

History

of the

U. S. Food and Drug Administration

Interviewee: Kenneth A. Silver

Interviewer: Ronald T. Ottens

Date: March 11, 1999

Place: Naples, FL 34109

INTRODUCTION

This is a transcript of a taped oral history interview, one of a series conducted by the Food and Drug Administration's History Office. The transcript is prepared following the *Chicago Manual of Style* (references to names and terms are capitalized, or not, accordingly.)

The interviews are with persons, whose recollections may serve to augment the written record. It is hoped that these narratives of things past will serve as one source, along with written and pictorial source materials, for present and future researchers. The tapes and transcripts are a part of the collection of the National Library of Medicine.

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General Topic of Interview: History of the Food & Drug Adm.

Date: March 11, 1999

Place: Naples, FL

Interviewee(s): Kenneth A. Silver

Address: [REDACTED]

Last FDA Position: Ass't.RFDD for Intergovernmental Affairs

FDA Service Dates: 1967 to 1989

Interviewer(s): Ronald T. Ottes

Number of Tapes: 2

length: 90 minutes

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DEED OF GIFT

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Kenneth A. Silver

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Chief, History of Medicine Division
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RO: This is another in a series of FDA oral history recordings. Today we are interviewing Mr. Kenneth A. Silver, a retired FDA official, in his home in Naples, Florida. The date is March 11, 1999. I am Ronald Ottes. This interview will be placed in the National Library of Medicine and become a part of FDA's oral history program.

Ken, to start this interview, would you give a brief biographical sketch of where you were born, educated, and so forth, and what brought you to the Food and Drug Administration?

KS: I'm glad to do that, Ron. I was born in New York City in 1927. My father was a British subject, and thereafter I went to England, and then, since my mother's family was American, we traveled back and forth. In fact, I made that trip twelve times before I was thirteen. So I was partially educated in England. When the war broke out in 1939, my father said, "Stay in America. We're going to send our youngsters to into Canada and elsewhere anyway because of the anticipated bombings." And my father said, "Go live in La Jolla, California, because they have some English people there." In looking back on that statement, I wonder if he thought there were Indians and we needed to have solid British citizens to protect us.

In any case, we went out to California, and I was in La Jolla when Pearl Harbor was bombed. At the age of sixteen, I went to the University of California in Berkeley, and I studied to become a mechanical engineer, with a strong emphasis in things like time and motion studies. I graduated in 1948.

Actually, my basic career was in the field of motion pictures. When I met Weems, I think at that time I was working for Columbia Pictures. Weems Leon Clevenger was my next door neighbor in Piscataway, New Jersey, where I lived with my wife and two children. I was traveling in South America for Columbia International, setting up a division for screen advertising.

My system of writing to my wife, Miriam, was not to make separate letters--you know, "I love you, I miss you, I need you" type letters, which after a while get somewhat boring. What I did was I made extra carbon copies of my everyday memoranda to the head office in

New York and notes of meetings that I had and so forth, which I had to do anyway. I made these extra copies, put them in an envelope, and every day she got an envelope of what we called throw-away copies. She then knew exactly what I was doing, and they were of some interest. She was lonely, and she went next door to share them with Weems, unbeknownst to me.

Weems was a great neighbor to have. His hobby was making home-brew beer, and on the weekends we'd go down in the back of his house, down by the little river that ran there, and drink orange juice and gin, which was very convivial, and we had a lot of fun with him as a neighbor. So he, as I said, unbeknownst to me, was seeing my everyday work.

Later on, I left Columbia Pictures, and I took another job as manager of a record company called Caedman Records. They put out spoken word records. This was a career mistake on my part. I didn't hit it off with them, it was not a good mix, and six months after they had hired me, they fired me. At that moment I had a silent interest in a sales promotion company run by a fellow called Daniel Binkin. I just moved to his office, started making calls to get another job in film or in records. During these calls, my eye happened to see Weems' office number in my address book. I called him, and I said, "Weems, I'm in New York. Let's have lunch." He said, "I notice you've got a new number. What's the story?" I said, "Well, I'm not working for Caedman anymore, and I'm over at Binkin. He said, "All right. We'll have lunch." He came to Manhattan and suggested to me I go to work for him as executive officer.

Now, I had never in my life thought of working for the federal government. In fact, when I ran a slide projector company called Automatic Projection Corporation, we went to a lot of shows in which we exhibited our slide projectors. There's always a table at these shows with a green gauze covering on the table and a few little pamphlets laid out and some very sad-looking guy sitting behind it. That was the government to me. It was just somebody that you were polite to and felt sorry for. So I really didn't have a good idea about the government.

I said, "Well, you know, I don't think that's me." He said, "Well, come down and see it." So I went down to the Brooklyn office, which in those days I felt was very impressive. The office was about 200 feet wide, 700 feet long in this semi-abandoned warehouse, but it was beautiful. I got the A-list tour, and it was fabulous. At one point I used the bathroom off Weems' office. Weems had a huge office. He had a huge desk. You could lend it to the navy to practice carrier landings, it was so big. I went into this bathroom, and I noticed that there was a little potted plant on the window, and on the pot was a list showing when it was watered and the initials of the person watering it. I looked at it, and I said, "God, this place is really organized. That's just fantastic! Imagine keeping records of when you watered the plants." So I was very impressed with that, and of course later, after I joined the organization, I found this was the only thing he had organized. But that's another story.

So he said, "Look, fill out an application." There was a fellow, Jim—right now I don't remember his last name—and he helped me fill out my application. I stressed the fact that I spoke Spanish, which is a bit of a stretch. I understood and read Spanish, but I wasn't that great at it. I made an application. I had to go to the Civil Service and apply, and they came back after a while, and they said, "Well, you're either a fourteen or a fifteen." So I got lined up to get the job, and then I forgot about it basically. I went back and did my job search, and I took a number of part-time jobs. I worked briefly for McGraw Hill. I went down to Ecuador to do a study of a gold mine down there. I kept myself busy, but more and more the idea of working for the government started to appeal to me.

After all, in talking to Weems, Weems had a lot of great stories about FDA. Weems, I'm almost sure, was in BDAC (Bureau of Drug Abuse Control). I know some of his friends definitely were in BDAC, and they had great, great stories. We had a lot of fun. When I had worked in Puerto Rico for the Alexander Film Company, I had by coincidence met some of the people: Harry Lynch, his wife Fernanda, Dennis Miracky, Charlie Wayne, who is a great drug expert, used to come down. And we had a lot of fun even though I wasn't in FDA at that time, but I was socializing with FDA people.

So eventually, the job came through, and I was selected to be the new executive officer for New York District.

RO: What year was that, Ken?

KS: That was '67, and I think I was sworn in in September. I'm almost positive. As far as I know, I was the first executive officer in Food and Drug. The idea of the executive officer wasn't just to be an administrator, because I did have an office manager and I had forty-six people under me, which is a lot of people when you think about it. In fact, if you looked at the job description, it was impossible. You had everything to do. You had record keeping, data processing, emergency, safety, education, training, industry relations, consumer specialists that deal with consumers. The list was almost endless. When I looked at what I had signed up to do I said, "You're out of your mind. This is a very wide spectrum of things that you're expected to be on top of." But I had some very good officers.

RO: So that was really expanded duties over what the administrative officer who had been . . .

KS: Absolutely. Weems had something called Project Action. He had this idea to build up New York District, particularly in the area of imports. For a while anyway, he called the Import Section the International Section. Then eventually it became its own branch. For a short time, after Weems had actually left, I believe, it became a district, an actual district, and then they closed that down and put it back in New York District. But the idea of having an international section doing everything, and probably imposing itself on other districts and other regions--in other words, this was it . . .

RO: You weren't over that.

KS: No. But I was, in a sense, because people looked at me as an extension of Weems. In fact, I remember I was trying to give blood in a blood drive, and somebody came by, a bit of a wise guy, and he said, "Silver, are you giving blood for yourself or for Clevenger?" But basically, he asked me to do things to reorganize, whatever it was he wanted me to do, and I did it. I was his guy to make changes. Of course, if the changes were unpopular or I didn't handle them right, I got a lot of flack. And that was on top of the fact that I came in in a fourteen position that many long-time FDAers would have given their right arm for, because it was a great position, and theoretically could lead to being a district director, or being a regional director, or something of that nature. It was a great place to start a career in FDA. So there was some real feeling . . .

RO: A little resentment.

KS: Yes, I think so. People liked Weems very much, and they knew that I was a friend of Weems, so they probably weren't as outspoken. I did a lot of things to make their resentment less. I went on a training program in which I didn't just watch. I participated in a whole bunch of training exercises, including a drug raid, including going into food plants and storage areas and getting myself filthy dirty doing the examinations, and then getting someone to take my picture for the *Sound of Action* newsletter so people saw that I wasn't just what they now call "a suit," but I was somebody who was participating in the whole activity.

RO: Now when you came in in 1967, that was before FDA had the regions. So if Weems was the district director, who was the chief inspector?

KS: Arnold Morton. And he was replaced. I think he went back to Seattle, and then he was replaced by Gerstenberg, George Gerstenberg, who then became the district director.

RO: Who was the laboratory director when you came in? Do you remember?

KS: I think it was Kleks, Abraham Kleks, who after he left FDA, received some notoriety, I'd say, because his daughter, Marcia Clark, was a big personality in the O. J. Simpson trial. But at that time, no one knew anything about what was going to happen to his daughter.

RO: Well, getting back to this International Section, or whatever they were going to have, you know the FDA had a foreign inspection program. Did Weems envision taking over that foreign inspection program for FDA, run it out of New York? Do you know?

KS: I couldn't say that was so, because I don't know. If you ask me what I think, maybe yes. He had Charlie Wayne, he had Irving Feldman, Kenney Klein, he had a number of people who had great reputations for overseas inspections. I just had the idea that he was moving in the direction of setting up some sort of international "empire," although I don't think he ever said anything like that, and I don't know why I had that impression, but I did and do have that impression that this is in the direction he was moving.

See, Weems was a good friend of James Goddard, the commissioner. After the normal working day was over, Weems and I and usually other members of his top staff would sit in his office, and Weems would talk to the commissioner and we'd listen. He had a very friendly relationship with him. As you know, Weems left the agency thereafter rather suddenly, and he left after Commissioner Goddard was fired by President Johnson because he made some remarks about marijuana being no worse than a couple of martinis, or something of that nature, which infuriated the president, and he said, "You're out of here."

When Goddard left, some of whatever Weems was doing or was suspected of doing came back to roost, and he got in touch with his friend Jerry Hansler. Hansler was a son-in-law of Senator Sam Irwin, who had risen to great public acclaim during the Watergate hearings. I've met Jerry through CASA (Central Atlantic States Association). He's a very, very nice guy. He endeared himself to me once when we met on the street, and I introduced

him to my wife, Miriam, and he identified me as one of his colleagues, which I thought was great, because he was very well placed up in the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency).

So one day, and I had no foreknowledge of this—I may have been the only one who didn't, but I did not know about this—Weems called me into his office. He said, "I'm leaving, and I'm going to EPA. I didn't want to tell you about this, because I didn't want to upset you. I want you to do me a favor." And the favor he wanted me to do was unusual. By this time he had remarried, I think, and his wife didn't like handguns or firearms of any sort, so he had taken a whole bunch of rifles . . . He and I shared a hobby. We were gun collectors. We didn't use them, we'd just collect them. He had brought from the storage room a big, big carton full of rifles, and he said, "Would you keep these for me?" I said, "Sure, no problem." And then he reached in his drawer, and he said, "Then keep this, too," and he had a revolver. He handed it to me, and I didn't notice it was loaded. Geez! I said, "Sure, I'll take that, too." I was really a little appalled, because to have a gun on federal property is one of the major no-nos. But he was gone. He just left like that.

A team came in from headquarters. I don't remember who they were now. One of them I do remember was a Quaker gentleman (Lee Strait). I don't remember any more about him.

RO: I think it was Charlie Armstrong and . . .

KS: That was one of them. Right. That's the name. He came in briefly. They obviously suspected some sort of real wrongdoing, but what, I don't know. I really don't know. There was talk of this \$50,000 missing, and they wouldn't let . . . Ed Warner, who as you know, became the regional director eventually, they wouldn't let him into the staff meeting. I said, "Where's Ed?" and they gave me some sort of mumble. But he was obviously invited to stay out.

RO: What was Ed Warner's capacity?

KS: Shortly after I came on board, there was some sort of briefing, and Ed Warner was doing a dog and pony show. He was a supervisory investigator. He did a superb job. I said to Weems, "Boy, I sure could use him on my staff," and they transferred him. So he was a bit of a protege by now. Ed has passed on now, but if he were here and I said, "You started out as my protege in management," he would deny it, because that would embarrass him. But he did. He did a very good job as a planning officer, and he was great with this. At the time that Weems left, he was on my staff, but I don't remember exactly what job he had. He was doing executive planning.

When we went to the regional staff, eventually we both became assistant regional directors, and he was taking care of the number crunching, and I was taking care of state programs and intergovernmental relations. So we both worked in different areas, but that's how we started out.

RO: Do you remember when you went to the regional staff? When Weems became the regional Food and Drug director?

KS: No, I don't. I don't remember exactly when that was. I have all my papers, and I probably . . .

RO: Probably around '70, 1970, I suppose.

KS: Yes, I think so. Yes.

RO: What year was it that Weems left? Do you recall that?

KS: No. No, I don't. I'd have to look that up and tell you.

RO: I was wondering, do you recall any highlights of things that happened, as far as you were concerned, during the time that you worked under Weems before he left? Do you remember any significant . . . ?

KS: Well, the one thing that I do remember is Weems is somewhat freewheeling. There were two areas that he was doing things in that I, as a friend and as an employee, would talk to him about and question him about. One is that he was prone to having accidents with his own car, and from time to time his car would be laid up. But I think he only had one car, so he'd borrow a government car. Now, that seems to sound reasonable, but you can't do that in the government. You cannot use a government car for personal reasons. He seemed to take the attitude that being a regional director and being very important, that this somehow didn't apply to him. Of course, it did.

The other thing is that in the government you have to get a requisition signed and approved before you buy anything. So Weems, in one incident that I do remember, he had seen a cute little TV he just had to have for his office. He bought it, and he called me, and he said, "Give me a requisition for this." And, of course, it would be post-dated, and you can't post-date a requisition. It's not allowed. Here's where Weems may have thought because I was his friend and his admirer that I would do something that was essentially illegal. The fact of the matter is, much as I valued him, I valued my own integrity a lot more. I said, "I can't do that." I said, "I'm not trying to make you mad." And he said, "Well, you're doing a damn good job of it, you know." So we talked no more about that and the little TV disappeared, and I didn't hear any more about that.

RO: From a program standpoint, you said you got involved in a lot of different things from maybe your own training.

KS: Well, my training was extensive, because at some point--again, I really should have looked this up before I talked to you--but at some point I switched from an administrative

career ladder to becoming a supervisory investigator. You have to have a certain amount of science for that, and I did. I had more science than I needed for that position, which surprises a lot of people, but as I just told you, I was trained to be a mechanical and civil engineer, and I took a great deal of science at the University of California. So I was academically prepared for that.

It certainly helped me, because when I took over what was then called Special Programs, subsequently called State Programs, which was milk and food and shellfish, part of my job was supervising the regional consultants. I had to be able to go into a milk plant, see what they were doing, know if it was right or wrong. I was able to do that, and I did a pretty good job actually, if I have to say so myself, because I did have the training from FDA that was incredible.

For example, I recall, one drug raid in Englewood, New Jersey. We went out with, of course, a U.S. marshall. Frank Flaherty, who is a very important guy at headquarters still in FDA, was a supervisory . . . In those days they called them inspectors, not investigators. He was in charge, and we had local Teaneck and Englewood police to back us up. We had New Jersey Department of Health officials. It was called Lorraine Cosmetics, and it was a group of men who were repacking physician samples and counterfeit drugs, we thought. They would take them out of the original packages, which of course started misbranding them, and put them in little paper bags and other containers, and take them to pharmacies and sell them at *greatly reduced costs*.

So we went in there with a search warrant. In those days it was an inspection warrant. But it was so early, the early days in inspection warrants, and the actual paper read "Search Warrant," but it was an inspection warrant. We proceeded to inventory the misbranded, or allegedly misbranded drugs and take them away, and a couple of funny things happened. One is the gentleman, who was in the plant at the time, got a call and it was his wife. So he went off in the corner, and he was talking to his wife, and he said essentially, "Woe is me, the Cossacks, jackbooted Nazi thugs have arrived, and they're taking away everything we own, and our lives are over. Everything we've worked hard for all these years is gone in a puff of

smoke." And he went on and on and on, overdramatizing his problem. Then there was a silence . . .

(Interruption)

KS: There was a silence while he was listening to his wife, and then he says, "Yes, I know, dear. I know I promised to take you to the movies tonight, but I can't." (Laughter)

So then later, we realized this poor man had been without dinner, and we had arrangements to take him to a local diner. He jumped up, and he stood in front of his desk, and he threw his arms out as if to protect the desk, and he says, "Promise me, promise me, you won't touch my desk. You won't touch my desk." Well, we were looking for drugs, and there were hundreds of thousands of pills all over this place, and certainly nobody had any idea of touching his desk. We said, "No, don't be silly." So he went out to dinner, and we made a rush for the desk. We opened the drawers, and this was not this man's lucky day, because we found some--what was it?--I think it was cocaine or something, HCl.

Of course, he was not licensed to handle cocaine HCl, so when he came back from his dinner, the local police put him under arrest. He was arraigned and released on bail that evening. In fact, he probably got home before I did. We finished at 1:00 a.m., essentially the next day. They took me back to the federal building in Newark, where I had left my car in the parking lot. Sure enough, somebody had broken the window and tried to steal something, so that was my initiation into the world of the criminal.

But as I was talking about the training, I went out with inspectors on all sorts of assignments with both drugs and food, and I knew what they were doing, what they should do, and I had, frankly, great respect for the work that they were doing.

RO: You mentioned when you took over State Programs. It seemed to me that Ralph Bernstein at one time had the State Programs.

KS: Absolutely right. Ralph was a New York State Department of Agriculture official. He had been borrowed. They had a system for borrowing state employees, and they made him regional assistant commissioner in what was in those days the Health, Education and Welfare regional office. Theoretically, he was a superior to Weems. That was the system. There were a whole bunch of different systems that . . . There was something I believe they called CPEHS, Consumer Education and Public Health . . . I forget what . . .

RO: CPEHS (Consumer Protection and Environmental Health Services).

KS: Obviously, it didn't make much of an impression. It came in; it went. The idea of a regional assistant commissioner for Food and Drug in the regional office came and went. He (Ralph Bernstein) didn't have a job, so they brought him over, and he became head of Special Programs. He was a delightful guy, but he drank a lot, especially at lunch. He liked stingers. He had a wonderful secretary, and she'd sit him down at his desk and put a pen in his hand, and he'd sit there after lunch, because he could not move. But for half a day he was terrific. He knew everybody, and everybody liked him, and he got his job done in dealing with the states because he was a state guy, and they knew him and liked him. Eventually, though, I think--and this is a guess--that his drinking got a little too much for people to excuse, and he retired.

At that time, that was about when Weems left, I think. When Weems left, people like me--particularly me, although I don't want to say that I was singled out--people who were identified with Weems were given a bit of a hard time.

RO: After he left, you mean?

KS: Yes. I had a nice office, and somebody went to the people who were sitting in. I don't know whether it was Charlie Armstrong or this gentleman that all I remember of him was he was a Quaker (Lee Strait).

RO: Henry Roberts?

KS: No, I don't remember him. It could have been him, but I don't remember the name. But they said, well, I think the first thing was they liked my furniture, and Gerstenberg took my furniture. I didn't say anything, because I realized that my best thing to do was say nothing, and since I hadn't done anything wrong, just stay and take whatever was going to happen. Then they threw me out of the office, and they gave it to one of my subordinates.

RO: You say, "they." Was that a new, or was that this team that came in after Weems left?

KS: It's a team that came in or an acting director.

RO: Acting regional Food and Drug director.

KS: Probably. I really don't remember. All I remember, these were very trying times. For instance, I didn't faint, I didn't collapse, I didn't have a fit, but Morris Label, who worked for me, went to one of these meetings, these one-on-ones. I don't know who was behind the door. It could have been Charlie Armstrong or somebody similar. He came out the side door; I was passing in the hall, and I heard this terrible thump behind me. I looked. He had passed out. He had just fainted dead away and was lying on the floor, had to be taken to the hospital. So these were very trying times for people, not all of whom had any idea what was going on.

I think--and this is just what I think. I can't prove it; I don't know it's true. But I think that whatever Weems was doing, the assumption must have been that people like Warner and Silver and their staffs were involved. I don't know what he was doing, and I wasn't involved. Neither was anyone else that I knew of.

RO: You came in when Weems was the district director.

KS: That's right.

RO: At that time they had deputy district directors.

KS: Yes. Mary Dolan was.

RO: Mary Dolan.

KS: Yes. Eventually she went to Washington. Now, they may have had some sort of liaison, those two. It is very possible. If they . . . You know, I couldn't prove it. I didn't care. This wasn't my . . . But it's very possible, because Weems's marriage was falling apart at that time. Weems was married to FDA. He worked tremendous, long hours. In fact, when he'd talk to me, he talked about FDA, and he was fascinating, and he had hundreds of great stories. FDA was his life. Since I knew him after he was in FDA, and I visit him in his retirement home now, he isn't interesting on any other subject. He's just FDA.

I think it must have killed him to leave FDA, because even though he got this job down in Puerto Rico . . . He was really king of that island, head of EPA down there. He had no supervision that anyone ever saw. He did everything. He did a lot of good for the island, but he didn't learn anything. I came through on a vacation once. He just met me in the airport. We were going to Vieques, and I had to go to another airport--there are two in San Juan--and I went from the main airport to the little one. He picked me up in a government car and took me over, so he didn't learn anything.

RO: Who came in then as the permanent RFDD after Weems left?

KS: As I recall, it was Bob Martin. Oh, no, what was your question, the permanent RFDD?

I'm sorry. Bob Martin was sort of a deputy who was in line for the job. Everybody "knew" he was going to get the job. Bob Martin--and this is an interesting story; I may not have all the facts. Bob Martin reminds me now of President Clinton. He had a lovely wife. He was a charming, charismatic guy, and he could not keep his hands off women. Anything that was breathing in and out, and we'd say to him, "You know, you've got louvers in your door, so we can hear what's going on." But nothing bothered him. He was a guy who wanted to be caught, like Clinton. You know, you do something so stupid, you're going to get caught.

I'm just thinking of this this very moment. The guy in the Kenneth Starr role, the man of integrity and strong beliefs, was Ed Wilkens. Ed Wilkens was a director of investigations over in Newark, and he was outraged because this guy was going out with a very beautiful lady investigator. So he mounted some sort of an undercover surveillance and took pictures of him going into motels, and he got the goods on Bob Martin, and then he squealed. Of course, what happened was they fired the investigator. He said, "Hey, now wait a minute. It's Martin who's got to be fired, too." No one wanted to fire Bob Martin; he's a very nice guy, he just had a little . . . Just like Clinton! I just thought of this. He was a nice guy, he was doing a good job, but he had a little problem. He couldn't keep his pants on. Ed Wilkens insisted, and eventually Bob Martin was fired, or he disappeared from the radar screen.

Some years later, he wanted to get back in the agency, and I do not recall why I was involved, but I was on the selection committee. Most people knew that I hadn't been a big fan of Bob's, and Bob wasn't a big fan of mine. In fact, I had thought that if he did become regional director, I might have some problems. But I never did, because he never did. I voted for him on the selection, and he got back in the agency with a job. I don't know where he is now.

RO: Well, he came back in, I think, when Caesar Roy was the regional Food and Drug director, and he did some work over in San Juan.

KS: Is that it? Now, your question was, Who was the regional director after Weems?
Boy . . .

RO: Was it Cliff Shane?

KS: Well, Cliff was in there, but this gentleman who I keep saying, the only thing I remember, he's a short man, I think he came from Baltimore, and he was a Quaker.

RO: Oh, Lee Strait.

KS: Lee Strait! That's it! Thank you. He may have been holding that job. He may have. He certainly was my superior. Then, of course, we had Cliff Shane. Cliff was a very interesting guy. Cliff told me once that his great ambition in life, he would fulfill his whole life ambition to be a chief inspector. He was sitting in his office, and in those days we were up on the eighth floor of the building, and it was a beautiful office, and a huge chair, and his feet didn't touch the ground. He was sitting there and he was saying about his ambition and, "Look at me now. I'm a regional Food and Drug director." And in our world of FDA, that was a very good job. I mean, that's almost next to God. So he was so pleased with himself.

He'd have these staff meetings, and Cliff had a way with words. He would say things like, "I'm looking at it rectalspectively." We would sit around the table over there and close our mouths, "Hmmm." Don't want to say anything. We don't want to embarrass him. He'd talk about "taking a wide panchromatic view of things." He'd say things like, "I can't stand scrapegoating." I wish I had a list. It was marvelous. He could mangle the language.

One day . . . I used to put out a newsletter, and I described him as peripatetic. He circled it and sent it back to me saying, "I will not put up with this." So I just Xeroxed a page out of the dictionary to show him what peripatetic meant, and he said, "Well, I knew that, but a lot of other people don't." He was fine.

Then Caesar Roy came after him. Caesar was smart. Caesar was smarter than most anyone he dealt with. He knew FDA, and he knew the law, but he rubbed everybody the wrong way. He didn't understand me at all. He called me in and said, "I came here three months ago, and when I came here, I couldn't understand what you were talking about, and now after three months I still don't." But we got along. He lived in Virginia, and he didn't move up. For the longest time, he rented the third floor in my house. I can't say that I ever saw him. He'd never socialize. If he came in, he went straight up. He didn't say, "Hi!" or anything. You couldn't tell that he was there. I mean, we had no contact in the house, but he did stay there.

But he and I used to tangle. One thing was he gave me an appraisal on I guess it's equality of opportunity. Very involved to make sure that everybody got a fair break.

RO: That was the performance appraisal system. And you had various elements that you were measured against.

KS: Yes, absolutely. And this one element was dealing with whether you were sensitive to people's rights and so on. My unit, from time to time I'd get a black secretary, and then they'd move on, and then the next one might be white. I did have black secretaries, but I never had a black officer. I'm talking about officers who were my milk guy, the shellfish, the food service, and then for some time radiological health was under me. So those people were white. But they never moved.

RO: Now you inherited a lot of them.

KS: I inherited them, they didn't quit, they stayed on the job. So I said, "Why do you give me a bad rating here?" "Well," he says, "you don't have any black people in your unit." I explained to him. My voice was going up. I saw in the corner of my eye Dorothy D'Amico,

his secretary, creeping over and shutting the door to his office. So eventually, I just exploded. I said, "What in the hell do you want me to do with them? Paint them?"

I said, "You know, when you were probably still in college or high school, I was out picketing Woolworth's." My NAACP card was signed by Roy Wilkins, you know. I was outraged! A person who was . . . I'm so liberal in that area, that my credentials are so good in that area, that to be challenged . . . But that was just an incident.

When he was the hardest on me was when I was negotiating the labor contract. He called me up with our team and read us the riot act: this is what you'll do; this is what I want; this is what you'll get. So we had him, the immovable object, and the union, the irresistible force, and we as a team were between them. To tell you how hard this was on me is that one day . . .

(Interruption)

KS: To back up a little, I had been put in charge of negotiating a regional contract with the union. The union had a lot of feelings about management, and it took nine months to do. About two-thirds of the way through it, one day I got pains in my arm, and somebody said, "You're having an angina attack." Well, I didn't know what an angina was. And so I said, "Thank you." I was up there as the head of our team negotiating with the union, and I was getting sicker and sicker and sicker.

I had a secretary by the name of Jane Knight. Jane saw that I was ill, and on her own, she called my doctor. He said, "Get him here right away." So one of my officers from state programs took my car—I don't know how he got home—and he drove me to my doctor's office. The doctor took one look at me, put me in his car, got me to the hospital, put me in intensive care, and I was there three or four days. They stabilized me, and obviously negotiating was a lot more stressful than anyone had thought.

The thing about this negotiation, I keep looking back on it. I once figured out that about a quarter of a million dollars went into salaries. I was at that time a GS-14. There

were other fourteens on our team. There were twelves, certainly twelves and thirteens--twelves, anyway, on the union team. And you start taking this group of people, paying the airfare for the people from Buffalo to come down, and you had a tremendous amount of money being spent to negotiate the contract.

Now, this contract turned out to be a pretty good one, and it had some good ideas in it. In fact, eventually FDA recognized what I did, and they gave me an achievement award for my work in this.

But you still have to wonder, was this all necessary? If not, who do you blame? I have a tendency to blame the management. I don't know if this makes sense to you, but most of these managers who were giving the union fits were people who would come up from bench chemists. They came in as bench chemists and investigators and became managers, and I wonder how much training as a manager they got, because they didn't know how to deal with these people. So it made them upset, and the law governing labor relations in the government is really slanted towards the union. All the union has to do is file an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP), and that takes them five minutes, and then from then on a whole panoply of people--labor lawyers, at the regional headquarters, at Public Health Service, in FDA . . . Do you remember George Bork?

RO: Sure. He's still working.

KS: He is? God bless him. All of these people started grinding. Then you had administrative law judges, and you paid them a huge fee for listening to you. The thing was incredible from a five minutes worth of filing an Unfair Labor Practice. So, if the union and the management are going to be fighting, the union could hurt management a lot more than the management could hurt unions. People didn't seem to realize that.

The story I have told before which might illustrate this, Newark District was expecting an audit. They had had this audit a year before, and they had been gigged because they had an active coffee pot in something that the audit team thought should be a storage area. So

they read the last year's report, and the district director told the administrative officer, "Lose that coffee pot. Get rid of it." And the administrative officer was a little smarter than most, and he said, "Well, I'll tell the union first." And the district director said, "Look, we don't have time to horse around with that crap, that nonsense. Get rid of it!" So they took it out. Some union guy—and they were all represented by union—came in looking for a cup of coffee. "Where's the coffee?" "We took it away." Uh-oh. They filed an *Unfair Labor Practice*.

Now, what was wrong with this is that the reason they took it out was they wanted to fool the audit team. So there was a conspiracy here to deceive an audit team—that being very serious. The regional director was very upset because this thing is going to blow up into something. From a lousy coffee pot he's going to have a real mess on his hands, and he might have to discipline a district director, and the whole thing was terrible. So we did some horse trading with the union, and the ULP disappeared. But the point of the story is, if you read your contract and obeyed your contract and took it seriously, you can have pretty good labor relations. But if you said, "Oh, that doesn't make any sense. Those are a bunch of nice guys. They're my type of guy. I can deal with them. We don't have to pay attention to the contract"—you are in trouble.

RO: Ken, I know you were active in things like our Central Atlantic States Association (CASA) and things of that kind. Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

KS: I'd be glad to. When I first came on board, one of the things that Weems wanted—it was part of his Project Action—was much better federal relations with the state people. One of the mechanisms were the professional organizations. The first one I joined was the New York Conference of Food and Drug Officials. That was affiliated with a regional group, which I also joined, called the Central Atlantic States Association of Food and Drug Officials, and that was connected to the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) of the United States, which then they dropped "of the United States" because they brought in Canadians.

So I joined all of these, and I was active in the New York Conference, and I wrote their newsletter, and I was active in CASA. When I say active, I did a lot of planning for the meetings, getting good speakers, etc.

We had something--and I've got to say Ed Wilkens was involved with this--this was a Weems Clevenger thing, the Single System concept. If you ask me, "What did you do at FDA that is the best thing you did?" looking at it, I used to say, "Well, under my watch the milk in Puerto Rico improved by about 30 percent. It was terrible and we got it up to just mediocre." In other words, Puerto Ricans have better milk now because of our efforts in that area. But even more important to me when I'm thinking of my time in FDA was the Single System concept, which was a way to get the state and the federal people to work together. They never really had . . . The inventory lists of inspectional obligations didn't match. Their systems of putting data in didn't match. It was a tremendous job. We had also the fact that human beings want to take credit for it. There was a reason that people wanted to take credit for it, because there are people we call "bean counters" who said, "How many inspections did you do? How many legal actions did you take?"

So if you had something that you were doing, and you said, "You know, it would be more efficient to do that under state law," and you called the state and said, "Take over on that," you might get better consumer protection, but you had lost some numbers. Somebody could say at headquarters, "What have you been doing? Are you sleeping? You're not seeming to do anything here," because you developed a case and gave it to the state. The state got the numbers. So there were a lot of problems in getting this done, but we persevered.

I want to say that, you know, you asked me earlier, "What's the difference between an executive officer and an administrative officer?" and this is one of them. Weems wanted to get us together with the states, and we . . .

(Interruption)

KS: Weems really wanted to get us together with the states, and one of the things we did was cross-commission. This, at that time, was almost unheard of. We would issue federal commissions to the states, and the states would issue state commissions to us. Now this really worked. We went into this slowly. We gave them a lot of training, oh, maybe sixteen months, before we dared give ten commissions out to these people. We were very, very cautious, because we didn't think the state people were as well-trained or as well-educated as we, and they were, frankly. Some of them had advanced degrees. They just did it differently from us, and their way of doing it conformed to their state law. The way we did inspections conformed to our federal law. Different laws, different ways of doing things, but they were perfectly adequate investigators and inspectors. If we showed them how we needed it done for us, that's the way they did it, and it was fine.

So the Single System concept I think was probably the best thing that we did. I understand from people I talk to now that it's coming back. So many things upset people, mainly getting credit. It's surprising how people will take credit. Even people . . . I remember the head of Federal-State Relations was Heinz Wilms.

RO: Yes. He's retired.

KS: He's retired. But he and I were good friends, and he stayed over at my house and came to some of my big parties. We got along really well. One day I said, "You know, we're big people. We're the federal government. Why don't we call it State-Federal Relations? Why don't we put the state first, make them feel better? They have an inferiority complex often, and it would help dealing with them if we sort of built them up." And he wouldn't hear of it. Just ran against the grain of FDAers.

RO: Well, we did get involved in state contracts. So we were paying states to do certain kinds of inspections. Were you involved in that?

KS: Yes, we supervised the contracts in that region. You're right. That's one of the things that we did. We did a lot to deal with the states. I'm not suggesting that we have a bad record, but I'm trying to say that one of the reasons that these things were difficult is that we, like many agencies, felt we were a little better than the others. Sometimes, you could detect that feeling in how we approached the state people.

RO: Of course, that varied from state to state, as far as the competence of the states in doing things. Some have very, very aggressive programs, primarily in the food area, and nothing in the drug area. Maybe up in the New York, New Jersey area it was pretty equal.

KS: Pretty much, because New Jersey is called the medicine chest of the world, and they knew what they were doing. I thought they were good people, and we got along very, very well with them. But every so often, a line manager would upset them, and we'd have to sort of step in and make them feel a little better.

Did I answer a question or . . . ?

RO: Well, we were talking about our relationship especially with AFDO and things of that kind.

KS: I was active, as I said, especially in CASA. Eventually I became the president and, I understand, was the first federal official to become president, because these organizations were at that time somewhat state dominated.

I became active in AFDO mainly because sort of a curious thing. In my job as assistant regional director for Intergovernmental Affairs I had, among other duties like dealing with the union, etc., a State Programs Branch. To help the state programs people, I had been cutting out articles, stories, bits out of the paper and professional magazines, and I Xeroxed them into something I called "The Write Stuff." This was sort of a secret newsletter. Everybody knew I did it, but my name wasn't on it, and it didn't get checked by headquar-

ters—it wasn't official. We just sent it to people who asked for it, mainly state programs people all over the country. It was pretty popular, because it had a lot of good stuff in it.

About this time, a gentleman called Orlen Weiman out of Colorado had been editing the AFDO journal; when he retired they were looking for a new editor. The people had been reading this underground "Write Stuff" and they liked it. They knew it was mine, so they said, "Why don't we get that guy Silver in New York to do this? So I was invited up to Connecticut to the office of Commissioner Mary Heslin. We had a discussion with some people from AFDO, and I got the job, and my boss, Cliff Shane at that time, said, "Yes, you can do that. As long as you get your regular work done, you can do that, too." So I became the editor of the AFDO journal. When I retired in '89, I retained that job.

Now, I was very fond of AFDO. I got to go to their meetings then, because I was the editor, and I got to go to the board meetings, and I liked the people very much. Unfortunately, a couple of years after I retired . . . One of the things that happened after I retired—I want to mention this because you had asked about highlights—there was an important lecture at AFDO. It's the Memorial Lecture for Glenn W. Kilpatrick. Incidentally, I'm going to take credit for calling it that, because actually that's what I did. When he died I said, "That lecture is going to be called the Glenn W. Kilpatrick Memorial Lecture, and everybody said, "Yes, yes, fine." So I actually named it.

So they called me—I had retired—and they said, "We had a . . ." And I actually saw the form eventually. "We sent out a quiz to who you want next meeting to give this lecture?" And they had, you know—I'm exaggerating—Mother Theresa, Gorbachev . . . and I won! They wanted to hear me. And I was so flattered, and I worked very hard on my lecture. That was in Denver, and I gave it, and it was a successful talk, and people told me I did a very good job.

The meeting that my deal with AFDO fell apart was in Grand Rapids. The way it had been worked out is that they were going to put me on salary, small, a couple thousand dollars or something.

I should mention that when I left, when I retired, I gave some stock, \$4,000 or \$5,000 worth of stock to AFDO to underwrite an award that was specifically not going to have my name on it, just the AFDO Achievement Award. I thought this was sort of payback, because I had liked them, and I had had a good career, and this is what I wanted to do. They do have that award. They do still give it. Nobody . . . They never thanked me, so I don't know how many people know I did that.

But anyway, so I told the then-president, "Look, you've got to recognize that this is a real job. The lady who does RAPS (Regulatory Affairs Professional Society) gets \$40,000 a year for doing it. I'm doing it for nothing." I said, "I don't want the money. I don't need the money. I would rather you gave me a large salary and I waived it than not to recognize it has any value. So they're putting me on the payroll, and I don't know exactly what happened. I have a guess that they needed an executive officer, and they were hiring Mary Heslin for this, and they had to give her some money, and it was Mary or me. That's what I think.

I had to leave Grand Rapids early, because I had another conference in Canada. I flew up. So I missed the last board meeting, and when I heard what happened . . . They had deferred my salary. They could have given me \$100,000 a year, and I would have waived \$99,000, but they didn't see, they didn't understand or whatever, or maybe they didn't like me anymore. I really don't know. I wasn't there. But they said, "Well, you're not getting it." I got very angry, and I overreacted, and I made them very angry, and I quit, which is an unfortunate ending to a very good relationship.

Although it wasn't a bad journal when I took it over, I think I was doing a very good job with it. We had a lot of extra things in it besides speeches. Everybody seemed to like it. And they've kept a lot of the things I was doing. So that was how I ended with AFDO.

RO: Let's back up a little bit and talk about some of your colleagues up in the New York area or the New York Region, because New York had, in addition to the New York District, Newark at that time and Buffalo.

KS: Yes. And we had for a long time Puerto Rico.

RO: And then Puerto Rico. That's right. And some of the folks that you worked with in those places and the relationship you had as executive officer with, say, those people in Buffalo and in San Juan and Newark.

KS: Well, some people stand out. The district director in Buffalo, Eugene Pitt Smith . . . Now Pitt was a character. He would call me up, and he'd say, "We need a regional office about as much as we need teats on a bull." And then he'd say, "Nothing personal." He'd always say, "Nothing personal," and then he'd excoriate the whole regional concept. So we were friendly, but I don't think I had much influence on Buffalo, one way or t'other.

RO: Mike Tuzzo was the administrative officer there.

KS: Mike was a great guy, and he was one of the people on our negotiating team. He signed a plaque that they gave me for my job as the chief negotiator. I got along very well with Mike, and my trips there were always very friendly. One of the people that became a good friend of mine was Love, Burton Inge Love. He stayed over at my house when he'd come down. He and I just got along real good.

Some of the people I liked in, say, Newark were Frank Flaherty—I mentioned him before. Very competent. He'd been an old BDAC man. He was street smart. Jerry Kolaitis, who went to industry. I went to his retirement from FDA, and I went to his retirement from I think it's called Novartis. Do you know that name?

RO: No.

KS: I may have it wrong. One of the major drug firms was put together with another one, and they came up with a name like Novartis.

RO: How do you spell that?

KS: I don't know. N-O-V-A-R-T-I-S. But I think I've got it wrong, because it's . . .

RO: I see. That's all right. We can correct this later.

KS: He was a great guy. He and I used to shoot together out on the range. I guess my most contact was with Ed Wilkens. Ed is a man, as I mentioned, of great integrity, but he had, like all of us, a blind spot. He was absolutely against any form of discrimination, but he never found a woman investigator who was worthy of promotion. He just never found one. Roy did something very clever—I thought it was clever. He took Ed and he put him in my job over at the regional office, and he made me director of investigations in Newark for two months. Gee, I found some women worthy of promotion.

What was happening was very funny. He had a secretary, Marsha Supan, a delightful person who eventually went to the U.S. Marshall's Office. But Marsha Supan was sitting right outside my office when I was filling in for Ed, and she's on the phone all the time: "Now he's interviewing so-and-so; now he's doing this; now he's doing that." So I couldn't do anything that Ed didn't know about. It was very funny. That was under Matt Lewis.

Matt was a very, very nice guy. He'd ask me to do things that he'd always wanted to do, but Ed didn't want him to do. And Ed's pretty strong. In fact, after I left, a lot of what I did, Ed went in and, "What happened? Oh, that Silver, he did that!" and they reversed it. But Matt would remember things the way they should have been rather than how they were. He would sort of rearrange his memory to be the way it should have been, and it would drive people crazy. He didn't realize he was sort of prevaricating. He just saw life, that's the way it should have been, and that's the way I'm going to remember it. But then he got high blood pressure and retired.

Ed Warner, of course, sticks out. Ed was an extremely hard-working person. He was there when I left, and he was there when I arrived. One day I went into him I said, "Ed, do

you get in early, or are you just left over from last night?" He was always working, and he deserved to be district director, and he deserved to be regional director. He knew his stuff. He was square. I think it's a shame. Obviously, it was a tragedy he died so young, but he could have been a very big person in Food and Drug eventually, because he just knew his stuff.

RO: What about San Juan while it was still under New York's . . . ?

KS: Well, the one thing I did . . . Again, going back to your question, what's the difference between an XO (executive officer) and an administrative officer? I was called in by Weems, and he said, "Look, I want a lab in Puerto Rico. Now, you go down and get me a lab." He had made a deal with the customs people. The customs people were afraid of losing their customhouse to the state people who coveted it. This was a fine old building, and the deal that Weems worked out was we'll put a lab there, and then they can't touch us, you see. I didn't know about this deal, but I know that that was done.

So I went down and I . . . A fellow called John Meecham, who was a microbiologist, he was helping me, and Dennis Miracky, whom I knew from the days when I was working for the Alexander Film Company in Puerto Rico. So they were helping me, and I saw right away that you can do anything with anything if you've got enough money and enough time, but you'd need more than we had of both time and money to put a lab in that building.

So there was a guy at GSA, and he said, "Look, I'll give you some space in the old post office where your offices would go on the second floor." I said, "Well, we don't have much money." He said, "I'll tell you what. I'll cap every profession. The electricians will not cost you more than \$2,000; the plumbers won't cost you more than \$2,000; the painters will not cost you more than \$2,000." Every group was capped. I have never heard before or since of anyone doing this. This was an incredible way of keeping the costs down, but he was working with these groups of people. He said to them, "You're going to have to do this, and I'll give you \$2,000." End of story. So we built a lab.

So a little while later, some guy, I think his name was Nixon—not the president—called me from Facilities Management, and he says, "I understand you've built a lab down there." "Yes, yes!" "Well, you didn't tell us, and you know, we're in charge of that." I said, "Geez, I'm new. I didn't know that." And I sounded so stupid that he gave up on it.

RO: Ignorance, huh?

KS: Yes, I pulled the old ignorance thing. But Weems got his lab. We had a lady down there, a lady district director who then I know she . . .

RO: Mary K. Ellis.

KS: Mary K. Ellis, yes. She went to the Chicago area, because I was there on some trip and I dropped in and said hello to her. I don't remember off hand anything special.

My trips to Puerto Rico dealt with milk, mainly milk. They had a terrible milk situation, and we were pushing them. In fact, in part of this thing, I was acting regional director one day, and I got a call from a newspaper in Puerto Rico about our thing. Sometimes I'm a little too smart for my own good. So I gave the interview in Spanish, and I wanted to say that the people of Puerto Rico had the *right* to wholesome milk, and *right* is *derecho*, but somehow, I said "civil rights." So I elevated the problem to one of civil rights. Now, they had asked me my title, and I said, "Well, I'm acting regional director at this time."

The real regional director, Caesar Augustus Roy, was meeting with his other regional directors in Puerto Rico. And you get this headline saying something to the effect of "FDA Blasts Governor, Demands Civil Rights for Milk Drinkers." And this guy, he's having his breakfast, and they show him this headline and I wouldn't say he turned white, but he sure blanched. They ran over to the governor's office and said, "Oh, oh . . ." So when I went and he got back, he stripped a lot of flesh off me for that one. But it was the type of pressure we were putting on. This incident wasn't done to hurt the governor—I don't know that I said

anything about the governor; I don't know the governor—but they had to do something to clean up their act.

You know, Puerto Rico had a lot of problems. One of the problems Puerto Rico had is something called thelarche. Are you familiar with that? I may, again, be pronouncing it wrong, but thelarche causes the growth of breasts on very young girls, also on boys. They develop breasts at an early age, and the boys develop breasts, which they shouldn't have at all. This was happening in Puerto Rico, and it was upsetting a lot of people.

Now, I think everybody except maybe a receptionist in the office "knew" that what was happening was that they had these pharmaceutical factories down there making estrogens. This powder would fall on the floor, and the workers didn't have boots—there was very little sanitation—and they would go home with this estrogen on their feet. They'd walk into their house, and they didn't take their shoes off. The houses often did not have floors; they were just pounded-down dirt. The kids played on the floor.

Now everybody "knew" that, but nobody wanted to officially discover this until they had a chance to fix it. So everybody was looking. The USDA was looking at chickens, and we were looking at things other than the plants, you see, so that the plants had time to get their act together, because when this would come out, there would be such an uproar that they might close the plants which were essential to the economy of Puerto Rico. This is one of those things that I look on where the politics of something are so big that the public health aspects were pushed away.

I'm thinking you probably had this with cyclamates. I don't know the cyclamate story, but where the political situation got ahead of and overwhelmed the public health thing. I think that's what happened in Puerto Rico. Eventually, they cleared it up, because they knew what it was, and everybody was looking somewhere else for a while, and then by the time they got to that it had been cleared up.

RO: From where you sat, what about the commissioners FDA had during your twenty years with the Food and Drug Administration?

KS: The only commissioner I got close to was Frank Young. The reason I got close to Frank Young, I think, is that I had a good car. Still got it. I had a 300SD Mercedes Benz--big, luxurious car. If you had to do the commute from Montclair to Brooklyn and back every day, you'd want a heavy good car, too. So I had it, and Young was coming to New York, so someone had to take him around, and I had the best car, so I got the job. That's how I think they picked me.

So I'd pick him up at the airport. I did this several times, and I don't want to mix the stories. He came off the plane and he's beating his chest. He's banging his chest. He's got body armor on--that's what he's showing me. See? Because the people from ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) had threatened him, and he was also surrounded by two Baltimore policemen. So they get in the car, and he's telling me all about this. And you know, we talked religion. He was a fan of the 27th Psalm, and he'd start to recite it, and I'd chime in, you know.

I guess our first stop was the U.N. He was giving a talk at a luncheon there. I got to park my car on the oval. Wow! I've never before seen a car parked on the oval in front of the U.N., and I probably . . .

(Interruption)

KS: So I go in with the two cops, and I'm looked at as sort of the head now of his security detail. That is very funny, you know. So I'm hoisting up my gun belt, which I didn't have . . .

RO: You should have had Weems' revolver then.

KS: Yes. (Laughter) And I'm saying things like, "Is there a back door to this room?" I'm acting all of a sudden as head of his security detail and having a ball. So he has this lunch, and

I'm invited to the lunch, and then he introduces me as this great person he has with him. He was always giving kudos to his staff and making them feel good.

From there we go to Columbia University, and by this time we're joined at the meeting with I think two uniformed New York City police and about six undercover policemen. They were on the isles sort of to protect him from being rushed. He's up giving his talk, and all of a sudden, people all over that auditorium stand up silently, and they take off their sweaters, and they have this ACT-UP T-shirt on, and they were really harassing him. Then, he told this story about his kid, who I think was injured severely.

RO: Yes, I think it was wrestling.

KS: Wrestling. And there wasn't really a dry eye in the house when he was finished. He grabbed that audience. It was marvelous what he did.

There were several trips he took. One he gave a lecture to some students, and he kept showing his badge. He loved that badge. God, he loved that badge. He'd get me in on the act with the badge; you know, we'd hold up our badges. It's ridiculous. But he enjoyed his job. He had a good heart. I think the day he left the agency to go to the department, I got a note from him, which I still have, about my retirement. He was a friendly, nice guy.

I met Kessler, of course, and I thought he was good. I respected him. He was a marvelous person with such a great background and a lot of integrity.

RO: What was the official title of the last job you held?

KS: It was assistant regional food and drug director (RFDD) for Intergovernmental Affairs, and if you can say that, you don't have emphysema. It's a big title. But basically it described what I did most of the time.

RO: That included, of course, the state programs. Yes.

KS: Yes. State programs, labor, what else? That was basically it. As you mentioned before, we had state contracts, and we were monitoring those. Got a lot of things that came along to do to represent the regional director in certain areas.

RO: Sure. Well, Ken, is there anything else you'd like to add? I want to thank you for participating in this.

KS: I'll think of many things that I've left out.

RO: We can always add.

KS: Well, you know, you asked me what I was doing when Weems had me doing a lot of what I call outreach. I worked with the Federal Executive Board in Newark. I was stationed in Patterson for a while doing what we called the Patterson Project, which developed into this. We made a list of every organization in Patterson who was in a position to help people: what they were, what they did, when they were open, how you got there, their address, everything. We did it in English, and we did it in Spanish.

Then we got little plastic bags, and we hung them on the doorknobs of the citizens of Patterson so that they all . . . I'm not sure they got them on every doorknob, but we got them on the doorknobs of the people who needed this type of assistance. It was a booklet, which I have a copy of still. It was very well received, and I was given an award for that, too. That's the type of thing that we did.

I had to go to Washington to talk about the Patterson Project, and a guy from the White House in the Executive Office of the President picked me up at the airport, and he took me out to Virginia to give my speech. I said, "Boy, this is the life. It doesn't get any better than this." And as I arrived, another speaker arrived, but he was a major general, and he came in by helicopter. So there was somebody getting better treatment than I got. (Laughter) So that's a typical thing that I got to do.

RO: Well, Ken, we want to thank you then, and this will end the interview.