

Ernest Paul "Rusty" Sachs
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Vietnam Project
04 May 2023 / 08 May 2023
Transcribed by Brandyn Humberstone '22

Interview Part 1:

00:00

HUMBERSTONE: All right. So, this is Brandyn Humberstone. Today is the fourth of May 2023 and I am conducting this oral history interview for the Dartmouth Vietnam Project. I'm recording this interview in person with Mr. Ernest Paul "Rusty" Sachs. I am at his residence in- we are in Norwich, Vermont. And— [Pause]

00:40

HUMBERSTONE: Mr. Sachs, thank you for speaking with me today.

00:43

SACHS: It's gonna be a privilege.

00:46

HUMBERSTONE: I realized now that I was reading the prompt for someone on Zoom, so. [Laughter]

00:54

SACHS: Well, this should work just as well.

00:56

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah, that is totally fine. But yeah, thanks for taking the time to speak with me today. And to start out, let's go back to the beginning. Can you tell me when and where you were born?

01:08

SACHS: I have it on good authority, I have no personal recollection, But I am informed that I was born on the seventh of May 1944. In St. Louis, Missouri, at 97 Arundle place, which was my grandparent's residence. It was during the war. And my father had already gone overseas. And my mother was apprehensive about the absence of physicians in the United States, generally, but since her father-in-law was a physician, she traveled to St. Louis to dad's family home. And that's where I was born.

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02:00

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. Very cool. So, your dad was overseas in the Army?

02:08

SACHS: In the Army. When I was born, he was in England, preparing to land at Normandy. He was a battalion surgeon and he landed at Normandy a month after I was born.

HUMBERSTONE: Really?

SACHS: Yeah, actually, he didn't find out I was born until I was about three months old.

02:29

HUMBERSTONE: And that was by— I'm guessing by letter?

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: So obviously, you don't recall these? Do you know when your father returned home?

02:42

SACHS: Oh, yeah, yeah. I— He returned home in, in '46. I was two and a half.

Humberstone: Okay.

SAHCS: And my sister was born 268 days after he returned home.

[Both laughing]

SACHS: And I don't remember his getting back. But I— When talking— We talked about it for many years afterward. I was the only child at that time was the firstborn.

HUMBESTONE: Yeah.

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SACHS: And he came back and— I guess he was discharged within a few days of getting home. And he got a job immediately as a fellow at Lahey Clinic in Boston, which is a—

He wanted to get the meat ball surgery out of his system, having been a battlefield surgeon for the last several years. And- And then he went on to train and become a brain surgeon.

03:59

HUMBERSTONE: Where did you end up during this time? And where do you spent most of your time growing up. Where—

SACHS: In Norwich, Vermont.

HUMBERSTONE: In Norwich?

SACHS: Yeah.

04:10

SACHS: So, we moved out a couple of short stays, you know, one year less than a couple of other places. In Boston [MA], in New Haven [CT], and in New Orleans [LA]. He got his first job after training in New Orleans [LA].

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: But that didn't work out at all. And we moved down there we drove family drove down into cars with mom, dad, each driving a car. Her brother helped as a relief driver. Because I was about to start third grade. So, I was about eight or nine. And my sister who was three years younger was with us and then another sister, who was a newborn. Who had been born in March of '51. And suffered horribly from eczema all over her body.

HUMBERSTONE: Really?

SACHS: So, she was swaddled in wrist to armpit cloth and same with her whole legs and her torso. So that's why the extra driver was needed.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

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SACHS: And we drove from Norwich to New Orleans, and it took six and a half days. No interstates in those days. And we went down in the end of August beginning of September get down there in time to start school. I started school at the Monterey Park Country Day School. And before the snow was gone, they'd had their fill of New Orleans [LA] and a job opened up at the Hitchcock [Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center] they caught called and said would you be willing to come back here he said, "I'm halfway there already". And I have no idea whether they took a bath on the house that they had bought and sold six months later, or anything. But I was very happy. When we moved back, we had to live in Hanover [NH], you know a rental house, for the first half-year because houses turnover in the summer. But the meantime I met my oldest and dearest friend Tom Palmer. We were in Mrs. [Alberta] Stephens is third grade class together. Then we were back in Norwich the next year and went to grammar school in Norwich [VT], went to high school, Hanover High School, because Norwich [VT] doesn't have a high school. And then I left home in hopes of becoming a grown up somehow.

06:51

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. And so, you had a memory of this of this trip? Or is that all—

06:56

SACHS: Driving down and back? Driving down in New Orleans and back? No, I remember that. I remember. It was very hot, very muggy. I remember stopping at these little mom and pop gas stations in where you'd get. Get your meals and stuff. I remember asking for a glass of milk and a waitress saying, "Oh, ain't that adorable. You mean sweet milk?" Sweet milk? Refrigeration was sufficiently uncommon in the world south that if you ordered milk, you got buttermilk. You had to ask for sweet milk. If you wanted to get regular drinking milk.

07:38

HUMBERSTONE: I don't think I've ever had buttermilk.

07:42

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SACHS: It goes bad more slowly. I remember living in in New Orleans, I remember what the house looked like, and remember what the street looked like. I remember, it was a private school.

HUMBERSTONE: And you were about-

SACHS: Third grade. We had lunch in a formal dining room with white tablecloths and you had to be on your manners, and they'd correct your manners if you neglected to put your fork a knife on the table for converted and both of them pointing to 20 minutes after four on your plate to indicate that you're finished, then it wouldn't clear your plate. [Laughter] Things like that. It was it was a nice, very genteel place where they trained Southern gentleman.

Humberstone: Yeah.

SACHS: Lily white. This was this was 1951 and '52. Yeah, yeah. '51 and '52. So, it was way before the Civil Rights Movement, and everything was very segregated. There wasn't any unrest in our neighborhood. But it was- I looked back at everything. There were white fountains, black fountains, white restaurants, black restaurants, and you didn't go in the wrong one.

09:13

HUMBERSTONE: And these are like your earliest memories as must have been a bit of a shift-

09:17

SACHS: They're nowhere near my earliest, but they're pretty early.

09:20

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. And then coming back up to Norwich, that must have been a bit of a switch to come back. Do you remember-

09:27

SACHS: There was snow on the ground. I had only been gone six months.

09:30

HUMBERSTONE: That's true. That's right. I have to keep that in mind. It was very short trip.

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09:37

SACHS: It was nice. Nice to be back. And even though it's going to a different school over in a different state. I was in Hanover [NH] instead of Norwich [VT]. I had lots of friends who are still here. I would see them- we would go shopping at the Co-Op [Co-Op Food Store], and I would run into friends from Norwich [VT].

09:55

HUMBERSTONE: So, these towns, they looked a lot different than what they do now, from what I understand?

10:01

SACHS: Yeah, they weren't air conditioned and the buildings were a little less sophisticated. Dan and Whit's [Dan and Whit's General Store] which was more like a feed store back then. And it wasn't called Dan and Whit's, it was called Merrill's Store. But that's where you could get everything- You couldn't get the newspapers there.

HUMBERSTONE: You couldn't?

SACHS: For newspapers, you had to go into Gil's store, which is around the corner. And, and Gill's also had a soda fountain bar where you could get ice cream, or you could get a lemon coke.

10:41

HUMBERSTONE: Norwich was a farm town, like just a farm town back then. Right?

10:46

SACHS: Yeah, but it was becoming a bedroom town for Hannover. There were there are a lot of my classmates and Norwich would come to school in their barn boots. And they keep a pair of shoes at the school to change into when they got to school.

11:05

HUMBERSTONE: And they would they be working after school?

11:08

SACHS: Yeah, they would go back to do chores after school.

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HUMBERSTONE: Some of the some of them remained good friends. Throughout my life, you might have noticed there's a picture on the bookcase in the living room, which was my second-grade class. Was my first year in school because we just moved back from France. I started school in second grade because I knew how to read and write, not in English, but I knew how to read and write. So, they put me into the second-grade class picked it up pretty quick.

11:53

HUMBERSTONE: So, to keep it all together, your father taking you to France and you learn to speak French?

12:00

SACHS: After the war, he got a job in Normandy. Teaching surgery. And we moved to Rouen, Normandy. And I went to school there. And we spoke English at home. But life was all in French.

HUMBERSTONE: So, you had to catch up?

SACHS: So, in some sense, some sense. My first language was French, if you're referring to reading and writing. But we always spoke English at home. I'm still as comfortable and French as I am in English.

12:38

HUMBERSTONE: And then you were in in Norwich [VT] for the rest of that time, until you graduated. Correct?

12:44

SACHS: Graduated from high school and then I didn't get into Harvard. And my father said "the only place you can go to school is Harvard, I'm not going to pay for anything else. It's the only place you can get a decent education in this country."

I got waitlist at Harvard. So not knowing what else to do. I moved to France, I moved back to France, but not to the same town I moved to the French Alps to Grenoble.

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HUMBERSTONE: When was this?

SACHS: This was in 1961 after I graduated. And I lived with a family in Grenoble [France] and I went to l'Externat [Notre-Dame, Université de Grenoble] My closest friend there was a neighbor named- a boy, Bruno Courteaud, who continues to be like a brother. Actually, he called me yesterday morning. Said "you back home yet?"

And he and his wife in about 1990 or '91 got married in my backyard in Norwich, Vermont, and I performed the ceremony.

HUMBERSTONE: Really?

SACHS: His wife is probably Marlene's [Marlene Sachs] closest friend. And so, we've got some continuity.

And after that year, during that year, I applied again to Harvard. Not wanting to rely on the waitlist. I applied again. And I guess I had some panache, some exotic appeal for applying from l'Externat in France. I got in, and showed up and didn't know what the fuck I was doing and flunked out pretty promptly.

14:40

HUMBERSTONE: So, taking time in France, what kind of effect did that have on you? Did you— Well, it didn't seem to help you find what you wanted to do at Harvard? It sounds like—

SACHS: Oh, no it didn't.

HUMBERSTONE: Did that make sense make things worse?

14:57

SACHS: No, I think it made things a lot better. Gave me more of a worldly perspective on things, that's for damn sure. And I was living in France when the France's war in Algeria was, was ending. And there were there were French generals who were being charged with treason and they're condemned to death. And, and there were student protests in the streets about the war. And I never really understood the details of what they're

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protesting. But the whole concept of students marching and expressing their own opinions about things. That was something I was not familiar with all!

HUMBERSTONE: That was strange?

SACHS: That was very strange, but it had an effect. And a few years later, I was thinking of that. When people were beginning to be upset about the Vietnam War. But that was— I was in France in 1961, '62.

And then I came back to start college in '62. And in the middle of my sophomore year, they said, you know, this doesn't seem to be working out, put into take some time off, and see if you really want to be here. And I said, "okay", so I took some time off and I enlisted in the Marine Corps. And next thing I know, I was there, I was in uniform, and I was learning how to fly. And I didn't find it very academically challenging. I could whiz through all the ground school and stuff like that. And I had toyed with learning how to fly when I was in high school.

HUMBERSTONE: Really?

SACHS: Lebanon airport, I started flying when I was— I had my first flight [inaudible] I was 14.

HUMBERSTONE: 14?

SACHS: And then by— Before I went to the Marine Corps, I had a pilot's license. And I had soloed, and I passed tests, and things like that. The Marine Corps didn't care very much about that.

17:25

HUMBERSTONE: Before we get into the Marine Corps, I'm interested in hearing more about your path through these times. Kind of what influenced— more about what influenced these decisions to go to France and Harvard. And well, it sounds like your father's input was a big—

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SACHS: My father [Ernest Sachs] had gone to Harvard as an undergraduate and had gone to Harvard Medical School. His father had gone to Harvard as an undergraduate, where his classmate and roommate for four years was his first cousin. Who became a neurologist. And that's not true. That's not true. His first cousins, father became— was a neurologist. But Grandpa [Ernest Sachs Sr.] and Uncle Paul [J. Sachs] roomed together for four years at Harvard. And then [inaudible] went to the top medical school in the country at that time, which was Johns Hopkins in Baltimore [MD]. And upon completing his MD, he moved to Vienna [Italy] and London [England] and spent a year in Vienna on your London studying with [inaudible] studying with Sir Victor Horsley. And I'm slipping [inaudible]—

But he came back thinking you know what, this this, I really liked neurology on it. But I like surgery. And I think maybe there's some maybe there's some future in surgery on the nervous system. So, he went to, he'd grown up in Manhattan in New York. And so, the first place he went to Columbia [Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons] and they said, "No this is a passing fad. Surgery? The nervous system? Never going to happen." Same thing was the message he got out of Harvard and Yale. He really wanted to do it and then some people at Washington University in St. Louis [MO], said "we think you're onto something here and we'd like to establish a professorship in neurosurgery".

There was no such thing on planet earth. At this time, it was about 1910 Yeah. And so, he said, "Okay, I'll move there. As long as I can continue my practice, I want to be a practicing surgeon". And he did. Moved out there. He was the first professor of neurosurgery and loved it. And in 1913 he met him at my grandmother. And they got married that summer.

20:40

HUMBERSTONE: Well, this explains your father's drive for you to go to Harvard.

SACHS: Well, yeah, probably.

HUMBERSTONE: Did you also have pressure to go to med school?

20:49

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SACHS: Not as much. Because I started not wanting to go to med school when I was probably in high school. I said, "I didn't ever want to have to examine obese people". I didn't want to see them naked. I just, I was just I would never have been a good doctor. I don't think I am. I like to make good decisions. I like to make a decision myself. I don't like to make decisions on behalf of somebody else. I don't like to. I don't like to give people choices of what to do. Like I like to do what I do.

I was— I could have been a real asshole officer. But actually, worked out pretty well, because I always got along better with the Marines than I did with the officers. That's still kind of the case. If I'd been around more officers, like Jack [O'Toole]. Yeah, I mean, I think Jack [O'Toole] was generally probably a pretty good officer. And Derek [Odom], you know, Derek [Odom], I don't know [inaudible].

22:00

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. I wasn't sure on his last name.

SACHS: He was army, but the guys who want to get the job done, rather than want to please their superiors. It's kind of personal.

So that's what happened there. And I didn't fit in that well at Harvard. But I did go back when I got out of the Marine Corps. Yeah, because the skids were greased a little better to go back to Harvard, than to try to convince people at the University of East Bum-Fuck that they should let me study there, because they still don't really know what I am doing.

22:50

HUMBERSTONE: At that time?

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: Well, at that time you had— you'd met Marlene and you had some support.

22:56

SACHS: I did. And I had, I had a pleasant home life. Which was nice. And it wasn't until— it pretty clear that that was actually going to graduate. That we

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started thinking about having a family of our own and stuff like that. So that worked.

23:20

HUMBERSTONE: Well, was there anything specific that made it, not click it at Harvard, when you got there? Was there something off?

23:26

SACHS: The first time?

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: No, it was just that I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't know. I was just going through the steps the way everybody had always said you're supposed to do. And I didn't. I didn't have any clear goals. I just sort of figured life happened. And then I wasn't very pleased with what was happening. And enlisting in the Marine Corps, I guess, was one of the first things I ever did on my own. Yeah, and guess that's never happened before.

24:02

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. Did you have any influence on that choice? The Marine Corps that was all your own?

24:06

SACHS: That was 100% my own. 100% My own and I'm glad because, you know, Marines are really different from any other servicemen. There's no Marine is ever going to get mistaken for an Air Force guy, or a sailor, or the soldier. And, and it's not just because the marine makes you to the Marine Corps makes you different. It's that different. The people who go to the Marine Corps are different inside even before they get there. And some [inaudible] and some and some don't make it but the ones that pick up on it all. Are we all have some— there's probably some study that has found something that we all have in common. And I don't know what it is, but I'm glad I got it. I'm glad I got it.

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But you know, you start talking with another Marine and you find these things in common and they just, they're not just things that you went through in common when you're in the Marine Corps. Their attitudes that you had before you went in the Marine Corps, toward yourself and toward your role within that institution and toward your goals and what you're going to do there. It's, you know, I think Marines are people who are much more result focused, then process focus. And the ones who focus on process don't quite make it as well.

26:23

HUMBERSTONE: So, what year was that that you left Harvard? And how long was it before you signed up?

26:29

SACHS: I left side of February of 1964. And I was sworn in and signed on the dotted line on Bastille Day, which is 14 to July. So, February, March, April, may be five months.

26:48

HUMBERSTONE: What was it about the Marine Corps that caught your eye? You see a poster? You have family?

26:54

SACHS: I've read *Battle Cry* which was about World War II Marines, written by a World War II Marine. That was about all who but the Marine Corps; except they did have the best uniforms.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. Those dress blues are sharp.

SACHS: Yeah, they are.

27:15

SACHS: Saw a recruiter at the post office. He said, "you liked these blues?" Yeah, they look pretty good. He said, "We'll have a set waiting for you at Parris Island [MCRD Parris Island, SC]. If you enlist".

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HUMBERSTONE: Well for those listening, anyone who hasn't? How would— What do you, I guess— what's your description of the of the dress blues? You want to explain to them what they are and what makes them sharp.

27:34

SACHS: They're brightly colored. Impeccably, pressed, and decorated, and worn, and squared away. And just like the apotheosis of military splendor. It was really nice, really good. And, of course, I never got us to dress blues until I was commissioned, which was like two years later. And I got the set of officer's dress blues, which the blue trousers with a red stripe with a blood stripe. Like you didn't get that did a corporal?

HUMBERSTONE: No.

SACHS: I had the red stripe on the on the blue trousers and a black blouse with no piping. That's what the officers wore. And a white cover. I guess enlisted get a white cover. Anyways, it was kinda neat. And I remember one time being chewed out by a drill instructor for the entire group have done something and we fucked up something. And he said, "who decided to do it this way?" I don't even remember what the chore was. "Whose idea was that?" I took one step forward, "Sergeant Brown, it was my decision to do it that way. And they all went along with it". And he came on he started yelling at me, but I could see the whole time he was yelling his eyes were sort of saying, you know, this guy is taking responsibility for something that's, that's okay. I like that.

And I felt really good about that, you know, even though I'd fucked up, you know, I admitted that I fucked up. And it was something like we lined up in the wrong order or we lined up at the wrong door for chow is some very, very small thing. But it was the sort of thing that was imprecise. They jumped all over you for that, but you know, taking responsibility for things isn't that all that bad.

30:05

HUMBESTONE: No? And this was, this was in Cherry Point— or not Charry Point. This was in Parris Island?

30:14

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SACHS: That was actually— that happened in Pensacola [FL].

HUMBERSTONE: In Pensacola [FL]?

SACHS: That was our pre-flight class. And Pensacola [FL] consisted of about 40 sailors and 10 Marines, okay, I'm guessing, but about that ratio. And we all went through the same training for what was nominally a 16-week course. But then the Navy guys who had completed college, at the end of that 16 weeks, got commissioned, and now they were in Ensigns with the rest of us, we're still enlisted folk. Cadets.

And, and I was a cadet until I got my wings, which was at the end of March in 1966. But my commissioning date was backdated to the first of January. Which meant, among other things, that all the people who had started college the same year I did, and went to the academy, or six months junior to me, as second lieutenants. And it was it was nice. And we there were a whole bunch of us who were commissioned around the same time, but not the same days. And we all had a January 1 date of rank, because it related to completing certain phases of training. And by the, I guess, they figure to be completed this phase, you're probably going to make it through the program, we're not going to wash you out. Now. We're going to give you lots of breaks and give you opportunities to succeed on anything to screw up and I [inaudible].

32:10

HUMBERSTONE: Well, from what I understand this is a pretty unique program in the in the Marine Corps?

32:16

SACHS: And yeah, it didn't last very long. The Marine Aviation Cadet Program.

32:20

HUMBERSTONE: It was pretty short lived, was it not?

32:23

SACHS: I think it was around for maybe six or seven years, or something like that. I think it started around '61 or '62. And when I came back as an instructor in '67 there was still a couple of [inaudible] in the Training Command, but

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they weren't anymore. And there was a guy named Frisbee who said "yeah, I'm the last [inaudible]". And I wonder what happened to him? I when I got back from overseas, and I was checking in to the B.O.Q. at Ellison field.

HUMBESTONE: And what's a B.O.Q.?

SACHS: Bachelor Officers Quarters.

HUMBESTONE: Okay.

SACHS: Where— and the cadets, as cadets— toward the end of training. We lived in the in the B.O.Q. With all the Ensigns and Lieutenants.

SACHS: I was gonna say something about that. [inaudible] Frisbee was the last of the [inaudible]?

SACHS: Oh, the day I checked in and met this guy frisbee and he said, "Yeah, I'm a cadet. I'm the last of the of the MARCADs. I'm gonna finish up next week". And that night, we're sitting watching the news, watching, [inaudible] report on TV. And there was a picture. The first photographs had been released from the Hanoi Hill, from the prison, where P.O.W. is shot down over North Vietnam, were kept.

HUMBERSTONE: And what time was this again?

SACHS: This was in the early fall of 1967.

HUMBESTONE: Okay.

SACHS: And, and I'm looking at I said, Holy shit, that's Dave Raymond. He was, had been, my roommate in pre-flight. One of— we had three or four guys in four-man rooms, rather than live in a squad Bay. They were four person rooms and chopped up alphabetically.

And this guy, David Raymond, David George Raymond, he was he was a Navy cadet. And he'd been in the backseat of a Phantom, and he punched

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out early in his in his first tour— his only tour. Off the carrier and he was a POW for about six years.

34:55

HUMBERSTONE: You're seeing this at that time you had come back from Vietnam.

SACHS: Yeah, I was just by back.

HUMBERSTONE: And you were instructing in Pensacola?

35:02

SACHS: I was about to begin instructing. This the day I checked in.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

35:07

HUMBERSTONE: And then so we'll go back and explain this program a little bit for people who are not familiar.

35:13

SACHS: The cadet program was for. It got started as a program for enlisted Marines to who had two years of college or the equivalent of two years of college to undergo flight training, and upon successful completion of flight training, will be commissioned as a second lieutenant and an aviator. The program—

35:43

HUMBERSTONE: And you still went to boot camp, did you—

35:47

SACHS: [inaudible] the essence of the program was that you spent this— our pay grades were— Sacks, Ernest Paul, rank MARCAD, for Marine Aviation Cadet, parenthesis Echo tack Oscar [E-O] for enlisted. Enlisted officer I wasn't Enlisted Officer Candidate. But we weren't an E-1 Private or an E-2 PFC, you're an E-Zero. And I went through the that the entire training syllabus is an E zero. Now our pay grade for Echo tack Oscar was 50% of O-1 with under two years of service. So, we're getting paid about like a corporal. Yeah, which was a little better than a private but not much. And

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this started off at main side in Pensacola [FL]. Learning how to drop march, and learning how to stay at attention, learning how to make your rack, learning all the boot camp fit. Which means the enlisted Marines had a little bit of an edge there. And then learning naval etiquette and customs of the service. And learning aerodynamics and learning aircraft engines and learning some hydraulics and stuff like that. There's a lot of physical training too. Running, just excruciatingly boring calisthenics, and swimming. Yeah. Because they're all these Navy guys. And yeah, you still had to pass a swimming test every year. Back then Marines didn't have to— We had to go to a rifle range. But we did that.

And then upon the completion of pre-flight, when our classmates from the Navy who had degrees got commissioned, we went to an adjacent field, Softly Field, which was partway toward Mobile [AL], out of Pensacola [FL] and we did our primary flight training, which was sort of weeding out to get the people who aren't aeronautical adaptable, the ones who are going to puke every flight. Get washed out.

And we would transition to the aircraft of Beechcraft T-34 which is a retractable gear 200 horsepower thing, and we—

HUMBESTONE: These are prop planes?

SACHS: Yes, props. Eeciprocating engine. And we learned acrobatics and, and we'd solo and then we'd learn new procedures and then solo and you sort of had to alternate between a dual flight and a solo flight. And then a final check. We had probably 30 to 40 flight hours total. And if you pass that, then they totaled up your grade. And if you had a high enough grade, you would qualify to be selected for jets if you wanted to fly jets. I never wanted to fly jets. I wanted to fly helicopters.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: But there was very few slots for Marines to learn to fly jets anyway, because helicopter pilots were what was needed in Vietnam. Because there are a lot of helicopter pilots necessary to do the job and there are a lot of helicopter pilots getting killed.

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39:35

HUMBERSTONE: So, at this time they you're going through training?

39:39

SACHS: Yeah.

SACHS: Well, they had foreseen— they didn't start getting killed till I was almost through training. But then at that point when they're bifurcating, some guys went to jets and some guys went to helos. We went to pre-helos, and you flew on a higher performance fixed wing aircraft a t-28, which had an 1800 horsepower R1820, radial nine-cylinder radial engine. And it was it was this very similar to two World War Two fighter jets, a fighter prop aircraft. And flew that transition and what got precision, [inaudible], acrobatics, and basic instruments, radio instruments, formation flying, navigation, cross country navigation flying, all sorts of stuff like that there's something else in there. Oh, day nav. and night nav.

I was. And, and then you went to another squadron back in main-side Pensacola to get this super advanced instrument training, same aircraft for t-28. And then, it may have been that that determined the date for my date of commission. But then had to go out to Ellison field and learn how to fly helicopters. And we started flying helicopters in the H-34, which was the same thing that I flew operationally at New River and in Vietnam.

41:23

HUMBERSTONE: And that was the newest technology at the time? It was the— they were just being fielded?

41:27

SACHS: Actually, think they use them right at the end of Vietnam, right at the end of Korea.

HUMBERTONE: Really?

SACHS: About 1954. So, they use them to evacuate the French prisoners from North Vietnam when they reached some sort of agreement.

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And so then, and I ended up finishing up, got my commission got my wings, and got orders to do New River [NC] for operational training in New River [NC] is the helicopter base that is part of the Camp Lejeune complex in North Carolina. And I was up there for a cup of coffee. I think I went up there. The first April and I left in July.

July I was qualified to serve as a co-pilot, as a second pilot, on the H-34 in a combat situation, and bang, go over to Vietnam.

And I was a July 1966 replacement pilot. And I was lucky enough to get assigned to just an outstanding Helicopter Squadron. Which was right up until a few years ago when it was decommissioned, and then it was recommissioned as an Osprey squadron.

And they invited a whole bunch of us H-34 pilots out, H-34 pilots from 362. Out to Sandy, to Miramar for the commissioning and dedication of VMM-362, which was an Osprey squad.

43:23

HUMBERSTONE: That's pretty cool. When was this?

43:27

SACHS: That was. Oh, maybe 2014, 2015. Plus or minus a few years. But we went out there. And there's a Dartmouth kid who was who was on Osprey pilot. Whom I had known when he's at Dartmouth. And he invited me down to his to his designation when he got his wings. And as I was rightly flattered by that. Good guy, and I think he's probably going to stay in. Yeah, he's probably coming up for major pretty soon. I think he was class at '12 or '13, at Dartmouth.

So, he wasn't going to be in 362. But he heard about it. He said, I understand they're going to be inviting guys. So, if you're going to be down here, please, you know, stay with me and Christy and we'll get together. So, the night we are there. There were, I think there were five of us from the original 362 there was me there was Ben [R. Cascio], there was Chuck Larson there was— see his face, his name is going to come— he'll come to me in a minute. As soon as I stop thinking about it.

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And there was [Even] Bloom [Dartmouth '13] the recent Dartmouth grad, Osprey guy. So, there was— I was from Harvard. Dick Mosser was the other guy. I was from Harvard, [Dick] Moser is from Yale, [Even] Bloom, the Osprey guy, is from Dartmouth. [David] Luhrsen was from Penn if these four Ivy Leaguers, and Ben went to Glassboro State School in Jersey, and we had a great dinner and lots of good storytelling there. And the next day, we go, and we ran into more of our friends, some of whom we had not seen since we've all been in 362 together in 1966 and '67. One of those guys was a guy named Charlie Upshaw. Who had joined the squadron as a captain, made major. Ended up staying in the Marine Corps. Ended up as C.O.— he didn't end up, but later on, he was C.O. of 362. Really good guy. I remember flying with him. I remember— He was senior to me, but he'd never flew in combat until he got over there. And I did some of his checkouts, making sure he was going to be safe to fly as a plane commander and stuff. And there was a really good experience because now here we are old farts. And we're looking at the new generation of 362 and they're flying a completely different aircraft and everything. But we were looking at them and say that's the way we used to be. And we could see them looking at us saying, someday we'll be like those guys. It was very satisfying.

Bloom has since been operational. He's deployed and he got all his first set of fruit salad stuff. And now he's back at New River or Cherry Point as an instructor pilot. And I owe him a letter actually.

His roommate, who I don't think they were ever, intimately involved, but they're very good friends. They had shared a house together in flight training. And when they're in the training squadrons on the west coast, was a 53 pilot.

47:37

SACHS:

And she was the first of that crowd to deploy. And she was over in the desert. She came back. She might not even have made captain yet. Yeah, she'd been the sergeant. She didn't— was a— [pause]

47:54

HUMBERSTONE: Mustang.

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SACHS: Yeah, she was a mustang. She was.

HUMBERSTONE: I guess now we gotta explain what a Mustang is.

48:01

SACHS: A mustang means different things to different people. But generally, it's a Marine Corps officer who had been an enlisted Marine for an extended period of time. Some people don't consider somebody a Mustang unless you've been at least a staff sergeant or a gunnery sergeant.

But some people, if you're enlisted for a year and a half, and then you go to an officer program, or you get out and go to OCS, they call them a Mustang.

I'm a little more of a purist on that, but she had a really good career. She said, "I screwed up in high school, and didn't go to college, and enlisted in the Marine Corps to just have something to do. But it kind of took to it."

SACHS: And they made her an embarkation specialist. And then she made Corporal pretty quick. And so, she's an embrocation NCO. And

49:02

HUMBERSTONE: That was something you all related to her?

49:05

SACHS: Yeah, we related to her, because she had a lot on the ball. And then she decided, you know, I think I really ought to go to college. And she went to the University of San Francisco, which is not a public school. I always thought that was some California State School. No, it's a Catholic school. Yeah, it's San Francisco [CA], St. Francis. And she was having trouble figuring out how to pay for it. After she got in, but before she started, and she had a career advisor, an NCO, he said "look, you can pretty much write your own ticket as a highly rated embarkation NCO, if you want to stay in the reserves, and you'll get paid, and you get paid two days for a day at work. And you get promoted right along with everybody else. And you can go on active duty for a fixed period of time any time you want. And the Marine Corps could really use you.

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She said, "Okay, I'll do that". So apparently the school closes down for the month of January, closes down. Sort of like Dartmouth right after Thanksgiving until like the first of February. So, she goes in and says, "hey, is there anything I could do? Can I go and get paid for this time?" And they say, "oh, yeah, you want to you want to have you know, five- or six-weeks active duty. Let's see, I think we'll have to send you to Hawaii for that". They sent her Hawaii. And she's loading ships and unloading ships and then she goes back. What am I gonna do next summer there's nothing I want to take in summer. So, they sent her to Italy for the summer. She did all these things. I think she might have made staff sergeant. I know she was a sergeant. But and then she went to flight training actually. Now about ready to retire as a Lance Major she's got so many years in. She's a really good lady. I liked her a lot.

51:00

HUMBERTONE: Well, to tie that back to— how was it that you were feeling during that time in training. That was a big change from feeling kind of lost or not knowing what to do at Harvard. How was Rusty feeling throughout this cadet training?

51:18

SACHS: Ah, [inaudible] back down? I really enjoyed flying and I really enjoyed knowing my place. I really enjoy, you know— there's something that the civilian world just doesn't have to compare to. If you say I'm the deputy assistant's control manager for widget valves. You know, that just doesn't hack it the way, I'm a Marine Aviation Cadet, I'm flying formation in helicopters right now and I'll be a combat pilot in the next six months. There's something that people sit up and look at. You know, it was clear what was expected of me, and I didn't have any difficulty doing it and like I was succeeding and things that I felt pretty damn good about myself. For a while was saying "Yeah, I think, you know, the Marine Corps is gonna be my life. Marine Corps is gonna be my career". And then we got to combat I changed my mind a little bit but that

52:44

HUMBERSTONE: But you felt pretty good throughout this training even hearing what was going on in the in the world.

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52:50

SACHS: Well, there wasn't there much going on yet. I was— The big event when seven Americans got killed and their coffins, flag draped coffins were on the cover of Life magazine, which was a weekly magazine at that time. And I think that was when I would I hadn't even gotten to [inaudible]. He said that he was still flying T-28s.

HUMBESTONE: When about was this?

SACHS: This was probably the summer of '65. The thing that was seven American advisors had been killed in one incident. And that was, that was a big shocker to the U.S. The U.S. didn't know much about that.

There was another thing that was after I was back from Vietnam. It might even been after I got out of the Marine Corps, where Life magazine published photographs of every American who got killed the Vietnam the previous week. They're like 350 or 400 of them. And all these faces of young healthy men really slapped the United States across the face. This is what's going on over there. And that

54:12

HUMBERSTONE: This was something people you knew were talking about.

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: You sense this in your circle?

54:17

SACHS: Yeah, absolutely. Well, it was everybody, they were talking about on the nightly news. I mean, the Life magazine published the names of names and photographs. Of all of it was like six pages in the photographs or let's say some postage stamp. That was a thing.

I didn't like the way the war was going when I was overseas. Because we didn't see anything in the way of progress. We kept getting told "well, we're winning now, we weren't before".

Commented [BH1]: Possible quote to use

54:56

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HUMBERTONE: This is when you're in Vietnam in '66?

54:59

SACHS: This is when I was in Vietnam. I mean, I thought we were going to be—
When I went over in '66, I was in the first group of replacement pilots.
There were there were guys who'd been over there since the summer of
'65, who were rotating out because then Marine Corps had this program—
it had this policy, that after 13 months in the combat zone, you went home.

HUMBESTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: That had some pluses and minuses. But I was, the first bunch of people
are coming over to replace people. When I got here, everybody in the
squad, every pilot in the squadron had gone overseas, onboard a ship.
And they took all the helicopters with them. From California. And they
established the first Marine Corps presence in Vietnam.

56:02

HUMBERSTONE: So, what were you told on your way over there? How did you how did you
make away to Vietnam? I guess, what were you told and what was that
like?

56:08

SACHS: You're going to Vietnam, and you're gonna be evacuating wounded and
you're gonna be inserting Marines into combat situations. Small or large.
Either a recon team of four Marines, and you're gonna sneak in and drop
them off. Or you'll be one of eight helicopters, each loaded with the
Marines and you're going to make a full company size, insertion. Things
like that. We were looking forward to, it couldn't wait to see if I can hack it.

Commented [BH2]: Possible Quote

56:45

HUMBERSTONE: Imagine a young gung ho. What is it, second lieutenant?

56:52

SACHS: Lowest officers right there. Yeah, we're excited. Because it's all adventure.
It was it was, you know, that Hemingway stuff. It was an adventure. But
went over in July '66, probably by, the time the rains were stopping,
around March or April of '67.

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57:26

SACHS: And people are getting killed pretty regularly. We only had a couple of guys from our squadron get killed.

But we were dealing with Marines are getting killed. And sometimes we would take off out of Ky Ha, where we're based, and where we slept.

HUMBERSTONE: Where was this?

SACHS: Ky Ha, which wasn't a real town they made up the name.

HUMBERSTONE: Really? The Marines did?

SACHS: The Marines did. Or maybe civilians? And I don't know.

58:02

HUMBERSTONE: Are you able to like give a description as to where it was?

58:08

SACHS: It had been a hillside. And the Marine Corps came in and built a level area where maintenance could be done and two level areas, one north of one south of it. For landing strips, landing strips are 200 yards long. Yeah, because there's helicopters. And then a bunch of hooches, which are rigid base tents, on platforms up on the hillside behind that, and then a perimeter.

58:42

HUMBERSTONE: Is this where you landed in Vietnam?

58:45

SACHS: Yes, this is where my squadron was based. There's an entire air group there. MAG-36 was based there.

But a typical mission would involve taking out from flying and doing it by yourself or maybe sometimes going over to a forward operating platform where there wasn't any wire or anything. You were just it was a staging area. And you'd wait there to launch and do stuff and it sometimes it'd be

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an area that they had been overrun. And just for lack of anything to do and you just sitting there in like he would help the grunts do whatever they were doing. And they weren't painting rocks. They weren't doing work parties to police up the area because the general is going to come through. They the time that I remember was after they had been overwhelmed and a whole bunch of guys had gotten killed both Americans and Vietnamese. And they were sorting the bodies and trying to put bodies together with the legs and the arms that belong to that one. Keep this one in there. This appears to be one person's [inaudible] put it in there. There'll be a pile of 40 bodies and parts of bodies that would sorted out and that kind of started driving home to me the scale of the fucking waste.

Commented [BH3]: Possible quote?

1:00:33

HUMBERSTONE: Do you remember where exactly when that that event was?

1:00:37

SACHS: It was around the time the rains ended, probably March April of 67.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. And this started to—

SACHS: This started my wheels going around a little differently. So, what's changed here? How are we— How are we doing better now? Then, I guess, I just started thinking in those terms. The month before I came home, we had moved. We're no longer in Ky Ha we're up and Dong Ha which was right by the DMZ. We'd get mortared a lot, and 1-9 had gotten into a real shit sandwich and they're absolutely devastated. They had something like 50% casualties.

We spent several days flying around and picking up the bodies that have been lying there. By now we're decomposing. We there's a corpsman gave us this stuff that is sort of like toothpaste, but it was, tincture of clover [pause] paste. Anyway, we would rub it on my upper lip just to kill the smell of decay.

1:01:57

HUMBERSTONE: You loaded these up in the helicopter?

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1:02:01

SACHS: Yeah, we would load them. They hadn't been bagged or anything. They're just lying there dead. And because the Marines said— I mean, there's so many dead, the others were just hightailing it. Couldn't get it and they couldn't recover the body. So, we're recovering the bodies because Marines do not leave bodies on the field. And I remember to come in and Sergeant Smith, I said "holy shit, you know, this entire battalion, they're all black guys". They're all negros, to use the language of the time. And he said, "No, they're not. No, they're just decaying. [pause] They're just as many white guys there as there is anything else. Meat rots Lieutenant". [sigh] Shit, ya know? The ignominious nature of guys rotting in the field. It bothered me a great deal.

Commented [BH4]: Sgt Smith's full name?

HUMBESTONE: This Sergeant Smith, was he your crewmen?

SACHS: He was one of the crewmen. Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: He was on this detail with you?

1:02:59

SACHS: He was Crew Chief for one of the helicopters. For the one I was flying.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: I don't remember which number the helicopter was.

I was talking about that with some of the other guys and one of the crewmen, who had extended his tour in Vietnam, so he could go and be a helicopter crewman. Instead of grunt, said that he just wanted to kill as many cooks as he possibly could, because it just wasn't— he said "one of the things that makes America great, Lieutenant. After a fight, one time, we were helping recover our guys. And there was one fight hole that had three guys in it. Three Marines. One was white, one was Mexican, and one was black. And they're all lying there dead. But I just think that says the greatest thing about the United States".

I think that was a really sad comment about what's going on, being here in combat, because what the fuck are we here for? "We're gonna stop

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communism". Do you think any of those people were fighting against care about communism? They just want us to fuck home. They want to get rid of us. And everything I seemed to read seem to confirm that.

So, I remember, Johnny Longden been saying, "you know, I'm not pissed at the VC. I mean, they're trying to kill me. I'm trying to kill him. That's my job, you know, but I'm not mad at them for that. It's the fuckin' Marine Corps that sent me over here". They put me in his position. And, you know, somebody who's landing in my field out here. Somebody who didn't look like me. Didn't speak my language. But he's landing in big, big noisy machines in the middle of my corn that I used to earn a living. I'd be pissed too.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: I just started resenting that, but I tried to— I didn't want to make a scene, didn't want to hurt morale, things like that. Came back to the states and I was in Pensacola [FL]. The 1968? I guess it must have been the '68 election. I come back in '67. Yeah, '68 election. There was a peace candidate named Eugene McCarthy, who was a senator from Minnesota or Wisconsin [mumbles]. So anyway, someplace in the Midwest. Who was a pulled out of Vietnam candidate. I thought, yeah, that makes sense to me. And I put one of his stickers on my car. And I was told I couldn't drive them on base.

HUMBERSTONE: Really?

1:06:11

SACHS: I said, excuse me?

1:06:13

HUMBERSTONE: By a, a— [stumbles over words].

SACHS: By an officer. By a Navy guy, but he was XO of the squadron. I was saying it's a Navy base. And it's a Navy training squadron, but most of the instructors were Marines. But he said, "you can't drive that on base". And I said, is this because we're not allowed to speak freely? We don't have any freedom of speech. "Well, this is this is not a democracy. This is a limited

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autocracy". I said, okay, now you're just saying words, but all the all these people who have George Wallace, who was the governor of Florida. "Segregation now, segregation forever". He was the governor of Alabama, and he was running for president. So, I said, they can have a sticker, but I can't? He said, "Well, I'll get back to you". So, I didn't take the bumper sticker off. But the world was getting crazy.

1:07:12

HUMBERSTONE: You were starting to have these thoughts?

1:07:14

SACHS: I was having all these anti-war— finally I did—

1:07:19

HUMBERSTONE: It sounds like you weren't relating to a lot of the people you serve with.

1:07:23

SACHS: No, a lot of them disagreed with me on things. Then I got released from active duty, moved back to Cambridge, got back to Harvard, and we were living in—

HUMBERSTONE: During this time. You had gone to be an instructor in Pensacola?

1:07:43

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: You taught for a while; you meet Marlene?

SACHS: I did that. That was when I got told they couldn't drive my car on the base with the McCarthy bumper sticker. We were married. And we were living in Pensacola— living in Cambridge. I was still flying in the reserves. Flying on weekends out of South Weymouth, Mass., which is decommissioned now.

One time I went down to a weekend drill, and you know, go to the club after flying. You have to wear a coat and tie, and I had a little peace sign lapel pin. "What the fuck you doing wearing that?" And I said, Yeah, well, I'm not really crazy about this. Or you know, or I'm a warmonger. I

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remember this guy's name is John Girl. And he was senior to me. He was a Major. He says, I'm a warmonger. I said, Major, you've never fought in one. You've never been in one. Oh, that didn't go over well.

[both laughing]

1:08:51

HUMBESTONE: And what year is this now? So, you were back in Cambridge when?

SACHS: Well, this would be '69 or '70.

1:08:59

HUMBESTONE: Everything's still full fledged over in Vietnam.

1:09:03

SACHS: Yeah, and I was getting letters from friends who were still in the squadron. Well, the new guy named [Anthony Edward] Kisucky got killed the other. Old Bob— can't remember his name. I will remember it in a minute— Bob got killed. He's the guy from Missouri. He just described one of one of the majors in the squadron, "this guy is as strong as a Missouri mule and almost as smart".

[laughing]

1:09:37

SACHS: So, then I got an— Oh and I started writing letters to the editor. And one day—

HUMBERSTONE: To the editor?

SACHS: The editor of the newspaper or magazines and stuff like that.

HUMBERSTONE: In Cambridge?

SACHS: Yeah. And one day— Oh, I wrote one that got published in **Playboy**. I don't remember that was one, but there was also one that was published in the **Globe**. And they were right around the same time. This was probably late summer of '70. And

Commented [BH5]: Find the letter Rusty wrote to **playboy**

Commented [BH6]: Find the letter Rusty wrote to the **globe**.

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1:10:20

HUMBERSTONE: Wait, you wrote a letter about Vietnam. That was published in Playboy?

1:10:25

SACHS: Yeah. Well, they published an article I said, yeah, he's really does a pretty good job of describing the way things are. I have to go through the archives, and see if I can find that.

So, when like, Marlene and I were sitting at home. I think one of us was washing the dishes, the phone rings, [yawning] excuse me. Pick it up. It says, "are you the guy who wrote that letter". What letter? I think it was the one to the Globe. "That was published today?" I said, yeah. He says, "well, I'd really like to talk to you, meet you, because I have. I'm a Navy vet, and I was in Vietnam, and I think we just we've got to get a bunch of, like thinking, Vietnam vets to speak up together".

Sounds good to me. Where do you live?" He says I live in Boston. I said, what are you doing now? You want to come over?

He said, "Yeah, can I come over for supper?" I said, well, we finished supper. Want to come over for dessert? He said, "Yeah, sure". So, an hour later, there's a knock on the door, open up, he said, "Hi, I'm John Kerry". I'm Rusty Sachs.

We started talking and turns out he was a year ahead of me, with respect to graduation dates, and he'd gone to St. Paul's School. And several of his classmates— No, I guess he was a year behind me. Anyway, several of his classmates at St. Paul's had been my classmates at Harvard. And we had all these friends in common. There was a predisposition to get along. And he said, "well, we're starting this thing called Vietnam Vets Against the War". I said, sounds good to me. What can I do to help? And well, the first thing we're gonna do— they had done one thing before they had on March and Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. But they're planning a big testimony event. That was going to be in Detroit, right around final exams, in January or February.

1:13:03

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HUMBERSTONE: At this time, this is your first year back at Harvard?

1:13:06

SACHS: This is my first year back at Harvard.

I said, Yeah, I can do that. I can raise some money and get some contributions out there. And before going out there, I said, I really ought to resign my commission and not be at the reserves doing that.

So, I did that. I wrote a letter of resignation, asking to be released from my contract. My commanding officer, a guy I always admired.

His name was John Springer, and he was chief administrator, or maybe chief supply person at the Hitchcock [Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center], at the hospital. And he lived in Hanover [NH]. And he was commanding officer of my reserve squadron. And when I wrote my letter of resignation— my letter requesting resignation, I had submitted to the chain of command. And he forwarded it to headquarters, saying recommended with regret. This is a fine officer at my final fitness report, where he judged me as an average and above average, and, I guess, I was outstanding at a couple of things. One of the outstandings was in loyalty and one of the outstandings was in moral courage. And one of the on the unsat, I think that was the only unset, was in judgment. And we always continue to get along after that, even if I was— no matter how outspoken I was about protesting this war. And when I started doing the Ball here, by now he was retired in Hartford, Connecticut, but he'd come up for the Ball.

1:15:12

HUMBERSTONE: You're talking about the Marine Corps ball that is held in Hanover [NH].

1:15:15

SACHS: Marine Corps Ball celebration that is that I would host every year for on the Marine Corps birthday. And which, soon after that, after he started coming up, we started doing it as a fundraiser for wounded Marine— for wounded and injured veterans. That means if you're a veteran and you get in a car crash, that counts too. We're over a quarter million dollars now. We've raised a bunch of money. And I've passed it on to Jack [O'Toole

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T'14] and Jarrett [Burke T'17] and, and to Jen Tietz [T'15]. Who was a military academy grad. Yeah, she and Jared are academy grads.

1:16:09

HUMBERSTONE: Well, at this time, when you're starting to be more outspoken. You send in your letter of resignation.

SACHS: It was it was accepted, and I was done. I was given an honorable discharge and stuff.

1:16:20

HUMBERSTONE: Did you start seeing a lot of shifts and relationships and the people around you?

1:16:24

SACHS: Yeah. Oh, yeah. But actually, before I'd send in a letter. I one point I was I got a phone call from, from a guy I had flown with, and I had known in New River [MCAS New River, NC] and then we were overseas at the same time, but in different units. And he said, I've got to go to Boston on business. And I'm wondering whether I could whether we can get together for dinner or something on such and such a date. And I say, I'd love to see a Keith, but that's not a really, I got some— I'm speaking in a fundraiser for Vietnam Vets Against the War. "Well, what the fuck are you doing that for?" And I said well it seems like a pretty good idea. He says "Oh, that's too bad". Oh well, never heard from him again. There are people who just say, "Oh, you've went on and you join the commies?" And that's not an accurate perception of what's going on.

1:17:28

HUMBERSTONE: That sounds like a lot of us versus them.

1:17:30

SACHS: Yeah. There are a lot of people who just went, "this is what my team decided. So, I'm gonna go along with that". It's like. I had a— you might want to hear some of this. I had a really good friend who was who was an undergrad at Dartmouth. We had two friends who were on the track team who used to come and they'd babysit the kids and stuff. Sometimes Marlene and I would go away for the weekend and wonder if one or both

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of them would come here and stay at our house, that house downtown with the kids, and then one time that he just stayed with their boyfriends at the house while we and the kids went away for a week.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: Then we were having a conversation about something, and she said, well, I'm Catholic, and Catholics believe ABC, I don't remember what it was. I said, I [inaudible], I'm not gonna say her name on this. I said, you believe that, because you're told to believe that? "Well, yeah, that's what we believe as Catholics". I said, how does that distinguish itself from something that you actually believe because you've experienced in your study, and you have come to a conclusion that this is right. She said, "Well, I've been told that this is right".

1:19:08

HUMBERSTONE: You found trouble with this? This is even years later?

1:19:10

SACHS: I still find— she's still a dear friend, as is her husband. One of their kids graduated from Dartmouth last year. I adore them, I'd do anything for them. But yeah, I just can't. I can't fathom telling other people what they have to believe. And much less having them comply. Um, when you're turning that off, I'll have an addendum to this.

Commented [BH7]: Possible Quote?

HUMBERSTONE: Okay.

1:19:55

SACHS: So, there's a lot of— sort of like Trump-ies. You know, "they said that. I believe that. That's the way it is". People are being told what to believe so they comply. It's just like Big Brother. I just [groans] cannot handle that. I cannot handle that. I don't know what any of this is any good for you?

HUMBERSTONE: No, I mean, this says a lot about— so from this earlier time in your life even until now you have had a hard time with that. Just compliance and blindly following—

1:20:41

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SACHS: yes [Inaudible].

1:20:45

HUMBERSTONE: And you are seeing it's affecting your relationships as you're starting to speak out and write these letters.

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: What about with your family?

1:20:51

SACHS: My family always said they're very proud of me. [inaudible].

HUMBERSTONE: Did they read these letters you were writing?

SACHS: Yeah, I don't think— My father was very pleased, I know he liked it.

HUMBERSTONE: Really?

SACHS: My mother and her brothers were not crazy about it. Not at all.

1:21:18

HUMBERSTONE: What was it about it that they—

1:21:20

SACHS: I think it was just disloyal. You were not, you have to take it as a better faith that the people in charge of the military or making wise decisions, they've got access to a lot more information than you do. You know.

1:21:38

HUMBERSTONE: What was your— I don't think we talked about it? What was your mother's background? Because, I would have expected that to be the opinion of, maybe your father who had served. You know?

1:21:49

SACHS: My father's service was, he landed at Normandy. It continued with an armored battalion, north through France, Belgium, battle a Battle of the Bulge, was bombed during the Bulge. He was decorated in the field.

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Received over a Bronze Star with a combat V. Which in Vietnam would have gotten a Silver Star. I learned about that much later. But then they were going east to link up with the Russians, because everybody knew where we linked up with the Russians. That's what they're gonna build the iron curtain and they're very [inaudible].

And one day in Germany, near the Polish border. A scout was investigating what was reported to be a POW camp. And he is on a motorcycle. And so, he came back ashen, and said to the CO— oh, by now my father wasn't with the battalion anymore. He's now with a, they didn't call it a MASH, they called it an evacuation hospital.

HUMBERSTONE: Okay.

SACHS: But it was a tent hospital that would move from place to place.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: And he came out and he went to the to the Colonel and tried to says, we can't go any farther. These people need us too much. It's a POW camp. It's not a POW camp. It was a German concentration camp. And there were I don't know how certainly more than 10,000. Inmates who have been worked to death, and some of them weren't always that and they are underfed. And they are they're like 80-pound skeletons. Skin and bones and said, we couldn't feed them. If we gave them 1000 calories, it would kill them because, you know, their bodies just weren't used to digesting stuff.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: Would you like to put your jacket back on, is it chilly in here?

HUMBERSTONE: No. I am okay.

SACHS: Okay, good.

HUMBERSTONE: Thank you.

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SACHS: My father's family is Jewish, but they came to the States in 1840. Okay. So, there's none of this fleet fleeing the Czar's army or anything like that. They came way before any of that stuff. He got really sour on war, and on Germany. His family had come from Bavaria. And he was on war and like Germany, and he wouldn't speak German anymore. He wouldn't. He didn't want to have anything to do with Germans.

HUMBERSTONE: And you think it was coming across the concentration camp that did that?

SACHS: No question. No question. He was very candid about that. And then one of his cousin's got— during the McCarthy era. And by all rights, he had that cousin and his wife, or that cousin and her husband, were probably membership American Communist Party. But they got they got blacklisted and ended up leaving the country.

HUMBERSTONE: And when was this?

SACHS: This was in 1951 '52, during the McCarthy era, and he was a tenured professor and had his tenure revoked and was blacklisted. He was a neurologist. And they said he was fired. They were dismissing him for teaching communistic philosophies. And what he would have done was he had assigned to graduate students to read some of the papers that Ivan Pavlov wrote about a dog salivating when they ring a bell, couldn't get a job, any point in safe couldn't get a job in England, and they fled the country and kind of just fucking disappeared.

Now, his cousin's oldest son had been a classmate of mine at Monterey Park Country Day School in New Orleans. And one time around early high school, which would be like 1958 '59. I asked Dad, what happened to the Hodes? He said, I think they're behind the Iron Curtain. I think they're in Poland. What do you base that on? Well, I got a letter that had been mailed in Washington, that Jane Hodes had written to that was his cousin, had written to me and got a friend to bring it back to the states in a diplomatic pouch. And they mailed it in Washington said, the children are doing very well they don't have trouble with the language anymore. And Bob is studying in a lab where somebody worked in such and such areas, and I think that was Poland.

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1:27:30

SACHS: This is digression here?

HUMBERSTONE: No, I mean, this is all relevant.

1:27:36

SACHS: "I don't think we'll ever know". Oh, that's interesting.

Then 1962 and I'm a freshman at Harvard, and I'm walking through Harvard Yard and there's this guy walking toward me, it looks pretty familiar. And I step in front of them, and I say Bill Hodes, and he said "yeah", in a very wary expression, as I said, Rusty Sachs. Your cousin, we were in third grade. He said "Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's right". I said, well, it's good to see you. What are you doing? "I'm a freshman". Okay. Well, help. I'll see you around. He said, I'm late [windy rushing noise]. That was kind of peculiar. But then we ended up sophomore year living in the same house. And we were both involved in the Harvard, Gilbert, and Sullivan players and we got to be pretty good friends. And one day, I stopped over his room because I was going to dining halls and want to go get some supper. And he said, Yeah, just a minute. Let me put on a tie, because you weren't allowed in the dining hall unless you had a tie and a coat.

And I noticed on his desk, he had all these he had these books, and, on the spine, there was some Asian calligraphy. And when he came back, I said are you taking Japanese? Is that Japanese? He says "no, it's Chinese". I said you're taking Chinese? He said "I am teaching Chinese. Where the fuck do you think we were all those years?" You were in China? "Yeah, we were in Beijing" [China]. And when Kennedy got elected, when we were just starting our senior year in high school. When I was starting my senior in high school, he was junior.

All of a sudden things thawed a little with the Chinese and they were permitted to leave China. Before that they couldn't leave. But when Kennedy was elected, they were trying to smooth things out a little bit to China in the US and they came back, and they moved to New Jersey, and he went to high school in New Jersey with his sister and his brother and he got into Harvard and—

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[Rusty gets a phone call from a spam number]

1:30:24

HUMBERSTONE: Alright, so where were we?

SACHS: Dad was pretty well leftist with the way his cousin had been treated by the Conservatives at Tulane, who were the ones that convinced us to move to New Orleans, by the way. Because Bob Hodes, Jane was married. His cousin Jane Sachs was married to Bob Hodes. Was tenured faculty at the med school Tulane. And they said it's a great place to live. You know, the private schools are affordable, and they're really good schools and everybody has domestic help. So, you can really live high on the hog. Okay. That's why they moved down there. But it didn't work out at all. Partly because one of the things that was not working out in the slightest was the Hodes were getting blacklisted. So, I had a pretty good left-wing background.

1:31:53

HUMBERSOTNE: So, your dad was more open to these ideas. He was willing to question what he saw, and he heard?

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: But some others in your family were not.

1:32:03

SACHS: My mother's family. My mother's side were— her younger brother. My mother was the oldest of five kids. My dad was the older of two. I was the oldest of six. So, my mother's the younger of her two brothers, was career Navy. The older of her two brothers was in the army. He was a corpsman or a medic during the war, and he got out. He and his brother both went to Fitchburg State Teachers College, and he became a schoolteacher, and the principal, an administrator, and he was a man, you do what the boss says. So, he was he was pretty right-wing too. And there was a rather telling incident shortly after Kelly was born, Marlene and I were over at my parent's house in Hanover for dinner and had had a doc Kelly had a doctor's appointment and is three months old, six months old, something like that. Anyway, had a regular doctor's appointment and the doc had

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said probably I'd put him on fluoride drops because he started in get teeth. And that's really good. Now when fluoride dropped started being popular when we were in high school in college, there are a lot of people didn't trust fluoride didn't want that to go into their kids' mouths. And Marlene said, "well, can I see the literature on that? I'm really curious to know, because I know that people complained about fluoride". And he said, "Sure, I'll get one of the girls to copy the papers and send them to you". Well, when that got mentioned that the dinner table. And we're pretty pleased he said he was going to he was going to send us the paper so we can read the literature for ourselves. My father finally got up and he threw his napkin down on a table and said "that contradicts everything I stand for and my professional standing. You have to trust experts for these things".

HUMBERSONE: This was your father?

SACHS: This is my father who was of the era where the doctor makes the decision, and the patient complies. And he stormed away from the table and of course we are at his house, and he went to his bedroom. It is kind of funny and everything. And then my mother wrote this truculent letter to you Marleen saying, "Well, if we didn't trust the experts would still be living in caves". That's that that was her view of the world. I mean, you trust the experts, you trust the, you know, the mayor says, do this, you do this.

1:35:14

HUMBERSTONE: So, your father was set in ways and somethings, but not all.

1:35:17

SACHS: In some ways he ways, but not all. He was he was a good— I used to describe it, and now I'm a little more reluctant to do this, but I'll tell you just because he was a fit for so many years. He used to give money to the NAACP and to the integration organizations and all like that, but he's still telling nigger jokes.

HUMBERSTONE: Really?

SACHS: You know, he didn't see an inconsistency there. But he, he'd grown up in St. Louis, which was a slave state and his father's to operating room nurses had both lived under slavery and lived while slavery was going on

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and during Reconstruction stuff. And it was just a slow change for him. I don't think he had a bigoted bone in his body but didn't like Catholics. Which is kind of peculiar because he married one. but he was a complicated people. Complicated person.

[End of first interview]

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Interview Part 2

00:04

HUMBERSTONE: This is Brandyn Humberstone. Today is the eighth of May 2023. And I am conducting this oral history interview for the Dartmouth Vietnam project. Today I am conducting this interview with Mr. Ernest Paul, aka "Rusty" Sachs. This interview is taking place in person. In— are we in Hartford? Hartford, Vermont. Mr. Sacks, thank you for speaking with me today.

SACHS: My pleasure.

HUMBERSTONE: So, I am this is our second section of our interview picking up from the other day.

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: All right, so in our last— where we left off, we were talking about you coming back to Cambridge, you're going back to school, you had gotten out of the Marine Corps, you had put in your resignation, and you had been writing letters to different editors and papers. And let's see, I guess let's go back to what was it that sparked John Kerry reaching out to you?

01:30

SACHS: I think it was a letter I'd written to the globe. And I don't remember the exact topic, but it was something expressing disappointment and disillusionment and frustration with the continuation of the Vietnam War, which I just didn't see a valid purpose for. I had begun to think that the war was being pursued as a holy war, for the religion of anti-communism. Not the religion of capitalism or democracy, or anything, but anti-communism. That's the— there's nothing that unites people quite the way a common hate does. And ever since the late 40s, the US had been, had had this fervor of anti-communism. And I think that's what it was. And even if there isn't any communism, if you can label something as communistic, people will hate it out of duty. Well, I didn't, and I didn't see anybody in Vietnam, who was that motivated by Communism, there is a was a pre-industrial, agricultural society where people were living. And the best I could see their allegiance was to their village and their family and their ancestors. There wasn't,

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there wasn't a communistic bone in their bodies. There was a big move. In Vietnam. I hadn't figured this out while I was there. But there was a nationalism, a loyalty to the nation with respect to outsiders coming in, and Vietnam kept getting invaded for at least 1000 years. There were there were, you know, Chinese invaders, their Japanese invaders, her European phasers. And we were just the tail end of the European invaders. And that that motivated them a lot. But the communism bit was something that most motivated Congress and in the US government and the consequence a lot of Americans said yeah, we fight those commies are also they're gonna come over here and take us over and wipe us out. Not realizing that what we were doing was we were going over there and trying to take them over to wipe them out. I was very frustrated and the thing that would kick it off would be every time he got a letter about some other friend who got killed.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: I said, do you know what that brought things home and he said, What the fuck. How come? How come Bob Kramer got killed. How come Roger Harold killed, over there? He'd already done a tour and he'd been back here. And we'd been friends when I was a flight instructor, he was a flight instructor between tours to Vietnam. And he went back for a second tour and got killed. That just drove me bats. That's probably what generally would have motivated the letter I'd written to the globe.

And I got a call from John Kerry saying, who wrote this letter. This I think this is about where we left off.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: I said, where are you? He says, "I'm in Boston", well why don't you come over? You had supper? "Yes". Well, come on over for dessert. And he came over. Half an hour later he's knocking at the door. I learned that he really likes chocolate milk. [Both laughing] We chatted, and we had— turns out we had lots of friends in common from his prep school class was also my freshman class at Harvard, and we got along, and we ended up— he got me to become involved in Vietnam Vets Against the War, which

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was just an educational vehicle. We were trying to tell people what's going on. And it's not, you're not getting the whole story on the nightly news. We got together, you know, several 1000 veterans who were actively involved in it and John and I and a few others would travel around to nice left leaning adults' homes, and they'd invite friends over and we'd ask them for money to help finance this organization we're doing. And that worked pretty well. And then we went on the road, and we get a bunch of us sharing a motel room together, things like that. We remain closed for a number of years. When he ran for president. He stopped taking our calls for all VVAW guys. And of course, that's probably why he was defeated.

07:37

HUMBERSTONE: Well, if I remember reading correctly, John Kerry ran with kind of advertising that he was a veteran, not that he was a member of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, right?

07:51

SACHS: He didn't deny it at all. But that guy got wounded three times. I mean, he might have been a Navy officer, but he was also out in the bush. And he was—he would take patrols off—they were called swift boats. They're basically updated PT boats and they were doing river patrols. And you know, stopping Vietnamese boats and searching to make sure they didn't have ammo on them, weapons, shit like that.

And then firefights, and he got three Purple Hearts, so he was very definitely a combat vet. And but they attacked him because they said he was disloyal. And he wasn't a real vet because one of his Purple Hearts was just for a band aid for crying out loud. Well, lots of purple hearts were for Band-Aids.

Just a flashback. One time, we'd been getting lots of guys wounded in order—we have lots of mortar attacks. When we're up at Dong Ha which is right by the DMC.

HUMBERSTONE: When was this?

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SACHS: This was in late '67. Middle— mostly '67. When we're in Dong, we didn't get to Dong Ha out till maybe late June or July '67 and some new General asked the group commander "I haven't seen any papers in for purple hearts. And he says, "well sir we've got a pretty good bunker system and an alert system and alert system and we're not getting that—". "You must be having bunker injuries from guys tripping on the tent spikes and getting cuts and shit, that's a Purple Heart". "Well, sir, we will try to do better" and apparently, he didn't bother to write people up for shit like that and the general shows up with some Staff Sergeant with the clipboard and, and they just started walking around the inside the wire, in Dong Ha, and anybody they saw with the bandage is getting a Purple Heart. They take his name down, serial number, give them a Purple Heart. There was one guy who had given blood.

10:23

HUMBESTONE: You saw this happen, they came out and talked with you?

10:27

SACHS: This was a story that came out, "you know what happened this afternoon? They gave a Purple Heart the Sergeant Haze. He'd just given blood that's all he had a thing on for. Purple Hearts, depending on the commanding officer, were either easy or hard to come by.

Anyway. So, Kerry got me into it into Vietnam Vets Against the War, and we did actions on the local and national level, explaining to people that it wasn't a clean war, it was a confused war. There wasn't any real way of measuring who's winning, who's beating who, in the war.

The US had taken to measuring progress, like body count, which kind of encourages indiscriminate killing. You know, if you took fire from a village, people did just shoot the shit and killed a whole bunch of people in the village. And when you were counting the bodies afterward, they have you know that person's a Viet Cong? "Well, he's dead".

HUMBERSTONE: You would have other Marines telling you this?

SACHS: That was that was sufficient, yeah.

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12:13

SACHS:

I didn't ever go through walk through a village on a patrol with the grunts. I saw some of the aftereffects, and things like that. And you'd see villages that had been burned without ever having any napalm being bombed. They just went through and there'd been a firefight and they'd lit one of the grass hooches, and the slightest bit of wind, and the whole place would burn down. We've been told before we went over the that our goal was to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. You're not winning an awful lot of hearts and minds by burning down their houses. So anyway, I was frustrated, and disappointed, and opposed to the continuation of this war. There wasn't any reason for getting people killed. And there sure as hell wasn't any reason for killing people.

Commented [BH8]: Possible Quote

It just, you know, anything I could do, and I did, there wasn't a whole lot I could do, but I can talk, and I could tell stories about what was going on. And I'm not sure how much of an effect we really had in the long term, but at least I felt I was doing something. I was trying something.

Then in a spring of '72 I was getting ready to finish college, at last Age 28 and Marlene [Sachs] got pregnant. And I decided, time to get a little more serious. Having graduated, got a job. Job didn't work out. Job was in Portland, Oregon. Building houses you know, swinging hammers, learning the construction trade. Didn't work out very well and it started raining and miserable there. Then Kelly was born at a Grateful Dead concert in Portland [OR].

14:33

HUMBERSTONE: You're a Grateful Dead fan?

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: Marlene [Sachs] is as well?

14:37

SACHS:

That's not as much, but she used to go to the concerts, and she appreciate the music and she'd recognize riffs and songs. So, we kind of came back, packed up everything and drove back across the country. For

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two years, I was just trying to figure out what the hell was going on with my life. I didn't have a really good record of working for other people.

15:11

HUMBERSTONE: This is from '72 'till—

15:14

SACHS: To about '74. And in '74 Marlene said, "well, somebody's got to do something in his family". And she started med school at Dartmouth. And in '75, I started law school, at Vermont. And, and we were living here.

HUMBERSTONE: In the house we are in right now?

SACHS: In the house we're in right now. And a classmate of mine from Harvard, and her husband bought the North 40 acres of this farm from the guy we had bought it from. And he had retained that photo, and then it sold it to Teachout. And it turns out that Peter [Teachout] was the chair of constitutional law at the law school. So, for three years, he and I carpooled out there together. And that was pretty good. He was a veteran, he'd been— he'd already finished law school, he had probably already passed the bar when he got drafted. And he got drafted and then went immediately to OCS because in the army, they do that sort of thing. For somehow, I don't know whether he arranged it or is coincidental. He got sent to language school to learn an obscure language, an obscure Nigerian language, called Hausa. And then they put him someplace telemetering Russian satellites. And I don't know what he had to do with that. But he was at the—

HUMBERSTONE: Telemetering. What is that?

SACHS: Eavesdropping on Russian satellites, or Russian— yeah, transmissions. Maybe it was just transmissions from here to there bouncing off a satellite. But that's where I learned the word telemetering. And he never went to Vietnam. But when he was stationed at, I guess, was Fort Devens Mass., where the Army's security agency is. The army became aware that there were people protesting the Vietnam War and talking about atrocities and stuff. And they asked him if he would, as a lawyer, if he would give a speech to the troops about illegal orders and the like. And he said, sure,

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he would, and he got this auditorium filled with soldiers. And he's, Peter [Teachout], had gone to Amherst, Harvard Law School, was kind of hampered by an intellectual approach to the world. And he had this whole auditorium full of soldiers, and he started talking about the concept of an illegal order and the obligation to refuse to obey it, and what possible consequences were and then he gave examples of illegal orders. And at some point, some staff NCO gets up and says, "Hey Lieutenant, are we required to listen to this shit?" And he said, "well, you're not you're not required. this is an optional lecture", and a whole bunch of staff NCOs just walked out.

HUMBERSTONE: Really?

SACHS: When he got finished, and he walked out, there are a couple of MPs there who arrested him. And they locked him up. They couldn't hold him very long because they couldn't figure out what he'd done wrong. And they had to let him out. But he was a marked man after that.

HUMBERSTONE: He was what?

SACHS: A marked man. And he got out quickly, he had his first child who is unofficially my god daughter. Had been born then. Her middle name is Sorrow. Named for the sorrows of war. They're pretty outstanding family. Peter and Mary have five kids and they all grew up next door, and I think of them sort of as nieces and nephews, or nieces and nephew. Four girls, one boy.

And they don't all live in Vermont. One lives in Massachusetts. And one lives in New York, and she ran for Attorney General in New York. She's run for congress stuff like that. She said, she's sort of a— there's a word— influencer in left wing politics.

I had pretty much burned myself out by then. By the time we had moved here on electoral politics and just tried to live a good life in, in concert with my values, then toward the end of law school, I got cajoled into running for the Vermont house. And I was in the legislature for a couple of years.

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HUMBERSTONE: Yeah, that was in that was in 1978?

21:10

SACHS: I think I got elected in 78. And I was in the house until 1980. Where I didn't, didn't rather bothered to run because it was an incumbent and I thought it was going to be a rubber stamp. And I didn't get reelected. But that was okay. Gave me time to try to earn a living.

21:39

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. At this time, you have your own firm that you're starting, correct?

21:43

SACHS: Yeah, well, yeah. I never worked for anybody else. Well, I hung out a shingle and learned what I was doing at my client's expense. The never overcharged them, hardly made enough to make a living, to stay [inaudible]. And then a couple of friends said, why don't you join us? And we'll be a firm. So, I was one of three partners. I was the junior most and the other two have been practicing for quite a while. That lasted a few years, and I really didn't like working in that town when I didn't know anything about the town. The population of that town.

HUMBERSTONE: Which town was this?

22:37

SACHS: That was Windsor [VT].

HUMBERSTONE: Oh, Windsor, Vermont?

22:43

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: This is around the 80s?

SACHS: Yeah, early 80s, and mid 80s maybe.

HUMBERSTONE: Windsor not too far from here. You were still close to home at this point?

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SACHS: Oh, no, no, that's where Marlene, establish your medical practice. She was at Mount Ascutney Hospital, in Windsor [VT], and she practiced there for 40 years. Almost.

But it wasn't working for me. And I come back up here and practice alone for another couple of years, then a guy joins me and then another guy joins me and then it's getting too big for me, and I didn't like it. So, I went off on my own again. But by then I was kind of fed up with practicing law. And I got recruited to run a Cessna dealership and a flight school out of Lebanon [NH], and I did that, and it was fun for a few years and then I got recruited to run the National Association of flight instructors. That was 2000 that I got recruited to go back to the airport full time. And then about '03. I got invited to run the National Flight Instructor Association, which was run out of the Midwest. So, I was flying back and forth from Lebanon [NH] airport at Oshkosh airport.

And that was kind of fun. Marlene had grown up in Oshkosh [WI]. I should have realized ahead of time; she would never want to move back that way.

24:31

HUMBERSTONE: Oshkosh is in Wisconsin, right?

24:32

SACHS: Wisconsin, yeah. So it was, you know, every month, every six weeks, I come home for a long weekend. Or she'd go out there for a long weekend. And that was okay for three years and then it got to be 1980 and no— 2008. 2008. I knew there was an 8 in it. In 2008, Lydia and Gabe, were gonna get married. And Kelly and Laura, were gonna have a baby. And the baby was born on February 29, 2008. And Lydia and Gabe that married in October around, but before, before Eleanor was born, during the winter there, I think it was around January, I came back and set up here.

And I had for the first time in my life, I had an opportunity to talk to a VA shrink. And I cannot say enough good about either the VA hospital in White River Junction [VT]. As into the extent it's representative of VA system, the entire VA system, I realized there are places that aren't quite

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as stellar. And Dr. Mike Fanizzi, who is now retired, but he made time for me, and we used to get together at eight o'clock every Monday morning. And we did that for three or four years until he got disabled and he had to retire. But by then, I was feeling a little more on top of things.

HUMBERSTONE: What do you mean by that?

SACHS: I was I was just a fucking mess. I didn't know. I've had, you know, periods of— lots of survival guilt. Survivor guilt.

[short pause]

27:04

SACHS: Disappointment in myself. I should say there wasn't— there were so many things that I could have done better that I didn't.

27:15

HUMBERSTONE: In what sense? Regarding the—

SACHS: All because of the fucking war, but—

27:23

HUMBERSTONE: You're talking specifically about your time in Vietnam.

27:26

SACHS: Yeah, yeah. And he was, he was very helpful about that. He was a good guy, and I came to find that experiences universal, you know, I feel guilty at having been such an integral part of the war machine, somebody else feels guilty that they didn't get the corn planted before that rainstorm. And somebody else feels guilty because he didn't notice that banana peel when he was sweeping up in the store and somebody slipped on it and broken a finger. And yet, everybody feels guilt in some way. Everybody feels of sorrow. Everybody feels joy in different ways. But the core feelings are, are pretty universal. Sarah Kahn was a classmate of mines and basketball, and she coined it. In my world, she coined that expression experiences universal, and it's really nice.

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HUMBERSTONE: So, at this point, I realized that you can connect to people more than you thought?

28:44

SACHS: Yeah, I can, and I do have— there's some things that I'm not the best in the world. Like there are parts of practicing law that he just wasn't as good at. My brain didn't work that way. I could, I could have done better. But there are some parts of it that I was really good at. And those things I could transfer to something other than practicing law.

I'm pretty good at telling stories. I can recount a story and get people to understand what what's behind it and what was involved in making that an important incident for the people involved, whether it's me or somebody else. That's, that's one of my real gifts.

I have enough flight experience. I'm pretty good at teaching fly. Now I don't fly anymore, and I don't teach anymore. But that was something that I could feel I am if not the best anywhere, at least among the among the top 10. Coming to some self-acceptance, complete with the warts and with the faults, that was a thing that the VA shrink helped me get, help get me to. Not that you have to have a VA shrink or any shrink to get there. But there are certain patterns of mental health that you can get to by lots of different routes. And for me, that's the one that worked.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: And there were others that didn't work. And having a good partner, they can talk about shit like that, and you can. And you can feel accepted by even when you're not at your best. It's a pretty, pretty key part of life. They're two sides to that coin, you know. The other is that when your life partner is up stuff is not. At best. You have to accept and understand that that's— and you have to remind yourself it has not always been like that, and it isn't always going to be like that. One of the reasons falling in love is so great is that you're getting so much good stuff early in the relationship that you have good stuff to draw on. And when they when you reach obstacles and stuff you can tell yourself well, you know, this has been really great before, and I'm sure if we get through this, it will be again, and it always does always know if you give it give it the time and give it the

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energy to get through the trough and backup on to the upside. That's good.

32:20

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah, Marlene has been they've been there with you—

32:23

SACHS: Yeah, she has put up with my shit for 55 years, you know. [both laughing]
And I'm trying to try to balance out the scales.

32:38

HUMBERSTONE: Well Rusty, I have a couple of things I would like to ask more about.

SACHS: Yeah, okay. Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: Well, I keep thinking about what you had said about this religion of communism.

SACHS: Yeah.

HUMBERSTONE: You know that you're witnessing, and I was wondering in what ways were you witnessing this? Were there? Were there any specific points where it kind of dawned on you that, you know, that was the case? Or were there things you were reading that that really influenced this like perspective of this idea in America?

33:08

SACHS: There were some things I was reading, that were more, more related to this continuation of butting our heads against the wall in Vietnam. I mean, starting with the French, who were there for—
I tend to boil things down, you know, in Vermont, we make maple sugar. You take this really watery syrup, you boil it down, and get it thicker and thicker and sweeter and sweeter.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: Boil it down to France was there in Vietnam, because they wanted a colony to produce rubber. Basically, the French occupation of Vietnam

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and the French war was to protect Michelin and the Americans were there to protect mining companies that could get mining deposits out of Vietnam, and then lumber companies— it used to be. Before we started dropping bombs everywhere. Lumber was a phenomenal export for Vietnam.

[Rusty's son enters the room and lets us know he is letting the dog outside]

35:40

HUMBERSTONE: Well, the that take on there being motivations for legislators to think about these resources. I've actually never heard about that. In regards to Vietnam. And was that something you were seeing or reading or did this come up later when you were in a legislative seat?

36:03

SACHS: Yeah, there were— and war profiteering in Vietnam. When you take— a wonderful product of industry is something that can be used only once. So, you have to keep on making more of them to sell more and more of them.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: So, what's a classic example of a product that can be used only once?

HUMBERSTONE: A bullet.

SACHS: A bomb or a bullet. And when you have to build runways, and you have to build bases, surrounded by barbed wire and stuff like that, there are companies that say, "Oh, we can do that". And no matter where you went in Vietnam, there would always be these little signs around the base. Built and maintained by RMK-BRJ. And when we never knew what our RMK-BRJ was, there was an allegation that the J was for Johnson. But apparently, it was a subdivision of Halliburton. And they were making zillions of dollars off construction of new and bigger, newer and bigger places and turning a little landing pad into a places biggest Camp Lejeune [NC] with all sorts of buildings and stuff. A lot of money in it. And there are legislators that— legislators respond to money and big money people who

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support. Who get votes and support, support their legislator. I get very cynical about that sort of thing. There are people who are more altruistic and managed to get elected, but I think most people they're really short sighted. Most people who are in Congress are pretty short sighted.

38:19

HUMBERSTONE: And this ties into this, I guess, reasoning for this religion of anti-communism?

38:24

SACHS: Yeah. The anti-communism religion.

38:30

HUMBERSTONE: Then you're seeing it in media, you're seeing it in speeches and—

38:33

SACHS: Yeah, it echoes everywhere, everywhere and "we can't let our ally here fall to communism". And that's how the the domino theory of all these little countries in Southeast Asia that are lined up so nicely and if one of them falls to communism and that's gonna knock over the country next to them. "If the Vietnamese becomes communist, then Cambodia will, and then Laos will, and then Burma will, and Thailand and they're all gonna be communist. My god, how horrible with this be?"

I'm kind of laissez faire you know, if they want to have a communist economy that might work for them. It's not gonna hurt us. And another aspect of the religion of anti-communism is that the media and the spokespeople for it, you know, the senators from Kentucky or Mississippi or Missouri, speak about communism, but they superimpose it and made synonymous with Russian totalitarianism which doesn't have anything to do with the economic system. That's just a way of choosing leaders.

That people would oppose communism, they would consider the opposite of communism to be democracy. Whereas there, they're the ones fish and the other ones foul. Yeah, you know, one is a way of selecting leaders and the other a way of allocating resources, and I used to tear my hair, when my hair was like yours, over that issue.

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40:39

HUMBERSTONE: I can understand that. And so, this is really prominent in this time, and you're meeting with these other veterans, and that's driving all of these feelings and thoughts even more. And then that leads up to I think we kind of skipped over the Winter Soldier testimonies.

40:59

SACHS: Oh, that was part of that was one of the early things that I was involved with, with the vets against the war. I think the time when [John] Kerry on called and introduced himself was probably very late, 1970 or early, excuse me, early '71. I think I might be a year off, when was when a soldier?

41:39

HUMBERSTONE: I believe the testimonies were in '71.

41:43

SACHS: Okay, so right around then, when I met [John] Kerry. He said, "Well, we're trying to get a bunch of heads together to talk about what they did and what they saw". And we're trying to get a lot of them together. And we've arranged that this will happen in Detroit, at the end of January. I remember that part because it was during the exams.

They were doing in Detroit because there was some plan that never came to fruition where they were going to have some Vietnamese leaders in Ontario, and they were going to come down to Windsor [IL], and we're gonna get together and do a joint presentation. But apparently, they never showed up or something. But we had a whole bunch of— we had more than 100 vets. And it was pretty well organized because they had Marines, they had army, and they had Sailors. And Marines would be set up as panels. So, there was a first MARDIV and first Marine airwing, and there was a third MARDIV, third airwing. And then army guys were there by division. And there's some really, really interesting little growths out of this. We'd try to set people up by general unit, and by time in country. And there was one— the night I went in, went to this screening room where they were taking down [inaudible]. Sacks. "And when were you there". '66 '67. "And what unit were you with and where were you" and all that. And there was—

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43:48

HUMBERSTONE: Was this the was this recorded? Was this the, well, the opening of the Winter Soldier?

43:52

SACHS: Yeah. Have you seen the movie?

43:56

HUMBERSTONE: I've seen the first half.

43:57

SACHS: Yeah, the first half. The second half is not that good. And there's this thing where Ken Campbell, who I'm still a friend. Yeah, we we've gotten together. Just a wonderful guy. He was an undergrad.

HUMBERSTONE: At Harvard?

SACHS: No, no, he went to Temple University in Philadelphia.

HUMBERSTONE: Okay.

SACHS: But he'd been a cannon cocker in either 11th or 12th Marines. And he came—

HUMBERSTONE: You're gonna have to explain to people what a cannon cocker is.

SACHS: He was in artillery is a forward observer. Oh, I got a great photograph of him. He was an artillery man. And he came into the room when several of us were being interviewed and giving our names and numbers. And he walks up to this this guy with hair down to his shoulder said "hey, you're Sergeant [Scott] Camil". "Yeah, who are you?" "Ken Campbell, alpha battery 112".

HUMBERSTONE: Oh, yeah, this is recorded?

SACHS: It's recorded, yeah. I haven't seen Scott Camil for maybe 15 years. Ken Campbell, I saw a couple of years ago in— he is from Philadelphia [PA].

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And I'd been asked to be guest of honor for the Marine Corps birthday celebration for Echo company, I guess [muttering], Second Battalion 25th Marines, I got their guide on flag, they gave it to me. I was guest of honor. Their battery was in— their battery. Their ball was in Harrisburg [PA].

HUMBERSTONE: When was this?

SACHS: This is maybe five years ago, maybe seven or eight years ago. And the skipper of that company was the guy I'd met here. He's Naval Academy grad, his name was [David] Bates. And he was going to Tuck [School of Business] and I met him when he was at Tuck [School of Business]. And then he got command of this company and he's working for, I think, Fidelity? If it was another similar company, then he'll have my hide, but he's living in Philly and he's commanding his company. And I said, oh, we're going to be down there. I gotta call Ken Campbell. We get together and we got together in Philly. For a Sunday brunch. Yeah, we got up early morning, Sunday morning after the ball. And, or maybe it was Monday. But anyway, we got together for brunch, in Philly. And it was just a wonderful time. It was just needed. We're both— I'd already retired. And he was about to, he ended up as chair of the government department, might have been history, but I think government department at University of Delaware, and he was here is a thoughtful guy. I got a really good paper that he wrote, he published a thing about the about foreign policy under [President Ronald] Reagan and under preceding and succeeding presidents. So, [Ken] Campbell, I'm still in touch with. [Scott] Camil, I'm not quite as much in touch with although, you know. If I called him, he'd say, yeah, come on over, you know, if you need a place to stay. It's that close of a relationship.

How did I get onto that? That was one of the things that came out of Winter Soldier we had a continuum of people in the same places. People had overlapped in the same units, and the like. Oh, and incidentally to tie the [inaudible] when we were at the panel discussion of for the first MARDIV and First Marine Airwing. There were about 10 of us who were seated in long, you know, concatenated picnic tables with drapes over them. And I was sitting between Scott Camil on one side and Ken Campbell on the other and here we're still in touch.

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49:10

SACHS: Camil was his little further out there.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. In what way?

49:12

SACHS: He was one of the defendants of the Gainesville Eight, which— they were charged with all sorts of treasonous activity and shit, there are eight of them and they're facing— I mean treason is the death penalty, you know? Federal court and—

49:29

HUMBERSTONE: What was it they did?

49:35

SACHS: They were charged with treason. I don't remember the specifics of it. But it was a long trial. And every night or two there'd be something about it on the thing. When the government rested its case. The defense said the charges are absurd. We are not even going to bother to present evidence in our favor, and the jury was out for a short time and acquitted everybody of everything, which was pretty cool. Now that's Ken Campbell.

[Rusty shows Brandyn a photo of Ken Campbell]

HUMBERSTONE: Oh, wow.

SACHS: He was an artillery FO. And you even with his glasses and steel pot. And, you know, reaching to try and keep his rifle from getting too dirty. You could see the stress on his face. That's a 19-year-old kid taking a smoke break.

50:36

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah, I recognize him from the from the Winter Soldier Film.

50:39

SACHS: Yeah, he's a very good guy continues to be a good friend. There was another photograph I will continue to look for in here.

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50:52

HUMBERSTONE: Well Rusty, you know, when we met, I had no idea that about any of your history with this, and I think it was maybe a year or two after I had met you that I think Jack [O'Toole] had said to me, I don't remember what we were talking about. But Jack responded with—

51:09

SACHS: "He's a fucking Commie".

51:12

HUMBERSTONE: No, he responded with "you didn't know? Rusty is famous". And—

[Rusty shows a photo of himself]

HUMBERSTONE: This is you with long hair?

[Marlene comes into the room and looks at the picture]

HUMBERSTONE: Then so, what was— how were, I guess, how are you feeling? And what were you, I guess, what was the impact on you doing the Winter Soldier testimonies? You ended up on their poster and when you go to the website today for the Winter Soldier it's you.

51:49

SACHS: Oh, well, that's for— Yeah, that's true. However, that's um that was the filmmakers. That made that that didn't have anything to do with VVAW itself. The filmmakers found that archival photograph and they put it in. You can, there's a lot to be like—

[Rusty shows another photograph]

SACHS: There's another one. That's their hat but, Bestor [Cram] took that, Bestor [Cram] is one of my closest friends. He and his wife and Marlene and I all lived together in a communal situation for a while. And he was a Marine officer. He was an engineering officer, who came back and when he came back from overseas, I think they were going to make him an MP officer and he was going to be guarding, protesting Marines who are locked up pending court martial. And he refused and he just went home, and they

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never chased him as far as we know, but he eventually got an honorable discharge in the mail. He never went back to on active duty.

53:19

HUMBERSTONE: What was his name? Who is this?

53:20

SACHS: His name is Bestor be B-E-S-T-O-R Cram, C-R-A-M—

[Marlene makes a comment about Bestor Cram's name]

SACHS: Oh, there's another photograph that I'm looking for of me and my brother, who's next after me, at my grandmother's funeral, and this is when I was an undergrad, and just a mass trying to figure out what to do with my life. I was no longer flying in the reserves, and I had friends who say "what the fuck are you doing? You've gone off and join the wrong guys".

54:19

HUMBERSTONE: So, your efforts with Vietnam Veterans Against the War is starting to impact your personal relationships.

54:27

SACHS: Well, it was just sort of dwindling on among my personal relationships but among individual friendships. Were guys whom I thought had been my friends. Were seeing me as part of a unit that they didn't like. Oh, there's the picture. It's done. Okay. I hope I can find this stuff when they're tiny and your eyes are bad.

55:13

SACHS: I'm digressing. And they don't know whether it completely responded to your last question.

HUMBERSTONE: I was I was curious about the effects that the testimonies had on, like going forward.

55:34

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SACHS: I am not even sure that the testimonies were part of it. It was just that I had signed on— That's my brother and me and my grandmother's funeral. And that would be in 1971.

[Phone call interruption]

SACHS: One guy who was a really good friend actually. I had expressed myself in a letter. We— actually this guy had been one of my closest friends.

57:00

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. Where did you meet them?

57:04

SACHS: I met him the first day of flight. And, and we've gone through flight training together. I went overseas about a year before he did because he flew fixed wing. But when he got overseas, I showed him around and then we got together. Sometime— he was always a night owl. And he wrote the schedule for his squadron, which means he went up at around three in the morning. So sometimes I get back from flying and I'd be secured from flying and I would be secured for the night, and I would go down [inaudible].

And we got out about the same time. And I was back in school at Harvard. He was in school at Carnegie Tech and Pittsburgh [PA]. And, and we'd been talking on the phone I was just really pissed at Nixon and [inaudible]. It might have been around the time Nixon bombed the— mind the harbor, at Hai Phong [Vietnam], or some years sometime there in the round '70 plus or minus two years. And we didn't have an argument on the phone. But then I wrote him a letter afterwards saying how pissed that wasn't how stupid it was. And this just drags on and on and people are getting killed. And we're not winning the war. And they say we are and there's nothing to prove it. And I got a letter back from him, saying how can you possibly think that shit can't you trust people to make good decisions? You've gone and you've joined— taken the easy way out and join these shallow thinking assholes. I want you to do me a favor and never bother to talk to me again. And that just, that was just so cutting. That was in probably in '71. And it was probably Kelly was '72 moved here '73 It was probably five years later that I said okay, there aren't Americans in Vietnam anymore.

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I'm starting to get on with my life. Oh, no, actually it was later than that because I was at law school. Maybe 1980. And I tracked him down. I knew he'd finish school and he wasn't in Pittsburgh anymore. I found one of his brothers. There was who lived down in Western Mass. And he gave me a phone number. Where [James Augustus] Schmaltz [Jr.] was living in St. Louis. And I called that number around supper time. And he answered the phone and I said, this is Rusty Sachs. Are you still pissed? And there's this long silence. He said, I can't tell you how many times they want to pick up the phone and call you and apologize.

1:00:35

SACHS: I said well, as long as you're not still pissed, he said, "yeah, I am not still pissed. We ought to get together".

1:00:43

SACHS: Friendship resumed after that. And he died last summer.

HUMBERSTONE: I'm sorry.

SACHS: And I think I might have told you about that, I went out and spoke at his funeral. We, Marlene and I, drove down in North Carolina, [inaudible]. I married his daughter about a month before he died. He wasn't sick or anything. That was the one time the two of us were together where we both were wearing our decorations. He had been awarded the Distinguished— here's the thing about the Distinguished Flying Cross. You might you probably had guys, there might have been a lawn dart pilot who had a DFC.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: The Distinguished Flying Cross was established by, I think it was by Calvin Coolidge. In 1927, it might have been Woodrow Wilson, I always get them mixed up. And the first one was awarded to Charles Lindbergh. It was it's the highest award presented for heroism in Combat Aviation— in aviation. In aviation because Lindbergh wasn't in combat. Let's see.

[Gregory] Pappy Boyington was skipper of the Black Sheep Squadron and World War Two he got a Distinguished Flying Cross. Neil Armstrong got a

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Distinguished Flying Cross. John Glenn got a Distinguished Flying Cross.
[James Augustus] Shmaltz [Jr.] got his famous Flying Cross twice.

HUMBERSTONE: Really?

SACHS: Yeah. And he got them both in A-4s, single seat. single engine, dropping bombs 100 yards away from the grunts under cloud cover with mountains around. It was ballsy stuff, ballsy stuff. And that's pretty awesome.

But that had been really hurtful when he said, you know, you're doing these things with these people. That that that's bad. You shouldn't be doing that. And even though it costs 10 years that our friendship is worth going through.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

SACHS: I owe a phone call to his wife, actually. And his and his sons is going to come here with wife and kids in tow. Come here to summer, visit from Missouri and camp here.

HUMBERSTONE: Oh, that's awesome.

SACHS: Yeah, they're cool. He lost his firstborn son, he was a freshman in high school. He was playing water polo and all of a sudden [choking sound] went down to the bottom. Dead. Never— didn't have a drop of water in his lungs. He had a congenital weak partition in his heart that just blew out. And he was dead before he hit the bottom of the pool.

1:04:18

SACHS: That was on a Monday, and Tuesday morning [James Augustus] Shmaltz [Jr.] said what had happened. I flew up Friday. Stayed up all night just listening to him tell stories about his boy, a 13-year-old kid you know and felt a little bit closer to his other two kids, the younger ones. So, as a result of that. There were a couple of other friendships that were terminated and never revived as a result of the VVAW thing, and that was hurtful, but with respect the other ones, like I'd say, well, it's sort of the cost of standing up for what you believe in. Sometimes that happens, and has reminded me of how, you know, my father was placed in positions like that one. When

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during the McCarthy era when his cousin got blacklisted and had to leave the country. Dad's chairman published some papers based on spurious data. He had said, I can't support that. I can't do that and left the department and moved. Sold his house and moved back up north. You know, lots of people have times they get to decide where they're going to stand.

Commented [BH9]: Rusty had influence from his father to stand up for what is right.

1:06:07

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah. It seems it runs in the family.

1:06:13

SACHS: Ah, next. Or what can I complete, that I distracted myself away from?

1:06:21

HUMBERSTONE: No, it's not a distraction at all. What about what about your professional life to your efforts with the VFW— or VVAW—

1:06:32

SACHS: VVAW.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah.

[both laughing]

SACHS: There is VFW and VVAW.

[Laughing]

1:06:37

HUMBERSTONE: I am used to saying the other one.

1:06:39

SACHS: Yeah. And there's VVA, which was a Vietnam Vets of America. And I think that was established by Reagan, or during Regan and the Republicans kind of adopted it.

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1:06:52

HUMBERSTONE: Well, did that affect? Did that affect your professional life? Or do you still have—

1:06:56

SACHS: No, not that I know of, if anything I think it might have might have been a positive thing. In the— people said, yeah, he was involved in that as a leader, you know, not just as a follower. So that that might have been a positive thing. I Yeah. I didn't shy away from it when I when I ran for the House. When I was in politics. I always put it right down there.

Sometimes friends, non-veteran friends, kind of high school friends, would ask about it. And well, one guy who was couple years behind me in school. He might have been a freshman when I was a junior, and we were both JV football. Well, we were varsity, but we were non-starters. You know, he grew up and he was a shelf stocker at the grocery store. Grocery store where I shop. And I always say hello to him. And he said, "Hey, you're running for the House?" I said, Yeah, he said, and you were involved in that and the Vietnam thing. I said, yeah. He said, "what did you want to do that for?" I said, I think it was a shitty war and people were getting killed for lousy reasons. And I didn't want to have anything to do with it.

He said, "Oh, I never thought about it that way". Never came up again. We're always still friends again. He dropped dead when he was 53. I had three classmates, or schoolmates one from law school, one from high school and one from college. All dropped dead at age 53. Within about a month of each other. And he was one of them. He was dancing at the VFW; he was a guest. Brad Hills just had a heart attack; he never took care of himself. And Bill Boss got up in the middle of the night and went down to get something out of the icebox and he dropped dead drinking orange juice out of the carton. His wife heard a thump went down there he was cold-fucking-dead.

Anyways, that was Chuck Wilson. Who was the one who said "well, I thought of it that way". And he obviously it started off thinking that's a dumb thing to do because his blue-collar hardhat buddies all thought that "that was communism, by God". You know, he came around right away. I

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think a lot of people do. A lot of politics is the person next door to you. And if somebody you know and like, thinks differently from you. You might not think as judgmentally about what he thinks after that.

HUMBERSTONE: Yeah, that makes sense.

SACHS: I got a real good friend I'm sure you met Ben Casio. And one of the balls recently a one-eyed guy and had been my co-pilot and got shot in the face.

HUMBERSTONE: I don't think I had a chance to meet him.

SACHS: He's always been super right wing. Well, he didn't like Trump. Trump was too liberal for him. But still— [pause]

1:10:47

HUMBERSTONE: Despite that you maintained a friendship?

1:10:48

SACHS: We maintained a friendship. He said he, "you know, I got I got a call from Frenchie, and they said, 'did you know that the Sachs did all this shit? What do you think about that?'" And Ben said, "I think he's gonna right to think anything he wants, you know? Can't sit can't say he didn't do anything that we didn't do". "Oh". He said I disagree with him, but shit, you know, he's my friend. That's a much more civilized way to look at the world. Anyway, did you ever cross paths with Jack Shepard here at Dartmouth?

HUMBERTONE: That name sounds familiar.

SACHS: He died last fall. He'd been a journalist in Vietnam. He wrote for Look magazine. And then he came here and his faculty in, I think in environmental science is something. He died last fall or maybe during the winter. And he was written up on the front page of today's Valley News as being an influential person in that community who died recently. He's one of those guys. He, and Shepard, and fuck all that— Ignore that whole paragraph because then it can't even remember the other guy's name. It'll come back sometime. I'll tell you sometime have breakfast.

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1:12:26

HUMBERSTONE: Well, speaking about community. So, what you left for the Marine Corps, and then coming back. What did you notice about your local community? Hanover [NH]? Did you see a big shift in, I guess attitudes between before and after coming back, to tie this into Dartmouth?

1:12:52

SACHS: I came back my family had always been saying, we're so proud of you, we support everything you're doing, because the fact that I was flying medical evacuation was probably influential on that. If I had been dropping bombs, it might have been different. I came back I found out that my father had been writing anti-war letters to the Valley News. And open letters to President Johnson.

1:13:30

HUMBERSTONE: And everyone up here was reading them?

1:13:32

SACHS: And yeah, and I felt kind of betrayed. I was pissed that he had been writing against the war. Didn't despite the fact that I was leaning against the war, too. I thought it was sort of hypocritical, but he was— but there are an awful lot of people around here that were against the war. I mean, this is the left-wing pocket of Cow Hampshire.

SACHS: After I finished school. After I finished college, and I was trying to figure out what to do with my life. I applied for a position at the hospital, where they're looking—

1:14:16

HUMBERSTONE: Here at Gisele [Medical School], or at—

1:14:18

SACHS: It wasn't Gisele, it was Dartmouth Med School, but this is the Hitchcock hospital.

HUMBERSTONE: Oh, ok.

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SACHS: Which is independent of the med school. Although all the faculty have position in both places. Most of the docs at Hitchcock get half their salary from the med school. That's an exaggeration, but accurate.

There was a position an entry level position for an administrator at the hospital and I applied for it, in the first screening right through. Shortlist was— I wasn't told, but it was probably three or four people. I got an interview with the chief administrator of the hospital, whose kids had been in school with me and who was a neighbor, and I knew him, and I didn't call him by first name, but he'd call me by my first name, and you know, Hi, Mr. [Bill] Wilson. "Hi Rusty".

So, I get this interview with him. And I said I'd like to know more about the job and stuff. He said, "Well, yeah, but first of all, I gotta ask, you know, you've gotten a reputation as being kind of anti-establishment and stuff. Can you really take a job like this?" And I say, do you mean because I think killing strangers and using government money to send people halfway around the world to kill a bunch of strangers is wrong. You think that might disqualify me from working in a healthcare situation? He said, "well, yeah". So, there was one way that my activity had impinge stuff. You know, I don't want to work for this son-of-a-bitch.

And I forgotten about that till the other day. I don't know what— oh, Rick Johnson. You know Rick Johnson. He and I had lunch together Friday and he bought the house that's next door to the Wilsons. That's why Mr. [Bill] Wilson came into mind. They're dead or all moved away. But I drove by, and the Wilson's house is still the same color. And drove by, said, ah, that's where Sandy, Debbie, and Susie Wilson live, and Mr. [Bill] Wilson, that fucker.

[Both laughing]

1:16:54

HUMBERSTONE: Mr. [Bill] Wilson is the administrator at the hospital?

1:16:58

SACHS: He was the administrator at the hospital. But his successor was John Springer. And John Springer was the CO HMM-771 reserve Squadron at

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South Weymouth [MA], who wrote my final fitness report when I asked to be released from my contract with the reserves, who had judged me as outstanding in moral courage and unsat in judgment.

It was that final figures report preceded my interview with [Bill] Wilson. [Bill] Wilson was head administrator at the time, I had that interview and at that time, Colonel [John] Springer, was head of purchasing. Or something like that.

1:18:21

HUMBERSTONE: So, there's a mix of different opinions.

1:18:24

SACHS: Yeah, but generally I didn't feel adversely judged by people around here. But that might have been just because the people who judged me never bothered to invite me for dinner. We didn't hang out.

HUMBERSTONE: I guess that would make sense.

SACHS: And the first time I got invited to speak at the high school. I spoke, and I spoke my mind. And a couple of— or within a week or so after that, I got a phone call at home from a guy named [Charles] Conquest. Who wanted to talk to me about speaking. So, I said, Yeah, well, what about it? And I was expecting, "teaching this communist philosophy shit to my kids, dat data detta". And it was I just want to thank you so much for coming up there and telling people how it really was. I said oh, that's kind of nice.

One of his kids was a classmate of Lydia's on the track team or something like that. And he was a really nice guy. He ran. It's called Hannover strings, I think, upstairs on Main Street in Monaco.

HUMBERSTONE: Oh, yeah. I bought a guitar from there.

SACHS: He dropped dead about four or five years ago. He's 10 years younger than I am. And that was a loss. He was a good guy.

HUMBERSTONE: I am sorry.

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SACHS: Well, life goes on you know? So, what did I digress from?

1:20:08

HUMBERSTONE: No actually I think that pretty much brings us to the end of our time.

1:20:11

SACHS: Oh shit. That's okay.

HUMBERSTONE: Well, hey Rusty, thank you so much for talking with me.

SACHS: Hey with or without recording, anytime you want to talk is fine by me.

[End of Interview]