

Jim Curran: I worked on the beginning and the middle part of the AIDS epidemic, and that actually began two weeks after you were born in 1981. Two thirds of the cases in the United States were from New York City, and I made, I think, 40 trips to New York in the first year. It was a difficult part of the assignment. Your mother is taking credit for raising you and your brother during that time.

Katie Curran: And what did you do when you were in New York?

Jim Curran: We were quite certain that this was a new epidemic. The first challenge was getting people to take it seriously. Most of the cases initially were in gay men who were very eager to work with us because they had so many friends who had died of it. We were desperate to get press involvement and welcomed it.

I would try to estimate how big the problem was. And some people in the administration thought I was causing too much alarm. The sad thing was, I usually was underestimating it.

Katie Curran: Yeah.

Jim Curran: I think one of the wonderful things about public health is the sense of mission that people have. But it's one thing to say, "I really admire those people who put their life on the line." It's another thing to say, "My daughter is working on an Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, putting her life on the line." What was that experience like?

Katie Curran: It was a great learning experience. It was challenging at times just to do this work. You have long days, you're far away from home, you know, you're in remote locations. But it was very rewarding to be able to go and work alongside the local Sierra Leone health officers.

Jim Curran: The Ebola virus was discovered about five years before you were born. What made West Africa so different was the enormity of it, the thousands of deaths, and then also the fact that there were some Americans who became infected and came back to the U.S. that really got the attention of the U.S. government and the press. And you were interviewed by The Washington Post. I was on a plane back from California when the White House called me saying, did I know Katie Curran because the president wants to speak about her in his conference today.

Katie Curran: And you called me and you said, "The White House is wanting to contact you," and I thought you were just teasing me because you thought that my head had gotten too big. At the time, there wasn't always a friendly response for people who had

been serving on the Ebola outbreak as they returned home. And so President Obama highlighted me and some other people and was actually saying we should be supporting the people who are responding. But the cool thing was he called out you, too. What did you think about that?

Jim Curran: Well, he said, her father was one of the pioneers of the AIDS epidemic, and now Katie's charting her own course. And that's the kind of thing that brings tears to your eyes.

Katie Curran: Yeah.

Jim Curran: I was so proud of you.