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## Interview with Ed Navarro

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Side 1 - Interview with Ed Navarro, Manila Hotel, Republic of the Philippines -  
25 July 1985 - page 1

C: This is the morning of 25 July and I'm having breakfast with Mr. Ed Navarro in the coffeeshop of the Manila Hotel.

Mr. Navarro, would you say for the record how you came to know General Lansdale?

N: We were on board the USS Uruguay from \_\_\_\_\_ to Manila. This was in October 1945. The first time I met Ed Lansdale was when he was a major in the U.S. Air Force and I was a captain in the United States Army. We spent about 19 days aboard that ship and together suffered the sea sickness that occurred when we hit the tail of that very, very strong typhoon in October 1945. We were in the middle of the Pacific Ocean when this storm happened, and so we thought we were going to sink. That is a big troop ship...we were about 4,500 officers and men.

C: Did the trip take so long because of the storm or was that the normal length of time?

N: That is the normal length of time for that particular ship.

Together with Ed Lansdale were several Army officers also who were going to be assigned to the Philippines for the first time, most of whom were members of the intelligence community. When Ed was first assigned to Westpac, <sup>AF</sup> this is the Army Forces Western Pacific, he was assigned as the public information officer for the outfit. I was at that time assigned at Camp O' Donnell in \_\_\_\_\_ Province with the \_\_\_\_\_ Division, Philippine Scouts. I commanded the second battalion of the 45th Infantry Regiment, Philippine Scouts. As a background, the Philippine Scouts was a regular unit of the United States Army. The men and officers were mostly Filipinos. Some of the officers were Americans. The \_\_\_\_\_ Division was organized about 1946; this was the new Philippine Scouts

N: and after the old Philippine Scouts which existed long before the outbreak of the Pacific war.

C: General McArthur had started the first Philippine Scouts organization, hadn't he?

N: No. General McArthur was one of the commanders Philippine Department. There were many generals who commanded the Philippine Department, which included the Philippine Scouts. The 31st Infantry Regiment, U.S., assigned \_\_\_\_\_ and all the U.S. Army installations in the Philippines. General McArthur was one of those who became the general in charge of the Philippine Department. At one time his father was in command of the Phillipine Department.

I had plenty of contacts with Ed Lansdale because of his duties as public information officer. We used to go around a lot socially, and that is one of how he met Mrs. Navarro in/our social gatherings.

Now there is an interesting anecdote about him and President Magsaysay, when Magsaysay was still secretary of national defense. One evening my wife and I were eating with Ed in his quarters when he was already with the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group, Magsaysay arrived and he was sweating and this was evening, and he was sweating and sweating and he was very, very dirty. And so Ed asked him: where in the hell have you been this evening? You look so dirty. Mr. Magsaysay said: You know, I was in Ft. McKinley tonight--McKinley is now presently called Ft. Boniface (sp?)--McKinley used to be a U.S. Army camp. What the hell were you doing there? Magsaysay said: well, I was sneaking behind the houses of the officers to find out if they were playing Ma Jong. (sp?) You know, the secretary of defense is sneaking behind the officers quarters to find out if the people were playing Ma Jong. Ed said: you could have been shot by the guards, because he was all by himself, you know. Well, we had fun

N: listening to him tell us about his escapade that evening.

C: Had he even thought about the possibility of getting shot?

N: No, he didn't. It never occurred to him he could have been shot.

Well, I was introduced to him and so was my wife, and when he found out I had just been released from the Philippine Scouts, he said he would like to organize a battalion of ex-Philippine Scouts. See, the Philippine Scouts was deactivated in May 1945. If you want, I will tell you more about it later. So, Magsaysay wanted to organize a battalion of ex-Philippine Scout officers. When he found out I commanded a battalion, he suggested that he might ask me to command one of the battalions he was going to organize. And he started telling us about his stint as chief mechanic--I am talking about Magsaysay now--when he was chief mechanic of the Young Corp (?) Transportation Company in \_\_\_\_\_. He said when he was chief mechanic, he organized his mechanics into several groups, and pitted one against the other as to who could produce the most work in one given time. And he said if he could organize a Philippine Scout battalion he would pit this Scout battalion against the Philippine Army units that were existing at that time. When finally one of these battalions was organized, Ed Lansdale asked me if I would like to command a battalion, on the behest of Mr. Magsaysay. I said that would be a feather in my cap and I would be the first Lt. Col. in my class, my Academy class. But it just so happens I am already an American citizen, and I have a very good job with the Veterans Administration, so the offer of this unit was made to another Academy graduate, who took over as battalion commander of that battalion combat team. So there you go.

I would like to show you how close Magsaysay was to Ed, how friendly they were.

C: What kind of a person was General Lansdale in those days?

N: Very unassuming, very friendly and...what I want to impress here is that once he becomes your friend, you know down deep that he really means that friendship.

There was a...this man who interviewed me two weeks ago, and he asked me about Ed Lansdale, what is the assets of him. And I said, I would like him even if he was General McArthur, for just one thing: he knew how to pick his men. General McArthur was reputed to be a good psychologist. The men he picked were the best, and so he was able to make his outfit run very smoothly because of his staff. Well, I told this newsman that Ed Lansdale had the knack of picking his people to work for him, and when he picked his people, his people became very, very loyal to him, and would die for him. See, he has been retired for several years and up to now his men still look upon him...as for me, I look upon him as my patron--padron--and of course, my loyalty to him will never diminish.

C: It is very interesting, Mr. Navarro, to watch you as you talk to me. When you were telling me about other things, your face was sober and you were thinking about what had happened. You start talking about General Lansdale and you begin smiling this pretty smile. (laughter) That is a good compliment to him, just in itself.

N: Well, you know, I owe the man practically my life.

C: Why?

N: Well, I owe him my job with the State Department. In 1962 the Embassy here in Manila--see I picked up my citizenship in 1946 here in the Philippines--and after serving the Veterans Administration from the time I left the service to 1957, there was a requirement--of course this was a silly requirement of the Naturalization and Immigration Division of the United States, wherein they

N: required naturalized citizens to return to America once every three years. That was a requirement. Anybody who did not return to the United States after three years away from America, they were told that they had expatriated themselves by not returning to the United States. And that happened to me, that occurred to me. I received a letter from the Embassy saying that I had expatriated myself as I did not return to the United States three years after I left the Veterans Administration as a federal employee. While I was working for the Veterans Administration, this didn't apply to me. But the moment I left, my time started running. And I argued that I had not expatriated myself, that I had been very active with my Army Reserve, that I was not one of those people to whom this regulation applied. I asked General Lansdale to intercede for me with the State Department, to let them know that I had no intention at all of denouncing my American citizenship. And he did help me with the State. Of course, being in the active Reserve and attending my regular classes and receiving annual active duty pay. That went in my favor. The Embassy gave me 90 days to return to America. They said they would issue me a passport and that they would consider me still an American once I returned to the United States within 90 days, upon getting my passport.

C: Technically all you would have had to have done was take a plane to San Francisco, walk out through customs, spend an hour and then you could come back to the Philippines.

N: That's right. That silly regulation was finally done away with. There was a German girl who had the same situation as I. She stayed 5 years in Germany after becoming a naturalized citizen, and she fought the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court has said that there are not two classes of citizens -- that once an American, always an American.

C: That is right. If I can come over here and live for 12 years, why can't you?

Well, were you involved in the effort to help elect Mr. Magsaysay?

N: No, because I was already working for the Veterans Administration. See, if I had involved myself in politics and voted in the Philippine elections, I would have lost...

C: Of, of course, you would in terms of voting. But I was wondering if possibly you helped?

N: No. No, because I was already a federal employee at that time, and of course we were banned from assisting anybody in politics.

C: I want to return to Lansdale's character or his nature. You talk about him being unassuming and you talk about him being friendly--what other characters does he have? You know, better than I, he is a great man, but there are lots of people who are unassuming and friendly who don't become great men.

N: First I felt he was a loner. He worked better by himself, with nobody telling him what...I don't know if somebody suggested he start developing Magsaysay--and he obviously felt his job and he liked him like a brother. I have seen Ed with Magsaysay several times, and I have seen the friendly camaraderie between the two. I don't know if you have heard about Ed developing also President Ngo Dinh Diem in Vietnam.

C: Yes.

N: That he was responsible. Well, this is my personal opinion. I understand that Ed was the only American who could enter President Diem's bedroom. They were that friendly. And had he been appointed ambassador to Vietnam, he could have stopped the rebellion against Ngo Dinh Diem. The

N: Buddhists and some of the military, from what I got when I was in Vietnam, was that the only people they hated was Ngo Dinh Nhu, the president's brother, and his wife, Madam Nhu. All right. Had Ed been allowed to do what he wanted to do in Vietnam, he could have asked the President to send <sup>two</sup> the/out of the country. Had these two been taken away from Saigon, there would have been no coup...

C: I think that's right.

N: That's the way I look at it. But the trouble, I understand Secretary made fun ?? Rusk refused to have anything to do with Ed Lansdale. Of course, \_\_\_\_\_ exactly the real reason. But that hurt. Although President Kennedy liked Ed Lansdale very much; so much so that he suggested that Ed become ambassador. But Secretary Rusk was very adamant about that. But Ed Lansdale told me that he was going to Vietnam, 1966, 1965, 1966...

C: '65 he went over and stayed until '67.

N: I asked him what grade he was going to be assigned, and he said he was going to be given FS 1 rank. I said, that is not enough, Ed. If you want to be of any good at all, you must insist on a minister's job at least, because there will be so many on top of you who will prevent you from doing what you want to do...

C: And there were...there was Porter, there was Habib, there was, of course, the Ambassador himself, Henry Cabot Lodge...

N: And there was Barry Swarthian...

C: ...Barry Swarthian...

N: ...who thought he was the number one \_\_\_\_\_ sgt. in the country. And true enough, he was outranked. Had he insisted on getting a minister's ranking, he would have been the same level as those people who opposed him and who were



N:       envious of him. And there was so much intrigues in Vietnam, I stayed there for ten and a half years.

C:       What did you do while you were there?

N:       I was assigned with AID and most of my work was with development. My first assignment was in Caneen (phonetic) Province as the official representative for USAID, and I stayed there for 4 years. My next assignment was in Jadeen (phonetic) Province, the province which surrounds Saigon City, then up to the mountain province of Phu Bon (phonetic), and to the seacoast province of Dien Bien (phonetic)

C:       Uhn hunh. (You have said "uhn hunh" after each of these provinces, so I am absolutely certain you know what he said and how to spell them!!! Anna)

N:       Of course, I can tell you a lot of things about the intrigues, the happenings there, but since we are only talking about Ed, I can say that I feel that having accepted...of course, FS 1 is a very high rank. It is about the equivalent of a GS 17, maybe 18. But then there were so many people who had minister's jobs. There were at least three ambassadors in Vietnam. There were so many 4-star generals who were there at the time.

C:       What caused the enmity between General Lansdale and Philip Habib and some of the other people there?

N:       I had no direct dealings with Ed nor the other USIA people, but of course there is always wanting to have more power than necessary...I will give you an example, AID could have been administered from South Vietnam, from Saigon, yet we organized four regional headquarters, each of them an empire of its own...

C:       It sounds very much like much of the effort was involved with "making me look good" rather than helping the Vietnamese.

N:       Yes. You see, because of these regional headquarters and because there

N: were so many people in headquarters in Saigon, many of our advisory efforts were wasted, because all they did was make reports. Make reports. There was a time when we were submitting 80 monthly reports to Saigon from the provinces, which did not give us any time at all to advise our Vietnamese counterparts.

C: There were 44 provinces in South Vietnam times 80. For one organization, AID--

N: 45 when I first arrived. One was deactivated because the VC over-ran the province, cut the head off the province chief, and threw it into an open latrine. That was Huk Tan (phonetic) Province, which was deactivated because of that. When I first arrived in '63, there was not more than 70 Americans. In rural affairs. This was the counter-insurgency arm of the State Department. When I first arrived there, there were not enough Americans to go to the 45 provinces. But when we started to escalate, by 1968 there about 9,000 employees,

C: 90?

N: 9 thousand.

C: From 70 to 9,000.

N: Employees which included probably third country nationals and Vietnamese. Doing the same things we used to do in 1963.

C: So you think the hostilities were primarily empire building in origin?

N: Yes. Barry Swarthian for example, \_\_\_any other counter-insurgent tell their ambassador what to do. Because he thought he was the best counter-insurgent...

C: What was Barry Swarthian's background in counter-insurgency?

N: I don't know.

C: Philip Habib. Ambassador Porter. They may have read a little bit, but

C: they certainly had never wandered around the barrio talking to rebels. Lansdale tells me he very often did that in the early years here in the Philippines. That he didn't stay in Manila, of course, that he went up country and even to other islands. He wandered around by himself. Do you remember this sort of thing occurring?

N: Oh, yes. He was almost everywhere. And of course wherever Magsaysay went, he tagged along.

C: Did any Filipinos ever resent this American accompanying Magsaysay around here and there?

N: I don't know. They liked...of course, friendly. He used to have a harmonica. He played his harmonica whenever he had a chance. And I don't remember...he had a ukulele, something like that. But he had this harmonica which he played everytime he had a chance. That is one of the reasons, in answer to your question, the Filipinos liked him. We were talking about the subject that you are going to use for Ed Lansdale, you know, The Ugly American. In the Philippines, I don't think the Filipinos would like to have him referred to as the Ugly American--of course, among the Americans, with tongue in cheek, you know, you could always say, he is The Ugly American--but actually he is not-- he is the best.

C: But in the book if you remember reading it, The Ugly Americans were the best ones. And they didn't care what kind of shirt they had on, they didn't care whether their shoes were polished, or if they had nice manicured hands-- they went out and worked with people and lived with them and became friends with them, and had mud on their shoes--in a sense kind of ugly, but they were the best.

N: Are you going to use that as your...

C: I honestly don't know. That is called the working title. I am open to

C: suggestions.

(conversation omitted: general chit chat)

N: When I finally returned to the United States in 1962, because of this Embassy requirement, I went directly to General Lansdale and told him I was looking for a job, that I wanted to return to active service as a Lt. Col. I remember what I first told him. He was with Secretary McNamara in the Pentagon. I said: you know, General, I believe I kept my nose very clean in anticipation of asking you one day something like this, a job. I wanted him to feel that he can have all kinds of investigations to my background and would feel that he is recommending somebody who isn't worth his salt, you know. Of course he was in the Pentagon, but he did not raise a finger to help me return to active duty. He did assign a Lt. Col., Army, to take me to the people responsible for enlistment, because I insisted on assignment in Vietnam. Any assignment outside of Vietnam would not be acceptable to me. Two panels of officers started questioning my sanity. (laughter) They asked me if I had any problems with my wife, my child, my young son. I said no, I have no problems at all. I have a good family. I was not going to use the Army as a scape goat. I was not in need of any money, because at that time I had my business in the Island of Minora (phonetic). I just told them that I wanted to do something constructive for a change; that because of my three years as a guerrilla in the mountains of Luzon, if I could use my guerrilla experience in Vietnam to save one American life, it would have been worth it. Well, the Army later told me that it is their policy to promote young majors to the position that I will occupy if I was recalled to active duty. I was a Lt. Col. in the Reserves, and that I was not retirable (material omitted about waivers, retirement, wanted to go to Vietnam). They did/accept my request, and had told

N: Ed that I was not acceptable. (conversation omitted: why want to go to Vietnam, etc.) So Ed said if you really want to go to Vietnam, do you want to join AID? I said, what is AID? (conversation omitted) Ed said, it is Agency for International Development. I said, yes, I would like to go to Vietnam under this office. Ed said, all right, this is the counter-insurgency of the rural affairs. I am going to assign you. (TO WAITRESS: Would you please leave us alone--just leave it there. They insist on hurrying us up.)

END OF SIDE 1

SIDE 2

C: So you got back with AID.

N: He called up Aubrey Williams over at AID, State Department, and sent me to him. Aubrey, whom I met for the first time, told me this: if you are Ed Lansdale's man, he says, you are hired. Just like that. So I could have gotten in AID that same day. I had a secret clearance from the Army which needed to be upgraded to top secret. And my wife, who is a Filipino, had to be given a security clearance, too. And this took several months. So it took several months before I could finally land a job with AID. So I attribute my being hired to Ed Lansdale. Like I said, I call him my padron, my patron. Years later I got into trouble in Saigon. I referred to the chief of staff of my organization as stupid, in a staff conference.

C: Was he there at the time?

N: No, but all the rest were. After I sat down, I knew my goose was cooked, and I was banished to Washington. Ambassador Komer, who was then the man in charge of my organization, didn't want anybody to mention my name in his presence; he was that mad at me. And so I was banished to Washington, D.C. with chances of being reduced in force with only 19 good years for retirement

N: purposes. And I needed one more year. And so I again called my patron. I said, General, you know I did not fight AID, I did not fight the Embassy; I only fought one person, and what he did was so stupid I could not resist referring to him as stupid in that staff conference. My mistake was that I did not go to his office with just the two of us hearing the word stupid. I let the others in on my feelings. He said, I did not lose my cool in Vietnam, yet Komer doesn't like me at all himself--that's exactly his words. Then he said, do you know anybody else who...and it so happened that Ambassador Colby was in town, incognito...

C: This is William Colby.

N: William Colby (material omitted: ~~got~~ number, called Ed, told him did not know Colby leaving Sat. Did not hear back from Ed, ~~if~~ he called Colby.) Returned to office on Monday and knew <sup>but</sup> Colby had already left for Vietnam/ Wednesday, a week after I called Ed, the telephone rang. It was Mr. Colby. Said you don't know me, but I know about you from a mutual friend; tell me all about yourself. When I was in Washington I was sent to Conn. and Mass. to enlist to go to Vietnam; that is what I was doing, so I told Mr. Colby this (material omitted: repeats to Colby about what happened. Tells about trumped up charges; charged with stealing funds, selling AID commodities to Vietnamese--) When I talked to Colby I had already been cleared by the Inspection and Investigation Service of the State Department. Every charge was not substantiated. I told Colby about this investigation--said, Mr. Colby, I have been cleared by the INI and that I have not done anything illegal. Mr. Colby said he was leaving for Saigon very soon, and the first thing I am going to do is look into your case. Within one week I was ordered to return to Vietnam. Again because of the intercession of my padron, Ed Lansdale.

C: While you were in Vietnam, did you ever have dealings with the Freedom

Side 2 - Interview with Ed Navarro, Manila Hotel, Republic of the Philippines -  
25 July 1985 - page 14

C: Company? Or the Eastern Construction Company?

N: Yeah, a lot.

C: I have heard that it started out as a sort of a mutual American-Filipine effort (material omitted) I have heard that later it became not much more than a CIA front. Would you comment on that?

N: I first heard of the Freedom Company from Jack Wachtel.

C: Please spell that last name.

N: W A C H T E L

Jack was G-2 of FILRECOM (?). He was a major during the last days of our association together, 1949. Jack Wachtel was G-2 of FILRECOM (?), Filipino Re??? Command. One day I saw him in very, very dirty attire. I asked him what the hell he was doing in civilian clothes. He said he had resigned from the military and that he was looking for a job, that he had just debarked from a ship that same day. I said, are you serious about looking for a job? I said, you have already joined CIA. He said no, I am really looking for a job. I said, all right, you be in my office tomorrow at 7 o'clock in the morning. The following morning he was in the office and hiring ? I presented him to the chief of \_\_\_ / of the Veterans Administration for whom I was working. And I introduced him to Mr. Warren Brownfield (phonetic) and told him he had been G-2, and he would make a good investigator. He was hired that same day, due to my recommendation, of course. This was around 1950 or thereabouts. After Jack left the Veterans Administration I heard that he was forming a company to work in Vietnam, with Filipino engineers, technicians, and I inquired about this, and they said this was going to be funded by the State Department. And this is how that came about, knowing Frisco San Juan and the others. The manager was assigned to Saigon for Eastern Construction was a classmate of mine, Navy Captain Liberato Picar.

C: How do you spell the last name?

N: P I C A R

He went there around 1956 or thereabouts, so when I arrived in Saigon in 1963, he was the one who entertained my wife and I, because his wife and mine are very good friends. I had since been working with Ecco, especially when I was made the manager for National Self Help. National Self Help was staffed by Filipino technicians from Eastern Construction. I had a lot to do with their hiring, their assignments and...

(interruption)

C: But was it used by the CIA?

N: I had no definite information that it was. <sup>when you see this,</sup> However, this outfit is funded by the State Department, what do you think? What do you think is the side of the State Department that funds it? I don't know. It could have been CIA. But I have no definite proof that it was funded by CIA. However, the Pentagon Papers, the information in the back of the book mentions Frisco San Juan and CIA and things like that. Now where the author got this information, I cannot say. Perhaps from records, because...index in back of book. I did read Frisco San Juan being CIA and a couple of others.

C: Ok, I want to change the subject entirely. Did you ever meet Helen Lansdale?

N: Yes, she was a lady of the first class.

C: I want you to tell me about her.

N: Oh, she was very, very nice. We met Helen when she was here with Ed with her two sons, Ted and Peter. They were still very young. Helen loved Filipino foods, you know, and we used to send her chicken cor\_\_??, and the way she acted was ...she was a lady. Very formal at times if she was not your friend, you would think that she was very aloof and snobbish, but she personally



N: wasn't. She and \_\_\_ went along very nice together, even when we were visiting her in Washington when she was still alive. They used to live in the McArthur Blvd., and then somewhere on the way to...along the Potomoc, which was burned. And I think because she tried to save some of Ed's memorabilia, she inhaled a lot of smoke which later I heard, caused her death.

C: How long was she over here?

N: Not very long.. If she was here 6 months, that would have been long enough.

(interruption--waitress)

C: Now I want to ask you about Pat. Is she from Tarloc (sp?) Province?

N: Yes, she is from Tarloc.

C: In letters Lansdale refers to her as the Tarloc tease, and I wondered if that meant that she was from that province.

N: Yes, she is from Tarloc. She has a Chinese family name. I know what it is but I can't recall it right now.

C: Her married name was Kelly.

N: Yes. She is known all over as Pat Kelly. She was a widow when Ed first met her. Pat is very outspoken. She will tell you exactly what she feels. Very friendly.

(interruption--argument over who gets check)

C: So, what else can you tell me about Pat Kelly?

N: Everytime she comes here, she calls us. She and \_\_\_ are very good friends, you know.

C: How did she meet Ed?

N: She worked for USIA; USIS then.

C: Information Service.

N: Information Service. And remember, Ed was first an information officer,  
public information officer. So that's how it is. I think they met...I do not  
know very much about their relationship. \_\_\_\_\_ 10 or 12 years ago  
picture, with <sup>Hank</sup> Miller's wife acting as one of the sponsors, I think. Did  
you know Hank Miller?

C: Yes...he has died.

N: He has just died, I understand.

C: I met him last Christmas at a party.

N: Well, Ann Miller stood as one of the sponsors. That was when I  
refound (?) Ed. I had no inkling that he had any intentions of remarrying.  
So everytime we are in Washington we call on them. See Ed is the type of a  
person who would really go out of his way to entertain friends. Two visits  
to Washington ago \_\_\_\_\_ he had just suffered a stroke and I think his face...  
and his fingers do not write (material omitted: they went to visit; Ed  
had gone to station to meet Father Wah, although Ed still not physically able.  
Last time I saw Ed he had a pacemaker; Ed insisted on driving us to Baltimore.  
This is the type of friend he is.)

C: You know he has had a kidney removed.

N: Yes, we heard about it.

His beautiful dog is still alive.

C: Canbo?

N: Canbo.

C: It means cadre in Vietnamese.

N: Yes, cadre. When I ~~woke~~ <sup>walked</sup> up, there was Canbo's face looking at me  
(laughter), and I think Pat was not home at the time, so he was by himself.

C: Well, what else do you have written on your notes there, Mr. Navarro?

N: I am going to talk about the Cao Dai religion in Taneen (phonetic) Province. See I was in Taneen for 4 years as the provisional representative. In other words, I was the senior civilian adviser to the province chief, the Vietnamese province chief. Now the Cao Dai religion has membership of about 2,500,000 and they have a pope. The Cao Dai religion is a combination of the best in Catholicism, Buddhism, \_\_\_\_\_ism, and Confucianism. And they have as one of their saints, Victor Hugo. Well, one time the Cao Dai pope became ill, and Ed Lansdale heard about it, and he arranged to have the pope treated by a MASH (?) hospital...

C: A what?

N: A military hospital of the 196th brigade.

C: Is this the episode where he arranges for a helicopter to fly some sick man to a hospital?

N: Right.

C: It was the pope of the Cao Dai?

N: Yes.

C: Well, I had seen in the correspondence that he had done this, but I didn't realize who the patient was.

N: It was the pope of the Cao Dai.

C: I understand that the pope of the Cao Dai was very reserved...

N: Oh, no, no, no...

C: ...and hidden himself from public view...

N: No, that is not quite correct...he was accessible. As a matter of fact, I was the one who arranged, who informed him that the helicopter was coming, arranged by General Lansdale. So after he got well enough, Ed visited him again with the purpose, I understand, of consolidating the Cao Dai, the Catholics and the Hoa Hoa. You have heard about the Hoa Hoa?

C: Yes.

N: ...the religion in the Delta. Membership about point five million (500,000)--a half a million. The idea was to get these three sects together to form a strong coalition to back the government. See, with the Catholics 1,500,000; Hoa Hoa 500,000; Cao Dai 2,500,000--that is 4 and a half million people, which would have been a very strong political party. But I don't think he succeeded in consolidating these forces together. See, General Lansdale was a very good friend of the most famous Cao Dai general, Trinh Minh The.

C: He was a Cao Daist?

N: Yes.

Trinh Minh The was buried in the Neubaden Mountain in Taneen Province about half way up the mountain. When I was there, this mountain was occupied by the Viet Cong. There used to be a pilgrimage every year to the tomb of Trinh Minh The, but this could not be done because the VC was all around the place.

So you read about the helicopter ride of the Cao Dai Pope?

C: Yes. It saved his life.

N: Yes.

C: What was he ill with?

N: I cannot...he was a pretty old man.

C: What was his name? The pope?

N: I don't think I even have that in my records.

See, I was a very good friend of the Cao Dais, too. I build them a 30-classroom school, with their assistance, of course--self help. When the school and the office of the principal was about to be inaugurated, the Cao Dais

N: asked if they could build a monument in the quadrangle of the school for me. How nice. I said, on one condition, that if anybody among you hates the province chief, that instead of hating the province chief you spit on my monument, that will be all right (laughter), because...so they said, all right, if you don't want a monument to be built for you, how about giving us a big picture so we can paste it in the office of the principal. Well, I said, the only time I will give you that picture is when you can place black crepe paper around it, when I am already dead (laughter).

C: That is a little unassuming, also.

N: So we had a lot to do with the Cao Dais. At one time there a 30,000 man army, equipped and trained by the prince, but I don't think they went very far. Of course, when Diem took over, the Cao Dai Army was disbanded. Whether or not Ed Lansdale had anything to do with it, I cannot say. But he was then with MAAG, not a civilian adviser.

C: Well, what other good notes do you have down there?

(long pause)

N: I remember he was feeling lonesome, you know. He would take the two boys and visit friends and eat with Pat/<sup>??</sup>when I was out of town. And, of course, my wife being Filipino always had fish for lunch or dinner, and when the two kids eat with her, she debones the fish for them--they were very young. That was only because (omitted).

Many newsmen here refer to Ed as the man with the black bag, meaning he was the one carrying money. Of course, whenever we talk, and this was over at the \_\_\_\_\_ where newsmen used to go instead of here (omitted) they would refer to him as the black bag man. And I would say, no, that is not quite true. And so I had a chance to talk with the General and ask him to tell me the truth: did you ever carry any black bags of money? He said, hell no.

N: So the suspicion by some newsmen here that he was a CIA man bringing money into Manila, perhaps for the purpose of politicians, not true.

C: Do you have a favorite memory of the man?

N: Not in any sensational manner. The only memories I have of him is his calling the State Department, on his recommendation; all he said was, I want him and Augie Williams accepts me immediately. I have very many fine memories about him, but mostly personal, nothing spectacular.

C: I wasn't thinking necessarily of spectacular things; just fond kind of memories.

N: Nothing really except personal associations with him.

C: Well, you told me a lot of real good things about your association with General Lansdale.

N: Well, I loved the man, you know. Not because he gave me a job, that he is responsible for my being retired now. In terms of dollars, since I got hired, I have obtained a lot of money from the government because of his recommendations. He had me hired; he had me returned to Vietnam. He stopped them from firing me before I could retire. I owe it all to this man, but even if he didn't do that because of his friendship, I would have still say that I really feel for him...

TAPE ENDS

In view of the historical value of this interview, I Edmundo G. Navarro,  
knowingly and voluntarily permit Cecil B. Currey the full use of this  
information for whatever uses it may have, including eventual deposit of  
this interview tape in a suitable research library. (#25)

Edmundo G. Navarro

Date: July 25, 1985

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knowingly and voluntarily permit Cecil B. Currey the full use of this  
information for whatever uses it may have, including eventual deposit of  
this interview tape in a suitable research library.

Edmundo G. Navarro

Date: July 25, 1985