

eVIEWS

An interview with Steve Willis.

GLOSSARY

right off the bat	immediately
greater	bigger, more, higher, etc.
goods	consumer products(possibly short for white goods; refrigerators, washing machines, dryers, dishwashers, etc.)
washers	clotheswasher (U.K. washing machine)
dryers	clothesdryer (U.K. drying machine)
to yell (yelling)	to shout
hall	passageway
nod	short movement down and up of the head to acknowledge someone or indicate "yes"
"life on the street"	manner of living
"metro"	Metropolitan underground rail system
yards	gardens
neighbors	people that live next door or in the same area
to bother	to annoy
to mingle with	to mix with
"plaza"	public square or space
euphoria	feeling of extreme well-being
to go crazy	to behave strangely
to take your breath away	to leave you speechless/ surprised
to be ruled by sthg	to be controlled by sthg
wireless telephones	cell phone(U.S.), mobile phone(U.K.)
paging	messaging
set up	organised
to relate with people	to work with people
crime rate	number of crimes (often expressed as a % of population)
tons of problems	lots of problems
overall	in general
influx	arrival
overwhelming	incredible
newcomers	immigrants (people that have recently arrived)
white, anglo-saxon Protestant	also WASP, W.A.S.P.
aristocracy	established, wealthy families
to boom (booming)	to explode, to do very well
tough question	complicated issue
"the individual is supreme"	situation where the individual's interests are put first
"to do your own thing"	to behave without caring about others
boundaries	limits, edge
civil rights	people's freedom
socialist tendencies	politically left
to take care of	to look after
fantastic	excellent

menial
oughta
to strive for sthg
resources
assets
to tax to death

minimal
ought to, should
to work hard for sthg
source of energy or productivity
possessions
to tax at an extremely high level

COMPREHENSION EXERCISE

Listening 1 (eViews first two questions):

1. How long did Steve live away from the United States?
2. How long has he been living back there?

Listening 2:

Listen to each eView question (there are 8 more after the initial two) and answer one by one. First try and write down the eView question. You can replay the question several times to do this.

Then listen to Steve's answer and take notes on what he says. Again, repeat this a couple of times until you feel reasonably sure you have heard/written the main ideas.

Listening 3:

Return to eView question 3 (I'd like to talk to you about your experience of returning to the States. What ...?)

Try to complete the gaps in the following extracts from Steve's answer. Then listen to check your answers:

3. "The salary I was making was _____ than the salary I _____ in Spain."
4. "...the prices of these goods were _____ what they were in Spain."
5. "At work, one of the things I noticed right away was _____."
6. "Second was going to lunch at _____ And I felt like I'd just _____."

Next eView question. Repeat as above. Try to complete the following extracts from Steve's answer. Then listen to check your answers.

7. "In Spain you have _____ lunches, you generally work _____, you eat _____, you stay up _____. There's _____ on the _____, more _____ with _____."
8. "Instead of _____ so much or _____ full of people, it was _____."
9. "You _____ some of your neighbors, but you can _____."

Next eView question. Repeat as above. Try to complete the following extracts from Steve's answer. Then listen to check your answers.

10. "And I think that is _____, you've got _____, and no-one can _____."
11. "I've found that even when you're _____ that's _____ ... that there are places _____ ... sometime where you can _____ and still find that _____."

Next eView question. Repeat as above. Try to complete the following extracts from Steve's answer. Then listen to check your answers.

12. "Economically, I had never seen _____ and the economy being _____."
13. "There are not _____ to _____ jobs they have."

14. "The technology is _____ and everything is _____
_____ ..."

Next eView question. Repeat as above. Try to complete the following extracts from Steve's answer. Then listen to check your answers.

15. "Ten years ago I was _____ I came into the office and _____."

16. "Information systems weren't _____."

17. "Just simple administrative processes _____."

18. "...and you know what everyone is doing _____, and the amount of _____ you have is _____."

19. "And so what's going to happen, and you see it happening already, is that you can _____ most _____ in like _____ or _____ hours, which gives you plenty of time to _____
_____..."

Next eView question. Repeat as above. Try to complete the following extracts from Steve's answer. Then listen to check your answers.

20. "A _____ economy and _____ means more people have _____
_____."

21. "The _____ rate has _____."

22. "It's not a _____ world and they still have _____ of _____."

23. "You don't see _____."

24. "There are a lot of _____, more than I've ever seen in my whole life."

Next eView question. Repeat as above. Try to complete the following extracts from Steve's answer. Then listen to check your answers.

25. "I think there's two attitudes. There's the attitude of people who _____ and feel like America is only for the _____."

26. "And then you have the _____ Atlanta, that's _____, brought in all the _____, the _____ and everything that's happening."

Next eView question. Repeat as above. Try to complete the following extracts from Steve's answer. Then listen to check your answers.

27. "And I would like to see the country move away from _____
_____."

28. "Everyone does their _____ as long as they're not crossing the boundaries..."

29. "One thing I noticed in Spain was the socialist tendencies of trying to _____
_____."

30. "Trying to make sure that what they did _____, instead of everyone just going for _____."

31. "Why not _____ but for everybody?"

32. "They'll think you want to _____ ... and tax _____, and it doesn't have to _____
_____."

COMPREHENSION EXERCISE ANSWERS:

1. Six and a half years.
2. Nearly two.
3. "The salary I was making was so much greater than the salary I was making in Spain."
4. "...the prices of these goods were a lot cheaper than what they were in Spain."
5. "At work, one of the things I noticed right away was how quiet it was."
6. "Second, was going to lunch at 11.30 or noon...And I felt like I'd just finished breakfast."
7. "In Spain you have longer lunches, you generally work later, you eat later, you stay up late. There's more of a life on the street, more interaction with people."
8. "Instead of taking the Metro so much or walking on the streets full of people full of people, it was in your car, drive to your house..."
9. "You interact with some of your neighbors, but you can go days without seeing them."
10. "And I think that is part of the American dream, the idea of you've got your own house, and no-one can bother you."
11. "I've found that even when you're in a city that's congested, and there's lots of people and lots of noise that there are still places you can find, whether it's in your apartment, whether it's in a plaza... some place where you can get away from it all and still find that peace and tranquility that everyone is looking for."
12. "Economically, I had never seen the country growing so quickly and the economy being strong.."
13. "There are not enough people to fill all the jobs they have."
14. "The technology is changing so quickly and everything is happening so fast."
15. "Ten years ago I was more ruled by the time I came into the office and left."
16. "Information systems weren't as developed."
17. "Just simple administrative processes took time to happen."
18. "...you know what everyone is doing all of the time, and the amount of productivity you have is just incredible."
19. "And so what's going to happen, and you can see it happening already, is that you can complete most of your work in like 3 or 4 hours, which gives you plenty of time to start thinking about the other things and spend your time relating..."

20. "A growing economy and more jobs means more people have opportunities to earn money."
21. "The crime rate has gone down."
22. "It's not a perfect world and they still have lots of problems."
23. "You don't see as many people on the street."
24. "There are a lot of immigrants ."
25. "I think there's two attitudes. There's the attitude of people who don't like change and feel like America is only for the white, anglo-saxon protestants."
26. "And then you have the new Atlanta, that's come in, brought in all the growth, the excitement and everything that's happening."
27. "And I would like to see the country move away from where money is the most important thing."
28. "Everyone does their own thing as long as they're not crossing the boundaries..."
29. "One thing I noticed in Spain is the socialist tendencies of trying to take care of everybody."
30. "Trying to make sure that what they did was good for everyone as a whole, instead of everyone just going for what's good for them."
31. "Why not try to develop the highest level of education but for everybody?"
32. "They'll think you want to take away their assets, that you want to take away their money and tax them to death, and it doesn't have to be that way."

LESSON PLAN

1. Students talk about what changes there have been in their country in the past 10 years. They can mention the following: the economy, technology, work practices, life expectancy, unemployment, birth rate, crime rate, prices, “perceived” standard of living, % of time spent working versus % of time spare time, jobs people study to do, immigration, traffic, etc. Students should also talk about whether they consider these changes to be positive or negative and why. How do they think that these changes would be similar or different to the changes over the same period of time in the U.S.?
2. Explain they are going to listen to a man talking about the changes he noticed when he moved back to the U.S. after 6½ years. Follow the instructions for the comprehension questions, working on each question and answer individually.
3. Students discuss in small groups their own answer to the last eView question: “What would be the next positive step you would like to see your country take?”
4. Students work together in small groups to write a questionnaire on how much time they spend “doing things” per day or week. Help start them off with ideas by doing a couple of questions on the board:
Examples: What time do you normally go to bed?
 What time do you normally get up?
 (therefore, How long do you sleep every night?)
 How long do you spend travelling to work/school every day?
 ...do sport/ study English/ study other things/ have lunch/ at work or school/
 have dinner/ watch TV/ play computer games/ work on the computer/ spend
 time with friends, on the phone, etc.

When they have finished, swap groups around and ask each other their questionnaires. At the end they should decide if their lives are well-balanced, or in what areas they need to spend more or less time. Who, in the class, has the most well-balanced life?

TRANSCRIPTION

- eV How long were you away from the United States?
- Steve I was away for six and a half years.
- eV Now you've been back now for...
- Steve Just about two.
- eV I'd like to talk to you about your experience of returning to the States. What were the major changes that you noticed when you got back there?
- Steve Well, there were several major changes. One of the major changes right off the bat was economics. I mean the salary I was making was so much greater than the salary I was making in Spain, so money was all of a sudden, coming in. A lot of money which, I didn't have in Spain. I had to go out and buy lots of things because I'd just moved to the States, and I'd been away a long time, and the prices of these goods were a lot cheaper than what they were in Spain. We're talking cars, we're speaking about washers and dryers, refrigerators... those kinds of things you have to have, and they were a lot cheaper. At work, one of the things I noticed right away was how quiet it was. That might sound kind of strange but, when I was working in Spain it was always noisy, there was always lots of noise and Spaniards have a way of always yelling it seems. Even when we had meetings there was lots of yelling, people speaking at the same time. I moved back to the States, everything was so quiet. People would run into each other in the halls and instead of, "Hola, como te va" and real loud, it's just a nod, "Hi, hello". You'd go back to your office, everything... very, very quiet. And that was very difficult to get used to. Second, was going to lunch at 11.30 or noon. I was still in the routine of not even wanting to go to lunch till 2.00, and there people would call me up at 11.30 and say "Hey, let's go to lunch". And I felt like I'd just finished breakfast. It sounds strange but it is those kinds of things.
- eV Did you have any cultural problems readapting to the American way of life? What sort of things did you find different after being away for six and a half years?
- Steve I think getting back into the routine, the style of life. In Spain you have longer lunches, you generally work later, you eat later, you stay up late. There's more of a life on the street, more interaction with people, and you generally live closer together. You have more interaction with people that way. In the States, the workday actually seemed a lot shorter. Interaction with people was less frequent, everything was more quiet. Instead of taking the "Metro" so much, or walking on the streets full of people, it was in your car, drive to your house. You have nice, big yards, separate each house from the other one. You interact with some of your neighbors but you can go days without seeing them.
- eV Is that a good thing?
- Steve Well, some people think it's a good thing, and there are times when it's good. When you're tired and you like to have some peace and quiet. And I think that is part of the American dream, the idea of... you've got your own house, and no-one can bother you, but after having lived in Spain, I like some of the interaction. I like mingling with the people and feeling like there's some life and activity, and I've found that even when you're in a city that's congested, and there's lots of people and lots of noise, that there are still places you can find, whether it's in your apartment, whether it's in a plaza... Someplace where you can get away from it all and still find that peace and tranquility that everyone is looking for in their nice, big yard, or hidden away in their house.
- eV What about the United States itself? How did you find that the States had changed in that time away?
- Steve There were a lot of changes, especially in Atlanta. Economically, I had never seen the country growing so quickly and the economy being so strong, ever in my whole life.

Everywhere I went there were signs; "Help wanted". There are not enough people to fill all the jobs they have. They go out of the country to find people that can do information systems, computer programming. They go all over the world recruiting those people to come to the United States. And there are not enough people and I've never seen that before, and there's a sort of euphoria, of growth, of activity, and movement that's happening and... Even though they try to slow it down, and the stock market goes up and down and goes a little bit crazy, the technology is changing so quickly and everything is happening so fast, it almost takes your breath away. I think the way we work now, compared to the way I worked 10 years ago when I was in the States has changed dramatically.

eV In what ways?

Steve Well, ten years ago, I was more ruled by the time I came into the office and left, there was more control there. Information systems weren't as developed. Still a lot of things were done manually. Things took time to happen. Just simple administrative processes took time to happen. Now with the Internet, now with the new computer technology, wireless telephones, paging, e-mail, things like that, you can get so much done, so quickly, and be on top of it. You can have your agenda correlated with everyone else in your office, so when you go to set something up, you know whether they can come or not, and you can get them into a new meeting without them even having said yes, yet, and get it all set up, and you know what everyone is doing all of the time, and the amount of productivity you have is just incredible. And so what's going to happen, and you see it happening already, is that you can complete most of your work, in like 3 or 4 hours, which gives you plenty of time to start thinking about the other things and spend your time relating with the people and trying to develop ideas and develop solutions to problems that exists... out there.

eV Were all the changes that you felt or noticed, were they all positive?

Steve I think most of the changes have all been positive, I mean... A growing economy and more jobs, means more people have opportunities to earn money. The crime rate has gone down. It's not a perfect world and they still have tons of problems in the United States there. Lots of things they need to change, they do lots of things I don't like, but overall, it's a lot better than when the economy is not good. You don't see as many people on the street. I guess the one thing you do see, and I don't know ... I think it's good, some people probably think it's bad but, there are a lot of immigrants. There are a lot of immigrants. More than I've ever seen in my whole life. People from all over the world; Iraq, India, lots of people from India. Lots of people from China, Vietnam, lots of people from Mexico and Central America. It's just incredible the influx of foreigners coming into the country, just overwhelming.

eV What's the general attitude towards newcomers, towards immigrants?

Steve I think there's two attitudes. There's the attitude of people who don't like change, and feel like America is only for the white, anglo-saxon Protestant, who has always lived in the south and that's the way it's always been. He thinks for eternity, although he or she doesn't realize that it's only been that way for several hundred years. Then there's the others that... Atlanta is a very cosmopolitan city, and lots of people from Atlanta come from all over the United States, and come from all over the world. And so you have two groups, you have the old group, the old... aristocracy, the old people who have always lived there, and don't like to see the changes. And then you have the new Atlanta, that's come in, brought in all the growth, the excitement and everything that's happening... and these people may not like it but it's not going to change. It's going to keep growing and booming and changing that way.

eV What's the next change you'd like to see happen? What would be the next positive step that you'd like to see the country take?

Steve Boy that's a tough question! That's a really tough question... OK. I think the change I'd most like to see happen but I don't think it'll ever... if it happens in my lifetime I'll be surprised. And I would like to see the country... move away from... where money is the most important thing, it seems that way, and to where it's the individual... is supreme. In the United States the individual is supreme, everything is done so that you can reach your maximum. Everyone does their own thing as long as they're not crossing the boundaries on someone else's civil rights or something like that, but one thing I noticed in Spain was the socialist tendencies of trying to take care of everybody, trying to have a floor to make sure that everyone had a certain quality of life. I hardly ever saw any people on the streets, there was always medical... availability for everybody. Medicine, food shelter... all those things were available. A good education for most of the people, and the way they tended to think of everyone as a whole, trying to make sure that what they did was good for everyone, instead of everyone just going for what's good for them. And that's what I see is the major problem in the United States, everyone going for what's best for them. All the special interest groups you have in Washington, always thinking about what's best for their industry, best for them, and not necessarily best for the country, or best for the people as a whole. But anytime you go talking about these ideas of trying to have a more socialistic type of government, or some programs that make sure that everyone has a really good education, instead of just "some" education. I mean there's a big difference there. You have some schools that offer fantastic educations, then you have just the menial education that gets people by, and I think they oughta strive to have... Why not try to develop... have the highest level of education but for everybody? Because the resources and the future are the people. So those are the sort of changes I'd like to see happen, more of a socialist philosophy to enter into how we do things, not communist, mind you. And that's the biggest problem. If you say, "I'm thinking these socialist ideas", everyone will turn around and start calling you a communist. They'll think that you want to take away their assets, that you want to take away their money and tax them to death, and it doesn't have to be that way.

- end -