

Thomas Bruyneel Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Thomas (Tom) Bruyneel served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya from 1964 to 1966 as a land settlement officer (Kenya I).

Access

Open.

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Oral History Interview

with

Thomas Bruyneel

November 18, 2001
Palm Springs, California

By Robert Klein

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

KLEIN: [00:00:00] This is Bob Klein and I am interviewing Tom Bruyneel. He was a volunteer in Kenya in 1964 to 1966. Usually what I do is start with asking people to go back maybe six months to a year before joining the Peace Corps. Sort of describe where you were at in your life. If you want to go back and fill in a little bit about your childhood and background, that's fine.

BRUYNEEL: [00:00:32] Okay. At the time frame you mentioned, I was just graduating from college from San Diego State. I graduated there August of '64, and we started our training in September of '64. And so I just was a senior in college the year before I volunteered. And, uh.

KLEIN: [00:00:57] What was your major?

BRUYNEEL: [00:00:58] I majored in political science. I had a minor in history, and, you know, I was just one of those kids. President Kennedy hadn't been

dead that long. He, he had truly inspired me. And the idea of the Peace Corps had truly inspired me. And I don't recall when, but somewhere along the line in my senior year, it became obvious it's either going to be graduate school or something like the Peace Corps. Graduate school didn't appeal and the Peace Corps did.

KLEIN: [00:01:21] Yeah. You went to college at San Diego State?

BRUYNEEL: [00:01:26] Correct.

KLEIN: [00:01:27] Had you grown up in Southern California?

BRUYNEEL: [00:01:29] Yes, I grew up in Riverside, California, and I actually went to Riverside Community College for a period of time and then transferred to San Diego State.

KLEIN: [00:01:38] Yeah. Had you, up to the graduation from college, had you done anything extracurricular service or travel?

BRUYNEEL: [00:01:47] No. No, I was, uh, Riverside at that time was a very small town and literally going away to school at San Diego State and probably 80, 90 miles away from Riverside, an hour and a half drive, was the farthest away from home I had been.

KLEIN: [00:02:04] Up to that point?

BRUYNEEL: [00:02:05] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:02:07] Did you study any foreign languages?

BRUYNEEL: [00:02:08] No. Oh, I took, I take that back. I took and flunked German when I was at community college.

KLEIN: [00:02:16] And do you recall the role of Kennedy or the role of, I mean, what, what motivated you to join the Peace Corps?

BRUYNEEL: [00:02:26] It was, it was really two things, or maybe a kind of a multiplicity, a combination of things. I for whatever reasons, and I'm not a revisionist history person, but for whatever reasons, I became real enamored of Senator Kennedy. I first started paying attention to him when I was young back in '56, during that famous vice presidential thing at the convention. And, and I paid attention to him during the primaries. And when he was nominated, a friend of mine went out and celebrated and so forth. And I loved, as I heard about, I loved the idea of the Peace Corps. You know, we were in the Cold War in those days, and it just seemed to me a wonderful alternative to military service, uh, warmongering, and all of that. And I liked the idea of service.

BRUYNEEL: [00:03:13] I, I come from a family background of, you know, I've semi-jokingly said I'm a pink diaper baby. My mom was, leafletted for socialist candidates when she was a teenager and stuff and.

KLEIN: [00:03:25] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:03:26] And so it kind of grew up with the idea of doing some kind of service and it just seemed the perfect vehicle. It was right, right there and it was new and it was popular and all of those things.

KLEIN: [00:03:37] And at the same time you weren't really focused on a career choice or a graduate studies choice?

BRUYNEEL: [00:03:43] Not at all. I had no idea what I wanted to do. None.

KLEIN: [00:03:47] Yeah. And that, obviously, that added to the appeal of it.

BRUYNEEL: [00:03:51] It did.

KLEIN: [00:03:55] Your family. Do you remember the application process at all?

BRUYNEEL: [00:03:59] I remember taking these tests with designs of blocks and things. Beyond that, I really don't. I remember filling out forms.

KLEIN: [00:04:08] Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:04:08] You mentioned family and starting to ask that question.

KLEIN: [00:04:10] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:04:11] When I advised my family that upon graduation I was not going to go to graduate school, but had already volunteered for the Peace Corps and in fact had been accepted and was going to go into training for Kenya. My mother was thrilled and my father was extremely disappointed. It's funny because I talked to him about it the other night. I said, what was your reaction? He said, all that, all that time in school down the drain was what he thought.

KLEIN: [00:04:37] Yeah. Do you have siblings?

BRUYNEEL: [00:04:38] I do. I have a brother and two sisters.

KLEIN: [00:04:41] And what was their take on your joining the Peace Corps?

BRUYNEEL: [00:04:44] Well, my brother was, he's two years younger than I. He was kind of excited for me because it was such an adventure to think about going to Africa. I'm really grateful I got selected for Africa as opposed to Latin America, because, you know, as little kids in Riverside we grew up on TV, Ramar of the Jungle and then Tarzan and all that stuff. And, and I, I had read, you know, some stuff about Mau Mau so I was, I had read Robert Ruark's book. I remember that one and some other perhaps nonfictional stuff. So I was, I personally was real excited about going to Kenya.

KLEIN: [00:05:17] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:05:18] The continent itself would have been great, but that country in particular was great. And, and I conveyed that excitement to him. My sisters basically could have cared less.

KLEIN: [00:05:25] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:05:26] You know, we were not that close anyway so.

KLEIN: [00:05:30] Friends?

BRUYNEEL: [00:05:30] I had a lot of friends that were thrilled for me, um, thought perhaps I was being foolish. You know, maybe I should have been going on to law school or doing something more, more practical, but I was always more, quote unquote, liberal or whatever than my friends. I'm not saying that to demean them. We were good friends but, and in fact, one of them is still one of my best friends.

KLEIN: [00:05:53] Did you know anyone who had joined?

BRUYNEEL: [00:05:55] No.

KLEIN: [00:05:56] So you had very little firsthand knowledge.

BRUYNEEL: [00:05:59] The only firsthand knowledge I had was I went through the application process because, if I recall this correctly, a recruiter came to campus, and I think it was even at that time that I filled in the forms and took whatever testing there was to take.

KLEIN: [00:06:13] Could be, there were various ways.

BRUYNEEL: [00:06:15] Yeah, I really don't recall.

KLEIN: [00:06:16] Then you got a telegram?

BRUYNEEL: [00:06:18] I don't remember a telegram. I think I got a letter. Well, maybe it was a telegram.

KLEIN: [00:06:23] Which said?

BRUYNEEL: [00:06:25] Something to the effect I'd been selected to go. And I was going to go to Kenya and we were going to do training and starting in September in Milwaukee.

KLEIN: [00:06:33] Okay. And do you remember if you went into training with the expectation that you would be going from training directly overseas or that there would be time to be home?

BRUYNEEL: [00:06:43] I don't recall but there was time at home. And I.

KLEIN: [00:06:47] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:06:47] At that time they were very efficient. I don't know what they're like now, but they were very efficient. I have a hunch it was all laid out and we knew exactly what we were going to do.

KLEIN: [00:06:53] Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:06:54] I remember having no problems. Plane tickets showed up on time. I got on an airplane and I went to Milwaukee. And that was literally the first time in my life I'd ever traveled anywhere, other than as a newspaper kid I won a trip to San Francisco on an airplane. But that was the first time as a semi-adult I'd ever gone anywhere on a plane and flying. And, you know, they had arranged for a shuttle to pick me up at the airport and all that. And it just, you know, they were extremely efficient, very impressive in that way.

KLEIN: [00:07:19] Can you describe the circumstances of training? I mean, where were you?

BRUYNEEL: [00:07:23] We, uh, we were at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee campus. We lived in the YMCA, and we walked to the campus, it was about two blocks away. The campus, quote unquote, that we were in was just a large building. I don't recall. I think it was fairly nondescript, but it was next to a nice-looking park. And what I remember most about training was the staff, whose names I can't recall except for the secretary, Sarah, and the people that we had teaching. The Swahili teachers were Kenyans. And, and then the other thing I recall most vividly about training is in the evenings we had these lectures. And they brought in people like John Hope Franklin. They

brought in all of these name academics and so forth to to tell us about, to lecture us about Kenya, life in Kenya, the politics, the social life, and all that. And that was really fabulous.

BRUYNEEL: [00:08:25] And I said to you before we started the tape, we had gotten into this thing of Mike Davidson had just graduated University of Chicago Law School, and Mike was very alive intellectually and very sharp. And he would ask pointed questions not to be mean or vicious, but for his own education. But through various other factors, the group kind of picked up on that and got pretty mean about asking hard questions and competing with each other who, who could stump the speaker or who could, who could ask the question. If we didn't like the speaker for some reason, for example, sometimes we had people from Kenya, colonial people, and sometimes we didn't like their attitude. They would really get roasted with horrible, mean questions, mean spirited questions.

KLEIN: [00:09:06] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:09:07] So.

KLEIN: [00:09:08] And you started to give out the Davison Cup?

BRUYNEEL: [00:09:10] Yes, we, we awarded every night, as I recall, we came to a point where at the end of the lecture we would award a, we held up a Styrofoam cup that had the word Davidson written on it. We would award the Davidson Cup to the person that asked the meanest or most penetrating question, which Mike normally won.

KLEIN: [00:09:26] Yeah, I was going to say, do you remember winning anything?

BRUYNEEL: [00:09:29] I never, I never won it. I sat in the back room and kept quiet. I was shy.

KLEIN: [00:09:33] What was your impression of the rest of the group? I mean, you're stepping on a whole new stage now.

BRUYNEEL: [00:09:37] I loved that group. I, I fell in love with that group the first time I ever saw them. I, I always, I always wondered, why am I there? There's people like Mike Ivar, Mike Ford, who were just wonderful people, really brilliant people overall, with some exceptions, which I may name if you asked me to. I won't.

KLEIN: [00:09:59] Well, that's okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:10:00] Otherwise were highly intelligent, highly competent, just great people. I loved them. I loved being part of them. I loved hanging out with them. I loved talking to them. And I mean that literally. I'm using that word, love, knowingly.

KLEIN: [00:10:13] You were a little bit hesitant, though, in matching yourself up with them.

BRUYNEEL: [00:10:17] Absolutely.

KLEIN: [00:10:18] Okay. Um. How large was the group?

BRUYNEEL: [00:10:22] You know, I don't remember. I think 40, maybe 50 people. I honestly don't remember. Maybe 30 something.

KLEIN: [00:10:27] And it was all male except for three married couples?

BRUYNEEL: [00:10:30] There were three married couples. There was Kae Dakin.

KLEIN: [00:10:34] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:10:34] Janet Benson. And Ann.

KLEIN: [00:10:39] I don't know Ann.

BRUYNEEL: [00:10:39] That's right.

KLEIN: [00:10:40] Okay. But they were, were they participating as Peace Corps trainees or as the wives of?

BRUYNEEL: [00:10:46] They were also volunteers. Trainees.

KLEIN: [00:10:48] Oh, okay. So everything that went on, they were fully part of.

BRUYNEEL: [00:10:51] Exactly.

KLEIN: [00:10:53] Although as I recall, their roles were not as defined as yours was when you became volunteers, I think.

BRUYNEEL: [00:11:01] No, I think that's, I think that's actually true because we were, we males at least were settlement officers.

KLEIN: [00:11:08] Right.

BRUYNEEL: [00:11:09] So, for example, I think Don Dakin was a settlement officer and then Kae was expected to find some sort of a role for herself.

KLEIN: [00:11:16] Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:11:16] I really remember that as Mike Benson. Mike got some job with, he wasn't a settlement officer, but he had some work with the settlement, Ministry of Lands and Settlement. And then poor Janet was told just to find something to do, which she had some trouble doing at times.

KLEIN: [00:11:33] And I don't know if that, well, I don't think that was terribly clear in training. And I think in the field it became more obvious that there was.

BRUYNEEL: [00:11:40] I have a hunch that's true.

KLEIN: [00:11:41] Yeah, let's stick with training. One of the major components is language training. Can you describe what happened?

BRUYNEEL: [00:11:50] Well, it's fantastic. Language training, uh, the way it was supposed to be, as I recall it, and I think I'm accurate about this. We had two or perhaps 3 hours in the morning, some time in the evening. And then as the handouts told us, we were supposed to speak Swahili at meals. But we didn't. I don't recall ever doing that. Obviously, when we're first there, we could barely ask, why are you pushing your bicycle? I remember that from the lesson, [speaks Swahili], you know. You're not going to sit at dinner and ask, why are you pushing your bicycle? Or where are you going?

KLEIN: [00:12:25] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:12:28] But I thought. I have difficulty. I know from the fact that I flunked German in college. I have difficulty learning languages and I certainly wasn't totally fluent like people like Mike Ford were when we got to the country. But I was extremely impressed with our training in languages.

KLEIN: [00:12:46] Was the approach almost completely, uh, spoken language?

BRUYNEEL: [00:12:51] Yeah. We had a book.

KLEIN: [00:12:52] You did?

BRUYNEEL: [00:12:53] We had a book, but we kind of read out of that book and the whole class was speaking Swahili and learning to speak Swahili. First learning phrases like, where are you going? Why are you pushing your bicycle? Because it's broken. Are you hungry? Things like that. But it was mostly, almost all spoken. It wasn't, it wasn't like your college language class where you sit and you learn how to decline verbs, or decline nouns, conjugate verbs and so forth. We didn't do any of that.

KLEIN: [00:13:20] Two things on language, uh. Were you told that language, your ability to, well, the level at which you had learned would determine whether you went or not?

BRUYNEEL: [00:13:31] I believe that's the case. I think we had to achieve a certain S1 level in order to be selected in to go or whatever they called it in those days.

KLEIN: [00:13:39] And was it your understanding that you were going to be, in the job you were going for, you were going to be functioning in Swahili?

BRUYNEEL: [00:13:47] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:13:48] So it was key to what you were?

BRUYNEEL: [00:13:51] Right. In order to be effective, we had to be somewhat fluent, not perfectly fluent, but somewhat fluent at least in the language.

KLEIN: [00:14:00] What about, uh, was there? Were there much? What was the job that you were in training for? Was that, as you understood it, in training?

BRUYNEEL: [00:14:10] I'm not sure I fully understood it in training. I don't really recall.

KLEIN: [00:14:14] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:14:15] I know that. Well, we knew, we. I don't know that we knew we were going to be settlement officers per se. We knew that we were going to be working with the Ministry of Lands and Settlement on what were called settlement schemes where, whereby the African people were being resettled on African highlands, what were called the highlands, lands that had been previously exclusively occupied by the colonialists, by Europeans.

KLEIN: [00:14:42] Right.

BRUYNEEL: [00:14:42] They were breaking those up, those large holdings into smaller holdings called settlement schemes and resettling people. And we were going to be working with that. That much I recall we knew.

KLEIN: [00:14:52] And there was a government Ministry of Lands and Settlement.

BRUYNEEL: [00:14:55] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:14:59] And a structure in place.

BRUYNEEL: [00:15:00] Yes. Right.

KLEIN: [00:15:03] Kenya was independent in, what, '64?

BRUYNEEL: [00:15:08] Kenya became independent. We got there. We got there December 31st of '64. And I think Kenya became independent in December of '63.

KLEIN: [00:15:15] Okay. Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:15:16] Either late '63 or early '64.

KLEIN: [00:15:19] So it was immediately after.

BRUYNEEL: [00:15:21] Right. They were still very, very new.

KLEIN: [00:15:24] Yeah. Uh. There was also area, technical studies. You obviously didn't come from a farm background and yet you were going out.

BRUYNEEL: [00:15:36] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:15:37] Can you talk a little bit about that?

BRUYNEEL: [00:15:39] Well, yeah, they, they gave us some training in agriculture and, and which I'm not sure how effective that was. I mean, we had

lectures that told us the kind of crops and so forth that were grown in Kenya. I remember we went and spent a few days in Madison looking at cows and so forth. The theory that was explained to us, which I always loved, was that Peace Corps notion at that time was that you could take an AB generalist, liberal arts graduate from an American university, and teach them to do anything.

KLEIN: [00:16:12] Yeah. Okay. Let's.

BRUYNEEL: [00:16:14] I was saying before the plane came by is that as I recall it being explained to us, we were told that the Peace Corps' notion at that time was that you could take an AB generalist liberal arts graduate from an American university, and such a person could do anything. You could train, train such a person to do anything. And, you know, I think that's probably true. I really do.

KLEIN: [00:16:36] Do you recall if anyone in the group had a background in agriculture, had grown up on a farm?

BRUYNEEL: [00:16:41] Yeah. I think Jim Jorgensen had someone, I think he grew up on a, I think his dad was an almond, or as he called it, an "a-mond" grower, up in Northern California in the Central Valley in Merced or one of those towns. Beyond that, I don't think so. I mean, my most vivid memory is Arthur Levy, who's from New York City who. I think the first time he ever saw a living cow was in Madison. I think we were more of that kind of a group. I sort of had, what one might call a rural background because at that time Riverside was a small town. It had a lot of orchards and things like that, but I had never worked at them, I'd never farmed or anything like that.

KLEIN: [00:17:21] You hadn't been in 4-H when you were in high school or before?

BRUYNEEL: [00:17:24] No. And I don't know that any of us had. I don't think so.

KLEIN: [00:17:28] No truly, it tested the generalist theory.

BRUYNEEL: [00:17:31] I think it did.

KLEIN: [00:17:33] How about, uh, what was the typical training pattern? Were you on the go from what to what? And seven days a week? Six days?

BRUYNEEL: [00:17:43] It was, it depends on how you count it.

KLEIN: [00:17:46] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:17:47] On the seventh day, on Sundays, we, we often went to a field and played soccer and stuff so we could learn how to do that, which was a game that at that time American kids weren't terribly familiar with. But that's the kind of football they, they played there. The other six days, my memory is that we were on the go pretty much all day long, and I can't remember if Saturday was a half a day.

KLEIN: [00:18:08] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:18:09] Or if most Sundays were half a day. We may have had part of Saturday and part of Sunday off. I honestly don't recall now.

KLEIN: [00:18:16] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:18:17] But the, the weekdays were long. We went from early in the morning, 6:00 or 7:00 in the morning until 8:00 or 9:00 at night with these, with these evening lectures. Perhaps later, perhaps 10:00.

KLEIN: [00:18:27] So you did come in contact during training with some Kenyans?

BRUYNEEL: [00:18:30] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:18:30] Was it only the language instructors?

BRUYNEEL: [00:18:32] If I recall correctly, aside from those that came out to lecture, and I don't think we had Africans that came in lecture to us. We

may have had somebody from the Ministry of Lands and Settlement. I have a vague memory, but I think he was a European man.

KLEIN: [00:18:46] Okay. Certainly they had still had.

BRUYNEEL: [00:18:49] Yeah. They had a lot of staff that were Europeans at that time.

KLEIN: [00:18:53] And the people who came out and talked about the land settling, the settlement scheme, were British who had chosen to stay in Kenya?

BRUYNEEL: [00:19:01] Well, at least temporarily, yes.

KLEIN: [00:19:03] Yeah. And themselves may have been the large scale farmers.

BRUYNEEL: [00:19:07] Often the administration was. And I, I have a visual image of this man that came and spoke to us and he's kind of a ruddy face, round, round faced white male.

KLEIN: [00:19:17] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:19:19] And, you know, he's the one that told us. It's no wonder he got toasted and he told us, you know, a lot of basically racist stuff about, you know, Africans don't really like to work, they like to gossip and stuff like that. It's pretty remarkable.

KLEIN: [00:19:33] Who was the head of the faculty, do you remember?

BRUYNEEL: [00:19:35] I don't remember. I can see his face, but I remember he's a young man. A good guy.

KLEIN: [00:19:41] You also did American studies?

BRUYNEEL: [00:19:43] Yeah. But some of us, quote unquote, selected out of American studies based on the, on the tests they gave us. And we, we

only went to those classes if we chose to, otherwise. They had a AWACS. American, what was it? American studies, world affairs, and communism.

KLEIN: [00:19:59] Yes, yes.

BRUYNEEL: [00:20:00] And a handful of us got a high enough score on some tests on those subject matters that we did not have to attend those lectures if we didn't choose to. We often did, because that's, those are often I think were the lectures when we had good speakers like John Hope Franklin. But other times we were able to go and, dare I say it, drink beer and stuff like that.

KLEIN: [00:20:19] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:20:20] Didn't, just didn't have to attend.

KLEIN: [00:20:23] Was the group becoming socially cohesive, more or less?

BRUYNEEL: [00:20:27] The group was very socially cohesive, in my opinion.

KLEIN: [00:20:30] There were, I'm sure there were cliques within, but.

BRUYNEEL: [00:20:33] There were, but overall I remember sitting in that lecture hall and a lot of banter going back and forth, and, and I think we cared about each other. We may have gossiped about each other ourselves and formed cliques, as you say, but I, my memory is we were for the most part real cohesive.

KLEIN: [00:20:49] Well, how did you all deal with selection?

BRUYNEEL: [00:20:52] That was hard. It was.

KLEIN: [00:20:54] Were there are two points, was there a midpoint and a final?

BRUYNEEL: [00:20:56] I recall there was two. And I think, I think it was mid and final or it may have been mid and shortly before final. I really don't

remember. The reason it was hard was because you didn't know if the ax was going to fall, and when somebody was selected out, which is the euphemism they used in those days, that person would simply disappear. It was like, it was like becoming a non-person in the Soviet Union. We, I remember very clearly there was a young man from, I don't remember his name, but he had attended Harvard and so forth. And, and, um, it was a Saturday I believe. And we were on a bus to go to the field, or maybe it was a Sunday, to go play soccer and so forth. And he didn't get on the bus. And then we were told he's been selected out, he's going to be on his way home. And nobody got to say goodbye to him or speak to him. It was just like, poof, he's gone. And there was some other, at least one other that was selected out the next time around, whenever that was. And it was the same.

KLEIN: [00:21:56] Do you remember if the group objected to the, either the selection process or to some of the choices that were made?

BRUYNEEL: [00:22:03] Uh, I don't recall any objections. I think the main objection was this business of having them just disappear and nobody being able to say goodbye. I think we well understood, it was clearly explained to us that there would be a selection process. And, and I think that we were comfortable that they were not of ill will or bad faith.

KLEIN: [00:22:24] Oh, okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:22:24] I don't think that we, we would wonder why. One, one person that was selected out, we knew why. He, the kid had just developed a terrible drinking problem already. And but the first one that I'm thinking of, the kid that went to Harvard, nobody really could understand why. But, you know, we had been seen by psychiatrists and.

KLEIN: [00:22:45] Oh, I was going to ask, did you have separate psychiatric interviews?

BRUYNEEL: [00:22:48] Yes, we did.

KLEIN: [00:22:49] How did you deal with that? I mean, you said you hadn't had much experience.

BRUYNEEL: [00:22:53] No, I hadn't. And but I had no trepidation. Again, this, this, maybe it was unique. I really don't know. But the staff we had made things clear to us. And when you understand things, a lot of the fear and trepidation is gone. And it was clear to us, we're going to go see this man and he's going to interview us and just be honest and so on and so forth. And it is part of the selection process.

KLEIN: [00:23:14] Yeah. You don't specifically recall the content of psychiatric interview?

BRUYNEEL: [00:23:20] I do. I do, because this was one of those guys that asked, just like you hear about the jokes, you know, how do you feel about your mother? How do you feel about your father? Kind of those kind of questions, which didn't make a whole lot of sense to me. And then, and then, I don't remember. You can ask him, but Mike Ford used to fool around with him, and then Mike had to go back for a second interview. So I think he stopped fooling around with him on those questions.

KLEIN: [00:23:40] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:23:41] But I remember it was the source of a lot of hilarity at the time down in the coffee room or whatever, Mike telling us about his conversation with the shrink. But mine, I went in and answered the questions and, you know, the only real trepidation or fear is, well, what is he thinking of me and what kind of a report is he going to write about me?

KLEIN: [00:23:58] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:23:59] But we would kind of probably not. It probably wasn't totally kosher. We'd kind of get a surreptitious read back from the secretaries telling us, okay, you did all right. You don't worry about it. You did fine. You know.

KLEIN: [00:24:11] Did your own confidence build through training? I mean, you said you came in, you were a little bit apprehensive in relation to these other?

BRUYNEEL: [00:24:18] It did. It did. Because first of all, I got to know the members of the group and I really liked them and I felt comfortable with them. They, for the most part, all the individuals were those kind of people. The staff made it very easy for me in that way.

KLEIN: [00:24:34] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:24:34] It helped me a lot to be one of the few that selected out on AWACS. That helped me to understand that even though I'd only, if you will, gone to San Diego State, I had managed to pick up something.

KLEIN: [00:24:44] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:24:44] And, and it was, it was the kind of group that because of the cohesion we were talking about, we were very supportive of each other. So, you know, we didn't get into, into the snobbery business of, well, I went to Harvard or Yale and you didn't. None of that played, at least in my presence. If it happened, it happened behind my back and I wasn't aware of it, and I don't think it did.

KLEIN: [00:25:02] Also, the group was small enough that there was an opportunity for good kind of contact, which is different than if you're in a training program with 200 or 300.

BRUYNEEL: [00:25:11] That's true. That's definitely true. We were small enough that we could spend time with each other.

KLEIN: [00:25:15] Was there a final exam in the language? And that must have come before the final selection board.

BRUYNEEL: [00:25:23] I don't remember. But I would, I would think there was. I would, I would guess that we did have some sort of final testing, but I don't specifically remember it.

KLEIN: [00:25:36] Training wrapped up, selection was done. Did you party? Did you have a celebration?

BRUYNEEL: [00:25:42] We partied a lot all during training. So my answer to that is I don't, we probably did, but I don't specifically recall a concluding party. And we may not have had one. I say we partied a lot. There were times on Saturday nights when we would, we would get out and we'd go to various places, clubs or whatever, watch Jim Fanucan dance. And Jim was a pretty wild guy. And, uh, and I would guess that we probably did have some kind of concluding party, but I don't specifically remember it. And what I do remember is gathering in New York before we left and having a big party for a bunch of us at Phil Schafer's house in Queens.

KLEIN: [00:26:18] Okay, uh, training's over. You were selected. You then went home for a couple of days.

BRUYNEEL: [00:26:26] Went home for Christmas, basically.

KLEIN: [00:26:28] Oh, okay. I forgot the timing.

BRUYNEEL: [00:26:31] Yeah, it was just a few days.

KLEIN: [00:26:33] Were you a local hero? Did the local newspaper?

BRUYNEEL: [00:26:37] No. The newspaper, the local newspaper interviewed me. How that came about, I don't really know, for all I know Peace Corps told them. Go interview these guys or this guy. I have that clipping somewhere. It's pretty insipid. They didn't teach me that much. They didn't teach me how to talk intelligently to the press.

KLEIN: [00:26:54] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:26:55] But, yeah. But no, I was not a local hero. There was a little small thing with my picture in the newspaper.

KLEIN: [00:27:00] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:27:02] I think I was, you know, I think my friends were real curious as to what was going to happen. And my family. By then, my father had become really reconciled and supportive of the whole idea.

KLEIN: [00:27:14] Did you have any second thoughts about it?

BRUYNEEL: [00:27:17] Then?

KLEIN: [00:27:17] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:27:18] No, I was thrilled. Yeah. I loved it.

KLEIN: [00:27:24] You flew to New York?

BRUYNEEL: [00:27:25] Flew to New York.

KLEIN: [00:27:27] For whatever it's called, staging or gathering. And were you to go by charter to Kenya?

BRUYNEEL: [00:27:32] Yes, we went by charter to Kenya.

KLEIN: [00:27:33] Okay. How long were you in New York?

BRUYNEEL: [00:27:35] I went to New York I think two or maybe three days before we left. I went and stayed with Roland. Roland Johnson, who's grand, he was staying at his grandmother's in Harlem.

KLEIN: [00:27:46] Mm hmm.

BRUYNEEL: [00:27:46] And I had a wonderful time doing that. He took me to some clubs and stuff. It was, it was great, you know.

KLEIN: [00:27:56] That was all new to you too, I mean, of course.

BRUYNEEL: [00:27:58] Up until then, Milwaukee was the biggest city I'd ever been in. And now I'm in, now I'm in New York, and, you know, and but they had already given me a lot of confidence, the confidence of I wouldn't have otherwise had.

KLEIN: [00:28:09] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:28:09] I walked out of the terminal at JFK or wherever you go. I think you went on a shuttle to a terminal or something. And then anyway, I remember getting in a cab and giving the driver the address I wanted to go to, Roland's, and he said, I'm not, I'm not going to take you there. You've got the wrong address. You don't want to go there. If I'd known that before you got in the cab, I wouldn't have let you in the cab. Now you're here. I've got to take you. But you're white and you don't want to go there, and so forth. And I said, no, this is the address I have. And, you know, despite all the stories you hear about New York cab drivers, he said, I will wait for you because I know you're in the wrong place. And he did. I went up, found Roland, came back out, told him I'm in the right place. He looked at me like I was crazy and left. But that was a wonderful experience. His grandmother cooked us some good meals and, uh.

KLEIN: [00:28:53] And you got, you had a party at Phil Schafer's?

BRUYNEEL: [00:28:55] Right.

KLEIN: [00:28:56] And then flight to Kenya.

BRUYNEEL: [00:28:58] Flight to Kenya.

KLEIN: [00:29:00] At that point, what was your expectation? Had you had, had you received assignments?

BRUYNEEL: [00:29:05] No, I don't think so. I think we got our assignments when we got in-country. I think, I think we knew we were going to go to Kenya, I

mean, to Nairobi, and then stay again in a YMCA, which turned out to be pretty much like a resort as I recall. I think it was the Y. And then from there we were going to go to some place, the name of which I forgotten, outside of Nairobi for some training. And there we were going to receive our assignments.

KLEIN: [00:29:31] Kenyatta College, was it?

BRUYNEEL: [00:29:32] That sounds familiar. I think it was.

KLEIN: [00:29:34] Yeah. It may have been a postgraduate ag school outside Nairobi.

BRUYNEEL: [00:29:37] Yeah, that's, that sounds right.

KLEIN: [00:29:39] So, but you knew there was going to be additional training?

BRUYNEEL: [00:29:43] Right. I think we knew that.

KLEIN: [00:29:44] What's your impression? I mean, you get to Nairobi and you're there. I mean, this is Africa and this is.

BRUYNEEL: [00:29:50] You bet. That was great. It was, it was just, it was marvelous. I'll tell you right now, then and even now, it was like a miracle to me. It was just, it was a great experience. I was loving every minute of it.

KLEIN: [00:30:01] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:30:01] I don't think I ever had a truly bad minute the whole time I was in country. And I mean that.

KLEIN: [00:30:07] Did you run around trying to find people to speak Swahili to or?

BRUYNEEL: [00:30:11] Of course, we were talking, so I tried to talk Swahili to the guys, the cab drivers and stuff. And, you know, going around Nairobi

was cool because if you went with Ivar, it's like Ivar was born to be in a cab. He sat in the back seat like royalty, and then we would compete with each other trying to give, give the cab driver coherent directions. And, and we actually managed to get him lost one time, taking us back out to Kenyatta College or wherever it was, because he didn't know it by that name or something. So we're trying to tell him, turn right here. You know, it was coming out with turn left here and tried to tell him to turn around. And so it was, I remember that as being a fairly hilarious night but.

KLEIN: [00:30:45] Do you recall, was there a reception at the airport when you came?

BRUYNEEL: [00:30:47] Yeah, there was. We had to sing the national anthem in Swahili and we were met by some dignitaries. And then I think it was that after that, I believe that same day, which was New Year's Eve, if I recall correctly, December 31st, we went to the, to either the ambassador's residence or some place where we were addressed by the ambassador, Bill Attwood.

KLEIN: [00:31:06] Right.

BRUYNEEL: [00:31:06] That's my memory of it. And I remember being in some kind of a, so I'm not sure it was the residence, we were in some kind of a hall area like a classroom, stadium seating type, if I recall correctly. I don't know. I may be wrong about that.

KLEIN: [00:31:19] What'd Attwood say? Do you remember anything about?

BRUYNEEL: [00:31:25] Yeah, I vaguely remember. I don't recall the exact words, but it was, it was to the effect I'm responsible for you guys. I wrote Kennedy's speech that proposed a Peace Corps. And, uh, and I'm glad you're here. And, uh, and I'm a good guy. And I think he was, you know. Invited us to the residence and told us that we could swim in the pool. Telling us that he truly felt responsible for the creation of the Peace Corps because he had written the campaign speech that, that, in which Kennedy proposed the Peace Corps.

KLEIN: [00:31:54] Yeah, he was a Kennedy political appointee.

BRUYNEEL: [00:31:57] Right.

KLEIN: [00:31:57] And I think had been the publisher of Look magazine.

BRUYNEEL: [00:32:01] That's my understanding. Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:32:02] Yeah, yeah. And you met Peace Corps staff at that time?

BRUYNEEL: [00:32:08] I believe we did.

KLEIN: [00:32:09] Uh, Quimby was the director?

BRUYNEEL: [00:32:11] Tom Quimby was the director.

KLEIN: [00:32:12] And I was there as a field rep or whatever. I can't remember.

BRUYNEEL: [00:32:16] I think of you as the assistant director, I don't know if that was truly your title or not.

KLEIN: [00:32:22] And I'm not sure if I was there. I may have been back working with the teachers who were, came later.

BRUYNEEL: [00:32:28] I don't remember who from Peace Corps staff we actually met the time we arrived. I know you were there.

KLEIN: [00:32:33] But you were aware there was a Peace Corps staff?

BRUYNEEL: [00:32:35] Oh, yeah, absolutely.

KLEIN: [00:32:36] And that they had a relation to you that would.

BRUYNEEL: [00:32:41] Absolutely. That was a good staff. I mean, there was Dottie, the secretary. You know, I can still visualize the office. Somewhere along the line, early on, we were at the Peace Corps office. We knew

where it was. We knew how to interact with staff. The staff was not distant from us at all.

KLEIN: [00:32:55] A doctor named Campbell?

BRUYNEEL: [00:32:57] Was that his name? I don't remember his name. Young man, liked to hunt, liked to shoot animals.

KLEIN: [00:33:01] Yes, yes. That was him. I remember.

BRUYNEEL: [00:33:03] We used to tease about that a lot.

KLEIN: [00:33:06] Well, I remember being embarrassed because he put up the zebra skin in the office. It was so.

BRUYNEEL: [00:33:10] He did. So we used to, we used to really get after him about that. And then he threw a barbecue one time and he served us gnu that he had shot, you know, and these roasted wildebeests or some barbecued wildebeests.

KLEIN: [00:33:23] So now you're up at the college for in-country training?

BRUYNEEL: [00:33:26] Right. I think it was ten days or two weeks.

KLEIN: [00:33:28] Yeah. What went on during the two week period?

BRUYNEEL: [00:33:34] You know, we went out and we toured a lot of the local settlement schemes around Nairobi. We, we got more specific lectures about the agriculture and how things worked. I believe, I could be wrong about this, I believe we got some training in how the administration, the actual administration of the Ministry of Lands and Settlement worked. My most vivid memory is going around to various settlement schemes and literally on the ground, on foot, touring farms. Going out in these great huge busses that would get stuck in the mud and stuff at times, and going off and trooping around these people's farms and stuff, looking at the various crops and the various methods of doing things.

KLEIN: [00:34:14] Now, at the point you went, there was still large farms that were in the process of being cut up. Or had they been?

BRUYNEEL: [00:34:22] I think they had been cut up. I don't know if there were any left that were being cut up.

KLEIN: [00:34:27] And I know it was a complex issue as to who was claiming what land, but Kikuyus, for the most part, who were then moving into.

BRUYNEEL: [00:34:36] Right.

KLEIN: [00:34:37] New farmlands.

BRUYNEEL: [00:34:38] Right. Except I personally and then, and Bill Sterling, were not with Kikuyus.

KLEIN: [00:34:45] Oh, okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:34:45] I went out to, the tribe I was working with was, were the Kisii tribe. And Bill, Bill and I went out together to this town called Sotik. And actually we were beyond that, our settlement schemes. And he was working with the Kipsigi people. They bordered each other at the place where we lived.

KLEIN: [00:35:01] Which people?

BRUYNEEL: [00:35:01] Kipsigi. And, um, and then later Ivar came out and lived with Bill. And then later I had Henry Cushing from Kenya II come out. Henry and I had one residence. Bill and Ivar had the other. Henry and I worked with the Kisii. Bill and Ivar worked with the Kipsigi.

KLEIN: [00:35:16] Let's go back to Kenyatta College. Somewhere during that ten day period, you received your assignment.

BRUYNEEL: [00:35:23] Right.

KLEIN: [00:35:25] And initially, were you assigned alone or were you assigned with Bill?

BRUYNEEL: [00:35:29] I was initially assigned with Bill.

KLEIN: [00:35:31] And told you are going to be where?

BRUYNEEL: [00:35:34] I think, I think really all we were told is we were going to be in Sotik. I don't even know that we even looked on a map. The ministry had set up a driver to take us to where we were going. And so on the appointed day we got in a Land Rover with our stuff and drove off.

KLEIN: [00:35:50] While you were at Kenyatta College, were people being picked up and taken away so the group was being split? Or did it all happen on one day?

BRUYNEEL: [00:35:59] I think it all happened more or less one time, but I really don't remember. It's an interesting question.

KLEIN: [00:36:04] I mean, because, you know, there's a question of having developed a fairly strong group feeling and which represented a kind of support. You're suddenly at the point where, you know, it's being split up. And I don't know if you.

BRUYNEEL: [00:36:22] I don't recall feeling any pain or discomfort over that, and I don't even remember. I have a hunch we left all more or less at the same time. I don't know that it was like one group and suddenly a gang of Land Rovers arrive and we head off into distant parts. It may have been piecemeal over a few days, and in fact it probably was. But, you know, interestingly enough, that did not break up the cohesion of the group. We found ways to get together from time to time and stay in touch.

KLEIN: [00:36:49] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:36:50] And yeah, you were there.

KLEIN: [00:36:54] Well, I'm interested in your impression of first encountering Sotik, and if you could talk about that.

BRUYNEEL: [00:37:03] Well, that was really something. I mean. Um. We, we have a long, it's a long drive from Nairobi. We were probably the farthest out from Nairobi, and it took probably 4, maybe 5 hours to get out there. And Sotik is a real tiny town, it was then, just one, one post office. Basically the town was, was on the left hand side as you pulled into it on the road. There was a row of stores and bars, maybe, maybe five, six buildings, maybe seven or eight. I really don't recall. Across the street from that was the post office. And that's, that's the place where the, the paved road out of Nairobi in that direction literally came to an end.

KLEIN: [00:37:54] Mm hmm. Had it been, did it exist traditionally as a town?

BRUYNEEL: [00:37:58] Yes, I think so.

KLEIN: [00:38:00] Okay. Going back even before the British came?

BRUYNEEL: [00:38:02] Right, because there was a general. Well, I don't know about before the British came, but I would guess so. But I really don't know. It's an interesting question. I'm embarrassed that I didn't find that out.

KLEIN: [00:38:10] Do you remember if you went out from the college with suitcases, duffel bags filled with, with what?

BRUYNEEL: [00:38:18] Our clothes.

KLEIN: [00:38:20] That was it?

BRUYNEEL: [00:38:20] We didn't have our book lockers yet.

KLEIN: [00:38:22] What about mosquito nets, pots and pans, and all that paraphernalia for keeping house?

BRUYNEEL: [00:38:27] Well, I don't remember.

KLEIN: [00:38:28] Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:38:29] It probably did now that you mentioned it, but no, I don't remember that one way or the other. I remember the back of the Land Rover being full of crap, basically. And so we must have had some of that stuff.

KLEIN: [00:38:37] Yeah. Got out to Sotik. Who, were you greeted by anyone?

BRUYNEEL: [00:38:41] No. We, uh, literally we, we stopped in town. The, the, uh. We may have picked up some food. I don't remember that now. The driver, we stopped in town for a while then, and then we learned that, well, this isn't really where we're going to be. We're another 20 miles or so down, down the dirt road and then off into the bundu, off of that road. That was the main road from Sotik to the town of Kisii. But about mid-point, we went off into the settlement scheme area.

KLEIN: [00:39:12] Ah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:39:12] And he drove us up to the house that we were going to live in and dropped us off, said goodbye and drove off. And Bill and I stood there in the living room. No, no real furniture, no nothing, no curtains on the windows, kind of looking at each other like going, now what? And we were greeted by, by a man named Jeremiah who showed up at our house. Basically, I hear there's a couple of young white guys here, a couple of young *wazungu*, thought I'd drop in and see what you guys are all about. And he, he wasn't the chief, but he was, he was the most dynamic and articulate of the farmers that we had out there. He was kind of a leader in that sense.

KLEIN: [00:39:49] In this whole initial sequence now, was there anyone who officially identified themselves as being with the Ministry of Lands and Settlement?

BRUYNEEL: [00:39:57] Not at that time. But somewhere, maybe that same day, probably the next day, we were put in, we were contacted in some fashion, I honestly don't remember how, by a man named Rollie Armor. I'll take, I'll take back what I just told you. I think that we were first taken by the driver to Rollie Armor's house.

KLEIN: [00:40:16] Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:40:18] And, and he was more or less in the town of Sotik, and he was the, the highest-ranking local settlement officer. He'd been a farmer there, and he was the, not the area, but the district settlement officer, whatever his title was. I remember this now, because you're right. I am surprised that I remember, because I remember we stayed that night there. They served us a wonderful dinner, he and his wife Rosemary. And then she wrote a letter to our parents, to Bill's parents and mine, saying your boys were here. They're wonderful. They're well, they're safe. I gave them a good meal. And then it was after that. We stayed there for one, perhaps two days. And after that, the driver took us out to our house and then we got dropped off. And then we were standing there going like, now what?

KLEIN: [00:41:02] But he was, he was Kenyan but of British origin?

BRUYNEEL: [00:41:08] No, I think he was, he, he was a colonialist, but I think he had been born and raised in England. He was of that group of colonials that, that were placed in Kenya at the end of World War II, when they had a new wave of colonialization because they didn't know what to do with the veterans. So they stuck them in the colonies.

KLEIN: [00:41:26] Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:41:27] I'm pretty sure about that.

KLEIN: [00:41:28] And as of independence, he chose to stay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:41:31] At least temporarily. What they were doing, Bob, a lot of what a lot of the English were doing was they were staying, they had

sold their farms and made a lot of money. They were staying on as administrative personnel in the Ministry of Lands and Settlement.

KLEIN: [00:41:48] Right.

BRUYNEEL: [00:41:49] And if I recall correctly, they were being paid not by the government of Kenya, but by the World Bank or some other organization out of the UK.

KLEIN: [00:41:59] That sounds right.

BRUYNEEL: [00:42:00] And I remember they were, I thought this was very ironic. And I, I believe I was correct in this. They were getting hardship pay and overseas pay, you know, for doing this. And apparently their plan was to do it for a number of years, accumulate some money, and then move on to South Africa.

KLEIN: [00:42:16] There may also have been currency exchange advantages where they were being paid in hard currency and they could live on local money that they had accumulated. So that the, I think there was that aspect as well.

BRUYNEEL: [00:42:28] Probably true. Yeah. Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:42:31] So now you say goodbye to this initial security blanket and you're out in the. Can you describe the house that you were staying in?

BRUYNEEL: [00:42:38] Yeah. It was a, it's a large house made out of stone block type things. Uh, fairly, it's kind of, as they all were it seems like in our area, up on a hillside so you can look down over the valley. And, uh.

KLEIN: [00:42:55] Who had been the former occupant?

BRUYNEEL: [00:42:56] I don't remember. I think I knew their name, but I don't.

KLEIN: [00:42:59] But it would have been a British?

BRUYNEEL: [00:43:01] A local British person.

KLEIN: [00:43:03] With a large farm.

BRUYNEEL: [00:43:04] With a large farm that basically, this was the manor of the farm.

KLEIN: [00:43:08] How many rooms? Eight rooms, nine rooms?

BRUYNEEL: [00:43:11] Oh, probably. I don't, I don't remember that house. I wasn't in that house that long.

KLEIN: [00:43:17] What was the climate like where you were then and later?

BRUYNEEL: [00:43:21] The political climate or the environment? It was warm during the day and cool at night as I recall. We were high, we were over 5,000 feet high, almost 6,000.

KLEIN: [00:43:33] Oh, okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:43:33] We were literally in the highlands. The reason we didn't stay in that house long is because the. I was assigned to the Lietego settlement scheme and it was right in the settlement scheme and, and very quickly it was decided that house would become the, the co-operative's offices. We had the dairy there and all that. So Bill and I moved about a mile down the road into another house, which was much more modest. Again, it was on a hill overlooking the valley, had a better view. And it had been, not only was it more modest, it had been better maintained. The first house was, had obviously been empty for a long time and had a lot of dust, and it was pretty bare, you know. And we were surprised it wasn't snake infested, you know, but it wasn't.

KLEIN: [00:44:17] Who was making these decisions, was it within the Lands and Settlement structure?

BRUYNEEL: [00:44:22] Yeah. It was the local guy because the, the housing.

KLEIN: [00:44:26] The district guy?

BRUYNEEL: [00:44:27] Yeah. The district guy, I'm pretty sure.

KLEIN: [00:44:28] Whose name was?

BRUYNEEL: [00:44:28] Rollie Armor. Roland Armor. They called him Rollie.

KLEIN: [00:44:32] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:44:33] I'm pretty sure it was his decision or else somebody in Nairobi. The houses that we were in came as being part of the settlement officer that, of that particular settlement scheme. Each settlement scheme had been a former large landholding. So each, each settlement scheme had a large European colonial type house.

KLEIN: [00:44:51] Right.

BRUYNEEL: [00:44:52] So even if you were African, not a Peace Corps volunteer, if you were a settlement officer, you lived in that house as part of your compensation that went with the settlement scheme. So later Bill and I moved into one that was in the Kipsigi area. Then when Henry came, when Ivar came up country and Henry came up country, I moved another mile down the road to yet another house that was on the Kisii side of the border. I was also assigned to the Manga settlement scheme and that was the Manga house.

KLEIN: [00:45:18] So that was a new? Was that after about six months, eight months?

BRUYNEEL: [00:45:22] I don't remember how long. Probably, yeah, probably three, four or five, six, eight months. Something.

KLEIN: [00:45:26] So let's say the first six, eight months were, in the scheme you were at, were there African Kenyan settlement officers or were Rollie and you and Bill?

BRUYNEEL: [00:45:40] We were, we were, if I am recalling correctly, those schemes had just opened up. I don't think that they had settled. I'll take that back. Manga had a settlement officer, a European guy named Torquil MacLeod, young English guy or colonial. He had been born in Kenya, but his parents had come from England. Lietego I think did not have a settlement officer. Now maybe, maybe he had also tried to be settlement officer to Lietego at the time. I don't know. I remember that when I got Lietego virtually nothing had been done. I mean, they were on the ground, but I think they still hadn't even signed the loan paperwork and various other things, if I recall correctly. And I don't remember the name of the scheme that Bill worked on.

KLEIN: [00:46:23] Okay. Tell me what the job of a settlement officer is or was.

BRUYNEEL: [00:46:27] Well, at that time we were supposed to, to be the, you know, the lowest level government officer running a settlement scheme, which meant that we were to direct staff. There was an African agriculture officer, an African veterinary officer. We were supposed to help our people form up co-operatives to sell their crops and their milk. We're supposed to, as with all government positions, do some kind of reports to the next echelon up. And, uh, and then, then it was either part of our Peace Corps expectation or I don't think it was part of the ministry's job description. We, they, we really did a lot of agricultural outreach or a lot of trying to do crop management stuff. I don't know that that was part of the job description.

KLEIN: [00:47:21] Based on your vast agricultural knowledge.

BRUYNEEL: [00:47:22] Exactly. Based on being a Peace Corps volunteer, we're there to help people. And we were told things, like they don't really know how to milk cows. We'd been told that in Milwaukee and it turned out to be true. They don't really know how to manage a dairy herd. They, they need to be taught these things.

KLEIN: [00:47:34] Right.

BRUYNEEL: [00:47:35] And so we set about trying to do that, trying to, trying to teach them to, how to keep their dairies clean so that they didn't spoil the milk.

KLEIN: [00:47:42] And how did you do that? I mean, what's a typical day?

BRUYNEEL: [00:47:46] A typical day. I, at least, would go, either ride the motorcycle or walk to my office. I had a clerk also, like a secretary type person. Talk to him, see if there's any particular problems. And if there were, have him get in touch with either the agriculture officer or the veterinary officer to deal with the particular problems or somehow deal with them myself. And then basically go on foot or on motorcycle and go visit farms and talk to the farmers and tell them, you know, let's see your dairy and you need to clean this up because you get manure in the milk and then the milk is not good. You spoil the milk or whatever. Sat and drank, and not drank pombe, but drank warm milk with chunks in it and talked to them and spent time with them.

KLEIN: [00:48:32] What else were they growing there?

BRUYNEEL: [00:48:33] At that time, they were growing pyrethrum, which is the little daisy looking flower from which insecticides are made.

KLEIN: [00:48:40] Right.

BRUYNEEL: [00:48:40] The pyrethrins that we see in Black Flag and stuff. Um. Our main, in our area, our main, aside from what they grew to eat, we mainly sold milk and pyrethrum flowers and passionfruit. Ours was an area that was growing passionfruit.

KLEIN: [00:48:58] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:48:59] And then later we got a license to grow tea. Near the end of my time there, we had just planted our little tea stumps and that, that took some doing to get permission to grow tea.

KLEIN: [00:49:09] You didn't do sisal.

BRUYNEEL: [00:49:10] No, we didn't have sisal there. That was in.

KLEIN: [00:49:13] I remember.

BRUYNEEL: [00:49:14] In a different culture, uh, not culture, but in different environment. It has to be hotter or more desert like.

KLEIN: [00:49:22] Again, so your typical day. You were out talking to farmers. Was it at random? Did you have a pattern that you were going to hit everybody in a certain sector or you were going to deal with a particular kind of problem?

BRUYNEEL: [00:49:35] At first, well, let me answer that two ways. I had two schemes. I had Lietego, which was real small, 16 plots. I had Manga that was, which was real big, 400, if I recall correctly, some odd plots.

KLEIN: [00:49:45] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:49:46] And Lietego was the first one I had. That was my very first assignment. Later Manga came to me, so Lietego was my baby. And so with Lietego, I basically started having a meeting with all the farmers through the cooperative, which had already been formed, but just wasn't really doing anything. I had a meeting with all the farmers, tried to explain to them who I am and why I'm there, and then I set out systematically to go visit farms, just to get to know people and talk to them. Later when I had Manga, it was impossible to do that. So what I did with Manga was I would, I would tour it, literally in the Land Rover or on foot or on my motorcycle. And it had all these little small roads. And I would just go off into literally the hinterland of Manga. And if I saw something that I thought was a problem or if somehow a problem had come to my attention, I would stop and try to deal with that problem. But I was never able to work one-on-one with the farmers of Manga like I was with Lietego.

KLEIN: [00:50:47] And Lietego was your first experience.

BRUYNEEL: [00:50:49] Yeah.

KLEIN: [00:50:52] Were you, again on an ordinary day, where most of your contacts with people conducted in Swahili?

BRUYNEEL: [00:50:58] Yes.

KLEIN: [00:51:00] And the people you were talking to, their first language would have been?

BRUYNEEL: [00:51:07] Kisii.

KLEIN: [00:51:07] Kisii. And they had learned Swahili themselves?

BRUYNEEL: [00:51:10] Right. Exactly.

KLEIN: [00:51:11] But they were completely bilingual?

BRUYNEEL: [00:51:13] Yes. They were absolutely fluent in Swahili, you know, it's like a second language, but it's really not because you, as a little child, they grow up speaking it. So there they were way more fluent Swahili than I was. I was probably as illiterate as they were. I don't think I could ever read Swahili other than a few words, but everything, everything that was printed was in English anyway so.

KLEIN: [00:51:34] All the records and everything were?

BRUYNEEL: [00:51:36] All the forms, all the records, everything was in English.

KLEIN: [00:51:39] Did you conduct any of your business with the farmers in English, that you remember?

BRUYNEEL: [00:51:43] No. Other than filling out forms, government forms, and I would effectively try to translate them. But in terms of conversations or talking about let's do this, it was always in Swahili. The only time I spoke English to people in my settlement schemes were with the teachers who were there, or my clerk Robert, because they both were

learning to speak English and they chose to speak in English to practice their own English. So I would speak English with them for their sake.

KLEIN: [00:52:15] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:52:15] And they probably spoke better English than I did Swahili anyway. So.

KLEIN: [00:52:19] Yeah. Yeah. Uh. How did it come about that you were switched over to Manga?

BRUYNEEL: [00:52:29] Yeah, Manga was added because this, this guy Torquil MacLeod left.

KLEIN: [00:52:36] Oh, okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:52:37] He was a settlement officer. He left. I think he moved on to South Africa. I'm not, really not sure. Pretty crazy guy but. [tape break] Okay so I was saying, Robert, I mean, Torquil MacLeod left the service. And so at that time it was just, I was also assigned to Manga. I moved into the Manga house.

KLEIN: [00:52:56] Whose decision was that? Was that within the Lands or did?

BRUYNEEL: [00:52:59] I believe.

KLEIN: [00:53:00] Did Peace Corps have anything to do with it?

BRUYNEEL: [00:53:00] Probably Peace Corps, probably you or Mr. Quimby or somebody agreed to it. But I think it was a ministry decision.

KLEIN: [00:53:08] When you were out on the first and the second scheme, you pretty much had the sense that you were working for the Lands and Settlement, not for the Peace Corps. Don't let me put words in your mouth.

BRUYNEEL: [00:53:20] Yeah, um, I think that's true. I mean, one is, at least speaking for myself, always conscious that I'm a Peace Corps volunteer and I'm here as such, but I have this function now. At one point, you may remember this. I think others can talk about it more vividly. That came in conflict because the time came when the ministry said to us, you must have these Africans who've been resettled on this land, which is their tribal land before the Europeans came, they have to sign loan documents and promise to pay us for this land. And the African farmers I was working with, and this happened on a lot of settlement schemes, not just mine, basically took the attitude, why should I have to pay for land which I traditionally owned after a bunch of Europeans stole it from me, now have been forced to give it back?

KLEIN: [00:54:12] Yes.

BRUYNEEL: [00:54:12] And, and the ministry told us, in effect, well, you tell them if they don't sign these loan documents and make these payments, they're going to be evicted. Now, at that point, I think the Nairobi office somehow interviewed, intervened, and because we were Peace Corps volunteers serving as settlement officers, my memory is that somehow that assignment got taken away from us, that we did not have to go around telling people you're going to get evicted and so forth. I recall not ever having to do that on either one of my settlement schemes. I think the issue started to come up for me and then got resolved on other settlement schemes before it became a crisis of any sort for me.

KLEIN: [00:54:51] Of the two, you remember Manga better than?

BRUYNEEL: [00:54:54] No, I remember Lietego better.

KLEIN: [00:54:55] Oh, okay. Were there local political problems, conflicts with traditional leaders?

BRUYNEEL: [00:55:01] Yeah. Do you remember? My member of parliament made a speech wondering, wondering why, what the heck these Peace Corps guys are doing out here? And that was totally innocent on my part. But he was a young man who liked to drive around out there in a big

Mercedes Benz. And, uh, and there was some grumbling about his role as an MP. And, and what I told people, which was probably a mistake with hindsight, was that in the United States we use members of Parliament, members of the House of Representatives, to help us interact with the government and help us get things accomplished in the capital city and so forth. And that's probably a role the MP ought to be playing.

KLEIN: [00:55:40] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:55:40] And I'm not sure he agreed with that, quite frankly.

KLEIN: [00:55:44] How did it get back to him? I mean, obviously.

BRUYNEEL: [00:55:46] I don't know. I just remember somewhere along the line he stood up and made some kind of a quietly anti-Peace Corps speech in Parliament. I have a vague recollection of talking to somebody from the Nairobi office, perhaps you, perhaps Tom, about what was going on. As far as I know, nothing further ever came of it. I never really spoke to the man myself.

KLEIN: [00:56:06] He didn't mention you by name?

BRUYNEEL: [00:56:08] I don't think so.

KLEIN: [00:56:08] It was a generic.

BRUYNEEL: [00:56:10] I believe so, yeah. That's my memory of it.

KLEIN: [00:56:12] But soon after, you were transferred to?

BRUYNEEL: [00:56:15] No, I wasn't literally transferred. I was just given a new assignment. And it may have been, I don't recall the sequence that may have happened. But no, aside from that, I had no political problems. Part of our training had taught us how to respect local institutions. So therefore, we, we knew to respect the local chief. I think part of being an AB generalist taught us how to kind of scope out the

local power structure, who despite titles really has the power, and to work with them. We were told other real practical things like don't mess around with the local girls. I felt our training from that point of view was excellent. I felt like all of us, from all the experiences I remember hearing about and certainly my own, we hit the ground knowing how to get along with this, this different culture and not get ourselves into trouble politically, culturally, or otherwise.

KLEIN: [00:57:04] But emotionally, do you recall encountering what we, what goes by the heading culture shock, I mean?

BRUYNEEL: [00:57:10] No. I got culture shock when I came home.

KLEIN: [00:57:12] Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:57:13] I was happy in Kenya.

KLEIN: [00:57:14] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:57:15] I tried to stay in Kenya. You know, I didn't want to stay in the Ministry of Lands and Settlement. I wanted to go to the game. I really, I really didn't. And again, I think that was our preparation that we had, both in training or mental preparation or whatever. I really can't tell you what to ascribe it to, but I don't remember ever being lonely or. I remember not being surprised by the lack of electricity. I think the closest I came to culture shock was there was times when we had to take baths in kind of greenish cold water. It's, it wasn't culture shock. It's kind of like, boy, I wish I was home right now in a warm shower.

KLEIN: [00:57:48] And did you have a steward or somebody who worked for you in the house?

BRUYNEEL: [00:57:54] Yes, we had, we had in both houses, Bill, when I was with Bill and then later when I was with Henry, we both had a cook.

KLEIN: [00:58:02] And a wash man and?

BRUYNEEL: [00:58:03] Yeah, he did everything. We called him a cook, but he did all the, all the laundry, all the house cleaning, all the cooking.

KLEIN: [00:58:09] So what was your diet like?

BRUYNEEL: [00:58:11] Oh. Well, we ate. We ate, uh, we went. We went to town, we got beef in town. There was a butcher in town.

KLEIN: [00:58:24] Sotik?

BRUYNEEL: [00:58:25] Yeah, in Sotik. And, um, and I'm laughing now. I'll come back to this. But we would also go up to the market. There was, the Africans had a market once, one day a week, and we would go up there and buy eggs or chicken or, you know, potatoes or anything else, green vegetables, anything else that they were selling. The reason I laughed when you asked me that question is Henry, my roommate from Kenya II, really loved to eat. And, um, and before Henry got to town, we would go to the butcher and we'd say, well, we'd like a half a pound of beef or whatever. He'd just grab a side of beef and cut off a piece, a hunk of meat.

KLEIN: [00:59:02] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [00:59:02] Henry made it his business to teach this guy how to cut porterhouses, how to do rolled roasts, filets. This, he had this guy cutting meat like a professional butcher in the United States. It was really hilarious, you know? So he, he would come home with these wonderful cuts of meat because he somehow knew how to do it himself. And he would stand there and teach the guy how to do it, and he'd come home with these great huge, marvelous porterhouses and stuff. And it wasn't aged beef or anything like that. We ate very simply. We had a lot of posho, which is the cornmeal stuff like the African people ate.

KLEIN: [00:59:34] Oh, okay.

BRUYNEEL: [00:59:36] And, um. So we'd eat real tough chickens out of the market. They were very hard to eat because they were so tough. And posho and greens, and then every so often when Henry had made a run to town, we'd eat beef. Um. We would, we would also grind up the beef. Our guy knew how to make a shepherd's pie, which is a wonderful dish with the mashed potatoes on top and all that. So we ate kind of a semi-local, semi-European type diet.

KLEIN: [01:00:01] Where, do you have access to a safe water supply?

BRUYNEEL: [01:00:05] No. We had to boil and filter our water.

KLEIN: [01:00:10] Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [01:00:10] We had, our water came out of a reservoir that caught rainwater off the roof.

KLEIN: [01:00:13] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:00:14] And our reservoir, where Henry and I were, was underground. So it had a lot of algae and sticks and all kinds of crap in it.

KLEIN: [01:00:23] Did you, but there was adequate rainfall?

BRUYNEEL: [01:00:24] Sure.

KLEIN: [01:00:24] You didn't have to worry that there would be, well, there were no droughts.

BRUYNEEL: [01:00:27] No, we had enough water. And on our diet, by the way, we would occasionally, when we went to Nairobi, order peanut butter sent up from the supermarket in Nairobi and it would come up on the bus. Four and a half dollars for a small bottle. It was a real luxury in our house.

KLEIN: [01:00:41] Yeah. How were you being paid?

BRUYNEEL: [01:00:43] We were paid well.

KLEIN: [01:00:46] By whom?

BRUYNEEL: [01:00:47] By the government of Kenya. They gave us a paycheck, if I recall correctly, and I honestly don't remember. That's my memory though. We would get paid. And then the bank came to town once a month or something. We'd deposit our paychecks or cash them.

KLEIN: [01:00:59] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:01:01] I don't remember that too much because money was never really an issue it seems like.

KLEIN: [01:01:05] Uh huh.

BRUYNEEL: [01:01:05] It wasn't, it wasn't like here. You didn't, you know, you didn't have utility bills to pay and car payments and stuff like that. And we, we had government vehicles. And so for gas and so forth, we used vouchers. And so I just vaguely remember getting checks and I think they were Government of Kenya checks.

KLEIN: [01:01:23] Did you have to heat the house?

BRUYNEEL: [01:01:25] We had a wonderful fireplace in each house. I don't remember about the first house. The second house, we had a wonderful fireplace. Yes, we did have to have fires in the evenings and sometimes early in the mornings.

KLEIN: [01:01:34] Yeah. Did you? After about a year, Henry, you had, Henry had come.

BRUYNEEL: [01:01:45] Right.

KLEIN: [01:01:45] And you were at the second scheme. Had you become friends with any Kenyans who you might consider a personal friend or?

BRUYNEEL: [01:01:54] Yes.

KLEIN: [01:01:56] How would that and who was it and how had that emerged?

BRUYNEEL: [01:01:58] There were, there were several. The very first person we met, Jeremiah, who was kind of the peer leader over at Lietego, he was the farmer that always wanted to be up on the latest technology, the latest techniques, and so forth. He and I became good friends. I became real good friends with the man who was at least the titular chief, that had the title of chief. I became real close to him and his family, his kids and so forth.

KLEIN: [01:02:26] What were, those two people, what their educational background?

BRUYNEEL: [01:02:29] None.

KLEIN: [01:02:29] Oh, okay.

BRUYNEEL: [01:02:30] They had none.

KLEIN: [01:02:32] Elementary school?

BRUYNEEL: [01:02:33] I don't think even elementary school, because back in those days, um. First of all, we're just coming out of the colonial era.

KLEIN: [01:02:39] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:02:39] And the school there was new. They had lived in the reserves now, you know, this gets a little complicated because our schemes are in what were the reserved white highlands. So they had lived in the reserves and I don't think there were any real schools in the reserves in those days.

KLEIN: [01:02:55] Right.

BRUYNEEL: [01:02:55] And even in those days, schools charged fees to. Now, the first Jeremiah, there was another Jeremiah that I became friends with. The first Jeremiah might have gone as far as the second or third grade, somewhere along the line, I really don't recall. But basically these people didn't have any education. We're talking about some really, I think, smart people, but we're talking about purely native intelligence.

KLEIN: [01:03:19] Yeah. Yeah. Did the, did people tend to live in town and farm out or did they live? [tape break] Your Kenyan friends, their educational background and.

BRUYNEEL: [01:03:33] Right. Well, no, I was saying they really have no, uh, had no education. They were just really, some of them were really intelligent people. I had some, some guys. They're like any other group of people. Some are real dumb. Our agriculture officer, ironically enough, was not a very smart guy, but at least he took direction. If he told them, go do, go do this, this, and this, he would do that. If you left out of step, he would, he would too. You couldn't just say, go take care of this problem. And he was a friend of mine too. I was lucky enough that the staff that was assigned to my settlement scheme, we basically became friends.

KLEIN: [01:04:07] Were they from that area?

BRUYNEEL: [01:04:09] Yes, they all were, with one exception, our little mechanic. And I say that because he's a real short little guy, was a Kikuyu. So he was from the.

KLEIN: [01:04:16] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:04:18] Uh, around Nairobi area.

KLEIN: [01:04:20] Right.

BRUYNEEL: [01:04:20] Little Njarobi, his name was, and his wife Miriam, and their little baby, who I think his baby was named Kennedy. A lot of the kids there were named Kennedy, interestingly enough, at that point in time.

And they lived in the stable of what, of our house. Our house had had stables, brick stables. Our house was bricked, and they lived in one of the little stables. That was their whole house.

KLEIN: [01:04:43] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:04:43] One room little stable for a house.

KLEIN: [01:04:46] Did the house you live in eventually take on a home-like quality?

BRUYNEEL: [01:04:51] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:04:51] Or was it always?

BRUYNEEL: [01:04:52] No, it really did.

KLEIN: [01:04:53] What'd you do to?

BRUYNEEL: [01:04:55] Just lived in it. And we were fortunate enough, uh, you'll probably recall the, uh, when the teachers were on, on vacation, then they. Some of the teachers and I think it was Rose. It was Barbara Barnes and I think Rose was the other one. But I'm not sure about that. Or maybe it was Jackie somebody. I can't remember.

KLEIN: [01:05:16] Yeah. Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:05:17] Anyway, at least two of the teachers came and stayed in our house and then we put on a free school for a couple of months. They did, not we. Well, I taught once in a while, but basically it was them because I think, you know, it was Peace Corps' notion that the teachers group shouldn't just go idle for a few months while the schools were on vacation. And so somebody came up with this idea, which I thought was a great idea. So and then we had other people coming in. We had staff come and visit.

KLEIN: [01:05:44] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:05:45] And other volunteers come and visit. And if you just, it's like anyplace else, if you just live in it, sooner or later it becomes home. You know, you get your stuff around cluttering it up and that's what happened. I got a book locker, that helped a lot.

KLEIN: [01:06:00] Did you do much traveling during the first year?

BRUYNEEL: [01:06:03] Um, I don't recall. I did some traveling, but I don't recall. It probably was the first year because I think we had a rule we had to take 30 days leave the first year. And I think it was during that time that we went up, a group of us went up Kilimanjaro, and we certainly went to Malindi.

KLEIN: [01:06:18] Oh, yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:06:19] Yeah. And I think that was in our first year.

KLEIN: [01:06:24] Yeah. There was also, I'm pretty sure during the first year there was, uh, I don't know what it was called, a conference where the group was pulled together.

BRUYNEEL: [01:06:33] In Nairobi.

KLEIN: [01:06:34] And I think it was just your group. It wasn't, maybe before the second.

BRUYNEEL: [01:06:36] I think you're right about that. I think you are right.

KLEIN: [01:06:39] Do you recall that particularly? I mean, it was the first time.

BRUYNEEL: [01:06:41] I remember going to Nairobi for, or Nakuru one time I think it was, for conferences, because I remember it was kind of fun going there and getting together with everybody.

KLEIN: [01:06:51] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:06:51] And I remember at some point Tom Quimby complaining that the guys from Sotik needed to get haircuts, but he said we looked like cowboys or something like that. Quimby was a good guy, you know that but.

KLEIN: [01:07:04] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:07:05] He had a crew cut, he had a flat top or something like that, and he thought everybody ought to.

KLEIN: [01:07:08] Very straight.

BRUYNEEL: [01:07:09] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:07:11] I remember the role, you know, between us. Was there, was there a major break point after the first year or there was, was there some point when you sort of look back or forward evaluating, you know, personally? Well, I've done it or I'm doing it or I, what, I'm not, what I haven't done yet is, and I have another year here and.

BRUYNEEL: [01:07:39] Yeah, I don't know exactly when that was, but there was, there was at least one point in time, I think it was near the end, where looking back I felt not smug. I don't want to, I don't want to say that about myself. But I felt somewhat satisfied that the four of us, Bill, Henry, Ivar, and I had actually accomplished something that was implicit in the name Peace Corps. Because Bill and Ivar and Henry and I helped them, and it was their idea to organize the cattle auction. And the Kisii people I was working with and the Kipsigi people they were working with had always been rivals. And we were literally at the border. We were literally at the, at the place where they would fight. We would have evenings where they would come and steal my people's cattle and we'd have to go chase them.

BRUYNEEL: [01:08:27] And Bill and Ivar came up with this idea of doing a cattle auction, since everything seemed to focus on cattle. We needed to cull the herds anyway. And, and so members of both tribes would come and bid and sell and buy cows from each other instead of stealing

them, buy them from each other. And from that evolved the idea of, of doing a joint school and so forth at the house that Bill and Ivar were living in, that. We, we, through the beginnings of that cattle auction, started having the leaders of the two tribes talking to each other and making plans, say we're going to use this for a community center school type thing once these volunteers go and so forth. I don't know because I've never been back. I don't know if they actually did that, but that was the plan as of the time our tenure ended.

KLEIN: [01:09:15] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:09:17] And I felt real proud about that. I felt we'd done well in other areas too, but that part just seemed like the best to me. To at least open and begin the dialog of bringing them together and making them stop pissing on each other's shoes, so to speak, to put it real crudely, stealing each other's cows, not cooperating. And they at least begin talking to each other about how to have some kind of harmonious, peaceful efforts and cross those traditional lines.

KLEIN: [01:09:41] Yeah. How would you characterize the quality of life of the people you worked with?

BRUYNEEL: [01:09:47] I think, you know, I think given that they were in a quote unquote primitive society with no electricity and all that sort of stuff, I think the quality of their life was okay. It certainly could use a lot of improvement. We had a lot of malnourished kids because people didn't know about nutrition. People were still feeding their kids in the traditional way.

KLEIN: [01:10:07] Which was primarily a corn?

BRUYNEEL: [01:10:09] And greens.

KLEIN: [01:10:10] And greens.

BRUYNEEL: [01:10:11] The posho, the ground corn, and greens was primarily their diet. They would have.

KLEIN: [01:10:14] And the cattle weren't used for meat?

BRUYNEEL: [01:10:15] No, they were. They milked them and sold the milk and they would occasionally kill a goat for something, a special occasion. But, but they almost never killed a cow, you know, so they got very little protein. They, they really sold the milk, they drank very little milk even.

KLEIN: [01:10:32] Di that go down to Nairobi?

BRUYNEEL: [01:10:34] No, it went to a town called Kericho.

KLEIN: [01:10:36] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:10:39] There was, there was Sotik. And then another 20, 30, perhaps 40 miles on there was a more sophisticated town called Kericho.

KLEIN: [01:10:46] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:10:47] And that's where the Kenya Dairy Board had a processing plant.

KLEIN: [01:10:51] Oh, okay. Weren't there some areas where cattle were raised for meat? Because I, I associate Kenya with.

BRUYNEEL: [01:10:59] Yeah, there were areas where they. Exactly, but not our area. Ours was dairy.

KLEIN: [01:11:05] And that was the traditional pattern, to have cattle, milk them, and not eat?

BRUYNEEL: [01:11:10] For my, for my people and Bill's people, and Bill and Ivar's people, yeah.

KLEIN: [01:11:14] And yet they weren't by religious conviction vegetarian?

BRUYNEEL: [01:11:18] No. It's just the cattle were wealth. Once you kill it, it's gone. This way, you can milk it, you can own it. They liked owning cows. They're, they're like, you know, the legends of the Maasai in that sense. They liked, they literally liked looking out in their pasture and seeing lots of cows. That made them a wealthy man.

KLEIN: [01:11:33] But wasn't that a problem as land became limited, finding pasture for the cattle?

BRUYNEEL: [01:11:38] It was very much a problem. That's one of the things, the extension things that we, I think we were expected to help convey to them, was you can't have too many cows. You only have a limited amount of pasture, can only support so many cows. And one of the things that I tried to get started, and I think, I think it worked, was to get them to start keeping records of the production of their cows. And so as they, as they bred new calves, it wouldn't get overcrowded. They could get rid of the low producing animals and keep the higher producing animals and that way increase their production and the quality of their animals.

KLEIN: [01:12:11] There, was there any attempt to grow fodder? I mean.

BRUYNEEL: [01:12:15] Not really. Mostly just grazed them.

KLEIN: [01:12:17] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:12:18] Mostly just grazed them on the growing grass. And that was another thing we tried to teach them to do, which they had a rudimentary knowledge of it, probably more than us, truth be told, was to rotate pastures. Put them, put them in one paddock and let it graze while another one was recovering and so forth, instead of just going all over the lot.

KLEIN: [01:12:32] So the, where you were, the land wasn't really tight? I mean, because it was an issue in some other areas.

BRUYNEEL: [01:12:42] Yeah, land was and was not tight where I was depending on, on the scheme. Manga and Lietego, the lots varied in size depending on somebody's judgment as to a percentage of arable land. So everybody's supposed to get, say, 30 percent of arable land. So if you got to, had to get a great huge lot in order to get that amount of arable land then, not 30 percent, but say three acres. So they may have to give you 20 acres in order for you to get that three acres. And some of them were quite small because they were very, very well positioned lots.

KLEIN: [01:13:18] You didn't get involved with the program called Consolidation, did you?

BRUYNEEL: [01:13:22] No.

KLEIN: [01:13:25] Okay. Somewhere along the line, I assume, during the second year, I gather you became interested in staying on?

BRUYNEEL: [01:13:32] I did.

KLEIN: [01:13:33] Yeah. You want to talk about, I mean?

BRUYNEEL: [01:13:36] Yeah. I became interested in staying on because I fell in love with that country and the people. And quite frankly, I loved the Peace Corps. I really did.

KLEIN: [01:13:43] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:13:43] I wanted to stay on, not as an expatriate, I wanted to stay on as a Peace Corps volunteer. I think my impression is I could have stayed on in the, in the settlement department. I didn't really want to do that. I wanted to go in, I was interested in the game issues as well. So I wanted to go into the game department. And lo and behold, you have to have a degree. Even then, you have to have a degree in zoology. You know, and I was telling them, I'll just go ear tag rhinoceroses, you know, you don't need a degree for that. But they couldn't, they couldn't

use me if I didn't have a degree. And so I just decided to go ahead and come on home and go to law school. So that's what I did.

KLEIN: [01:14:20] At what point did the idea develop to go to law school?

BRUYNEEL: [01:14:27] Um, I don't really recall, sometime in the, in the second year where you're hitting that point where, you know, we're leaving in September, we've got to start paying attention to what we're going to be doing. The idea of going to law school came from Mike Davidson. I remember very well sitting and talking to Mike and, and, you know, Mike is the kind of guy that can make law, even law school, sound attractive and intellectually appealing.

KLEIN: [01:14:49] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:14:49] And, and, and I needed to do something. I needed to either stay in Kenya or get into school, because at that time Vietnam was starting to become an active issue. So one, and when one has a Riverside draft board, one doesn't just go home for a year and flounder around trying to figure out what he wants to be when he grows up.

KLEIN: [01:15:11] Okay. In specific time, when, what? What was the date when you were finishing Peace Corps service?

BRUYNEEL: [01:15:17] We got home September of 1966, early.

KLEIN: [01:15:19] Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [01:15:20] Probably 2nd, 3rd, 4th, somewhere in there, because I came home to Riverside for a few days and went up to San Francisco and started law school like the next week.

KLEIN: [01:15:29] And do you recall, if my memory's great, you were registered for the draft while you were still in college, I guess?

BRUYNEEL: [01:15:39] Right. We had to register when we were 18.

KLEIN: [01:15:41] Yeah. Okay.

BRUYNEEL: [01:15:43] Yeah, that's right.

KLEIN: [01:15:44] And do you remember getting a deferment?

BRUYNEEL: [01:15:48] No. It wasn't a problem at that time. I think I was just 1-A. I don't think, I don't recall ever even having any correspondence. Oh, I do. I did have correspondence. I wrote my draft board a letter because at one point I was thinking of, I knew I wanted to go to law school. Mike had already talked me into that, but I was thinking of maybe trying to go to the London School or something like that and then going to law school. And I wrote to the draft board and asked them, if I did that would I get a student deferment? They said, no, you can only get a student deferment if you're in school in the United States.

KLEIN: [01:16:22] Huh.

BRUYNEEL: [01:16:22] So I decided to come directly back and get into school.

KLEIN: [01:16:25] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:16:25] And then they wouldn't give me the deferment because I wasn't, I mean, the draft is a whole different story. But to make a long story short, I started off with the 1-A, got called for a physical, didn't have to take the physical, and then Johnson put out an Executive Order that anybody in a postgraduate course of study could get a student deferment. So they gave me one while I was in law school. But up until then it had been only if you're studying to be an engineer or something like that.

KLEIN: [01:16:49] Okay. And there were some in your group who on their return were drafted or volunteered?

BRUYNEEL: [01:16:57] I don't know that.

KLEIN: [01:16:59] Someone was in Vietnam.

BRUYNEEL: [01:16:59] That wouldn't surprise me. I mean, the odds are that somebody would have had to have been but.

KLEIN: [01:17:05] Was it Finukin?

BRUYNEEL: [01:17:05] You know, it may have been. Yeah, that sounds familiar now that you mention it. You know, it's funny, for all the cohesion we had while we were in the country, we really kind of lost it once we got back. Our group is, at least in my terms, and I think some others, like the ones that lived around Washington or in Washington, have stayed pretty, pretty much in contact. But other than that, I don't think we've, certainly I haven't had a lot of contact with them.

KLEIN: [01:17:28] Yeah. Looking back on it, I mean, it's a good many years later now, but what would you say was the, what effect did having been in the Peace Corps have on your life?

BRUYNEEL: [01:17:42] I couldn't even. I honestly couldn't even begin to articulate that. Totally positive change in my life. It made me, I am convinced, a different person in some way that I always say I couldn't even tell you. Well, I mean, some ways you can. Yes, I'm obviously more worldly than I was when I left. I think I had a something which I think still benefits me to this day, a much better understanding of Third World cultures. And the fact that, you know, not everybody has to have the same values and the same political outlook that we have in this country. Um. God, I don't know. It just made me such a, inside such a better person. I don't even, you know, people have asked me that question before. I still to this day, don't know how to answer it. It had a profound positive impact on me as a person internally as well as externally.

BRUYNEEL: [01:18:40] You know, I took off, I left school and became a Peace Corps volunteer not having, with a political science degree, not knowing, not having any idea of what it was I wanted to do with my life, you know? And what can you do with the poli sci degree, teach? Sure. Okay. Well, maybe I could be a teacher. Who knows? It wasn't

anything that certainly excited me. I came back wanting to go to law school and for many years I worked in what people would call poverty law type programs. I came back also wanting to be of service in this country as well, not looking to get wealthy, not looking to get famous, just looking to do something of a positive nature for, for people who, who needed some help. And I did that for many years. It's only the last 20 years of my legal career that I've actually worked for real, any kind of money at all, you know. And that's only because I have kids.

KLEIN: [01:19:34] So the effect really was in, in you. It didn't particularly motivate you to stay involved in Africa or Third World affairs or anything.

BRUYNEEL: [01:19:45] No.

KLEIN: [01:19:45] It's not a criticism. It's just.

BRUYNEEL: [01:19:46] No, I know. No, that's true. I mean, I'm interested. I hear it on the news.

KLEIN: [01:19:51] Yeah. My theory also with your group is why you didn't stay much in touch is that it is a very high-powered group. And I mean, you, you hit the ground running when you came back also. I mean, you just, you had lots to do. And one of the things you didn't have to do was to sit around drinking beer and thinking about, hey, wasn't it a great time? Maybe later on, but certainly not when you first came back.

BRUYNEEL: [01:20:20] Yeah.

KLEIN: [01:20:21] People jumped into, you know, you name it. I mean, this, and someday maybe I will, you know, catalog the whole thing. Um. Okay. See if you can answer this or comment on this. One of the questions that comes up in my own mind in these very lawless times we're now living in, what would I say to a young person who says, well, I don't know if it's worth joining the Peace Corps. In this world today. And could you?

BRUYNEEL: [01:20:58] I would, I would say to such a young person, and it's really ironic you asked me that question because I have a daughter that just graduated college, university, who, who wants to go to law school but bombed out her LSATs and is now like, I need to look at plan B, I may not get in. And I've told her, check into the Peace Corps. That may be a real good plan B for you. And why would I, why should I do that? And I'll tell her the same thing I just got through saying to you, and I would say this to anybody else, it's going to be a life changing experience and it's not going to change your life for anything but the better. Even, even if nobody else gets any benefit out of it, even if the host country or the people you're working with don't get anything out of it, you'll be a better person. And they almost, if you go and at least try and apply the training they give you, you're almost bound to benefit at least one other life somewhere in this world during your tenure as a Peace Corps volunteer.

KLEIN: [01:21:53] Uh huh.

BRUYNEEL: [01:21:53] I would guess that's still true. My hunch is Peace Corps has changed a lot in terms of what they do.

KLEIN: [01:22:00] Yes, but there's still a, I think there's still a continuing. In the long run, it's a personal growth experience.

BRUYNEEL: [01:22:09] Right.

KLEIN: [01:22:10] And you have a chance to be in touch with another culture.

BRUYNEEL: [01:22:13] Right. And I think that's, my hunch is that's still true.

KLEIN: [01:22:16] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:22:17] And my hunch is that if you go to another culture and you're in touch with another culture with a willingness to help and share what you know or share what your training is, like I said, at least one other person is going to be, aside from yourself, is going to be better off for it. And perhaps the whole group of people, perhaps a whole group of

school kids or a whole settlement scheme of people or something like that, you know, So, you know, virtue is its own reward. That's what I told my daughter.

KLEIN: [01:22:43] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:22:43] You know, there's nothing, any harm in doing something like that when your motivation is to give back that which has been freely given to you.

KLEIN: [01:22:52] Mm hmm.

BRUYNEEL: [01:22:52] And so, you know, that's what I would tell anybody. And I've told her I'm secretly hoping that she'll do it. I'd love for at least one of my kids to go volunteer.

KLEIN: [01:23:01] Yeah.

BRUYNEEL: [01:23:01] See what it's like in this day and age.

KLEIN: [01:23:05] Do you know if the Peace Corps are still in Kenya?

BRUYNEEL: [01:23:07] Yeah, I believe they are.

KLEIN: [01:23:08] Yeah, I hope so.

BRUYNEEL: [01:23:09] But I don't know what they're doing.

KLEIN: [01:23:13] Anything else? You know, that's essentially the cycle of the interview.

BRUYNEEL: [01:23:18] No. I really don't have anything to add except thanks for doing it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]