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Divine Secrets of the RYBAT Sisterhood: Four Senior Women of the Directorate of Operations Discuss Their Careers

A senior Directorate of Operations woman says that in the early days of the Directorate of Operations, then known ambiguously as the "Directorate of Plans," if you saw a woman anywhere you could almost be certain that she was a secretary or a clerk. Depending on your viewpoint, things have changed a little or a lot. Rather than venture helplessly into that minefield, I would like to introduce a panel of senior women who rose to the ranks of SIS in the Directorate of Operations. Their stories about what it was like then and where we are now are valuable and informative. While there is a lot of laughter in the retelling of their stories, there is also an element of righteous anger.

Carla [] joined the CIA in 1965 as a GS-4 secretary with Division D of the Directorate of Plans. She was promoted to SIS in January 2000. Her first overseas tour was as a secretary [] and she then spent a few years as a rover for NE Division. Carla moved into the operations officer category and served in []. Her headquarters assignments included Deputy Chief [] in the Counterterrorism Center and Plans Officer in ORMS (Operations and Resource Management Staff). She was Executive Officer for CE Division, Chief of Operations in Europe Division and, most recently, Deputy Chief of Africa Division. She retired on 30 April 2004 after a 39-year career in the agency.

Susan [] originally came into the Agency as a Persian language instructor. In the wake of the Iranian hostage crisis, she was asked to join NE Division as an operations officer and has served as Chief of the [] Task Force, Chief of Station [], Deputy Chief of Station [] and Group Chief of [] Operations. Post-9/11, she was asked to rejuvenate the Agency's language training, and she was specifically recognized for creating a strategy that will affect CIA's language capabilities for the future.

Patricia [] came in in 1973 as a PT, or "Professional Trainee." After completing "the farm" in 1976, she spent a year in language in []. Training for the job as Deputy Chief of Station []. She then served as a case officer in []. She then moved on to Deputy Chief of [] and, later, Chief of []. Then [she was] Chief of [] in CE Division, covering the six former Soviet republics. She retired as Chief of the Policy and Community Action Staff on 30 April 2004 and was awarded the CIA's Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal.

Meredith [] came into the DO originally as a contract wife in 1979 and then became an operations officer in 1981. She served as an operations officer in [] and []. And was the executive officer for CE Division. In 1997 she was asked to set up the DO's new recruitment effort and after that was Chief of Station []. She is currently Deputy Chief of Europe Division.

The moderator, Susan [] is the acting Chief [] and the driving force behind convening this panel.

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Susan, moderator: I want to start off today by talking about how things have changed. I know that all of us have come in 25 years or longer ago and the DO has changed in ways that are unimaginable to people, so I'd like to hear from you about what it was like when you came in.

Carla: I'll take that one to start. When I came in in 1965 the first assumption was that any female you met in the hallway was a secretary or a clerk. And the other big difference was when I came on board, we wore hats and white gloves every day. The gloves were inspected as you entered the office to be sure that your palms were white. I'm not sure what would've happened if they hadn't been white because I was too petrified to change that. So that's where I would start with the differences.

Susan, moderator: That was good. We were called the Directorate of Plans back then, is that right?

Carla: Yes.

Susan, moderator: If I recall correctly from other stories you've told me, there was actually a gate between the DDP and the rest of the Agency.

Carla: There were certain sections of the Directorate of Plans. I was in a very sensitive area; they wouldn't even give the offices names. We were just called "Division D," and the "D" did not stand for anything; it was simply "Division D" because everything was so super-secret and very compartmented. You did not know what someone in the office next door to you did, nor were you allowed to ask. Indeed, our division had a turnstile. There was a woman who was a GS-5 when she entered on duty and she retired as a GS-5 and her sole function was to look at your badge and see if you had an on it.

Susan, moderator: That [meant] you had an SCI clearance, right?

Carla: [*nodding*] It was a little that stuck on the border of the badge and that let you get into Division D. There were probably four or five other components within the DO that had those restrictions.

Meredith: Physically, back then, it was just what we call "Old Headquarters Building," right? The new building wasn't built until—oh my goodness—much later.

Carla: And none of the offices were vaults.

Meredith: Oh, I see...that's true, we had to clean up every day.

Carla: You cleared your desk, and everything got locked in the safe.

Patty: Well, the main corridor across the face of the building where it becomes D&E—those doors were closed, and at one point there used to be security guards at that point. If you weren't cleared for the DDP, you couldn't cross over.

Meredith: I remember, too, when I came in as a contract wife in '79 and then moved to the CST program in '81—CT program, then—I remember we had two dining rooms. The DI and everybody ate on what we now call the DI side—when I say that to CST they say, "Huh? What?" But the DI and everyone who was visiting ate on the other side and the DO had its own dining room, and you didn't mix at all.

Patty: That's right, because of cover.

Susan, moderator: I'm not sure we have contract wives anymore. Can you say what a contract wife was?

Meredith: Sure we do!

Susan, moderator: Not like they were, though.

Meredith: There were lots of us, and it was a venue for bringing women in at the time. My husband was an ops officer. He went through the CT program and his first tour was [] Back then we didn't allow any officers who were married to go to [] without the wife going through the full [] Course]—what we used to call, then, the CE ops course. I went through [] without even knowing anything. I think ignorance was bliss, and [I] did real well.

Patty: By the way, having [run] that course at one point in my career, I can tell you that the spouses—and they were usually women, in fact they were all women—were terrific because they had no preconceived notions and they inevitably—this is being a female chauvinist—were much better at detecting surveillants on foot. I always put that down to women [being] more sensitive [to] who's near or in their space, for physical protection. You know, somebody moves in on you, you're going to want to know. But they were great at picking up surveillants on foot and in stores. Because surveillants don't shop well; they just can't fake it.

Meredith: I always said if I ever wrote a book, I would start it with, "You could tell 'em by their socks." You would always know surveillants [] at the time by the socks and the shoes. We digress here, but with all the [] having such horrible clothes and horrible shoes and socks, the surveillants had good ones. That would never occur to my husband to look at it.

Patty: So when did you officially stop being a [contract] wife and become a CT?

Meredith: So, came back from [] and the Chief of the division and the Chief [] [] was the division chief), [they] said, "You did really well." There was a lot of stuff going on in [] and I really had to do a lot of the work, so when I came back, they said, "We'll sponsor you for the CT program." This is one story I wanted to use to show the differences between now and then. So, they had me interview for the CT program. It was then the Career Trainee Program, as opposed to now, the Clandestine Service Training Program. Back then with the Career Trainee Program,

we had people from the DI, the DA, and from the other directorates. Not a large number, but certainly every class had people from across the Agency. So I interviewed with—I guess he's not around anymore, but I won't use his name—

Patty: Go ahead, go ahead.

Meredith: []

Susan: There you go!

Meredith: —who was at the time—and, hey, now that you mention it—who was in the position that I'm in now! He was Deputy Chief of Europe, and he said to me, "I really don't believe in women being ops officers." I said, "I don't understand, [] Why is that?" And he said, "Well, because you know they'll have families." And I said, "You know, almost all of your male ops officers have families, too." "No, no, no," he said, "You might get pregnant. First of all, you can't be an ops officer while you're pregnant and, secondly, you'll have to take all that time off." I had two children at the time. And I said, "Well, it's okay [] because I've been fixed." And immediately he said, "Well, okay, you seem like a reasonable candidate. We'll put you in for that." So I went ahead—

Patty: And you were lying.

Meredith: —I was lying. It was clear to me that I wasn't going to get in without it, so I went out and promptly on my first tour got pregnant again. But I felt so compelled—we were talking before this, about sacrifices women—and, yeah, men, too—were willing to undergo at the time to have opportunities to do that. I was [] [for my] first tour and got pregnant and came back to Washington a couple weeks before the baby was born, [knowing] it was going to have to be a cesarean. Went in, worked up until the day the baby was born, had the baby, had the cesarean, and was back on the street [] in seven days. And I wasn't the only one that was doing that—all of us, you really felt like you couldn't take off and do that.

Susie: My experience coming in is kind of different from the rest of you, because I was born in Iran and I married from college in the United States. My husband is a [] State Department officer. So where we went on our first tour, actually, was [] where we met Carla. After we came back, I was absolutely enchanted, mesmerized by CIA people [] was the Chief of Station—another legend. We came back [] and one day my husband said, "Susie, I think you should work." I said, "Do what?" He said, "I don't know..." There was an ad in the paper that said CIA wanted Persian instructors, so he applied—he did the whole work for me, and I went for the interview. I had no idea what "GS" was, what government grading or ranking was, and they said, "Okay, you're hired." I said, "Wonderful." And I started working two days a week.

Carla: What grade did they hire you at?

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Susie: I have no idea. To this day I have no clue. I think it was GS-6, 7, or...

Meredith: 5. You and I came in at the same time. I came in as a 5.

Susie: So I did the teaching for two days a week, and then I kind of got bored with it. At that time my husband was going [] so I went [] with him. Hostages were taken. It was 1979. I got a call from CIA saying "Please come back." And I really felt duty-bound, [so] I came back. []

Susie: [] But that was the beginning of my career with CIA. I was at the right place at the right time. Unfortunately nothing has improved. They had no Farsi speakers at that time, very few Arabic speakers, as you recall. When we had to translate what the Iranians were giving us, there was nobody at the State Department who could read Farsi and translate.

Patty: At State?

Susie: At State. So I was going from CIA to State to translate the documents for the freedom of the hostages. This is how, as a country, we just didn't have linguists. []
[]—and this is why I'm always grateful and why I think a lot of women shy away from NE, but in the person of [] and another legend for me, []
[] who has passed away since—they came after me and they said, "Susie, you have the making of a case officer. Please come and join NE. I still wanted to keep my part-time status because I was a mother and my son at that time was about five or six years old, and I really felt obligated that I want to be home. So they said, "That's okay, come part-time." I went part-time and the only female in NE at that time who was a GS-13 was [] To me, she was a goddess because females, as Carla mentioned, were secretaries most of the time and the most they could aspire to was branch chief. And beyond that, I don't think we had anything higher than that [] because she was so good and she

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had nowhere to go in the DO, left the DO and went and did other things where she got promoted later on. But in 1983 I went to the farm and I became full-time. Talking about sacrifices: once I tasted this drug of being a case officer—

Carla, Meredith: Yup, that's right.

Susie: —then I really I think sold my soul and myself to being a case officer. The motherhood that I insisted on became kind of secondary, the wifehood that I thought I was in love with my husband became secondary. When I went on [my] first tour it was a separated tour, and that almost cost our marriage. There were a lot of times—our son lived [redacted] with me—in the middle of the night I would get a phone call. Remember, this was during Contra—

Meredith: Is this when [redacted] was set up?

Susie: Yes, it was during the Contra events that were happening, and a lot of people were coming through [redacted] I would get a call in the middle of the night: "Susie, go and [redacted] such and such [redacted] and don't ask any questions." The thought of leaving my son, who was at that time [in] seventh grade, at home without giving it a second thought—I mean, there, you're leaving a child in the—but as I said, I sold my soul. So you have to make sacrifices. It really paid off, but at what cost? We came back [redacted] we put the marriage together, but in future when opportunities were offered again, again I did it, again I went on separated tours. And my mother used to say you can go to the casino and roll that dice so many times. One of these times, your husband won't be there. Luckily it didn't happen to me. But for me to be sitting here as a senior female case officer of this Agency—every single one of us had to make sacrifices. For men, it's the same, too. But for us, the sacrifices we made were tainted with kind of huge, huge guilts: leaving our husbands, leaving our children, and not being a housewife at home. Now, things have changed. But even now, for any female to get up to wherever they want, they've got to think they have choices. And they've got to make those choices.

Susan, moderator: I know, Patty, you were talking a little about that earlier, too, about the choices that some people made. You came in in the Vietnam era, is that right?

Patty: I came in in July '73, and what's fun is that all of our stories and how we got here are so terribly different. My husband worked for what was then called the [redacted] and I was with him [redacted] (we were married in Bangkok), where I worked as a contract wife. And because [redacted] [redacted] they hired me as a GS-6.

Meredith: Woo!

Patty: Woohoo! And all of the other wives got mad at me because they were hired as 3s [redacted] [redacted] I went, "Hey, whoa, this is not my problem!" This was a problem with the Agency and the way they were treating the wives—contract slaves. Anyway, I quit...and we came back to Washington. Ken was doing a lot of

traveling for Africa, and he was on his way to [redacted] and had a heart attack on Pan Am, had a second heart attack in [redacted] and died in [redacted]. A full-time Case Officer was assigned to me, as you can imagine, the paper work trying to sort everything out. They offered me a job and it was the easiest thing to do, so I came on board as a PT. Even in those years, the DO had its separate program for bringing officers on board. The "Professional Trainee" [Program].

Carla: It went away for a number of years, then they realized that people like you really epitomized that whole program, and then they brought it back.

Patty: When I did come on board, though, there was a man—and I forgot his name—he said to me, "Mrs [redacted] you do understand you're too old for this program." So, whatever the excuse was, whether we were too old, or whatever. In the PT program you were supposed to spend a year doing records stuff. I sat on the [redacted] branch with a little red "record copy" stamp for six months, stamping documents and writing file numbers in the margins. To this day, I know the [redacted] files better than the people in the archive. Fortunately they needed somebody for the original [redacted] Task Force, so I was pulled. [redacted] whom we all know, and [redacted] were the co-managers of the original [redacted] Task Force, and I shared my office with [redacted]. So my introduction to the Agency was really kind of crazy, when you talk about some of the male power figures. One of the things I remember in those years—you talked about the white gloves—the Agency dining room used to be the executive dining room. You had to be a, what, GS-16 to get up there? Before the guys went up, they all put on their school ties. They were all from the eastern colleges, the big 10, &c. [redacted] who I used to call my [redacted] godfather because he's the one who offered me the job to come in, was the only non-big 10 school and [redacted] had done his master's, I think, at Harvard, so he had a school. But they literally would change their ties before they went up.

Carla: And it was subsidized. You could get like a four course meal for \$2.50. And the fun thing was, I was a secretary, of course, early in my career, and secretaries could order on their boss's accounts. So that was one of the things that was an advantage because you always got the boss's lunch. That was a given. If they weren't going out for lunch, you bought lunch. I mean, went and got it for them and brought it back to the office. So I would order my own little steak and whatever. I ate very well. Then, at the end of the month I just settled up.

Patty: You didn't mention, by the way, that you came on board as a 3.

Carla: 4, actually. But they wanted to hire me as a 3. I applied—

Merdith: Let's be honest, Carla. I've known you for so many years and I know you lied when you came on.

Carla: Yes, I was going to 'fess up. Because I applied when I was 15. Guess I was a freshman in high school, but anyway, long story, but there were family considerations and my college degree went out the window. So I thought, well, I've just got to get a job and I'll work for three or four years and then I'll

go to school. They interviewed me, and it went pretty well. I think I wore gloves to that interview, too. They called and said, "We're prepared to hire you as a GS-3." So I didn't exactly lie, I just didn't add what I should've to the end of my sentence. I said, "Well, the Pentagon is hiring at the GS-5 level...." Now, the end of that sentence is, "...if you have two years of work experience and a college degree." And you're 18. The woman on the phone said, "You're 15 years old!" I said, "Well, I'll be 17 when I come to work." "I don't know, we'll call you back." I thought, "Oh, I've blown it," but they did call back. They said, "We're prepared to offer you a 4." I said, "I'll think about it." I didn't need to think very long—it was like 24 hours later I called and said, "Well, I'd rather work for you all than the Pentagon, so, okay, I'll take the 4." And then, of course, the other obstacle was even though I blurted out "I'll be 17," they had somehow forgotten that you have to be 18 to take your polygraph, so that was another drama.

Susie: Oh, is that true still?

Carla: Yeah.

Patty: And you can't be pregnant.

Carla: Yeah. So even though I was assigned in this Division D that was one of these super-secret places, I was not allowed to ask any questions about anything I was doing. In those days, we stamped classifications on—

Patty: That was supposed to keep it secret? Because you didn't ask what the paper said even though you read it?

Carla: Yeah. I was using crypts and pseudos and I was like, "What is this thing? What is this word?" I would write them all down in this little notebook and I thought, "A year from now, I'm going to ask all these questions." Well, you eventually figure it out, so there weren't any questions.

Susie: But the other thing I think is kind of ironic—and Tom Twetten always used to tell this story—when my husband and I moved to Washington, he applied to three places for work. One was State Department, one was CIA, one was UN. This was in 1972. He got accepted by both those places; he got rejected by CIA for having married a foreigner.

[all laughing]

Carla: A foreigner they later hired!

Susan, moderator: I want you to think back to your first field experiences and think about what you remember about that. What are some of those early field memories you have?

Patty: First of all, it taught me never to aspire to anything that somebody put a title on. My first job in the field was as Deputy Chief of Station [] and I was a GS-9. The week before I left,

the division chief focused on the fact that this person—whom he didn't know, by the way, because I had come in, like usual, sideways—he said, "Who is this Patty []? We do not send out GS-9s as DCOS!" And somebody said, "It's okay, she's older." She's *older*. The good news was, it got me my 10 real quick. Big deal.

Carla: It was a big deal. 9 to 10 was a big jump back then.

Patty: Was it?

Carla: Oh, yeah.

Patty: Well, see how ignorant I was.

Susan, moderator: Didn't somebody tell you that you'd never make the jump to 10, Carla?

Carla: I had to sign a piece of paper when I professionalized because I did not have a college degree. I had to sign a piece of paper that I would never go any higher than a GS-9—

Meredith: Is that right?

Patty: Can you believe that?

Carla: —and that I was entering the ops field knowing that I was dead-ending myself. And I was like, "Where do I sign?" It's in my official file. I saw it when I reviewed it.

Susan: You should find that person—

Susie: —and say, "Look where I got."

Patty: It wasn't just a person, though; it really was a system. When I graduated from the farm—and I did very well at the farm, but we had a very small class. When we came back up to headquarters we were told to go around and see the various PEMS (Personnel and Evaluation Management Staff) officers. So I went around and I went over to NE division, and went to the PEMS officer and he said to me, "What are you doing here, Patty?" I said, "I thought it was pretty obvious: I'm looking for a job." And he said, with some horror, "Oh, no, we don't take women as case officers." There was some interesting things that went on in your career. I grew up in the Midwest in a Catholic background where you don't be proud, you don't take pride. But then my favorite saying is from Golda Meir: "Don't be humble, you're not that great." The fact is, none of us are sitting here because we didn't work hard and we didn't look for opportunity, because they weren't often handed to us as a woman. And to take sacrifices and to take risks and to step out of the box and to do all those things. We took them.

Carla: I think the key was we took [those sacrifices]. I often tell the younger officers, male and female, it's not true that opportunity only knocks once, but that particular opportunity only knocks once. And you have to make a conscious decision—particularly women—okay, here's your chance. I can tell you, just having left Africa division, we offered lots of women senior assignments: COS jobs that would get them in line to come back and be a COPS (Chief of Operations) or a Deputy or even a Division Chief, whatever. And they turned them down for family reasons, personal reasons, whatever. That's fine, if that's a personal choice, but then you have to be comfortable with that decision. I think it's just critical that you take advantage of the opportunities if you're able to.

Susie: When I came back from my first assignment, I was older. I was 42 years old and, again, in NE, much to everybody's surprise, they called me in and said, "You've had only one tour, however, we're going to offer you [a] Chief of Station job." That, for NE, is very unusual for a female and this was in 1990. It was a heart-wrenching decision: do I go, or have I just come back and have my whole family together? A lot of family discussions. My husband said, you have got to take it because if you don't you will blame me for the rest of your life for not having—and it was true, absolutely true. So I took the job, second tour, Chief of Station [] I did very well. Quite frankly, if I had not taken that job, I don't think I'd be sitting here [as a SIS]. I really don't. And, again, NE came through, and they said, we realize we are breaking up the family; every three months, every four months, we will bring you back for different conferences. So, again, it was NE that offered that position and that possibility.

Meredith: I finished the farm in '82-'83, went in for [] language, went out [] for first tour. And then on [] At that time in NE—when you were just coming up, too—neither NE nor Latin America Division was really taking women ops officers. They just said—and I remember these conversations—"Women will be at such a disadvantage. They cannot do that, they can't recruit those targets." I was [] in '89, I guess, and had a good recruitment record. NE contacted you, me—there were about 4 females—and said, "We want to take women who are good recruiters in their own context and see if they can do well against that NE target." And it was only NE that did it. LA didn't want to have anything to do with it. LA had [] and that was it.

Carla: Yeah, "We have our female."

Meredith: And that was it. It was NE that really reached out. I remember talking to [] I was home on TDY and he said, "Okay, we're going to give you this target, and we're choosing some female recruiters to see what you can do." What it meant, though, was walking away from my family for about three months and leaving them [] in hard times and going off—actually, []—and we were all successful. They said, "Maybe we better rethink that! Maybe women *can* do that." And I think each of us played the female part of it and really used it as the *best* way to recruit. Very high level NE targets, in fact, and we were each successful at it.

Patty: That's one of those things I think is interesting. When you read 201s, when you read agent files, one of the things I've been struck by is—and I think it's still going on—women recruit very differently than men recruit, number one. Number two: [in] the files, however, you could never tell it was a female

case officer if you took it away because we reported like a man would report it because we knew how to survive in the system. But the biggest advantage for women in recruiting—and I think maybe [] might have been smarter than the average fellow—was that men, foreign men, will tell women darn near anything—

Meredith: That's right.

Patty: —because we are the “nurturing” part of the equation, we are non-threatening, [and] if we play our cover at all, they assume that we're not intelligence officers. I recruited an ambassador once and, of course, you want to give them the cover, and I said, “Of course you knew all along I was an intelligence officer.” Oh, yeah, *right*, he figured it out! Of course he did. Bull...!

Carla: I got credit for a recruitment, but I never actually had to pitch the guy. This was [] There was [] and I had—it's now called [] I understand, but it was [] back then because there were no househusbands, so—[] and, of course, you work twice as hard to get to the [targets] because you're out exercising with the ladies to meet the men or whatever it is you're doing. Anyway, I was sort of the “Dumb Dora” personality to survive, and “Golly!” “Gee!” and “Wow!” And this [] that was it, he would seek me out. “Oh, could we talk?” He would tell me, “I just love talking to you because you're not very bright.” And I would just sit like this [*makes an innocent expression*], and I would get home and my spouse would say, “Well, how was it?” “Golly! Gee! You know? Wow!” But it worked. And, finally, unfortunately, the recruitment ended because he told me about a plot to go bomb the embassy [] and we arrested him and his gang of merry men as they crossed the border. He just told me everything and I got tons of intel out of him without ever getting to breaking cover or anything because I was just this woman who wasn't very bright.

Meredith: Reflecting on women in recruitment, I think it was about the mid-80s, late 80s when women started really actively recruiting. When I came in, I know women were really complaining because when they would get out to the field as fully trained ops officers, they were given [] Officers] to handle, they were given handling responsibilities—support assets, safehouse keepers—but never given the hard recruiting targets to go after. It was kind of all of a sudden in the mid- to late 80s that numbers of us started really recruiting FI producers, high level, with intel.

Patty: Women wouldn't put up with it anymore.

Meredith: That was exactly right. I think it was also about then—and I would like this thread to run through everything that we're talking about—that women started talking to each other. And I know all of us became friends about then. Women started talking to each other and, as you say, being very unwilling to sit aside and let all of this go on without us. As a result of that, all of the MO for recruiting, for men as well, changed. And it became rather than “You do it at a cocktail party, you meet these guys in a bar, whatever, and then you move them through [] ..” It became the acknowledgement that everybody has their own skills and everybody has their way to do this. It doesn't

have to be the macho "Let's go out and shoot together." From that point on, it was a much more creative-thinking kind of recruitment move.

Patty: In the mid-80s there was the DO Women's Advisory Council and I became the chair of that. But what was fascinating about that time is [that] we went out and reached out to the seven GS-15 females in the Directorate of Operations.

Meredith: I thought there were only three. Seven?

Patty: Well, there were four 15s and seven 14s. And they didn't want to deal with us because "We had made it on our own, *you* can make it on your own, we came up the hard way"—I heard it all. At our level, or maybe at our stage in our careers, we started to talk to each other and become friends to compare knowns to say, "Did you know there is a job coming up at such-and-such a station?"

Susie: Going to this question of your first tours or when you were more—not younger, but not as seasoned—to me, the biggest surprise was when I got to my station. It was a double-edged sword: it was a huge responsibility because by then it was the mid-80s and, as you said, women were now being—and because I had language capability and []—the awesome independence that all of a sudden I had. I couldn't believe it.

Patty: As a COS?

Susie: No, as a first-tour case officer. Absolutely awesome. That was great, but then there was no mentoring going on. I can understand why: I was 40 years old, so everybody looking at me would say, "She knows what to do." I remember one day, an asset [] I had recruited, he came back from [] emergency call. I go and see him and he said, "My mother saw me doing the [] and reported me to the police, and I had to get out." I was absolutely petrified for this man. When I went to the station to report this, it was like, "So? Handle it." To me, it was like, "I need some guidance! I need to know what to do!" It was just mind-boggling!

Meredith: In those situations, when you look back at where you were really effective—at least for me—where I was really effective as an ops officer was under a COS or a DCOS who really took time to help [me], to guide [me]. I was very lucky in that I had good COSs, as many of us did, but there were little patches in there where you had *no* guidance, *no* mentoring, *no* nothing. And, in fact, maybe just the opposite. Not necessarily because I was a woman, but because these guys were just—

Susie: That's how it was. But you know that didn't hurt me because maybe what it did, it made me grow overnight. Literally overnight I had to grow up and make decisions.

Meredith: But how much *easier* it was with a mentoring manager.

Susie: That's why I never knew the meaning of mentoring because I didn't understand what it was! This is not derogatory. This is—

Carla: I had lots of mentoring in the first third of my career when I was doing secretarial and operational support work. When I switched over to ops, it's like it all died. I can remember my first [redacted] recruitment, going to my COS saying, "Could we rehearse this? I'm really nervous, but I think the guy is ready." And he looked at me and he said, "I've never recruited [redacted] in my life. Just go with your gut." I was so demoralized, I was just crushed.

Meredith: When he could've role played with you, he could've done—

Carla: I sort of argued. I said, "Couldn't you just pretend to be him?" "You'll do just fine, don't worry about it." I delayed that pitch probably four meetings when I didn't need to.

Susie: But in all fairness, that wasn't a *male* trait. We just didn't know, as an organization, in the DO, what does mentoring mean?

Cara: But as a secretary, that's where I learned my ops skills, watching my bosses. Most of them were men, but [I was] watching them and saying, "Gosh, that's how he did that. I'm going to remember that." Or, "Wow, that guy really screwed up, I'm never going to do that." But when I got to a position where I really needed mentoring, it wasn't there.

Susie: I don't think anybody knew *how* to mentor. We didn't know you could pass the [wisdom].

Meredith: Let me just name some people here, because not only—at least for me—were these guys good mentors, but they also used women positively. Ted Price, who would sit down and have discussions with you, not only on your career but on a particular operation. Jack Downing, [redacted] [redacted] I was lucky, he was my first-tour COS.

Susie [redacted] another really good—even though he never talks, but when he talks—because he's always reading—but when he talks, he really passes on advice [redacted] is another person. As much as he yells and curses and swears and every other word is "f---," but, boy, he's a good mentor also.

Meredith: They were good on-the-street mentors as well as later on when they got into big policy positions. [redacted] when he took over Chief of Counterproliferation when we created that, I was out in the field heading CP [redacted] which is where our biggest unit out in the field, and he was terrific. In terms of not just mentoring you for career, but mentoring you on ops: "How are you going to do this? What are we going to do?" That really made a big difference. Unfortunately, as women who moved up—and you made this point—women who were 15s and 14s at the time—I remember [redacted] I was in awe of [redacted] but *mentoring*? Eh. Not a lick.

Susie: But I don't think we knew how.

Meredith: Well, but that's—

Susie: See, we learned all that later on.

Susan, moderator: Do you think women role models have changed over the years? I see it, but what do you all think?

Patty: Some of the earlier ones, like [] who I adored, were often more masculine than any of us were willing to be. And that was another issue. How do you keep—I mean, I like being a woman. I don't need to be a man.

Susie: She was one of the boys.

Carla: I'll give you my [] story. When we were [] it was a tandem assignment. I think I was a GS-10 then, but because we were tandem, I had to take the ops support job which was a GS-7. So I got paid at the GS-7 salary with none of the benefits that you get overseas: none of the differential or anything, and no overtime. [] I think, got her 14 there. Anyway, she came in the office one Saturday and I was combing my hair. She just stopped dead in her tracks: "I don't pay you to comb your hair and primp in the office—"

Meredith: [gasps] She said that? Whoa.

Carla: I looked at her and I said, "You know, you're right, you don't. Because you don't pay me to be here on Saturdays." "What do you mean?" "I don't get overtime." "Well, how can that be?" "You're the Chief of Station, tell me. But, you know, I'm out of here. I needed a Saturday off anyway, so, thanks, [] "Stop, stop! What can I do?" "You can take us all out to lunch!" "Okay!" To her—and you're right—combing your hair, that was something you did maybe in the morning before you left for work, but that would suffice for the day.

Patty: You mentioned [] she scared the heck out of the guys. That was one tough lady!

Meredith [] I don't know if you all had anything to do with her—

Patty: Oh, yeah. I called her bluff the first time and we became friends.

Meredith: But I had never met her before, and I was home on TDY because I was overseas, like you, for years and years, and I got this phone call. "Be downstairs at lunch by one o'clock, by God, I'll be sitting over in the corner..." Whoa!

Patty: That's classic []

Meredith: She was a 15 at the time but the boys would not allow her to be—they gave her COS [] and I think she was COS [] too—

Susie: And [] wasn't she?

Meredith: No, no, no, that was Eloise Page, oh my goodness. That was Eloise. She had the pictures on somebody—I know who it was, so... You remember we took Eloise out, you were there weren't you? We had a wonderful tea one day with Eloise and Betty whatshername...OSS...

Carla: Betty, who wrote the book on women in the OSS.

Meredith: And Eloise clearly, I mean, she said, "I had the goods on Donovan." That was all it was.

Patty: So it was blackmail!

Meredith: We won't go into that.

Carla: In 1960, I think Eloise was a 14 or a 15 because—as I say, everybody you saw in the hallway who was a female was a secretary—but when she would walk down the hall people would say, "That's Eloise Page! She's a GS-14," or whatever she was.

Patty: Did she come up in the DO?

Meredith: No, no, she was Donovan's secretary. And she was, like, Vassar, French Sorbonne, level-5 French speaker, everything. She ran his life, his office, his everything. She said, "And I played it for everything it was worth."

Carla: That's where I blew it, because one of my jobs was working for [] was Premium Deputy in Division D. In those days, of course, not only did you make lunch and all that, I paid all his bills—

Meredith and Susie: Oh, my god!

Carla: Ordered all his shirts from London, shoes from here or whatever, coffee straight from Colombia, and wrote his mother a letter every week.

Susie and Patty: Oh, you're kidding!

Carla: No...

Susie: Unbelievable! What year was that?

Carla: That was about '67.

Susie: Unbelievable. It was good to be a man then.

Carla: He went every Friday—it was no secret, everybody knew—to see his shrink. Two-hour session. I paid that bill, of course. So he came in one Friday and he was just, "Oh, Carla, what a wonderful session! You really should try therapy!" Well, I wasn't having a great morning. I looked up and I said, you pay more for two hours' therapy than I make in two weeks." "No!" "Yessir, your therapy bill is \$180, and I clear \$160 every two weeks." Three days later I was a GS-6.

Susan, moderator: Well, you did play it!

Carla: Yeah, actually, that's right!

Patty: So how did your meeting with go?

Meredith: Well, so I get this message, and I go meet her. I'd never seen her before, I didn't know what I was supposed to do, what she wanted. She said, "Sit down. I understand that you have some future here, and so we gotta plan it out, chart it out. Here we go. Where are you now? Where do you want to go? What do you know?" Whoa! One of the most—and she did that for lots of people, I certainly wasn't the only one—

Carla: But only the people she thought were going to do well. She didn't waste her time on the others.

Meredith: This was her discretion, no, no, no, no. And she made good on it. She really would link you up with all these people. One of the most wonderful things I have done in my career is, my last post was as COS

Patty: But to be fair—and and I have had this conversation—she wasn't going to do that until she made SIS.

Meredith: But she didn't make SIS.

Patty: Well, she made 15.

Carla: No, she only got 15.

Meredith: They wouldn't give her a SIS.

Patty: But prior to that. Because she was one of the ones that, when we started that Women's Advisory, the DOWAC—I was 12, [] was the vice-chair, and [] was also a 12.

Meredith: You were chairman of it as a 12?

Patty: Yeah. Well, nobody else would take the job.... It had been chartered as an organization that was to advise the DDO on the hiring, training, and promotion of women. It had been in existence for 3+ years, and the first thing [] and I find out is that it had never met with the DDO! Real hard to advise somebody that you never met. So, [] and I dutifully call upstairs, and Dick Stolz was the DDO. [] was about 18 months pregnant at the time. The two of us go up to see Dick Stolz, quaking in our shoes. I mean, nobody ever got to see the DDO, right? Bless his heart, Stolz must have spent 45 minutes putting the two of us at ease. He asked what we could do. We had some sketchy ideas, but I gotta tell you, everything that we asked Dick Stolz for, we got. For example, we had the stats from what was then called the Career Management Staff, now called HRS, about women not being on promotion panels in the DO. When we pointed that out to Dick and I had sent a memo up to him about it, I got back a four page single-spaced memo clearly written by the lawyers, and that was the end of it. They started putting women and minorities on those promotion panels. I remember seeing that memo, saying, "Oh, I think I hit a nerve!" Right? And that's the mid-80s.

Patty: One thing I can tell you is Stolz came down and met with the entire DOWAC council; there must have been about 25 of us. We had sent up questions and he came down and he dutifully answered them all. Finally he said, "Now I have a question for you. Any of those of you who have experienced sexual harassment, would you please raise your hand?" Every single hand went up! And Dick Stolz got furious. First of all, Stolz was the kind of man who would never have sexually harassed anybody; he really was a gentleman. You could just see the flush went from his collar right up to his hairline. I think that was truly the beginning of "we are not going to tolerate it" and now we're a zero-tolerance Agency []

Susie: In the beginning, I remember, when it was formed, there was a stigma. Men, when you talked to them about DOWAC, there was a stigma to have anything to do with DOWAC, as a female. I remember that clearly.

Patty: They were waiting for us to go down in front of the bubble and burn our bras, I'm sure.

Susie: They thought DOWAC was this crazy group because we didn't wear bras.

Meredith: Speak for yourself! I think we ought to take a minute, though, to talk about the Cat B women's suit. I hadn't thought about that in a long time.

Susie: Which one?

Meredith: The big one. Because I don't think any of us were involved in it.

Patty: Oh, yeah.

Meredith: You were?

Patty: Oh-ho-ho...

Meredith: But you weren't involved in it because you were a—

Patty: We were all part of the class.

Meredith: You were involved in it because you were chief of HRS at the time.

Patty: The DOWAC kicked off a study that was done by OMS, and talk about some interesting stats—

Meredith: This is the "glass ceiling" study?

Patty: No, it was a pre-cursor to that. We wanted them to look at the Cat B. At the time, the one thing that I remember specifically—

Meredith: For those of you listening, "Cat B" is ops officers.

Patty: There were 22 kids total among female Cat Bs. 22. And I have to tell you that the shrinks and the medics were really worried about that.

Meredith: And I had three of them.

Patty: And you had three of them! At the time, even for doctors—which is the group that they chose to compare with—female doctors on average had 1.8 kids; we had, like, .6 kids or less. That then led to the glass ceiling study and I remember reading the glass ceiling study and there had been some landmark cases out in California by a female dispatcher that said, “I don’t have to prove a case of discrimination if I can prove it statistically.” The glass ceiling study put in hardcopy under CIA seal the statistics which proved the discrimination.

Susie: What year was that? For those who are listening. I think it was 1987?

Patty: The glass ceiling study was published in '91.

Meredith: And then the Cat B women’s suit was right in the mid-90s because I was still overseas. I remember getting or whatever it was.

Carla: I never felt discriminated against because my ops tours hit the bulk of that time. I got like but there was no opt-out clause.

Patty: By then we were all pretty successful. I was either a 15 or I had just got my SIS. So it’s real hard to say you were discriminated against, but the fact was—I don’t know how long you all stayed as a GS-12, but I stayed as a GS-12 for six and a half years. That’s when you got your stupid certificate as a woman; you got your 12 and, boom, that was the end of it. Once I got my 13, a year later I got my 14, a year later I got my 15, then two years later I got my SIS. But there was that barrier and it was not made out of glass; in some cases it was made out of steel. That sounds like I’m bitter, but we’ve had this conversation.

Susie: My promotions were really fast. From 15 to SIS was where mine was the longest. Otherwise mine were really ahead of schedule, most of them.

Patty: Well, when I got older and wiser—

Susie: Because I was older! I knew what I was doing.

Patty: —when I got older and wiser and looked at files, I think it’s fair to say that most officers come to a plateau and they will stay there for a while. I think it’s, in some cases, [that] they’re catching up with expertise, in some cases they’re in a family situation where they can’t take the right job to get the right promotion. But the litigants in the class action suit were a mixed bag. There were some of them that didn’t have a lot of respect from the corps because we knew they were poorer officers.

Meredith: We didn’t want to be associated with them.

Patty: There were some that were quite good and that had, in fact, been given a bum deal.

Carla: That's what made it so difficult, because you knew the litigants and you had your own personal bias for or against.

Patty: But the funniest scene in the world that is etched in my mind until the day I die is the meeting in the auditorium, and you've got management lined up—

Meredith: Oh, man, I remember that.

Patty: Who was the DDO?

Meredith: That must have been in '97? It was Twetten, and he left. No, it must have been right before that because Jack came in in '97. But I was home, and I didn't come home until '97.

Carla: You might have been back for something.

Meredith: I must have been back for something. It was like '96, '95-'96.

Patty: Management loses control and it becomes a free-for-all. And [] who was one of the principal litigants, was known to all of us as having an artificial limb. She lost one of her arms.

Meredith, Susie: That's right.

Patty: And she gets up, she says, "I know you can't hear me." She walks down [the aisle], walks up [the stairs], and takes control of the podium. And the General Counsel, the woman—what's her name?

Meredith: Elizabeth []

Patty: Right. Begins to have a tugging match at the podium—

Meredith: With the microphone.

Patty: —with [] It began to get physical. I'm sitting there in the audience and I'm saying, "Oh my God, [] arm is going to come off." Half of us were frozen in horror.

Carla: The key to that was she was not to speak. It was all—

Meredith: That's right, questions and answers.

Carla: You were not to know the members of the suit. They were protected. And she went up and said, "For those of you who don't know, I'm it."

Susie: Where is she now?

Meredith: She's retired. Oh, wait—

Carla: No, no, she's still around.

Susan, moderator: Thinking back onto the glass ceiling study, the DOWAC in the early days, and the Cat B women's suit, and how things have changed, and you've been talking about role models...well, all of you are role models, right?

Patty: Isn't that scary?

Susan, moderator: It is. It could be scary. Now, this is your chance—Meredith still gets a chance to mentor people because she's a Deputy Division Chief and you all three are about to walk out the door. So what I want to ask you is: as a role model for the future, what do you want to say to this younger generation? It doesn't have to be just to the women. What do you want to say to them?

Susie: I just want to say two things. One is, as a female, do not have a chip on your shoulder. Because I have noticed women tend to be over-sensitive about issues. Pick your fights. Don't choose everything as, "It's against women." And pick the right fights. For me, having mentored so many younger people and having come from NE, I have witnessed so many times that women shoot themselves unnecessarily by picking on things that they could've resolved at such a lower level without ever bringing it up to the attention of the world. That's number one. Have confidence. If a man is bothering you, tell him to "f--- off" without bringing it to everybody else's attention. Number two is you've got to—what we, every one of us say—you have to make choices. When you don't, when you're not willing to sacrifice, then don't blame the system. Everything has two sides, so look at it with very open eyes and decide what you're saying "no" to. Because every one of us has been in the position to offer women jobs that were enhancing, and I think every one of us had rejections. And knowing that this is a job to set them up, if they're good, to set them up for future advancement.

Patty: I'd add a couple things to that. And I certainly agree with that—choices. And this isn't just for the young women. Number one, have fun. One of the things that worries me because we've been under terrific pressure lately is the fun is gone. Kick back, tell stories, get a laugh. I mean, there is nothing more crazy out there than people. The other thing is, don't let somebody tell you you can't do it. Go out and figure out and do it another way or go to another division or get the job. Don't ever let somebody tell you, for whatever reason, you can't do it because you're a woman or you're not smart enough or you're not senior enough or whatever. Then finally—and I hope the women aren't doing it—but I always noticed it: "Well, you know, back in the good ol' days when we had such fun..." Well, I had a heck of a lot of fun, but I gotta tell you these young people are going to have a lot of fun. We're at some turning points and some changes in the world that are just mind-blowing. Frankly, I would love to be out there and 25 again, starting in some of the challenges.

Susie: Knowing what we know now. *[laughing]*

Patty: Knowing what we know now. So those are the couple things that I would say.

Carla: I'd like to make an observation first. Having been here the longest, 39 years—

Patty: But you're not the oldest.

Carla: Thank you for adding that! As I look at what has evolved for women and the opportunities and the fact, as we've talked about earlier, [of] the difficulty in getting the jobs [and] getting the same benefits—even if you went as a tandem you didn't have the same benefits—I think the Agency does the best job of any entity in the U.S. Government in accommodating tandems. I think we're where we are—there are things like nepotism laws and things that apply—so I think we give women the opportunities that all of us would've killed for years ago. And I think we do it very well. I think, though, again, just to keep reiterating: it does boil down to choices. And that's whether you're male or female. *You* have to make the choices: "Am I going to take this split tour to get ahead? Am I going to go do a year [] Am I going to go do the hard stuff to get ahead?" That's a personal choice, but then you have to live with that decision.

Patty: Well maybe not just to get ahead, to get the mission done.

Carla: Well, that's a very good point, exactly. Mission first. Exactly.

Susie: With all of us, mission obviously comes first.

Meredith: I would add to that, the mission right now and always has been in the most difficult assignments. The greatest hardship tours that you can take. Right now: []
When we were growing up they were NE, AF, CE tours.

Patty: []

Meredith: Oh, excuse me, and []

Patty: EA. That's where I grew up.

Meredith: My point is, what people don't realize often is [that] it is in those tours and in those experiences that not only do you grow and you accomplish mission, but they're the most fun. That's where you learn your trade, that's where you learn all of that. So, step up to those very hard assignments and make sure that your track record includes that because that's where you're going to hit the mission, and that's what also is going to bring you the visibility if indeed you want to do that. The second thing I would say—I mentioned this before, but this is one of the biggest changes that I have seen in my career here—is more than camaraderie and collegiality, the absolute support and dependence women get from other women. It must, must, must continue to take place. It's a cultural

change as well. I think during the 60s and 70s and early 80s, too, in the American culture, it was women trying to get ahead and so they would step over each other. We learned in the 80s that we needed to share experiences and consequently we became very close friends personally—not just in the office, but outside of that. I think we really are trying to instill that also in CSTs as we raise them in, I hope, the divisions we work in. But it is such a key thing. I think it's not—yes, among women, but also everybody—the networking and the support, competing with each other in terms of, "Let me do you in. It's not enough that I succeed but that my friends fail also." That used to be kind of the watchword for the DO. It isn't anymore, thank goodness.

Patty: That's been one of the biggest changes across the board.

Meredith: I really see this as a change. The other thing is, whether it's women and men, whether it's senior and less-than-senior officers, I hope we are also moving away from this "us versus them" mentality, perspective on things, and moving more toward mission and what we have to do corporately, whether you're a GS-9—nobody's a GS-9 anymore—or an SIS, what we have to do corporately to achieve that mission. That's why we're here.

[credits]