



# Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

## Official Transcript: Alessandro Caldarone (3 of 12)



<b>Role:</b>	Senior Officer of External Relations
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	Italy
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<b>Location:</b>	Arusha, Tanzania
<b>Interviewers:</b>	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J Horowitz
<b>Videographer:</b>	Nell Carden Grey
<b>Interpreter:</b>	None

### Interview Summary

Alessandro Caldarone compares his experiences at the ICTR with his time at the EU-Human Rights Mission in Rwanda providing technical assistance. Caldarone reflects on a personal eye-opening moment during the defense of accused genocidaires when he realized that the perpetrators were not monsters but human beings. He questions the concept of 'victim' in the Rwandan context where everybody is, in some sense, victimized. He also suggests that the ICTR should be considered an extension of Rwandan justice.

*The transcript of Part 3 begins on the following page.*

## Part 3

- 00:00** Lisa P. Nathan: **When, because you have spent a good deal of time in Rwanda working with the Rwandese and are quite taken with the country and have very strong feelings about helping them . . .**
- 00:13 Yeah.
- 00:14** LPN: **. . . how do you think that's affected your work here at the ICTR, now that you are based in Arusha?**
- 00:21 Depends. If we go back in 1997 when I came to Arusha and when the Registrar asked me to be in charge of the defense, I start crying because for me was, "How can you ask me to be with the people, the, the, the people who were accused to, to, the killers, the murderers. How can you ask me to help them?"
- 00:55 I took it almost personally and I start – really I was crying. I say, "What am I going to do?" And so finally, you know, there you have the professional aspect coming. You have a juridical background. You are a lawyer. Everybody deserve to be defended. Everybody has the right. And I just accepted and I went ahead but it was not easy.
- 01:23 But something very important I have discovered during that period that, you know those people, accused people, they are not monsters. They're just human being, so really I did my best. They are just normal people. They are just normal like you and I. They are normal people and I did my best to, to help them.
- 01:43 But on the other side, the normality of those people who were able to commit such atrocity, this really is something that is like a, you know, a mark in y-, in your skin because how is it normal people can do s-, they can commit such crimes?
- 02:03 So you see, when you deal with detainees of that, that type of detainee, you have this, this dual – professional, yes, but human approach on one side.
- 02:13 They're human, normal; the picture of the wife, of the kids. They're afraid. The-, they have the same feeling that I have. On the other side, they committed these atrocities knowing that they were committing atro-, atrocity – because they are normal. They were normal and they're still normal. They're not monsters. They're just normal.
- 02:35 And this is, is something difficult really to, to digest. It's very difficult to digest. Yeah, even now I don't, I cannot understand how this happened. Is, is, is very difficult, yeah.
- 02:49** LPN: **So that was my next question. Because of your knowledge and experience so you've not only read a great deal about Rwanda and the history and what has happened there**

**and what led up to the atrocities in '94, and even, you know, are familiar with what's going on there very well now. You know government officials, (\_\_\_\_\_).**

03:11 Yeah, everybody knew, I know, yeah.

**03:12 LPN: And you've been thinking about this for a long time.**

03:14 Yes.

**03:16 LPN: So, what are your thoughts on how this happened? Do you have ideas? Do you have – or is it just still a problem working in your mind?**

03:27 Well, what happened, by, I know, the in-, what happened in term of history of Rwanda or? But, y-, you know in Rwanda we had an apartheid, like in South Africa before, it was in Rwanda. Because the Tutsi were discriminated in, in all positions. They could not even walk on the roads.

03:42 So that was well-known by everybody but it seemed that when you have the so-called rule of law, it mean you, you, you know, you, you, you tailor your rules, you d-, you manipulate your rules so even the government with Habyarimana and so on, it was looking legal because it was legal, but was a manipulation on these rules.

04:06 When you don't have morality, when it's immoral and, but it looks, the techni-, technicality of law and so and so, everything was legal. Everything was the rule of law but people forgot the rule of justice. I mean, how we can make justice? And, and nobody took any action against Habyarimana. Nothing was done.

04:28 D-, no Habyarimana himself all, but the regime of that president. And finally, '94, despite all the signal that we received, we had to wait the drama to take action. And even during the drama in Rwanda, it's not even a drama, sorry. It is genocide. It's the killings because drama is like is the nature, coming . . .

04:49 You know, you have – it's the killing. It's different. It's not just the nature, a, a tsunami. Is, is, is the killings, p-, planification and so. Even during the killings, the UN left. The only people there were the Red Cross who stayed there. And that is how we are, the human being. We left.

05:12 About the – I have colleagues, they have been tra-, traumatized really because they were in the UNAMIR and they had to leave in the, in the trucks, leaving the people behind.

05:23 When we did the evacuation plan for the European Union, we included the Rwandese staff. The UN, again, oh yes, we included because none of us wanted to have an evacuation plan and you leave your secretary, your any, your colleague or whatsoever because he's Rwandese.

- 05:43 And we really, we oppose and we get the money to have an evacuation plan not only for the foreigner but also for the Rwandese. And I think this is something that, is – those are achievement, important achievement I believe, that at least allow us to grow in, in a human asp-, aspect. And the . . .
- 06:05 LPN: So . . . so you made a distinction there between the rule of law and justice.**
- 06:10 Yes.
- 06:10 LPN: Could you say more about your thoughts there?**
- 06:13 Yes. No, what I mean b-, by rule of law is the, the legalit-, legality. I mean, when people just hide behind the law to do finally whatever they want, to manipulate the law, to manipulate the evidences, to make trials, fake trials, to make fake evidence and everything looks so legal, looks so legitimate.
- 06:39 LPN: And justice for you?**
- 06:41 Justice is, is, is a different step. We have to, to look the matter with, with a principle of truth, with a pri-, principle of “Help the other,” and is completely another dimension of approaching this.
- 06:58 But unfortunately, we are still at this stage, the legality, the rule of law. But, you just open any book, any article even in ICTR written by the President, the Registrar or any other representative of, by, by, is that what, what they talk about.
- 07:14 That is why I love so much your project in Washington University because you, you make a completely different dimension in, in your research which is a very a step above.