



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: M-L. Lambert (Part 6 of 8)



Role:	Associate Legal Officer
Country of Origin:	England
Interview Date:	23 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Donald J Horowitz John McKay
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

M-L. Lambert describes her personal relationship with convicted genocidaire Hassan Ngeze, who she worked closely with at the Tribunal. She speaks at length about her responsibilities researching and drafting judgments for Military 1, reflecting on the difficulties of assessing the credibility of witnesses and evidence in a post-genocide climate. She talks about the harrowing evidence presented to the court and recounts the case against Colonel Bagosora who was accused of masterminding the genocide against the Tutsis.

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Part 6

- 00:03** Donald J Horowitz: Taking you're, you're going to be here for a bit more, anyway.
- 00:07 Mm-hmm.
- 00:08** DJH: D-, do you know how, approximately how long?
- 00:09 I don't know how long. I, I can't actually say. I'll be here as long as it takes to render the judgment. I want to be in the courtroom when it is rendered and I've worked very hard to be there. So I can't say for how much longer, but I think at that point, I will probably move on.
- 00:28** DJH: Okay. Do you have any idea what, I don't mean specifically what job, but what area you may be interested in, do you think you'll be interested and – I'm not going to call up your law firm.
- 00:42 No, no, no.
- 00:43** DJH: Do you think you'll be interested in doing mergers and acquisitions, or will you want to be involved in other areas . . .
- 00:49 It's difficult. Without a doubt, I have been fortunate in that, you know, in my first legal job, I've come to work you know, almost every day with a sense of real passion for what it is that I'm doing and why it is that I am at work. And for that, I feel very privileged.
- 01:10 I'm, I don't think I'm a natural corporate lawyer. So to move back into that field would be very difficult. But equally, at the stage where we are in the ICTR and where we are in international criminal justice, the opportunities for long-time career paths are difficult. It's competitive. There are only limited forums for it. There's the ICTR with its limited, limited mandate of maybe two, three years.
- 01:40 We have the ICTY, the tribunal in Yugoslavia, which again has a, a limited shelf life. We have the proceedings in Cambodia, which I think I would find problematic to be engaged with. And the International Criminal Court, which currently, in my mind, is a problematic forum for international justice.
- 02:08 So where to next? I don't know. I want, I think, I have to stay involved in the advocacy or the pursuance of human rights. But where that would be, I'm not sure.
- 02:21** DJH: You've answered the question.
- 02:23 Yeah.
- 02:27** DJH: Looking back at your time here.
- 02:31 Mm-hmm.

- 02:32 DJH: . . . is there something that's happened that's really surprised you or something, whether it's happened or not, or some condition that's surprised you, in your experience, in terms of what you expected or what you thought mi-, might be?**
- 02:53 I think when I first, when I first got here, I was very naive or optimistic about the tribunal's capabilities. I still believe in what it is that we are doing and the purpose for it, but there's a sense of disillusionment now. You know, it's all very well working for a court, where we're holding people that perpetrated or alleged to have been perpetrated these international crimes to account. That, I think, is, is a valuable process.
- 03:38 It's a valid reason to be here and to justify the expense and the time and the energy that has gone into it. It's without question that, what we're doing is, is correct. But there is, there is a side to international justice that I think will always be overlooked or won't work.
- 03:55 And that is the intervention element. You know, why are we here? And the reason why we're here is that in 1994, the international community failed in many ways in preventing what unfolded to occur. And when you read transcripts of, you know, refugees, unarmed women and children, being left in areas in which they could have been protected by UN troops, to die, knowingly, knowing that there are men with machetes waiting to get to them.
- 04:37 It makes you realize that this is only a limited part of the process and that actually, why we're here is very sad and disheartening.
- 04:50 DJH: (___). I was, one of the questions I was going to ask you is, is there something that's happened here that's disappointed you, and perhaps you've already, just now, answered that. But perhaps also, let me ask that question i-, in another way. Okay. And I'll get back to it.**
- 05:09 Okay.
- 05:10 DJH: Is there something that you've been part of or that you've seen here –whether you've been part of it or not, that's made you proud? Have you, that you participated in or that you've seen here.**
- 05:23 Of course. Yes. I mean, as much as it may, this process could have been disillusioning, I am very proud to be working on the Military One judgment. I think . . . my proudest day will come when I'm in court and we render this judgment, because it would have involved, I know directly, extraordinarily hard work and energy on behalf of the judicial team.
- 05:52 Many years of work of, from the defense and prosecution teams. And it will be a part, a little part, or a closer step towards a more wholesome and complete history of what's occurred in Rwanda. So there is a sense that, in what I'm doing here, we're helping to create an historical record and account, and that I've been part of that process. So, I, I feel proud to have been involved in it. Yeah.