Name of interviewee: Frits Dirk van Paasschen
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Name of interviewer: Steve Velasquez
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SV: Okay. Well. Good morning. How are you?

FVP: Very well, thank you.

SV: Thank you. So, today is January 9, 2015. My name is Steve Velasquez. I am here at the National Museum of American History working on the Many Voices, One Nation Project: Family Voices. Good morning.

FVP: Good morning.

SV: And today we are here with – please state your name for the record.

FVP: Frits Dirk van Paasschen. Frits van Paasschen.

SV: Okay, Frits. We're here to talk about migration, immigration. So, let's start with the basics. Can you tell us when and where you were born?

FVP: I was born in the small town outside of Leiden in the Netherlands which is called Oegstgeest.

SV: Uh-huh. And when was that?

FVP: That was on the 24th of March 1961. I was born in the apartment building on the second floor.

SV: Oh, really? So tell me a little bit about your parents, and why they migrated to the United States.

FVP: Yes, so both of my parents were born in Indonesia in the 1930s which at the time was a Dutch colony. And, my maternal grandfather was an executive for Shell. And, my paternal grandfather was a – something of an inventor, and a jack-of-all-trades, but he was running, at that point, the Dutch government printing office. They had a wonderful youth in the Netherlands – in Indonesia until the invasion by the Japanese, and spent about three-and-a-half years in Japanese internment camps in Indonesia,

and my Mother then actually moved to Canada and Curacao and eventually back to the Netherlands.

My Father as a refugee went to Australia and – this is all by way of saying that both of them were Dutch by language and culture but not necessarily a small, flat, crowded, rainy country in Europe.

SV: Wow.

FVP: But none-the-less, when they had the opportunity to come to the US they chose to do that in large part for two reasons. First because of their own sense of safety and vulnerability and the belief that there was no safer place to be in the world then the US. But, secondly, because as they said to me repeatedly growing up that I would have – that I and my sister would have the opportunity to live a better, safer life then they had.

SV: So, where did they end up? Where did they end up going? Or coming in the United States?

FVP: My Father was a medical student and at first had a Fulbright Scholarship which brought him to Altoona, Pennsylvania.

SV: Oh.

FVP: And my parents spent a year there. In fact, my older sister was born in the US during that period. After the year scholarship was up my parents returned to the Netherlands and my Father began actively looking at opportunities to emigrate to the US full-time, and as I was told growing up were the three places my Father had an opportunity to be a Resident were outside of Detroit, in Pocatello, Idaho, and, Seattle, Washington.

And, having had the year in the US, and having found Pennsylvania to be both too hot and too cold my Father looked at the average temperatures in an Almanac in the library in Leiden and determined that the climate was most mild in Seattle and that was as much as he knew. The reason why he chose to go there.

SV: Uh-huh. And, so you moved there at an early age.

FVP: Yeah. I was 2 years old when we came to the US so, as they say, I didn't speak the language or have any money or a job, but I guess that wouldn't be a surprise at age 2.

SV: And, so how old was your sister then when she came?

FVP: She's two years older so she was 4 years old. She remembers coming across which I don't.

SV: Did they come by boat? Or, by –

FVP: There is a wonderful photograph of my Mother and Father coming in the '50s on a boat, but we flew.

SV: Oh.

FVP: And, we landed in New York and changed planes, and I had my first Coca-Cola, and kept my parents awake the entire flight from there onto Seattle. So, I was identified early on as having sensitivity to caffeine.

SV: So, tell me what it was like growing up in Seattle.

FVP: Seattle at the time was largely a community economically built around Boeing and my parents learned quickly that in the US that the quality of schools varied with neighborhoods, and I suppose culturally they just generally – they felt that it was very important to move to the town which had the best school, and so we moved to the only apartment building in an otherwise suburban neighborhood. And I remember my first seven or eight years in that apartment building which was largely a place with families with young children many of whom had emigrated to the US from all kinds of different places.

I remember that there were parents of kids who were Swedish, or from Eastern Europe, or from India, and I – and so in many respects it was a – as a young child in spite of the fact it was a two bedroom, one bath apartment with four people which was maybe a little small by some standards today, it was a wonderful place to be a small child because we could go out the door and there was – there were things to do.

SV: Oh, I know. It sounds like it was a very diverse, very safe, fun place. Did you get – did your – do you remember your parents ever commenting on that period? On that apartment?

FVP: I – not so much on that apartment, but I do remember that particularly because of my parents experience they described this as living in something like a greenhouse, and that we could just grow, and thrive, and – but, I had the kind of freedom I think that kids in the 1960s in the US enjoyed much more than today. My

Mother worked. I had – I literally had the key to the apartment on a piece of string around my and, I unlocked the door and my sister and I, or I, would make lunch. And, I do remember once looking for snakes next to the highway and my Mother driving home from work and seeing me there and being very upset with me and me not really understanding why.

You did have a sense that you could go out the door and do what ever you wanted.

SV: Uh-huh. And, so, growing up as a kid did – I am assuming your parents spoke to you in Dutch needing to have all the sort of traditional cultural traditions? Is that fair?

FVP: Yes, and – it always, although I would not have used these words then, there was always something slightly contradictory in the sense that in the '60s the goal, I think of our family at least, and I suspect many other immigrant families, was to assimilate. And so, if my parents despite their accents were asked where they were from, they would say Mercer Island, Washington, not the Netherlands, and they joined a bowling club and did whatever – we went to a church which had nothing to do with their beliefs, and everything to do with the idea of that's what one did and therefore that's what we were going to do.

But I, at this same time because of the fact that my parents were from another culture when they were with each other or with us they defaulted to what was most comfortable, and so I learned to speak Dutch at home not because my parents felt it was enriching or developmentally useful, or somehow a way of retaining our heritage, but simply because they would look at us and say, "Well at least they don't have to work hard to try to speak English with you," so – and over time the language of the house evolved into something of a Creole of our own spontaneous making, and one didn't really pay attention to which language was being spoken and where.

We did also keep some of the traditions of the Netherlands. St. Nicholas Day on the December 5th I remember eagerly awaiting each year of the a – a single box of oh, probably about six by 12 by 12 of all things St. Nicolas sent to class which were candies, and various things that are traditional of the time and we would sing songs and we would put our shoes – we didn't actually have a fireplace. I think we actually put them under the TV which maybe is the modern analog to that, and I also would say that, again in spite of the – and this is what I suppose I mean by the

contradictory aspect, or the dual aspect of this, part of wanting to assimilate –

My parents best friends growing up were other Dutch immigrants. And, when one of them had the idea that 10% of the world was Dutch immigrants or something and when you're small, but – and so through them I think maintained a lot of the other cultural traditions and, and that left an imprint on me. I remember joking with my college girlfriend that my parents had branched out and actually had some Danish friends as well, so –

SV: That's funny. So gonna jump forward a little bit, so that idea that you were talking about language – do you see it differently with your children now?

FVP: Most definitely. The primary difference being that I made an effort to speak Dutch with my children from when they were born as part of a specific agreement with my wife who – we deliberately felt it was important to do that for some of the reasons I had described as not being my parents which was developmental, to have a sense of heritage, to have a sense of being home. And to this day I have really only spoken Dutch to my kids except in the presents of their friends or in a broader conversation, and to me it is so automatic I don't really think about it. And, in some ways I feel blessed as having two mother tongues.

If I'm on a KLM flight and they make the announcement in two languages, if I'm not paying attention I wonder why they have said it twice because it doesn't really come through to me. And yet, I do believe that my facility in life with the other language was significant – other languages – was significantly benefited from having to make that switch from the beginning.

SV: Growing up in Seattle did you ever feel that you were never accepted as an American or that you felt different than others?

FVP: It is interesting because I certainly looked American and it – where as people perhaps from other parts of the world might be more obviously from somewhere other than Northern Europe, lets say, which was where I think in those days peoples default idea of what an American looked like. I always had the sense I had a funny name, and that stood out. And I remember sometimes wishing people could call me Mike or something that I wouldn't have to explain. I certainly remember being, more as a teenager, and as you became more aware, self-conscious the fact that my Mother

didn't really speak very good English, and trying to avoid being in situations where that might be embarrassing.

I think that – I remember resenting being called German particularly with a name like Frits which people associate with Germans. And there was no anti-German sentiment in my house with my family growing up, but with the exception of the 1974 World Cup Game which was friendly rivalry at its most intense, but I never felt a – significantly out of place although, I have to try to describe to people that while I feel at home in two cultures and two languages I never feel entirely at home in either, and that, there are aspects of both cultures and languages, I suppose along with that are slightly beyond where I feel like I am, and so I do feel like I am –

– I live in a space somewhere overlapping in both, but not quite entirely in either.

SV: Yeah, that's a sense for many migrants who come but there is also this idea of particular things that make them American, and I would as you growing up in Seattle and then going to college in – can you define some of those aspect that make you American?

FVP: For me, I suppose I associate, again I think from the messaging from my parents, that the sense of opportunity in America. And I think being able to go to college and to pursue my ambitions, and to feel like the only constraints to what I could do were my own. That to me feels, while a bit abstract, maybe the most American for me, in this belief that while I knew that I was different in origin from most everybody else, I none-the-less didn't ever feel like, in a real sense that was a liability in terms of opportunity.

SV: Do you see your success in business because of this? Or do you work hard at being the global citizen and that's what makes you successful? How do you –?

FVP: That is clearly a complex set of things coming together, but I feel a benefit from my upbringing in a business world that has gotten increasingly global and interconnected. And the fact that my parents were born in Indonesia, that they had lived in other places around the world, even though I didn't travel much other than by car in the US or on occasion back to the Netherlands, I felt part of the larger world. And I heard so many stories of – from my parents about being in the Suez Canal or being in Indonesia or other places that I have always felt comfortable and aware of the

rest of the world in a way that I think would be difficult for someone if they hadn't had that exposure at that time.

And that exposure for me, I think, was unusual and so as my career progressed the fact that I had a sense of the rest of the world and a facility for languages created opportunities for me. And particularly as you progress in business through large organizations often times it's a distinct feature that picks you out of a crowd to do something, and I remember one company I was with, we were based and headquartered in the US, we made a tour of operations in Europe, and the president of the company heard me speak five languages over the course of a week and low-and-behold when the Head of Europe role came up, my name popped up in his mind as the person to go.

And I have to believe I benefited from something that was inadvertently given to me when I was young that I think gave me an opportunity.

SV: Yeah. That's great. So, we just visited some of the early collections and looked at some maps, and I know that you're sort of a fan of maps, and one of our sections is on New Amsterdam, and I just wanna get you to try to think a little about – what do you think those parallels between some of those early migrants and yourself? Or your families, I should say.

FVP: I think one of the defining aspects of both the Dutch Golden Age and the expansion into New Amsterdam as well as – I would say even contemporary, if not 20th century Dutch culture is a certain commercial pragmatism. And a sense of overlooking peoples background or hierarchy. And – in many respects I think that – what I find so intriguing as New York as New Amsterdam is this idea that it is even to this day the melting pot that it is, and the source of this capital and capitalism that it is. And, I think in many respects I came to the US with too a sense of the wider world, the coming together of things, and –

And another aspect of Dutch culture that I think is pervasive to the point of humor in many cases is frugality. And it is almost one of the highest forms of Calvinist praise is that you won't – In fact wasting something is literally sort of committing a sin in the way it is spoken of in Dutch. And, in some ways, both that sense of diversity and that sense of mentally keeping track of finances is – has been useful to me in running a business where, in fact, as you become a business leader is one of the things you are always thinking about is allocating scares resources, and keeping score

with that, and the Dutch tradition of holding yourself to your commitment or arriving on time are all things that I think actually translate pretty into a typical business environment.

SV: Huh. Do you – I mean I have so many questions I want to ask. Out of all the business situations and businesses you've been in, has there been one you feel has been more American? This is an American business. This is an American idea. This is – versus the more global aspect, and have you – and how would you sort of balance the needs for something like that? And what makes it American? What makes that business American?

FVP: American business, I think, and I say this now as the American part of me talking – America has companies and businesses that are uniquely American in their origin and none-the-less in their global appeal. This may not directly answer your question, but I remember one of the first companies I went to work for was the Walt Disney Company. And I remember my Father talking about a clock that he had of a Disney character in the '30s, and how he connected that to a great fascination with the US that his Father had always had. And I don't think that there is an analogue of a company outside of the US that like Disney.

I worked at Nike which started, again, as an entrepreneurial organization and became another global branded company. I spent three years as the CEO of the Coors Brewing Company, which of course was started by a German immigrant who had come to a new place. And so, in many respects, each of my business experiences is at once uniquely American and at the same time global in its reach. I currently work as the CEO of Starwood Hotels and Resorts.

One of our brands is Sheridan, which is just over 75 years old, started in Boston, but if you go to China you will get the sense that Chinese see that brand as a Chinese brand, and, I think, that in an interesting way is part of what American business has brought to the rest of the world.

SV: Yeah. That is interesting. What about the culture of business? Have you seen those changes like the American culture? The culture of American culture? Has that changed since your start in the business world?

FVP: Since I've been in business in some form, or in jobs in business since I graduated from college in 1983, so as of now a little over 30 years, I think there has been a continued transformation in many

aspects of American business culture, the least of which being a sincere focus on diversity, for example, which I think at one point was – and again I say this as a general observation, I think that that first view of diversity when I started in business was more, almost out of a sense of obligation and more defensiveness.

And I think that businesses that are very successful today understand and appreciate the extraordinary value that being diverse can provide in having new ideas in drawing from a larger talent pool, and better identifying and understanding a very diverse consumer, or customer base, and while in any society there is always more to do to fight a natural human tendency to identify with ones own, I think that has been something where I've seen real progress in the mindset of business.

Another would be, and in a similar vein, is the importance of social responsibility, and the evolution away from what I think, at one point, was seen as entirely as focus on shareholder value which is still on a fiduciary level what would a business leaders are obligated to do, but an understanding holistically that meeting the needs of stakeholders. And doing the right thing by way of a staining sustainability are now a more integrated part of how businesses look at what their, their role in society is.

SV: And, wearing your sort of Dutch hat, is that – is there a parallel for the European business models as well? Or is that – is it different? Is it the same you think?

FVP: The European business model, from my experience, is more static and – well, I would say that in Dutch businesses have a more global view, at least from the Golden Age, and the – and the evolution of how that played out for New York as well. There is, I think, more social stratification in terms of – even today if you were in the Netherlands, similar, by the way, in London, if you had an accent that was – didn't indicate that you were from the right stratum of society that would be a liability for you, and in the US I think that's almost the opposite to a certain extent.

The American business – going back to Horatio Alger, I mean there was a long history of the underdog coming up that I don't think is as pervasive in the European business mentality as a broad generalization.

SV: Interesting. Let's go back a little bit to your time in Seattle. Do you ever recall, I guess being a teenager in high school, in college doing things you considered were truly American like playing

football or baseball or – enjoying the movies, popular culture, anything like that, that you would reflect on maybe my parents wouldn't approve because – my parents are from Ecuador, so whenever I did something like that, in the back of my mind I was like, "Yeah, they probably would not see this as something that they would have normally done." Do you ever recall something like that?

FVP: I don't recall it in that sense. I do remember in some of the generational though – listening to rock and roll, or having the freedom to go out and drive a car which wasn't something which they would've had as an opportunity, or going to a – maybe – in my mind, at least, the defining American cultural event of high school years which is going into the homecoming football game, and wanting to participate, but where I suppose the line crossed into not approving, aside from the fact that my Father wasn't a big fan of rock and roll, would be the game of American football was something that my parents didn't understand and I –

The only time it came on television when I was growing up my Father would say, "Why does that stupid guy always run right in the middle of all those other guys and get stopped? Why doesn't he run around them?" And, it was sort of the extent to which that part – that type of football was talked about at home.

SV: Uh-huh. Yeah. Did you do other sports in high school?

FVP: The two sports I've been most passionate about in my life are running and soccer, and I somehow identify with long distance running as being not typically American, at least at the time and somehow with it being a bit – somehow more European. And, I think I actually did go through my thought process. So this is something more like what I should be doing. And then, soccer for the obvious reason, and as it turned out given the closeness of the Dutch culture I ended up having a Dutch soccer coach for many years who were also family friends, and many of the –

The culminating event of that being when I was 13 actually having my Father splurge on having us be able to watch the World Cup final on closed-circuit television which was a combination of technology and national pride that stands out rather sharply for most of the rest of my upbringing, but that was quite an event for me at the time.

SV: Yeah, I can imagine. Did your – and so you had – your parents had other Dutch friends. Were they around a lot? I mean, do you remember your house being full of other Dutch families?

FVP: It – when we socialized there were Dutch families coming over, and I think in a tradition that's a bit more Dutch than American, there was the idea that you could just stop in, and there wasn't necessarily this idea that you had to set up a time. And yet, by the way, if you set a time you arrived precisely then. And in many cases it was also specified when you might leave. So, you can be here from 4:00 to 7:00, but – which again is slightly inhospitable in an American context, but where we had even more influence of that was in relatives coming over. And, because of what was certainly 50 years ago, or almost 50 years ago, a sense it was a very, very long way to come.

If you came that far you would wanna amortize that cost over a longer period of time, let's put it that way, and so we would have relatives, friends, come and stay for weeks and weeks, and this – usually in our bedroom, or whichever, so it was a way to connect. And I only really remember my grandparents from their longer visits from when I was very young.

SV: Yeah.

FVP: So.

SV: Yeah, that's interesting. That's fun. That's fun. So, I wanna return to another question about identities. And, in some cases it might be kinda hard to answer, but do you consider yourself American or do you consider yourself Dutch?

FVP: I suppose I would really have to say both, and in that maybe I feel one or the other at different times in reference a bit to your earlier question. I suppose I feel most American today when I'm with my college friends, and I have that sense of opportunity having been able to go, but also that sense of camaraderie that you get through the college experiences being the first time away from home. And, I went to college in Massachusetts at Amherst and therefore very far away from home again so that my college friends are my – were that much closer I think for the fact that there wasn't a network otherwise around.

SV: So, what aspect of your life – I'm going to ask you this twice. What aspect of your life are you most proud of?

FVP: Well, I can answer this in a slightly different way. I remember seeing my Father most proud of me was when I received a job. And someone had written that one of the most important criteria used to choose me for that job was the fact that I was honest and an ethical person. And I think that speaks to my Father as an individual, but also to the importance that that has in Dutch culture. It wasn't the moment he was not most proud was when someone said I was smart, or that I was talented, or that I had done something, but that I was a good person. So, I think that touched me the most as a single thing.

SV: What about in, slightly **[unintelligible][00:33:54]** in your business career. What aspect have you been most proud of? Or, what has been your proudest moment so far?

FVP: I – that's a tough question to answer. I – you know when I was the CEO of the Coors Brewing Company I came into a company that had a few difficult years, and it's one thing in business to reduce costs or be more efficient. It's another thing to change the revenue trajectory of a business particularly when it is consumer driven because in the end you have to appeal to other people to come to your brand.

Having a sense of being a CEO for the first time and being able to motivate people and move resources, and the gratifying moment there wasn't so much the result, but was getting a sense that people believed that we were winning again. And that we could succeed, and seeing how important that was to peoples jobs were dependent to the success of the company.

SV: Yeah. Very – yeah. Very important. So. An American ideal, I think –

FVP: Yeah.

SV: – in a way. What advice would you give – two parts? What advice would you give future generations and what advice would you give immigrants or migrants today?

FVP: In my own situation, and I can't exactly define how I developed this perception. I had a sense of our being in a tenuous place in the sense that it wasn't clear to me that if my Father lost his job how we would stay here or what would happen. And, I knew that we were – I won't say we were poor, but I knew we were very careful about what we could buy and that sort of thing. And it has always made me a bit more safe in terms of the things I have chosen for

myself, and if I were criticizing myself I would say that I have made decisions based on a fear of what losing might look like opposed to being more audacious at different times in my life.

And that might be less apparent from what I've done than how I've thought about what I've done. And I think that that sense of timidity or vulnerability is something that if you're new to a place, and if your parents are, and you see that they are intimidated by a place, then that becomes something you need to overcome and have the spirit to be able to see beyond. And I think that, and my Father once described this to me, and I think I have the same sense that so many people around us seem so comfortable, and I won't say took things for granted, but – and I really don't mean that, but this is where they were and they weren't going anywhere else, and this is how things are going to be.

And I think that we had a sense of, we've gotten in the door so let's make sure we don't somehow slip out.

SV: Interesting. So given that, what would you like to see in this exhibit about immigration and migration? What would you expect to see, and what would you like to see?

FVP: I think the power of America is a concept as a place is you can arrive, and where you're from or who you are matters so much less than what you do and what you can do. And, in an evolving society where income distribution is more extreme, and where opportunities may be less open, or maybe challenging in different ways, I think it's so important for an exhibit like to communicate the sense of hope and opportunity that should be part of not just people arriving, but those of us who are already here recognizing as part of what continues to make America such an exceptional place.

SV: That's a great answer. Is there –

FVP: That's a tall order for you guys.

SV: It is. Slight challenge. Well, is there anything else you would like to add about growing up, about being in two different places, about immigration, about business? We could go on and on. We could sit here all day, and I have a lot of other questions I want to ask, but is there anything else you would like to add to our discussion about what you've seen or what we've told you about –

FVP: I – my own experience, I guess, in years past is there's a less good side to it being important to where you're from is also that it isn't important. And I think that to this day I am affected by the reasons my parents came here and the experiences that they had. And, I mean this is a bit of a second order kind of thought, but that part of talking about this even now is making explicit some things that I thought were my own business and not important or interesting to other people, and yet profoundly important to who I am.

And if that's true, then part of the importance of communication and art and culture and human discourse is sharing those things. And, the things that the generation before us went through, for example, to get here are things we very much carry with us ourselves. And those are important things for us to not only acknowledge, but to celebrate, and also at other times to confront.

SV: Well put. I think that's wonderful. A though and process we need to go through everyday. Are there any other –

Female Speaker: What about some more traditions that you've mentioned that such a **[inaudible][00:41:05]**.

SV: Oh, yeah. Right. Let's go back to the tradition part. You mentioned the box, and what would be in the box, and what would the typical event be –

FVP: So –

SV: – for your family?

FVP: I think I have every sense still of what came out of that box in terms of sweets. There's something called a babbelaar which is butterscotch kind of waffled. It's made – there are small sort of gingerbread mints are – they are called pepernoot, but they are not actually pepper or a mint, but little pieces of gingerbread. Something called taai-taai which is very tough, which is also what the word can mean. And most important was a chocolate letter, with the letter of your first name on it as part of these things. And that was certainly one big part of – as with anything, right? There was cultural significants and scarcity value to this, right, because it came once a year. Needing out and dividing between my sister and I, an important accounting activity, right?

SV: Lots of negotiations.

FVP: Indeed, and what's **[inaudible][00:42:30]** anyway, but and then at New Year's Eve there's something called – translation again directly is not elegant, oliebollen, which is basically dough with various things like raisins in it, deep fried with powdered sugar on it, and again another one of these things you celebrate. We – the idea for us was that you had fireworks at New Year's Eve not at the 4th of July. 4th of July seemed like a very impractical time to have fireworks particularly if you lived in the north where it doesn't get dark until 9:30 or 10:00 where as New Year's Eve you can have your fireworks, have dinner, and go to bed early.

SV: Yeah, I've always found that fascinating. So did you Mother make these materials, these treats, or – how did that work?

FVP: Yes. And the other, I guess the other sort of cultural mixing, I didn't grow up – I grew up eating some Dutch food which is mostly some version of overcooked mashed potatoes and bacon drippings and, onion and carrot. I mean, things from the earth kind of thing. I ate quite a bit of Indonesian food because that, to my parents was most what they wanted to eat. We would make various trips into downtown Seattle in Chinatown in search of herbs and a certain pepper paste with about a 1.5 pH called Sambal.

And the other thing I remember is going back to Holland in later years is that my parents used a number of words that were more Indonesian colonial than colloquial Dutch, and there were also things that they didn't use or say that either had come into the way people spoke after they had left or weren't part of their own colonial. So there were things that were very Dutch that I was utterly unfamiliar with and other things that I would say people would look at me and say, "Oh, yeah. My great-aunt used to say that," or something. It's interesting the reconnection with those things.

SV: Yeah. So, what about the treats? Did you – do you know – were they imported? Were they sent from Holland, or where they made?

FVP: No, they were sent by my maternal grandmother.

SV: Yeah.

FVP: And that was a very important part of the – as the days were approach I would be watching the mail intensely, and –

SV: Exactly.

FVP: No, sent by my maternal grandmother. The only thing I remember also those years some of the things that I have in my house today came from when my paternal grandfather had passed away and there were antiques my grandmother had had in a store that were part of the family, so those came over in crates. Imported.

SV: Yeah, that whole family history is so very important and so meaningful. And, as you said, some of the objects are, they carry so much meaning, and they are brought over –

FVP: Yes.

SV: – that long journey. Is there anything that your parents brought with them when they – something that sort of was meaningful for them, so from either Indonesia or Dutch culture that you remember that you sort of kept on the mantelpiece or something?

FVP: Yeah, actually that's a great question. There was a babi which was Indonesian, I think, for pork or pig. It was a very, very fat Buddha, Chinese, out of porcelain it had a smile. And, I remember it had a very round stomach with a – and indentation for his belly button, and he was good luck.

SV: Yeah.

FVP: So. The babi. I've scoured Asia in search of one exactly like – and anything that isn't exactly the same just isn't quite right.

SV: Right.

FVP: I've gone through many a Chinese market in search.

SV: Well. That's great. Well, I know you have other plans for this afternoon so – What was that?

Male Speaker: **[Inaudible][00:47:10]**.

SV: So, one of the other aspects that we're looking at is once some more traditions and more blending of things, and you talked a little bit about your children. Is your wife Dutch?

FVP: No, my wife is from a – her Father is from an Italian family, and her Mother is from a Midwestern Swedish-German family. Her Father was a symphony orchestra conductor, and so she, my wife,

spent a good deal of time in Europe with him while he was preforming, and developed an ability having lived in Geneva when she was young to speak French. So she and I have lived in the Netherlands when my kids were young, but also before that, so she has developed a proficiency with the language, and therefore has made it easier for me to speak Dutch with my kids whereas otherwise, if my wife really didn't understand it would be a bit more of a conspiracy. But she's been very supportive of us being about to maintain that side.

And, I should say that when I went to run a European part of one of the companies I was with, in that case Nike, the headquarters were in the Netherlands. And we were able to live there for a little over five years, and while I myself never had the experience of being in a Dutch school, my three children have, and so we have been able through that to be able to continue the bicultural part of our lives. And, for me as a parent to share that with my children in that way, I think, has been a wonderful way for us to be closer that's not been a side of me that I've had to explain or that's ever been mysterious.

And I think also, this is somewhat in answer to a question you posed in a different way earlier – for me, speaking Dutch, and the family have somehow always been connected because the only people I ever spoke Dutch with were family, relatives from Holland, or friends, and so to me it's always been the language of people with whom I'm familiar. And, I remember first going to Holland and it seeming slightly odd speaking Dutch to people on the street that I wasn't connected with, and so that's been – it's interesting how these different cultures imprint you ways.

So, in some ways my scholastic culture is American and my family culture is Dutch, and that, in some ways, that's where that line gets drawn, as well. The other thing I notice is I have a different sense of humor when I speak Dutch because I know what – it just comes more naturally that there are things that I would say and we would joke about them. Mostly in Dutch it's about making fun of authority or being slightly irreverent or saying something just a little bit more so off-color as a way of somehow – I'm trying to think of the word – shirking off the structures of society among us, and that somehow for me that's even more the case because the language feels more like a "among us" type of expression.

SV: Yeah. Yeah. I get that too a lot with language. Language is a very important aspect of this immigration experience, and it's something that is fraught with issues of what languages do you

speak, and I mean, is it – is America a land of many languages or is it one? Or is it both? And I just want to get your sense on what do you think of that?

FVP: What's different, at least for me, with the American experience versus the Dutch one is if you're Dutch it's who you are, and I remember asking my Father, sort of, when did our family get to Holland, and his answer was, "We've always been here," or "We were always there." That was how who we were, and America is a coming together, and it's a bit like the discussion of whether soccer or football is an American sport. It is an American sport in the same way that the many languages and cultures that are here are part of the American experience, and that I think is distinctive. A country that's formed by immigration.

SV: Well, are there any last thoughts? Any other last-

Female Speaker: **[Inaudible][00:52:35]**.

SV: Well, thank you for sitting down, and sharing your thoughts, and your family history. It's been wonderful getting to know you, and I appreciate your time, and hopefully we'll see you again very soon.

FVP: I feel very privileged to have been a part of this in any small way.

SV: Well, thank you very much.

[End of Audio]