



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Angeline Djampou (Part 3 of 10)



Role:	Chief Librarian
Country of Origin:	Cameroon
Interview Date:	30 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan Ronald Slye
Videographer:	Nell Carden Grey
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Angeline Djampou describes the facilities provided by the ICTR library and the different groups using library services. She speaks about embedded prejudices towards Hutus at the Tribunal, and the challenges of working with detainees, drawing attention to the importance of the presumption of innocence. Djampou reflects on travelling to Rwanda as part of her ICTR induction and stresses the importance of this experience for her work. She notes that many of those working at the Tribunal have never travelled to Rwanda.

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Part 3

- 00:00** Lisa P. Nathan: So I'd like to take a step back and actually numerous steps back and ask you if you remember where you were in the spring of 1994? If you can describe to me where you were then and when you first heard about the events in Rwanda?
- 00:21 I remember very well I – in 1994 I was in Côte d'Ivoire in Abidjan and I had heard, heard on the radio that there were, there were killings in Kigali. It was in the, in the news every day. There were killings in Kigali. Hutus were killing Tutsis and a few days later I actually saw it on TV and I – there was a river and I just saw and, and I was with my children and my ex-husband.
- 01:05 We just saw the river f-, and full with corpse and that was, that was actually how I stopped. I, I actually put a, a – it actually became important, the i-, that image. I was hearing, it was like – okay, this is sad. Before that, we had heard about killings, Hutus, Tutsis in Rwanda, Hutus, Tutsis in Burundi. I actually, when I saw this image, I actually realized the im-, the, the, the extent of what was happening.
- 01:49 And I never watch the TV when they were – I mean, when I was watching the news and they announced that, I would just, I would just go. It was unbearable.
- 02:02 LPN: So then, a few years later . . .**
- 02:04 Yes, then a few years later I, I was working at the African Development Bank and I was at the point where I wanted to change jobs and I was going through the internet applying for jobs and I saw this position in Kigali. It is funny – I never made the link. When I was applying, I never made the connection between this position and what I saw on TV.
- 02:43 So I applied for the job in May 2000. I didn't get any response and I forgot about it. Then in February 2001, I got the offer and I was never interviewed for the job. I got the offer and since I wanted so much to quit my job, I accepted the offer.
- 03:15 And then when I, when I saw the offer, and then I said, "What, which job is this?" Because it, it had been s-, so long since I applied that I went to my file and I saw, "Oh this is the position to which I, for which I applied."
- 03:31 Then I accepted the offer and I came. When I accepted the offer, they said I had to be there at the end of the month. So I had to give notice to my employer immediately. I never, I never stopped to think. I never stopped to reflect on where I was heading to.
- 03:58 There were just so many things to do where I was, how to, what arrangement would be made for my kids, how I would end the job there, how I will train another people, another person to take over from me. And actually, I, I had one month notice but I could not, and I had leave but I could not take leave because I worked until the day I travelled.

- 04:26 Then on the, in the plane, it, it came. I'm like, "Where am I going?" And that was in Lome. We had a stopover, a stopover in Lome and I just broke down in tears. I, it just occurred to me that, I mean, I didn't know where I go-, I was going and I was leaving my children behind. I mean I was, I just realized that I had not thought this over.
- 04:55 So anyway, there was no turning back. I had resigned so I could only go forward. When I reached Kigali, the first assignment I was given was induction because when I came, my f-, my former boss who is actually now is senior trial attorney here, he was the Chief of the Legal Advisory Section in Kigali. He gave me three books.
- 05:23 He said, "This is for you to read about the genocide, the context." And he said, "You can't do any work before." And I wish everybody would do that. So he gave me these three books, which he selected himself. So he gave me to read and he said, you should read that.
- 05:44 So now this is, okay it was coming back to me. This, this really happened. This is what I saw. And the following week, there was a team of investigators who were going on mission to the field and my boss said, "I think you should join them. You should go to the field to actually get a sense of what you will be doing for the next few years."
- 06:14 So we went to the field. We saw some mass graves. We saw some – I remember going to a hill in the Bugesera and we saw some stones and these were stones that Tutsis were using. They fought until the last minute because they were using these, these stones and we were told by the guide that they were actually, they really fought.
- 06:51 And they were a little group and they, all they had were these stones to fight back in front of people who had machetes and guns. And actually they fought to the extent when those people had to go and bring back some, how do you call "renfort" in, in English? To bring back extra help and that's how these people were killed.
- 07:19 But we saw these stones and it was, I was shaken. It was, and again, I wondered, "Where am I? You know, "What have, what have I done?" You know, yes. But it was very informative and it gave me the context that I needed to do the job. It gave me a better understanding of the material that I was reading.
- 07:46 And that also I think reinforced me in my job because when people, when investigators brought evidence from the field and when we will have a draft indictment because when investigators brought the e-, the evidence, a legal advisor will be assigned to draft an indictment and then the group would meet to review the indictment.
- 08:18 So I really took this, when-, whenever they drafted the indictment, I went to the database to check the statements. I was always reading the sp-, statements, check the statements and, and compare it with what was in the indictment. And being to the field, having this induction really, really, very, very helped me.

08:40 And it is very in-, unfortunate that you have people here who have been working for eight, ten years who have never been to Kigali. There's something missing, yeah.