Human Rights – Conversations Across Generations
Episode: Cees Flinterman
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Transcript of audio conversation

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 0:04
Hi, welcome to our podcast, Huma Rights, Conversations Across Generations. I'm Meredith Lockwood, founder of Lockwood Creative, a purpose-driven creative agency. And I'm here with my dad.

BERT LOCKWOOD 0:16
And I'm Professor Bert Lockwood, the director of the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights at the University of Cincinnati College of Law.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 0:27
Together, we are your father-daughter co-hosts.

BERT LOCKWOOD 0:29
For over 50 years, I've had a front-row seat to the evolution of international human rights.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 0:35
And now, we're sharing that expertise with you by connecting to the powerful stories and insights of human rights voices from around the world.

BERT LOCKWOOD 0:43
We bridge the past and the present, making complex human rights issues more approachable and understandable.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 0:50
So, pull up a chair and join our table as we speak with Nobel Peace Prize recipients, political leaders and the world's leading human rights scholars and activists.

Meredith intro outro 1:04
Hello, listeners, welcome back, we have another special episode today featuring Professor Cees Flinterman, now, before we begin, I wanna bring you a bit behind the scenes of our our show. For over a year, my dad and I have been recording guest episodes so that we could build a robust media library and debut weekly episodes. Today's episode was actually our very first one we recorded, as we were just beginning to imagine what Human Rights Conversations Across Generations podcast could become. You may hear references on today's episode of past events or former political leaders, and we wanted to share that context at the outset. it meant a great deal to record our first episode with one of my dad's oldest friends, who trusted us enough to be our very first guest as we were dreaming up our Human Rights Show. Cees joins

us from his home in Maastricht in the Netherlands. My dad and Cees first met in the 1970s. That early connection grew into a lifelong friendship and parallel careers devoted to building human rights institutions, education, and global norms. Cees Flinterman has served as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, as an expert on CEDAW, which is the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and as a professor and institutional leader at Utrecht University and Maastricht University. His work has taken him around the world, from Ghana to Geneva, from national foreign policy to international treaty bodies, always grounded in the practical aspects, implementation of human rights. you As we begin today's conversation, we jump right into My Dad in Cees's early days, and what follows is a wide-ranging and deeply personal conversation about international human rights work, and the long arc of legal change. Let's tune in now.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 3:04
Cees, thank you so much for joining us. It's an honor to have you here because you are my dad, one of his oldest friends.

CEES FLINTERMAN 3:11
Yes,indeed .

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 3:12
And I think the best way to start off- Hearing about how you two met back in 1970.

CEES FLINTERMAN 3:20
Do you start, Bert?

BERT LOCKWOOD 3:22
Well, yes, I will My, mentor was Richard Lillich, um, uh, I went to, uh, Syracuse Law School on the advice um, a, a trustee at my undergraduate institution, St. Lawrence. When I told him I wanted to go to law school my interest was international and could he recommend a place to go, and he said, well, he had been working with this brilliant young international lawyer at Syracuse, Richard Lillich. so on the first day of law school at Syracuse, I found out who Lillich's research assistant was, and I said I wanted to take his place when he graduated. And so that's what I did. I ended up pretty much majoring in Richard Lillich Syracuse. And then the University of Virginia stole and he offered me a large fellowship drop out. I was doing a joint degree in political science at the Maxwell School. He offered me a large fellowship drop out of that and do an LLM. And I have to say, I think in terms of personal development, that year was very important to me both at St. Lawrence, which was a small liberal arts in upstate New York, in a little town that had 5,000 people, and then at Syracuse law, was all at the time and no minorities, no and no foreign students. And so when I went to Virginia, one of the great things was, I believe,of the 16 students I think we had, I think I may have been the American. And so it was really sort of my first contact with foreign students. I can remember being in and being awed by you, where you would have books open in three languages and be writing a paper looking at And one of the things I've always regretted was that I only speak I was sort of

amazed at the linguistic talents that you had in addition to your brilliance. But one of benefits of being the only male or the only is I think I sort of became our social chairman.

CEES FLINTERMAN 6:08
That's right.

BERT LOCKWOOD 6:08
And so really, I were a fairly close during that LLM experience. And as I say, for me, it was wonderful with the my foreign colleagues for the first time, and really benefiting different views. I don't know if similar recollections or not from Charlottesville.

CEES FLINTERMAN 6:34
me? I couldn't agree more with, uh, with Burt. in my case, I just finished my law studies at Leiden University in 1969 with a specialization of public international law, and one of my deepest wishes to continue my study at a foreign university, and especially at an American university. I applied for Yale because there were scholarships available at Yale, but unfortunately, um, I lost against a Dutch woman who later became my friend, and I had to choose another university, and that was the University of Virginia, but it happened to be an choice because of the professors involved, John Norton Moore, Richard Lillich, and because of the group of people that were studying uh, Virginia University. And especially, the big interest in human rights caught me at, at the time. I took the first time ever, I think, international human rights law course, um, uh, told by Richard Lillich and assisted by, by Bert. And, uh, that certainly Further stimulated my interest in the field of human rights. And looking back, I think it was a wonderful start of my career in the field of human rights since 1971.

Can you still hear me?

BERT LOCKWOOD 8:02
What I don't know if this applied to a high school in the field of human rights and having a place in the field of human rights. I don't know if this applied to you or not. one of the things that a number of, the, the foreign, uh, students, uh, said That it was such a refreshing change, the way that American law schools taught classes, where it was very much an interactive discussion between the professor and the students. That professors in Europe, they had studied, were basically put up on some pedestal and that the students basically were, expected to simply write down every wise word the professor said, sort of taking notes, um, from a lecture, basically. And, my sense was that a number of the students, because of the experience, at Virginia Law School, that when most of them went back to be teachers, like you, when they their classes, that they took this more American style of, uh, teaching, interactive discussions with the students, as opposed to simply lecturing was, was that your experience?

CEES FLINTERMAN 9:23
Oh, in general, studying law, public international law, at University of Virginia was much more demanding than it was back at University of Leiden. I always told my students later that in one year time during my master's studies at Virginia University, I had to write five papers, five

extensive papers on different topics of international law, in particular international human rights law, and also participated in the Jessup Moot Court competition on behalf of University of Virginia, whereas in the five and a half year study of law at Leiden University, I only had to write one paper, one long essay over the five and a half years, so that was quite a difference, the challenging atmosphere at the University of Virginia, and as you said, Bert, the interactive discussion. And later on, when I helped establish the Faculty of Law, of the new University of LImburg, certainly my experiences at the UVA were very much leading me and setting up a new system of education at the Limburg Law School. So it helped a lot and stimulated me a lot in my later work, both in academia and fro the point of view of human rights, my Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

BERT LOCKWOOD 10:48
I know you teach in

CEES FLINTERMAN 10:50
Yes,

BERT LOCKWOOD 10:51
At what point in your career was that?

CEES FLINTERMAN 10:53
that years after I left University of Virginia in 1974. And I went for two years to Ghana, to work at the University of Ghana Law School, as a lecturer in comparative law. And one of my courses there was on comparative human rights protection around the world, at a time that Africa did not have its own system yet, at a time that we didn't have an International Bill of Rights. And I worked for the Ghana Law Reform Commission, but in a context of a military government, in a context human rights was very much at stake. So, there I learned a lot the real value, the value in everyday of human rights, and the blessings that we have in many Western countries of enjoying human rights, sometimes without thinking about it.

BERT LOCKWOOD 11:50
I'm curious about your experience there. Because, you know, I in Beijing, in the summers, at the China University of Political Science and Law. And one of the realities of what I'm teaching is that I sort of understand when you're trying to have an interactive discussion, that students are very reluctant to openly voice any of the Chinese government or their sort of for two One is that they don't know if any of their fellow students are actually government And the other is, I in that situation, that some are not comfortable enough with their English, that they think they can actually have good exchange with me. But if you were in Ghana and you got a military government at the time and you're teaching human rights, be, was there some reluctance of students to candidly exchange views with you in class?

CEES FLINTERMAN 13:04
No, not at that time,not at all, University of Ghana Law School was the only law school in the Only 75 students were admitted to the law school, the best of the best,in other words. That's

one. Secondly, Ghana had just come from a democratic tradition, and it was for the first time ever that a military government over. So there was that, looking back earlier times when there was still democracy and the University of Ghana was still considered to be a sort of haven where free discussion was still possible within the boundaries of the campus. And also, the Ghana Law Reform Commission, a commission of nine highly renowned Ghanaian The developments of the military regime were quite often very critically discussed. But the regime, the military regime over the two years that I was there, became more and more leading among others to political trials. And that, again, was one of my experiences there, to sit in in such a political trial, And to see that the court is that the court of the court, and to see that the judges were very afraid to do anything in cases where it was clear that the defendants who were critical of the government of the day were tortured during interrogation, and during that time in prison

BERT LOCKWOOD 14:35
Sounds like it. experience that you had

CEES FLINTERMAN 14:39
it certainly was yes and again later on on behalf of the international commission of jurists in the six in the 80s i've been back on a one person human rights mission to ghana in order look into the situation at that time human rights situation and there has helped me a lot that i knew ghana from inside that i had a number of colleagues and friends in in ghana some of whom have later on played an important role in human rights protection in africa Bert you know the name of Victor Dankwa for example who has been a member of the african commission on human people's rights and Kofi Kumado who has been an international commission of tourists the commissioner and and both Kofi Kumado was one of my students at the time and Victor Dankwa was one of my close colleagues in ghana so it's it was interesting and stimulating had to work against the backgrounds of my experiences also at virginia university

BERT LOCKWOOD 15:45
and when you first went i think i recall that uh were involved in the ministry of foreign affairs and the dutch had one of the um if not the first

CEES FLINTERMAN 15:56
uh

BERT LOCKWOOD 15:56
uh document out foreign ministry that human rights as one of the foundations their foreign policy it is my recollection correct that uh worked on

CEES FLINTERMAN 16:10
was certainly correct i joined the ministry of foreign affairs in the late 70s uh because you know Bert i never had plans or had the ambition to become an academician a my ambition uh in due time to become an ambassador uh and working for the ministry of foreign affairs and finally becoming an ambassador well to an interesting country around the and at the ministry

of foreign affairs i met people like Tom van Doorn Hermann Bergers uh you remember them uh at both i think uh champions of of human rights uh especially Herman Burgers who was responsible for drafting the first ever white um the Netherlands

BERT LOCKWOOD 16:59
he played a very important role in maybe my favorite book in my uh University of Pennsylvania book series where i've now published 180 books

CEES FLINTERMAN 17:10
yeah

BERT LOCKWOOD 17:12
one of the most important books was by a historian at University of Montana Paul Lauren

CEES FLINTERMAN 17:19
yes indeed

BERT LOCKWOOD 17:21
who looked at the the history international human rights

CEES FLINTERMAN 17:26
yeah

BERT LOCKWOOD 17:26
but the way that book came about was

that Herman Burgers wrote in the Human Rights Quarterly th wonderful, it was about a 50-page that was called "The Road to San

CEES FLINTERMAN 17:44
Yeah,

BERT LOCKWOOD 17:44
Francisco."

CEES FLINTERMAN 17:44
yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 17:45
And, and in the penultimate … …of that where he was how did this idea of international human rights come about in the middle of the 20th century?

CEES FLINTERMAN 17:58
Exactly.

BERT LOCKWOOD 17:59
and were there antecedents to it? And as part of exploration, he had exchanged letters, uh, with Nigel Rodley,

CEES FLINTERMAN 18:09
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 18:10
uh, at Amnesty International at the time.

He put together great piece. I think his father, if I recall, had participated in, uh, the drafting of the UN Charter in San Francisco.

CEES FLINTERMAN 18:25
Exactly. Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 18:26
yeah, and at the end of it, he said, look… this is a, uh, absolutely, uh, fascinating topic. I've just touched the surface of it.

CEES FLINTERMAN 18:37
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 18:37
And I hope that younger scholar will take up the challenge and write a book about it.

CEES FLINTERMAN 18:44
Yeah, yeah, I remember

BERT LOCKWOOD 18:45
and, and I took Burgers' article in the Quarterly and I sent it to this historian who had, earlier in the Quarterly written about a 20-page article on the uh, drafting of the human rights provisions of the, uh, uh, uh, Charter. And I basically said to him, uh, you know, read, Burgers' article. And in particular, the penultimate paragraph. And I want you to write the book that Burgers envisions for my, my Penn series.

CEES FLINTERMAN 19:16
yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 19:16
And this was before email. I, A couple weeks later, I got a letter back from him saying that at the time my letter arrived, he had, three contracts waiting to be signed for commercial books, um, for him to, to write. And he found that after reading the article and my invitation that he

was unable to sign those, uh, uh, contracts that he was so excited by this idea. And so one of the first things he did was I, I believe, go to, uh, the Netherlands and meet with Burgers

CEES FLINTERMAN 19:51
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 19:51
to talk with him. And that was very important. Burgers kept an interest in, in his work, um, it, it is one of the, uh, classics, I think in the, the Penn series, this, the, the history of human rights.

CEES FLINTERMAN 20:03
Oh,

BERT LOCKWOOD 20:03
And

CEES FLINTERMAN 20:04
yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 20:04
I've always sort of marveled at historians who, see the big picture and these large themes, in their writing Lauren is just a beautiful writer, but the scope his book and the sources and things that he, he, he looked at, is just the sort of, uh, uh, awe-inspiring. uh, when people ask where should they start, they're interested in human rights. Uh, I usually refer them Paul Lauren's book on the history as sort an introduction to the, to the field.

CEES FLINTERMAN 20:40
Yeah. No, you're quite There's one thing I forgot to mention that, and that it was one of the results of my study at University of Virginia, and that is that when I came back, I met Hans Thoolen, who was my colleague at University of Leiden Law School at the time. And we set up then the Dutch Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the first ever non-governmental organization in the Netherlands, uh, working on human rights issues, from a lawyer's perspective, and there again, my experiences in the courses by Richard Lillich, were, uh, certainly of great importance and also your involvement, I think, in a project which was called Transnational Enforcement of Human Rights. Do you remember that?

BERT LOCKWOOD 21:25
There is, I worked on materials that Lillich was developing that became the first course book,

CEES FLINTERMAN 21:35
yeah,

BERT LOCKWOOD 21:35

or there, there were sort of two that were, uh, Tom Bergenthal and Louis Sohn also, um, had one of the first course books, but, worked with, uh, Frank Newman at Berkeley,

CEES FLINTERMAN 21:47
Yes.

BERT LOCKWOOD 21:48
and they uh, an important- And I don't know if that was part of that or not. cause when I uh, Virginia, I went to and, and of course I met ano, full Dutchman uh, NYU was one of our dear friends, uh, Toine Van Dongen.

CEES FLINTERMAN 22:07
indeed. Who later was my colleague at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Yeah. Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 22:14
Wow. he, he was a you became a dear friend. So.

CEES FLINTERMAN 22:18
Sure. And he was certainly a, uh, human rights activist in diplomatic suit and always wearing a tie. And, yeah, a wonderful colleague. And, uh, deeply, he was deeply committed also to, uh, to human Uh, did a lot in that field.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 22:39
And, dad, and Cees, maybe we could let our listeners a bit about Toine, and his background. Um, and that unfortunately,you know, we, we did lose him last year. Uh, might just be nice to give the listeners some background of who Toine was.

CEES FLINTERMAN 22:51
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 22:52
you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you want to take that case?

CEES FLINTERMAN 22:54
You start your experience with Toine at New York University. I always liked to hear that.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 22:59
Me

CEES FLINTERMAN 22:59
Yeah.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 23:00
too, they have great stories.

BERT LOCKWOOD 23:03
Toine was one of the Sincere students. a, uh, this was sort the end of the heyday uh, foundations funding, uh, internatio education in the, uh, U. Um, and there was a very special center that was run by Tom Franck who was a Canadian, but he taught at the, uh, law school. And I would say probably the most brilliant, uh, person that I ever met. Um, but he had this center for international studies which, gave out, senior fellowships to distinguish academics and professionals. And junior fellows, which were PhD students and, uh, gradu law students. And so my first real after Virginia was as the assistant director at this NYU center. and it was sort of interesting cause I basically was like, uh, a country Um, and New was one of the places where I really didn't apply for jobs cause it was sort of big and intimidating, but sure enough, the best job offer came uh, NYU. And looking back, I, I'd probably have to say those three years at NYU were, uh, uh, uh, uh, in terms of personal growth, uh, very important to my Toine, uh, Toine was one of those uh, as was Mohamed ElBaradei, and, uh, who later, uh, won the, uh, won the, uh, Nobel Peace Prize for his with, with the, uh, International Atomic Energy, agency, um, he Toine and I became very, close friends during that time. if I could digress for one moment, I, I was thinking of Mohamed, today

CEES FLINTERMAN 24:56
Uh, yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 24:56
: And I always remember, a comment that Mohamed made to me. This was during the Nixon, Running for president, uh, campaign is Mohamed said that he thought that every person in the ought to have the right to vote in an American presidential election because the consequence was so important to the rest of the world. And, and that, that has a, uh, a true echo uh, that, that was Mohamed's, sage advice about 50 years ago or so.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 25:31
dad, if I recall there's a great memory of you, Mohamed, perhaps Nigel pranking Toine about attending a party.

BERT LOCKWOOD 25:41
no, not Nigel, but, uh, Mohammed and me. And, uh, to a certain extent, you need to know Toine's personality, how serious he was. And, uh, there was an annual party uh, Professor had his, his house. And, and Tom as I say, he was brilliant, but he wasn't sort of a, uh, particularl warm, slap on the back kind uh, personality. He somewhat and but he gave this annual party. And so, Mohamed and I schemed to, play a, a prank on Toine, and, uh, let it know the attire was formal, and he needed to wear a tux. And, uh, uh, his wife at the time would, you know, need to uh, dressed, appropriately for a um, uh, occasion. And so, Mohammed told Toine then we arranged it so that Toine would come to me as the assistant director to double check that that was accurate information. And he was in tears because he was at a student's budget and he couldn't afford to a new dress for

CEES FLINTERMAN 26:52
the, uh,

BERT LOCKWOOD 26:53
the thing. And so I said, well, you know, Toine, I'm, I'm sure you know, if you called Professor Franck at home and asked him if it would be okay if she didn't wear the formal dress, that, that would be fine. And, in a classic uh, I said, you can use my phone. And so he, he was in my office, using my phone and he called Professor Franck at home and he explained the situation that, you know, he couldn't afford this. And Professor Franck said to him, well, Toine, I think someone is pulling your leg. which is, you know, an American, uh, expression, that someone is kidding you. But Toine looked down at his leg and he said, no, no, no, no, man's pulling my leg.

CEES FLINTERMAN 27:47
I don't have such nice stories about Toine, but I recall Toine, especially as a very good friend colleague at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Toine later became the first secretary to the government advisory committee on human rights and foreign policy in the Netherlands. That was the upshot and one of the outcomes of the government memorandum on human rights and foreign policy. And since the early eighties we have had here in the Netherlands, uh, such a government advisory committee composed of independent experts. And I had myself the pleasure later on in the nineties to be, uh, the chair for about 12 years of that committee, About the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.Uh , uh, which was certainly, uh, influential and because of people within the ministry, civil uh, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, uh, like Toine van Dongen and Herman Burgers.

BERT LOCKWOOD 28:42
if I could put.

uh, uh, Cees, because I think people listening will not appreciate, the fact that human rights typically was not, a subject matter that had a separate, uh, department for, within foreign ministries. and the fact that the Dutch may well have been the first to have you know, a special section devoted to human rights was very important. the, um, the, um, the U S had an interesting history on that. Um, and that it was part of the post Vietnam experience and, and the reaction against, uh, Vietnam, that it was actually the U S Congress, uh, former mayor of Minneapolis named Donald Frasier was, who was a Congressman, Congress passed a bill to force the state department to create a section on, human rights. and, and, and this was, that's something the state department diplomats really wanted because diplomats sort saw jobs as getting along well with the governments, in the country where they were, uh, stationed.

CEES FLINTERMAN 30:02
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 30:03
One of the great things with the experience is that Congress required the state department

report. Initially, it was on countries that received American aid, but eventually became all countries, what their human rights

CEES FLINTERMAN 30:22
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 30:22
is. And one of the things that. is the value of legislation is that it becomes bureaucratized. And so you have, within, the foreign ministry and within, uh, diplomatic delegations. An obligation and people assigned to keep track of what the human rights issues are in a, in a country. because they have to report back for this annual Uh, and I've had some of my students who, um, have graduated and who have gone into, the foreign service. And, uh, and they end up these, uh, foreign countries, but one of their jobs has been to actually keep track of these things for part of that reporting process. Um, it, it actually, uh, if I tell this particular story to, to bring that home. Um, it uh, uh, a most telling and interesting experience when I went in 1986 to Pinochet's Chile.

CEES FLINTERMAN 31:28
Oh,

BERT LOCKWOOD 31:29
On

CEES FLINTERMAN 31:29
yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 31:29
a mission for the,

CEES FLINTERMAN 31:30
um,

BERT LOCKWOOD 31:30
uh, International League for Human Rights. And, we were to do a report on what the human rights situation uh, was in, uh, Chile for this NGO and I contacted Toine ahead of time. Um, the Dutch had a three-person mission Chile at the time. And we, at our first day there, we met the person that Toine identified for us to talk with. And this fellow just laid out for what all these human concerns and who we should talk to. And, and, and it was just a wonderful background. We, that same day subsequent to that meeting went to the U. S. mission, and the U. S. mission had 88 people. well, we asked them about the human rights situation. They said to they had had to cut back their mission from 96 to 88. they didn't the manpower to, uh, you know, follow the human rights stuff. And so they really didn't have anything to provide us. And it was so telling that here we, the Dutch with their, uh, three people, you know, knew everything that

was going on. the U. S. was pretending it didn't have the manpower was trying to be able to keep up on the issue. So.

CEES FLINTERMAN 33:03
Yeah. Especially sad in light of the fact in the overthrow of, uh, Salvador Allende's government in 1973, it was clear that there was some U. uh,implication . And you would think that, the U. S. would get, would remain involved, uh, in trying to uphold human uh, instead of further, contrib to the deterioration of human rights in that part of the world.

BERT LOCKWOOD 33:29
There, um, was that the, the U. S. interest with largely with our, companies,

CEES FLINTERMAN 33:36
yeah,

BERT LOCKWOOD 33:36
uh,

CEES FLINTERMAN 33:36
yeah,

BERT LOCKWOOD 33:36
corporate,

CEES FLINTERMAN 33:37
the company.

BERT LOCKWOOD 33:37
uh, corporate business stuff. And, uh, Lundy uh, you know, nationalizing some of, some of those, and that was the great fear of uh, an elected communist government that was going to be, uh, expropriating, U. S., uh, corporate interests.

CEES FLINTERMAN 33:53
Yeah. The, the government memorandum on human rights and foreign policy also led to the establishment a human rights ambassador, in the Netherlands. And that's still the case. And Bert, you have been very much involved in organizing meetings, uh, with, various human rights ambassadors in the country.

BERT LOCKWOOD 34:12
You know, that, that really was the, uh, The genius of, uh, Bill Butler, who

CEES FLINTERMAN 34:17
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 34:18
you know, the chair of my board. Um, for, it was one of his clients, that, uh, established the Morgan Institute. Urban Morgan was his um, gave the money to the University of Cincinnati to set up the uh, program at a law school in international human rights in 1979. And, Butler had some great and one of the things that he did, uh, to bring together senior, bureaucrats in foreign ministries that had portfolio on human rights. and you know, the were the first, and then the U S that we've mentioned, I think his first meeting in Canada, uh, as I recall, was seven countries. and one of the, the great things in, in, in the stories, is Butler would hold these annual meetings, of Western, Bureaucrats in foreign ministries interested in human rights, I mean, the senior person, and would do it in a different capital. And as I say, they started with seven, but eventually it got up to around, I think, about 25. it wouldn't be true today, but it clearly was at the time.

CEES FLINTERMAN 35:40
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 35:40
Uh, t people were not important enough. To be able to organize such a meeting, within their foreign ministries, so Butler would organize it under the auspices of the International Commission of Jurists, which he was involved with. and a different country, uh, would host it and the would send their representatives. Well, at the these people had interactions and so there would be an agenda, but frankly, the most important part, um, meetings were over the

CEES FLINTERMAN 36:16
Uh,

BERT LOCKWOOD 36:17
coffee breaks and dinner when they would exchange

CEES FLINTERMAN 36:20
um,

BERT LOCKWOOD 36:20
ideas. uh, uh, and it was really just sort of, if, if, if you think about, um, networking, the, the, the bureaucrats, if you will, the, the, the ministry people, they absolutely loved the meeting because uh, gave them an opportunity to meet counterparts. that it, it, it, it wouldn't have. It, it would have the same relevance today now there is sort of this within the foreign ministries to the human rights people, but plus, you know, with email, the technological changes, it's much easier be in contact. But at the time, it really was, I think, a very important development. I got to go to about 20 of as the rapporteur. And they were important to me. and I think people sometimes are cynical, if you will, but... It was clear to me that the foreign ministry people, were interested in human rights. I mean, it just wasn't the job, but they really wanted to advance human rights. And they were Good people. not ones that would make newspaper coverage or that you would ever hear of, but that wanted to do good. And I the value of was

that it gave them an opportunity to share and put proposals. And as I Bill was wonderful for my program, but this was one of creative contributions. And it was ridiculous. It cost him to do these meetings about $5, 000.

CEES FLINTERMAN 38:04
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 38:04
would have the other governments for the individuals that would attend. And then the host government I think, was obligated to do a dinner. But in each of the that they met, he would arrange for a dinner on the first evening the American wha country it was in. And then he would get the American, the State Department a lunch for these diplomats. But one of the things that he was the invitation of human rights NGOs within the country for the lunch. And so it gave them an opportunity also to interact, if you will, between their foreign and these NGOs. And again, sort networking, really, I think, important.

CEES FLINTERMAN 39:00
that reminds me best, one of my best experiences the field of human rights, working in the field of human rights. I don't know whether you have yourself best experiences in that but I always recall my work in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1993 very much helped and that's the reason why I came to it, very much uh, by committed civil servants within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I was a leader of the delegation of the Netherlands to the Commission on Human Rights, and the vice chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, and one, one occasion, Shimon Peres, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel was due to before the Commission and the chairman, the Tunisian chairman said to me, well, in my case, well, that's not the best place for me now to be, to chair that meeting, would you mind to chair that meeting, uh, and I chaired that meeting, uh, that was such an interesting meeting, Shimon Peres, uh, talking for one hour, laying out the, uh, conditions under which it would be possible to come to an agreement with the PLO at the time And later, September 1973, I'm not claiming any responsibility there, but we had the Oslo Accords. It was a period of hope, of expectations, trying to find ways promote peace in the Middle East. And if you see now, the present situation, that's still far away. And in between that meeting of the Commission on Human Rights, we had the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. You may remember it and you may have been there was the chair of the delegation at the time, the government delegation, switching from academia to government for a short period. And then I an interview Arafat. And I always remember that again, as an example it is find diplomatic ways forward in order to use human rights and fundamental freedoms and to strengthen peace and security. And again, that was in June 1993, a few months before the final Oslo Accords 1993, which unfortunately were incredibly undone by the murder of Rabin a year later. like, yeah, I was… But were you there?

BERT LOCKWOOD 41:32
I was

CEES FLINTERMAN 41:34
was there? Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 41:35
And there was one classic thing happened at Vienna. And it's a lesson governments never learn. that is censorship. these attempts at censoring things actually backfire on them. And the Chinese used their weight in Vienna the Dalai Lama …from

CEES FLINTERMAN 42:00
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 42:02
at the public meeting. …. And what happened was that Amnesty International then invited the Dalai Lama to speak. And I think he probably had at least 10 times the size of the audience

CEES FLINTERMAN 42:21
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 42:21
that he would have had if he had spoken governmental.

CEES FLINTERMAN 42:24
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 42:25
that's a lesson. I've a number of during my life where they try to censor things, but it ends up only creating more in people to find out what's going

CEES FLINTERMAN 42:37
That's right. Talking about the Dalai Lama, I had the privilege of meeting him in his in Dharamsala, high in the mountains in India after a seven days mission to Tibet, uh, together with an Irish senator and a Dutch parliamentarian, which led, uh, eventually to a report under the title "Tibet is the remaining largest colony in the world", a colony of, uh, China. Tha was in 1998, I believe, that I was there. And I admire him because of his commitment, his never giving up, his struggle for human rights and for peaceful solutions. And that's very impressive two and a half hours conversation with him the privacy of his house northern India.

BERT LOCKWOOD 43:32
benefits of 50-some year friendship I think it'll be another book in Pennsylvania series, the not. manuscript that have recently sent my with your Dutch friend reflections. And experience is in Tibet.

CEES FLINTERMAN 43:50
Great, great.

BERT LOCKWOOD 43:51
Uh, yes, and, there's a foreword by the Dalai Lama,

CEES FLINTERMAN 43:54
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 43:55
it, but, uh, it's in the process of being reviewed right now, but, uh. read the manuscript and it's just absolutely fascinating.

CEES FLINTERMAN 44:02
That's nice to

BERT LOCKWOOD 44:03
I'm

CEES FLINTERMAN 44:03
hear. Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 44:04
pretty sure. will in the Penn series And a most addition.

CEES FLINTERMAN 44:11
I'm very pleased to hear that. Yeah. I think that She was one of the active human rights activists in the early years in the working for the Tibet issue at that time in the sub-commission on the prevention of discrimination and protection minorities. Where I was the ultimate member for important minorities, where I was the ultimate member for Theo van Boven, who was the member of the committee. And I always remember that we drafted the first ever resolution on China adopted within the human rights situation in China, particularly Tibet within the United Nations framework.

BERT LOCKWOOD 44:48
yeah. You've mentioned the magic

CEES FLINTERMAN 44:52
couldn't

BERT LOCKWOOD 44:53
wonder if offer few comments our friend Theo van Boven, who's one of the big heroes international human rights.

CEES FLINTERMAN 45:03

Yeah. I know Theo for a very, very long time. I'm still very deeply impressed. The other day we celebrated his 90th birthday. He was involved well, in the architecture and then building up the system of the United Nations system of protection of human rights involved in the, for example, the last minute drafting of the optional protocol to the covenant on civil and political rights. And later he the UN commissioner human rights. And he became the UN commissioner for human rights, which is presently the director of the human rights division of the United Nations, which is presently the high commissioner for human rights. And of course, the UN commissioner for human rights, which is presently the title. And of course, with another mandate, Theo was the director at the time. In 1977, he became director of the human rights division of the UN. And his motto was, and I will, I take that always at heart. His motto was that people matter. People matter. Human rights is about the protection of ordinary people. And he opened the doors. of the United Nations to victims human rights violations around the world. And of course, governments didn't like that, especially Latin American governments at the time, the Chilean and the Argentinian government, but also the United States government didn't like it at all. And that led eventually a non-renew of his five years contract. And in a sense, that was a blessing for us, because at that time it had just started. Here, together with a few colleagues, the Faculty of Law of Maastricht of Limburg University, and it became clear that Theo was interested in going back to academia, because he was offered only a very, well, a modest job back at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was no recognition of his enormous merits in the field of human rights. So he accepted our offer to come to Maastricht, and since that time, we have been working even more closely together than, uh, before.

BERT LOCKWOOD 47:21
and, and, and bringing this full circle again, um, he's the hero, in the, uh, first book that published, in my University of Pennsylvania series, written by Ian Guest, who was a British journalist uh, covering the, situation in Argentina. The title of the book is Behind the Disappearances,

CEES FLINTERMAN 47:45
I read it is, yes. Paul

BERT LOCKWOOD 47:47
Jay The hero's in the book as he covers the, Geneva and the attempts of the Argentine government to prevent the UN from taking up the case of Argentina and the, uh, pressures, uh, brought to bear against Theo Van Boven, uh, refused back down on it. yeah. Theo's the hero of that story, but, it's a book that I'm very proud of because it reads like a novel.

CEES FLINTERMAN 48:13
Indeed.

BERT LOCKWOOD 48:15
and, and, and it's uh, compelling. And it's sort of interesting, uh, he first went to a commercial publisher to try get the book published, and they said they would, but they wanted them to take out the third of the book devoted to Geneva and to the Theo Van Boven stuff. And, uh, I

mean, what was taking place there and, uh, you he thought rightly that that was the most important part of the book. Uh, and uh, when I got the manuscript, it had no footnotes. and, uh, as I said, read it like a novel,but I just thought it was absolutely fantastic. he agreed that if I accepted it, that he would put in the necessary footnotes and the like, but, uh, yeah, it was an important thing, but capturing the importance uh, Theo and people which a wonderful way of describing human rights field.

CEES FLINTERMAN 49:08
I do think so. It is reflecting the gist of human rights. People matter. It's people. The world. Yes.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 49:17
speaking of Theo, I thought it would be an interesting, uh, personal story to share that when my dad and I got to visit the Netherlands, I was living in Amsterdam for three years. And we got to travel to Maastricht and see Cees and his beautiful family. And Cees you took us over to Theo's

CEES FLINTERMAN 49:33
Yeah.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 49:33
house. And we had a lovely lunch outside. and then you gave us a beautiful tour of Maastricht, which is one of the most beautiful cities in the Netherlands. if a listener has not been usually, you know, it's Amsterdam,Rotterdam , the Hague, but Maastricht is absolutely worthy to go visit. and one of the inspirations I had for this podcast, you know, the theme is an oral history to get these incredible stories of human rights giants like yourselves. but we got to sit down in Maastricht. we were walking along and it was a beautiful sunny day. It doesn't always happen in Netherlands, uh, quite rainy certain time of the year. but Cees you and my dad had sat on a park bench together and I was next to my dad. And it was just a very natural, casual moment where you both recorded memories together of your 50 plus year friendship. I know, this year, uh, you both turned 80.

CEES FLINTERMAN 50:25
That's right

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 50:25
And I was just so lucky to, you know, be the daughter of a human rights, lawyer and professor. And I've heard these stories growing up since I was little. And Cees, I know your children have as well. And just to be a listener into the window of your long-term friendship and your incredible legacy in the international human rights world, I just sat there listening to both of you and taking it all in and just knowing how lucky I was to be in that moment. And I thought, well, I'd really like to share this with others. And that's where this podcast really came about. And, you know, it all circles back to just a wonderful day in Maastricht with you and Teo and my father.

CEES FLINTERMAN 51:02
How nice.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 51:04
also wanted make sure we get to a few more, for myself, being very passionate for women's rights and working in social impact and for female empowerment. I'd love to hear your experience, with the CEDAW, the Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. I know you were elected as one of the experts for that committee. I would love to hear your experience.

CEES FLINTERMAN 51:28
you, Meredith, for your kind words. Yeah, it was a wonderful meeting here in Maastricht. My experiences in the CEDAW Committee belong to my best experiences in of human rights. And why is that? You know, I've been involved with women's rights for quite some time. At the time that I was working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the convention came into being, 1979. It took quite some time before finally the Netherlands ratified the women's convention. And with my staff here at Maastricht University, we were very active in pressurizing the Dutch government to ratify the women's convention. In the 90s, I was involved in remedying one of the defects of the women's convention by negotiating an optional protocol, providing for an individual complaint procedure and an inquiry procedure. And then in the early years of this millennium, I was elected to the committee four years. And again, another four years. And four years, out of those eight years, I was the only man. And you know why I consider it the best experiences? Because of the deep commitment of my colleagues, all women, to the cause of equality, of gender equality. And they knew what they were talking about. They were very serious in their work, coming from different cultures, different backgrounds, different religions, but basing themselves on the words of the convention, which can be used very much as a vehicle, had to change the situation. And I was impressed by the impact that the women's convention has in quite a few countries around the world. And it's a long process. But certainly, it makes a difference. And for that reason, I was so pleased to be part of that endeavor. And that was also the why, after eight years, when I had the opportunity, once again, to run for election, to choose for the Human Rights Committee, because I thought that it would be important to strengthen the link between the various human rights treaty bodies within the United Nations. And was planning to use my experience in the Women's Committee, within the Human Rights Committee, which is supervising the covenant on civil political rights. And I met old friends, Bert knows him also very, very Nigel Rodley, Michael O'Flaherty, and a number of others. And again,there I have very good experiences and I've tried establish a link by regular contact between the Women's Committee and the Human Rights Committee, so as stimulate also the Human Rights Committee to back up the efforts the CEDAW Committee. And I do think well, that I've succeeded to some extent. It was a pity that I was not re-elected after my first mandate in the Human Rights Committee, which is also a mandate for four years. I hope that answers your question a little bit, Meredith.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 54:51

Yes, absolutely. absolutely fascinating. when my dad and I were going and preparing our show notes for you, that was one of my most intriguing parts of your history, knowing that you were, at a time, one of the only males in that committee amongst women.

CEES FLINTERMAN 55:06
Yeah.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 55:06
And I think that speaks so highly to you. So thank you so much for sharing that.

BERT LOCKWOOD 55:11
I just wanted to underline one of wonderful things about Cees, is that he's had not only the academic positions where he can influence, uh, students and, and scholarship, through his writings, but he's had these incredible, uh, experiences as a representative, uh,on these international, uh, official bodies uh, expert bodies that have been, uh, created that are, know, a passing,uh, uh, and implementing, uh, if you will, the human rights. But, it's, the melding of those experiences is something that, I think, gives Cees Particularly valuable, uh, uh, contribution that he has made, uh, in, in the international human rights field.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 56:03
Yeah. Thank you, dad. that was, very good to recap that. we're going to end on a couple of notes, but I did think it'd be really interesting to hear about the co-sponsored event you did together for the economic and social rights conference at the university of Maastricht.

CEES FLINTERMAN 56:17
Yeah. we had the pleasure of together again in, uh, in Maastricht with Toine van Dongen, who helped us a lot, uh, from the ministry of foreign affairs at the time. You know, Meredith, um, economic, social and cultural rights have always been, and still unfortunately, uh, in many parts of the uh, also in the Western part of the world, also in your country, the poor relation of the human rights family. At the concept of the invisibility and inseparability of all human rights is um, taken seriously by many around, uh, around the world, despite the fact that, uh, in the universal declaration of human rights, there is a holistic approach. And we sold at the, uh, Ministry of foreign affairs with the assistance of the Urban Morgan Institute and the international commission of juries to work, a set of principles that could help, that could help interpreting and strengthening economic, social, and cultural rights, uh, and it was a most, uh, interesting conference at the time, Bert, wasn't it? Seven days of hard, five days of hard work. And we managed to have a, uh, a very detailed set uh, interpretive principles and, uh, and ideas about how to strengthen economic, social, and cultural rights 10 years later, followed by a similar conference in which, again, we participated in 1996 on how to identify and remedy violations of economic, social, and cultural rights. And I think both documents, which have been published in the Human Rights Quarterly, have contributed a lot keeping up the idea and strengthening the idea of the indivisibility of all human rights and strengthening, in particular, economic, social and cultural

BERT LOCKWOOD 58:10
rights. those meetings, as I recall, we the participants, some of the key a number of them, if I recall correctly, experts on the treaty body that was being

CEES FLINTERMAN 58:24
Yes.

BERT LOCKWOOD 58:24
in the economic field. So gave particular expertise importance in terms of attempting to influence progressive in this area, is particularly neglected in the United States.

not.

you know, again, this was also need to Bill Butler,

CEES FLINTERMAN 58:56
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 58:56
was someone who felt About international economic and, uh, social and those rights. not. but yes, I think it made a, uh, in, in, important contribution, though. Those are still our challenges.

CEES FLINTERMAN 59:11
Oh, yes.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 59:12
And I wanted add that Cees, I the honor you had of meeting the Dalai Lama is absolutely incredible. And what a once in a lifetime opportunity, And,

CEES FLINTERMAN 59:20
Yep.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 59:20
uh, growing up in Cincinnati, we had one of the first cars I remember. Um, I think dad, you and mom bought it probably in 1986 when I was born. I'm in what, what we call an elder millennial these days. I'm 38. and we had a blue Volvo station wagon, uh, the one that had a back seat that you could, open up and you'd sit in the very back and you would. ride backwards. I think that's probably not safe anymore. I doubt they'd do it anymore, but I always remember we had a bumper sticker on most of our cars, but the blue Volvo always rings true. Cause it said Save Tibet. And we would drive around Cees, you know, the neighborhood we live in is called Clifton.

CEES FLINTERMAN 59:58
Yep.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 59:58
part of university Cincinnati and we would drive. Growing up. I always had friends and say, why, why do you guys want to save Tibet? And they didn't really know about the human rights challenges happening in Tibet. and just being in a humanitarian household, I would always, you know, share, well, this is what's happening and it's really important, you know? Um, and then my sister Courtney, my older sister went to university of Indiana in Bloomington and the Dalai Lama's brother lives in Bloomington, Indiana. so she had a couple, great events where she would get to meet, his brother. I have a very special place in my heart for it Tibet. And hearing your story,um , was incredibly

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:00:36
Save Tibet is still on the cars, Meredith, um, that that's, that's your mother's doing. So

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:00:42
that is mom. Let's give Lynn Lockwood credit.

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:00:44
guest.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:00:44
Uh, mom's not, I hope my mom will be a podcast, uh, One day it might take some, uh, wrangling to get Lynn Lockwood on, but that definitely is mom. and then I also wanted to, do a full circle moment as well. Cees, thank you for sharing your experience in Ghana. you know, you went there in 1974. this is 50 years later and Ghana has been in the international news, with human rights issues. the Supreme court right has commenced deliberations with the challenges of the anti LGBTQIA

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:01:14
Yeah.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:01:15
legislation. you know, the bill that was passed in parliament, and Richard Dela Sky is the lawyer and journalist who was granted permission by the court to contest this contentious bill.

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:01:25
Yeah.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:01:26
and I just think for our listeners, um, it might have been seeing Ghana in the news for this, really dangerous bill. you know, it's already illegal to be gay in Ghana and you can go to three years, to jail if you are caught. and they are trying to tighten those restrictions and make it even more dangerous. so I just wanted to open up the floor to speak about Ghana now

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:01:45
Yeah. well, it shows that the struggle for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a never ending, uh, struggle. Isn't Uh, that, uh, is experiencing once again, undermining, uh, I think uh, uh, what has been achieved at the international level. on the domestic level by restricting the principle of equality, and the principle of gender equality. So, but on the other hand, I do believe in, and I think that's one of the developments over the past 25 years, I do believe in the strengths of human rights defenders, who on the basis of international and regional human rights instruments are continuing to put pressure on their governments to, well, to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms, also in the field, in particular in the field of the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:02:53
would be sort a, a nice story to bring this together, which is we've actually been in in and so we were very much with the Unity Dow

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:03:10
yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:03:10
years ago. Dealing with gender, uh, in, in litigation challenged gender discriminatory provision of the, 1986 Citizenship uh, that case became sort of a cause celebre. And, and we were ultimately successful. I like to use that particular case something of an insight into how international human rights develops.

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:03:38
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:03:38
And so, um, we won that case. In the trial court, which was the high court in Botswana and then in their, the court of appeals. but we were having figuring out a way to get the government to implement, the victory. It chose to disregard it.

China decided to open itself up to the And to host in 1995, uh, conference on. rights. u,

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:04:09
world. Yes.

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:04:11
uh, everyone in the Wanted to go to, uh, Beijing for this opening up of, of, of, of China. Including And the president of Botswana. And one of the things that you have to do as part of these UN conferences is that when they have these themes is that you need to submit a report before the conference as to what your record is. Um, and this thing with women's rights, and basically the president of Botswana did not want to be embarrassed in

the unity Dow case, which had become sort of this international cause celebre in the human rights field. that's the reason we really were successful is that, you know, he wanted to go to Beijing. so in that case, the government had fought it and the attorney general, uh, Botswana that had argued the uh, against us in the,uh , the, the trial court, thought that this was not simply a question of how a few more kids getting Botswana citizenship, but that was an attack on their patriarchal society.

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:05:25
Yeah. Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:05:26
And, and he fought it tooth and nail. two years ago, um, a very important decision in Botswana dealing with gay rights. uh, there was a, uh, a, a statute that criminalized, gay sexual, uh, activity. And it went up to the high. Um, and, uh, in Botswana whose chief justice was the attorney general that argued against us in the Unity Dow case. And in last decision, whe he retired, he wrote

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:06:05
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:06:05
this decision striking. The anti-gay legislation striking down the criminalization of homosexual, uh, sodomy. and throughout the decision, the basis for doing it. Um, and the approach of the court the Unity case. And in an interview that Unity sent me that he gave to Local newspaper, the, the main newspaper in the asked in his long and distinguished legal career, was there any act or decision that he had made that he that he regretted that was, uh, wrong? Um, and without hesitation, he said, my stance in the Unity Dow case, I re, I realized that I was on the wrong side of history. you know, people can change. and, for this fellow played this very important role in, in,in Botswana to openly admit, that he had been wrong and to take that case and to apply it to upholding the rights of, uh, gays in Botswana, which we see from what you were mentioning in, in Ghana, but also in Uganda

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:07:37
Yeah.

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:07:37
now, where they have passed criminal. Um,

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:07:44
um,

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:07:44
this, it's important, uh, uh, the, this Botswana case is very important in terms of, being an uh, precedent, that can be cited.

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:07:52
uh,

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:07:52
you know, it carries more power than if you were You were to, uh, the U. S. Case or um, but to get an actual, uh, highest court of Botswana, you know, proclaiming such is important

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:08:04
Um,yeah .

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:08:04
think speaking of the Botswana case, dad, and seeing that people can change is that I hope that this podcast can be building bridges, and can be an educational, insightful, show for our listeners, our community that we're growing. I think the world can be polarizing and I deeply believe that through human rights, we need to build more bridges. And on that, Cees, we would love to offer you the last word. and I have a question, to pose to you. and it is, as we look to the future, what do you believe will be the most pressing human rights challenges and opportunities that the world will face?

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:08:42
I could give you a long answer to that question, but let me try to be brief. I'm an optimistic person. And I think in this field, you have to be, you have almost a moral duty to be optimistic. And why do I say that? Because I look at the drafters of the universal declaration of human rights who came together after the second world war, after a period of most serious human rights violations. And they drafted the universal declaration of human rights, uh, of uh, they said, uh, it is a common standard of achievement, knowing that the reality in the world was quite, quite far, from what the promises of the universal declaration. So, um, and I think that's a long, long struggle with many different threats, old threats, continuing threats and new threats, uh, for example, in the field of artificial intelligence. I think that's going to be in the field of artificial intelligence, because of the field of artificial intelligence and human rights. We owe it to those who drafted the universal declaration of human rights, to remain optimistic, to work, knowing that it is a long, long struggle for human rights and fundamental freedoms and never ending as the struggle, most likely. , But a struggle which is worthwhile and which is now followed by many, uh, around the world. I'm very pleased and that's one of the opportunities I think by the human rights defenders, having the courage to stand up against their governments around the world, they need our support. let me, um, um, restrict myself to this answer, uh, much more could be said, but, uh, there' reason to be, to remain optimistic.

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:10:30
What wonderfully stated, Cees

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:10:33
Thank you.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:10:33
Thank you so much. And, to end us on a, on a personal note I will put. hope the next time, Bert, myself, my mom, uh, with your family, we get to see you. I hope we not only come to Maastricht, but in honor of Toine, um, I would love for us to go to The Hague together and eat at one of the best restaurants. We've had the privilege of going to, um, it's called Restaurant. I don't know if I'll say this correctly, so I'll spell it as well. It's Restaurant Soeboer in The Hague and that's spelled S-O-E-B-O-E-R. It's an Indonesian

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:11:07
Oh, yes. Oh,

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:11:08
Oh, and, and, and, and Toine had said it's very popular with, um, You know, the foreign ministry

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:11:13
Yeah.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:11:13
in The Hague and it was his lunch spot that he went to and oh my goodness. We had one of the

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:11:20
four hours

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:11:20
biggest meals we've ever had and I think we probably spent about talking, conversing, catching up on old times. it's a, it's a lifelong memory and I hope we can recreate it with you, and the family, our next trip to the Netherlands.

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:11:37
You're most welcome and I will be happy to host you both in Maastricht, The Hague any other city in the Netherlands, but I love The Hague myself. I was born and raised there and like, uh, it's, it's good for me to go back there every now and then. And so welcome. And thank you very much for inviting me podcast. And it's such a pleasure to meet you, to see online Bert

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:12:01
to Dankjewel,

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:12:03
Cees, I just, it triggered one memory of Toine. Uhm, which, uh, I, I wanted to share is, the most prized assignment that he was given, in the foreign ministry was when the foreign minister, um, decided that they needed a new piano in the foreign ministry. And of course this took

weeks for Toine to, he had to go and try out each piano at these different places, you know, playing music and stuff. But, uh, he absolutely loved the Uh, oh, okay. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks forever.

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:12:47
Yeah.

MEREDITH LOCKWOOD 1:12:48
and, and Cees, uh, I'll say goodbye with one of my favorite, uh, Dutch. Uh, d we do we? Um, and again, dankjewel for joining us on today's podcast Um, the honor was of ours.

CEES FLINTERMAN 1:12:58
thank you very was great. Thank you to your wife, uh, Bert, uh, too late. Okay. Thank you very much. I'll have a warmest greetings, uh, to your wife, uh,

BERT LOCKWOOD 1:13:04
Cees, this has been absolutely

Meredith intro outro 1:13:13
Wow, what a wonderful trip down memory lane. And a meaningful way to bridge the past and present through important human rights legacies. My dad and I are very grateful for Case's trust in being our very first recorded guest on the show. We also want to thank you, our listeners, for being part of this community and for your continued interest in this work. Your support truly means so much to us. If you our podcast, please consider subscribing, rating, and leaving a review. It really helps others find our conversations. And we invite you to share this conversation with your own family, friends, colleagues, and more. If you ever have a suggestion of a future guest or topic, please reach out. Our email is humanrightsconversations at gmail.com. And you can learn more about the show at my website, meredithlachwa.com. Until next time.