:49:52] What was his name? Do you remember?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:49:55] Hmm. Oh, God, isn't that awful? I should. Um, Don David. Don David. David Sandoval. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KLEIN: [00:50:07] Was he expecting you?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:50:08] Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah. He was expecting me and he was very gracious. His wife, Irma, she was lovely.

KLEIN: [00:50:16] So you wandered around the school and finally found?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:50:18] No, no. The bus left me off. They, I mean, the bus only comes once a day, so I mean, it's a big thing. And I guess he knew about when I'd be coming, certain days. So they were on the lookout and they came out and greeted me because I just literally got off the bus and standing there with some suitcase and they came out and greeted me.

KLEIN: [00:50:39] Did you think to yourself, well, this is the end of the line?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:50:42] Well, I remember. I remember really like waving goodbye to the other six people, not knowing how far away they were going from me and uh.

KLEIN: [00:50:54] Any tears at that point?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:50:56] I think I was too terrified to cry. No, I didn't cry. I didn't cry. But um. Oh, well, so he showed me to my room. I did have a private room, thank goodness.

KLEIN: [00:51:12] Now, did he live at the school?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:51:14] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:51:14] Oh, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:51:14] It was a one story, one story structure with a breezeway through the middle.

KLEIN: [00:51:19] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:51:19] Which. And then on one half was the one big classroom, huge classroom. And then there were like two storage rooms, I think, which opened up from the breezeway. One of those storage rooms was given to me and it was very small, but adequate. At least it was private.

KLEIN: [00:51:39] Did it have a window?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:51:40] It had high windows, everything was up high, so you couldn't look in and see anybody. But it was up high. It was all screens. I mean, no windows. There were no windows and, um, but high ceilings. Cement floor. Wood walls.

KLEIN: [00:51:55] Indoor plumbing?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:51:55] No.

KLEIN: [00:51:56] Any running water?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:51:58] No, no. Pump. Pump out back. Now there were lavatories that had originally been installed when the school was built, but they were not used. They were not used. I used that because at least there was a hole there. And what I would do is just get big buckets of water and use that. I could not bring myself to go out in the bushes if I didn't have to.

KLEIN: [00:52:23] Right.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:52:23] Didn't have to. So I was, it was sort of like my own private bathroom because nobody else did.

KLEIN: [00:52:28] As soon as you met him, were you, did he know enough English? Did he know some English or were you?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:52:34] Yeah. Yeah, he had pieces here and there, but we spoke Spanish. We communicated in Spanish. Oh, no, no. I mean, it was very, very definite that we had to get along by that time in Spanish. And I took my meals there. See, the deal was with the teacher and his wife. And they had all prearranged this. So I was being fed by them, but giving them so much a month or a week. And I really forget how that worked but.

KLEIN: [00:53:06] Do you recall your initial pattern of eating meals with them, what the meals were like?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:53:12] Well, um, yeah, the. I remember Irma made a wonderful *huevos revueltos*, that's scrambled eggs. What am I thinking of? No, *chile relleno*. She made wonderful stuffed chilies. She was actually, she was really a good cook. And I ate extremely well. She'd cook out back over a woodstove and, um, but it tasted good to me. And not much meat. Hardly any meat, but eggs and chicken.

KLEIN: [00:53:46] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:53:49] Not many vegetables. Of course, we have been told not to eat any lettuce.

KLEIN: [00:53:54] What did you do for water to drink?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:53:55] Water was gotten out of the well, the pump, pumped out, and I got my own tinaja, like an earthenware pot, which would keep it quite cool, by the way.

KLEIN: [00:54:07] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:54:09] And I dropped iodine tablets in it.

KLEIN: [00:54:11] Oh, you didn't have a chance to boil it or anything?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:54:13] No. No, at that point, no. And I would do that. And I can't even remember whether they did the same thing. They didn't have the iodine tablets though. But, you know, in retrospect, I think these wells were safe. I think they really were safe water all along, but we didn't know that.

KLEIN: [00:54:32] So the first couple of weeks.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:54:34] The first couple of weeks, I thought I was going to go crazy. I mean, that, I went through culture shock. I mean, you know, struggling with the Spanish, for one thing, and thinking, is this going to be it for two years? Am I going to be living this? Because what would happen, I think it was lack of privacy. I had not been used to being, you know, surrounded by people all the time and not know where to get away from or go to. And that was scary to me.

KLEIN: [00:55:06] Were the children curious about you?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:55:07] Oh, yeah. I mean, in the morning, as soon as they would hear me get, that I was awake, you know, they'd knock on the door. And of course, initially I was polite and let them come in, but they'd be in the room and then the chickens would come in the room and the pigs would come in the room. And, you know, it was, it was sort of like I was ready for the loony bin. And I really missed the language. I mean, I was really struggling with the Spanish because things were happening so quickly and people were speaking fast. I was meeting a lot of the parents, the kids were coming to school and all this. And I actually, I actually had reached a point in that first month that I thought I couldn't hack it. And the first chance I did get to go back to the city, I did speak to Boubion, the director, and say, I'm not going to make this. I'm not going to make it. You know, this is way beyond my expectations. I don't think I can do this.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:56:06] And I'll never forget, I mean, it was wonderful. He said, look, he said, you've come this far. You know, you've worked this far. He says, give it another month. He said, if you feel the same way and another month has gone by, come back and see me. Well, another month it was over. I mean, I was fine. I was fine. But it was panic time. It was panic time. One of the Guatemalan agency, agriculture, agricultural agents, who had befriended us and when we were in the city, I mean he, and he was really a nice.

KLEIN: [00:56:40] During the first two weeks?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:56:41] In the first two weeks, yeah. And he was sort of our guardian out in the field. And I'll never forget him pulling in in his jeep. I was never so glad to see anybody in my life. He said, you want to go for a ride? We'll go see the other volunteers. Well, you know, that was like heaven to me. I mean, because I didn't, I didn't have, I didn't know where to go. I didn't know where to go to see them or anything.

KLEIN: [00:57:04] So you weren't going to Mass?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:57:06] No. That was another. Oh, my mother turning over in her grave. I did. I struggled to get to church. I found out where the Mass was.

KLEIN: [00:57:14] How far was it?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:57:15] It was in Retalhuleu. It was about an hour away, down the dirt roads again in that one little rickety bus. And I did for about two Sundays. I got on that thing, it left at like 6:00 in the morning. And God, the chickens running over my feet in my sandals and all this. And I get to the church in the town. It wasn't too hard to find, you know, the only church. I was the only one there. I mean, this whole thing was such an awakening to me and my Catholicity or whatever, you know, too. I mean, I started to really question things in the traveling. Traveling was a big eye opener but. And I came back and I scratched my head. Latin America, Catholic country. I'm the only one at church on Sunday. Something's wrong with this picture. So I stopped going and I wasn't struck by thunder and lightning and I wasn't going to go to hell. And I didn't, you know, and it was sort of the beginning of the end for me in my whole religion. But I never told my mom that.

KLEIN: [00:58:21] How soon did you get a bike?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:58:24] I think shortly. Maybe when that Guatemalan guy came, he might have delivered my bike to me, but I didn't have it right away, so I was without wheels for a while. It was all by foot. And I'd be, I'd be just walking on these dirt roads by myself, trying to see the lay of the land. It was a rural community. The town was the school and the little tienda at the end of the football field. There was no center. People lived in thatched roof, bamboo sided, dirt floor homes.

KLEIN: [00:58:55] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:58:55] And they were, it was an interesting.

KLEIN: [00:58:58] Did they live on their farms?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:58:59] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:58:59] And then so.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:59:00] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:59:01] There's a distance between. OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:59:02] Yeah. There were distances between the farms and, uh, among the farms I should say. So it was a spread out place and, I mean, I ended up really needing the bike.

KLEIN: [00:59:16] But initially you just, for your own curiosity, you were trying to understand the environment you were in.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:59:22] Yeah, yeah. Trying to discover what was around.

KLEIN: [00:59:25] What did you have any conversations with any farmers or their families as you wandered?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [00:59:30] Yeah, I would always. I think they had all been told by the school teacher that a Peace Corps volunteer was coming. And I'm just trying to remember, was there ever any formal introduction of me? There may have been, but again, it might have been during that time when I blocked it out, I was just sort of shocked. But as I'd walk along, I'd always say, *buenos dias*. And, you know, and the one thing is that people in these countries that they're just so kind and friendly and good, you know? I mean, there was no never any fear and I never was afraid of them, and they'd just be respectful. *Buenos dias, senorita*. You know, and so.

KLEIN: [01:00:13] That was about the only conversation?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:00:16] Yeah. Yeah. Until I got into the school situation. The teacher asked me to maybe, you know, I just sort of watched him a couple of days. I mean, he had a heck of a job on his head and he was teaching, oh, I guess about 120 kids in this one classroom. And they ranged in age from 6 to 13. I mean, some of the 13 year olds were coming for first grade. He only taught up to third grade. And these kids still worked on the farm. That's, you know, why many of them hadn't really gone to school or couldn't go to school. But eventually I found a place or positioning. I used to take some of them out under the trees and in my limited Spanish start teaching them to count and we'd use soda bottle caps.

KLEIN: [01:01:09] Oh, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:01:09] And all that. So I was starting to be, I became like his teacher's aide.

KLEIN: [01:01:13] And what you would do with the kids was, you worked it out with him.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:01:16] Yeah. Yeah. And I was actually relieving him, you know, sort of being, as I said, a teacher's aide initially and.

KLEIN: [01:01:24] When you first were dropped there after the two weeks, did you have any specific sense of what it is your job was going to be?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:01:35] Um.

KLEIN: [01:01:36] Had anyone give it a definition?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:01:37] Yeah, I, the way it was in my mind was that the first thing was to get to know the people and get them to know you. Earn their trust. And that's, that was the role. I mean, any suspicion and all would be eventually melt away if I came in with a specific purpose. And then the second phase, as I understood it, was to learn what the people were feeling and wanting for their community, expressing thoughts about what would make their lives better, etc., etc. And then with that information, start to connect them to resources and ways that they could achieve these goals.

KLEIN: [01:02:23] Right.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:02:24] That's what I mean. The whole thing of facilitator was very, very clear to me as to what what we were to do. And so, and that took time. I mean, it was six months before I even began to get that kind of feedback from them. [tape break]

KLEIN: [01:02:45] During the first six months.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:02:46] During the first six months, I started going out and visiting people. Every day I would try to get to one or two or three people during the course of the day because mid-day you really had to quit. It got hot. And everybody was at siesta and all that. But on the morning and maybe in the late afternoon, I'd try again and go. And I would just go. And maybe the teacher, I don't know whether he, I mean, maybe he told me who to go see or who lived down that road. I mean,

he was a big help to me and he'd give me the names of the people and maybe somehow they found out that I might be coming or something but. And it was just a matter of going and seeing their homes and visiting them and sitting down with them and.

KLEIN: [01:03:29] Were there natural leaders within that community?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:03:32] Well, not, not readily available to me anyway, at the beginning, but in time there was. And I'll tell you, I'm jumping ahead a little. But when that supposedly CIA connected group came into town, I believe that was their goal, was leadership training. And it was during those workshops that the real leaders became very obvious to me. I mean, there were some that I knew right away and some I was very, very fond of. A guy by name of Eladio, whom I adored, he and his wife. And he was a natural leader. And he blossomed during those trainings.

KLEIN: [01:04:10] Did he live in town?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:04:11] He lived in, no, he was in the rural. He had a farm too. But I'm really jumping ahead. I went back to my site 20 years later and he was one of the first ones I asked about. He had moved into town. So he, and I don't know, I don't really know what ever happened to him.

KLEIN: [01:04:31] Now in a sense though, I mean, other than the school and the tienda, there was still, there was a town or?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:04:39] Well, no, the nearest town was Retalhuleu, an hour away.

KLEIN: [01:04:43] And that, the people didn't, did they relate to that town administratively?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:04:48] Well, that was the market. No, no. That's where they'd go to market. So they'd go on their bus, on this rickety bus to go into town and get some.

KLEIN: [01:04:56] And people from other areas would also go there?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:04:59] Sure. Yeah. Let me give you a little background on the community I was working in. It was, they were called *parcela mientos*, parcels, parcels of land. And the land originally had been a finca, a huge farm. Cotton, coffee. No, it couldn't have been coffee. It was probably cotton, owned by Germans in pre-World War II. The Germans had run these farms and lived there part time, I guess. And World War II, they all went back to Germany to fight and they never came back. So the government, the Guatemalan government, then parceled these lands out. So these owners, these farmers were first time landowners.

KLEIN: [01:05:44] Oh, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:05:45] So in some ways, I'm thinking in my political, politically mature mind now, that this was like the beginning or the budding of a middle class.

KLEIN: [01:05:54] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:05:54] People who had a stake, at least in their own futures. They weren't. Because, you know, the difference between wealth and poverty in a lot of these countries is so tremendous. But this was the beginning of a middle, of a middle class.

KLEIN: [01:06:10] During the first six months, what happened with your Spanish?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:06:13] Oh, it got much better. Much better.

KLEIN: [01:06:15] Yeah. Do you remember sort of being more and more comfortable?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:06:19] Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, I did. I got. I never, I never even at the end of the two years, I never scored that high. I think I was a two and a half or maybe a two when I came in, but I was really living with very simple people, uneducated people for the most part. So I didn't need a big vocabulary to get along, but I was learning.

KLEIN: [01:06:43] Did you ever see Peace Corps staff during the six months?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:06:46] We would have meetings, group meetings, where we'd meet in some exotic, nice place for a little R&R, which was nice.

KLEIN: [01:06:55] After what? After three months?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:06:57] I think we met maybe after a month, the first month, and then maybe every two months after that we had regional meetings. And we'd get our notices by telegram.

KLEIN: [01:07:09] Everyone, uh, everyone who would come to this were essentially doing the same kind of things?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:07:16] Most of us were doing the same kind of thing, yeah.

KLEIN: [01:07:18] Did the director say anything when you finally came to the meeting and it was obvious that you were going to stay?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:07:25] I don't remember. I don't remember whether there was any formal, um, conclusion or tacit agreement or, I don't remember. But I guess.

KLEIN: [01:07:34] The answer was obvious.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:07:35] I may, yeah, yeah. I may have been doing so well at that time he didn't even have to bring it up. I mean, it was, I think I may have like thanked him at one point and said, you know, you told me the right thing to do.

KLEIN: [01:07:49] During the, again, we'll stick with the first six months. That's kind of a. Did you travel out to visit people?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:07:57] Well, once I found out where my neighbors lived, my closest Peace Corps. Yeah. Yeah. At least once a week I'd go over to their place for dinner, or they'd come to my place and. And there were many trips to the town in those first months because I had to furnish my room. Oh, I didn't. I skipped something. Another thing happened during the first six months, which, um, I was able to move out of the school and move into my own shack, I'll call it. Uh. It had been the former house of the German finca owner. Very humble, wood shack, cement floor, raised off the ground, no screening. So I had to go into town. A lot of the volunteers came to my site and put up the screens for me, you know, so you really. You just crave to be with the other volunteers, you know, and whenever you could, but you still had a job to do. So it was maybe once a week there was some socialization with some other volunteers.

KLEIN: [01:09:04] Yeah. So now how soon after you arrived there did you get the shack and start fixing it up?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:09:11] I'm just trying to think. I think it might have been two months, three months. Once I found out about it. See, in my walking around I found out about it and I learned that that was owned by the government and, you know, we were there under the auspices. So I put in my request and said, could I move there? Because I really, I really was like living in a glass bowl in the school.

KLEIN: [01:09:35] Was it a delicate matter, telling the teacher that you were moving out?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:09:39] No, no, no. He was fine with it. You know, I wondered whether some of the other people might think, you know, something.

KLEIN: [01:09:49] Then what did you do for food?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:09:50] I did my own. Then I had to go and buy my propane stove and my five cylinder and.

KLEIN: [01:10:01] Did you have a fridge or?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:10:02] No, no. No refrigeration. So I got very little fresh, fresh food. Eggs, of course. And a guy would come around on a horse every so often and sell me the *lomo* that it would really be like filet mignon, which is about the only meat you could chew.

KLEIN: [01:10:21] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:10:21] And I buy that from him. I'd have meat once a week, but I'm trying to think what I ate. I mean, I ate lots of beets, lots of root vegetables.

KLEIN: [01:10:30] You went in town to buy food too?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:10:31] Yeah, I. Yeah, I did buy them there. That's where I would buy my veggies, in town. I couldn't eat salads. I mean, that was, anything above the ground that couldn't eat. And I crave them.

KLEIN: [01:10:42] So was it a little two burner stove?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:10:44] Yeah, little two propane thing. And my pressure cooker came in mighty handy, you know, and I guess it was

turnips and potatoes and beets and eggs. Chicken. Yeah. I mean, I.

KLEIN: [01:11:02] So you.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:11:03] I then set up housekeeping. I then.

KLEIN: [01:11:06] How close was the nearest house?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:11:08] From my new house? From the, well, I guess my nearest neighbor was, well, my nearest neighbor actually was an Indian family that was sort of the caretakers of this property. So they were within earshot. They would be, oh, I'd say 50 yards, 50 yards away. And then there was another house on the other side of the road. This new residence for me brought me back out to the main road where the bus would go. It wasn't paved yet, but yeah, it was at least not down this rickety lane to the schoolhouse. I felt connected a little bit more. I'm a city girl, you know.

KLEIN: [01:11:50] Well, I was wondering whether you felt isolated, I mean, living alone. And were there any security concerns?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:11:59] No.

KLEIN: [01:11:59] OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:12:00] No, there really wasn't. Yeah. When I, you know, when I think back to a lot of things I did with my life, I was like either dumb or a fool or something. But no, I never felt threatened or at-risk safety wise or anything. No, the people were amazingly respectful and beautiful people.

KLEIN: [01:12:20] At the end of the six months.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:12:23] Things were starting to happen.

KLEIN: [01:12:25] Have you made any particular friends who might be? Sometimes people get one or two people from the country who are sort of their bridge to the culture, you know, that make it a little easier for you to understand what's going on. Did anyone emerge like that?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:12:40] Well, this Eladio, the one farmer that I really, I really just found him. I think he was, I think he was very bright. I think he, if he didn't go to school, he should have been. He should have gone to school. He had a curiosity. He had a knowledge. Yeah. I would say he helped me with the farmers. I mean, he helped me understand what was going on. And by the end of six months, things were starting to, they were starting to talk to me and really let me know what was on their mind. Of course, the schoolteacher wanted another schoolteacher, full time, paid for by the government, and that was quite obvious. And that was echoed by a lot of the farmers too, because they knew that their children needed another teacher. They were. Um.

KLEIN: [01:13:31] Well, let's take that issue that's a felt community need. What did you do? What was your role in doing something about it?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:13:39] Well, when I went to the next Peace Corps meeting or I, one of the agriculture guys came by or the Guatemalan guys, you know, they were out in the field all the time. They'd stop in and say, hi, how are you doing? That kind of thing. Maybe bring me some food, some delicacy or something. I'd ask them. I'd say, hey, they want a teacher. Where do I go? How do I start? And either through them or in the city at one of the meetings or at some, I found out, yeah, they could get one. They had to make a solicitation, they have to sign a paper, get so many signatures, you know, I mean, see, these were tools that were there, but these people didn't know how to use them. And that was what was so great about, or I feel what we

were doing. We were saying, hey guys, you know, you can do something about this.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:14:29] So it's all an attitude thing too. I learned that to be an American is, something's wrong? Well, what do you do to fix it? In Latin America, something's wrong? Dios. God wills it.

KLEIN: [01:14:43] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:14:44] I mean, we, you know, there's such a big difference in us that you learn to look at yourself. And it was. It was great. I was just got real excited when I found out, yeah, they could do it. And I started on, I started doing it. I started going around getting the signatures and things.

KLEIN: [01:15:01] Did you have to go, did you have to go all the way into Guatemala City to get information or was it available closer at?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:15:08] You know, I can't quite remember. I can't quite remember. Maybe the teacher. Maybe the teacher himself knew about it, you know, and maybe. I'm just thinking. I mean, he was a smart guy. He was a smart guy. Maybe he felt that by getting me there, he'd get it. You know, for all I know, he may have had his petition in for a long time and might be, by me being there, you know, *tiene cuello*. That means, we have collar. You have some pull. I mean, he was politically.

KLEIN: [01:15:46] You didn't literally carry the petitions around and see that they got signed, right?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:15:50] Oh yeah, I did.

KLEIN: [01:15:51] Oh, you did, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:15:52] Yeah. See I would do. That was where I fit in, that's what I would do. I'd go and explain things to people. But I had

to earn their trust for them to start, you know, enabling me. Yeah. Whereas the teacher, I don't, I don't know whether he wanted to do it or. I don't know, I guess, I don't know.

KLEIN: [01:16:11] He was using your collar.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:16:13] Yeah, right. He was. He was. Absolutely.

KLEIN: [01:16:17] And this was during the second six months or beyond?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:16:21] Right. Yeah. And I will add, I'm jumping ahead, but they did get a teacher by the time I left.

KLEIN: [01:16:25] Good.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:16:26] Uh, what was the other thing that they wanted? They, uh, they wanted some health care. They wanted some sort of access to have. And I learned there was a male nurse living in the town where my, one of the married couples was. Well, they had already set up a nursing program there, an education program about nutrition and all that. So I tapped on him and asked him to come to my site one day a week too. So that was good. And I had the women coming to my house.

KLEIN: [01:16:58] And he was Guatemalan?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:16:59] Oh, yeah. Yeah. And he was a pompous son of a gun. You know, he would show up once in a while, you know, and then he wouldn't show sometimes, you know. But if he didn't show, I would go into my nutrition courses and cooking. And I showed them how to use a pressure cooker and they, most of them cooked over wood so they didn't even know propane. There were many, many things I could substitute for.

KLEIN: [01:17:22] So you ended up doing direct teaching.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:17:27] I was semi teaching. Yeah. At that point, when he wouldn't show and all. But my main goal was to have him come.

KLEIN: [01:17:33] So it wasn't a formal, like you asked people to commit to three months and you would give so many lessons in home ec and what have you?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:17:41] No, no, no, no. It was like by the seat of your pants every week, you know? I mean, the day was set, the day of the week was set. They would show up. And then I started running a, um, storytelling thing. This was all on me with the little kids that they wanted after school to come to my house. And my sister, the nun, had gotten all her kids and her Catholic school to donate money, and I was able to buy a whole library of Spanish books.

KLEIN: [01:18:11] Oh, lovely.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:18:12] So I had a library going in my house and the kids would come late in the afternoon.

KLEIN: [01:18:16] Where'd you buy the books?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:18:17] In the capital, the capital city. I had to go in there and get them. And that was uh.

KLEIN: [01:18:24] The kids would come and sit and read?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:18:27] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:18:27] You weren't running.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:18:28] Read stories. They didn't know what stories were, you know?

KLEIN: [01:18:31] You weren't running a lending library.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:18:34] Did I lend them out or not? I may have. I don't know. I don't know. I can't remember. So many, so many important things I can't remember. But I just remember the niceness of that. That was a nice thing. That was fun for me.

KLEIN: [01:18:51] The end of the first year was a break point sort of.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:18:56] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:18:57] Was there another conference of volunteers?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:19:00] Oh, there were conferences like every two months. We were always meeting each other. There was also a place that we could go to in the city called, it was called the papal house. A retired dentist from, I believe he was from Saint Louis or somewhere in the Midwest. He and his wife, when they retired, took their money, went down and bought this beautiful home in a very nice section of Guatemala and dedicated their lives to running sort of a B&B. At dirt cheap, I think \$2, you'd get a bed with sheets on it and three meals and conversation around a big table. I mean, it was really a great place. And volunteers from all groups. And every chance I got, I would go in there.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:19:46] And I had a couple of visitors too. I had my airline people, a couple of airline people flew down at two different times. A woman I had done all my traveling with to Europe, she had moved to San Francisco. She came down and visited me and spent two weeks and then I did my traveling then. I went up to the Petén and we did all the things tourists do.

KLEIN: [01:20:08] You took a break?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:20:09] Yeah, took a break.

KLEIN: [01:20:10] Between the first and second?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:20:11] Yeah, I had to save my money to do it. You know, pay was pretty, pretty modest.

KLEIN: [01:20:15] Was there any restrictions on your travel at that point? Could you go back to the U.S. if you wanted?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:20:19] Oh, no, we couldn't. No, no. That was the understanding. We were not to go back.

KLEIN: [01:20:23] During the whole two years.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:20:24] I think that's changed now. I think it's changed a lot. But no, no, no.

KLEIN: [01:20:28] And so where did you vacation?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:20:31] Went up to the highlands, where the Indians are, where most tourists go when they go to Guatemala. That's where all the beautiful costumes and things they make. Lake Atitlán. Went up to the Petén, the Mayan civilization up there. Had to fly in there. And then actually visited another volunteer up there who had, had a very unique job. He was helping a group of Guatemalans homestead up in the jungle. The deal was if they went up in the forest jungle on this plateau and cleared it, they could keep the land. Well, the only way to get to these spots was by the river. So I flew in by airplane and then got on Phil's elongated canoe with a motor, went by about 45 minutes down the river to his site. He lived in a thatched roof.

KLEIN: [01:21:34] What was Phil's?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:21:37] Phil Jones. And in fact, I tried to get him to come to this reunion. We were emailing. He's in Kosovo now. He still works for, uh, he worked for the World Bank.

KLEIN: [01:21:48] I think I've heard of him.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:21:50] You have heard of him?

KLEIN: [01:21:51] I think so.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:21:52] Really? Phil Jones. He was in this kind of work all forever. I don't know how he stayed married. He's married. His wife lives in Pittsburgh. They have three kids, but he's gone most of the year.

KLEIN: [01:22:03] Yeah. Maybe that's how they stay married.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:22:07] Well, you know, you're absolutely right. I can agree with that totally.

KLEIN: [01:22:11] But OK. End of the first year.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:22:14] So yeah, so I went to the Petén, had a great time up there.

KLEIN: [01:22:18] As you started your second year, do you recall setting any new goals for yourself? You know, now you can see that your time is finite.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:22:29] Yeah, I actually had a big calendar and I was counting the days. Not that I, you know, not I was rushing it, but I was, I was looking forward. I was.

KLEIN: [01:22:36] Were you expected to do 24 months service or was it?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:22:41] 24.

KLEIN: [01:22:41] That's, so it's training plus 24?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:22:43] Right.

KLEIN: [01:22:43] OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:22:43] Yeah. So, no, I didn't come back till June of '69.

KLEIN: [01:22:49] OK. As you went into the second year, do you recall particularly thinking that, setting any goals for yourself or, you know?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:23:00] I just wanted to get the jobs that I had already started done. I wanted to try to see some results.

KLEIN: [01:23:07] Which at that point was some health care, some school teaching, the petition to get another teacher there.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:23:15] Right.

KLEIN: [01:23:17] And there was a fourth one.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:23:19] Uh, well, I didn't even tell you.

KLEIN: [01:23:20] The library.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:23:21] Well, that was, that was my own thing. I knew that wasn't going to survive after me. I mean, I left them the books. No, they wanted a bridge. You know, you say Peace Corps builds bridges. I mean, it's so bad. But there was, there was one shortcut out to the highway that if this bridge were built, they could get their crops to the town faster and cheaper. And it was this stream like thing and there were great big round tubes. What do they call that?

KLEIN: [01:23:59] Culverts?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:23:59] Culverts. Yeah, sure. But they were broken and scattered and anything. So that came out, you know, during the first six months or the second six months. Well, that was a

whole different ballgame for me because that was out of my bailiwick. So then I had to start finding out what agencies could take care of that. Well, to make a long story short, the bridge was built. The bridge got built before I left and I have pictures and stuff so. But all the men had to provide the labor and, you know, all this information, I'd be the relayer.

KLEIN: [01:24:35] So again, strictly the role of facilitator.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:24:38] Facilitator, absolutely. I told them, you could do it, what was needed, how much money. I think they all had to chip in some money, but the government would come and then if they provided the labor and, you know, all the rules of the game were brought back and forth. And they did it.

KLEIN: [01:24:54] You never picked up a shovel and started digging?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:24:59] I never started planning or anything there. You mean, with their, with their?

KLEIN: [01:25:02] Well, when the project was on, you know, sort of?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:25:05] No, no, no. It was, it was, it was really, it was, it was too big a job. I mean, it was, it was a nasty job. Yeah. I wouldn't have had the strength. I mean, first of all, I don't know how they did. Most of them were skin and bones, you know. What they could do with their strength was amazing.

KLEIN: [01:25:23] So during the second year, you didn't say, if I don't finish this, then my time will not have been worth it or?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:25:32] No, I, I, you know, I kind of had a philosophical outlook by then. I realized what a mammoth job it is to recreate foreign countries. I mean, you know, if I did a couple small things that were going to make their lives easier, that was going to be fine. And that was all I could ever expect or hope for.

KLEIN: [01:26:05] Were you asked by Peace Corps whether you should be replaced?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:26:11] Um, I don't recall. I don't recall that process. By the way, we were not replaced. They never replaced that program.

KLEIN: [01:26:20] Do you have any idea why?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:26:21] No. And I always was curious as to why. I figured were we failures? I don't know. But why it didn't continue, I don't know.

KLEIN: [01:26:32] Now, by the end of the second year, was there more political activity building up in the civil war?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:26:42] Um. There wasn't a civil war going on. It was the guerrillas. The guerrillas in the highlands were acting up. And then there was this right-wing group. There was the right wing that was reacting. It's still going on now. I just read an article. I mean, there's been this constant ying and yang, the wealthy and the poor. Um.

KLEIN: [01:27:08] It didn't?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:27:09] No, no. Well, the closest I came to any. Well, the ambassador was killed. There were things going on.

KLEIN: [01:27:16] Yeah, yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:27:17] But I was not. I was so removed from it, and most of us were. I mean, we really. We really were apolitical in the true sense of the word. The closest I ever came to knowing that something was happening politically in the country or militarily, whatever you want to call it, was one day coming from the swimming hole with the teacher and the kids. This was in the first year. This was not the second year. And around the turn

of the road comes a row all abreast of military with guns. And that, that alarmed me. And they were just coming towards us. And the teacher just quietly said, you know, out of the way, you know. So we just went off to the side and they just kept going. They were obviously looking for somebody. But there was no unrest down in that particular area. There might have been unrest in the towns.

KLEIN: [01:28:17] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:28:18] Because I started to make some Guatemalan friends, maybe upper middle class people. And I know a couple of times got into some political discussions there that made me to believe that the one guy may have been *bandero* by night or something on this rightist side of things. Yeah. Yeah. You know, like he was saying, what are you doing this for? You know, or what's your, what are you really here for? You know, that kind of thing.

KLEIN: [01:28:47] So I assume he spoke English.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:28:50] Well, but we spoke in Spanish.

KLEIN: [01:28:51] Oh, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:28:52] We spoke in Spanish, yeah.

KLEIN: [01:28:53] And those people you had met in the town?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:28:55] In the town. They would find out from the school teacher or they'd find out.

KLEIN: [01:29:00] Would they invite you to dinner?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:29:01] Oh, yeah. And in fact, I stayed overnight sometimes. I ended up going to their children's birthday parties and things like that. No, there was a sort of an entrée

by being an American, uh, an entrée into many, many levels of society.

KLEIN: [01:29:19] And their interest was that they just enjoyed the company of an American?

KLEIN: [01:29:23] Yeah, yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:29:24] And you enjoyed good food.

KLEIN: [01:29:27] Getting out of my. You got it. You got it. A decent meal. And, you know, some maybe higher level conversation or just a little more learned, you know?

KLEIN: [01:29:38] So life was pretty placid but not.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:29:41] With breaks. With breaks now and then.

KLEIN: [01:29:44] Were there, uh, was there any of the traditional life of festivals and celebrations of births and deaths and marriages? Did you touch on that?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:29:58] No, the closest to that, in my site now I'm talking about.

KLEIN: [01:30:02] Yeah. Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:30:04] No, the biggest, well, soccer. Yeah, they all played soccer. The kids play with bare feet in town. That was the big thing. I remember again, it was the first year, being told that the priest was going to come and have Mass. This was the first time, you know, that this had happened. And I'm thinking, oh really? You know, so he came and I was again in the school yard and I saw a lot of the people had come out and Mass was served there and all. And then it wasn't too long after that that an evangelical came. And guess what? Same people were there. You know, again, this is all my head

scratching, you know, what's wrong with this picture? This religion thing is like, you know. I mean, it was a social thing. That was a social thing for them. I'm sure they had some beliefs, but it was a lot of social. They didn't have much social life.

KLEIN: [01:31:05] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:31:06] I mean, it was hard work and.

KLEIN: [01:31:09] There was no point at, say toward the end of the second year, when Peace Corps called you in and alerted you to political problems?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:31:18] Uh uh.

KLEIN: [01:31:18] None of that? OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:31:21] No. Yeah. They really, I mean, you know, you read things and say, were you undercover or, you know, things like that going on. And I never felt used or abused or any way connected to the rest of the political scheme of things.

KLEIN: [01:31:34] Did Peace Corps staff ever come out to your site?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:31:38] I'm just trying to remember. I think he may have come out once. I think he may have visited me once or twice at the most. And, um. No, I guess not. You know, not that much.

KLEIN: [01:31:51] Were you doing any kind of reporting back to?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:31:55] Yeah, oh yeah. I think we had to do a monthly report.

KLEIN: [01:31:56] Oh, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:31:57] In Spanish. And then at the end of the two years, we had to summarize our two year service.

KLEIN: [01:32:02] And was that for Peace Corps purposes?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:32:04] Peace Corps.

KLEIN: [01:32:04] Not for the ministry of?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:32:06] No, no. Peace Corps. Well, unless they, um, unless they shared it with them.

KLEIN: [01:32:12] Well, if they were in Spanish.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:32:13] Yeah, it was in Spanish. It had to be in Spanish. I really don't know.

KLEIN: [01:32:17] Yeah. Do you recall what your, what it was about, I mean?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:32:20] I have it in this box of mine. I'll have to read and think, you know, and go over what I said. Had I known I was going to be interviewed, I might have, I might have dug through this stuff in a way beforehand. But I sort of, I didn't know whether to get it all out and bore you with it now or just leave it alone.

KLEIN: [01:32:37] OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:32:38] No, I'm sure. I'm sure in looking over, it's going to trigger a lot, a lot more things, because this is really off the cuff.

KLEIN: [01:32:45] Yeah, well, that's fine. Toward the end of the second year.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:32:51] I was counting the days. I was looking forward to going home. I was going to go home via Baton Rouge, Louisiana. My first cousin on my mother's side was getting married, so I was going to stop off. And I remember my cousin. My uncle at the time worried about me showing up at this wedding as a hippie flower child. I mean, you know, they didn't know what to expect. And I was quite proper.

KLEIN: [01:33:17] This is '69, right?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:33:18] This was '69. I mean, I was quite proper. He was so relieved to see me dressed in a nice dress. And, you know, I mean, you know, there was such a. I got a kick out of it.

KLEIN: [01:33:29] Well, how did you feel as you left?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:33:32] Guatemala, um.

KLEIN: [01:33:34] In relation if you think back to your joining, you know, you didn't have any clear.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:33:40] I felt good. I felt good. I was glad to be going home. I really felt I had accomplished something. I really felt good about myself.

KLEIN: [01:33:50] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:33:51] I thought it was the best thing I had ever done for myself.

KLEIN: [01:33:53] Right.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:33:53] In terms of I did something really tough and I survived. It's a great feeling. [tape break] I was ready to come home. I was ready to go on with my life in other ways.

KLEIN: [01:34:08] At that point, did you have any clear idea of what you wanted to do or?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:34:13] No, no. Well, my job, remember? My job was back here.

KLEIN: [01:34:18] With United.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:34:18] Yeah. And I knew that was there, so I'd have a means to support myself. And shortly after I got back, I found out about a job through another returned volunteer who had seen it in Washington or something. I ended up getting a job with Sesame Street as a result of my Peace Corps. I had a wonderful career. I was, uh, they were hiring in Philadelphia, community development. They were looking for returned volunteers. I had Spanish. They wanted people to go around in the ghetto and promote the show.

KLEIN: [01:34:55] Lovely.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:34:55] Promote the families, uh, you know, because Joan Cooney, the founder, was trying to close the educational gap.

KLEIN: [01:35:02] Right.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:35:02] Having the kids watch it in their living rooms with mom. Well, mom, they didn't want it to be used as a babysitter but.

KLEIN: [01:35:07] Who was funding that?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:35:10] That was government at the time.

KLEIN: [01:35:10] Yeah, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:35:11] Yeah. Well, Joan Cooney walked in, you know, and sold her idea and said, we're not only going to make this

show, we're going to make sure it gets to the target audience. So to get to the target audience, who's better than a Peace Corps volunteer?

KLEIN: [01:35:22] Like a Head Start program.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:35:24] Yeah, but we went out and so I did that for a couple of years and that was, I loved that job. Then I got promoted and I went to New York.

KLEIN: [01:35:31] That must have felt good though, because it was such a logical extension of.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:35:35] Yeah, although the Spanish was Spanglish. I mean, Puerto Rican Spanish is, forget it, forget it. But I mean, it was my hometown and I loved it. It was very creative. And I was able to do a lot for my educational background as well as I love kids. And I thrived in that job. And if I hadn't met and married him, I'd be working for them today. I went to New York, yeah.

KLEIN: [01:36:02] And at any point, did you think of further education?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:36:06] Um, no. No, no, I didn't.

KLEIN: [01:36:12] What was your, over the first five years back, your continuing connection to Guatemala, if any?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:36:23] Yeah. Let me think. Did I, did I write? I think wrote. I wrote to the teacher once in a while and some of the people wrote me then. The downside in a way which hurt me was they all wanted to come and live with me, you know, and I had to say no. I had to say no. There was no way I could have sponsored or supported. And I was really on my own then because my mom was very sickly when I came home, she didn't live too much longer. She was in a nursing home, and so I was living as frugally as I was down there. I was still

single. And so. Um, no, I. The job was Sesame Street, was the big chance I got to do. The teaching, I guess I never really was into the teaching. I was too ready to leave it initially to go and join the airlines. I mean, I come from a family of teachers, but I guess.

KLEIN: [01:37:28] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:37:28] And I did a stint recently before I really retired, I went back into subbing in the Philadelphia system. So that culture shock all over again.

KLEIN: [01:37:37] Do you recall your initial reverse culture shock in coming back from? Can you talk about it a little bit?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:37:44] I think it was worse here. I think it was far worse for me to get adjusted back here than it was in Guatemala.

KLEIN: [01:37:49] And essentially, you went to the wedding, but you came back to Philadelphia to live.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:37:53] Right, right, right. Um, I just remember that the speed, everything was moving so quickly. Joe, hey, we're. [tape break]

KLEIN: [01:38:06] We're talking about the reverse culture shock.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:38:07] Yes. The speed of everything back here. The, I guess, big city versus the laid-back kind of gentle communication or the exchanges with the people. Good morning. Good evening. That kind of thing.

KLEIN: [01:38:34] Do you recall how you dealt with it? Did you seek out returned volunteers or did you?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:38:39] Yeah, I did. I joined the returned Peace Corps volunteer group at that point and went to some of their

meetings. And but again, I don't know why. I don't know why I didn't stick with it, but whatever.

KLEIN: [01:38:56] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:38:58] Then I remember driving a car for the first time back here and pulling into a gas station and asking for gas in Spanish. That was a shock. That was a shock because, you know, I mean. Well, that was a big break when you started to dream in Spanish and then you felt you had arrived, you know. But this was a reverse situation there so, um.

KLEIN: [01:39:25] But you were using your Spanish even though was a variety.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:39:28] Yeah. In the job. In the Peace Corps job, yeah.

KLEIN: [01:39:31] No, on Sesame Street.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:39:32] Oh, on Sesame Street, excuse me. Yes, yes.

KLEIN: [01:39:34] Well, I mean, that's a nice continuation.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:39:35] Oh, yeah. And yeah. And it was a job that I never probably would have been interested in had I not done it.

KLEIN: [01:39:44] What led you, you mentioned that it was 20 years later you made a trip back?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:39:48] Twenty years later. Oh, that was something. Good friends of ours and neighbors suggested it. They went to Mexico every February for R&R. He was a doctor. He is a doctor, retired now. And his wife, Trudy, is a bit of a travel bug. And she suggested, why don't before we go, meaning her and her husband, go to our place in Mexico, that they go to take a side trip to Guatemala. And of course, I knew she wanted to do something along the lines of my former site. And, you

know, I had always thought I'd go back. And so I just jumped on it. I said, yeah, I'd love to. So I don't think the men were that excited about it, I think.

KLEIN: [01:40:36] Did you try to contact anyone in advance?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:40:38] Oh, yeah, yeah, I did. Not in my site, strangely enough, not in my site. But there was an American couple that I had made friends with. Well, he was American. She was Guatemalan, and they were still living there. So I contacted him and asked him, first of all, was it safe? Because things had really gotten bad after I had come back. And he said, Yeah, you're okay. Just have to follow certain rules.

KLEIN: [01:41:07] Was Peace Corps still there?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:41:09] Yeah, it was. But I couldn't find anybody when I went, for the short time we were there. I went to the office. There was a Peace Corps office in town, but it was closed. I mean, when I was there, it was open seven days a week, 24 hours a day almost. But it was closed. It was a weekend.

KLEIN: [01:41:30] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:41:31] So they had closed down. And then when we went to Lake Atitlan, I had heard there was a Peace Corps volunteer there and I asked for her and she was off doing some traveling. So I never did connect to any Peace Corps. But when we pulled into my site and it was. I didn't tell anybody. That was very emotional. That was super emotional. Saw my house from the road and I pulled out a scarf. I had this very unruly hair and I used to wear these bandanas around them. So I had one of the ones that I wore down there still. And I, as I got out of the car, I put it around my head and a woman came out, came out of my old house. Oh, *senorita*, *senorita*! Well, *mucho* tears, *mucho* crying. I mean, I just. It was like a flood with me, and everybody looked the same. I

mean, I thought they look so old when I was there, but they all looked the same. They were younger than I was, most of them. But, you know, they just seem so old because they were so hard driven and worked so hard.

KLEIN: [01:42:45] Did you jump back into Spanish?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:42:46] Yeah. Oh, sure. Oh yeah. And then while the word got out, you know, somebody went off on their bike. And before I knew it, there was a bunch of people. We went down to the schoolhouse. The teacher had just finished a school and it, *mucho* hugging.

KLEIN: [01:43:02] Was he still there?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:43:03] He was still there. They had the other school teacher there. Then I went back to his house and met his mother-in-law, whom I thought she had to have been 100 when I was there. She looked great, I mean. And a lot of crying, a lot of emotional stuff there. And then, and a lot of exchanges. And one of the nicest little things that happened there. The woman that had come out of my house, her son was living in my house. It was a *puesto de salud*. It was a health center, OK? So that was good number one. The roads were still dirt.

KLEIN: [01:43:38] Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:43:40] The teacher had a new shiny pickup truck. He didn't have a vehicle when I was there. Um. And the woman had gone back to her house and came back with an armful of mangoes. I left out an important part of my Peace Corps experience, in that we would have classes for these campesinos that my roommate, the same lady I had gotten on the bus with to go and is still my friend, the one I'm meeting out in Arizona. She's a horticulturalist. She had a skill. She had a specific skill, very apropos for there. So we would get

the audience. She'd come out and teach these people how to graft. And on my property, in my house, the finca owner's house, the Germans had gorgeous mango trees. She taught the people how to graft mangoes with ba ba ba ba. Here they had started their own mango grove. They had a nice little business going. And she gives me these big, I mean.

KLEIN: [01:44:45] That's very nice.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:44:47] That made me feel good. And Jeannie knows that story too. So. But anyway, yeah, we went back and I was only there. I mean, I only visited. I wasn't staying in the site.

KLEIN: [01:45:02] Did you get to see Eladio?

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:45:05] No, that's when I asked about Eladio and he was in. They said he had moved into Retalhuleu.

KLEIN: [01:45:12] Oh, OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:45:12] And you know, we hadn't allowed a lot of time. I had, I had mixed emotions about going back. You know, it was part of me that was, like, worried about would they remember me? And did I really, you know, did I really leave an impression or was there a legacy or was it, you know, she came and gone, you know? And so I didn't want to, like, pave the way and then not have anybody show up. You know, sort of that kind of fear, to be perfectly honest, that I thought, you know, I'd done so little. But the feelings and emotions that came out just by stopping in. So we were really only there for about an hour and a half all told. One hour and a half, 2 hours. And then we had to move on because we were on a strict driving schedule and we had been told to be careful at that stage of the game in Guatemala, we had to not travel at night.

KLEIN: [01:46:13] But your friends must have been very impressed.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:46:16] Oh, they were. She's a photographer. She is great. She took great pictures of me, you know, unbeknownst to me, some really good ones. So. Yeah, yeah, they were. They were, she was crying too, Trudy. She was like, it was pretty emotional. And, you know, another little thing that I want to mention is when I was going around and going into all these little huts, whatever you want to call them. Picture of Kennedy, all over. Kennedy's picture was in every one of them.

KLEIN: [01:46:48] And that was four years after his death. Almost four. Yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:46:52] Yeah. So he not only, you know, that says something.

KLEIN: [01:46:57] Yeah, yeah.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:46:58] Yeah. Well, he paid attention to Latin America. He was very, very happy with them. So, anyway.

KLEIN: [01:47:08] OK.

CONNOLLY-JORDAN: [01:47:08] That's my story. You've been very patient.

[END OF INTERVIEW]