

United States Institute of Peace
Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Iraq Experience Project

CHARLES GRINNELL
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Interviewed by: Mark Gribbin
Initial interview date: October 22, 2004
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LTC Charles Grinnell is a career prosecutor with the Division of Criminal Justice and the Office of Counter-Terrorism in the state of New Jersey. He was originally mobilized on February 10th, 2003 as part of a battalion operations law team. He has been stationed in Iraq from April of 2003 to the present. He has had two major duties in his tour (1) briefly served as a war crimes investigator in the early stages of the ongoing conflict; (2) served as senior advisor to the Commission on Public Integrity, working to develop nation-wide anticorruption strategy and institutions for post-war Iraq.

Grinnell briefly outlines his work as a war crimes investigator. Under the rules of the Geneva Convention, an Article 5 Tribunal was established. Captured Iraqis were interviewed and screened to decide whether they were going to be held as a civilian internees, EPWs (Enemy Prisoner of War), or released. One purpose of these interviews was to establish and secure mass-grave sites. Grinnell noted interviewees often spoke of wide-spread corruption in the Hussein government.

Grinnell's next task was to review, compile, refine, and present possible approaches for a proposed anti-corruption strategy for Iraq. Following this presentation, he became the point man for the anticorruption program. After extensive consultations with Ambassador Bremer, coalition colleagues, a special subcommittee of the Iraqi Governing Council, and various Iraqi political interests, a final strategy was developed. The cornerstones of this strategy were three institutes: The Commission on Public Integrity, the Board of Supreme Audit, and a system of inspectors general to be implemented in each ministry.

The decision to take multi-pronged approaches permeated the anti-corruption effort. Grinnell discusses corruption education initiatives targeted at the public (media campaigns, an anticorruption hotline) and civil servants (a new code of conduct, ethics training). Other transparency elements, such as financial transparency for high-level public officials, were also part of the strategy.

Grinnell describes a highly collaborative policy development and institution building process with lots of input and decision making coming from Iraqi players (i.e. the Governing Council, the commissioner). He describes his role as presenting Iraqis with options and allowing them to choose an appropriate course. He notes that anticorruption institutions are continuing to evolve as Iraqis take more of the lead, as design flaws are worked out, and as the government becomes better established.

Grinnell notes several hurdles encountered, including (1) a widespread culture of

corruption that had emerged under the Hussein regime and had become especially endemic since the imposition of sanctions; (2) simplification of the pre-existing regime's code of conduct; (3) training auditors and inspector generals up to international standards, an ongoing process; (4) convincing former bureaucrats to take initiative and make individual decisions; (5) reconciling the need for public official financial disclosures with the physical dangers to those persons and their families; (6) dealing with a slow moving, unresponsive, and often incompetent bureaucracy in Washington; and (7) overcoming a lack of adequate human and physical resources: staff, computers, office space, etc.

The focus of the anti-corruption effort was on low-level bribe taking amongst street-level bureaucrats. However, this focus does not preclude investigations into higher level public sector corruption. Private sector corruption has not yet been targeted. External partners such as NGOs or the World Bank have yet to take an active part in anti-corruption programs.

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Q: Today is October the 22nd. My name is Mark Gribbin, and I will be interviewing Lieutenant Colonel Charles Grinnell.

LTC. Grinnell, if you could please start off just by giving us a little of your background. For example, your work, military experience, and how that led you to Iraq.

GRINNELL: OK. I'm a career prosecutor with the Division of Criminal Justice and the Office of Counter-Terrorism in the state of New Jersey. I was mobilized on February 10th, 2003, originally as a battalion ops law team. I arrived in country in April of 2003.

Upon arrival, a determination was made by the secretary of defense that the CID, or Criminal Investigation Division, would have the premier role in war crimes investigations in Iraq. As a result, they needed experienced criminal prosecutors to conduct that investigation.

Three of my unit members, myself included, were assigned to that task. We were then moved to what's called 3rd CID Group in Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Within a week, I was selected to deploy forward to an area called Camp Bucca, which was the premier internment facility in Iraq for all potential EPWs (enemy prisoners of war), [including] civilians that had been swept up in the war effort where they couldn't make a determination as to whether or not they were civilian or insurgents.

The only other area for that at the time was at BIAP (Baghdad International Airport), where they held the top 55 prisoners.

So we had about 20,000 to 35,000 come through that facility. Our job was to not only interview them to see if they were witnesses to war crimes or potential victims of war crimes, but to also see if we had any defendants in and among the area of potential suspects.

During the course of that, a serious set of interviews, we were also assigned to conduct what's called Geneva Convention Article 5 tribunals. I was the first president of the Article 5 tribunals, as we made assessments on individuals as to whether or not they would be held as an EPW or released as a civilian. [If they were civilians,] there was no other reason to keep them.

During the course of all those questions, we were surprised to find that somewhere between – and this was really unofficial – but somewhere between 80, 85, 90 – it all fluctuated sometimes, depending upon the week – percent of the individuals talked about the extensive corruption that went on under the former regime.

We found this pretty amazing, because here it is, we're talking to people whose daughters and nieces and wives had been sexually assaulted under Uday. Their father, brothers, and uncles were murdered in extreme and horrendous ways under the former regime. And yet as you would talk to them, they would begin to just talk about the incredible amount of corruption that was occurring in the country, and that stuck with me.

That mission ended in October of 2003. At that time, I was asked to continue on and help stand up Iraq's internal affairs division for the Prisons Department. I came up to Baghdad to begin that process.

In November of 2003, Ambassador Bremer asked if we could put together three courses of action on a nationwide anticorruption strategy. I presented that briefing to him. At that conclusion of that briefing, he selected a course of action which we are currently attempting to implement, then he turned to me and said, "And you're going to do it."

It was a surprise to suddenly be thrown with that, because that's a huge undertaking: to attempt to stand up a nationwide anticorruption campaign in a country that was so – just so corrupt. You almost didn't know where to start. But he promised to support us, and sure enough, he gave us incredible support in order to make it happen. We currently have a budget of \$35 million. We expect to have a staff of Iraqis onboard by the end of this year at around 700, which will grow to about 3,000 by the end of 2005. And we have 27 American consultant slots, which is one of the largest numbers currently here in Iraq, attempting to aid and assist the Iraqis as they stand up this effort.

So that's my brief background.

Q: That's great. That's a lot of good starting points. I'm probably going to focus more on what you did with anticorruption, but just to clarify a few points on your work as a war crimes investigator.

The people you were prosecuting for war crimes, were you looking for perpetrators of recent crimes, such as crimes that occurred during this latest conflict? Or were you looking at incidents that spanned back through the history of the Hussein regime?

GRINNELL: No, it went all the way back. We went from Jessica Lynch to the very, very beginning. Whenever we could get an idea of where a mass grave would be, or where atrocities had occurred, we would put it together and we would forward on it. We would do analysis, try to collect other bits and pieces of information, and then get a site so that we could go do a site survey for the mass graves. If we were in a neighborhood, and had control of the neighborhood – remember, there was a war going on – we had

Civil Affairs or another unit out there that could ask some questions of the local populace. They would do that for us. And that would all come back to our main site, which was way down in Kuwait at the time (subsequently moved to Baghdad). Now that's been turned over to the RSLO, which is the American contingent that's helping the Iraqis prosecute these war criminals.

Q: Who else was involved in investigations besides American and coalition military? Was there also an international element from either NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) or organizations such as the UN (United Nations)?

GRINNELL: Not really NGOs and not really the UN. You've got to remember that the war was *really* going on. That's when we were there, and that's when a majority of the activity was still occurring. We had the Brits, Australians, and the Spanish right there beside us. I do remember a couple of Italian units that were close by. But for the most part it was a U.S. effort.

Q: Later, was there a gradual influx of these other organizations as the situation settled? Or do you not know about that?

GRINNELL: The coalition effort was really at the beginning. Then as the war progressed farther north, and pushed farther north, they at times got pulled farther north. The British were the last ones to really leave. Basically they had a drawdown in some of their forces and they had to take over the command and control of the southern part of Iraq. So they were spread pretty thin. They were only over for six months in terms of their rotation schedule, so when it was time for them to rotate back, they just weren't backfilled.

Q: How did you do your investigations?

GRINNELL: We would sit down with an interpreter and we had a regular interview sheet that we would go through. There were about 15 or 20 judge advocate generals who would ask questions and try to make an assessment of the individual. As information may or may not come out about war crimes, we had a mechanism to have CID right there. So if there was an intelligence value that the individual had, you had an intelligence component that was there.

If they had war crimes investigation information, then you had CID there. If they had cache-type information, "Where weapons are stored right now," and then you had EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) right there. I know that that's a lot of acronyms, but basically those are the mission specialists who were right there at the camp, who could take immediate action on whatever information was being processed at the time.

Q: A clarification point: I'm not familiar with international law. What was the statute that you were doing all of this under?

GRINNELL: The Geneva Convention, as an Article 5 tribunal. Basically what an Article 5 tribunal does is, after those screening officers – remember, all those judge

advocate generals that I was telling you about – were conducting the questioning part of it. What would happen there is, if there was a question as to their status, they would be held and go before a tribunal of three officers. These officers would ask questions, and based upon the law laid out under the rules, we would determine whether or not they were going to be held as a civilian internee, held as an EPW, or released.

Q: OK. Let's move on to the anticorruption work. You were tasked to help stand up the Commission on Public Integrity?

GRINNELL: Actually, I created it.

This was something that, when it was thrown into my lap, they basically said you prepare the suite for this. It was such a unique experience. I mean, when in somebody's career did they ever get a chance to do something like this?

Q: Right. Build your own institutions.

GRINNELL: Yes, basically, from the ground up, and with support. It was great.

Q: Where did the impetus come for the commission? You said that Bremer told you to "make this happen." Was that just something that he had personally identified as a need, or was that done by a planning group of some type?

GRINNELL: No. There were actually two other plans that were out there that Ambassador Bremer did not like. So he wanted a smorgasbord or a buffet to be laid out in front of him of different courses of actions, with the pluses and minuses for each. [He wanted it done by] somebody that "didn't have a dog in the fight." [That was me,] because I didn't care which one he picked. It was up to him. At that time, I was [doing some] analyzing for him, then I was going to move on to my internal affairs mission with prisons.

So I took the existing plans off the shelves. Some were very small, some were huge, and some were massive in terms of structure. I added in different components from the different groups and agencies that were out there. I borrowed from my own experience and from the United States. I checked and looked back in terms of Denmark and Holland for ombudsmen, and the European concept of what ombudsmen are as compared to what we have had in the United States. I took a look at the Hong Kong Commission, what they were doing in Australia, what we had done in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

What I tried to do is to take those sections which had been really successful and combine them into one organism. It was clear that if you just had one component it wouldn't stand. It was almost like a stool. If it only has one leg, it doesn't stand. If it has two legs, it doesn't stand. If it has three legs, now you're starting to talk about something. That's why, throughout the campaign or the strategy, you see everything in a series of threes.

Q: I understand that aside from the Commission on Public Integrity, there was also an

effort to create transparency in the government by developing the inspector generals and revamping the Board of Supreme Audit?

GRINNELL: Right, we looked both forward and backward in an attempt to create these pillars, and that's what we talk about with a nationwide anticorruption strategy. We already knew that there existed an independent auditing group, which was called the Board of Supreme Audit. Unfortunately, they were basically eunuchs.

Q: Rubber-stamp authority?

GRINNELL: They had structure, but their internal investigative means were antiquated. Their ability to point and rout out issues, for example where money was being siphoned, was totally squelched under the former regime. The regime didn't want people knowing about the corruption going through Oil for Food. They didn't want them to know about the smuggling of the oil. They didn't want to know about the massive corruption at every level, really, in government out there to prevent foreign investors from coming in. They just didn't want that stuff getting out.

What Hussein did use the reports for was his own [personal] use. If he saw individuals stealing from the government, that meant they were really stealing from him. He would take the drastic means necessary in order to squelch that. So, we knew we had an institution that was out there that was severely antiquated in terms of its methodology, in terms of its requirements and in terms of its abilities. They only had five computers.

Q: Wow.

GRINNELL: Five computers!

Q: And they're supposed to be auditing the entire government.

GRINNELL: Right, exactly. And the entire Board of Supreme Audit, it consisted of 1,200 people. Of those 1,200 people, there were only between 100 and 150 real CPA auditor types. For an entire nation. Simply incredible.

So we knew we had that. We knew that we had the Commission on Public Integrity, where you would have an independent, autonomous body that was separately funded, that had nationwide jurisdiction, and which could investigate cases. It could collect information; investigation was one of its pillars. Its second pillar was to educate the public and civil servants that corruption is a bad thing, that it's not good; it's not a way of life. Shining a light on the real harm that it brings not to the upper echelon in society, but where it really cripples is the poor.

Iraq consists of a lot of poor people, despite its incredible wealth. There just wasn't too much sharing going on during the former regime.

But the commission also had to educate government workers and say, "This is not the

way you do business,” where you open up the drawer and somebody puts a certain sum of money in there and then you close the drawer and then you do your work as a government worker. That's not normal in the real world. It's just not.

So they had an education component, a public relations component and then, finally, that transparency component, which consists of a legally-mandated code of conduct that every single government worker will sign. If you don't sign it, you can't be a government worker. If you breach it, then you can be administratively disciplined all the way to [having] criminal action [taken] against you, and being forever barred from government employment. Since 80 percent of Iraq is really currently in government employment, that's a big hit. You could, in essence, have a director general one day and a guy who, the next day, couldn't even get a job sweeping the streets with a palm leaf.

So between that and the financial disclosure – the other major transparency program we had in there – we thought we had a good, rounded overall umbrella for these programs.

Then we had the inspector generals program. But we failed in the inspector generals program in one respect: we failed to get real Iraqi buy in.

When we did the Commission on Public Integrity, we worked for eight weeks with the Governing Council. In fact, the Governing Council passed the legislation which created the Commission on Public Integrity. It was one of those rare times when Ambassador Bremer delegated the Governing Council the right to make law. In this instance, it was Order 55 which created the Commission on Public Integrity.

That wasn't so with the inspector generals program. A great idea, a good program, but it doesn't fit into the concepts that Iraqis currently have of how you report, how units can be funded, and how they can be supported. It is really a very foreign concept to them. Just two days ago, in fact, the prime minister, in recognition that the inspector generals program was in essence failing, has ordered that the inspector generals, instead of reporting to the ministers (because the ministers were a problem), that they would now report to the commissioner for the Commission on Public Integrity.

So that's why I say we're growing by leaps and bounds now. There will still be inspector generals. They will still be inside each of the ministries. They will still seek to identify fraud, waste, abuse and corruption. But now they will have the criminal [justice] powers to actually conduct investigations, where they didn't have that before. They will not be the conscience of the minister; they will be the conscience of the nation in an attempt to root out corruption within their individual ministries.

So there has been a fundamental change, but I think that that fundamental change is a good thing. It represents an Iraqi concept of what the inspector generals program should be, rather than a Westerner's concept of how it should be applied here.

Q: Earlier, you said that Bremer had given you this task. Was it obvious that there was a lot of corruption and something needed to be done to address that? Where did the

impetus originate?

GRINNELL: You know, that's a good question, because I just got it from him. I'm sure that there were other people, because there were other plans out there... But corruption was so endemic in the society. The Iraqi people, if you go back 35 years, corruption was unknown. A government worker wouldn't even take a cigarette from somebody because they didn't feel that that was ethical. Yet now you can't do anything without paying 500 dinar, 250 dinar. In many ways, it was out of control at the very end of the regime.

I think that any administrator coming in to take a look at the issues that face this country, both the issues that they faced then (in terms of coming in and trying to stand up a government in a war-torn area) and down the road five years (i.e. how do you attract foreign investment?), you would have to be blind not to understand that you have to do something about corruption. Ambassador Bremer was never blind. He had a lot on his plate. He certainly worked hard and he had all of us working really hard for him, in essence, to really stand up Iraq so that Iraqis could take over and run this country.

But it was just so difficult. It is so intertwined on so many different levels that it's difficult. So, to say "Where it started?" I don't know. I do know that there were other programs out there, and I do know that he said to me, "Do this, do it right, and I will support you." That's all I needed to know.

Q: From there, you said you were looking through different plans and different things that had been done. Who were you working with? Was there a group of coalition staff? Did you have a lot of Iraqi input and discourse going on?

GRINNELL: Actually, it was me. I was the only one assigned to it. But, I recognized that we needed Iraqi buy-in very early on, so I suggested to the political section – which was back then called governance – that they check with Governing Council to see if they could create a subcommittee. This subcommittee would be an anticorruption subcommittee. What we would do, basically, is we would meet, sit down, and discuss ideas: "What do we mean by 'anticorruption'? What can be successful here? How should it be structured? How far back should we go? Should we give amnesty to everybody from before and then start afresh, or should we be able to attack those individuals that had profited so greatly before?" I said, "You guys make the decision and I will help bring orders to the table for you."

And that's how Order 55, which created the Commission on Public Integrity, was molded. We worked for almost eight weeks in order to pull that together. It was truly a credit to David Kirk, from England, who was a point person here. There were individuals in governance that helped pull us together with the Governing Council and establish these meetings, and in the end it was a collaborative effort between the three of us, with the Iraqis [making and] taking a lot of good suggestions. We laid out a smorgasbord for them and said, "What do you think will work here in Iraq?"

Q: This is for the Governing Council subcommittee...

GRINNELL: Yes, it was a subcommittee that was doing it. Judge Dara was the principal, the elder statesman, spokesperson with whom we met. And then there was Mouwafak Radhi who was also very interested in it. So you had a great diversity from Governing Council taking a particular interest in it. Then there were also smaller groups in there that had an interest. They would send their representatives with ideas, because there's no mail in Iraq, and back then there were no phones. So, their representatives would basically come to the front gate and knock on the door. We would go out and see them. They would say, "We're here to talk about corruption." "OK, what ideas do you have?"

Q: I'm sorry, what kind of groups were these? Were these political groups, religious groups?

GRINNELL: No, I think that for the most part, they were politicians who were part of the Governing Council, sometimes to a greater extent, sometimes to a lesser extent, that had an idea. And they said, "Will you think about this idea as you're bringing this together?"

"Well, of course we'll think about it, so send your reps over. We'll sit down and we'll talk to them about it," and that's what we did. We had a great exchange.

Q: And then, following Order 55, when the commission is established, how was staffing carried out? Sharon [Isralow] mentioned that the Iraqi commissioner was a real go-getter and that there was gradual growth in the number of Iraqi staff.

GRINNELL: Exactly. In the beginning, there was myself, Sharon, Chip Borman, and Barbara Wilke. Barbara was in charge of finding us a building in the Green Zone, because we knew it was going to be very dangerous. That would be our headquarters, our main starting point where we could actually put the commissioner. We knew the structure of how it was going to be.

Sharon began to put together everything involving transparency. She was absolutely fantastic. She worked day and night on the code of conduct with an expat Iraqi from Jordan. Chip Borman's job was to help hire the American components, to bring them into country so that we could create our idea books, "This is how they do it in this country, and this is how they do it in that country." [The idea was so that the Iraqis wouldn't] have to do all that research, it would already all be pulled together and available for them in Arabic. [There would already be] some ideas and concepts, and even some game plans together. That way, when a commissioner was finally selected by Ambassador Bremer, he didn't have to start from scratch. There was already a building for him to move into, there were already game plans. What he [would have] to do was to digest these game plans and then make what was, for him, the right decision.

Q: Right, because he has the understanding of the country and what would and wouldn't work.

GRINNELL: Well, and he is the commissioner. He is the guy in charge of this nationwide strategic program. Everybody would look to him. He can't be fired. Well, I guess he could be if he was found to be corrupt.

Q: Let's hope not.

GRINNELL: It would be very difficult to fire him, and we made it intentionally so because we knew there would be huge political pressures. I was on the steering committee to find such an individual. There were three people on that committee. There was one person from governance; there was myself, and then Ed Schmuts, who was then the senior adviser for the Ministry of Justice. He was a former deputy attorney general under Reagan, an absolutely fantastic man who could read somebody very quickly and get a good sense of them.

It took us probably close to three months of interviewing candidates to find somebody that met all of the criteria that Ambassador Bremer wanted: somebody who had really known what it was like under the former regime, who was very bright, energetic, and courageous beyond belief. Someone who wouldn't back down – even if his life was in danger, would not back down if he seriously and sincerely believed if that was the road to take. That person also had to be, with that power, kind and compassionate. It's not that those Iraqis don't exist. They do, and they probably exist in greater numbers than we interviewed, but you also have to remember that this was a dangerous place. For somebody to step forward and say, "I would be interested in a job like that," and then to hit those criteria, that's a rarity, because it's very dangerous.

Q: Were you concerned about the candidates' relationship with the governing council, whether or not they would have that political support? Obviously the council had a major role in the creation of the commission, with the drafting of the order and everything.

GRINNELL: Surprising enough, Governing Council kept their hands off of the selection of the commissioner, at least to my knowledge. Now, what occurred behind closed doors at very high levels, I don't know. But I do know that the individual that was ultimately selected was a member of the Judicial Review Committee who reviewed every single judge in Iraq and made an assessment on whether or not they were Baathists, were involved in previous criminal activity, and if they were qualified to be a judge.

As a result, that individual helped vote 180 judges off the bench, but also placed 140 judges on the bench [of the court] that he was the head of: the Central Criminal Court of Iraq, the CCCI, the premier court in Iraq during the time when Ambassador Bremer was in charge and before transition. It still exists today, and it will continue to exist because it's a great concept for Iraq, a court with nationwide jurisdiction.

I know to you and me this concept of nationwide jurisdiction sounds, "Well, yeah, that makes so much sense." But over here, no way. They were going, "What are you talking about?"

Q: Really? It seems like with the history of centralized institutions, that would be a no-brainer for Iraqis as well.

GRINNELL: No. [The judicial system] was pretty cut up. I think part of the reason was to dilute their power and their ability to go through – very early on, Saddam Hussein took an interest in the judiciary. Those judges that failed to bend to his will, he took great pains to torture, great pains to make sure that they suffered, and suffered immensely under the former regime. And that's not to say that every single one of them were corrupt, but you have to eat. You've got to understand that they suffered under this for 35 years.

Judge Radhi, who was ultimately selected, was one of those judges that Saddam Hussein took an interest in. When he failed to comply with Saddam Hussein's orders, he was arrested. He was sentenced to death. He was tortured. In fact, if you were to meet him today, you would see the physical manifestations of that torture. As soon as you saw him, you'd see it. And yet here's a man who never bent under that yoke, and then one day Saddam Hussein woke up and said, "You know what? There's a better way of teaching judges a lesson."

So what he did was, he let Judge Radhi out of prison, out of Abu Ghraib. He let him back out on the streets [as a lawyer], but he let every single judge know that Judge Radhi should not succeed. I don't know how a lawyer succeeds in an environment like that, if his bread and butter is going to court.

Q: Getting back to the formation of the commission, I kind of skipped over this part. You mentioned that the IGC had a lot of input into what was going on in your consultations before the actual commission was created. Can you give me an idea of what sort of things that they proposed found their way in, and what those discussions were like?

GRINNELL: Oh, absolutely. Sure. What we did was we came with a blueprint, and they would add [their suggestions]. They would say, "We have suggestions for additions to this..." Then we would sit there and we would talk about it. We would talk about the pluses and the minuses, and we'd come to a consensus. For the most part, it was 100 percent consensus.

Let me give you an example: they did not want to give amnesty to individuals who had been involved in corruption under the former regime, even though they knew that many people had to engage in corruption in order to support their family. The wages that were being paid [were so low.] I think a schoolteacher made \$2 or \$3 a month, for example. The wages that were paid were insufficient to buy medicine for a sick child, to put clothes on your family's back, or to put food on the table. Just insufficient. Therefore, a lot of government employees would take a little bit from everybody in order to supplement their income.

So [the discussion] was like a rubber-band, like Gumby; they would flip back and forth.

They would say, on the one hand, "We want to do it, [we want to punish all those who took bribes in the past.]" On the other hand, "We know that we have to reeducate our government workers to know that this isn't right, because they've been doing it for 35 years, and it's kind of tough to suddenly spring upon them and tell them." [But the consensus was] "Oh, no, we're not going to do that anymore – now, in fact, you're going to be criminally prosecuted for it."

They ultimately decided to go back to the very day when Saddam Hussein took over, and that found its way into Order 55. The concept of ombudsmen, their concept of what an ombudsman is, is almost verbatim in Order 55. It combines information collection with an investigation, to make sure that the information collected is viable, before it is pushed forward to an investigative judge for actual criminal investigation. Those were there ideas.

Where they had difficulties was clearly in the transparency end. I can honestly say that Iraq [previously] had a code of conduct, so to say, but it was so jumbled and cut up that nobody could understand it. Sharon tried to tackle that job at one point. I think after a month of trying to understand it and to go through it, just so that she could converse about it, I think that she, as all of us did, came to the conclusion, "We've got to take the basic concepts here, pull them out, and make them so you can read them."

You don't need two pages to say, "I will not steal," for example. You don't need to go into that level [of detail]. What you have to say is, "I will not steal," because every Iraqi knows, from a religious, historical, cultural, ethical, and a moral point of view, they know, "I should not steal."

So you don't need to go into these – I think it was five or six pages it talked about not stealing. So they had a code, but in essence it was unreadable and unworkable. So what we have tried to do is boil that down.

[Things like] financial disclosure were never out there. That's incredibly difficult here, even though for us we would say, "Well, wait a minute, you just disclose your finances and then people can come and they can see that you're not stealing and that you're not trying to turn around and to make the connection to family members that may have a family business out there. So you're not buying a billion pencils when all you need is a million and you're not charging \$10 a pencil."

The problem here in Iraq, though, is it's more complicated than that. The individual who fills out that form has to have confidence in a degree of confidentiality, because if we were to open it all the way up, then in reality what would happen is that renegade elements in this country would get ahold of it. They would kidnap family members, and now they would know exactly how much money these people could afford to pay for ransom. That's just the reality of life that we have to deal with here.

Q: Wow, I hadn't even thought about that.

GRINNELL: Yes, pretty crazy, huh? But we have to think about all of that every day.

Q: This effort, was it you and your team and the Iraqis working together, or was there also input from other groups? I know Transparency International goes about establishing local chapters. Did you have any contact with groups like that?

GRINNELL: Not yet.

Q: The World Bank also has an anticorruption program. I know that they fund anticorruption programs for civil servants.

GRINNELL: Those were two of the areas that, in the concept papers, we had [looked at. We had] created this transparency prevention division, more or less, and that was where they should go, in order to get information to help build [greater overall transparency].

What we said was, "At least start with these two concepts. Start with the code of conduct and the concept of financial disclosure. Those we can help you do now. But in terms of those broader ends, in terms of training investigative journalists, in terms of opening up the private sector, you should go to the World Bank, you should go to Transparency International." We need to have NGOs here in country that we can rely on, but the NGO community is in its infancy still as we speak here today. Unfortunately, there are some NGOs that are really just trumps for either terrorist organizations or organizations who want to benefit themselves from the infancy of the governance that's here. And it takes a little while to weed through that, so there is a natural suspicion of them.

We do understand that there is a group trying to form a Transparency International chapter here, and they are reaching out, but there are a number of criteria that have to be met before you can begin that process. That's imposed by Transparency International themselves. But we tell them, "We'll support you, but if that's what Transparency International is telling you you've got to do, that's what you've got to do."

There's no waivers coming from the coalition forces attempting to assist our Iraqi brethren.

Q: Where did you get the money from? You mentioned the \$35 million budget. Is most of that coming through DFI (Development Fund for Iraq), the supplemental? I know that throws in some money...

GRINNELL: Twenty-million is DFI money, and then there's \$15 million in supplemental. Five million of that is currently being used to help equip and train their investigative staff in advanced investigative techniques, including electronic surveillance techniques, advanced accounting techniques.

You also have the remaining \$10 million, which is being set aside for individual programs. We just got through putting out a scope of work and it just got through closing. In fact, I think it was yesterday that it closed. We were asking for instructors to

come to Iraq to train these auditors so that we can create an internal audit group, because of the amount of construction that's going on.

Our training, since it's supp[lemental] money, does not just concern the Commission on Public Integrity. We open our doors to the inspector generals' offices. We open our doors to the Board of Supreme Audit individuals. But, one of the debates that goes on is, do you do capacity building, or do you do the training yourself?

That's the real debate that goes on. So you try to meld the two concepts. We have also invited professors from different universities out there to come in and train. One of the requirements is that it will be in Arabic. The course instruction, the course material, and the instruction will be in Arabic, because this is an Iraqi governmental agency that we are supporting. It's not an American agency. It's an Iraqi agency, and if it's going to be Iraqi, then it's got to be in Arabic.

Q: You also mentioned that you gave the commissioner a number of choices when he came in. Could you speak on some of the things that he did and the initiatives that he took?

GRINNELL: Sure. Each of the subject matter experts who were in-country spent about two hours with him when he first came in and laid out some various courses.

Let me speak about the code of conduct, because that's the one that comes quickest to my mind right now. There were some words in there that he felt should be stronger, so he took it upon himself and began to rewrite certain sections of the code of conduct.

He then – it has to follow a rather interesting path in Iraq. It then has to go to a special committee, consisting mostly of lawyers and judges, who review it and make sure that it's grammatically accurate and complete. That will come back to us and then we will be – it'll basically become the regulations, because he can sign the regulations himself. It'll be the regulations for the code of conduct.

What he asked us to do is to come up with ideas on how we deploy this code of conduct throughout the country, so we came up with a couple different ideas. "You should have ethics officers. They can work for you. We can train them, and this would be the training course curriculum. Or, the inspector generals programs also have an ethical component. You can take members out of the inspector generals program, train them to be your ethics officers, in essence, and you can deploy it through them. Or, we can go to an independent outside agency and they will basically be an agency of ethics officers and answer all the questions and we'll train them. Tell us how you want it."

He ultimately decided that it should be within the inspector generals program. So what we did was we created a six-day course of instruction for ethics officers that were to reside in each of the ministries and be responsible for answering questions (sometimes there were rather difficult questions on the code of conduct). But they would also be responsible for deploying and then doing an audit to make sure that every government

worker that is in that ministry has signed that code of conduct and understands the code of conduct before they sign it.

Q: This covers government employees on down to the municipal level, working for the ministries? For example, are teachers considered in the Ministry of Education?

GRINNELL: Yes.

Q: OK, so it's still that very centralized structure was still in place.

GRINNELL: Yes, but the wording actually says – it's state employees. We got a definition of “state employee”, and that includes the guy that sweeps the street with the palm branch.

Q: OK. Is this also something that applies to the municipal and provincial-level? Is this something that's being asked of elected officials or is there a separate thing for elected officials?

GRINNELL: No, a state employee is an elected official. So not only do they have code of conduct, but then they also have financial disclosure that they have to deal with.

What we're going to try to do, and this is something that the judge hasn't given us his decision on, because, again, we gave him several courses of action. We're going to proof it in Baghdad, and then we're going to do a GAAP analysis to see how that went. Then we're going to be able to deploy it out into the provinces. We've been mandated by the prime minister to establish branch offices in six provinces, so part of that will be increasing the presence of this code of conduct.

[END SIDE]

Q: We were talking about the code of conduct. I had spoken about this briefly with Sharon. She said one of the things that involved was educating civil servants of what exactly the code of conduct was saying you could and could not do. I was wondering if you could comment a little bit on those programs.

GRINNELL: Sure. We're in essence taking a two-prong approach. Our first prong is a media campaign, going to the public and saying, “Look, this is what the code of conduct is talking about. This is what we mean by a gift, for example.” In the Arab world that is really a lot different than the term “gift” is to Western society.

In that campaign program, what we've also done is taken the code of conduct and broken it down into – I don't want to say infantile, but into its very basic components. That way it can be taught at the grammar-school level. Our objective there is to weave it into their ethics and civics course curriculum so that by the time they become old enough to be a state employee, and would be subject to the code of conduct, they will have known from a very early age the basic premises upon which it is founded.

Q: Understand the principles.

GRINNELL: Yes, we can deal with it at the first and second grade level. But the concepts of gifts are sometimes oh-so-difficult that it would be a more high school kind of thing to go through it all.

Q: She also mentioned something about a hotline that was set up. How was that working?

GRINNELL: Well, it's about to get up and running. The infrastructure here is so destroyed that it took us quite a while just to get a phone line, but now we have four phone lines coming into the building, one of which is specifically dedicated to the hotline. So we have a media campaign that will be prepared to be rolled out on that. We have hired individuals that will man that phone. We have developed a program to take that information and forward it to the investigative side so that it can be reviewed and analyzed to see what the next step is going to be. We also have a poster campaign which will go on.

So, between all those different elements spinning together, we're hoping to start in the Baghdad area and spread out into the provinces. We've taken all the correct steps to educate people that there is a hotline, that it will be anonymous, that there will be follow up with respect to it, and if you want to know about your follow up, there's a procedure for us to make sure that that happens. So it's on the eve of deployment.

I think that we're going to have to wait until after Ramadan, though, only because of the amount of actual street work that has to be done with respect to the posters and the campaign. We're not going to have enough time during Ramadan to accomplish that, so it'll probably be shortly after Ramadan that it will kick off.

Q: How would you gauge the reaction of Iraqis to the anticorruption movement in government, the public at large, and then maybe the business community?

GRINNELL: I think they say, "It's about time." That's the general gist that I'm getting. Prime Minister Allawi has recognized it, and as I said before, many other political organizations have recognized it as an issue. So it's growing into a platform politicians are now making statements about. We're of course being pushed to work faster and to work harder, that is a constantly reminder to the commissioner. I said, "Sir, last year at this time, you were but a gleam in my eye. You were just a thought. And here you are, a year later, with 200 employees, with the support of a government with a main headquarters building, with cases and instruction going on, with coalition forces assisting you."

We've just made incredible strides given the amount of time that we've had it. We can't expect to go from birth to sprinter in the short term. We also have to look long term. So whatever we do, let's do things with due diligence, due speed, and also with due thought.

Q: OK. Is there some type of strategy that has been adopted by the commission, "We must target this area. This is the type of thing we're looking at first."

For example, I did a research paper on anticorruption once. I looked at a Bulgarian anticorruption campaign, and they were targeting what they called "street-level" corruption, which is just simple bribe-taking. Is there any specific area that it's focused on, any problem areas that have been highlighted? What general strategy has been in place? How has that developed and how is it being implemented?

GRINNELL: The investigative teams are basically broken down into three groups. That will actually be expanded once we increase the number of people that we have, because, like I said, we're growing every day. But right now, we're concentrating on the street level, because that affects your normal, everyday citizen the most; the guy that takes the 500 dinar in order for you to get a marriage certificate. When he gets arrested, there's a lot of people who hear about that. They're going, "Yes! That's the guy."

But what you can't lose sight of is that there are high-ranking government officials who have in the past, or are currently, engaged in corrupt activities. So you have to have a group that tries to pull together information which develops these high-level cases. We have that. Because if you just concentrate on the low, or you just concentrate on the high, you can't be truly effective.

You'll take out the upper echelon, and yet all the workers will just migrate over to another corrupt boss. If you take out all the workers, the boss will hire new people to take their place. It has to be a coordinated effort, and we are concentrating really on governmental corruption first. Then we will move into the private sector.

Q: The strategy; was this something that's been planned out through discussions or something which has gradually emerged?

GRINNELL: It was originally conceived in that light. It's called, "You can't catch big fish without catching little fish." That concept was bought by Judge Radhi, that's what we were originally doing, and that's what we were starting with. Then we also saw that our efforts, the information flow that was coming in, were giving us bigger fish. So, you better have a mechanism to be able to investigate, and our second phase is to move into that.

In reality, we have to first clean up the government to a greater degree. The everyday citizen has to have greater faith in the government official. The everyday citizen has to understand that there is an effort to clean government from the inside out. Then the international community has to have a level of confidence that corruption is either under control, or that at least there are great steps being taken in order to combat corruption, so that they have the confidence to come in and invest in Iraq (once the security and the safety issues are overcome).

Q: Is there any sector which is of special note? I know Oil for Food and the public

distribution system were marred by corruption under the Hussein regime. They're still distributing the food baskets, so they're out there with those citizens every day.

GRINNELL: Yes, that's one of them. Health is another. Housing and construction is another. But while those may be at the top of our agenda right now, in a month from now, when those cases are fully investigated and sent to the court, we may be on to another three or four or more. It's not the flavor of the month here.

But we do know that corruption is so extensive at times in various groups and ministries that you would have to be blind not to be able to see, and you would have to be heartless if you had the ability to do something about it and didn't.

Q: The investigators doing most of these investigations, are these the IGs (inspectors general), or are these people from the Commission on Public Integrity assigned as investigators with a national mandate?

GRINNELL: They are the investigators from the commission. The inspector generals will find an issue, or find a potential criminal case, and they are mandated under the order [55] to forward that to the commission. That's because currently they do not have law enforcement powers.

When the new government is formed and they make changes to the law, that's one of the laws that we are recommending be changed, because they can now fall under the umbrella of the criminal powers that were invested in the investigators for the Commission on Public Integrity. They can benefit from that.

When [the Iraqis] make those little “tweakings” to the law and bring the IGs in, [then things will improve even more]. The IGs are really de facto under and reporting to the commissioner now; funding is through him, their guidance is through him, their reporting chain is through him. So, de facto, it's already happened. But the legislative process has to catch up, and it will catch up. But we have to wait until after the elections for that to happen.

Q: What is the exact relationship then between the Board of Supreme Audit and the Commission on Public Integrity?

GRINNELL: Well, the Board of Supreme Audit needs some more help. First of all, they need a standard for what is a CPA (Certified public accountant) or what is an internal auditor in Iraq, because their current standard is clearly below the international standards. Therefore, when an Iraqi says that he's a CPA or says that he is an internal auditor, most of the other Arab world and Europeans recognize that it's not the same stringency.

So, the first thing is, we have to set a standard for them. Then we have to train them to hit that standard. The debate that goes on now is, “Do you create an academy where you do the training yourself, or do you capacity build and train the professors and organizations that are out there in order to provide a training base which people can then

go to in order to hit the standard?"

We still haven't resolved that issue yet. We're working on it.

Q: OK. Is the Board of Supreme Audit an independent organization, as the commission is, or is it attached to a ministry?

GRINNELL: No, it's an independent organization. Unfortunately, shortly after the new president of the Board of Supreme Audit was announced, he was assassinated. So it's taken them quite a while to find a replacement. And really nothing's happened.

Q: Earlier you were talking about how the Hussein-era Board of Supreme Audit was a tool of the regime. What were the effects of de-Baathification on the board, as that was the only preexisting organization that you've talked about?

GRINNELL: Basically, de-Baathification took out the board's upper and middle management, gutted it. But there are a lot of other people that were prepared to take over and to step up to the plate. It suffered a downturn when the president was assassinated, because suddenly its rebuilding effort, with the highly motivated, highly competent individuals that you want – that was frustrated and hindered.

It's like so many other things here in Iraq – you will find yourself making tremendous strides one day, only to have the people who are at the forefront of that killed. It's difficult, and it takes a little while for people to say, "I'm going to take their place."

This is a tough world. This is a tough place. I've had a fair number of friends killed because they have decided to step up and make Iraq a better place. There are people out there that just don't want that to happen.

Q: Were there any problems with any staff or any specific organizations? I've heard a lot of comments that, when dealing with people who had worked as bureaucrats under the old regime, they were always looking up and asking the person above them, "What should I do?" There was a problem amongst Iraqis with taking the initiative and doing things on your own, without having to ask somebody first.

GRINNELL: Yes, it's a problem. It's clearly a problem. Just to get paper bought, I have to go to three different committees consisting of at least three different individuals. You've got to understand it from the Iraqi way.

If you had a committee of individuals who were making the decisions, and Saddam Hussein or one of his top henchmen didn't like that decision and it was a committee, he's not going to kill the entire committee. He's going to kill maybe one person on it. So you had a one in three or one in five chance of being the guy, which meant in reality you had a four in five or two in three chance of surviving.

Q: Better odds, I guess, but still not odds you'd want.

GRINNELL: Take the better odds on it. You can never lose sight over here of what they've been through and why they do certain things. Suspicion is still very high. The friction which exists out there between the different groups sometimes gets very high.

Q: These are the different ethnic or religious groups?

GRINNELL: Ethnic, religious, tribal – there's so much in that soup, it's incredible.

Q: Political?

GRINNELL: All of it. Outside influences in particular. It's a very, very complex situation. But what buoys you every day is that there are Iraqis who get out of bed and get ready for work and come in, not knowing if they will live to go home, or if when they do get home, they won't find out one of their family members have been killed because they are working in government to make things better. When you see that kind of courage, when you see that level of commitment, how are you going to say no? How do you say, "We're out of here"?

Q: Well, aside from the obvious – the traits of leadership and fostering diversity, what pragmatic measures are being taken to try and change that culture? What do you think will work best in getting out from the authoritarian mindset?

GRINNELL: I think a sense of security would be great, and that's slowly coming around. I think that having leaders like Judge Radhi [helps because he] pushes decisions down instead of mandating that they come up. He wants to know about stuff, don't get me wrong. He doesn't decide by committee. He decides himself, but what he tries to do is to push that decision-making process down, and that's what you're going to need.

I've also found that our female employees, in the beginning, they were quieter. But as they work in their jobs and they interact with all the different elements in the office, they speak out and they have opinions, and they have conviction with respect to their opinions, and they are willing to be more vocal – in a respectful way, but still vocal on their opinions.

Most of that, surprisingly enough, comes in the automation and the computerization that we take for granted in America. I mean, they still do their “books” here—they open up this big book in front of me [with their financial records].

Q: It's really by the book.

GRINNELL: It's just incredible. We transferred \$3.5 million in U.S. dollars, [in cash], because over here there's no checks. They don't know what a check is and banks don't know how to cash them.

Q: I understand nobody really trusted the banking system under Hussein, so that's not

surprising.

GRINNELL: That was all part of it, but [checking accounts] just didn't exist here. So it's difficult to deal with. When you write a check, you're giving it to somebody and they have to believe in you in order to accept that check. You have to make the decision that you're going to spend this kind of money on that particular product, and that you're going to give faith and trust in that money as you transfer it.

It's those simple things, those day-to-day things that we so take for granted that the Iraqis have had stripped from them for so long. The concept of a wire money transfer is also something new to them.

So, I think by increasing diversity and women in the workplace, you're going to see an increase in it. By having top managers, smart leaders, push down the decisionmaking process to a [lower] level and then have those leaders also push it down to the next level, you'll begin to have faith in their ability to not only make the decision, but that they are going to be supported in that decision, and maybe more importantly, they're not going to be killed for that decision.

Q: I guess the flip side of that coin would be the IGs. This is a new concept; having the inspectors in the Commission on Public Integrity. I imagine that's also a fairly new profession in Iraq. Then there's also the question of auditors who you mentioned were functioning at lower than international CPA standards. What efforts are being made to train these people in these positions at the level that you would expect for an anticorruption effort to be successful?

GRINNELL: Well, we just approved at our commission level training for 600 Iraqis, coming from the Board of Supreme Audit, the Commission on Public Integrity, and the inspectors general. That training will be conducted in Egypt. It covers a variety of different topics, from investigations to auditing to management. It doesn't come at a cheap price. I think it's about \$835,000. But we can't import that level of training here [in-country] yet. What I've also suggested is to take some university professors to Iraq and to get them out to these training seminars.

So, on one hand, we're working the education element. On another hand, we're working – and this is far more complex, surprisingly enough – to create a standard which was equal to the international standards. There are some Iraqis who say, “No, we are superior to the international standards.” And you go, “Wait a minute.”

You have to do that very respectfully, and it takes time. The commissioner understands, but there's so much to do that you have to take little steps. You also have to take a multi-pronged approach. That's what we're attempting to do.

We're going to provide education for those 600 people. We're attempting to – we just closed bids on having the internal auditors program brought here into the country. That'll be 120 seats in classes, with blocks of instruction of 30 each. The course of instruction

goes for two weeks. That'll be conducted here in Baghdad.

So, by bringing strong educational elements in, by sending some of the Iraqis out in order to be educated, [we will be ready] to take that next step where they come back to educate their fellow workers on what they've learned. We're also attempting to develop bonds with Kuwait, currently, in an effort to see if they have training programs that are out there to which we might be able to send more Iraqis. Because they are so close, it is just so easy in realistic terms if we can come to an agreement between the two countries to have training occur in that country.

I went with a delegation of judges to Kuwait when we were attempting to open up the judiciary. Surprisingly enough, the number one thing that the Iraqi judges asked for [when we got there] was books, because Iraq had been ravaged. Under Saddam Hussein, only certain books could be had. They could only be written a certain way. When Iraq fell, it wasn't Baghdad falling, Iraq as a country fell. When it fell, and the looters took over, they destroyed oh so very much – the written history has really been decimated.

Q: You mentioned the books and this urge to learn. Was that translatable into those training programs as well, where you had employees were saying, like, "Oh, yes, I'm very excited. I want to participate in this program. I need this program"? Or was there a lot of heel-dragging, "Why did I have to do this? I've been doing this job for years," or "This is just some BS that the Americans are trying to throw on us"?

GRINNELL: If you have training abroad, believe me, they'll go for it. I mean, you've got to remember, it was a very closed society. Very few people were allowed to travel abroad. So now that the borders are basically open, to a greater extent, and they have these training opportunities, they want to go to them.

But, even beyond that, I think what you find is that the individuals who are elder statesmen are pretty much locked in their career paths. They're not prepared to really make the next step to the computer age, for example. But everybody below them does.

Iraqis are like sponges: they just thirst for knowledge. They have been closed in for so, so long across gender, religious, ethnic, and tribal lines. They have just been denied so much for so long, and they have seen so much in a picture that they just want to get there.

Sometimes they want to get there too fast. You can't get a college degree in a year. I tell them that. You have to take steps along the way, but by taking the little steps now, we are still one step closer to where they want to be.

Q: Looking back on your overall experience to date, what were the most notable challenges and successes? Were there any failures that you learned from, where you look back and you say, "Wow, we should do this from now on." I guess just a general "lessons learned" from the experience.

GRINNELL: General lessons learned, boy, there are so many of them it's incredible.

Some of the greatest frustrations had to be getting subject matter experts out of the bureaucracy in Washington, into the pipeline, and over here. If it weren't for the Herculean efforts of people like Ed Schmults, Ambassador Jones, and Ambassador Bremer, himself, getting involved, I am positive that this program would not have gotten off the ground, no matter how well it was received.

The additional frustration has been in the bureaucratic fighting that occurs between the different agencies over this supp[lemental] money. I've been promised personnel and equipment since February, and I still don't have it because of this bickering that goes back and forth.

Some of the greatest achievements have been when my superiors here took a stand and got those people in the pipeline to suddenly see those concepts, thoughts and ideas that you had thought about for so long and worked on for so hard suddenly come into fruition. Again, you've actually got the beginnings of a nationwide strategic program. You've got cases that are being worked. You've got people being taught. You've got a main headquarters. You've got people being employed and money being spent and it's just an exciting time here, to watch it all just finally come together. Then you go back to the frustration side, which is that it's just going to take a lot longer than I'll be permitted to stay in country, to watch it.

But then when you get to the plus side – and I told Judge Radhi this – I hope in five years to be able to come back here as a tourist, with my sons and daughter in tow, and to point out where it all started. [I want to] have them meet the commissioner. [I want to] bring them into Baghdad and see all of the growth and development, the capacity and the integrity, and the courage of everybody in their efforts, and to say, in essence, "Look what they've done."

I remember when we didn't even have a phone, when there was no running water, when there was no electricity, when people were dying at 200 a day throughout this country.

It will get there, but it's going to take a while.

Q: So, aside from the occasional delay, do you feel that you've largely got the support that you needed from the CPA (Coalition Provisional Authority) and the coalition?

GRINNELL: It was never a problem with CPA forward. It was never a problem with CPA in Baghdad. It was a problem with the individuals in Washington. To this day I have been only at – the highest I have ever been in personnel in order to accomplish this is 60 percent.

Q: It seems to be a problem that's endemic to CPA. I know a lot of civil affairs people told me, "Yes, we were supposed to be 10 percent of the staff and we ended up being 50 percent of the staff."

GRINNELL: Yes, it was difficult, but again – and I've been here a long time – it was not

because of CPA in Baghdad. This is what I learned about the individuals who were making the decisions back in the United States: they never had to say "No" to me. They just didn't have to say "Yes". So, as a result, they would drag on a program and, in essence, strangle it because you didn't have the personnel, funding, or equipment. They'd give you one or two people when you were supposed to have 27, and those people of course – the Americans and the coalition partners that come here – are under threat of death every day. There hasn't been a night in this last week where we haven't been mortared or rocketed.

Last Tuesday, suicide bombers were in the international zone and killed coalition force members. This is a dangerous place to be, and you can't be jerking around telling people things are all right, when in reality you can't get your job done because there are people that have never set foot in this country attempting to interfere and to say, "No, you don't need that." They don't have the first inkling of what your needs are.

I'll give you an example. I requested two armored cars. I requested them back in February. They cut that from our budget, and now we can't go anywhere without armored cars. What kind of brilliant genius cut that budget item? You want to go, "Come over here for a week and then you'll understand." That's the greatest frustration going.

Q: Do you think the problem with that is that there's too many agencies involved and it's difficult to put pressure on anybody? I've just put words in your mouth, let me retract that. What do you think the problem is? Why are you unable to get these things that you need?

GRINNELL: It's this interagency infighting, and it really just comes down to that. At one time, the Ministry of Justice was supposed to be staffed with 20-some-odd individuals from the Department of Justice. They sent two. Two!

Q: That's 10 percent.

GRINNELL: Yes. How is that, when at that time, at least, the military could have fully staffed it?

Q: Why didn't they? Was it because they thought DOJ (Department of Justice) was going to?

GRINNELL: Well, at some point in time, a decision is made and then you go with it. So when somebody promises you 20-some-odd employees that are going to come over as detailees, and they're going to be there for six months, you've got to say, "Hey, that's great." Because from the military side, you're going, "I still have a war to prosecute. I can now put more guys on the front line somewhere." So, decisions were made, but then when the agencies didn't come through with what they said they were going to, that was just [a major error]. And the excuses were just ludicrous.

I've been here a long time. I can tell you – and I know that there are people in

Washington who have been here and who are just as committed to my program in particular and to this effort in general. They are just as frustrated as I am back in Washington, but they don't have the power and they don't have the ability to say, "Hey, this is really wrong."

I've had stuff sit on people's desk because they were on vacation. We talked earlier about the Iraqis not being able to make a decision, [but] that's what was happening back in Washington. It would sit on people's desks. They forget that here in Baghdad, we work seven days a week, 16 to 18 hours a day. So while they take Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday off for Veteran's Day, or they have Christmas, or they have a Thanksgiving or they have a New Year's, we don't have that. So our timeline, our timeframe, we're always looking at things just a little bit different.

We appreciate that people have to go on vacation. We appreciate the fact that they should be able to take a day off on a weekend or something, but why should my program sit on their desk for three weeks with no action being taken because that person's mandated that they've got to touch every single piece of paper?

Q: Seems pretty ridiculous.

GRINNELL: That's been frustrating.

Q: I know the World Bank program actually funds civil servant training in the exact same type of anticorruption education that you've been talking about with the Commission on Public Integrity. Has that type of international assistance materialized at all? Is that something that would be helpful if it were there, or would it just kind of get in the way of what you are doing?

GRINNELL: No, I think it would be extremely helpful, but... What I don't want is a training program without the people to send to the training program. I don't want to just throw bodies in there to fill a classroom. I want to put the right bodies in the classroom, in order to do it [right]. So, at times, we are constrained by our own growth capacity. Our building is at maximum now, and we pledge that we won't hire somebody unless they have a desk and a computer to work at, and they fit into the organizational structure that we've laid out.

So, in some ways, we're confined, because we only have four internal auditors within the Commission on Public Integrity in order to work that end. With all the construction that's going on, we know that that's insufficient. But we also know that it's no good to have 100 people and have them basically work out of their car with no coordination, structure, guidelines, or procedures.

Ambassador Bremer assigned that delegation [of authority establishing the commission] back on the 28th of January, and Judge Radhi wasn't appointed until close to June. So we're not that old. We're getting there, and when we've got the people, we sure hope that the World Bank will be there for us. I know that they will be.

Q: My last question would be to get an idea of where your organization sits. Do you liaise with some of the other ministries? I know you're an independent body, but I imagine with the inspection connections and prosecuting, there'd be ties at least to the Ministry of Justice.

GRINNELL: No, see, the Ministry of Justice – I just want to correct you there. The Ministry of Justice was broken up.

It used to have, for example, all the judges and prosecutors. It used to have the prisons too. The commission fell under that only because I was in that area, together with the Iraqi Property Claims Commission. When transition it occurred – even before transition occurred, actually, about a month before – the judges, the entire judiciary was cut out of the Ministry of Justice. That [judiciary] is now headed by a Council of Judges. The prosecutors were also cut out.

The Commission on Public Integrity, I just moved over to it, together with the Iraqi Property Claims Commission, who moved over to it. So the Ministry of Justice really only controls prison and then some administrative functions.

Our strongest base of communications is with the IGs, which are embedded in the ministries. What we do is we try to take the information that we have from the IGs, and if it is not a specific criminally prosecuted case, the commissioner will call the minister and they'll have a little sit-down. They'll talk about some things that are happening within their ministry and how there are different ways that they can possibly take care of this particular issue together.

However, when push comes to shove, it's up to the minister. All we can do, at the end of the day, if it's not criminal, is to identify it for the national legislative body and the executive (for whatever executive government they ultimately decide on). We can identify it for them and then make recommendations. But the minister is the minister, and we do work with each of them.

We do have strong ties with the coalition forces. We have excellent communication with the other subgroups that are out there, like the Board of Supreme Audit. We meet weekly with them. And we also have good communication from Baghdad to some of these provinces as we begin to build up the program in six [of the] provinces.

Where we lack – what we lack is great communication, and we don't have that because the infrastructure in this country doesn't support it. There is no AT&T here: the cell phones only work – if you've got a cell phone for the central part of the country, it only works for the central part of the country. It doesn't call the south or the north.

So, it's interesting. There's no mail system here, either. Everything is by hand delivery or by meeting. Again, it's going to take a while. It took a tremendous amount of time for Germany and for Japan to get put back together ...

Q: And those were fully industrialized countries.

GRINNELL: Exactly, and it's going to take a little while for this one, too.

Q: OK, well, I'm fresh out of questions. Do you have any final comments that you'd like to add?

GRINNELL: Nope, I think you asked a lot of questions.

Q: Well, you gave me a lot of great answers, and you have my appreciation for that.

GRINNELL: No problem.