

BACK TO NEWS

30 MARCH 1997 GRENADE ATTACK IN PHNOM PENH

**Discussion on 29 May 1998 between Chhay Vee and Chum Bun Thoeun on the one hand,
and Eng Chhay Eang and Tioulong Saumura on the other hand**

Translation of the 14-page transcript in Khmer
as presented at

http://www.cambodiapolitics.org/doc_30_march_1997/050702_transcript/050707transcript.pdf

- First witness: Chhay Vee (CV)
- Second witness: Chum Bun Thoeun (CBT)
- First interviewer: Eng Chhay Eang (ECE)
- Second interviewer: Tioulong Saumura (TS)

Background: In 1997, Chhay Vee was a parachutist in Regiment 911 based at the Kambol military base (west of Phnom Penh). As most soldiers in his unit, Chhay Vee attended a special military training in Indonesia in 1994-1995. He had a friend named Chum Bun Thoeun who was a member of Prime Minister Hun Sen's Bodyguard Force based at Tuol Krasaing (south of Phnom Penh, where Hun Sen lives) under the command of General Hing Bun Heang. Chum Bun Thoeun occasionally acted as a recruiting agent for Hing Bun Heang. The Hun Sen's Bodyguard Force has also a compound adjacent to the Prime Minister's Phnom Penh residence, behind Wat Botum (a pagoda).

1. ECE- Chhay Vee, when did you first meet Mr. Hing Bun Hean?
2. CV- I met him briefly, with this guy [CBT]. I didn't know what it was about. I didn't even know his name was Hing Bun Heang.
3. ECE- Who took you to meet Hing Bun Heang?
4. CV- I went with this guy [CBT].
5. ECE- How many days before the grenade attack [30 March 1997]?
6. CV- On the 26th.
7. ECE- When you met him, you didn't know he was Hing Bun Heang?
8. CV- No.
9. ECE- When did you realize he was Hing Bun Heang?
10. CV- When I was told, that day, that he was Hing Bun Heang. After we had left that place [Tuol Krasaing] where we talked about the work... Actually, we didn't talk about the work yet. We talked about different things... About the soldiers who had come back from Indonesia after attending a special military training...
11. ECE- After you knew he was Hing Bun Heang, did you know his role and position?
12. CV- Not at all.
13. ECE- You just knew he was Hing Bun Heang?
14. CV- It was only after he had left us that I was told he was Hing Bun Heang, the commander of Hun Sen's bodyguards.
15. ECE- On the 26th, when you Chhay Vee went to Tuol Krasaing, did you go there on your own initiative?

16. CV- Yes.
17. ECE- Nobody had summoned you?
18. CV- No.
19. ECE- You wanted to pay a visit to some friends?
20. CV- Yes, I had friends who worked there.
21. ECE- Do you remember their names?
22. CV- There were Son, Hak, ... and many others whose names I forget. They were parachutists.
23. ECE- Those parachutists, upon their return from Indonesia, were they automatically recruited as bodyguards, or did they have to apply?
24. CV- They were recruited from our unit [Regiment 911].
25. ECE- When you met Hing Bun Heang on the 26th, you didn't talk about anything specific?
26. CV- No.
27. ECE- What did he ask you?
28. CV- I didn't know him then. But when he talked to me, he started to raise that point.
29. ECE- What did he ask you?
30. CV- He asked me how long was my training [in Indonesia]. I replied: "More than eight months". I added that I was looking for a job with a good salary and that I would be happy to work with him. We stopped there. There was a break of about half-an-hour. Another person – whom I didn't know – came to talk to him. They talked about work in general, but did not refer to that point.
31. ECE- It was about ordinary work, not about any grenade attack yet?
32. CV- No.
33. ECE- You didn't talk yet about any work related to a grenade attack?
34. CV- No, not yet. But after a while, he did talk about... This one [CBT] said... When we were all together in the car, we talked about a grenade attack.
35. ECE- In the car... Which day was it?
36. CV- Same day, the 26th.
37. ECE- The very day of the meeting, and you talked about that in the car?
38. CV- At the meeting we just got to know each other and didn't talk about anything specific. But thereafter, in the car...
39. ECE- Still on the 26th?
40. CV- Yes, but on our way back.
41. ECE- How many people were there in the car?
42. CV- Me, him [CBT], and the other person.
43. ECE- Mr. Hing Bun Heang in person... But tell me, when you met Hing Bun Heang that day at Tuol Krasaing, what time was it? Noon?
44. CV- No, in the morning, around 10 o'clock.
45. ECE- Then, Chhay Vee, you were alone to meet him?
46. CV- No, we were all together.
47. ECE- Thoeun, you were also there?
48. CBT- Yes.
49. ECE- At the end of the meeting, he drove you back in his car?
50. CV- Yes.
51. ECE- In the car, what did he ask you?
52. CV- He asked me to work with his group. I wanted him to be more specific. He told me that, in exchange for my taking part in a work requiring expertise, he would give me \$10,000. Then he added: "If you want to know more, just ask your friend here [CBT]." Thoeun then gave some explanations... In the car he handed \$1,000 to me. He dropped us at Chromos Chrouk.
53. ECE- But before the 26th, before you went to Tuol Krasaing, had Thoeun talked to you about the work?

54. CV- Yes, to some extent.
55. ECE- What did he tell you?
56. CV- He told me that I should come and work with them as a bodyguard if I wanted to make some money, and that they were precisely recruiting people [at that time].
57. ECE- But you didn't know about any specific plan?
58. CV- No, not at all. I was just told that they were recruiting people.
59. ECE- Thoeun, before the 26th, do you remember when you had met Chhay Vee?
60. CBT- On the 23rd, I think.
61. ECE- Hing Bun Heang apparently trusted you when you talked in the car with Chhay Vee.
62. CBT- Yes, he did.
63. ECE- Once you arrived at Chromos Chrouk and got off the car, Chhay Vee, where did you go afterwards?
64. CV- I went to Building [a block of buildings in Phnom Penh].
65. ECE- To Building?
66. CV- Yes, to buy a motorcycle.
67. ECE- How much did the motorcycle cost?
68. CV- \$800. Out of the rest, I gave \$100 to Thoeun [CBT].
69. ECE- Then you went out on the motorcycle... Did you go back to Kambol?
70. CV- Yes, in the evening [of the same day].
71. ECE- When were you supposed to meet [Hing Bun Heang] again?
72. CV- I was asked to come on the 30th, in the morning.
73. ECE- What about 27th-28th?
74. CV- [Nobody] came on 27th -28th.
75. ECE- The 30th, you had to be there in the morning?
76. CV- Yes, in the morning, around 4 o'clock.
77. ECE- Where did you have to meet them?
78. CV- Behind Wat Botum.
79. ECE- How did you go there, Chhay Vee?
80. CV- I took my motorcycle and parked it at the pagoda. But it was on a motorcycle taxi that I left for...
81. ECE- Left?
82. CV- Yes, to accomplish the mission.
83. ECE- At what time did you actually arrive at the rear of the pagoda?
84. CV- I arrived at the pagoda at around 4 o'clock. I went to eat something first, and then came back at around 5 o'clock.
85. ECE- What time did you leave Kambol?
86. CV- 4 o'clock, at dawn.
87. ECE- And then, what time did you arrive at the pagoda?
88. CV- Say 4:30.
89. ECE- Whom did you meet there?
90. CV- Nobody. I saw just a few people. I didn't know who they were.
91. ECE- How were they dressed?
92. CV- There were civilians and soldiers.
93. ECE- They didn't ask you anything?
94. CV- No. I sat alone. They formed their own group. I could move freely.
95. ECE- Normally, it is difficult to get into that block.
96. CV- Yes.
97. ECE- What did you do to be allowed to get in?
98. CV- I just told the guards that I had to meet somebody in the compound, and they let me in.
99. ECE- Normally there are soldiers there.
100. CV- Yes, but when some soldiers went in, I just walked in with them.
101. ECE- But they didn't ask you anything?

102. CV- No.
103. ECE- Through which entrance did you get in?
104. CV- The back entrance. Not the main entrance. It's just straight from the rear of the Royal Palace.
105. ECE- And they let you in as in normal circumstances?
106. CV- Yes.
107. ECE- Had you been there before?
108. CV- Yes, in the past, but there were no soldiers.
109. ECE- Whom did you go to see?
110. CV- Nobody, I just happened to pass by.
111. ECE- [Back to the 30th], when you got in, you didn't see anybody?
112. CV- I did, there were already some people.
113. ECE- There were people already?
114. CV- Yes.
115. ECE- But nobody came to talk to you?
116. CV- Not yet. I was on my own, they were on their own.
117. ECE- When did you start to meet with other people?
118. CV- At around 7 o'clock. There was already broad daylight.
119. ECE- Did you have to wait a long time?
120. CV- I had waited for a long time. I had been there since it was still dark, since 4:30. I went to have breakfast and came back to wait again. At around 7 o'clock, I was still pacing up and down, then we started to meet. But I didn't know the people around me.
121. ECE- Did you notice anything special?
122. CV- No, I didn't. I didn't know yet what was going to happen and what they expected from me.
123. ECE- At what time did they come to meet with you?
124. CV- At around 8 o'clock.
125. ECE- Who came?
126. CV- There was a meeting of the whole group.
127. ECE- A group?
128. CV- Yes, but I didn't know the other people. And there was another group outside, including soldiers with netted helmets.
129. ECE- Who precisely came to meet with you?
130. CV- There was a tall person who came to talk with me.
131. ECE- What did he tell you?
132. CV- I had never met him before. As soon as he arrived, he just said: "Here you are!" – I said: "Yes, here I am." – He asked: "Have you seen Thoeun?" – I replied: "He has not arrived yet."
133. ECE- And then?
134. CV- Then, when we were about to leave (the compound) to do the work, there was a group of people I didn't know – I thought they were soldiers who worked there... Then, Hing Bun Heang came to meet me. He handed a hand grenade to me.
135. ECE- What kind of grenade?
136. CV- A Chinese-made grenade. A small one like this. Then he said: "You will not get the money until it explodes." Then he left me. I didn't remember his face and he probably did not remember mine.
137. ECE- Then, who accompanied you to the exit?
138. CV- The tall person who was the first to meet me and who said "Here you are!"
139. ECE- Among the people you saw in the different groups, did you notice the presence of Brazil?
140. CV- Yes, I remember him as the guy who threw the first grenade.

141. ECE- But when you were still (in the compound) behind Wat Botum, before you left to do the work, was he in one of the groups?
142. CV- Yes, he was. I quickly noticed him. He looked very suspicious. I can remember him very well. But upon leaving (the compound) I lost sight of him.
143. ECE- What about the tall person?
144. CV- He wore a hat and accompanied me to the exit. Outside, there were two or three motorcycle taxis. He told me to take one of them, which I did. I got off under a longane tree (next to the National Assembly). [When I arrived there] things had already started, demonstrators had already arrived. I saw a number of motorcycles going in every direction.
145. ECE- You were alone on the motorcycle?
146. CV- I took a motorcycle taxi.
147. ECE- Yes, but you were the only passenger?
148. CV- Yes.
149. ECE- Did the motorcycle taxi driver stop on his own initiative or did you order him to stop?
150. CV- He stopped on his own and he told me to stay at the same place.
151. ECE- Really! It means he was not a real motorcycle taxi driver...
152. CV- I suspected so after he told me not to move from the place where he had dropped me. But because I felt uncomfortable at that place, I crossed the street and went to position myself under the tamarind tree. All of a sudden, upon turning my head back, I saw Brazil throwing (the first grenade) – I still don't know where and how he subsequently escaped. Then, a number of other grenades were thrown but I don't know by whom and from where.
153. ECE- You clearly saw Brazil?
154. CV- Yes, I did. [After Brazil threw his grenade], I moved slightly to face the other side of the garden, [launched my grenade] and ran towards the pagoda. On my way there were soldiers – including those with netted helmets – standing on guard. There were some people who ran after me. I eventually reached the pagoda where I saw a number of other soldiers.
155. ECE- Out of the four grenades, which one did you throw?
156. CV- Mine was the fourth one.
157. ECE- You ran away immediately after throwing it?
158. CV- Yes.
159. ECE- You were the first to reach Wat Botum?
160. CV- Yes, but I didn't know where the others had gone, or which way they had taken.
161. ECE- Did you run across the pagoda?
162. CV- No, I took a street bordering the pagoda. There were a number of soldiers there...
163. ECE- Which entrance did you go through?
164. CV- On the side of the pagoda.
165. ECE- On the side? Not across the pagoda?
166. CV- No, if I threw it [the grenade] here, I ran along the pagoda there.
167. ECE- Let's draw a map. This is the street in front of the pagoda. This is the pagoda. There were many soldiers guarding all the entrances to the pagoda and the adjacent streets.
168. CV- Yes, I took one of the streets adjacent to the pagoda.
169. ECE- But the pagoda has fences.
170. CV- Yes, it does.
171. ECE- When you got out of the pagoda, through which door did you pass?
172. CV- The backdoor.
173. ECE- The backdoor?

174. CV- Yes.

175. ECE- There is one first street there, then another street. How many people did you see there?

176. CV- I saw only soldiers. No ordinary people.

177. ECE- About how many soldiers?

178. CV- Many. May be twenty or thirty. At least twenty, I didn't count them.

179. ECE- Did they ask you anything?

180. CV- No. It was a hectic moment. The soldiers were running in every direction.

181. ECE- They asked you nothing?

182. CV- Nothing.

183. ECE- When did you leave that place?

184. CV- I stayed there about 5 minutes only. The atmosphere was threatening. I couldn't wait any longer.

185. ECE- You didn't say good bye to people before leaving?

186. CV- No.

187. ECE- What about the remaining \$9,000 [Hing Bun Heang owed you]?

188. CV- I thought of my life and security first.

189. ECE- You didn't care about the rest?

190. CV- No.

191. ECE- You left [the military compound] on your motorcycle?

192. CV- Yes.

193. ECE- Where did you go?

194. CV- To Kambol. Then back to Phnom Penh.

195. ECE- To Kambol... Which day?

196. CV- The same day.

197. ECE- What for?

198. CV- Just to collect my belongings.

199. ECE- Have you ever returned to Kambol since?

200. CV- No.

201. ECE- After Kambol, where did you go?

202. CV- To Boeng Kak [a district of Phnom Penh] for one or two nights, then to Kompong Cham.

203. ECE- At Boeng Kak, whom did you stay with?

204. CV- At a guest house.

205. ECE- Were your family with you?

206. CV- No.

207. ECE- After Boeng Kak, where did you go?

208. CV- To Kompong Cham

209. ECE- And your motorcycle?

210. CV- I sold it at Kompong Cham.

211. ECE- To a trader?

212. CV- Yes, to a trader.

213. ECE- After Kompong Cham, where did you go?

214. CV- To Kratie.

215. ECE- To stay with whom?

216. CV- At my brother's house.

217. ECE- The day of the grenade attack, what clothes did you wear?

218. CV- Civilian clothes.

219. ECE- Civilian...

220. CV- A shirt with long sleeves, and a T-shirt under. This color [light blue], but with long sleeves.

221. ECE- Same color?

222. CV- Same color.
223. ECE- And the grenade, how did you carry it?
224. CV- At my waist.
225. ECE- How big was it?
226. CV- A small one.
227. ECE- The day you went out to throw the grenade, were there any people who followed you?
228. CV- Yes, there were. But I lost sight of them when I crossed the street to position myself under the tamarind tree.
229. ECE- Did you know who threw the second and the third grenade and from where they were thrown?
230. CV- No. But the first one came from a spot nearby the [National] Assembly's fence.
231. ECE- The first one?
232. CV- Yes.
233. ECE- You saw Brazil?
234. CV- Yes, I recognized him, even though I didn't know his name then.
235. ECE- You really recognized him?
236. CV- Yes, I saw him when I turned my head into his direction.
237. ECE- Before you left Wat Botum that morning, when Hing Bun Heang handed the grenade to you, what was his instruction?
238. CV- He said: "You will not get the money until it explodes."
239. ECE- After handing the grenade to you, where did he go?
240. CV- He left and I also left at the same time without exchanging any more words. It was already clear to me...
241. ECE- Then, did you notice that he went to meet with some other people?
242. CV- No.
243. ECE- He just left?
244. CV- Yes... The other guys formed a group; I didn't belong to their group. I could feel some mistrust on their part, and I felt a little bit uncomfortable.
245. ECE- At that time, you were not told in what order the grenades must be thrown?
246. CV- No.
247. ECE- Then, some people threw their grenades before you?
248. CV- Yes, there had been a number of explosions before I threw my grenade.
249. ECE- How did it happen exactly?
250. CV- The first explosions were close together. I intervened very shortly after.
251. ECE- One... two... three grenades?
252. CV- I didn't count them given the chaos.
253. ECE- When you arrived at the rally site, who was speaking there?
254. CV- The President [Sam Rainsy]. But I couldn't hear him, I was too far.
255. ECE- Was he holding a microphone?
256. CV- Yes.
257. ECE- Who was speaking when the [first] grenade exploded?
258. CV- I don't know. I didn't pay attention.
259. ECE- You were thinking only of your work?
260. CV- Yes. I was doing the work only for money.
261. ECE- But who told you to come?
262. CV- The organizer... Hing Bun Heang.
263. ECE- When was that organized?
264. CV- In the car.
265. ECE- In the car?
266. CV- Yes. I knew very little then. Thoeun knew better than me.
267. ... (inaudible/unintelligible)

268. ... (inaudible/unintelligible)
269. ECE- At the crossroads?
270. CV- Yes, there were many soldiers there.
271. ECE- For how much did you sell your motorcycle?
272. CV- I sold it at Kompong Cham for \$780.
273. ECE- After your return from Indonesia, and during the month preceding the grenade attack, how many times had you been to Tuol Krasaing?
274. CV- Just once.
275. ECE- On that occasion [26 March]?
276. CV- Actually, I had been there once before, but I didn't meet this guy [CBT] then. The second time, it was to meet with him, and things really started from then.
277. ECE- And you, Thoeun, when did you know Chhay Vee?
278. CBT- A long time ago. Since one or two years ago. Since he came back from Indonesia.
279. ECE- Really?
280. CBT- Yes.
281. ECE- You used to go out and have good time together?
282. CBT- Yes, we have been close friends.
283. ECE- Thoeun, did you know Brazil well?
284. CBT- Yes.
285. ECE- Really?
286. CBT- Yes.
287. ECE- Have you talked with him?
288. CBT- Yes, I had met him quite often.
289. ECE- Do you know where he lived?
290. CBT- Yes, I do.
291. ECE- Do you know his parents?
292. CBT- No, I don't. I knew only his home.
293. ECE- I am a little bit puzzled... What has led you, Thoeun, to bring information about Chhay Vee throwing the grenade and to come and tell all this to him [Sam Rainsy]?
294. CBT- At the beginning I didn't think of doing anything. Then I heard some newspapers accusing H.E. Sam Rainsy of organizing himself the attack against his own supporters. This made me laugh because I knew the real story. But because I knew the real story I started to reflect and, thereafter, to worry when I learned that the guys involved in the attack had disappeared. I went to Brazil's house and asked him whether he had seen the guy with a mole on the face. He said no. Then I asked: "Where are the other guys?" – "They have all gone." – "Gone where?" – "They have been taken to Kompong Som." He stopped there, but subsequently, because I kept asking him, he specified that, immediately after the attack, the guys were taken by helicopter from Tuol Krasaing to Kompong Som.
295. ECE- Didn't Hing Bun Heang know Brazil's house?
296. CBT- Yes, he did.
297. ECE- Then, why didn't he get hold of Brazil at his house?
298. CBT- Brazil was also taken to Kompong Som but escaped from the rest of the group and surreptitiously came back to his house. It was precisely at that time that I went to see him. He was surprised by my visit. He first wanted to avoid meeting me. At my insistence, he came forward and told me he had no news about the guy I asked for, who had disappeared since the very day of the incident. He told me six people were taken to Kompong Som. I told him he should not have come back and should instead go into hiding. He said that he was reflecting on what to do and that he might join a [Funcinpec] military unit. I told him to take care of his life. Then, I returned to my

home. My wife told me that two or three colleagues of mine had come and asked for me. "What for?" – "I don't know, they just asked me to tell you to go back to work." I then realized that the situation was getting serious. I did not perpetrate anything but I knew the story. The perpetrators have all gone. If I returned I would certainly die. I was stunned and left home after saying to my wife: "If somebody comes and asks for me, tell them you don't know where I have gone; if they insist, tell them we have got divorced and you don't know anything about my whereabouts." Since then I have been on the run. I went to Kompong Cham and worked for some time there carrying timber. Then I went to meet with him [Chhay Vee]. But then I realized the danger because I would soon be identified if I went on doing the same job carrying timber on the river in Kompong Cham. Then, I stopped carrying timber and went to live with another woman, as a fisherman, at another, more remote, part of Kompong Cham. After a while, I returned home. Then, I met with my nephew who was a motorcycle taxi driver, who reminded me of the story of the grenade attack.

299. ECE- Did you go to meet with Chhay Vee?
300. CBT- Yes, I did.
301. ECE- When?
302. CBT- At Kratie.
303. ECE- At Kratie?
304. CBT- Yes, at Kratie.
305. ECE- At that time, Chhay Vee, had you returned to Phnom Penh?
306. CV- No, I had been all the time at Kratie.
307. ECE- Really?
308. CV- Yes.
309. ECE- Where did you meet Brazil then?
310. CV- At the workplace.
311. ECE- I mean after the grenade attack, had you met Brazil again?
312. CV- No. But Thoeun met him, and he told Thoeun he had escaped.
313. TS- One minute! You have just said Brazil met with Thoeun. Who said that the six guys had been taken away?
314. CBT- Brazil told me.
315. TS- Why wasn't Brazil with the other guys?
316. CBT- He first was, but he escaped.
317. ECE- Thoeun, since you left Chhay Vee [around the day of the grenade attack], have you ever returned [to Tuol Krasaing]?
318. CBT- Never. No phone call either.
319. ECE- Why?
320. CBT- Because I know the story of the ones who have been taken away. Because when you know the story of the perpetrators, you will die, just like the perpetrators themselves. Because I know their story, they will also kill me. They want me to return to work. I have since been on the run.
321. TS- When did you first think of coming to meet with Sam Rainsy?
322. CBT- A long time after [the grenade attack], may be eight or nine months after, I met with a bodyguard of the Prince [Norodom Ranariddh] who advised me to go meet with H.E. Sam Rainsy and tell him the truth. "If he somehow won the [July 1998] elections our situation would likely improve; but if we don't help him expose the truth there will be accusations against him, that he led demonstrators to death and killed innocent people."
323. TS- How did you know that bodyguard of the Prince?
324. CBT- Through my nephew. My nephew is a motorcycle taxi driver.
325. ECE- When you met him [Sam Rainsy], what did you tell him?
326. CBT- Yes...

327. ECE- Did you first meet with Prince Ranariddh's bodyguard?
328. CBT- He [my nephew] took me to [Sam Rainsy's] house that very evening. I said: "I don't know what I will say to him". He said: "If we go to help H.E. Sam Rainsy expose the truth, we may enjoy peace, and even though we cannot do anything against them [those who organized the attack], it may bring us some relief." I had long discussed with my relatives and finally accepted to take the risk. I am not one of the perpetrators but I know the story because I was in the bodyguard unit; I know the whole story, the facts, and I want to let [Sam Rainsy] know. When we arrived in front of [Sam Rainsy's] house, I waited outside and he [my nephew] went in. I was not really confident; some people [among the guards] stared at me; I was about to get on my motorcycle and leave when I was allowed to get in; at that moment I decided not to hesitate any longer and walked into the house. I met you [Eng Chhay Eang] there. Since that day I have felt some kind of relief. Because it turned out like that, I accepted to expose what I know. Even at my house I don't feel safe because they continue to look for me. Each time I go back to my house, I have to do it quickly and surreptitiously as if I were a robber.
329. ECE- Chhay Vee, I want to ask you a question: From the day when Thoeun last met you [after the attack] until today, are you afraid of being prosecuted?
330. CV- When Thoeun came to see me, he talked about the Sam Rainsy Party, saying this and that. But at that time, I was reflecting [on my future] and looking for [a new direction]..., some sort of an honest life, and inner peace. Besides, I was thinking about our country, as a fighter, even though I have never known anything about the law... But I didn't want other people to know too much about me... I didn't dare go to the market. I didn't trust Thoeun yet; I didn't trust anybody. I no longer trusted him [Thoeun] and he also probably no longer trusted me. For a while, I suspected that Thoeun was trying to trick me and I thought I might fall into a trap. But after observing him for some time, I realized he had no bad intention and I accepted to take the risk to come to the Sam Rainsy Party.
331. ECE- And to meet him [Sam Rainsy]?
332. CV- Yes.
333. ECE- Were you afraid?
334. CV- Yes, I was.
335. ECE- Afraid to be prosecuted?
336. CV- Yes. I feared him. I feared he might be angry with me and be revengeful. On the one hand, [he might think] I wanted to kill him. But I didn't know what [the attack] was about. However, throwing the grenade is like [trying to] kill him, yes I know. When I went in [to meet him], I was fearful. But when I came out [after the meeting] – let's put all political considerations aside – and also after the first meeting with you [Eng Chhay Eang] and your colleagues, after listening to you, I realized my fear was not founded and I felt a kind of relief. Therefore, I can say I then stopped being fearful and worried and felt much better.
337. ECE- But when you were in the car on your way to Phnom Penh, were you worried?
338. CV- Yes, I was somehow worried. I was worried that some people would recognize me. But [to overcome that worry] I told myself that even my wife did not know; even the other soldiers in my unit did not know that I had done that work [related to the grenade attack]. Only Thoeun and I knew about it. Therefore, I should be able to defend myself and to ensure my safety. But still, I was not fully confident.
339. ECE- And you, Thoeun, when you were going to meet with Chhay Vee, did you think that you would be able to convince him to come and meet with Mr. Sam Rainsy?
340. CBT- Yes, I did.
341. ECE- Really?

342. CBT- Yes. Because I was certain he had started to care about his life.
343. ECE- When you met him, what did you tell him?
344. CBT- I told him we could not be on the run all the time, moving from one place to another [like what we had been doing]. “There is no way out, except if we go and confess to H.E. Sam Rainsy and tell him the facts. He will not blame us or take his revenge on us because he needs evidence to resolve the case at a higher level and to clear himself [of certain accusations against him].” At the beginning, he didn’t want to come. But I kept trying to convince him, and he first replied: “If you, my friend, are trying to lure me into a trap in order to get me killed, I accept to die without regret, but [because of your bad deed] you will suffer from your karma for ever [according to the Buddhist religion].” I replied: “My friend, we have been together for years, and you still don’t understand me. How can you have such suspicions and mistrust?” He then accepted to come. But the first time, when we [were on our way to meet with Sam Rainsy in Phnom Penh and] arrived at Kilometer Seven [a place located 7 km from downtown Phnom Penh], he suddenly decided to go back home upon getting off the car. I had to start [the whole process] again...

345. ECE- Chay Vee, among Hun Sen’s bodyguards, who else do you know besides Thoeun?

346. CV- I know a few of them, among the parachutists.

347. ECE- What about the others?

348. CV- I don’t know anyone.

349. ECE- Don’t you? And you don’t know Hing Bun Heang very well, do you?

350. CV- No, I don’t, even though I have seen him.

351. ECE- How did he look like when you met him?

352. CV- When I met him, it was not like meeting with you now. It was relatively brief. Maybe five minutes. If this guy [Chum Bun Thoeun] had told me [since the beginning of the meeting] that the man was Hing Bun Heang, I would have paid more attention and would have looked at his face more carefully. But he [Chum Bun Thoeun] had not told me anything and I didn’t pay much attention and did not suspect what his [Hing Bun Heang’s] position was. If I had been told earlier that he was Hing Bun Heang, I would have noticed more details.

353. ECE- You were in the car together...

354. CV- Yes, but I was in the back seat, behind him.

355. ECE- So you didn’t pay attention?

356. CV- No. It was only after we had got off the car that [Thoeun] told me: “Don’t you know him? It was Hing Bun Heang, the commander of Hun Sen’s bodyguards.” Then I realized the context... and just uttered: “Oh”.

357. ECE- But you, Thoeun, knew Hing Bun Heang well, didn’t you?

358. CBT- Yes.

359. ECE- And he knew you well?

360. CBT- Yes.

361. ECE- Suppose now that I take you to meet with Hing Bun Heang? Would you dare to come with me?

362. CBT- Yes.

363. ECE- You dare meet him?

364. CBT- Yes, as long as you ensure my security, I will come.

365. ECE- You dare come and meet him! Aren’t you afraid to be arrested?

366. CBT- Hey! It depends on you to ensure my safety.

367. ECE- He can shoot you! [Now, I want to reassure you]. You guys [Chhay Vee and Chum Bun Thoeun] don’t have to be worried. Are you worried that people who know your story like me, would hand you over to the police or any other authority?

368. CV- I am worried about something else. I am worried that, while we have not completed these [interviews], you would publish my name. I would be in trouble. I beg you to ensure that, as long as these [interviews] are not completed yet – or if there is any unforeseen event – we don't make any mistake... What we are doing now could lead me to difficulties...

369. ECE- But suppose there are people who push things that way?

370. CV- As long as [my name] is not made public, it's OK; I can look after my safety.

371. ECE- But suppose there are some people who want to make it public and [in exchange] they will help ensure your safety?

372. CV- I prefer not.

373. ECE- For what reasons?

374. CV- No specific reasons. Only because I don't want to come out.

375. ECE- Under normal circumstances, why don't you want to come out? They will look after you and will provide what you need where you are now. And when they want to do something specific [with you], would you accept?

376. CV- I need some time to think about it first. I want my wife and my children to be with me. I need to consult my relatives first.

377. ECE- You need to consult your wife... But you have previously said that your wife was not aware of what you had done.

378. CV- Yes.

379. ECE- If you want, you and your family could come to live in Thailand. You would be taken care of.

380. CV- I will have to talk with my wife first. I cannot order her to move from one place to another. What about her living? So far she has been living on her own. She would have to sell our land. To do that, she would need to consult other people and to jointly comply with the formalities. I cannot decide on her behalf now.

381. ECE- They could help your whole family. They might just want you to be in a safe place so that they could perform their task [with you]. And they might need to make [your revelations] public.

382. CBT- If I were the perpetrator [of the grenade attack], I would immediately accept. But because of my wife and my children, I still hesitate.

383. ECE- A different question: What was the brand of the motorcycle you bought?

384. CV- A "JR".

385. ECE- You bought it in Phnom Penh?

386. CV- Yes.

387. ECE- Where exactly?

388. CV- At O' Russei market.

389. ECE- And you sold it at Kompong Cham?

390. CV- Yes.

391. ECE- How much loss did you incur?

392. CV- I bought it for \$800; and I sold it for \$780.

393. ECE- How long did you use it?

394. CV- Less than a week. More precisely, 5 or 6 days.

395. ECE- When exactly did he [Hing Bun Heang] hand the money to you?

396. CV- When we were in the car.

397. ECE- When he had stopped the car?

398. CV- No, when he was driving. He didn't even look at me. Actually, he handed it to Thoeun, who [in turn] handed it to me.

399. ECE- You told us he said: "Only if [the attack] is successful..."

400. CV- ... will I get the money?"

401. ECE- He first gave you \$1,000?

402. CV- Yes.

403. TS- He didn't tell you when to collect the remaining \$9,000?
404. CV- I was supposed to collect it after the grenade would have exploded.
405. TS- As soon as the grenade would have exploded... And you would have to go back to Wat Botum?
406. CV- Yes.
407. TS- Then, it means that as soon as the grenade would have exploded, you would have to go back there to collect the money?
408. CV- No. I had to go back [to the compound behind Wat Botum] but it was not for the money. It was to take refuge there [after the attack]. But after seeing the soldiers wearing netted helmets who were positioned there, I noticed that the situation was tense and threatening. I was the first [among the perpetrators] to return [to the compound] but there were only soldiers there. I didn't know who was who. I instinctively hurried to leave the place.
409. TS- Why didn't you think of looking for Hing Bun Heang in order to claim from him [the rest of the money he had promised you]? Hadn't he told you to go back to him once the grenade has exploded?
410. CV- No... Once I had done the work, I realized that I had been fooled. Normally, once I had done the work, there should have been some people to welcome me back... But there was actually nobody that I knew. Instead, there were only strangers and soldiers whom I knew nothing about. The atmosphere was strange and I felt really uncomfortable. They might want to get rid of me or do anything bad to me... I didn't ask them anything; they didn't ask me anything. I left immediately.
411. ECE- After throwing [the grenade], did you look back?
412. CV- Yes, quickly, but my eyes were blurred. There were some people running after me but I didn't know who they were.
413. ECE- While you were running?
414. CV- Yes.
415. ECE- After you had thrown it?
416. CV- Yes. After throwing it, I immediately ran away. There were people following me but I didn't know who.
417. ECE- What about the soldiers on guard there? Did they open a passage for you?
418. CV- No they didn't... Or perhaps they did. Actually, they didn't care about me. They seemed busy and preoccupied with their own security. But they did not stop me nor did they ask me anything. It was in the midst of a chaos. When I passed by them, they were on their guard, but they did not stop me as a civilian...
419. CBT- That place was full of bodyguards.
420. CV- They might think I was a demonstrator...
421. TS- What about the person who threw the signal?
422. ECE- [Rectifying:] The paper ball.
423. TS- Did he throw a paper ball or a cigarette butt?
424. CV- Oh, the signal! No, it was a white paper ball, something like a paper ball made of newsprint. A paper ball like this... It was going to be thrown on the road surface, at this point of the street... Suppose you were here, it would land at this distance from you...
425. TS- Let's draw a map... This is the [National] Assembly... This is the Royal Palace...
426. ECE- Yes, this is the Royal Palace... This is the National Assembly... This is the street in front of Wat Botum... This is the site of the rally... Where did the assigned person throw the paper ball?
427. CV- Here...
428. ECE- Oh, at this side?
429. CV- Yes, toward this end...
430. ECE- Where did you get off [the motorcycle]?

431. CV- Under the longane tree.

432. ECE- Where did the person throw the paper ball?

433. CV- Toward the front row [of demonstrators].

434. ECE- The paper ball...

435. CV- As a signal, it was not thrown at this corner... Rather at the middle [of the street], or toward this end...

436. ECE- Here is where the rally was taking place...

437. TS- At this side of the Assembly...

438. CV- Yes, the Assembly...

439. TS- One second! Chhay Vee, where were you standing?

440. CV- Here. I was standing under the longane tree...

441. TS- I want to know where you were standing when the paper ball was thrown.

442. CV- When the signal came, I was positioned under this tamarind tree.

443. ECE- But the person who threw the paper ball, where was he positioned?

444. CV- I am not sure. I was standing behind. But I realized the signal had come.

445. TS- One second! Where did you get on the motorcycle?

446. CV- Behind the pagoda [Wat Botum]. Then [the motorcycle taxi driver took me] to Veal Men [the square in front of the National Museum and adjacent to the Royal Palace].

447. TS- So, you got on the motorcycle in the pagoda...

448. CV- Behind the pagoda.

449. TS- Not in the pagoda...

450. CV- In that block. But it is a big block.

451. TS- Then you made a detour and passed by the National Museum...

452. CV- I went to Veal Men and passed in front of the Royal Palace [toward the National Assembly].

453. TS- Where did the motorcycle stop?

454. CV- I stopped at...

455. TS- You stopped under the longane tree. And then, did you remain there or did you go somewhere else?

456. CV- After staying about five or six minutes at the place where I got off the motorcycle – and while the rally was going on – I crossed the street and went to stay under this tamarind tree.

457. TS- OK. When your motorcycle arrived there [at the National Assembly], had the demonstrators already arrived?

458. CV- Yes, they had.

459. TS- Had they arrived long before you?

460. CV- Yes, I think so.

461. TS- Do you remember at what time you arrived?

462. CV- No, I don't.

463. TS- But everybody was already there?

464. CV- Yes. But I was on my own when I arrived. I didn't know since when the other people had been there. I ignored who they were. I first did not realize where my motorcycle had stopped. It had stopped following a signal given by another motorcycle that was preceding mine. [The preceding motorcycle] might have dropped a piece of paper at the spot where we were supposed to stop. It was not me who ordered my driver to stop.

465. TS- A preceding motorcycle dropped a piece of paper?

466. CV- Yes, and I stopped there.

467. TS- Your motorcycle stopped there.

468. CV- Yes.

469. TS- What kind of paper was it? A paper ball?

470. CV- Yes, a sort of paper ball made of newsprint.

471. TS- Then the motorcycle stopped and the driver asked you to get off?

472. CV- Yes. I got off and started to watch the people around me. After a while, I crossed the street and went to a spot located under this tamarind tree.

473. TS- Who told you to go under that tamarind tree?

474. CV- I went there on my own initiative.

475. TS- You had received no order from anybody to do that?

476. CV- No.

477. TS- You had not been told to position yourself at any specific spot?

478. CV- No.

479. TS- You just crossed the street and went to stand under that tamarind tree.

480. CV- Yes.

481. TS- And then?

482. CV- Then I saw Brazil throwing [a grenade], the first [one]... He was nearby the [fence of the National] Assembly. I don't know what he was aiming at. He was doing like this [imitating a gesture]... He turned his head... I then [from the tamarind tree] crossed [the alley] and came to this side of the garden.

483. TS- You saw Brazil throwing [a grenade] from here?

484. CV- Yes, he was just next to the Assembly.

485. TS- Then, Brazil had already thrown [his grenade]?

486. CV- Yes.

487. TS- Then, where did you go from there?

488. CV- I started to run, crossed [the alley] and turned to that direction... Facing the garden...

489. ECE- Here is the garden...

490. CV- I was there. I threw it and I ran away.

491. TS- So, you threw [your grenade] after Brazil had thrown [his]?

492. CV- Yes, mine was the fourth one...

493. TS- When did you see the signal, that paper ball thrown by somebody? Weren't you supposed to launch [the grenade] upon that signal?

494. CV- Yes, somebody had thrown the paper ball. After five seconds I ran to this side [of the garden]. But as soon as I arrived there, the other guy [Brazil] did it [launched the grenade] and I followed suit.

495. TS- Wasn't the paper ball a signal for you to get off the motorcycle, and not to throw the grenade?

496. CV- No! The paper ball indicated the spot where the grenade must land.

497. TS- However...

498. CV- I got off the motorcycle... It went fast... I stood there [under the tamarind tree] for maybe fifteen minutes. I didn't cross [the alley] yet. Maybe because they were waiting for more people to join the rally, or because of some other reason, I don't know... But after a while, the attack started with Brazil [launching the first grenade]. Then, I launched [my grenade] across [the garden] in this direction...

499. TS- So, according to orders you had received, you must wait for somebody else to launch his grenade first before you can launch yours?

500. CV- No! Nobody had to follow any other person. [The attack organizers] would have liked [the assailants] to launch their grenades at the same time so that there would be only one [big] explosion, but [the assailants] must also manage to escape.

501. ECE- Really!

502. CV- I don't know what orders the other [assailants] had received. As for me, he [Hing Bun Heang?] did not tell me where to throw [my grenade].

503. ECE- As long as it explodes along with the other [grenades]?

504. CV- Yes, as long as it explodes along with the others.

505. TS- Therefore, the paper ball was not a signal for the motorcycle to stop. Were there any other types of signal?

506. CV- No, there weren't. The paper ball was not thrown as a specific signal for my motorcycle to stop. When my motorcycle came to a stop, the [preceding] motorcycle driver – the one who wore a hat – [had actually given a signal] for my motorcycle to stop. After that, I crossed the street. But the motorcycle [from which the paper ball would be thrown as the signal for the grenade attack to start] had not arrived yet.

507. ECE- One minute! I want to be clear on that point. After you had got off the motorcycle, had you already crossed the [alley near the tamarind tree] when the paper ball was thrown [as the signal for the attack to start]?

508. CV- Not yet. I was first standing [under the tamarind tree]. I had subsequently moved until only here when the paper ball was thrown. Then, the other guy [Brazil] threw [his grenade].

509. TS- OK. I understand. Chhay Vee, you said that a paper ball was thrown from the motorcycle that preceded yours, and this prompted your motorcycle to stop.

510. CV- Not at all ! The motorcycle rider wearing a hat, the one who was riding ahead of my motorcycle [on my way from Wat Botum to the National Assembly] was not the one who threw the paper ball [as the signal for the attack to start]. Had it been so, I would have been dead... But, [later on], the paper ball [corresponding to the signal for the attack to start] was actually thrown there.

511. ECE- You saw somebody dropping it?

512. CV- Yes.

513. TS- Was the person who dropped it riding a motorcycle?

514. CV- Yes. His motorcycle went further and I don't know who he was. They all were part of the same group...

515. TS- And then, after the paper ball was dropped from that motorcycle, Brazil immediately launched [his grenade]?

516. CV- Yes.

517. TS- And then, you launched [yours]?

518. CV- There was a succession of explosions across the garden.

519. TS- Behind the tamarind tree?

520. CV- Yes, from behind the tamarind tree.

521. TS- This means that you had been told about the paper ball being the signal for the attack to start?

522. CV- The spot where the paper ball would be dropped was the spot where [the grenade] must explode.

523. TS- Therefore, the paper ball indicated the target?

524. CV- Yes.

525. TS- Actually, it indicated both the target and the time [for the attack], didn't it?

526. CV- Yes, we had no time to waste. We must launch the grenade on a specific spot, at a specific moment, as determined by the fall of the paper ball.

527. TS- Where did the paper ball actually fall?

528. CV- In the middle of the street. Slightly toward this sidewalk where [the grenade] would roll a little bit on the macadam... I had crossed [the alley] and reached this point. [The other assailants] had already thrown [their grenades] in this direction when I threw [mine] in that direction, toward the garden.

529. TS- Therefore, you were no longer standing under the tamarind tree when you launched your grenade?

530. CV- No, I was no longer there.

531. TS- You had moved here.

532. CV- Yes. Let's see. First I stopped here. Then I crossed this street and came to stay under this tamarind tree. Then the motorcycle came...

533. TS- Somebody dropped the paper ball.
534. CV- Yes.
535. TS- The motorcycle dropped the paper ball in the middle of the street.
536. CV- Yes. The guy around here [Brazil] launched [his grenade].
537. TS- And then?
538. CV- A number of other explosions followed. I don't know their origin. Then I threw the fourth grenade toward this side of the garden.
539. TS- Were you then still under the tamarind tree or had you moved toward [the center of] the garden?
540. CV- No, I had already crossed [the alley]. Actually, I threw [the grenade] while I was moving.
541. TS- Therefore, from here you moved to here. Then you stopped here.
542. CV- Yes.
543. TS- When you were under the tamarind tree did you see a motorcycle dropping a paper ball?
544. CV- Yes, I did.
545. TS- You saw Brazil throwing [his grenade]; you moved to here; and you also threw your grenade.
546. CV- Yes.
547. TS- So, you were standing approximately here when you threw your grenade.
548. CV- I threw it toward the garden, in this direction.
549. TS- You threw it toward the garden, not toward the...
550. CV- No, not in that direction...
551. TS- But you said that the paper ball was the target.
552. CV- Yes, the target... But as soon as the first explosions occurred, I was a little bit stunned. I mechanically continued my way in that direction without thinking.
553. TS- Therefore, when you threw [your grenade] you were in this part of the garden and no longer under the tamarind tree.
554. CV- I was not far from the tamarind tree.
555. TS- From there you threw it toward the garden.
556. CV- Yes, toward the garden. But they had told me the objective was that block [the rally site]. For me, there was no need [to be that precise]. They had said: "As long as it explodes"...
557. TS- Therefore, it means that you have not followed their instructions.
558. CV- No.
559. TS- This problem...
560. CV- They said as long as it explodes...
561. ECE- Could you confirm whether Brazil had hit the target as determined by the paper ball?
562. TS- Had he really aimed at that target?
563. ECE- Are we sure he had seen the paper ball when it was dropped?
564. TS- But you, Chhay Vee, you did see it.
565. CV- Yes, I did. But as soon as I saw it, boom boom immediately. I started to run away while throwing [my grenade] toward the garden.
566. TS- After throwing it toward the garden, you ran away.
567. CV- Yes, I ran toward the pagoda and saw a line of soldiers on guard on that side [of the garden].
568. ECE- And those who were following you [since you left the military compound behind the pagoda earlier that morning] were they also running?
569. CV- At that time, I had lost sight of them...
570. ECE- Thank you, Chhay Vee.

[End]