

David Risley

An Interview with David S. Risley
Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
War on Terror Oral History project
Interview(s) on Apr 10, Apr 18 & Apr 24 2007
Interview # VRT-V-L-2007-001

David Risley, an Assistant U.S. Attorney who in 2005-2006 worked on Saddam Hussein's War Crimes trial, was interviewed on the above listed dates as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview location(s):

Date: April 10, 2007 Location: Springfield – IL Information Service Studio
Date: April 18, 2007 Location: Springfield – IL Information Service Studio
Date: April 24, 2007 Location: Springfield – IL Information Service Studio

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Mark DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Mark Suszko, IIS

Transcription by: Kay Campbell, ALPL Volunteer

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 78 Total Time: 1:17 + 1:15 + 2:00 / 1.28 + 1.25 + 2.0 hrs = 4.53 hrs

Session 1: Risley's early life and assignment to Regime Crimes Liaison Det-Iraq

Session 2: Iraqi High Tribunal and the Marsh Arabs

Session 3: The War Crimes Trial proceedings

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 10/30/2007.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

© 2007 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

David S. Risley, *War on Terror*, VRT-V-L-2007-001

Biographical Information & Synopsis: David S. Risley was born on January 10th, 1952. He is a long-time Assistant U.S. Attorney assigned to the Central District of Illinois office, currently working as the Anti-Terrorism Coordinator. In November 2005 he joined the Regime Crimes Liaison Office, an agency of the Department of Justice, working directly with the Iraqi High Tribunal. In other words, David worked on Saddam Hussein's War Crimes trial for a period of nine months, specifically as an assistant investigator on crimes against the Marsh Arabs. The Marsh Arabs were an indigenous cultural group who had lived in the marshes of the lower Tigris and Euphrates Rivers for thousands of years. Beginning in 1991, Saddam began a systematic campaign to drain the swamps and to destroy that culture. Dave describes how he decided to go to Iraq, his work with the Iraqi people, especially the Marsh Arabs, and his work on collecting evidence against Saddam. He also shares his views and opinions about the trial.

Topics Covered: Topics discussed include: David's background, both personal and professional; Saddam Hussein Trial; Green Zone, Baghdad; Iraqi judicial system, both before and after the U.S. occupation; Regime Crimes Liaison Office; Iraqi Provisional Authority; Iraqi High Tribunal; Marsh Arabs culture and background; Baroness Emma Nicholson; life in the Green Zone; impressions of the Iraqi people; and impression of the Trial Proceedings.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955