

**ORAL HISTORY OF THOMAS WILLIAMSON, JR.**

Third Interview

August 26, 2015

This interview is being conducted on behalf of the Oral History Project of the Historical Society of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewee is Thomas Williamson Jr., and the interviewer is Precious Boone. The interviewee is taking place in Tom's new office in Washington, D.C. on August 26, 2015. This is the third interview.

Ms. Boone: Hi Tom.

Mr. Williamson: Hi. How are you doing?

Precious Boone: Doing well. How are you?

Mr. Williamson: Fine. Thank you.

Ms. Boone: Good. So the last time we talked, we were talking about your experience at Harvard and how it started off somewhat rocky your freshman year and ended on a high note. You were selected as a Rhodes Scholar, and then you decided that you wanted to take a different course. You decided that you wanted to go to Ethiopia, and you were determined to make it happen. So where we left off...

Mr. Williamson: Well I did start out. I did do a full year and one term in my second year at Oxford.

Ms. Boone: Right. So when we last talked you had decided to take a different course. You had dropped out of Oxford.

Mr. Williamson: Right, right.

Ms. Boone: Made your way back to Ethiopia, but you were there with no plan, no job, and one contact (laughing).

Mr. Williamson: Right.

Ms. Boone: And on top of everything else, and when we last spoke you had just turned down two jobs, and then that's where you left us at that cliffhanger.

Mr. Williamson: Well I guess I think I'd got up with my contact by then – Dereje Deressa. And Deressa is D-E-R-E-S-S-A. And he owned a public relations company that among other things had contracts to train Peace Corp volunteers. And as I think we talked about before, the Peace Corps had offered me a position as their training officer. And I had declined that even though...well about 10 months earlier, I had been seeking that position and they had decided to reject me. But I had originally been seeking it because I thought of it as a means to end way to get to Ethiopia and actually get there at the expense of the U.S. government since I was going to be a Peace Corps employee. But now I had gotten to Ethiopia on my own expense, and so I wasn't so inclined to accept the Peace Corp's offer. But then my contact who owned this company asked if I would become the head of the training division for his company and manage the contracts that they had to train Peace Corps volunteers, and I initially resisted because I had come to Ethiopia looking for a totally different cultural and personal experience than I could have had in the U.S. or in the United Kingdom at Oxford. And so it was not so appealing to me to take

a job that would involve my working regularly with an American government agency and dealing with Americans. As I had said to him, “I already had 22 or 23 years living with and getting to know Americans.” And in Ethiopia since I had come so far to Ethiopia, I wanted to have a very different experience.

He persuaded me to accept the job with his company for a couple of reasons. One was that he felt that I would be able to train the Ethiopians on the staff in how to use English in a business context and to enhance their skills in dealing with Americans in a professional and business way. Also he felt that if I accepted the position they would be able to, or that we would be able to develop our management scheme and our people skills so that we could handle larger contracts, and that would mean that more young Ethiopians could get jobs with the company. And most of our employees were university graduates who actually had aspirations to study abroad particularly in the U.S. I thought that was a marvelous aspiration on the part of these young people. They were really around the same age that I was. I maybe shouldn't just call them young, or I need to qualify that they were young and I was young.

Ms. Boone:           Yeah.

Mr. Williamson: At the time as well. And so even though I wasn't particularly relishing spending so much time or as much time as I would have to with U.S. officials, I decided to accept the job.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: Although there were some mixed views over at the Peace Corps about how much I should be paid because there was an administrative officer who said, "Well if Williamson wants to go native then he should be paid as if he were a native." I made clear to the Peace Corps director that they would have to pay me exactly the same rate in U.S. dollars as I would've been paid in the U.S. because I had been working in the federal government before I had left to go to West Africa, and he was fine with that. He overruled his administrator so that it was a very ample salary for life in Ethiopia since the cost of living was drastically lower than in the U.S., but I actually needed the money to save up for law school expenses, and I knew I'd be going to law school back in California where I'd have to buy a car so then I made a good salary. I didn't spend very much of it during the time that I worked there.

Ms. Boone: So at this point, you knew that you wanted to go back to law school. It seemed to me when we talked before that your decision to go to Ethiopia was to free yourself somewhat from the structure of academics. It sounds to me like you had in the back of your mind at that point that you would be going back to school.

Mr. Williamson: I think by that time I did have that in the back of my mind. I had left Oxford. I found that the university wasn't as flexible about the study areas I was interested in as I had hoped it would be, and that's when I realized that at a university if you don't have faculty who are interested in sponsoring your academic interest, it can be very difficult whereas if you go to a law school and you come out as a lawyer, and if there's some large law firm that doesn't like you, you can still just walk out the door, and start practice on your own, whereas it's kind of difficult if you're at a university and things aren't working out. You can't just walk out and start your own university.

So yeah things had evolved to that point. By the time I reached Ethiopia, I viewed it as kind of my last hoorah before surrendering to the authorities.

Ms. Boone: So you had already decided at this point that you would be going to back to the west coast? Had you applied to Boalt Hall at the same time as you applied for the Rhodes Scholarship, and to Yale your senior years?

Mr. Williamson: I'm trying to think. When do you apply to law school? I think I may have applied a little earlier. The Rhodes stuff is done in December. I'm not sure. Anyway I did my law school applications during my senior year of college. I applied to Harvard and Yale and Berkeley.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: I had thought that I was going to be going to Yale Law School. I came back. During my first year at Oxford, I came back to the States for the wedding of my college roommate and visited Yale and decided...this was in December...that it was too cold for me to spend another three years in a cold climate and that I should just go home. Also at that time I thought that I would be spending my legal career practicing in California and that it would make the most sense to go to a California law school.

Ms. Boone: Okay. So how did your experience in Ethiopia end, and how was the transition back to the States? Did you get from Ethiopia what you thought you were going to get?

Mr. Williamson: Well I didn't get all of what I was hoping for. In part, I'd hoped that I would learn to be fluent in another language, and I learned enough so I could kind of fake being able to speak Amharic, but I can't really speak Amharic. It was a very, very rewarding experience in the sense that I made some very, very good friends, worked with wonderfully capable people, fell in love with my first wife, and lived in a fascinating, very beautiful country for 10 months. As I said, after I accepted the position with the Ethiopian company -- it was called Alem Public Relations Consultants ...Alem is spelled A-L-E-M...I shifted my occupational goal a little bit because I realized that the training division was suffering

because the Peace Corps viewed the Alem company as not measuring up to American business standards or best practices for American business.

Ms. Boone: Did you think that assessment was warranted, or was it unfair?

Mr. Williamson: Well I felt it was unfair. In addition, I thought it was very ironic that a U.S. government agency seemed to be suggesting that a private business in Ethiopia wasn't operating as efficiently and effectively as Americans would expect and was also consistent with the idea that even though I think the Peace Corps director was a very open-minded, liberal person, the culture of the Peace Corps, like the culture of the State Department, was that America is much more technologically advanced. We come from a culture that is more sophisticated, more rational and progressive in their management techniques so that generally we're superior. But since I was someone from that culture I said, "Well if we were in the United States, people would not be saying the government is a paragon and effectiveness."

Ms. Boone: Right.

Mr. Williamson: So I'm going to work with our division to demonstrate that we will be the ones who set the standard for efficiency and effectiveness in the relationship and see if that way we can get our payments in a more timely fashion. We had very talented people, but they were new to American-style management techniques, but they very

quickly adapted. Within a few months, we were getting our invoices pulled together and performing at a level where it was evident that the delays really were a function of issues at the Peace Corps. We didn't know why initially, but after about six or seven months it turned out that there was an employee of the Peace Corps -- he was an Ethiopian guy, but he was an employee of the Peace Corp -- who was embezzling money.

Ms. Boone: Ouch.

Mr. Williamson: And that was the reason for the delays in processing.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: We increased the size of the program -- the first program was maybe 28 volunteers -- up to about 60 or 70 on the third contract that we did. So that meant we were able to accomplish what Dereje had been seeking which was to expand the size of the contract so that more Ethiopians could be employed and his company could make more money. As I said, I made tremendous friends, fell in love while I was there.

Ms. Boone: Did you get married in Ethiopia or was that later?

Mr. Williamson: No. Maybe that would've been a wiser thing to do, but I came back to the States, and I bought this ticket that had 16 stops on it.

Ms. Boone: On purpose?

Mr. Williamson: Yes. I viewed it as surrendering to the establishment authority and getting back to what my parents wanted me to do and go to law school and get a law degree. But I had about 9 or 10 stops in different places in Africa and then 4 or 5 stops in Europe before I came back to the States. But the reason I came back was that it was June of 1971. We were completing our third contract, and in order for me to have time to see other parts of Africa before I would have to show up at law school, I needed to leave in June to begin that journey. When I hit Berkeley, it was the last day of late registration. I had to go directly from San Francisco International Airport to the Berkeley campus to get registered.

Ms. Boone: By the hair of your chinny, chin, chin you made it, right?

Mr. Williamson: I made it.

Ms. Boone: What was your impression of law school? You graduated in 1968. It's been three years, so you didn't go directly from undergrad to law school like a lot of students do. So you had perspective, international perspective at that. Did you feel different from the other first year law students?

Mr. Williamson: Well from some. As you say, a lot of people go directly from college to law school, maybe the majority, but also there are a great many who had also done other things before going to law school. When I sat down that first day of first year orientation, the guy in front of me was one of my Harvard classmates who had

gone to Berkeley High School. We had met each other initially when we were high school kids and invited to an event for high school students accepted at Harvard, and there was Rob Goodenson right in front of me. He had been in the Navy for a couple of years.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: There were people who had been Peace Corps volunteers, and there were people who had spent time in the business world, so I certainly was not unique, but I did feel it was an advantage to have worked in a real world job between college and law school. I say that because, as you know, law school is a very intense academic environment. If you've only gone to college, I'm afraid that you are more likely to define your self-worth and your sense of your future capability based on what grade you get. Whereas if you've had a job and you had some serious responsibilities, as I did when I was in Cameroon and then when I worked in Ethiopia, you have a sense that you can actually be a useful person in the economy regardless of whether you have a law degree and regardless of whether you have the highest grades based on written exams. I found law school to be challenging, I had to work harder than I really was hoping I'd have to work in order to do well. I was, I wouldn't say relaxed, but I was much calmer about the exam process.

Ms. Boone: The Socratic Method didn't intimidate you as much?

Mr. Williamson: Most of us had not had prior experience with that. I was intimidated by that, but if I didn't do well, I didn't go back to my apartment -- that first year actually I was living in my parents' house -- and say, "Oh my gosh, there's no way I can be a successful lawyer." I would just sort of feel bad, wish I'd done better, but it didn't bother me that much. At the end of first semester when some people got really, really high grades; I wasn't particularly in awe of them. I was somewhat frustrated that I had not done as well as I'd hoped I'd be able to do. Although back then at Berkeley, they were all full year courses, so your final grade wasn't going to be until really the end of the spring semester, your final grades. My exam experience was that for the first three exams, I was trying to respond to the questions by writing a treatise in order to demonstrate that I had learned everything that had been taught in the course. But when you use that approach, first of all you run out of time. Rather quickly and you begin to wonder, "Should I maybe be paying more attention to the facts in the question than just saying let me tell you everything I know about what I learned this semester?" So it took me three exams to figure that out that maybe it would be useful to focus on the factual circumstances presented in the question and try to actually use them in the answer. When I got my grades, it was clear that the

first three exams were mediocre. I didn't really know what I was doing. Then the last two were much better.

Ms. Boone: Want to go back to this concept of this plan for your life, the fact that you decided during your senior year that you were going to go to law school.

Mr. Williamson: I hadn't decided. I had applied to law school so that I wouldn't have to go through the hassle of pulling together applications from overseas. At the time I applied actually I was still considering whether maybe I would become an academic. I was leaning toward law school, but I hadn't definitely decided. You've used the term life plan a couple of times. I didn't really have a life plan. I had a sense of what would be the next step that would supposedly both ensure and expand options for me if I ever became wise enough to figure out what my life plan should be, but I didn't actually figure it out before I got to law school.

Ms. Boone: Who were your models at that time? I know Thurgood Marshall's name was well out there in our community. Did you have a sense of other black attorneys?

Mr. Williamson: No. I didn't really look at the world. Are you talking about when I was in law school?

Ms. Boone: Yes.

Mr. Williamson: First of all, there weren't that many black lawyers to pick from as models. Everybody admired Thurgood Marshall, but there were

in 1971, there were very few African American federal judges, and I didn't know of the few that there were, I don't know that I knew any of them. While I was in law school, one of my mentors was a guy, he's not African American, named Bob Gnaizda. He and two other lawyers had set up something called Public Advocates, a public interest law firm in San Francisco. Sid Lewinsky and Tony Klein were the other two. And I had met Bob Gnaizda the summer before my senior year in college when I worked for California Rural Legal Assistance. He was the one who put me up to being an undercover investigator, the camera fraud. I don't know if I told you about that or not. That summer before my senior year I worked at California Rural Legal Assistance. I thought I had mentioned this.

Ms. Boone: You maybe have.

Mr. Williamson: This had really significantly inspired me to want to be a lawyer because those lawyers there were representing rural poor people, many of whom were rural farm workers. It was very inspiring to me to see what sort of difference they were able to make in the lives and the protections that were available under the law but weren't because these people just didn't have representation.

Ms. Boone: Right.

Mr. Williamson: Gnaizda -- he's a very creative lawyer, really charismatic, imaginative litigator. He was working in the Salinas office and I

happened to be driving back from the Bay Area down to L.A., and I stopped off in his office and he said, "Look I've got a case where a woman on welfare bought a very expensive camera that cost \$400 or \$500." He said, "I'm sure that when you get back to L.A., you will find an ad in the *L.A. Times* for sales people to sell this camera." I'd like you to answer that ad. Take the training course and find out how it is they're persuading people who don't have any money to sign up to buy this very expensive camera. And sure enough, when I got back to L.A. there was an ad for the company, and I went out and interviewed and told them -- I tried to play a bit on a stereotype because I thought they'd be rather suspicious if I told them the truth, that I was there for an undercover investigation.

Ms. Boone: Don't do that.

Mr. Williamson: Even to tell them that I was a Harvard student that would be a problem, so I said I was football player at BU and that I'd had a falling out with the coach and so I'd lost my scholarship, and I needed a job to make some money. As I said that's sort of applying on the stereotypes that these people are -- a lot of my people are very comfortable and find you very credible if you as a black man say, "Well, you know, I'm a ball player, but I'm not such a smart one that I can actually even stay on the team." So they hired me.

Ms. Boone: Sorry.

Mr. Williamson: I took the training course, and then toward the end again playing on the stereotype, the training course was in a couple of weeks, I said, "Well, actually the coach had contacted me and they decided they're willing to take me back on the team, so I'm going to go back on scholarship at BU." That seemed perfectly plausible in that that's what black people are here for, to just play ball. About two or three weeks later, there was a complaint served on the guy who was in charge of that office and that company for consumer fraud in large part based on the investigative report I had done.

Bob Gnaizda - he was one of my role models because he had left California Rural Legal Assistance by the time I got to law school, and he and these other guys had set up a public interest law firm. They were suing the San Francisco Police Department and the San Francisco Fire Department for discrimination against minorities and discrimination against women.

Ms. Boone: So when you were in law school, you had an idea of what kind of law you wanted to practice. You wanted to do that kind of work?

Mr. Williamson: I wasn't sure. I knew that I wanted to have a legal career where I would somehow be positioned to try to advance social justice for poor people and minorities. I hadn't figured out really how I was going to get there. I got somewhat detoured here for most of the forty years working in a large law firm, but that was what I had in

my mind. At the time, I wanted to get acquainted with progressive left wing lawyers in San Francisco, and I thought I wanted to practice in the Bay area. I thought I'll probably end up at some small or medium sized law firm, probably some kind of litigation outfit, either a public interest firm or a private firm where people were of a similar political persuasion who would do pro bono projects and otherwise try to be a constructive presence and resource in the community.

Ms. Boone: During your summers then, did you, by this time Bob Gnaizda had the Public Advocates law firm. Did you try to get summer positions there? Did you reconnect with him at that time?

Mr. Williamson: No. I got married at the end of my first year of law school. I had to go back to Ethiopia and participate in a wedding and collect my wife and bring her back. So I definitely needed to earn some money to pay for that, and so I did secure a job with a San Francisco law firm. It's no longer in existence. I think it was called Peddally Everson Martin that summer. Then in my second year in the second semester I made arrangements at Berkeley to do what's called an externship where you were allowed to work full time, and you only had to take one course at the law school, and the course I took was one that was given in the evening, which was unusual at Boalt. There was a course being given by an adjunct professor on land use developments, so it may have only been once

or twice a week that you had to show up. I would take that course and do the coursework for that, but during the day Monday through Friday, I was an intern at Public Advocates, helping to prepare those cases. My second summer, I got this somewhat peculiar idea that I wanted to be an entertainment lawyer, and I backed into the rationale for that. I was hoping that I could somehow have a practice where my clients would mainly be African Americans other persons of color, but particularly African Americans. Sadly, when you reflect on where African Americans were in the U.S. economy back then and even today, but particularly back then, you say well who are the African Americans who would be able to afford having -- you hoped you could offer first rate legal representation. You'd want to be compensated as if you were a first rate lawyer. Well it pretty quickly narrows down to athletes and entertainers.

That's not a good reflection on where our community is, but that was the reality. I said, "Well, you know, maybe I could establish myself hopefully as a capable entertainment lawyer and build a distinctive practice with entertainers and athletes as clients." So I interviewed for and accepted a position with a Beverly Hills law firm, which also now is no longer in existence. It was Caplan, Livingston, Goodwin, Berkowitz, and Selden. At the time, they actually were one of the leading entertainment firms

in Beverly Hills, and there was a very good friend of mine -- he was an associate there, and I thought it would be helpful to go someplace where I already knew at least one of the lawyers. He's somebody who would be honest with me about what was going on along with partners at that law firm, how welcoming and positive the environment could really be. He's a friend named Dan McIntosh. He's still a very dear, close friend. As it turned out, what was most useful about having that experience was that it taught me I was not going to be a good fit as an entertainment lawyer.

Ms. Boone: Why?

Mr. Williamson: Well there are a couple of reasons. Particularly, if you're representing talent, which was ultimately what I thought I wanted to do, it's a business where most of the transactions really are based on form contracts. The only thing that's really interesting is what the specific terms of the deal are going to be, but there's a huge amount of boiler plate, and just intellectually that was not very interesting.

I'm not somebody who was all that fascinated about whether you made more money. There just was sort of a space where you put in whether are you are going to get a percentage or not. I realized that a lot of the people who are in the industry are people who are young people who have been rewarded,

particularly younger people, for having some very narrow talent. To me it was very analogous to people being athletic stars, and it was particularly analogous because they had a talent that was very admired. Indeed often they were surrounded with adulation, but that meant they had grown up in settings where people weren't holding them accountable to behave in reasonable and decent, even just healthy, ways.

Ms. Boone: Right.

Mr. Williamson: Because I can sing or I can play ball or something like that, I somehow get exempted from being a responsible, lawful, ethical person. Not everybody, but there was a high proportion, and you couldn't blame people for that. We all react to the incentives in our lives. Since I had been a football player, I knew what it felt like when people would want to be introduced to you or say hello and believe it or not our team was successful enough my junior year, so actually people would ask for your autograph and stuff when you were walking around. So I had some sense of that.

That it seems like fun, but it's pretty superficial. If you start thinking you're really different and special -- I don't know if superior's the right term, but just the way that you don't feel like you should be held accountable for your conduct the way other people are, or people just keep deferring to you because if you're the one making the money for them, they don't want to make you mad. And so it

leads to a lot of these folks not being very mature personalities, and then the lawyers end up being like the adults and the camp counselors to try to manage at least some pieces of their lives. I don't know if you've seen this new movie *Out of Compton* yet?

Ms. Boone: No, I haven't. Have you seen it?

Mr. Williamson: Yes. We saw it last week. Watching it, you'll see one of the themes is really it's the same old same old that there are these people making a lot of money in the music business who have no idea how much they're being ripped off by their so called managers and agents because they don't understand the contracts.

Ms. Boone: Right.

Mr. Williamson: I wasn't that keen on having to deal with -- to me it wasn't so much being a lawyer and using your analytical skills as being a counselor and a kind of surrogate parent for people. For my generation, I was way at the stick in the mud end of the continuum as far as drugs. I didn't use any drugs. I actually could honestly say that I've never smoked marijuana or anything like that. Everybody else was doing it. I got my highs playing ball and I just wasn't part of that scene. I could see in the entertainment world, one of the ways you get ahead, one of the ways you do business development is you give parties and you go to parties and you give people the sense, "Hey whatever you want to do that's cool. Let's have fun." And what I saw up close really was that the

entertainment business is a very rough business, and what I mean by that is people would be going to parties and there would be lawyers telling them I can do this and that for you. As long as you were popular, you could generate money for them.

But popularity doesn't endure for most people. And what happens to the relationship then? How do you treat people? Maybe that's the way you have to be if you're going to be successful. That's probably too strong, but I think there are a lot of people in the business who, they're just lawyers, who are users of their clients as long as the clients generate income for them. Then once it's clear or even maybe before it's clear that you're not going to be helping them with a percentage, they're dropped pretty abruptly and precipitously.

So emotionally for me Precious, as an African American man, I just couldn't be that cold in the way I was going to deal with people. I felt I didn't want to have a career where it was important to be really shrewd about when it's time to just cut people loose who often -- if you were good at what you're doing -- would be quite dependent on you.

So I learned. I got some insight into that. Then there was something else that was I smile now, smile for the tape -- at the time I thought it was ironic, but it was bitterly ironic, you also came to learn that black people really had so internalized the

values of white America. Most of these entertainers actually did not respect a black lawyer.

Ms. Boone: That's interesting, so interesting.

Mr. Williamson: If I have to have a really smart lawyer, I need to have a white lawyer.

Ms. Boone: Right.

Mr. Williamson: Well, you know, like maybe I have many flaws and I'm not at all such a humble person that I would be comfortable with some black person looking at me and thinking I was a second class lawyer just because I'm black. I mean it's aggravating enough if a white person does it. To have your own people...

Ms. Boone: To have your own people... especially since you're looking at this field because you're like I want black clients. I can get them into this industry, and they're looking at you and saying, "I don't want a black lawyer."

Mr. Williamson: So that was pretty galling to me to realize that would be part of the environment. And it's true, it wasn't so much actually an intelligence thing, but there's a network of people who are regulars in the entertainment and business, business and lawyer regulars, that was almost entirely white, almost entirely white. I had a strategy for breaking into that, but still the idea that your own people...it's not like these are people who have their PhDs from MIT. Obviously a lot of these folks didn't finish high school,

didn't go to college and looking at me as if I'm not smart enough to represent you. Please.

Ms. Boone: Not the ideal attorney client relationship.

Mr. Williamson: It was sort of ironic that in that the business and professional world where these people were fully intimidated, the elite white business and professional world, actually there was a greater likelihood that those people, when they were introduced to me, particularly if they had any idea of what my credentials were, would be more respectful of what I can do for them. Then some of my own people I don't want to say the Rhodes Scholar thing is the be all end all, but a lot of these folks had no idea what you're talking about. What Rhodes, where's that at? I think it was good that I had that experience. Realize that my kind of superficial analysis, "Where are the black people?" "They're in this industry. I'll just show up and this will all work out." Not that simple. Now it could be done. I grew up in northern California so you have your biases about southern California. I don't know if you know.

Ms. Boone: No, I don't.

Mr. Williamson: Northern California people are very kind of snobby and parochial about how we're really superior to the southern California people. There's some brothers who've done some very...brothers and sisters...some very interesting things blazing trails in that industry. I just realized this is not a very good fit for me. They're going to

think I'm boring. They're going to think you should be working on your art and trying to stay healthy, and these drugs, they may seem like that's cool or what not, but that's going to hurt you. Of course it's heartbreaking when you see what happens to Whitney Houston and people like that. Look at Michael Jackson. I don't know if you saw the story. Did you see how much debt he had?

Ms. Boone: No.

Mr. Williamson: 500 million dollars.

Ms. Boone: Michael Jackson?

Mr. Williamson: Now he had a net worth that actually was greater than that. Since he died, he's been making more money than he made when he was alive. But how do you end up in a position someone like Michael Jackson where you got 500 million dollars of debt. That doesn't make any sense.

I think there are ways to break into those worlds, but I didn't see it happening for me. You might have gone to school with somebody. I mean I went to an all-white school so I wasn't going to school with any future black performers. You might have played ball with somebody where you could get a reputation. I had a very naïve, idealistic notion that if people knew that there was somebody out there who was a very capable lawyer who had a very sort of reasonable percentage or where he was going to compensate himself, and that he really felt my goal was to make

sure that you are able to maximize your artistic and creative development in the most positive way, that people will hear about that and...

Ms. Boone: Flock to you [Laughter].

Mr. Williamson: Flock to you, right. Because I came to realize that's very naïve.

Ms. Boone: So then what was your plan B?

Because 2.0 year, I don't know if it was the same back then, but after your 2.0 summer you're pretty much accepting your position for what you're going to do after law school.

Mr. Williamson: Well if you have the opportunity. I mean the firm did make me an offer. But by then my first wife had made clear that she wanted to move to Washington, D.C. And that was because she's Ethiopian. As is the case today, the largest concentration of Ethiopians in the United States is in the Washington area. I thought she was going to fall in love with California. It's where I grew up and where I thought I wanted to practice so I was dismayed to hear how strongly she felt about this. But I also felt I had taken her 10,000 miles from her home and said, "Come be with me in California." How can I now say, "Well, no we can't go to Washington, you have to stay in California even though you think you would be happier in D.C."?

Ms. Boone: So how hard was that to make the transition? What kind of connections did you have? I know your mother's family was from

the Baltimore area. What kind of connections did you have to Washington, D.C. to get here after law school?

Mr. Williamson: Other than relatives in Baltimore, my father's relatives and my mother's too.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: I didn't really have any professional connections, so it was dismaying. I had not studied the Washington legal community so actually I had no idea what [garbled] was. I now had to embark on plan B in my third year with interviews, and so where I started out was thinking I was taking a course on communications and I thought that would be an interesting area. Now that I was thinking about Washington I said, "Well they're regulated by the FCC. Maybe I should try to sign up with some firms that specialize in communications." Then when the word got out that I was thinking about going to D.C., there were a couple, maybe several, faculty members who -- I guess they summoned me and said, "You need to apply to places like Covington and Wilmer." I said, "Why do I need to do that?" I said I spent my whole life applying to all the right places that I'm supposed to. Isn't there some point where I should be grown up enough to just go and do what I feel like doing? And they said, "Yeah, that's understandable." What proved to be persuasive as far as opening up my perspective about large firms in Washington is that they

said, “You know, law school is not really a good place to figure out what you would like to do in practice because we don’t teach you what practice is like in law school.” So you may think you’re interested in something. You get to a firm and you find out that what’s actually done in the practice in communications. I was thinking, “Oh well, I’ll have a fair measure of First Amendment stuff and la de da de.” It’s really much more regulatory. It’s very rare. And they said, “You go to a large firm like a Covington. If you decide you want to change your practice focus, you can do that within the firm and that’s much less disruptive than having to change firms.”

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: And then as I studied more about Covington, I learned that the firm had a rotation program where you could spend six months at Neighborhood Legal Services on a regular associate salary but actually be full time as a poverty lawyer.

Ms. Boone: That’s great.

Mr. Williamson: So I’m thinking I want to figure out a way to persuade Helen, my first wife’s name, to go back to California. I think the summers will be so miserable in Washington that will persuade her that we should move back, but for this couple of years, I’m going to be there. It’s a top firm so I can get some training. I’ll rip off the

firm for some training. I'll go do the legal services for six months, and then "Hey, we'll be back in the Bay area in two years."

Ms. Boone: Right. I love all these plans you have by the way. So tell me how that worked out for you.

Mr. Williamson: Well I did start in the communications area and after a year and a half, I did, I guess about a year and three months, I did get assigned to the Neighborhood Legal Services office at 6<sup>th</sup> Street between L&M.

But things were not working out well in my marriage, so I spent a lot of time concentrating on work, and then when I came back from Legal Services or by the time I'd gone to Legal Services, I realized I didn't actually like doing communications work that much. And the guy who had been my patron really, the one who had recruited me most aggressively, is now a retired partner named Chuck Miller. Chuck had grown up a mile or 2 from where I had grown up. He grew up in Oakland. I grew up in Piedmont. He'd gone to Berkeley Law School, and he had been very aggressive in recruiting me, including having his wife take my wife around Washington while we were here. She also felt she was attended to.

But Chuck was the leader of an area of practice that was being invented while I was in law school, representing state governments against the federal government in disputes about health and welfare programs, mainly the Medicaid program.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: Because there's a huge amount of federal money that goes to the states through the Medicaid program. A lot of people don't fully appreciate that Medicaid covers much more than healthcare for poor people. It also actually pays for nursing homes that are filled with many middle class people who, when they find out how much nursing homes cost, they -- most people think that Medicare pays for that, but it doesn't. Medicaid does. So Medicare does not pay for long-term healthcare. It's just when you go to the hospital or for your doctor visits.

Ms. Boone: Yeah, I didn't know that.

Mr. Williamson: Most people don't know that. So there is this huge amount of money in the Medicaid program. Chuck very shrewdly let me try some other areas of practice because he didn't want to make me sort of totally dependent on his patronage. But when I came back from Legal Services, he said that I could work with him in this states practice, and that's what I started doing. Here I was thinking that this was somewhat ironic also this would have been in the mid-70s and then as I got more into it the early 80s -- here I was representing state governments.

Ms. Boone: What was the issue by the way? What was the issue that they

Mr. Williamson: Well it's not intuitive to understand because it's a highly specialized area, but there were a whole range of issues about

whether the states were complying with all the federal regulations that you have to meet when you provide Medicaid services. Now it could be something like, how did you figure out the charge for services? Well, partly it's hard to understand because you aren't intuitively aware of what Medicaid actually pays for.

One of the things was for these nursing homes. This became my specialty area. Medicaid paid for people, developmentally-disabled people, who were then mostly in large state operated hospitals. There's been a deinstitutionalization movement, so now they're more dispersed in community-based facilities when back then they were in these large state operated hospitals where a state like New York back then it cost \$300 - \$400 a day to provide care to severely or profoundly mentally retarded and handicapped people.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: But in figuring out what billing rate you could use, and the feds might challenge how you came up with your indirect cost rate because the indirect cost can be -- the overhead can be a very significant proportion of that. There were also certification issues. They're saying, "We don't want you to just warehouse people. You have to provide a range of services in what we call active treatment." They had a whole bunch of regulations that would send out surveyors to see whether people were just sitting around

and overmedicated, or are they engaged in training programs where you're keeping track of what progress they're making and trying to further their development to the fullest extent it could be done. My main specialty ended up being defending these large state operated facilities. They're called intermediate-care facilities for the mentally retarded, ICFMR. When the feds would come and do a survey and say, "You are not complying with our treatment regulations or the facilities are not well enough maintained, and so we're going to take back the money."

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: Or if they said, "You came up with an indirect cost methodology that overpays you. You have to keep in mind, these are millions of dollars. When I was a fifth year associate, I had one case for the State of New York where it was a 58 million dollar disallowance, and we were able to persuade it's what they call the Department of Appeals Court to reinstate 55 of the 58 million dollars.

Ms. Boone: Now you said that this was a burgeoning practice when you first entered into it. Is it still? Because I don't really hear about this area of law

Mr. Williamson: No. There are a variety of other issues that arise under the Medicaid program. There are what they call waiver issues that you may want to have a somewhat different approach for how you're going to deliver the services, and there are regulations about how

you can get a waiver and questions may arise about whether you complied with the waiver. Under the Affordable Care Act, there's been a huge expansion of Medicaid. How do you take full advantage of that? There are certain things that used to not be covered. It used to be that Medicaid did not pay for what they call IMDs, to basically a mental health hospitals. They did mental retardation, but Medicaid didn't pay for what were traditional state mental health hospitals. Now I've left the field so I don't know all the current issues. Under the Affordable Care Act, one of the inducements for states to buy into it is to say the federal government will now start paying for or paying a significant portion of your cost for mental health facilities which is a big chunk of the budget. There are a lot of issues where for some reason, either they're too boring or too complicated for the media to present them to the public, so people don't really know what's going on. So when you hear about these Republican governors or conservatives who say, "Well maybe we're thinking about buying into Obamacare." What is going on is that their budget division people have told them, "We're walking away from huge amounts of money if we don't have an Affordable Care Act in our state. We may have to start raising taxes to pay for the stuff that was put in there as an incentive." To get states to support or participate in the program, you just have to know a lot of background to know

what's really going on in the Medicaid area. States have to realize that's a very powerful incentive to join up even if you're a state or you've got a governor who doesn't ideologically want to align with Obamacare. It's really fiscal suicide to not come into the federal program.

Ms. Boone: I'm trying to think. I'm from Michigan, and I know there was a huge debate about whether or not to accept the expansion, the Medicaid expansion, in Michigan. I can't remember how that came up. I kept wondering. I'm like, "What is the debate?" It seems pretty black and white to me, but of course like you said, I'm not getting the full information.

Mr. Williamson: Well the counter argument to accepting is to say, "Well, they say they're going to pay, or they now say they're paying 90%." But can we trust the federal government in the future, and then if they pull the plug, are we going to be stuck with burdens and expenses that we can't afford?

Ms. Boone: Yeah.

Mr. Williamson: That's the counter argument.

Ms. Boone: Well you said you started in that area and then you transitioned.

Mr. Williamson: Well no. I stayed in that area. That's what I transitioned to when I came back from Legal Services.

Ms. Boone: Right.

Mr. Williamson: I had a wonderful experience at the NLSP office where you're in Landlord/Tenant Court. You're dealing with consumer fraud, and you're dealing with poor people's problems and their challenges and wrestling with the bureaucracy. One of my most memorable cases was an elderly woman, probably almost passed away now 40 years ago. Mrs. Robinson had been represented by the lawyer who was my predecessor in the office when she had applied for veteran's benefits, spousal benefits. Her husband had passed away, and she was denied. And she was denied because even though she had been living with her husband for like 20 or 25 years, they hadn't gotten married until about six months before he died, and there was a regulation saying you have to be married at least nine months. And that's a reasonable regulation obviously intended to avoid fraud and undue influence on elderly people to get married at the last second so somebody can start getting these benefits. Mrs. Robinson was a very religious woman and to her it was as if the federal government was saying we have no respect for your marriage, your dignity as the spouse of this man that you had cared for 25 years. Here was this document that says, "You don't count as a spouse." So there had been an initial determination and when the file was handed to me, the question was that we needed to appeal this. I remember looking at the reg and saying well on the facts, she pretty clearly doesn't qualify, but I had been at

Covington for a year and a half and I had begun to realize that just because the facts don't look good doesn't mean that you give up as a lawyer. As Covington lawyers, we will research and analyze the law as thoroughly as it can be done to see if we can figure out a strategy that will either win a case or improve the result for our client.

I was on 6<sup>th</sup> Street but I said if I were back in the firm I'd be in the library into the night looking through these regs and cases trying to find an answer, so we usually didn't stay at this office at night because they didn't have a big library there. So when you came on back to the firm's library, I said, "I've got to fully understand this regulatory scheme and see if there's any way we can help Mrs. Robinson." As it turned out, after several hours of paging through the CFR and realizing that the table of contents and the index were not set up for you to easily find a provision that was in effect an equitable exception to the rule, sort of said, "If x, y, and z, other factors can be satisfied, then you get exempted from the 9 month requirement."

Ms. Boone:           Okay.

Mr. Williamson:    So I said, "Okay I've got a legal angle. I've got to develop the facts." I got in the facts and found out that Mrs. Robinson when she was a young woman had been married in South Carolina, and I forget whether she was the one that left or her former husband left,

but the marriage ended, but no divorce was granted. So that was another challenge. Under the rules, we basically had an invalid marriage license. You're responsibility as an advocate is to try to be resourceful and creative, and I knew this meant the world to her, so I said, "Let me do the best I can in trying to draft a brief that says we do meet all the requirements." It was really a kind of equitable exception regulation, so that gave you some room to run with what is going to be fair. We were going to be up front about, the facts that she's an older woman so back in the 30s and 20s it was hard to get divorced before the 1960s when they invented no fault divorce.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: The only people that were getting divorced easily were like entertainers who could afford to go to Nevada for a weekend because they had very lax divorce laws in Nevada. I don't remember exactly how I fashioned the arguments, but to make a long story short, we won the appeal. Mrs. Robinson came in to see me and she said, "You know, the Lord brought me to you Mr. Williamson."

Ms. Boone: [Laughter]

Mr. Williamson: She was just glowing with happiness that now the government realized that she was the wife of her husband.

Ms. Boone: And do you find that the relief that the client was seeking was not necessarily the relief that it looks like is on the service, or yes she wanted the benefits, but for her it sounds like what was most important was this recognition.

Mr. Williamson: This went to her core sense of dignity and self-respect. She and her husband were people of modest means. She had been a good wife to this man. How could the government say in some official paper, you don't count as your husband's spouse? You're right. She needed the money. It changed her whole demeanor. It was just wonderfully gratifying to see what you could do as a lawyer. You know, she thought it was the Lord. I thought my training as a Covington lawyer had something to do with it.

Ms. Boone: How would you describe yourself as a lawyer? What do you feel like your motto is, and does it change when you're dealing with these pro bono cases or when you're dealing with poor clients as opposed to corporations and businesses?

Mr. Williamson: I don't think I change as a lawyer. I'm not sure how to summarize myself. What's different in the legal services context is that you are able to change the equation for balancing the scales of justice so that the most modest, the most humble, the most vulnerable can speak with the strength, the same force and volume as the wealthiest people, and that's very satisfying to me because that's what I think the scales of justice should mean in practical terms

and to the extent that I can be someone who plays a role in getting those scales tilted back so they're balanced. It doesn't mean you'll always win, but so that everybody who has suffered an injustice has a chance to prevail and have their rights vindicated. It's very satisfying, sometimes exhilarating for me to play a role in that.

I also take satisfaction in the commercial context. As a lawyer you're not moralizing about whether every case is sort of morally worthy, but we are very committed to the highest ethical standards and so if you have a business problem, I also take pride in trying to help you figure that out and try to solve it in accordance with the highest ethical principles. Corporations also can suffer wrongs. There are other times when what you're doing is you're being resourceful about giving your client an additional advantage. That's part of the system. In telling you this story about Mrs. Robinson what I've realized is that developing that skill for commercial clients gives you a capability to do important progressive things for pro bono clients.

Ms. Boone: So do you like the balance that you have then between your corporate clients and then the work that you do pro bono? Do you feel like that's actually necessary to have that sharpening?

Mr. Williamson: It's not necessary. To me part of the appeal of law practice at this firm is that I'm able to engage in both types of practice. The firm is supportive. If I need a first rate paralegal or you need some kind

of an IT support, there's not IT support for pro bono cases and IT for commercial cases. They're Covington cases. As you get older you begin to realize -- like I found this in some of the disability stuff I've done, just by writing a letter to the general counsel of a company on our letterhead when there's pretty clear noncompliance with the ADA, Americans with Disabilities Act, the company's general counsel is going to say, "These are kind of serious people. And if we're wrong, you should understand if we mess with them, even if we go out and hire our own big law firm, they will relish taking on the challenge."

If in this particular context I found that it's pretty clear they aren't fulfilling their obligations, they usually write back and say, "Let's have a meeting, and let's talk about how we can work this out." You don't even have to file the lawsuit.

Now that comes from the credibility that you build as an effective lawyer for commercial interests. I mean obviously there are other public interest lawyers who have credibility because they are well known for what they do as public interest lawyers, but another way of getting into these sorts of issues is to be lodged in a law firm and be someone who's committed to spending at least some portion of your time handling pro bono matters. I don't do death penalty cases, but I take great pride that the firm handles those cases because they're very, very extensive, very time consuming. I

had a discrimination case, what used to be called The Holiday Spa Health Club Organization, turned out they were running a segregated health club system in the Washington metropolitan area. They hired a major defendant employment law firm, and they started to try to put our plaintiffs through the usual drills that big law firms do, a lot of discovery and motions practice and what not. But, you know, we're Covington & Burling. That's our home court. Bring it on. Just bring it on. And there was a fair amount of luster and motions and stuff. We won all the motions. Well, not all of them. Actually they got the case transferred out of the D.C. Superior Court to federal court. We were in federal court in D.C. They got it transferred to federal court in Baltimore, and that was because they knew that court. The jury in that court would be drawn not just from Baltimore, but in federal court they also draw from the Eastern shore. However, the case was assigned to an African American judge who had been former general counsel for the NAACP. So we got in motions practice. We got some pretty good rulings out of him. A week before the trial they settled on our terms.

Ms. Boone: Have you lost a case?

Mr. Williamson: Sure, sure.

Ms. Boone: And how do you deal with that?

Mr. Williamson: Well I think it's unrealistic to think that you're going to be able to win every case. My approach is that I'm just going to try to work as hard as possible and be as thoughtful and imaginative as I can be, but there are times you lose and you lose for different reasons. Sometimes you lose because the merits are very weak for you.

Ms. Boone: Yeah.

Mr. Williamson: There was a heartbreaking pro bono case that I lost for a support center for legal services grantees. They did social science research for legal services grantees. We were before an African American judge. We had some serious problems on merits, particularly the productivity of the center. But at the oral argument it sounded like the judge was buying all our arguments, but then he ended up ruling against us. Now in the interim, because the oral argument had gone so well, the other side had offered to settle on terms that would've been actually pretty good, but I thought the oral argument had gone so well that we were just going to make some new law that would be helpful for other centers in the future. It was the wrong judgment was lost.

Ms. Boone: Caught you by surprise?

Mr. Williamson: Yes, very stunned. I wish the judge had said -- you know, sometimes judges will be more balanced at oral arguments and say, "Well I think you people should think about settling this case," where both sides kind of sense what's going to happen and feel,

“Maybe we should settle it.” Where we had a problem on merits, I didn’t focus on it as early as I would’ve for reasons I won’t go into. I’m not sure if it would have solved it. I wish the judge had given a little different signal. It kind of ended up making me feel too cocky.

The other case where I lost another one of these Medicaid cases was a big case for a New York State facility. We had very unfair ALJ, outrageously unfair. It was an interesting case because the facts looked bad on the surface. One of the things you worry about with these large facilities for severely and profoundly mentally retarded people who also have behavioral problems is that the staff will give them excessive amounts of psychotropic medications so that they just kind of sit around doped up. The records showed that the residents of this facility were receiving two or three times the recommended dosages of the medications. It also turned out that they had a full time psychiatrist overseeing this program who was an expert in these medications, and when I came to talk to him, he explained that -- the recommended dosages are for normal people. He said where you have people who particularly have severe behavior problems, there are people who are head bangers, there are people who bite themselves, there are people who are doing things to either injure other people or what they call pica behaviors, injure themselves. He said we have an

obligation for the facility to provide programming for those people, which means they should get some kind of training. You know, there are daily living skills and things you try to make something more meaningful in their lives.

He said, “We give these increased dosages, but they’re part of a treatment plan where we’re closely monitoring for side effects. He actually told me, “We don’t know why these drugs work. We just don’t. We know they can have a calming effect.” He said, “We don’t really know exactly how they work, but we know they do work, and we do know what sort of side effects to look out for.”

So he says to me “Tom, you have to choose between whether you want to give them higher dosages so they can participate in the programs, go out of the facility, get to go to the park, get to go to a workshop, or we can put them in a straitjacket in their room.” See how different the picture is.

Ms. Boone: Yeah.

Mr. Williamson: Present that case.

Ms. Boone: Yeah.

Mr. Williamson: Okay. So, it’s uphill. Stuff doesn’t look good in the opening. So the government comes out and puts out all this stuff about how here’s what this treatise says about what the dosages are, and here they’ve given them three times. So we start to put our case on. We said, “Well we have an expert that we want to put on.” It was

then called HCFA, the Health care Financing Administration. They didn't have any experts. After I've offered the qualifications of our expert, the ALJ says "I'm not going to let him testify Mr. Williamson. Now my colleague who actually was a much more experienced litigator, an amazing one, resourceful guy, he leans over to me. He says, "Tell them we are withdrawing from the hearing if he does not allow our expert to testify." "Mark, what are you talking about?" I said, "Your honor, may we take a recess for a few minutes?" I can't just walk out on the hearing.

Ms. Boone: Can you do that?

Mr. Williamson: I said Mark is a very shrewd guy. And one of the great things about working at Covington is you get to work with people who are very talented, a lot of times smarter than you are, and he said, "In the whatever system he's working under, he's not going to be able to explain or have a box to check off for our walking out of this hearing. There's no point in going on if he's not going to allow us to put on our expert, we can't possibly make our case. So we don't have anything to lose by walking out. "I said, "Well, I'm going to have to explain to the client that we're going to get up to the State of New York, we're going to tell the judge because you were unwilling to rule in our favor, we are withdrawing basically in protest of your unfairness. Goodbye." And I thought about it. I

said, “Yeah, I think you’re right. We don’t really have much to lose.”

Ms. Boone: So he was betting that the judge would find it more inconvenient to try and explain why the hearing wasn’t going forward if you walked out of the hearing.

Mr. Williamson: I came back in after the recess and got up and gave a speech about how this is the United States of America, and we’re entitled to due process and fairness. This is outrageous that here we have this well qualified expert. We’re not being allowed to put on our case. This is manifesting unfair, unconstitutional, and improper. We’re withdrawing your honor. Then the judge says, “We going to take a recess.” About an hour later he reconvenes the hearing, “Mr. Williamson, put on your witness.”

Ms. Boone: [Laughter]. Good.

Mr. Williamson: That’s the ruling.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: What do I do when I lose the case? Here, after the ALJ ruled, I called back and said, “Well, have a record and we were going to appeal it.” When I came back, there was another partner at the firm who was a friend of mine who was a legislative expert. He said, “Look, if the guy is that unfair we can come up with some legislation and undo his ruling.” And here’s an example of how you take the expertise that people have developed for commercial

businesses where there are provisions that are put into laws that extensively look like they're intended to accomplish some general legislative objective, actually they're designed to advance either a particular company's or a small group of companies' interests or protect their interests. He said, "Let's think about how to draft something to undo the ALJ's ruling." So he thought about it and then he said, "Okay, now the State of New York won't be able to do it by itself. We have to come up with a coalition. As it turns out, New York is not that popular on the hill even though they have a lot of representatives. He said, "We need to get..." because the issue was one that actually would benefit other states.

Ms. Boone: Right.

Mr. Williamson: Because in the states practice we've represented every state in the union, we knew state officials at other states and knew which ones might be interested. So we put together a coalition of Arkansas and West Virginia. Who else was in that? Missouri, actually Missouri was very important. So I was able to put a very different face on it than this is just for the State of New York because they were all interested in the protection that was going to be built into this provision. And we ended up getting it. I mean I said when he first brought it up because I was so naïve since the hearing was in May or June the legislative Congress goes out in August, I said, "Rod, don't you have to introduce a bill, have it referred to a

committee, get that committee to report it out.” So now we just have to have a vehicle. I don’t know if you know what that means. Particularly at that time, there were these omnibus pieces of legislation going through then. When they were running out of time to get everything done, they would come up with these bills that had a whole bunch of actually unrelated provisions on them, and you could in effect circumvent the normal process that I just described. If something like that was going through and you were able to persuade a Senator or a Congressman, particularly the chair of the committee, to throw that in, you didn’t have to go through all that other stuff.

Ms. Boone: And so how did it turn out?

Mr. Williamson: It was adopted. We had to do a fair amount of lobbying, but it was enacted into law and that invalidated the ALJ’s ruling.

Ms. Boone: That’s great! So it wasn’t a loss?

Mr. Williamson: I’ve just given you these examples. They’re different reactions, you know, depending on why you lost. There are a number of cases you should lose if the judge is really doing his job.

Ms. Boone: Okay.

Mr. Williamson: You ask yourself, did I put the highest quality, maximum effort into trying to achieve the most positive result that I could lawfully argue for on behalf of my client. If I’ve done that, that’s kind of like sports. When you lose a game, if you played as hard as you

could you're disappointed that you lost, but you don't need to be ashamed of that. If you lost because you weren't thorough enough in the research, you didn't put energy into interviewing witnesses and preparing them. That would be different. To me another element of losing is trying to determine what lesson should I draw from this? Listen, this is unfortunate that you picked that judge, somebody who either has a certain bias or was unwilling to take account of information you produced. With both victories and losses, I try to analyze them to see if I can understand how I can do a better job first to satisfy myself that I did the best job I could, and if not to subject myself to lashes for not having done that, or if I thought I did the best I could, trying to analyze the loss to figure out is there something else that I could've done better, to kind of quality control that experience.

Ms. Boone: Well I think we should probably stop here for today. I think I am getting an idea of the kind of lawyer you are. And I'm also getting a sense of how committed you are to Covington and how you really feel like this place has changed you. In our next session I'd like to get into your decisions to leave Covington for a little while and the transition back and into your time as the president of the D.C. bar.

Mr. Williamson: Okay.

Ms. Boone: So thanks again for your time.

Mr. Williamson: All right.