

Charlotte Albright

Dartmouth College Oral History Program

The Dartmouth Vietnam Project

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Transcribed by Dashiell Advincula '25

ADVINCULA: We are recording. This is Dashiell Advincula. Today is May 2nd, 2023, and I'm conducting this oral interview for the Dartmouth Vietnam Project. I'm conducting this interview with Ms. Charlotte Albright. This interview is taking place in-person in Berry 405 in the library on the campus of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Ms. Albright, thank you for speaking with me today.

ALBRIGHT: You're very welcome. It's my pleasure.

ADVINCULA: And so just to jump right in, when and where were you born?

ALBRIGHT: I was born in 1950. In Altoona, Pennsylvania, which is in the middle of the state.

ADVINCULA: And so who else was, was in your family?

ALBRIGHT: Interesting. My parents were 43 when I was born, which was unheard of in 1950. I had at that point, three sisters. So I had an 18 year old sister, a 16 year old sister, a nine year old sister who was, they thought, the surprise baby. And then nine years after her, I came along in 1950. So four girls, two parents, older than most parents, and therefore they didn't live as long as a lot of my friends' parents.

ADVINCULA: What were your parents names?

ALBRIGHT: Charles Albright and Helen Albright.

ADVINCULA: And what was it like growing up kind of being so much younger than your siblings?

ALBRIGHT: Well, it meant that my older sisters were, my oldest sister was in college when I was born. So one of my earliest memories is she's married, she starts to have kids. So my nieces and nephews are almost my peers. So all of the ages are skewed in our family. So often, I feel as much of a sister to a niece and my sisters, when my mother died and I was 17, then stepped in as sort of surrogate parents. So everybody's roles were shifting in my family. And I was the baby for sure, and probably spoiled.

ADVINCULA: And did you have like a big extended family?

ALBRIGHT: Well, by the time I was born, because I was born so late in my parents lives, the grandparents that my sisters remembered were gone. So extended family kind of extended from me into little kids. I didn't have grandparents alive at that point. They had, they had gone. So my extended family was my sisters and their kids.

ADVINCULA: And what type of work did your parents do?

ALBRIGHT: My father ran a midsize trucking company in Pennsylvania. His sole client was a grocery store, the A&P which was the Atlantic and Pacific, would be like a Hannafords today. So he trucked largely produce for them. And he was a junior partner with his two uncles, hardworking guy. And, but to have a trucking company in those days was interesting because it was also the rise of the Teamsters union. So larger trucking, trucking companies dealt with unions. My dad's trucking company was almost like a family business. And one of the interesting things about it was that the truckers did not unionize. So it was a pretty profitable concern. I mean, by the time I came along, our family was a little bit more affluent than it had been when my older sisters were were little. So I've benefited from that.

ADVINCULA: And you say that changed kind of your childhood?

ALBRIGHT: Well, I certainly had a comfortable childhood. Public schooling, but if I needed something, if I wanted something like a bike or a dress or something, I could get it. And then I was sent to Bennington College in Vermont, which was an expensive school at that time, but by that time, my parents had died. So it was their estate that sent me there. But I had a comfortable childhood. But my, I wouldn't say I had a complacent childhood, in terms of, my mother was, she was a liberal woman for her time, and she was an artist. And she was a follower of FDR. My father was an Eisenhower Republican. So I grew up in a family where the two parents were not on the same page politically, but I could see that they could talk about that. You know, I remember some political discussions and sort of trying to figure out where I fit in.

ADVINCULA: Was that like a common dinner discussion?

ALBRIGHT: I don't think it was common but during election time, you know, I was 10 when Kennedy was elected. And I think about then is when you start to listen to the grownups when they talk about whom they're gonna vote for and why. And my mother was a Kennedy fan. And I grew up thinking that, that whole Camelot thing, I bought the whole thing.

ADVINCULA: And do you remember, like being happy when JFK won?

ALBRIGHT: Well, I was happy when JFK won; my older sister Becky, who was in college at that point, she would have been 19. She was on my dad's side, and she was a Goldwater Republican. She now is a Democrat. But yeah, our family was, there was a political spectrum there. Yeah, it was kind of interesting to be a little kid and try to figure out where do you fit and why. I was just in love with JFK, because his whole demeanor seemed like the kind of person you wanted for President, young and vital, and his wife was beautiful. But when he was assassinated, my dad died about the same time. So it was a traumatic moment.

ADVINCULA: And do you remember where you were when, when you heard the news about JFK?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah. My dad died a week earlier from cancer. And he had been battling it. My mother was going back and forth to Philadelphia. So I was pretty preoccupied with that. And the week Kennedy died, I was still kind of reeling from my own dad's death. So I was at home, thinking, what more could go wrong? Yeah.

ADVINCULA: And I guess just to jump back a little bit more in time. Do you want to describe your, like middle school and high school?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah, it was a not terribly good school. I mean, it was a public school. So for me. All my sister and I were both learners. And we were both A students. But that wasn't hard to be an A student in Hollidaysburg High School. So I went to high school through 10th grade there. And it was a pretty easy ride. And then, partly because my dad died when I was 13, my mom was alone, not coping terribly well with it. I was the only one of my family sent to boarding school. I think she just didn't think she could cope with a teenager she was so much in grief on her own, so. And I was pretty bright. And I think she wanted a better school for me. So she sent me to a boarding school in Baltimore, that was an Episcopal girls boarding school, the kind where you wear uniforms and go to chapel. And I think that was good for me. It was harder, it was more structure, a great English teacher, which is probably why I studied English through my own college career. And I was thriving there. And it was helpful for me to be in the setting.

You know, when your parents are, one parents gone, and the other one struggling, and you're the only kid at home, it's wasn't a bad idea, to have me be in a setting with other people and distracting me into academic sort of accomplishments and music and all those other things. So, but what's interesting is to get back and forth from Baltimore to my house, my dad's truck drivers were still kind of helping my mother. So I was picked up at that school by a tractor trailer for vacations, and all the other kids are picked up by Mercedes, but I get into a tractor trailer as it pulls up. And I think my relationship with those truck drivers was, they were like all my surrogate dads, they wanted to take over, they would put up the Christmas tree. So I, I saw kind of how they lived as well. Not as well as we did.

ADVINCULA: And what was the name of the school? Do you remember?

ALBRIGHT: Hannah More Academy.

ADVINCULA: So you talked about how English was really, your English teacher was super influential?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah.

ADVINCULA: Do you want to talk about that?

ALBRIGHT: She was a Wellesley graduate. She was the wife of the headmaster, her name was Joan Causton. She had us reading difficult stuff. You know, we were reading T.S. Eliot, we were, I remember I wrote a paper about Hieronymus Bosch, the painter, comparing him to T.S. Eliot. That's not the kind of thing that you would have done in Hollidaysburg High School. And if you excelled, there was no limit. You could just, she would almost treat you as an individual tutor would be treating a student. "Oh, if you want to read this. You don't have to read what everybody else is reading." I took Latin, four years of Latin there. I sang in the Baltimore Symphony chorus. Somehow somebody schlepped me back and forth to those rehearsals. I don't exactly know why, but they will, I'd have opportunities at that school. But English has always been my strong point. Even when I was a little kid. I think I was pretty verbal. So when I went to Bennington I majored in English.

ADVINCULA: And did you have any other like leadership roles in high school?

ALBRIGHT: Well, um, yes, I was [laughter], in boarding school, you know, there's something called prefects. Senior prefects are supposed to be the leaders of the class and they, I don't remember government where we had any say in passing the rules. But I can't say that I was the most moral of prefects. I can remember I wanted to be liked by the other girls, I was from the north, and they were all from the south, they came north to school, I was the only one sent South. And they were sort of much wealthier and took riding lessons and that sort of thing. So I wanted to get into their good graces. And I do remember one time when you're not allowed to have sunlamps. First of all, they didn't even know that was bad for your skin. But it wasn't good for their electrical system to have every kid have a sun lamp. And for some reason, we felt we needed to have suntans. So the prefects were told to, if they saw a sun lamp, confiscate it, and hand it in. Well, my

roommate and I, who were prefects confiscated the sun lamps. But we didn't hand them in. We set them up on our bookshelf, and we invited everybody in to have some suntanning party, and we set our laundry bag on fire.

ADVINCULA: And did you get in trouble for that?

ALBRIGHT: Well, there was a very aged dorm mother who didn't come in, she just smelled the smoke. And she said, "Girls, I know what you're doing in there. You're smoking cigarettes. Stop that!" And that's, we got the fire put out. And she never told on us for smoking. She just said to put out our cigarettes, which we were not doing. We were setting fire to our laundry bag.

ADVINCULA: And did you think that you – the kind of geographical differences between the students impacted like how well you got along with them?

ALBRIGHT: Well, again, you know, it's funny. I think the more experiences you have outside of your own hometown and comfort zone, the better. And that was certainly hard to be sent to boarding school, into the south. And I learned about soul music. I learned how southern people still thought about the Civil War. Some of the issues that we're seeing today. Again, I was sort of up against people that didn't think the way I did. And I had to sort of learn how to listen and figure out where they're coming from. It didn't alter my beliefs about who won the Civil War [laughter]. I think it just reiterated that I should work hard. Somehow. They didn't seem to work hard. Some of those girls, they didn't. They didn't care about school. They knew they were gonna get married off to some wealthy southern boy. And I looked at them and I thought, I don't think I can. I don't see myself in those shoes. So it made me and my roommate, who is the other northerner, we set out on a different course in contradistinction to the girls that we were going to school with.

ADVINCULA: Do you feel like that changed your opinion of like meritocracy?

ALBRIGHT: Yes. Yeah. I Well, I think that my dad and my mom set a pretty good work ethic standard to begin with. I mean, I knew that the way, the reason we had an oriental rug was because it costs money that he worked hard to

make. Whether I would spend money on an oriental rug today is a different question. I wasn't interested in keeping up with Joneses, but my parents were hard workers. My mother didn't have a job when I was born. But before that she was a teacher. So they were the typical sort of American work hard and live well, kind of story. They weren't the American dream in terms of what your parents might experience or anybody else's parents today. I think the 50s, it wasn't very hard. It was a prosperous time. So today, I think it's much harder to achieve the American dream than it was for my parents. There wasn't much in their way.

ADVINCULA: And did your grandparents immigrate to the United States?

ALBRIGHT: Actually, yes. My mother's father was from Cornwall, England. He was from a tin mining background. tin mines closed. He came to Shamokin, Pennsylvania where there was a coal mine he worked in the coal mine but he worked himself up to become a cabinet maker. a fine furniture maker for the Pullman cars of the railroad because Pennsylvania Railroad had those cars that were elegant in first class cars, and they were all tricked out with beautiful woodwork. He was a cabinet maker for them. And then he worked up to be sort of middle management in the railroad. So in both generations, there was that sense of "Okay. Roll up your sleeves." And Pennsylvania was a, it was a it was a state where the economy was doing well, you know, so they weren't sharecroppers, they could move into sort of middle management kind of jobs.

ADVINCULA: And can you talk about your mom's decision to become an artist and then teaching?

ALBRIGHT: Oh, well, she never bought, she never sold her stuff. She didn't see art as a money making scheme. It's just who she was. She was a talented artist. And she always, when I went, as soon as I would go to school, she would go downstairs into our basement, which was her art studio. I wrote an essay about this once, I always thought she was like, going down into some deep, dark place, which is deep and dark in our house, but also deep and dark in her and she did some beautiful paintings. And sort of, I think she deepened my appreciation of art. So I really enjoy collecting art that my friends have done. Most of the art that I have, I've either bought from students of mine, or my friends have given it to me, so I'm not very good at art. But I think that I appreciate the creative spirit that my mother had.

ADVINCULA: And I guess going back to high school, and your decision to attend Bennington, can you tell me about that process?

ALBRIGHT: Well, that was a very odd thing. My sister Janie, the second one of the family, 16 years older than I— Again, my mother was kind of a Bohemian for a time, and she had discovered Bennington College, like, in the back of Harper's Magazine or something. But at that point, it was one of the most avant-garde schools in the country, mostly known for dance, Martha Graham. So my mother took it upon herself to say, you know, I think Janie should go, she's a dancer. She should go to Bennington. And my father said, "Why, I mean, that's some sort of commie pinko school. No, we're not going to send her there."

I mean, it had a lot of publicity about Bennington girls being loose. Which wasn't necessarily true, but because they didn't have as many rules as say, a Smith or a Wellesley. So she was packed off to Bennington, but my father went, made a surprise visit and didn't like what he saw. There had been a party in the dorm, some lamps were turned over. She— he yanked her out, brought her back. But it was always sort of this mythical place like "oh Bennington." So by the time I got to boarding school, I wasn't a particularly avant-garde kid. But I guess my writing might have been a little bit out there. And my headmaster pulled me into his office one day, nobody else was helping me apply to college. I mean, I had no parents. It was, my mother died in October of my senior year, and you know, there's a deadline to apply to colleges, what December, I hadn't really gotten around to that. And my headmaster said, "you know, I think there's a school that might fit you. It's called Bennington College." And I said, "Well, funny. You should mention that." And because I wasn't really, my head wasn't, I wasn't getting my arms around the whole college application thing, I said, "Okay, fine. That sounds like the right thing for me because my sister went there, and she didn't get to finish so I'll finish for her."

So that's really why I went and it was a good place for me to go. It was. Again, it was one of those places where you could stretch as far as you wanted to. It was a lot of individual freedom in that school. So I worked with some really incredible faculty in English and I was a drama major for a while. Again, I guess this is where the rule breaker comes back. Bennington was an all woman school. Williams, 30 miles down the road in Massachusetts, was an all male school. As a drama major at Bennington I had competition for parts, right? But if I went to Williams where there were

no women, I got every part in every play. And the first play that I tried out for— I saw an audition notice for *The Fantasticks*— was a Broadway musical, that one of the last shows I had seen with my parents in New York. And I thought again, must be fate. I better go try out for that. So I hitchhiked, had never hitchhiked before, hitchhiked to Bedding— to Williams. snagged the part. So then I had to hitchhike to all the rehearsals, at night. nothing bad ever had happened. And I got a couple of other roles. So I was kind of an honorary Williams student. I was sort of the woman and did a couple of musicals there. And then finally, I kind of thought, you know, I better actually major in something at Bennington, and go to classes. So I did. And then I went to graduate school after that.

ADVINCULA: And when you were a senior in high school, you said, your mother died?

ALBRIGHT: Right.

ADVINCULA: And that was how many years after your, your father?

ALBRIGHT: Five.

ADVINCULA: Five years. And so how did you deal with that grief?

ALBRIGHT: Wow, that's a good question. Um, I think I might have seen it coming. I think if your parents are older they seem to me older than I, I mean, I'm 72. My mother was 60. And I think when I saw her at 60, she seemed like 80. I hope my, my grandchildren don't see me as that old. I mean, I have better habits. They smoked, they drank, they never exercised. They lived at a time where, you know, if you had a heart problem, you didn't automatically get a pill that fixes that the way we do now. I mean, the medications were not particularly sophisticated for them. They had all manner of ailments. So I think I, I must have thought I would lose them. But I didn't expect my mother to have a stroke. And that's what happened. So it's pretty sudden, she was, she had this stroke the night before she was supposed to go for Parents Weekend to my school. So it was tough. It was very tough. But maybe it toughened me. And I had my sisters who came to my graduation, and pretty well, I would say that I had a great support system with the other girls.

ADVINCULA: Did your sisters, they all lived on the East Coast?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah, they did. I mean, my oldest one was too busy. She had five kids, I didn't see her often. But the second one, my sister Janie, kind of stepped into my mother's shoes. And she was close to my mother and similar to my mother. So we're still pretty close.

ADVINCULA: And just to jump around a little bit more. In 1960, the US initially deployed the first set of troops to Vietnam. Do you remember that event? how you felt about it?

ALBRIGHT: I don't remember it then. I don't think I was aware of because I was in boarding school from '65 to '68. And you know, you didn't wake up with the news. You didn't have your parents talking about it. You were just going to classes. So as the war was escalating, first of all, I think I thought to myself, well, Kennedy wouldn't do that. Like he seems like a nice man. It wasn't until after he was killed, and LBJ took office, and, again, promised that we were going to get out but kept deepening our involvement. I was aware of what LBJ was doing. And when he decided to not run, I was aware of that. I mean, by 1968, I was a senior in high school, that's about when I was starting to realize what was going on. I went to Bennington from '68 to '72. But I think I was in the dark until about '68. And that's also when the protests were happening, you know, and a lot of my friends were involved in those but I was pretty much in the dark until I was a graduate of high school.

ADVINCULA: And when you got to Bennington, do you think the stereotypes were accurate of it being kind of a liberal enclave?

ALBRIGHT: Well, depends what you call liberal actually, Bennington was one of the few schools that did not go on strike. During those turbulent years, I mean, places like Columbia and University of Chicago, you know, they cancelled classes. We were very— meaning to Bennington girls, your education was paramount. But we certainly found ways of locally protesting the war. I mean, I was a drama student. So we did, you know, street theater in Albany. You know, I mean, I didn't go to Washington until '71 to protest march, but, but we, we somehow balanced it out. The other interesting

thing is Bennington was a school that, I mean, I would say people were, we didn't have parietals, you know, so if you wanted a boy in your room you can have a boy in your room. But everybody I knew was on birth control. If you wanted it, you could get it from the school nurse. So yes, it was liberal in that sense, but that meant that there was nothing for us to fight for. If you went Wellesley, or you went to Smith or you went to a large university, you were mixing your revolutionary zeal against the war, with your demand for personal freedom. Those two things were intertwined. At Bennington, we already had personal freedom. So when we were protesting, it was focused against the war. But we didn't have to do sit ins at our dean's office to get what we wanted from our own schools. And I thought that was interesting.

You would have thought that we would have all, all the Bennington girls would be, would be activists, politically. It was a very arty school and a lot of people were kind of self indulgent about their art. No, I need to stay here and do my paintings. You know, I'm an important composer. And so the political activism didn't happen until a couple of years before it fully went co-ed. Boys came, and the boys came from the University of Chicago to revolutionize us. And they were members of SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] couple of them. And they did revolutionize us and wake us up and say, you know, come out of your painting studio and look what's happening. And that was an interesting moment, because here were these men telling us what to do. But they were right. So that was a that was a turning point. And, and at that point, we started to turn our art into activism.

ADVINCULA: So in your first year, it wasn't co-ed yet?

ALBRIGHT: No, it wasn't co-ed the whole time I was there. I graduated in '72. And I think it started to go co-ed in '73/'74. I think I remember being a student on the board of Bennington, on the Board of Trustees, I was like the student rep. And I was in favor of having coeducation. Most of my— I would say, I was in a tough spot there because a lot of the women that I was supposedly representing did not want to have boys come. But as I say, I kept, I had been hitchhiking back and forth to Williams. And I had made a lot of interesting male friends at Williams and I thought, why should you have to hitchhike to do that? So we did, we did go up co-ed, but it was after I left.

ADVINCULA: And who were some of the influential people you met at Williams?

ALBRIGHT: Oh, well, they were actors, and they're now famous [laughter]. I didn't have the money to sort of spend the next couple of years in summer stock. But probably the most well-known actor that was my leading man in a number of plays was David Strathairn. And he has now gone on to do—he played Edward R. Murrow in Good Night, and Good Luck. He's been in a lot of movies. He's been on Broadway. And he just finished an amazing piece in — he played J. Robert Oppenheimer. So a lot of the boys that I acted with continued to act and, and a few women as well, because Williams was going co-ed. I mean, this was all happening, even when Dartmouth was happening everywhere. One way or the other, the most influential people were in the theater.

ADVINCULA: And did you feel like when you were at Bennington, did you already know you wanted to join the theater program?

ALBRIGHT: I was torn. Again, going back to that work ethic, middle class America thing. I didn't have parents who could say, you know, why don't you, Honey, why don't you try, you know, and we'll buy you an apartment in New York. And you can, you know, maybe you could wait tables a little bit. I just didn't have the money to be an itinerant young actor. So the friends that I knew were either somewhat subsidized by their families for those first couple of years. And then they made it on their own. But I mean, they needed a little bit of crossover. So I could either have tried that, but I don't think I had the guts for it. I mean, women did, and you could live in New York and bus tables and try to make it I don't think I had the confidence and I don't think I had the guts. And maybe I wasn't that good. Certainly not. In musical terms. My my voice is fine for college theater, but it wouldn't have made it— I'm not a Bernadette Peters, right. So the other option was to go to graduate school because during the Johnson years, the Great Society years, there was a ton of money to go to graduate school so and at the time I was living with— by the end, I was dating and living with a Williams guy who was the class of 69. So he had just graduated when I was a freshman, and I just met him I met him my freshman summer at Williams when I was an apprentice in the summer theater, and he was still living in his dorm room that summer having graduated, so he was the only non-actor man. And we fell in love. And he was going to architecture school in Boston. So I took a scholarship opportunity, and that took me to Boston University. So we could go there together. We've since divorced, but it was amicable, that's a jump forward. But for graduate school, you got paid to go, you got paid to teach. And then you got a housing stipend. I mean, it was like having a job and

getting a degree at the same time. So it was kind of hard to resist that. So I did that as opposed to becoming an actress. I got a PhD in literature.

ADVINCULA: And so at Bennington, what type of activities were you involved in?

ALBRIGHT: Almost all my time was spent in theater. I was really dedicated to that. I also considered for a while being a child development major, I was really interested in children's cognition, maybe because I had all these little nephews and nieces. And I worked at the nursery school there. And I had, I was in the big sister program. So there were kids in Bennington in the town of Bennington, who needed to have a big sister to mentor them. They were living in troubled families, and so I spent some time doing that, that was kind of my community service work. And then at Bennington, you were supposed to try stuff that you couldn't do. So you know, try ceramics, try modern dance. And so I loaded up on all that stuff. And you also had to write a senior thesis just like here, I think about, you know, the honors program here. Senior honors, your whole senior year might be dedicated to that. So like I wrote, My, strangely enough, I wrote my senior thesis on Saul Bellow. One of the more misogynistic writers, now that I look back, why the hell I did that? I'm not sure. But I was interested in the modern novel, and the structure of it. And I love the novel, *Herzog* because it was written in letters, just like epistolary fiction, and it was a modern epistolary novel. So I think that's what attracted me to it. And I was trying to figure out what the structure of it was, and what the readers role is in a novel in which perspectives keep changing.

ADVINCULA: Do you remember any other influential novels you read in college?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah, I loved Faulkner. I loved Virginia Woolf, I love the sort of between the war period in fiction, both British and American. And what I was really interested in was novels in which the narrative function, if you will, is shared by characters that don't agree, I don't know why I was interested in that. But I knew that if, as a reader, you're confronted with a novel in which the storytelling task is shared by people that don't agree on what happened. Then you as a reader become a narrator too. And there was a theory back then called reader response theory that I ascribed to a guy named Wolfgang Iser, who said that meaning is not contained within a novel, it is outside the novel. And that was revolutionary, right? Because back then people were trying to figure out what does the author want me to think? And Wolfgang Iser says the author doesn't want you to think the way the author thinks. So it's sort of a postmodern idea that the final

thinking, the final meaning making happens, reader by reader by reader, and there's only— there are many meanings to a novel. And so my thesis for my graduate school, selected novels in which that was the structure and tried to explain it as the rise of relativism [laughter]. What what I ended up doing was Public Radio, which is a multivocal medium. So clearly, I found a way of practicing what I had been reading, because that's what public radio is you take a bunch of voices, they don't all agree, you throw them at the listener and say, figure it out.

ADVINCULA: And so you talked about doing theater at Williams, did that theater become more radical and kind of anti-war?

ALBRIGHT: That's interesting. That was the distinction I got. I got to have it both ways at Williams, I got to, you know, be in Camelot and you know, these really sort of cheesy, overly sentimental but fun musicals where I got to show off right? I got to show off I got to sing and dance and but at Bennington, I was in theater that was, yeah, much more radical. And it was at Bennington that we did improvisational theater that was political, and took it on the road. It wasn't from Williams that that happened. So Williams was sort of the establishment school for me and Bennington was the opposite. And I kind of went to both. So I guess I was like a little ping pong ball between ideologies.

ADVINCULA: And when you said you had to try out for some of these, you had to kind of try out for like improv?

ALBRIGHT: No, at that point. at Bennington, we were in charge. You know, Bennington was a sort of place that said, you students want to do something. Go ahead. So in that case, it wasn't a typical hierarchical producer, director, actor system. It was a bunch of us who said, Okay, let's, like, I should have brought the, I still have some of the reviews from the Massachusetts and New York newspapers of what we were doing, we were doing anti war pieces. I don't know if you're familiar with bread and puppet theater in Vermont, but that was also starting at the same time by a guy named Peter Schumann. It's in Vermont still. And it was anti war with these giant puppets and, you know, Nixon puppets and then suddenly Nixon walks in and everybody dies, you know, that sort of thing. That was influential on us. They did make a stop at Williams. And so some of our stuff was sort of half choreographic, modern dance, slow motion, reenacting of— we weren't reenacting battles, but we were, we were taking our protest to the streets and then somehow turning it into theater and I can't exactly describe it,

you'd have to be there. But I can tell you that we had things thrown at us by more right wing folks in the streets who would come out and throw apples or whatever they had.

ADVINCULA: And was this in Albany, you said that you—?

ALBRIGHT: North Adams, Massachusetts now where the art the big art museum is MASS MoCA, I can remember do that. I also did Children's Theater in North Adams on a grant from some sort of Title Nine grant, I think, Nanook of the North, I was in North Adams. And the reason I could do some of this stuff that was not curricular is that Bennington had what we call the non resident term. So after Christmas, you didn't come back till March 1. And you were expected to figure something out to do. And a lot of my friends would go to New York and work in galleries or financial district jobs. I mean, it was like a work Co-op sort of program. And I often used that time for theater. If I could find a bunch of kids and and we would travel around the northeast and stay in people's houses sleep on the floors of churches and make stuff up.

ADVINCULA: And after your first year, what did you do that summer?

ALBRIGHT: Ah, so the first year of Bennington. I was really still footlike fever, right. I was starstruck and Williamstown summer theater has an apprentice program. So I applied for that. And that meant that was great. That meant that I was an apprentice in a really good summer theater, doing serious stuff. I mean, not summer stock, but Williams is kind of like an outpost for the Yale Drama School in the summer. So that was serious theater was really good drama. And often it was a tryout for plays that later went to Broadway. So as an apprentice I was a prompter. I swept the stage, sometimes I worked the lights. And that that's probably the most serious theater I've done.

ADVINCULA: And at that time were you still undecided about pursuing theater as a career?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah, yeah, I would say I saw myself as an actress.

[Interview was suspended for 10 minutes to take a water break]

ALBRIGHT: I was considering a career in theater.

ADVINCULA: Yeah, so after your, after your summer in Williams, were you still undecided about pursuing theater?

ALBRIGHT: I was. I wasn't the most realistic of 18 year olds. So I, I think at that point, I still thought it would be impossible thing to do. But as I say, I met this guy named Richard [Rick] Renner who was not in theater. And to be honest, a lot of the my male friends who were in theater were - they were pretty self absorbed guys. And he, he wasn't so but he didn't-- to be with him was not it wasn't easy to be with him and be with them, at the same time, it might have been a social decision. The kind of life I wanted to lead and the kind of person I wanted to lead it with. And so my theater friends that I still know, one of them is Gordy Clapp who lives here at Norwich, he was-- We go way back into theater at Williams and he became Sergeant Medavoy on NYPD Blue. He had quite a career and now he's living here. He always says that I got "Renner-fied." You know, "What happened to you? You got "Renner-fied"? Meaning that, you know, you you chose to lead a more normal life. You did? I don't know about that. But it was a fork in the road. And I definitely went into a more academic direction at that point. And I've always bounced back and forth between academia. Even when I was a public radio reporter making my way to NPR [National Public Radio], occasionally I would teach on top of all that, I mean, I've always had that sort of straddling those two worlds, and I still do.

ADVINCULA: Yeah. And how are you coping with your mother's death at this time?

ALBRIGHT: Wow. Really interesting question. I mean, I still miss her. I can't say that-- It was certainly a loss. And yet, my parents had raised a pretty strong kid. So my husband, my second husband now has asked me that too, like, how did you do it? How did you keep it together? How was your mental health? I honestly think that some of that theater was the way I did it, because I wasn't me. You know, I wasn't the kid who lost a mother. I was Guinevere in Camelot. I think there was a whole year where I just absented myself from my life. Tried out theater. And then somehow when I came back, and sort of became a wife and a mother then I had my own

family. So one of the ways that I did that was if I— if my family was gone, I'd make one, I think is what happened.

ADVINCULA: And when you returned after, after that summer at Williams, were you continuing to date?

ALBRIGHT: Yes, yes, Rick, and I work at that point, close. And he and I are the ones who would go to, we went to the what, March on Washington in 1971. Together. At that point, he was a high school teacher in Wilmington, Vermont, which is how he didn't get drafted. Because footnote here, I think it was 69 that they started to have a lottery for the draft, I think was 69. You better check me on my 50 year old memory. His number was 16. So he would have been drafted. But he got a deferment to teach high school that— those deferments lasted a couple of years, and then they went away. So then he did have to go to the draft board and and get his physical and as mental, medical tests to see if he could, they could take him and I saved his life by bad cooking. And the way that happened was at that point, I was working for a restaurant. I did need to make my spending money at Beddington. I mean, the estate paid for the tuition, but I still had to work to make make money. So I was waitressing at this restaurant called Crepes et Fondue and the crepes that my boyfriend liked were sausage crepes. So I thought, well, I should make him a really nice dinner before he goes off to Vietnam. Right and so but of course, he was completely freaked out by this prospect that he was going to have to go I mean, he was from an upper middle class family. His father was climbing the ladder at Alcoa, became president, eventually, a lot of his friends were getting somehow bought out. Or they were paying doctors to say things. I mean, there was a lot of scamming of the system. But his dad wasn't like that; his dad was, his dad was a World War Two vet and that that wasn't gonna fly, so you knew he'd have to go. So he was having some anxiety and my sausage crepe, just put them over the edge. So when he got to the draft board, he had a bleeding ulcer [laughter]. And if it weren't for how really awful the sausage was for him, they probably had to take him but, by then, I had created a stomach disaster for him.

ADVINCULA: Were any of your other close Williams friends drafted?

ALBRIGHT: A lot of them went to Canada. Gordie went to Canada to escape it, and went into theater in Canada for a while. A lot of them were gay, and the army wouldn't take them. And they showed up and, you know, really provocative outfits for their draft physical. I remember one, the lighting

designer at Williams, a guy named Santo Loquasto. I never learned exactly what his underpants look like. But I know that he bought something that got him out of the draft can't tell you what it was. But there was some pretty amazing tricks that people tried to have the draft board say no, and theater people were pretty good at it. My other friends, you know, my high school friends from Hollidaysburg, and Altoona, Pennsylvania, they didn't have that kind of money. They didn't have those doctors. They came from more conservative families. They left and some of them didn't come back. So that kind of bothered me.

ADVINCULA: At this point, were you pretty anti-war? Did you feel—

ALBRIGHT: Yes, yeah. I was anti-war, because I am somebody who needs explanations. That's why I'm a journalist. And none of them made any sense to me. You know, I wasn't anti-war, like, I wouldn't have been anti-war in World War Two. It's not like I'm a pacifist or a Quaker. It's just that I kept seeking understanding of why we were there. I mean, this domino theory made no sense because I had not seen a single domino fall. Even then, it seemed to me there must be some hidden benefit that people are getting, the people who make the guns. I was naive, but I still, I still couldn't figure it out. Just last week, I'm writing an article about Jim [James] Nachtwey. He's class of 70. Right. And I'm class of 72. And we both agreed that it was the pictures that were coming back above the fold in the New York Times. The burning girl pictures, it was the images. And the words didn't make any sense to us. But the images spoke to us. And I think as a generation, we owe our anti-war activism largely to photographers.

ADVINCULA: Did your friends feel the same way? Like that was their motivation?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah, yeah. I think there was a common ground there. I mean, as Jim says, The pictures were telling us one thing, our president was telling us another. We believe the pictures, how could you not? And, you know, even I didn't watch nightly news. You know, I was in college. So you know, it was the older generation that was watching Walter Cronkite. And Walter Cronkite was finally saying, You know what, we're not winning this at all. They're lying about it, Tet offensive. And so then some of my friends, parents were starting to change their views because of that mainstream media turning on Nixon. So when you had two generations starting to change their minds, I think you had a powerful movement. And we did have a powerful movement.

ADVINCULA: Did you, did you think like, the older generation was reluctant because they'd been in the previous wars?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah, definitely. If my father had been alive, and my my husband, my, the guy, I'm here to now. He's three years younger than I was, but he was even more radical. Herb Swanson is his name. And he was you know, he was burning flags, burning draft cards, you know, doing much more radical stuff, although none of us did anything that was violent. I mean, we're all in our protests minds, Gandhi-like. You know, even though– the marches on Washington with 500,000 people weren't violent. They weren't like January 6. Yeah. We marched to the Capitol, but there was no violence that I remember. But I do think it was it–. At first when our generation was protesting, we had to sever ties some times with our parents, not sever ties, but certainly have fights, right? I didn't, because I didn't have parents, but I know my friends did. And Herb's father said, you know, when your country asks you to go, you go, if, if we hadn't gone in World War Two, we'd have Hitler. Right. That's how they looked at it. But as we said, well, where's the Hitler? So I think there was a generation gap there. But as it, it did close for a lot of families.

ADVINCULA: And you talked about how your sister was a Republican at some point. Did that kind of switch during this time?

ALBRIGHT: Well, in our family? Yes, it didn't switch, she became more–. I think, eventually, she did renounce the sort of conservatism of a Goldwater. But she fell in love with a guy who, from our hometown, who, who would have been exempted from military service, because he had lost a thumb in an accident. He had no thumb. Like, on his trigger finger, he had no thumb. And, you know, the army didn't want him. And he pulled strings to get in and went to Vietnam. So my brother in law, my sister's husband, was in Vietnam at the time that I was protesting. That, that created a bit of a problem for us, for her and me. And it created a problem for me, because I thought, if I go out here and protest, what message does that send for these guys that really are sacrificing their lives? For whatever reason, it was a conundrum. Luckily he didn't die, and he didn't get hurt. But it caused a rift.

ADVINCULA: Did you have conflict with him like when he returned?

ALBRIGHT: No, because he returned an anti-war. He wasn't an anti-war activist. But like a lot of people that I knew who went over there all gung-ho thinking, Oh, this is really a worthy cause, came back with deep questions about that. So he was among the veterans like a John Kerry, who went over with one mind and came back with another. And if you talk to him today, he will say, it was a horrible mistake.

ADVINCULA: And obviously, all in the backdrop of this was the Civil Rights Movement.

ALBRIGHT: Right.

ADVINCULA: Were you an active participant in any of that?

ALBRIGHT: I'm embarrassed to say that I wasn't. And maybe that's because I was in New England. I mean, I didn't have a lot of opportunities, I was pretty much focused on the war. And as I look back now, I think it was a really unfortunate racial divide that a lot of white kids spent their time, including me, protesting a war, and not joining the civil rights movement. And a lot of my black friends said, Where were you? Where were you, exactly? Like, this was a problem in our own country. You know, basically, our own country had had a civil war that was never resolved and that you care so much about the civil war in Vietnam, why weren't you on the frontlines here? And I think they're right, why weren't we. And at the same time, there was another whole kind of social revolution going on, which you might call feminism. And the same question was asked and should be answered, honestly, that the feminist movement was too white as well. And we're paying for that now. We're paying for that with a lot of divisions, social divisions that could have been— we could have had a lot more. There could have been a lot more interracial activity against the war, against civil rights than there was and it could have healed a lot of wounds. That didn't happen.

ADVINCULA: Bennington was, obviously, all white?

ALBRIGHT: All white. just about just about all white. Yeah, the college was all white. My towns that I lived in were largely white. And it really was, as I think

about it now, housing, I mean, busing was just happening in Boston. And I mean, there were so many deep reasons that a lot of our activism was I think, as I look back on it, shallow, and it had to do with where people lived, and whom they met.

ADVINCULA: You talked about how your mom was kind of liberal for the time. Was she racially liberal as well?

ALBRIGHT: Yes, she was. But how do you act on that? Exactly. So how can you? Alright, so there are other women that have housekeepers who are black, and she, she wouldn't do that. I mean, that's not the way she would behave. And she was active in our church, in our Episcopal Church. And both she and my dad were constantly trying to figure out how to integrate the church more how to invite more people into that church. But in Altoona, there weren't that many black people to invite in frankly, it was shocking sometimes to hear. I would hear truck drivers, for example, use slurs against Italians. That was the group in Altoona that I think was discriminated against, Italians. Really? The best restaurants in town. It always seemed to me that no matter whom you were living with, difference was difference. So if you weren't any, if there weren't any black people in your town, white people discriminated against the next thing, right? It wasn't— And I saw that I could see it. So when I finally had kids, we lived in Maine at the time, and the Maine was what like Vermont 99% white in the public schools that my kids could have gone to, in Portland, Maine, all white. Ironically, the school where they met the most number of people of color was the expensive private school in town. Because 50% of students, it's like Dartmouth, right? So I got on the board of that school. And we raised enough scholarship money so that ironically, it was the most diverse school that I could send them to, and that's why I did it. And they look back on that as formative for them.

ADVINCULA: And when you were in college and boarding school, obviously, you went to a religious boarding school, but did you remain religious like after that?

ALBRIGHT: That's a good question. And and to go back to how did I handle my parents death? Religion was one way I did that for a few years. Somehow, I convinced myself that they were still around. You know, that whole idea of life after death, and somehow vaguely it seemed to me that that got me through. But somehow it didn't last. I did baptize my kids and I went to Episcopal churches where I live because I love to sing. I have to say that's why I did it. And then now I'm not churched. But I wouldn't say that I'm

unspiritual. I just find churches sometimes to be as hierarchical as the rest of the world that I'm not happy with. So they don't they don't seem to me like a refuge from all that, sometimes they incorporated.

ADVINCULA: And when you were at Bennington, Dartmouth, obviously have some connections to other women's colleges like Wellesley, did you interact with Dartmouth students?

ALBRIGHT: Every now and then a Dartmouth boy would hitchhike to Bennington, and think he could get laid and we would just send him home. We'd just say no. The other connection with Dartmouth was I mean, we guess we could tell this we he was into at that point, like a road trip. And just sort of showing up at our dining hall thinking you could just pick one of us up and we didn't, we didn't go for that. But Dartmouth was different place then and the attitude of men was not, i wasn't from a Bennington girl's point of view, wouldn't have been top of our list. But then when I did get married to Rick Renner his parents retired to Hanover, so in about 1978/1979, they had a house here and we came to Hanover a lot to visit them and bring the grandchildren to see their grandparents. So I was here on campus through the early 80s. I saw this school change. But I also, that was also a time when it was, you know, the Dartmouth review the whole deal, the shanties, all of this stuff that happened that can, I think Dartmouth was about 10 years behind, in terms of waking up to some of the injustices of the world. And there was a lot of friction here between right wing editors of the newspaper, for example. So I kind of watched all that with interest. And when I finally got a job here in 2015, I was so thrilled at, it was even more different than I thought it was from those years, it was much more inclusive, much more equity was going on. It's still not there yet. It's not where we want it to be. But I see effort, which I didn't see in the eighties.

ADVINCULA: And in at Bennington, would you say that they were pretty inclusive to LGBTQ?

ALBRIGHT: Oh, yes, absolutely. Yeah. I think in the freshman dorms that I was in, that's where I really— it was the first time that I really met women who were out. In my dorm, I think I might have been in the minority, actually. I think being a heterosexual woman in that dorm, I was one of the few. And they're all good friends today. I mean, I didn't— The way I met gay men was more through theater, I think, but Bennington was and is today. I would say it's a it's been incredibly explicit to prospective students that if

you have been experiencing some problems as an LGBTQ member in your high school, come here.

ADVINCULA: And and so did you did that impact? Were you sure about your sexuality by the time you got to college?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah. Yeah, I wasn't an experimenter. But that's not because I disapproved of it. It just wasn't the way I felt. But a lot of my friends in college, probably a higher proportion of friends in college at Bennington, were gay than I would have expected other schools.

ADVINCULA: So you talked about how you went to protest in it was it 1970 in [Washington] DC?

ALBRIGHT: 71 was the only one I went to. It was the largest one I think it was. May day I think it's around now. Maybe the end of April. And my boyfriend then, as I said, was a high school teacher and I can't believe we did this. We took high school students to that march, their parents let us. I was 21. He was 25. And they entrusted their high school students to us. I think we took about five, two of them were black. I remember that two black students from Wilmington, who I was worried about just, I didn't know what it would be like for them. Because as I said, I'd see mostly white protesters, and they were going to go to DC. And, and they were the ones, the two black kids are the ones that police rounded up. We lost track of them. We lost track of these kids. I can't remember their names. Now. I wouldn't name them if I could, but they kind of drifted away. I mean, it was chaos there. And there were lots of different groups. There was I believe there is a rock concert somewhere. I'm thinking either. I can't remember who was singing. It might have even been Beach Boys, which I never have associated with activism. And I think Noam Chomsky spoke. So there are different locus points that people might go to, and we kind of turned our backs and they were gone. And I thought, Oh my God, what do we do now? So as I recall, though, we didn't have to go bail them out of jail. The police rounded a lot of people up. I think they ended in a stadium. And my boyfriend went off and somehow found them in this stadium and brought them back. So they weren't actually arrested. But they were detained. I mean, police grabbed anybody that either looked hippyish or I swear, if you, if you had a choice, if the policeman had a choice between running up a white person well dressed or a black person they took black people. They definitely did because when we went to the stadium, it was clearly completely out of whack there. So luckily, we didn't lose them.

ADVINCULA: And do you remember what event this was in response to?

ALBRIGHT: It was built up. The group that did it, I think, by this point, the aim was not only to get out of Vietnam, but to get rid of Nixon. So it was, I don't know, I mean, it was quite decentralized. I think there was something like the Mayday group that might have organized it. There were some SDS folks in that. And that I do think had some civil rights training, people who had been on the frontlines in Selma [AL]. Were part of that group, because there was definitely non violence training beforehand. We didn't take it, but I knew that some of the leaders had it. And at least that's the scuttlebutt that we got. I mean, it's not like we got social media posts telling us what to do or where to go. I mean, it was all word of mouth. And so I'm not sure we even knew who organized it's just, it was like Woodstock, right? You know, people just got in their cars and went, and we drove from Wilmington, Vermont.

ADVINCULA: This was was 71, obviously, a year after the Kent State shootings, were you afraid of turning violent?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah. A boy that I had gone to the prom with in Altoona, Pennsylvania, went to Kent State. And he was about 50 yards away, when those students were shot. And he was a Vietnam vet. So that hit home, that hit home, he could have been shot, this friend of mine at Kent State. So that I think I considered going to Kent State one and 1970, which was a response to Kent State, was really kind of whipped up at the last minute, as I recall, it just kind of wasn't quite as big as the 1971. I think it was right after the shootings, and I couldn't pull it off. I couldn't get, I couldn't get myself together to get down there. These were all at the ends of school when you have your exams and everything. I didn't want to leave. But by 71, I thought— we have to. And so, in 71, as I recall, we were really trying to get rid of Nixon and rattle him. And I think he wasn't there. I think he went to Camp David or something. But it was, Henry Kissinger was there. And Henry Kissinger was the one who gave the orders. We thought we don't know. But we had the idea that his henchmen were the ones who were rounding and he had the national guard there and helicopters are flying around. And sure, I thought I thought we could end up being hurt, no doubt. That's why I can't believe we took high school students, we were thinking crazy.

ADVINCULA: And was the protest diverse? Like you talked about how some people had civil rights training.

ALBRIGHT: Yes. Yes. That was I do remember that when looking more diverse to me. You know, I mean, I'd only been doing things in the streets in New England. Until then. So of course it was.

ADVINCULA: And just to jump back in time a bit. MLK's assassination was in 1968.

ALBRIGHT: Right.

ADVINCULA: Do you remember what the environment was like on campus during that point?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah. That was that was a call to arms. I mean, it didn't bring us to Selma. It didn't get me to go to Selma. But it did— There was so many assassinations. I mean, as a coming of age, we were just talking about this, a bunch of us in our seventies, we were saying, Well, you know, knock on wood, it's amazing in these turbulent times that we haven't seen that. But I mean, there was JFK, there was RFK. There was Martin Luther King, there was, John Lennon really bothered us for some reason. And I think when, when the MLK assassination, woke us up to the idea that our country was in way more big trouble than the Vietnam War. You know, that if if somebody like him could be assassinated, then there was something rotten in the state of Denmark. And it was discouraging, because it, for me anyway, I had been pretty idealistic at that point that you know, if you're just a good person and you work hard and you yell loud enough, you can change things and if you're a journalist, particularly, maybe you can change things? Well, there was a lot of good journalism going on. And there were a lot of protests. And there were a lot of good people. And still these guys are getting shot. And I think it was depressing.

ADVINCULA: Did you ever think like, maybe I should turn to violence or—?

ALBRIGHT: No, no, it made me think the opposite. I think it made me think the opposite even back then I thought where did they get the guns? Like, how

do they have these guns? And now I'm really upset about it, because the number of guns has exponentially increased. No, I think just the opposite, especially since you know, we all read what his— I mean, we we did read a speech. I remember reading a speech in the New York Times, in print. I don't remember hearing it on the radio. But if Martin Luther King wanted us to practice non violence, then Damn, yeah, we were gonna do that.

ADVINCULA: And so did you also remember kind of in juxtaposition to that Black Panthers, Malcolm X, how did you rationalize what they were doing?

ALBRIGHT: I was. I was. I understood why they were doing that. Because at some point, it didn't look like non violence was working. You know, I mean, how many martyrs do we want? So I don't I certainly understood it. But as a young, sort of naive white girl. I was watching it from afar, for sure. But I wasn't disapproving of it.

ADVINCULA: In, at Bennington. Were there groups of people who were involved in kind of violent radical groups or stuff like that?

ALBRIGHT: No, not that I recall. I mean, they talked a big game, these two guys that came from the University of Chicago, you know, free Bobby Seale, the whole deal, but I don't think they bestirred themselves to do that. There's a lot, I have to say there was a lot of hypocrisy. I'm afraid to say in our generation, we talked a big game. But how much walk did we walk? Other than just sort of gathered at anti Vietnam war protests, how much walk did we walk? And what bothers me is, as we grew older, did we just become like our parents from the 50s? Did we, I mean, a lot of people forsook those early years of idealistic action and went work for banks.

ADVINCULA: And do you know, anyone, any of your friends, did they do that?

ALBRIGHT: Let me think about my friends. Most of, I would say a lot of my, the friends that I have now, a lot of us became journalists. So I guess we were walking the middle road there, right? We needed careers. We were certainly not going to just live on flower power. We needed to make money. But I think we thought journalism was still a way to call attention to social ills, maybe not by marching in the streets, but by marching into newspaper offices and radio stations. So yeah, I think my friends were,

maybe I'm being too critical of people that I don't even know. But a lot of my friends did helping professions. From the six- and the people that I knew in the 60s, when I went back to my reunion to Bennington last year, my 50th reunion, an amazing number of my friends from Paddington are doing social impact stuff. Still, I mean, they're starting urban gardens they're-. And if they're working in the industrial sector, they're working for companies that are figuring out how to put additives in batteries to make them last longer. You know, it's there is that to be said for us that if we found a profession that looked like it was socially useful, we tended to gravitate toward it. But on the other hand, there is a larger gap between the haves and have nots than there ever was and it's got to be our fault. Got to be our fault.

ADVINCULA: And do you think that is indicative of the culture at Bennington as why you feel like so many people-

ALBRIGHT: The culture at Bennington was, it was a very expensive school. I just happened to have the money because I had inherited it. I inherited exactly \$20,000 Which wasn't a lot. It was expensive school then. Dash, it cost \$4,000 a year for tuition and room and board. That was the cost. It was the most expensive school in the country.

ADVINCULA: Yeah, that's not much compared to now.

ALBRIGHT: No. I still don't understand why schools are so expensive now because my friends who are professors aren't seeing their salaries increase. So I think it has something to do with administration. But no, I, I think, a school like Bennington, there was a lot of elitism there. And there was a lot of dilettante-ism, you know, girls, and we were girls, I suppose I should say women, but it felt like we're girls at the time. Spending a lot of time making paintings and mommy and daddy paying for the paint, mommy and daddy saying, Oh, you don't have to get a real job. You'll be a wonderful painter, and then mommy and daddy, starting a gallery for them. And you know, there was that for sure. I wasn't part of it. But I would not say that schools that were like Bennington liberal progressive schools were necessarily the hotbed of political action.

ADVINCULA: And was this, this was elitism from the North, there weren't southern students coming to Bennington or?

ALBRIGHT: No, no, I don't think so. It was mostly New Yorkers.

ADVINCULA: And so what year did you kind of decide you wanted to be a literature major?

ALBRIGHT: Well, I went to I was a, frankly, I hadn't read enough. You know, I had skipped a bunch of classes to be in those plays. So I thought I should keep reading. And they would pay me to do that. So I went to graduate school. I taught four courses. I got a PhD on a fellowship. So in order to have your fellowship, you taught four courses, and you took four courses, it was a lot of work. Then I had a baby in 1978. Just as I was finishing my dissertation, I was— it was very hard to find a teaching job. There's a glut of PhDs and because of all the money that was flowing out there that drove us all into graduate school, on the government's dime. But then there are too many of us to get jobs afterwards. I wrote an article about that called "The Tenure Track Trauma." And I just happened into public radio. We moved to Portland, Maine, again, sort of trying to be helpful. I worked in a lot of arts. I was a volunteer for a bunch of arts organizations, including a string quartet in Portland, that had just had a messy divorce from the symphony, and they needed somebody to do their PR and run it. And I decided to survive— They needed to have a series on the radio. So I talked to public radio station and pulling them on. And then my, the news director there said, you know, what else can you do? And I said, Well, I can write so I started to do do writing of commentaries, then I became a reporter, and never really used my PhD. I just went into journalism instead.

ADVINCULA: And you graduated in 62, which was Nixon's year of reelection?

ALBRIGHT: I graduated in 72.

ADVINCULA: Oh I mean 72, sorry.

ALBRIGHT: Yeah. And he, I believe, this is something I will never forget. He left on the plane after he resigned. He resigned, officially resigned on August 8, I think. But actually left on August 9, 1974. And I remember that because it's my birthday. So I was 24 and I felt vindicated. I thought, wow, all this

was worth it. He's gone, everything's gonna be fine. I can have some kids now. You know, I can, I can relax. Everything's all set. Just because he's gone, which wasn't necessarily true. But we did have some decent leadership after that. I mean, you know, I wasn't a big Reagan fan. And I actually, the second time, the time that Nixon ran for reelection. When was that? Was that 72?

ADVINCULA: 72.

ALBRIGHT: Yeah, I voted for Mondale and I thought we'd win. He carried one state.

ADVINCULA: Yeah.

ALBRIGHT: And I was in that state. I was teaching that summer at Andover and all my friends were voting for Mondale. So I figured, oh, we're all set. Everything's fine.

ADVINCULA: And why do you think there was no response to the fact that people were angry about the war?

ALBRIGHT: You mean, why didn't Mondale win?

ADVINCULA: Yeah.

ALBRIGHT: Because he wasn't a very good candidate. He was uh - We couldn't relate to him as young people. You know, maybe if there had been a young Obama at that point. But there were, I mean, young people weren't voting in droves at that point. They were still tuning out. I mean, we didn't trust the government. A lot of people didn't have any interest in voting at all. I mean, they were still living on the margins, and they were still anti government, period. So for somebody to vote for Mondale wasn't necessarily the logical step from protesting the war.

ADVINCULA: And why did you decide to vote?

ALBRIGHT: Because I'm a middle of the road person. I do what I think is right. And I was raised by these, you know, small town, parents, and you do your civic duty, and you vote. I mean, I don't care, I was wearing long skirts, and you know, looking like a hippie when I voted, but I did vote. And I was very surprised that somehow my vote didn't bring it over the top.

ADVINCULA: And did you feel like you had more mistrust in the government when Nixon— they found the corruption?

ALBRIGHT: Well, the year I think was the year after that big march on Washington, the Pentagon Papers. And that was a big moment, for a lot of us I mean, we idolized Woodward and Bernstein. And that's brought a lot of us into journalism, because we thought, okay, so we already did the street thing. And now, you know, there's this thing called journalism and people can get rid of presidents that way, because we didn't get rid of Nixon by being in the streets. As a matter of fact, he sent his National Guard after us, but the Woodward and Bernstein things suddenly that I thought, Oh, not that I became, you know, Woodward and Bernstein. But that was a big moment, the Pentagon Papers moment because, yes, the images had been telling the truth, but now we had it in writing, that they knew they were losing the war, and that they were keeping it secret and lying. I mean, it was all written. And we cared about facts, then. I mean, even people on two sides of an issue, argued about facts. And they, they both sides thought facts existed, and they were important. I'm not sure that's true now.

ADVINCULA: And was that kind of your aha moment where you're like, I want to pursue journalism?

ALBRIGHT: I think it was. Yeah, I think it was. And again, I wasn't trying to be a crusader in journalism. I went into public radio journalism, and I did healthcare stories. I did kitchen table issues. I covered in Maine. I was really interested in migrant labor, because it shocked me. I thought that was only in California. And when I saw all these, all these migrant laborers picking blueberries, right, and how are they living in northeast Maine, of the state? Not well. So I realized, wow, I could cover this stuff in my backyard. You know, I don't have to go to Selma. I don't have to, you know, follow Cesar Chavez. This stuff is happening in Maine. Gay people

are being discriminated against in Maine. So I was sort of, we had referenda against gay rights in Maine, we had referenda - Maine seems like a liberal state, but it isn't always. So I covered some of those issues, right under my nose.

ADVINCULA: And did you ever consider kind of being an investigative journalist traveling kind of like what you just described?

ALBRIGHT: Well in in public radio circles, then you didn't have that kind of time. I mean, the investigative journalism was going on in places like mostly in newspapers, where if you were a newspaper article, writer, you might work for the Oregonian, you might work for the New York Times, you had time to do that. In public radio, you had to have a story a day you had to be on the air the next day, I mean, or there'd be black air, right? There'd be no - there'd be dead air. We didn't. There wasn't the money. I mean, think of the money that the New York Times had small public radio stations. You know, I tried to do fairly deep reporting. Maybe I'd get four or five days on a long form report. And then I became the host of the program, so it was hard to get out. And then I became the producer and host of a public affairs show that was a little more in depth because I had guests on and I could grill them on air live. And my predecessor who was the host on that show was Angus King, who then became Senator he was a Dartmouth grad. And he became governor of Maine. So when he ran for governor, I took his place as the producer and host of Maine watch. And that was a step up for me. Although I hated television, because I had to put makeup on. I was terrible at that. But there I could bring sort of lawmakers and, and policymakers onto the show and grill them and hold them accountable for things, which is a little more like, I guess, like a PBS newshour would do.

ADVINCULA: And so you had your your first child, was it 78?

ALBRIGHT: Right.

ADVINCULA: And when did you get married?

ALBRIGHT: I got married in 72. I was only 22 years old.

ADVINCULA: So right after you graduated?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah.

ADVINCULA: And what did you do in between the time that you were married, and then decided to pursue your PhD?

ALBRIGHT: I pursued my PhD. I remember we left our wedding and moved. And, you know, no tin cans on the car or anything. We just got in our Volkswagen left our wedding and moved to Boston the next day we started graduate school, and I was in graduate school. I got a master's in '73. I got my PhD in 1980. And I had had my first child in 1978. So I was writing my dissertation as a new mother. And then we moved to Portland, where my husband got a job in an architecture firm there. And that's where I made the switch to public radio. And then I had a kid 1982.

ADVINCULA: And so did you like kind of, you've never really considered writing for like the newspaper like the New York Times, or—?!

ALBRIGHT: Well, I did. As a matter of fact, this is it. Oh, my God, you're just getting me to admit everything. While I was in graduate school, and I was writing my dissertation, I went to a party with a bunch of people from Harvard Law School. And they were complaining about their newspaper, they said, it was really boring, the Harvard Law Record, which was not the law review, but it was the newspaper for the school. And they said, you know, why don't you write for us because you know, you're a writer, and we need somebody to write book reviews or something more interesting. We need somebody who's not a legal scholar, because the legal scholar writers are just doing boring stuff. And I said, well, well, I can't write for your law school newspaper, because I don't go there. People who write for their school newspapers go to those schools. And they said, Why do we have to tell them? So again, I kind of took a flyer and I showed up to an editorial meeting, and you think they'd noticed I was a woman? There were no women law schools. I mean, there was like four women at Harvard Law School in 1974. And the editor gave me an assignment, you know, just showed up and he said, Who are you? And I said, Well, I'm Charlotte Albright. And I'd like to write for your paper. And he said, Okay, so he sent

me off into— ironically, I did an assignment about Women's Law Day, which is the day that Harvard was trying to recruit women invited women from all these high schools. And so of course, they sent a woman to cover it. Anyway, I took those clippings to the Boston Phoenix, which was then kind of like, Do you know what the Boston Phoenix newspaper is? It was sort of an alternative newspaper. Think about seven days in Vermont. I took those clippings from the Harvard Law School newspaper, and Boston Phoenix hired me. So I did have a print career. While in graduate school, I was doing my dissertation Sundays, and then I was doing kind of print journalism other days. And once I got to Portland, I started doing some print work, too. So I've always kind of done both. But when I discovered Public Radio, I succeeded more radio, it had something to do with my theater background. And my voice, people liked my voice. And so I figured I might as well use that.

ADVINCULA: And did you ever consider going to law school?

ALBRIGHT: Yes, yes I did. I got justice, sort of a fork in the road. I was feeling a little stagnant in public radio. So— and I was covering a lot of court cases. My beat was the Supreme Court in the state of Maine. And I was fascinated by it. So the University of Maine Law School was trying to attract non-traditional students, particularly women, that was kind of their niche. So I took the law—LSAT, and I applied to the University of Maine Law School in Portland and I got in and but by that time, a year had elapsed and during that year that I was sort of applying and waiting to get in. My radio career started to take off in a way that I didn't expect and I started to get on NPR. So by the time I was in the University of Maine law school, my choice was then continue to make a career at NPR as a contributor, or go to law school in Portland, Maine. The money in the law school in Portland, Maine attracted me because, you know, we needed it. And I went to one day of law school, and they had all these demonstration classes, they were teaching classes, and the Dean of the Law School said, This is what law school classes are like, so just go to them. And I didn't like any of them. And the reason I didn't like them is that the language was opaque. I mean, it seemed to me that people when they showed me what we're going to read and write, I said, I've been trying to clarify things for people. It seems like you're using language that I couldn't possibly write like that. So I didn't go and stayed in public radio and, and ended up doing more work for NPR. And I actually covered some Supreme Court cases US Supreme Court cases for NPR.

ADVINCULA: And was this prior to the birth of your second child?

ALBRIGHT: It was after that, I think he was about six when I applied to law school, and he was even then disappointed that I didn't go. He wanted his mother to be a lawyer because he wanted to have a condo at the ski resort. And all the families that had condos at ski resorts had, you know, doctor, lawyer, combination parents.

ADVINCULA: And were you a big skiing family?

ALBRIGHT: Well, he was. He took ski lessons in, in school, you know, they had ski days on Wednesdays. And so he was really into it. I wasn't so much. No, I mean, we couldn't afford it. Skiing even then, for a family of four on an architect's salary. No, it's not how we were going to spend money.

ADVINCULA: And so your husband at the time was still doing architecture?

ALBRIGHT: He was an architect. He still is, my first husband. He's retired now. But he was working for a small firm in Portland. And he was one of the first I would say, green architects, he was really kind of a pioneer in a lot of sustainability in architecture.

ADVINCULA: And so how did that first marriage end?

ALBRIGHT: It ended amicably. After 25 years, we just ran out of steam. And our kids were one was in college, one was in boarding school, he went to boarding school for one year camp didn't like it came back to Portland and finish up his schooling in his original school. But to be honest, I think the marriage had ended years before but I stayed in it, because I didn't want the kids to deal with two different households. So I stayed until they were kind of grown up.

ADVINCULA: In what year was that?

ALBRIGHT: What was that? 1999.

ADVINCULA: And did you feel kind of regret for getting married so young, or?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah. Well, I would never regret a marriage that produced the kids I have. So I think we both feel that way. I'm very close to the kids and their children. So I have no regret. And I'd probably do it again. It's just that I we grew apart and there was no at least we tried to make it so civil that I hope that children weren't scarred by that. They are close to both of us. He's remarried. I've remarried. And I married a journalist. I've married a photo journalist. We think more alike. We've covered things together. And maybe that's why it's working. One of the big reasons.

ADVINCULA: And did you stay in Maine after the divorce?

ALBRIGHT: We stayed for a year. He was working, dividing his time between being a stringer for the New York Times in New England, and he also had a part-time job at the Portland Press Herald. He's also a wire photographer. He didn't have he didn't have kids. He wasn't married. He was a sort of globetrotting photographer covering a bunch of stuff for Agence France-Presse. And so but when we decided to get married, we, we thought, well, there's nothing keeping us in Maine. Let's try something else. So we moved to Vermont in 2007. I took a job teaching at the State University there in Lyndonville where we still live. But I continued to freelance in public radio and then eventually this state college had some fiscal problems and I went back full time for public radio and that's what I was doing when I came here, because Dartmouth wasn't in my territory. I was covering Dartmouth for VPR [Vermont Public Radio]. And Dartmouth said, you know, we keep pulling your stories about us off the VPR Website. Why don't you just write for us? So I went back to print. And now I'm bouncing back into audio because I'm doing all these podcasts.

ADVINCULA: And so early 2000s start of the Iraq war. What was your initial opinion of that?

ALBRIGHT: Ugh. I thought, here we go again. Why do we do this? I didn't believe the weapons of mass destruction thing. I mean, it's not that I had evidence against it. They just didn't give me evidence of it. I mean, journalists want positive evidence, you can't prove a negative to us. You're gonna have to

show us and nobody did. And I didn't. My my deep distrust had been planted during the Vietnam War, and it resurfaced during Iraq. I thought it looked very similar. And this time, I also thought there were oil interests at work there. I mean, I don't think we were in Vietnam for resources. But in Iraq, I thought we were. I still do.

ADVINCULA: And then in that in between time, did you, were you still very mistrustful, the government?

ALBRIGHT: Well, so let's see who we had. I was. I didn't like Reagan at all. There are a couple of things. I hated the whole economic, at that point, probably from Reagan on, I was more concerned about economic injustice in our country. And I thought our government was feeding it. Especially during the Reagan years, this whole idea of trickle down was ridiculous. And it only made the rich richer. I mean, I'm a Bernie Sanders Democrat. Right? So I think it only made the rich richer. The deregulation that happened during Reagan appalled me, particularly the deregulation of media. So his, his decision through the FCC to lift any restrictions for equal time is why we had— why I think we have media that is encamped now. Right? You have right wing media and you have left wing media. Well, that's because the rule that used to say if you have Reagan on, you also have to have Carter on is lifted, and all hell breaks loose. And so I think that's why we have a terrible crisis in media today, where people who are on the right, let's look at the media on the right, people on the left do the same thing. I mean, to be honest, I'm not even a fan of Rachel Maddow. Although I believe everything she says, I just don't think there should be shows like that. I'm a PBS newshour watcher. I still think there has to be balance in every show. So, so I didn't like Reagan. But you know. I thought Carter got a raw deal. I thought he was fine. He was a healer. He was a healer after— when we needed him. And I thought that and Randy Ballmer writes beautifully about that here. I was a fanatical Obama fan. So I would say my distrust and trust alternated with leadership. I don't think I thought of government as a monolith. I thought of people who were at the head of government could be trusted or not. But I didn't think there was such a thing as mistrust in government, per se. So believe in government.

ADVINCULA: And how did you perceive like the war on drugs?

ALBRIGHT: Oh, you mean, just say no, the Nancy Reagan?

ADVINCULA: Yeah, well, I mean, I guess it's kind of every president after.

ALBRIGHT: I think it's been horrible. I think the government has been turning a blind eye and giving prescription drug companies free ride, which is why we have an opioid crisis. I covered prescription drugs. And it's also why people are sick all the time. I mean, they're too expensive. So not only do we have drug addiction, we have illness that people can't afford to cure. Because of the drug companies. I'm not a big fan.

ADVINCULA: And in 2000, Bush gets elected. There's the Supreme Court drama. Was that another kind of flashpoint of your mistrust and government?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah. Well, it was certainly the first time that I started to worry about the Supreme Court. I'd always held the Supreme Court and like, you know, like high esteem because of who was on it. And so, that was troubling. I felt that the Supreme Court made a political decision in haste. I still remember the morning after the election and like my mother in law, who was then in her mid 80s, called up sobbing, she said, I think I did one of the hanging chad ones. So not only did I, I was appalled at how that was decided. Now then, now we had to start worrying about our election system. Which I'm still worried about. Yeah, that's, that that's still a nightmare in my head. I mean, it was the first time that I realized, wow, these things could be hacked. You know, the rise of the Internet at that point, which Al Gore did not invent. The technology started to look to me like it might hurt us more than help us in terms of Democracy. And I think that's true.

ADVINCULA: And so you joined Dartmouth in 2015? Yeah, obviously, another huge event, election of Trump in 2016.

ALBRIGHT: Ugh, well, I must admit, my, my worries during the election for Trump was just that he was dumb. I just thought he was incredibly dumb. And, you know, I thought kind of Reagan esque, with his television show duping people into thinking that somehow because he was rich, he would be smart and good. seemed to me the opposite. And I was terrified that he would win. It's interesting. My, my husband, Herb Swanson, worked for the Associated Press. When the Clintons were in office, and he covered both, he he followed them around, was in Little Rock when they were Little Rock. I mean, he was part of the press corps that follow Clinton and

Hillary. He wasn't a big fan of Hillary, not because he didn't believe in her politics, but he just didn't think she was a good candidate. She thought he would she would turn people off. And she did. And so I was concerned about Trump, but I never in my wildest dreams imagined that he would be an autocrat. I just didn't, I— plutocrat, maybe, but I just didn't see this coming. I didn't see evil. I didn't see evil. And I do. I actually do. And I remember I was producing a show on Sirius radio here, Mike [Michael] Mastanduno was the host. And the week after the election, I said to Mike, we have to do a Trump show. We have to gather some faculty here and have them talk about it. And he talked about Trump. And nobody was very upset. I mean, Mike just said, Well, you know, these guys who look like they're so right wing, they always have to come to the middle eventually. I mean, he was taking that view that you might not like the man, but you know, his politics will have to find an electable point. And I disagreed with them. But I was producing the show. I wasn't hosting it. So I couldn't disagree in person. But when the show's over, I said, Mike, I think you're wrong. I think Trump is truly going to be disastrous for the country. And he said, Well, my wife said the same thing. You know, so I said, Well, I think your wife's right, we should have run the show. But I didn't see, I didn't see January 6. I didn't. I'm terrified about this country.

ADVINCULA: How do you feel about the future of journalism as a profession?

ALBRIGHT: I feel terrible that people don't believe it. What's the point? I mean, what's the point of gathering the facts? I mean, the stuff that Brendan Nyhan does terrifies me because he shows that you can get a bunch of people who have somehow formed beliefs based on fiction. And you can show them the fact instead of the fiction, and they can agree with you that they had been believing fictions, and that these are the facts. But then they say we don't care. Because beliefs are more important to us than facts. So it's not that I think journalism is failing. I think journalism is doing pretty well. It didn't do very well in the run up to the Trump election. There should have been a lot more poking around. And you know, but it, journalism could, it could reach a pinnacle of quality and success and it wouldn't matter. So it's not that I'm worried about the future of journalism. I'm— I'm worried that it doesn't matter to people.

ADVINCULA: Yeah.

ALBRIGHT: That's what worries me. And I think it's all because of social media.

ADVINCULA: Do you see a way to fix it or—?

ALBRIGHT: Education. That's the only— that's the only way I see— I think all public schools should teach civics. I think all public schools should teach the consumption of media as a course. How do you consume it? How do you fact check? I think this should be taught to fourth graders. And I think it should be required, you know, whether we can afford to wait for as long as that's going to take to re-educate Americans. I don't know what the time— I don't know what the ticking time bomb is on this.

ADVINCULA: And tying back to Vietnam, do you feel like your generation was more literate when it came to, to kind of dissecting truth from the politicians?

ALBRIGHT: Yeah, Well, I don't— I don't want to pat us on the back too much. I just don't think that we had an alternative. You know, we couldn't say oh, we don't want to watch Walter Cronkite, we're going to, we're going to dive into some sketchy website. I mean, maybe we would have, you know, maybe if the weathermen had a website would have followed them. But we didn't, you know, you had a choice. You could watch Cronkite, or you could watch Chancellor. So, I mean, I think there was a notion that was passed down by our parents that there were facts. And I don't think we felt it incumbent upon ourselves to verify them. I think we assumed that journalists would be doing that for us. And I don't know what would have happened. I mean, I can't say as a generation, we would have been any better than yours. Had somebody introduced 5,000 different social media threads for us to follow, I think we probably would have followed the one that matched us, which is the worst thing you can possibly do. Sometimes I have to force myself to watch Fox.

ADVINCULA: And do you think, I guess, post-mortem on the Vietnam War in your protesting— do you think that's kind of when it started to go wrong?

ALBRIGHT: Journalism?

ADVINCULA: No, just I guess, the trajectory of America.

ALBRIGHT:

No, I think it went right, then. I think America righted it itself for a while after the Vietnam War. I think that it turned itself— it turned its attention to its own economy. I mean, Clinton's campaign slogan was it's the economy stupid. And he did grow the economy. And he did grow the middle class. And I think that's very important that we did that. So I think for a while, things were fine. But they were fine only on the surface. They were only fine for college educated white people. And all the other things that were happening in the case of our cities, the lack of opportunity for people who weren't white educated Americans. I don't think that— I think journalists covered that, but I don't think people paid attention to it. And I don't think it became enough of a campaign issue every time we elected people. So we didn't elect anybody that would do anything about it. And, you know, when I was in public radio, we have surveys that show what are people's major issues in terms of, you know, what do they want our leaders to fix? And the economy and education are always at the top. But then when you look at what people talk about on the campaign trail, they don't talk about the economy and education very often. What do they talk about? Hot button issues that divide us. So those issues that could unite us that we really haven't fixed, including racism. Well, they are talking about racism, making it worse. That is the people who say, oh, we can't have any woke candidates. All these weird hot button words. Nobody knows what Critical Race Theory is. These guys that are decrying it, they don't even know what it is. So I am worried that during the time that we had the Clintons and even Obama could have been way better I think he could have been way less— what do I want to say about this? He could have been more motivational in terms of calling out racism in this country. He did it at the end so I think that things to our generation seemed fine after Vietnam. I don't think that we lost faith, but maybe we should have.

ADVINCULA:

And do you think some people were kind of resting on their laurels of being involved in the protest?

ALBRIGHT:

Absolutely. Absolutely. I think there was a lot of people who were quite proud of themselves, and then didn't keep— didn't— how can I put this? I think I mentioned this earlier, I think there was a false sense of, well, job well done with a lot of jobs left to do when still there. I mean, I think we tried to raise our kids in ways that were more inclusive. And I think we've tried on an individual basis as parents to change things from inside out a little bit by the way we talk to our kids, but in terms of policies, I don't see a very big difference from the 1950s.

ADVINCULA: And so I guess, kind of to wrap up, do you— are you proud of your involvement in the Vietnam War protests and what you did? Do you feel like you could have done more?

ALBRIGHT: Yes. And I'm not proud of what I did. I mean, I think I was a follower. I wasn't a leader at all in that. I think it was very peer pressured. I'm fine with it. I mean, I think it was. I certainly wouldn't have been proud if I'd sat it out. But I don't take any credit. No.

ADVINCULA: And did you do any other protesting after?

ALBRIGHT: Well, certainly I've done some protesting. You know, it was part of the whole Kitty Riot thing. I mean, there's a lot of hats, and I'm very concerned about Roe v. Wade being overturned. I mean, that was— that was our agenda generations. We took it for granted. You know, I do remember having some arguments with people in graduate school, some actual— some men who said well, surprisingly to me, we don't agree with the Roe v. Wade decision. It is a unifying factor for women across class lines, across political spectrum. It's a horrible decision. But if it ends up unifying women in ways that we haven't been unified before, there will be a silver lining to it.

ADVINCULA: And that decision occurred when you were in college, right?

ALBRIGHT: 72, I think, yeah.

ADVINCULA: And was that like a big event? I mean, like, very impactful at that time?

ALBRIGHT: Yes, it was, although I don't remember pressing for it. I remember being surprised by it. I didn't even know it was an issue. Until you know, it passed. I didn't have an abortion. I knew there were students at Bennington, who were having abortions. And so for them, it was huge. For me, I mean, most of us, if you wanted to be on the pill, you were, so it didn't have a personal impact on me. But philosophically, it reified many of the other tenants of what you might call the women's movement which is: stop bossing us around.

ADVINCULA: And do you think there were similar trends along the anti war movement of people kind of stopping and saying, oh, we've won and not continuing to push?

ALBRIGHT: Yes, yeah, I do.

ADVINCULA: And when you were— you went to your 50th reunion last year?

ALBRIGHT: Well, the women that went to this reunion that I met, did continue to do things that I would consider socially useful things. You know, did they change the world overnight? No, but on a day by day basis, I think the women that I knew I'm not, I'm not saying that we are to be commended for that. It's something that gives us pleasure. It's not something that we're wearing hair shirts about. I mean, we enjoy this work, I enjoyed being an underpaid journalist instead of a lawyer. And there are also women who are doing things now not for pay that are pretty useful. So because I went to school with all women, I'm only talking about women. I didn't have male classmates. So I, but I, I still feel that if we could just have bottled the energy and the skepticism. Not only should we have been protesting the government, we should have been protesting what Eisenhower warned about the military industrial complex, the whole shooting match, literally shooting match. So in the meantime, what's happened while we're asleep at the wheel, raising our children, and enjoying our fine lives, we have a school shooting like every day.

I mean, we have gone backwards in terms of reproductive rights right now. And so, for about a nanosecond, I was pretty happy about this world, when my kids were little, but I have grandchildren that make me terrified. I mean, I'm terrified for what they have to deal with economically, politically, socially, and above all, environmentally. I mean, I think we haven't even talked about climate change and the environmental movement. But I think we were, we were reading Silent Spring. And then after we've finished reading Silent Spring, we were putting all of our garbage in plastic bags and taking it to landfills. You know, I mean, we were incredibly slow to realize what was going on with the environment, as we were so fixated on the political environment. Well the political environment, you can change by elections. You can't elect to keep climate change from happening. I mean, you have to really do something yourself, every single person. And our generation failed at that.

ADVINCULA: And I guess, on that positive note—

ALBRIGHT: Wait, there's a positive note though! There's you. There's you. I mean, the one thing that gives me hope, and one of the real reasons— and I don't want to make this sound like an advertisement for Dartmouth, because I could be retired now. But one of the reasons that keeps me engaged in this school, writing for it— I'm going to do a podcast based on Greenie students in their labs. I'm going to walk into labs and podcast what they're doing scientifically. And a lot of that is sustainability work. I think we did light a couple fires that were good. I think we did make some changes as a generation that were good. Then I think we kind of became complacent, and we fell asleep. And we raised our families and we bought our cars. But I, and I'm sorry, I do have to apologize. But I do think the connections that I've made with students here are hugely helpful, that you are going to make a difference. Not just in your backyard, the way I tried to do, but I mean, globally make a difference. You're powerful.

ADVINCULA: Well, on that positive note, we're going to wrap it up here. Thank you so much for participating in this oral history. And yeah, any last comments?

ALBRIGHT: Absolutely. Your questions were great. You should be a journalist. Is that what you're going to do?

ADVINCULA: Um, I'm unsure. I mean, I'm very undecided right now.

ALBRIGHT: Think about it!

ADVINCULA: One of my really good friends is a journalist.

ALBRIGHT: And what's your major?

ADVINCULA: I'm government right now.

ALBRIGHT: That's a good basis for journalism. Just call Jake Tapper.

ADVINCULA: Yeah, I wish.

ABSTRACT:

Charlotte Albright, freelance journalist and writer for Dartmouth communications. This oral history interview documents her experience growing up during the height of the Vietnam War. Albright describes her early life, growing up in Pennsylvania, the death of her parents at a young age, and her undergraduate studies at Bennington College. She discusses her involvement in guerilla theater as a form of anti-war activism at Bennington as well as the impact the draft had on many of her male friends in theater. Albright also reflected upon her participation in an anti-war protest in Washington DC and how she views the war 50 years later.