

Monthly Meeting: September 2019



Jack: Hey Nick, how are you doing?

Nick: Hey, good. How about you?

Jack: Not too bad. Welcome on. You finally got all your audio issues.

Nick: Yeah, seriously. Technology is always like that, right?

Jack: Yeah. It only works when you don't need it and when you need it, it doesn't want to work.

Nick: Exactly. Yeah, so I guess first off, yeah, thanks for putting this on. I'm glad, yeah, we got a little one-on-one going. Yeah, so I appreciate it.

Jack: You bet. And just to let you know, usually it ends up being one-on-ones just because of time zone issues or what have you. And so really this is just an opportunity for you to ask any questions that you might have. I'm happy to be a

reference. Just to let you know we are recording just because I like to try to put these online when I do end up getting the time to do it.

Nick: Yeah, sure.

Jack: And just say off the bat, just in case you haven't read any of the above for episode compass, I am not a Foreign Service Officer. I just want to make sure I say that upfront. But I've gone through the process many times. So, I know some things. So I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

Nick: Cool. Yeah, so honestly, like I've just been going through a lot of practice right now because I'm a recent college grad so I found the website and actually just before hopping on here, I finished an essay prompt that you from the practice essay resource that you set up. And honestly that thing is, I just want to say like right off the bat, starting off with that, that thing is just perfect.

Jack: Awesome.

Nick: Yeah. Because not only because the prompts are good and well to be honest it's not difficult finding prompts, but it's just like you said a kind of like in the preamble for that which is you need, it's not only like the time window in terms of like picking the prompts and actually writing the essay, but also having something that doesn't just automatically correct you like, yeah, because yeah, we all take spell-check for granted. So, but I guess I'll start off with the first question of what do you think in your experience, the best structure is because I find myself kind of bouncing back and forth depending on the prompt between like four or five paragraphs. So I was just curious to ask you your thoughts on that.

Jack: All right. Yeah, you bet. First of all, thank you so much. That makes me really happy to hear about the essay simulator. It was something that was developed because of just my own needs and I figured it'd help others. So it's good to hear that you're finding a lot of-

Nick: Oh, yeah, seriously because yeah, before I was just picking prompts and willy-nilly and yeah, so like the fact that it's just I guess as immersive as it really can be is just perfect.

Jack: Awesome. Thanks. And then for your question though, what I've found to work the best is just a very simple five paragraph essay. You have your introduction, your

three points, and then your concluding remarks. Something that I've been doing the last couple of times I've taken the test and I think it really helped out was to in the third paragraph mention what like the tractors of the argument that you're trying to make might make and then basically say why they're wrong. That way you show that you have, you know, the other points of view or another point of view. And then if possible, try to add data points in there.

Jack: So if you're trying to say something along the lines of, I don't know, if it's an environmental thing and if you're trying to make the argument that climate change is going to melt all the ice caps and we're going to die, you could say something that like just increasing by like 3% of the earth's temperature would cause blah, blah, blah. Just something to show that you have some data in there as well because that can easily hit a few of the 13 components of a Foreign Service officer. Those characteristics that they're looking for. If you're able to hit a few of those points in the essay, that should help you out.

Nick: Cool. And, but with the detractor points, do you think it's, in terms of just, I guess going into with the game plan, is it better to just kind of set aside like a specific paragraph just to kind of debunk those points or do you think it might be a little smoother just to incorporate it in? So like if you make a point saying like I am for X, and then you weave into that paragraph, others might say this is wrong, but this is why they're wrong. So do you think it'd be better to kind of weave it in or to kind of have a separate section for that?

Jack: I mean I'd say whatever you're most comfortable with. I've been going with the, here are two strong points why I think so like paragraph two, the first argument for whatever you're trying to say is, I believe this and here are some reasons. And then paragraph, the next one is I believe this other thing, here are some reasons. And then the third one I do the others believe this and this is why they're wrong for these reasons. But if you want to do the weaving in between into all the other paragraphs, I think that's great. I think that's fine. If that's what you're most comfortable with, go for it. The main thing you have to remember here is that they're not looking for ... They don't care what opinion you have, they just care that you're able to write a good argument and be able to provide supporting points to that argument.

Nick: All right. Yeah, it makes sense. I mean, yeah, I guess that's a little bit of my advantage being fresh out of school, I'm used to writing papers and all that, but it's interesting that you say to throw in data points because I mean, can you, do you

have to necessarily cite it by saying like, "Oh, I write on the New York Times X, Y, Z or can you just kind of just say it?"

Jack: I think you can kind of just say it

Nick: All right.

Jack: Because I mean there really isn't a lot of space in there. What is it like 1300 characters that you're allowed, and if you start referencing things, takes up a lot of time. Now say we keep with the environmental one, if you start talking about any kind of like major reports that came out during like the convention of UN or something and they said X, Y, Z, that could probably help you out.

Nick: Okay. Yeah.

Jack: We'll actually say like September 11th of 2005, the New York Times said X, Y, Z. That might be a little much.

Nick: Right, yeah because I'm not a human encyclopedia unfortunately. So it's yeah, but that's good to know. But I guess kind of pivoting a little bit, the other section that's been really kicking my butt in terms of practice because yes, like job knowledge has been going well, you kind of know how to study English, but then of course you got the newish situational judgment and yeah, someone fresh out of school with very little, like I've got some work experience but not like I can, yeah, nothing that looks too crazy on a resume in terms of managing people. So and I was reading your blog post the other day on passing situational judgment and I was just wondering if you had any further tips or epiphanies that since then that you could provide?

Jack: No, I'd say what I wrote is I'll stand behind that. I don't really have anything more to add to it. Since I wrote that piece I did take the test because I wrote that in May I think and I took the test again in June and I kept to that and I passed very strongly in the situational judgment.

Nick: All right, good. Yeah because it gave me a little bit of a heart attack because I think it was like the first time I took that practice test that they've got on the state department website. It was everything went, it was fantastic for the first two sections and then, oh, like I got like 34 in situational judgment. So yeah, but it's a little freaky because like aside from your blog post and I've got this, yeah, I just got another

practice book that was updated because a lot of the other ones are out still outdated and don't really address it. So, but do you think just reading it, are the questions more something that people learn through experience or would you consider it more, I guess academic, for lack of a better word, where it's like, oh you can learn through a book or through a management course how to approach these situations? Or is it just more targeting like people who actually have experienced those situations?

Jack: I think what they're trying to do is really, they're trying to find independent thinkers who will not rock the boat and will get the job done. So if you keep to those things, the tenants of don't be mean to others. Do as much as you can yourself. So then the research and only go to your supervisor if there is no other option, then you can pretty much do well.

Nick: And I guess there's also another like in terms of delegating where like I'm a little 50/50 on when you see those types of questions where it's like your supervisor gives you a bigger project but you're busy is delegating, because I remember on the blog post what was actually helpful is kind of like that pyramid that you put up of assume that you're kind of in the middle of that you've got your supervisor above you, you've got coworkers at the same level and then people kind of below you. So what are your thoughts I guess in those situations where for those types of prompts which I'm sure will come up where it's you're overworked and yeah, you want to take on the job, you really don't want to say no and you don't want to delay your other responsibilities. So like is delegating a reasonable option in that situation do you think or is it just purely?

Jack: I think it's going to be highly dependent. I hate to say this but the situation being-

Nick: Exactly.

Jack: Because there will be prompts where it'll be like three or five or more where they're basically going to be throwing you that question of, "Hey you need to do this, but you got a lot going on. What do you do?" And don't delegate unless that's even an option. So for the most part they like, I think I wrote it in the blog post that your scenario will be written in the description of the question. So don't go outside of that. Don't think that you have all these other people that you can delegate to. And then it is very dependent on what it is that they want you to do. If it's time sensitive, then it's probably best for you just to do it yourself. Put things aside, unless you have

competing things that need to be done and do the one that they just told you to do. If it needs to be done in like the next day or so.

Jack: I don't know, if like a different supervisor, like someone else from a different department comes to you and says do this and you think you're swamp, then maybe you go to your supervisor and ask for help but it's very dependent and unfortunately the test they never actually give you the results per question.

Nick: Yeah, that's the tough part.

Jack: Where you get right or wrong, which is always a pain.

Nick: Right, because I mean again this might be because of my lack of experience, but I think kind of like based off of like, because I was kind of going off of other management websites because situational judgment questions aren't exactly ... While they're hard to find for not for the FSOT, they've been pretty easy to find for like management or other job applications or whatnot. But it seems like the balance that I think I've gotten a little bit better with but I'm still struggling to kind of go with is when is it okay to go to the supervisor? Because kind of like the attendance of like I guess being transparent and open and not necessarily confrontational but addressing the issue, whatever's presented head on. So, I mean, of course it's hard to say because yeah, it's all situational, but how much should, like how much do you think is within reason to kind of go? Is it go to the supervisor when it's urgent or like if you can solve the problem yourself, just do it or just voice every concern or I'm just I guess ask your thoughts on that.

Jack: Yeah, I would not voice every concern because then that would not show leadership on your part. When it's urgent you say, I think for the first two that you mentioned, urgent, and I don't remember what it is now, but you did mention something. It's basically, I think I would try to do as much as possible on my own before going to a supervisor. And by saying on my own, it would be that I gather as much information as possible, work with my peers if it's appropriate. If it's time sensitive and there are other people who should know, but you won't be able to get their feedback let's say before the deadline, then it's basically notifying them by telling them that you need to get it back by a certain time or not be considered essentially. But you do the work as best as possible.

Nick: Yeah, because it seems a little tricky because for, yeah, on the situational judgment part they say, "Oh, we're not assuming you have not like knowledge of the state department work culture or policies or anything like that." But sometimes it

does seem a little, I mean knowing because you have to know about like the hierarchy and kind of follow by that and, but most of it seems pretty reasonable. Like don't go over people's heads. Don't be mean, don't create unnecessary work or be, yeah, crazy about it. But I guess it's maybe, oh, I guess that kind of leads to a different question is what sort of, I guess steps do you take because I guess also what makes it even more challenging for me is it's sometimes you've got clearly the worst option, but then when it comes to finding the worst option, you've got two bad options, but how do you kind of go between when you're stuck like for instance, if you're stuck between two bad options, how do you kind of determine which one's the worst option?

Nick: Yeah, sorry, it's a little bit of a rambling question but it's a-

Jack: Because I was just actually about to tell you that the hard part won't be what you just said.

Nick: Oh yeah.

Jack: The first part of it that everything seems pretty obvious. You go to your boss when you need to, don't be mean to others, blah, blah, blah. That will be like as soon as you read a question, you should know like, oh, this is what I should do. But the problem is you have to work off the five prompts that they give you or more. Sometimes I think I saw there was like six prompts and from within that you have to figure out which one's the best and which one's the worst and sometimes the scenarios that they provide you are best and worst are so similar to each other, that it really makes it challenging to choose the right one.

Jack: And I have no idea if it's on a gradient scale, if they do like, oh, they chose not the best but the second best and we'll give them like a percentage of a point. I have no idea if that's what they do because some of these things were just so ridiculous, the way that they phrased it.

Nick: Yeah, exactly.

Jack: Which goes to your second question of like you have two bad options, which one's the least bad or which one's the most bad? I'd say usually the most bad you can pretty much tell and that's you're being aggressive or passive aggressive is actually I think the worst. If you don't confront anyone about it or if you just yell at them or if you try to, I think I remember one example that the online practice test

that the state department put together was basically you have a loud coworker in the visa section, what do you do and one of the prompts, one of the options was be louder when you're talking, which was worse. But when I was trying to figure out what is the better approach and that's where a lot of it will actually come down to the experience you've had in the past but for the most part usually it's like just go talk to the person. I think that's where they're trying to get.

Nick: Right. Yeah, because I'm sure when it comes to other more serious procedures assuming everything goes well, I'm sure they've got their procedures where it's like you'll learn what to do if like oh, you come across a coworker violating or like looking at classified information that they shouldn't be or I'm sure they have all that, but it's just kind of maybe gauging the reaction that you, I don't know, that you kind of have. Your gut initial reaction in those kind of urgent situations. But yeah and do you think the like kind of more management oriented ones because a lot of the questions that I've seen, yeah, which aren't FSOT but they're plenty for management, do you think those are helpful or to kind of practice or as bit of a waste of time?

Jack: I mean I think it's all practice. What you need though, if these other examples have them would be to try to find the reasoning behind the answers and instead of just saying like, oh, the answer is A, and then you read this like, oh yeah, I guess that's why, but you actually need to be able to breakdown the thinking of these people that are giving you the prompts because then that will help you as well. And you can initiate with the state department even though they don't really tell you much. If you review, you can read what these other example prompts are giving you and then you can redo the test at the state department website. And then, and I don't know if you know, but there is a link at the very end it says like review your answers.

Nick: Yeah. And you have to go back to that horrible interface that they have.

Jack: Yes, it's a horrible, horrible interface. I agree with you. And you can try to understand the reasoning of the state department as to why they chose what they did.

Nick: Okay. Yeah, like it's just finding answers and explanations because that definitely helps and that also kind of, I think that was probably one of the more helpful tips that especially I think I first saw on your blog post, which was it was so simple, but it's so easy to forget which was just take the information that's given to you and don't assume anything after that. Because there are even some questions that I was showing to some of my family members and they're, it's just so easy just to kind of extrapolate and play what ifs. But if you just kind of work with the

information given and just that's your world and that's all you have to worry about, that's all you should really consider then that does take quite a few. Like it's helped in the past, so it's easy just to way over think and just, I don't know, psychoanalyze or whatever.

Jack: Yeah, exactly. And the problem is we're all human, so as soon as we read a prompt, we're going to be like, oh, that reminds me of when Bob was a real pain in the butt to me and just like Bob was, this is his attitude and this is how we had to approach it. But you can't think about Bob, you got to be thinking about like, all right, let's imagine a very pristine bureaucratic system and what will you have to do in this pristine bureaucratic system.

Nick: Right, assuming everyone gets along unless stated otherwise and so on. Yeah. I mean, and do you think, because I've actually, yeah, my test dates going to be October 1st so that's coming up quick.

Jack: Awesome.

Nick: And, but do you think that in the meantime kind of taking a management course because I was a government major back in school, so when it comes to the job knowledge and knowing the amendments and history stuff, I mean I love that sort of stuff. So I'm not too worried about that but when it comes to the going through the sections, I guess the communications and management sections are probably my weakest points that I've been trying to beef up on a little bit. Do you think it'd be worth going through like some like [Coursera](#), online courses real quick or should I just kind of get the, or just boil down, try to find the cliff notes version. Well, how much, like how in depth is it really worth going in terms of communications and management or stuff or any subject for that matter?

Jack: Yeah, definitely. I mean for any subject I'd say like, I mean you're on a time crunch right now. You've got what, like three weeks?

Nick: Exactly. It's coming quick.

Jack: I'd say just go get a [dummies](#) book and review that. They're usually pretty easy to get through. It's a cliff notes version like you said, and they will tell you the major principles and don't dive in any further than that.

Nick: Yeah, no, that makes sense.

Jack: The only time that you should really do like a Coursera or if you want to do like actually read any of the books that are recommended by the state department is if you really just want to delve into more information or you have a genuine interest in it. Otherwise, like the saying goes, it's breadth and not depth. You know a lot about a lot or a little bit about a lot let's say and sure there will be questions on the job knowledge that will get very in depth, but if you just use some common multiple choice practices where you take out things that are obviously wrong and you will reach your probability of choosing the right one and then if you start doing like inferencing of well, around this decade, these were the major things that were happening and because of that, I think I can answer this, that starts to help you.

Nick: Yeah, for sure. But I guess I'll also not where it's but so like for in terms of like the breadth not depth, so maybe just focus on for instance, management basic theory in terms rather than going super in depth?

Jack: Definitely.

Nick: Okay. Yeah. That's good. And yeah, I'm guessing the same also applies for American history stuff and other questions bombing as far as you can say, are the questions, are they expecting a little bit more in depth knowledge for say American history, history of foreign policy because you're going to the state department and do they expect a higher level of knowledge or more in depth knowledge compared to other sections or is it all pretty even?

Jack: Yes, they and you can tell because there's like seven or eight subject areas that they test you on and when two or three of them are you US culture, US history, US government politics, they do expect you to know a lot more about US items than global.

Nick: Okay. That actually helps a lot. So it's, yeah, it's I know the-

Jack: I guess the question where they asked like in 1980s the president of Egypt was really interested in doing this type of foreign policy, yay or nay? They don't do that. They want you to know the US because you are a representative of the US, so they want to make sure you have at least a basic concept of culture and politics over the last five or six decades.

Nick: Okay. Yeah. But, and then before that, because yeah, there is a little bit of world history, so like just know the basics of world events and then as it gets more recent, maybe focus a little bit more on the US perspective?

Jack: Like I said, I'd say that's a good approach as a generalization. Will there be questions that they ask that will be very specific on something? Most definitely. I mean that's just to try to weed out people who are exceptional to very good, to good, to not so good.

Nick: All right. Cool.

Jack: It's a pain in the butt test, Nick.

Nick: Yeah. But I mean it sounds like it's kind of meant to be because I mean to really get the people who are really dedicated to, yeah.

Jack: It's something like 60% of the people don't pass the test and then after that 80% of the people don't pass the essay portion. So by the time you get to the orals, it's really only like the final 10% of people that took the test.

Nick: Yeah. And with the essays, because it's on an eight point scale, right, or something like that?

Jack: Oh, the essay, are you talking about the one on the Foreign Service test?

Nick: Oh yeah, the Foreign Service test. So like the one that they grade after doing situational judgment and so on.

Jack: It's more than eight. I think it's on a 10 point scale.

Nick: Yeah, it sounds right. And it was like six is passing or because-

Jack: Think it's passing and six is the average just to let you know.

Nick: Oh, okay, good. So and for that eight, are they expecting like the Magnum Opus of writing or do you think they're like isn't eight like if you write a reasonable paper and then you kind of like check all the boxes in terms of get your point across,

address counter arguments, be clear and so on. Is it reasonable to get an eight or is an eight actually like pretty, you have to do all, check all the boxes and then go further?

Jack: I think an eight is on the high end. I've never heard of anyone getting above an eight.

Nick: Oh wow.

Jack: I got an eight last year when I took it. I did the approach that I told you earlier when it came to writing essays and then I did that same approach this year and I got a six, so.

Nick: Yeah, exactly.

Jack: It all depends on the reader.

Nick: Exactly. Just like all the other standardized tests and all that. I mean, yeah, I know also I'm sure no matter how much you prepare, it's a little bit of randomness in terms of the questions you get. Because it could be like the one thing you just don't know or the one thing you just happen to study the night before, who knows?

Jack: Yeah, no definitely. And it's a black box when it comes to the grading of it because they don't tell you anything and it's always different readers and reviewers. And in the end is really what I have to keep reminding myself is that they have their own staffing numbers so they have to meet. So even if you pass the test, because remember the test is graded on a, I forget, a T score. So you might have gotten a 95 on it out of 100 let's say, but if there are more people that got 96 and above and there's like they can only take 20 and you're 21, doesn't matter that you passed, they'll take the first 20.

Nick: Yeah, that's the unfortunate part.

Jack: The same thing happens for the essays. You might have the part after the test, not the essay, end of test. For those six essays, you might have written some great essays, but if you're number 20 out of 21, I mean if you're number 21 and they can only take the top 20, they take the top 20. They don't tell you that that's how it broke

down. They just said you don't move forward. So you don't know if you did well, if you didn't do well, you just know you don't move forward.

Nick: Right. And I guess kind of like, yeah, just taking a step forward in that the whole process. So say like, yeah, I take it in October, everything goes awesome, personal narrative questions after are great and I make it to the oral section. How do you really prepare for that? It seems a little tricky in terms of the, because actually I asked this to my local diplomat in residence and it seems, she was saying it's a little bit like more the United Nations in terms of you've got, you're representing your country or your interests and you're getting it across, but it's not really like that because they're working with people. So I'm just, yeah, well, so how do you really approach that or how do you begin to approach that I should say?

Jack: Yeah, did the plan residents go into any detail about what the structure is of that day?

Nick: Not really. I know it was, you've got your one on one thing and then you're given a certain amount of time to kind of take on a role and then you get together in a group and yeah, just kind of or you're like representing a different department and everyone's supposed to have this situation and everyone's supposed to work together to have the best outcome for everyone, so.

Jack: Yeah, okay, there's three parts to the day and they all takes place in a single day and at the end of the day you find out if you pass or not. So the three different sections in that day are the, actually I'm forgetting the name of it. Now there's the group portion, which is what you mostly been talking about. And that's where, let's say there's you and three others, you're put into a room, each one of you are given a scenario, which is usually like having, let's say you are given a ... It's usually also all about like limited funds and have you spend money essentially. Those four different scenarios of how you can spend the money and you have to collaborate with your teammates on choosing an approach. It's not supposed to be combative, like but you also have to say why your approach is better than the others.

Nick: Okay. Yeah, so it's not just be like the meek one and just do what everyone else says, but also just don't dominate everyone and just crush them. Yeah, so not like...

Jack: And usually it's usually stuff like let's say you're given the environmental package that you really want to go save the elephants and then someone else is given like, "Oh, but we have malaria so we have to go put money in that" and then someone's like, "Oh, but the light infrastructure sucks. Let's put money on that." And

then someone else is saying like, "Well, education here, we really need to give money to pre-K." So the four of you talk about it and then you come to a decision at the end of which one's better. And then after that-

Nick: Oh, so it's not like, oh, you have \$100,000 to split up each way and then it's your job to split it up. It's which initiative, everyone has to agree on which one initiative to move forward on.

Jack: It depends. The prompts change every year.

Nick: Oh right. Yeah.

Jack: Sometimes it's like choose what you can do with the most, here's a set amount of funds, what can you do with the projects that you've been given?

Nick: Okay, so the prompts are pretty different. So it's not like they just change the topic and it's the same problem. Like it can be very different. Okay. Yeah, that's good to know. So I mean, yeah, I'd be disappointed if they didn't make it as mysterious as possible.

Jack: I know, indeed. But during all deliberation you have four assessors in the room watching you the entire time.

Nick: Oh gosh.

Jack: And so they hear everything that you say and they're there writing their notes and they're trained not to show any expression. And then afterwards, this is a new component, I think it start in the last couple of years, they place you in a room with two of the assessors, one or two of them, and one of them is pretending to be an ambassador and basically drilling you on the decisions that were made.

Nick: All right. Yeah, and then still keeping in with the role and within the parameters of the guests information or, yeah, within the role that you were given?

Jack: Yep.

Nick: So all right.

Jack: Yeah, that's part one. And then part two is a structured interview. So basically think of it like if you're going to interview for a job, but there's a couple other components in there. There is another situational judgment thing. Earthquake just happen in ... Well, let's take the most recent example. Dorian just hit the Bahamas and you're the consular officer and now people are trying to leave and immigrate to the US. What do you have to do? So you got to figure out, you have to provide your plan and you don't need to know embassy processes, but they just want to hear how you think.

Nick: And is that in kind of like memo form or?

Jack: No, that's all verbal.

Nick: Oh, that's tricky. So it's like on the fly so you don't really get a chance.

Jack: Exactly.

Nick: Oh, yeah. That's, that's interesting.

Jack: And there was some other part, it's like the interviews and then that, and I think there's some other part, but I'm forgetting within the structured interview. And then the final part, so that was part one and two. Part three is a memo writing assignment. So you're given like a binder of 50 pages and each one of them, it's just like a bunch of different details and they give you some prompts and you have to read all the material and then answer it in a one to two page memo.

Nick: All right, cool. Yeah, because that's probably, I mean I have no idea, but I'm hoping that that'll kind of play to my advantage because yeah, fresh out of school, I've been writing memos way too many memos. So it's, yeah, I mean it's, do you think, I mean some of it I'm sure plays to kind of, it helps or if you have a little bit more experience like a real job setting or, but then also for some jobs you aren't writing memos or timed essays that often. So I'm sure that has an impact on what people put out. Yeah, I mean it's a nerve wracking process so far but yeah, honestly the resources in your blogs and other things you've been putting out have been

really helpful. So, yeah, I mean it's just a lot to digest and I appreciate you having me on and just answering my rambling questions.

Jack: Right **Nick.** I mean, I know it's such a pain in the butt, which is why I started the whole thing and my process trying to get through it. If you have any more questions, I'm happy to help. I know I've been a bit MIA on the site clearly since May with that last blog post. Work has just been inundating me over the last few months and then some personal things, but I try to get back on there and update some things. So thanks for driving and coming on.

Nick: No, thank for having me.

Jack: Where are you based by the way?

Nick: Oops, sorry.

Jack: Where are you based sir?

Nick: Around Los Angeles area.

Jack: Okay. Yeah, I've been finding that I'm mostly, whenever I do these during lunch time, it's mostly West Coast. So I'm probably going to-

Nick: Yeah, time works out well for us.

Jack: Yeah.

Nick: Cool. Oh and actually Neil I guess outside of state department questions, because if I remember correctly, like in your little bio that you spent a fair amount of time living abroad, like when you're younger and kind of having that international experience and actually I'm somewhat similar, like spent years living like Belgium, China, all that. Do you think that kind of experience or impact kind of like, do you think that kind of helps or complicates the Foreign Service process or do you have any thoughts on that?

Jack: Nah, it won't. It won't complicate it. The only time that it might, I won't even say complicate it, the only time that it might like elongate your process is if you pass

the orals and then they have to start doing the background checks. But I think they only do that for like the last 10 years of your life.

Nick: Yeah, hey still have to cover.

Jack: So if you have the last 10 years then you should be good. If I ever get to that stuff I'm probably screwed because I travel a lot.

Nick: They'll take a little while, that's for sure.

Jack: Exactly.

Nick: Yeah. But I mean that sounds kind of like what I heard because the state department reps and recruiters come to my school and they were saying similar things. Do you think a dual citizenship would have any problems? It does?

Jack: I think you're going to have to drop your other citizenship.

Nick: Oh yeah.

Jack: So, and don't quote me on that. So the only thing that I'm basing that off of is a personal experience. So the reason I traveled was because my dad was in the Foreign Service and when he married my mother, she had to drop her Costa Rican citizenship to get a US citizenship and she couldn't be dual during that time. Now, if that changed, I don't know. but that's the experience that I know.

Nick: Yeah. I mean we'll see. Because I mean, right now mine's US and German. So it's not like US and Germany are not sworn enemies. It's not yeah so it's-

Nick: But yeah, because I mean as far as I thought it would be, oh, assuming everything went awesome and I was offered a position there, it just might've meant not being stationed in Germany because I guess conflict of interest, but yeah, I'll be sure to do a little bit of research on my own and see, because that'd be interesting because if that's changed at all. But yeah, other than that, it's, yeah, like you said, it's a pain in the butt process, but we're all working hard towards it.

Jack: Yeah. Best of luck Nick. October 4th?

Nick: The first.

Jack: First. All right.

Nick: Yep. All right. Thanks so much.

Jack: Hey cheers. No problem. If you have any questions, just let me know.

Nick: Yep. Sounds good, right. Bye. Bye.