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## **AT KRT, the Co-Accused In Their Own Words**

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As another day of document hearings continued at the Khmer Rouge tribunal yesterday, observers were granted a brief respite by two of the co-accused themselves in the form of candid video interviews.

In one video clip – filmed before his arrest – co-accused Nuon Chea gave his own definition of “smashing”, a word often used by the Khmer Rouge as a euphemism for executions.

“You smash a person’s selfish nature, the part drawn from personal privilege,” he said, maintaining that smashing was purely ideological.

“Because materialism makes you selfish. It meant smashing your bourgeois [misconceptions].”

When asked by an off-camera interviewer why he hadn’t taken the position as party secretary, the former Brother No 2 said that he had recognised Pol Pot’s “analytical mind”, and realised that he could attract badly needed intellectuals to the cause.

“At that time, some people considered me an intellectual, but I considered myself only a low-level intellectual,” he said, with a chuckle.

In another video, Democratic Kampuchea head of state Khieu Samphan said that he too had been struck by his first impression of Pol Pot – then still known as Saloth Sar.

“I didn’t know he was party secretary,” he said, noting that no one had ever considered Sar leadership material.

“I was not the only one surprised. Everyone was surprised.” After seeing the young revolutionary debate, however, Khieu Samphan was a convert.

“We were all impressed; before, we only knew Saloth Sar as a musician and a soccer player,” he went on, expanding on Saloth Sar’s facility for laying out a course of action.

“When we left the meeting, we understood the situation, and understood the measure quite well. It was the only path to take.”

The document hearings will continue today.