

# GOING DUTCH

BY KIRA P. DAVIS

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TWO JRCCL'S ALUMNI

WORKING AT THE IRAN-U.S. TRIBUNAL  
IN THE HAGUE

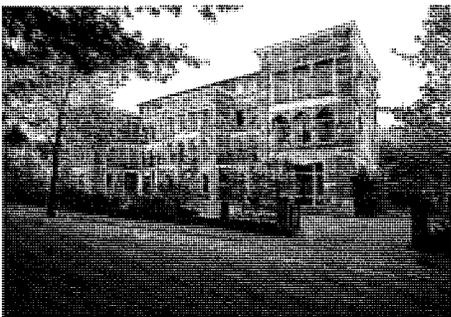
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**T**HE IRAN--UNITED STATES  
Claims Tribunal was set up in the  
Netherlands in 1982 by the agreement  
between Iran and the US as part of the  
bargain for the release of the American  
hostages from Iran. Jeff Robinson and  
Mark Davis are two J Reuben Clark Law  
School graduates (both from the class

of '83) working in The Hague as legal assistants to Judge  
Charles N. Brower, an American arbitrator on this tribunal

Though I am married to Mark Davis, my view of Mark's and  
Jeff's work has been from the outside looking in, seeing things  
but not really comprehending them completely, like someone  
on the street watching people in a lighted room—I see the  
action but don't hear any sound. Cases come, big cases that go

*Mark Davis*





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CASES COME,

BIG CASES

THAT GO DOWN

LIKE RABBITS

IN A SNAKE'S

THROAT

down like rabbits in a snake's throat, keeping Mark up in his office until nine, pulling his beard and scowling into books. I hear bits of it from him at home—sometimes he summarizes cases for me, he has even come up with ideas that way, telling it to me. And sometimes details about his separate life from me over there leak out at parties. Mark and Jeff look at each other knowingly and groan about Judge Whatshisname, or they compare vacation or career plans. I stand and smile politely most of the time, holding my orange juice. But in large part it remains a mystery to me.

So one day in late December I decided to try to get an insider's view and write this article. I scheduled an interview with Mark and Jeff, and they treated me very nearly like a real reporter.

It was coincidentally an exciting time to be doing an interview at the Tribunal, newspapers and television networks in the States and in Europe were carrying the story that the Tribunal had been playing a major role in secret negotiations for the release of American hostages in Lebanon. There were reporters in raincoats huddled under the eaves as we drove up in our station wagon. They looked searchingly at us a few seconds but then decided we were nobody as we drove on through the electronically opened gate and into the parking lot. A big blue bus with "CD" license plates drove in just behind us and the reporters

jumped down off the porch and crowded around. "*Corps Diplomatique*—those are the guys from the embassy," Mark explained to me. "They're here for negotiations right now." He laughed. "But what they just won't believe," and here he pointed to the press, "is that the negotiations have got nothing to do with hostages."

The Tribunal is as important looking as its neighbors—all embassies and schools and mansions—each with its spread of grass and a front gate, but it has no sign, no title posted anywhere, only a flagpole in the front yard behind the fence—as if the building knew very well how important it was, but wasn't saying. There is a circular drive, curving up to the front portico, and a fenced-off entrance to a parking lot on the right side as you approach. There is a little red

speaker box for drivers to shout into and explain their business as they wait for the guard inside to open the gate and let them in. There are still a few brave geraniums left in flower boxes under windows on the ground and first floors.

We parked in the back and came in through a back door. The *New York Times* had described the Tribunal as "heavily guarded" the day before, and Mark joked with the very unimposing guard in the front hallway as we went in to get his electronic badge needed to open certain doors in "secured areas" of the

building. There was a cartoon of a tank with "taxi" written on it tacked up on the wall of the guard's room, and he teased about hiring out his services as a "heavy guard."

We met John Crook, American Embassy representative at the Tribunal, in the hall. He congratulated us on the birth of our baby a month ago and asked how Christmas had been, and then we asked what he thought of the recent press uproar. He gave a tired sort of chuckle and shook his head. "This really is a nonstory. They're sure we're trading money for bodies." He mentioned that two major American networks had carried the story last night. "We just have to cool things down—the more we deny, the more they're sure."

We walked on again down the hall. This building was once a hotel, but now the front foyer is redivided into boxy little guards' rooms and an air-lockish front hall, with a metal detector and electronically locking doors at both ends and a receptionists' cubicle, and up the broad stairs are copy centers and hearing rooms and offices, and even a prayer room for the devotions of the Iranian contingent. It is clean and quiet—unassuming prints and photographs of ornate mosques wait on the walls. There are no surprises in the architecture, no miniblinds, no dramatic lighting, it's as if everything were waiting respectfully on the decision of the Tribunal, orderly and portioned out between English and Farsi, between God and Allah. There is nothing odd or unseemly or indecorous in the building—except perhaps the owl, who turns his head impossibly all the way around and winks at our girls when Mark brings them, or at anyone else gawking at him through the window on the second floor, there in his place next to the chimney outside, a few feet away.

Jeff and Mark share an office on the third floor overlooking a small yard filled with large trees. Mark's half of the office is not homey—his offices never are. He has an Iranian calendar, a cutaway diagram of an oil rig, and a crayon drawing of a mouse on the wall. He never brings things from home to hang up, it seems. He only puts there what Becky, our six-year-old, insists he tape up immediately after she's drawn it on nights when he has to work after dinner again and she goes with him for the hot chocolate from the machine in the hall and the sticky yellow memo pages peeled delightfully from a thick pad in his drawer. When he's in the middle of a case, he leaves books and files sprawled spine-up across his desk, keeping the places he'll want to read from as he composes his report into the dictaphone.

Jeff's portion of the office seems somewhat more orderly. His wall has a postcard of the Matterhorn (which he recently climbed) as well as a Sierra Club calendar, a couple of weathered Xeroxed cartoons, and a quote from Imam Khomeini: "Aim all your weapons at the U.S. for our enemy is the U.S." He also displays the art work of his four- and two-year-olds.





**O**n the morning of my appointment, I got out my memo pad and my pen and set up Mark's dictaphone to record the interview, feeling very reporterish—the only reporter who could get in past the guards. After a few minutes Jeff came in, his raincoat glistening and his hair wet. He shook out his umbrella and asked if we had seen all the hubbub downstairs and

commented that his mother-in-law had called from the States the night before. "She wanted to know if the Tribunal would be closing up soon and if we would be coming home next month."

Mark laughed. "Oh, brother." He shuffled through the papers on his desk and showed me copies of recent articles from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* as well as releases from UPI and Reuters news agencies. There it was, bold and certain: "United States and Iranian officials are to meet Monday to resume negotiations on returning \$500 million in frozen assets. The issue figures in an Iranian offer to intercede for American hostages in Lebanon."

I asked them, first clearing my throat, "So tell me the truth about this: Is the Tribunal involved in hostage negotiations?" They both laughed as if it were hardly worth denying. So I asked them why there was this mix-up.

Mark said, "Well, Judge Brower's theory is that it's

the after-Christmas news vacuum." He and Jeff exchanged glances and chuckled. Jeff explained, "There really are negotiations going on here this week between Iran and the U.S. about a payment of about \$500 million to Iran, and there are in general some superficial similarities of the work at the Tribunal with the recent arms deals and hostage negotiations. Current circumstances made it look like they might be related. And that, coupled with some indecipherable statements recently made by the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, Mr. Rafsanjani, fueled speculation that there might be some sort of relationship." Jeff looked solemnly down at his hands and then up at the ceiling, seeming to peer down inside his internal file and order the thing for me. He spoke as if into a dictaphone, putting in topic statements and even numbering his supporting points. I was flattered he treated me so much like an official Somebody—me, his neighbor and sometimes babysitter.

"What are the potential similarities here? One, Iran has sued the United States here in several cases for the return of military equipment that Iran bought and paid for when the Shah was in power but was never delivered and is being held now in various warehouses in the U.S. Two, there are substantial monetary assets of the Iranian government left over from the time of the hostage settlement that the U.S. government has so far refused to return to Iran. Iran sued here for the return of the money, and the U.S. argued that it was legally entitled to keep the money, at least until the Tribunal had finished its work. The Tribunal last August decided that the U.S. was not

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entitled to keep the money, however, and it ordered the U.S. to turn the money over as soon as the parties could reach agreement on certain technicalities. The U.S. and Iran are now in the process of determining just exactly how much of those assets are in the category that are supposed to go back. That's what the negotiations downstairs are about." He looked up to make sure I was following

I said, "You mean that the meetings going on downstairs right now are just coincidentally coming now when there is all this uproar in the States?"

Mark said it was even more coincidental than that. "The Tribunal's order for the U.S. to release the \$500 million came in August, around the time when a couple of hostages held by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon were freed. A few weeks ago a professor in the States wrote a rather creative work of fiction in the *New York Times* where he said people shouldn't be looking at the \$50 million in arms that Reagan sneaked over for hostages but they should look at the \$500 million that the U.S. is giving Iran in The Hague. And he calls that the real 'wild card.' And then the UPI correspondent in Amsterdam—I don't know if he had seen the *Times* article or got the same idea on his own, but last week he sent off the wire story that negotiations were going on about \$500 million to be paid for hostages, and for a week now the lead sentences in all the papers have said 'negotiations over hostages.' And that's not what it's over. It's over whether it's \$500 million minus \$60 million or minus \$30 million or some other relatively insignificant number that's going to go back to Iran. The negotiations are over minor and nonpolitical points." Well, so much for believing everything you read in the papers.

Mark was casual, telling me about it. He leaned back with his hands together behind his head and smiled through his beard, occasionally gesturing, flipping a hand through the air. And we all pitied the poor reporters out there, huddled in the rain over their nonstory.

**S**o if it's not arranging deals for the release of hostages, just what does it mean to be a legal assistant to a judge here? Well, that requires a little background. When the U.S. Embassy in Iran was attacked and the embassy personnel taken hostage in 1979, President Carter froze more than \$8 billion in Iranian money held in American banks—and a lot of that money was subject to judicial attachment by American plaintiffs who had sued Iran in U.S. courts for financial losses during the Iranian Revolution. The Algiers Accords, the agreements signed 444 days later in January 1981, required

Iran to release the hostages if the U.S. would unfreeze Iran's money and dissolve the judicial attachments. But to protect the rights of the Americans who had claims against Iran, \$1 billion of the money was diverted to a special "security account" in Holland, and the Tribunal was established to decide those claims, with all amounts found owing to be paid out of the security account. Nearly 3,000 such claims were brought, and Mark's and Jeff's work is to help the Tribunal, and particularly their judge, to decide these cases.

As cases come up for hearing, they read all the materials submitted by the American claimant and the Iranian respondent, examine the evidence, and do research on the major legal issues or problems. As a guide for their judge, they then generally prepare a draft award or decision describing the case and giving their view of the right outcome. Then they attend the hearings held—simultaneously in English and Farsi—in one of two hearing rooms at the Tribunal. These tend to be rather similar to appellate hearings, where the parties highlight the main points in the evidence and legal arguments already submitted and answer the arbitrators' questions. Following the hearings, Jeff and Mark attend the deliberations—the aspect of the work they both agree is the most interesting—where the three arbitrators decide how the case should be awarded. After a case is decided, Mark and Jeff help write the final award—sometimes based on their own preliminary draft—or if the decision didn't go the way Judge Brower thought it should, they may draft a dissenting opinion. In addition, they work with the other arbitrators and their legal assistants to keep the cases proceeding toward resolution, trying to moderate the number and length of extension requests and generally making sure that the work advances with as few surprises as possible. Jeff also mentioned the two or three papers on legal topics he's written for Judge Brower to deliver at different conferences. Mark says his duties have included keeping the boss's Mercedes driven and his house checked on while he was away on vacation.

The nine arbitrators appointed to the Tribunal are organized in three "chambers," each chamber with an American, an Iranian, and a third-country judge. Each chamber has its own schedule of cases to work through. Once in a while a big case, or a particularly sensitive legal issue, comes along, and then there may be a full Tribunal hearing. In such a case the Tribunal meets at the Peace Palace, an ornate castle-like building just down the street, built during the idealism of the turn of the century by Andrew Carnegie with contributions from countries throughout the world as a center for—and a symbol of—solving international conflict through discussion and the application of law. The International Court of Justice also meets there. The Peace Palace also contains a very complete law library that Jeff and Mark often use in their research.



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ANOTHER

UNSUCCESSFUL

ATTEMPT TO

DISQUALIFY A

THIRD-WORLD

JUDGE LED TO

THE INFAMOUS

INCIDENT BACK

IN SEPTEMBER

1984, WHEN

TWO OF THE

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NECKTIE

And how did a couple of BYU alumni end up here in The Hague? Jeff, who is a believer in the fruits of hard work, feels that this job “is a clerkship just like any other clerkship. Professors know about these things and recommend their best students. High academic credentials and a good school stand you in good stead.” Jeff was recommended for the job by Judge Wilkey, for whom he was working on the D C Circuit. “Judge Wilkey got a call from one arbitrator who said, ‘I’m looking for a legal assistant, do you know someone?’ and he said, ‘Yes,’ and recommended me.”

According to Mark, who is more a believer in serendipitous quirks of fate, it’s all a matter of being lucky, of being in the right place at the right time, and it’s not something you could plan on. And indeed, as it happened, Mark’s appointment was more quirky. Jeff, who was already on the job here, called last December when he found out that Judge Brower needed another legal assistant, someone who could come in a big hurry to work through a mountainous case starting January 5th. Mark flew out to interview on December 13th, was offered the job on the 18th, and flew over with me and our two kids on January 2nd.

“But my wife didn’t mind at all,” Mark said into the dictaphone, laughing. “She was on her mission here in the Netherlands, and she’s been dying to come back here.” Quite true.

I asked if it had been difficult working with the Iranians. “Is there some lingering hostility here at the Tribunal?” I read the question from my notepad and looked up at them, remembering the reserved, makeupless faces of the Iranian secretaries in their shawls—shy and sizing me up at first, but then warming to me today as I gave them the thank-you note to give the Iranian judge who had given us a present for our new baby. They told us the judge’s wife had just had her baby too, and I seemed to feel the universal feminine truth that birth is hard and sweet as they told me, “No, she did not have a hard time, but when is it ever easy?” I wondered if things were more hostile when business was going on.

Jeff was eager to assure me, “Well, on a personal level I would say there’s none. Everybody’s friendly and cooperative.”

Mark said, “In the first few years it was pretty tense here. They originally met in the Peace Palace. That’s where the International Court of Justice meets, and the ICJ had, just before the hostage settlement, ruled against Iran and ordered it to release the hostages and make reparations. That order was ignored but was not forgotten. One room contains

ornate needlepoint chairs of all the member states of the ICJ, and during the hearings, someone, apparently on the official delegation, had slashed up the chair bearing the needlepoint seal of the United States. That gives you a feel for the nature of relations in the early days, when the U S was commonly labeled ‘the Great Satan.’ I think the ‘Great Satan’ attitude prevailed even among the first judges Iran appointed to the Tribunal, whose published opinions are full of personal attack on the character of the other judges and claims of bias, illegality, and so forth, rather than a reasoned appraisal of the legal issues. They challenged the impartiality of one third-country judge from Holland on the ground that, as a citizen of a member country of NATO, he was necessarily a lackey of the Americans. Another unsuccessful attempt to disqualify on legal grounds another third-country judge, from Sweden, led to the infamous incident back in September 1984, when two of the Iranian judges attacked the Swedish judge in the stairway at the Tribunal and attempted to strangle him with his own necktie. That incident virtually closed down the Tribunal for several months until the two judges were recalled to Iran. It seems that is a past period at the Tribunal as their replacements are dignified, competent lawyers who concentrate much more on the legal issues, and the Tribunal atmosphere is businesslike and friendly. It’s hard to imagine what it was like then.”

But had they made friends with any of the Iranians or had much to do with them socially? I asked them, as a reporter.

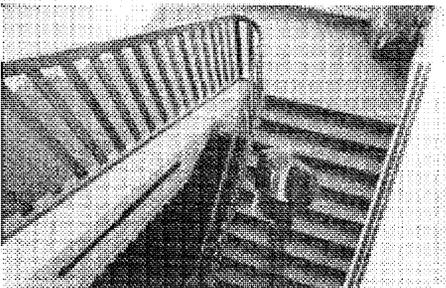
Jeff said, “The Iranian legal assistants will sometimes come to informal Tribunal social functions—going-away parties and so on, but the arbitrators generally do not, presumably for political reasons.”

Mark added, “They say that they can’t come because they can’t be seen anywhere where alcohol— forbidden by Islamic law—is served.”

“A compunction that doesn’t bother us,” Jeff observed.

Mark continued, “We are friendly when we do meet outside the tribunal context. For example, Ms Reporter, we met Judge Ansari, the Iranian judge in our chamber, at the playground the day before we had our third baby. Becky and Katie were running around and playing on the slide, and Judge Ansari came walking up with his wife, who was also pregnant, and their little boy, who is about the same age as our second. We stood and chatted with them, and it was very friendly. We’ve met at the grocery store a couple of times. But we’ve never quite felt we could venture to invite them over for dinner or anything really personal like that. It just feels like it would be too awkward or inappropriate, maybe even politically risky for them.”

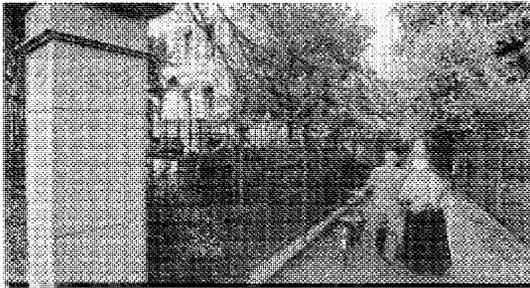
But despite its name, the Tribunal is not made up just of Americans and Iranians. One thing Mark and Jeff have found particularly exhilarating about working at the Tribunal is the mix of people—there



are staff members not only from the U.S. and Iran, but from Sweden, France, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, England, Ghana, India, and Bolivia, to name a few. On a given day, Jeff may argue with Sylvia, a legal assistant from Poland, about whether you can actually order a government to do anything—something that seems impossible to someone from Poland—or Mark may talk about Maori culture or compare the merits of wilderness hiking trails with Jennifer, a legal assistant from New Zealand. Into the office may come Mr. Khan, dark and imperious in his gaze, bringing the mail, or Nancy, an American secretary who is also an opera singer, with the filing.

Do they ever feel intimidated by the cosmopolitan atmosphere?

“No, in fact my small-town Utah origins bring out other people’s small-town origins,” Mark said. “We had some friends from the Tribunal over for dinner at Christmas, and the missionaries were there, too. One



elder, who was from Smithfield, Utah, had never heard of Sri Lanka, where another one of our guests was from. We got out a map to show him, amid general good-natured teasing. And Jennifer, from New Zealand, said it was okay—Srilal, the friend from Sri Lanka, had probably never heard of Smithfield either. And there are other things. One person always reports to me on the BYU football scores—a little embarrassing since I don’t keep track myself.”

I asked Mark and Jeff what some of the more notable cases were that they had worked on.

Mark looked off at the boxes of files on the shelves surrounding us and said, “The big case that I originally got the job to come and work on was about an American company seeking about \$200 million in damages for a factory they had constructed. But the Iranians said the Americans had bribed government officials to get the job and that the bribery should be considered to deprive them of any right to payment for the work they had done. The American company said that they hadn’t bribed anybody—million dollar commission payments to professional Iranian consultants and business-getters were necessary and usual—and that if, contrary to their agreement with their consultant, he may have passed a minor few millions here and there, well, bribery was a regular, and usually inescapable, part of business deals under the Shah. Ultimately the decision in the case went for the Iranians, but not based on any of the moral or legal issues raised by the alleged bribe, but on a relatively technical jurisdictional ruling by the third-country judge.”

Jeff said, “Well, that was the same case where the parties had years to submit their evidence and had been scheduled for a final hearing three different times and each time postponed, each time giving the parties further opportunity to complete their final briefing. And about two months before the final hearing, the Iranian party submitted a one-sentence letter stating that they had found a little new evidence they wanted to submit to the Tribunal. And the chairman of the chamber, that is, the third-party judge, without consulting either of the other two judges, granted the request, and what we saw come in was a stack of ‘a little new evidence’ about three feet high. Virtually all of it could have been submitted earlier.”

“But one of the most interesting cases I have worked on involves a claim for a complex industrial plant co-owned by the American claimant. The Americans were allegedly forced off the job during the revolution, then not permitted to return afterward. The Iranian government subsequently offered to buy the plant, but never paid any money, and finally just took over day-to-day control and operation of the plant. Shortly after that the Iran-Iraq war started, and the Iranian government now asserts that the plant has been bombed into virtual non-existence. The claimant argues it’s entitled to the multimillion dollar value of the plant as it stood when the Americans left Iran, Iran says it shouldn’t have to pay anything, but the Americans should repay various asserted debts and obligations. The case is interesting because it raises such a broad spectrum of legal issues about governmental expropriation and compensation, force majeure, valuation of complex assets, and so on. The case is still undecided.”

I asked, “Have you had experiences here that have given you a clue into the Iranian soul, or what life is like in Iran right now?”

Mark said, “What we see here at the Tribunal is, it seems to me, very removed from what’s going on in Iran right now. We’re dealing with things that happened in 1978–1979, a time when there was an emotionally charged and ideological revolution going on, and actions were taken against U.S. citizens and businesses that were clearly and virulently anti-American. Now, in the calmer context of nearly ten years later, those uncontrolled, undirected, and even unintentional actions have to be painted by the Iranians as the legitimate rights of sovereignty. And they have to be fitted by the Americans into the rubric of unjustified contract breaches or expropriations. That’s probably not how it was perceived by either side when it was happening.”

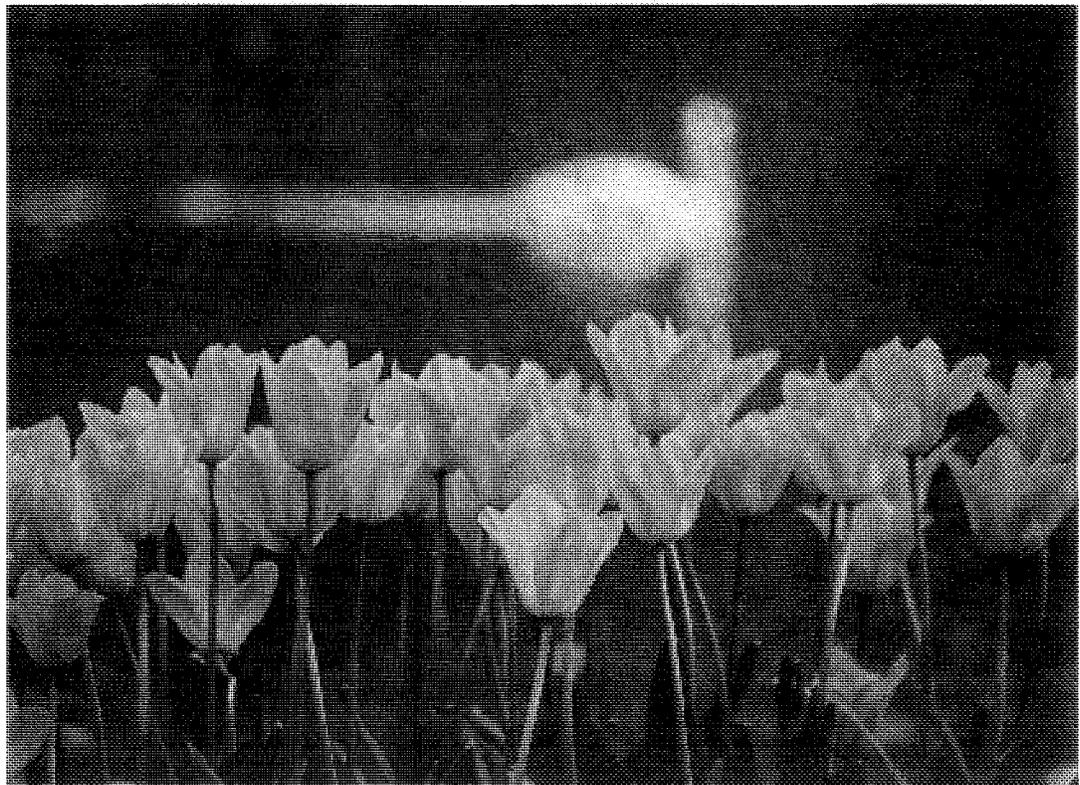
“One incident came up in a case that really gave me a feeling for what it must have been like for ordinary Iranians mixed up in it all. An American building company, building houses in Iran, left one of the Iranian employees in charge. He was told to pay all the salaries of the Iranian workers that they had employed there, and if he needed to he should sell some surplus tents and scrap lumber. But when this

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THE SUMMER  
 IS WONDERFUL  
 THE SUN SHINES  
 UP NEARLY ALL  
 NIGHT YOU CAN  
 GO TO THE BEACH  
 AND THE CHILDREN  
 ALL PLAY TOGETHER  
 HOME THERE  
 IS A WELL KNOWN  
 IS WITH ME  
 ALL SUMMER  
 LONG



guy tried to sell the items, he was arrested, apparently for theft of public property, since the government had taken control of the site and materials on site. And so he wrote an extremely pathetic telex to America saying, 'Do you remember me? You told me to sell the tents, and I'm in big trouble,' in his broken English."

I said, "You mentioned that case where the plant was bombed; has the Iran-Iraq war hampered their efforts in other ways?"

Mark said, "They say it does. It's the continuing reason for most every extension request."

Jeff elaborated, "About a year and a half ago, Iraq announced an air-exclusion zone around Iranian and Iraqi territories, saying they would take hostile action against any aircraft in that zone,

including private or nonmilitary jets, and this was stated as a reason that inhibited the flow of documents and witnesses between Tehran and The Hague. There was one hearing that took place during that period where it was claimed that the Iranian lawyers could not be present, probably for this reason, or for other similar ones. But the U.S. agent stated that he had seen the Iranian counsel waiting at a tram stop in The Hague, probably doing some shopping." Jeff laughed and leaned back in his chair. "It also shows up in the context where they'll say these documents or this

equipment or this material related to the case is located in the war zone, and we don't have access to it."

Mark said, "Or was blown up, like that plant. Some of the cases involve former American property that was taken by Iran, and the defense has been 'that stuff was taken from us by Iraq so why should we have to pay for it?'"

At this point Jeff's phone rang, and we waited while he answered it. When he was finished he explained, "That was about another extension request—the sixth extension request for this particular document. In granting the last extension, the Tribunal said it envisioned no further extension—but this one is for fifteen days only, and they say it is all ready, and they just need to finish typing it up and translating it. But the language that was proposed for the order says that the Tribunal will grant a final extension, and Judge Ansari objects to the word 'final.'"

Mark joked, "Of course, we're objecting to the word 'grant.'"

Looking out the window from Mark and Jeff's office you can see trees and gardens surrounding one of the mansions on the Parkweg, the street the Tribunal is on. Mark says he often finds himself staring out the window, wondering if he'll ever have as nice a view from his office again after he leaves here. The part of The Hague where the Tribunal is located and where we live, and the Robinsons just around the corner from us, is known as Scheveningen. It's close to the beach. In the summer it is a resort town, and in the winter it is windy and cold, with the Dutch sky hanging low, bringing rain and the smell of

the ocean wafting out through the narrow, brickpaved streets. When the fog comes in, Mark and Jeff can even see it rolling down their office windows, like the final plague in the movie *The Ten Commandments*.

I asked them to give me their opinions on living here in The Hague. Mark said, "The Hague is a nice place to live. The weather is not as bad as people say. The summer is wonderful. The sun stays up nearly all night. You can go bike riding after dinner, at seven o'clock, and not come home until eleven, which is what we did all summer long. In the winter it's cozy and friendly, because Dutch people make a point of doing cozy, friendly things during their abysmal winters."

The neighborhood is tidy and fine and very Dutch. Walking from our house to the Tribunal, on a day like today, you would pass the bike stall where we keep our bicycles and then a little tidy grocery store, where a brusque and pointy woman stands behind the counter with her fingerless gloves, sovereign over the bowls of tiny peeled potatoes and fruit salad and hutspot in the glass case beneath her. She asks you, man-to-man, what you want, leaning there, all serious business, looking up her pointed nose at you. The apples and oranges and peppers in the bins outside are arranged in diagonal stripes in their crates, a thin red meshing over them as a precaution against casually passing high school students from around the block. There are flowers too, bunches of tulips and chrysanthemums in all shades, with their long stems in metal buckets and a chalkboard next to them with the prices written on it. Then there is a ladies' hat store, with little tabs of hats with feathers and sometimes a poof of netting for little blue-haired ladies to try on before the mirror, and smile primly at themselves, imagining the effect in the third pew next Sunday in the Hervormd Church in Scheveningen. And then there is a gentleman's hairdresser, with an inexplicable wooden model of the Eiffel Tower in the window.

And then there is the bakery, its front window a-gaggle with inedible dainties: pink and hard and glistening candies, little wrapped Christmas bonbons with glitter-covered ruffles, ingenious chocolates, and marzipan carrots. Only around this time of year does it look so clever, far too clever to eat. Once New Year's is past, out come the humble apple tarts and currant buns and plain brown cookies, rich and earth colored and again lowly enough for mortal mouths.

And then you turn left down a short piece of street, a little one-way alley, and you can look through a chain link fence into someone's yard, see their holly bushes and the robins chirping in a weathered porch that perches on leaning stilts above a locked wooden shed. After the alleyway you cross a street and go down a walking path—marked with a little round blue sign, a round blue sign with the white silhouette of a man in a long coat and derby walking with a little girl in a dress and pigtails, a grandfather stooping along with his granddaughter, a wistful, helpful,

loving old fellow always out with the little girl, telling her about when he was young and a fisherman, and brought in his nets here in Scheveningen, and braved the storms, and she, listening kindly, holding his gnarled hand, waiting for a pause, and then asking if they might please go into the bakery and buy a sack of licorice. And they do, the tired old man smiling gently and patting the little golden head. The walking path goes past lawns and backyards and holly bushes right up to the front of the Tribunal building.

**I** was on my mission here nine years ago. I have dreamed all these years of coming back, but I never thought it would happen like this. Mark now speaks, as one friend of ours put it, "A nice little mouthful of Dutch," and our six-year-old Becky, who goes to first grade in a Dutch public school, is very fluent, and even falls into fast and sputtery Dutch when she gets mad at us. She is Mark's best teacher—laughing mercilessly at

his mistakes. Luckily he is a good sport. [Mark also speaks Italian and Russian.] Jeff and Robyn, his wife, have learned quite a bit of Dutch too, they have had too—Robyn was called as first counselor in the Relief Society right off the bat and was only released last summer when Jeff was called to be in the bishopric. All of the work at the Tribunal is conducted in Farsi and English, so any education in Dutch we get comes from Church and from our neighbors, as well as the backs of milk cartons and cereal boxes on the breakfast table.

I asked Jeff what he thought about living in The Hague. "Are you anxious to go back?"

"No, not really, although I am looking ahead to the next phase of my career, but I'm not anxious to leave The Hague, because I really like it here. We live in a nice townhouse just a five-minute walk from work on a tree-lined street with a canal with ducks in the summer and ice skating in the winter."

I asked Mark and Jeff where they were going from here. Jeff said he hopes to know for certain next month, but, in any case, he and his family were returning to the States in April. Mark said, "As you well know, we own a house in Washington, it's got lots of blood, sweat, and tears in it because we just finished remodeling it before we left, so we're going back—most likely next December."

"Are you going to keep working in international law?" I asked.

Mark answered cheerfully, "If such a thing exists." (Chuckles and exchanged glances.) "Yes. This is a unique situation, especially, I think, at our time out of law school and our experiences. This is an uncommon concentration of international law experience that you just couldn't get anywhere else."

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*P.S. This article was written last January. Jeff and Robyn and their kids moved to Orange County, California, in April, where Jeff works for the Newport Beach office of Gibson, Dunn, & Crutcher. Mark has been called to take Jeff's place in the bishopric of The Hague ward. We are staying on until December, and then we will go back and live in our house in Takoma Park, Maryland, and Mark will go back to work for Steptoe & Johnson in Washington, D.C.*