John White '61
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Vietnam Project
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Transcribed by Karen Navarro

CALCATERRA: My name is Paulina Calcaterra ('19), for the record. I'm sitting in Rauner Special Collections Library in Hanover, New Hampshire, on April 27th, 2018. I'm joined on the phone by Mr. John White, who will be sharing his experiences with me as a part of the Dartmouth Vietnam Project. Mr. White, thank you for speaking with me today. I encourage you throughout the conversation to provide like full names of anyone you're mentioning, and also if you're using an acronym, to define that acronym, or any slang words or jargon that you use, just so that down the line if someone's using this interview as a source, they can fully research anything we reference and can understand all the context. And then, I also encourage you to let me know if you need a break for any reason, if you need water, if you need any snack or anything like that, and whenever you want we can pause and reconvene at another time, or maybe we'll get through everything today, but we'll figure out what works for us. And yeah, so that's all my introductory things. I'd like to start by asking you a bit about some background and biographical information. So, can you tell me when and where you were born?

WHITE: I was born in New York City in Manhattan on August 16th, 1939.

CALCATERRA: Okay. And what were your parents' names, and what they do for a profession? Or can you tell me a little bit about them?

WHITE: Sure. My parents were Robert Paul (P-a-u-l) White, and Jane Zobel (Z-o-b-e-l) White. They met several years before I was born in New York City, were married in 1936, and when I came along they were living in an apartment on the East Side of Manhattan. I was born in a midtown hospital which is no longer around now. My father was a chemical engineer working for his father who had his own private chemical engineering company. My mother was acting as a housewife, although she later got her—she had a degree from Cornell [University, Ithaca, NY], and later received a master's of divinity at Yale [University, New Haven, CT],

worked in various capacities with that master's degree, M.Div., Master of Divinity degree.

CALCATERRA: Awesome.

WHITE: And a career in engineering and [inaudible] Uniroyal in the 1960s or so. Now, what more would you like to know about my background?

CALCATERRA: Well, thank you for all that information. That's really interesting so far. I'm interested to know if you have any siblings, and what they were like, what your relationship was like? And also, if you stayed in Manhattan throughout your childhood, or if you moved to any other town, but like what area did you grow up in?

WHITE: Okay, sure. I'm the first-born of my mother and father. I was followed two-and-a-half years later by my sister, Erica (E-r-i-c-a), who was born in Los Angeles. Between then, my mother and father moved from Manhattan to Florida, where my father was working as a professional fisherman for a year-and-a-half, just sort of feeling wanderlust. And, so then I had a year-and-a-half in Bradenton Beach, Florida. That was followed by a move by my parents to Los Angeles, where my sister was born, and they stayed there for I think about eight months to a year. But the Second World War had just begun, and they decided to come back to the East Coast where their relatives were. So they moved to Baltimore, Maryland, and found a house on the outskirts in 1942 or '43.

I grew up on the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland outside of Baltimore. At age 11, my father got a… Oh, and during the Second World War, my father worked for an airplane manufacturing company in Baltimore. I'm trying to remember the name of it. Anyhow, he was a time inspector on manufacturing operations, and then after the war he returned to chemical engineering when he got an offer to move to Connecticut and join the Uniroyal Company, which he did. So we moved in 1950 from Baltimore to New Haven area in Connecticut, actually to Cheshire where I presently live. And so, I've lived in Cheshire since 1950, which is now what, 67 years, 68 years, and I jokingly say to people, "That's almost long enough for the natives to start accepting me."

CALCATERRA: [laughter] Well, thank you for sharing that. That sounds really interesting. So it sounds like you and your family moved around a bit in the beginning of your life, and then after World War II started, moved to Chesapeake area, and then eventually settled in Cheshire. And I'm wondering if your father, if his work in this airplane company was instead of being drafted, or if your father ever was drafted for World War II?

WHITE: Okay. I'll answer that in just a second, but I want to say that I have no other siblings, so there's only my sister and me, and my sister moved to California with my parents when, around 1960, and lived there for many years. She's presently in Colorado with her husband and a couple of her kids. Now, the name of the aircraft manufacturing company my father worked for was Glenn (G-l-e-n-n) L. (initial "L") Martin (M-a-r-t-i-n) Company. He was not drafted. He had poor vision and was already working in the defense industry on aircraft, so he served on the home front during the Second World War, and had no direct military experience. What was the rest of your question?

CALCATERRA: Yeah, that was pretty much my question. And I'm wondering now if you had any understanding of what World War II was and what it meant for him to be working for the cause on the home front, or if he talked to you at all about his work or his feelings about the war that you can remember?

WHITE: The answer is yes. Yes and yes. I was six years old when the war ended, so I grew up in the wartime conditions prevailing around Baltimore on the East Coast. I remember air raid wardens coming around at night to make sure the shades of homes were drawn and they were dark shades. I remember food rationing. I remember seeing military service men and women all over the place in uniform home on leave or perhaps stationed nearby. So the war, the Second World War was very familiar to me as a young kid.

In fact, there was a holding camp for German Americans not far from our home. That's an act of the war which isn't generally recognized by the public, nor written about very much. But, you know that Japanese Americans were put into internment camps. Same thing for Italian Americans and German Americans, primarily here on the East Coast, and the numbers involved were much smaller than the Japanese Americans. But, the point of this comment of mine is that the

interns in the German American internment camp were for all I know decent Americans, just happened to have a German last name or perhaps more directly some German sentiment, and were considered potential enemies, so [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt had them rounded up. There was one intern camp not far from my home in Baltimore in a big open field, and my friends and I, ages 5, 6, 7 and 8, would go over there to visit them. They loved to see little kids, because they were apart from their families, and they actually encouraged us so they could talk to us, and they encouraged us by giving us candy through the barbed wire, a great incentive for little kids.

So, the war was just part of my upbringing. And on V-J Day ("V" as in the letter, first letter of Victory, "J" for Japan, V-J Day), August, I think it's August 15th. And my father took me down to Baltimore Harbor where all the ships, commercial and naval, had rigged out all their flags and bunting, were blowing the steam whistles, and it was just a wild, almost chaotic upwelling of happiness and joy at the end of the conflict. I wasn't quite sure what it all meant, but it sure was obvious that people were happy about the end of the war. So, that was an important influence on me when I later decided to join the Navy. During the war I had neighbors, Nick and Doris, who had no kids, but Nick was in the Navy and would frequently come home on leave in his naval uniform, enlisted man, a white hat with bell bottoms. That made an impression on me. So I was very favorably inclined toward the US military, and especially toward the US Navy. End of comment.

CALCATERRA: Thank you, yeah. It's kind of hard on the phone to know when to transition. But, that's all really, really interesting, and I'm very impressed by your memory at this early part of your life. And I'm wondering now, so you mentioned this influence of your neighbor and also the celebration at the end of the war that started making you interested in this potential military career of service. I'm wondering what your family thought of that, if you expressed that to your family, if they encouraged it, or if other relatives were in service at all? And I'm also wondering if the dialogue about the German holding camp and Italian holding camp in your town, if that was an open dialogue? Were people talking about that? Was that controversial in your town or was it sort of an unspoken kind of acceptance that this was just a wartime measure? Did your family internally talk about it at all, or have any

concerns about visiting the camps or anything like that? So, a lot in that question, but I can rephrase at any point if you want to, if you need a reminder.

WHITE: Okay. The answer is no, there was no real family discussion of the nearby internment camp. It was just a fact of wartime for us, along with food rationing, collecting fat in metal cans for recycling, and recycling tires, things that were scarce during the war. So, I grew up with a deep sense of patriotism and love of country, and of the righteousness of our cause. That's been called into question in later years by various groups. But, as a young boy I was very deeply influenced by the presence of the military throughout society, at least my local society. And I recall that for several years after the war was over, any military man, or woman I suppose, in uniform who walked into a bar, got his or her first drink free, just in appreciation for their military service.

As I got older, it became clear that my father could not afford to send me to college and that I would have to seek financial assistance. It looked like the NROTC scholarship was a good deal for me. I was favorably inclined to the Navy, and I had an academic record which placed me second in my class ranking it upon graduation. I was salutatorian, National Honor Society, what else? And editor of the yearbook. I was active in high school in a variety of ways, and favorably inclined toward the Naval ROTC scholarship. So I submitted an application for that, was accepted, and selected Dartmouth as my first choice, because I knew I wanted a small town, more rural campus than downtown New Haven, where I probably could have been admitted to Yale, as well, but I just wanted to get away from home. So, I passed the NROTC scholarship and showed up in Hanover in September, 1957.

CALCATERRA: Wow, that's really a very interesting story of how you ended up here at Dartmouth. I'm wondering if we could go back a little bit to your high school experiences. So you mentioned being very academically successful, involved in the yearbook. Do you have fond memories of high school? Or can you describe a little more, you know, what subjects you were interested in, or if you were involved in sports or any other activities, or, you know, what drew you to the yearbook? Just maybe talk a little bit more about high school or any part of your early education.

WHITE: All right. I've been academically inclined or intellectually inclined since my early childhood. I can remember writing some poems that were observed for the writing and scribblings of a six-year-old. But, I had a wide range of interests. I read widely, both in literature and in science. My father was very science oriented. My mother was oriented more toward the humanities and religion. So, I grew up with those poles, if you will, (p-o-l-e-s) of the family gestalt, and see in myself a meeting of science and spirit. In high school I was received well by the teachers and the administrators. I guess you'd call me a "brown nose", although I didn't consciously seek it. I was just respected as a smart kid, not very athletically inclined, although we had physical education classes that were required.

And I pretty much hit the books until I came to 11th grade, and at that point I sort of discovered girls. *Oh, wow!* That became more important that books at that point. So I began dating, and in my senior year at Cheshire High School I met my wife. We dated throughout my four years at Dartmouth. She would frequently drive up for college events. And one week on the Hanover plane my last week there, I was commissioned, graduated and returned to Cheshire to be married, all in the same week. Set off on my four years of naval service with an assignment to a destroyer in Newport, Rhode Island, a glorious, glorious assignment. Couldn't be anything better than to report to Newport in its heyday, militarily or Navily speaking, and at the height of the summer. It was glorious.

CALCATERRA: I'm wondering if we could talk a little bit more about your experience during your time at Dartmouth, and I did some research here at Rauner with the yearbook and the freshman Green Book, and discovered that you were an English major and that you were involved in, again, the yearbook and the Winter Carnival committee, DOC [Dartmouth Outing Club] and, of course, the Naval ROTC. And I'm wondering if you could describe a little more, you know, what drew you to the English major, or what were some of these extracurricular involvements like? And I have some more specific ROTC questions, but maybe we can first start with your academics at Dartmouth and some of those other involvements that you had.

WHITE: Sure. At Cheshire High School I was a big fish in a little pond. And although I had a sound intellect and academic

training, I pretty much coasted the last year while I enjoyed life by dating, and generally hanging out with guys and gals the way I hadn't done up to that point where I'd been just a sort of solitary academic. But, when I got to Dartmouth my first semester I found out what it means to be a little fish in a big pond, and I nearly flunked out. I had several [inaudible] that really, to use the phrase, challenged me, economics and I forget what the other—oh, and physics. Well, I had to dive in and learn the hard way that there's more to education than just skimming an occasional book and having a good memory and good recall.

So, I had to buckle down shortly after getting my grades for the first semester, [laughter] I think it was a couple of C+'s and a couple of D's. My academic record incidentally is not closed to you as far as I'm concerned, if you want to look at it. I don't have it, but maybe you could dig it up. Anyhow, the point is, it was a rude awakening to a young guy from the sticks, and I learned very soon that I had to buckle down, be serious about my studies, and that didn't leave any time for athletics, little time for dating, and since my wife who was then my girlfriend, we got engaged senior year of my time at Dartmouth, my wife was 200 miles away, 150, I'm not sure of the exact distance from Cheshire to Hanover, but it was not easy to get together. So, I had little to do but study and occasionally go to a Pi Lambda Phi party, where I was a social member.

And I think I graduated in the middle of my class, with perhaps a C+ average, no academic record to be bragging about, and it was a good training in humility for me, because I had been—in high school, looking back, I can see I was young and stupid and fooling myself, [laughter] and I had a good deal of that left by the time I got to Dartmouth. But, at a deeper level, I was searching for myself through all of that. While the military, the Navy, had a deep appeal to me for the gallantry and glory that it promised, there were still questions, existential questions in my mind about *who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is life all about?* And I was frantically, I was searching for answers through my course work at Dartmouth and through my personal readings and explorations. In fact, I can remember time in my junior year at Dartmouth when all of that seemed—"all of that" meaning the academic studies—largely irrelevant to the more urgent needs I had to resolve, the questions, the philosophic searching, the metaphysical dilemmas that I

found myself in. Somehow through the grace of God and a good kick in the astral, I made it through, and as I said earlier, was commissioned, graduated and married all in the same time. Have I failed to address any aspect of your questions?

CALCATERRA: No, that's a great amount of information you gave me there, and also pretty comforting to hear that the existential questions are normal at this age. But, I'm wondering if the—you talked about the gallantry and the glory of the Naval ROTC. What kind of community was that like for you? I'm aware of a statistic that around a third of Dartmouth students were in ROTC, so I wonder if it felt like a prevalent presence on campus or a significant part of your identity? And at that time, were you thinking about having a military career? Or did you have any inkling that you would end up potentially in Vietnam? Or what were some of your thoughts about the ROTC and your potential military career at that time?

WHITE: Uh-hum. ROTC in general was well accepted and welcome on campus at Dartmouth at that time. I felt a sense of identity belonging to the NROTC unit. It was deeply fulfilling to me to find that as an individual I had an identity that transcended myself in some ways, and transcended it in accordance with my own sense of patriotism which had been deeply impressed into me as a young child, not only by the war, but in the following years by the opening exercises in school which were daily routine at that time. We began school with the Pledge of Allegiance, with a prayer and with usually a patriotic song or poem, and then we got on with the business of studying and doing whatever the curriculum required. But, all that made a deep impression on me as a young kid, not totally conscious as it is now, or greatly conscious.

But, my orientation was to respect duly constituted authority, both civilian and military; it was to be grateful for the opportunities that we had as Americans and the freedom, the blessings of liberty which were ours and had been secured by those brave men and women who went to fight World War II overseas, or served in less dramatic ways back here on the home front. So, my orientation was gung ho American, and that certainly included Congress and elected officials all the way up to the President. I say that in anticipation of what we'll talk about later, namely my accusation against President Lyndon Johnson, who was after all my Commander in Chief while I was in the Navy.

So, my feeling about being at Dartmouth was one of expanding sense of appreciation for the various identifications I was making with the campus, with the college in its historical dimension, as well as its physical, for my part in a long military tradition, and my part in the academic and intellectual traditions of asking profound questions of oneself for having them asked via the studies. When I was a senior at Dartmouth, there was a required course for all seniors called “Great (G-r-e-a-t) Issues” (I-s-s-u-e-s), and once a week we had to gather in what was then Webster Hall. I think it’s now Rauner, and hear the words of great men and women, men much more so than women at that time, as speakers on great issues, whether it was war and peace, economics, philosophy, world politics. We had people such as Abba Eban, who was the Israeli ambassador at that time, speak to us. Robert Frost. I’m trying to remember some of the other speakers. And that all came together for me in a deep sense of belonging to an organization and an organism called society, which left me deeply grateful to be an American, and feeling highly privileged of the service and sacrifice of so many others who went before me. I’m ready to pause if you want me to do something on something else.

CALCATERRA: Uh-huh. Well, it sounds like you definitely had felt a lot of meaning in your involvement in the NROTC, and other aspects of Dartmouth’s education kind of affirmed those patriotic feelings or the feelings of this greater cause. Again, I’m wondering if this sort of became a career aspiration for you, or again, if you were thinking of Vietnam at this point, if that was at all on your radar. And yeah, just what were you thinking of in terms of the future, and yeah, let’s start with that.

WHITE: Well, at that time I did not have any specific thoughts of a naval career, although I certainly wouldn’t and didn’t rule it out. I’ll try to organize my thoughts here. At the same time as what I just described was happening for me and to me and in my life, there was a divergent course of mental exploration going on in which I was trying to find my authentic sense of self, which was not satisfied just with the conventional wisdom of America or American society at that time.

And one day as I was browsing in the stacks at Baker Library, I came across a book entitled *The Reach of the*

Mind, by Dr. J.B. Rhine, (Joseph for “J”, “B” for Banks, Rhine (R-h-i-n-e)), who later became known as the father of parapsychology. The book itself was about his parapsychological research at Duke University’s Parapsychology Laboratory. And it deeply, deeply intrigued me because throughout my childhood, among the things I’d been drawn to read were science fiction and fantasy, but that seemed, while appealing, hardly grounded in science or in everyday reality for me. But when I came across this book, *The Reach of the Mind*, it opened new vistas for me into the question of *Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is the human potential versus the human condition?* And I began to avidly get into psychical research, parapsychology, pursuit of study of what were otherwise regarded as paranormal or just downright paranoid ideas and events.

So, a new vista on existence opened up to me through that discovery of a rational, scientifically based method of exploring reality beyond just literature. And I avidly pursued that throughout my time in the Navy. But, my primary job in the Navy was to serve as ordered. And so, that took the form of serving three years on the East Coast in destroyers, one home ported in Newport, one home ported in Norfolk [VA], and in between, a two year course of study in anti-submarine warfare at Key West, Florida. I’m going to ask you to pause for a second. I have a tickle in my throat and I want to cough.

CALCATERRA: Sure.

WHITE: [He coughs.] Okay, to return to my train of thought… I was simultaneously concentrating hard on performing as a good naval officer, and at the same time in my off hours reading widely in traditions that challenged a lot of the conventional wisdom I had acquired as I grew up about *Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?* And it put me in a bifurcated state, if you will. Part of me was drawn to consciousness research and the study of the mind; part of me was drawn to the hard disciplined logical thinking of being a military person. And my last duty station, after three years on the East Coast, was a seaplane tender, the *USS Pine Island*, home ported in San Diego.

So, I spent my fourth year on the West Coast and in the Pacific, which is how I got to be involved in the Vietnam events. But, as a result of those four years, my naval record

was such that I was offered a promotion to lieutenant if I would ship over after the end of my four years of obligated service. And I had been away from my wife and kids for nearly the last year of my naval service, either in California or in the Pacific, and when I discussed it with my wife, she said, “No way, Jose. We want you back here. You can choose the Navy and we can get divorced,” and she wasn’t threatening, she just said, “I want you here and I don’t want the Navy to own you anymore.” And so I decided to decline the offer to ship over and the chance for promotion in the naval career, in order to return to my family, my wife and kids, and to a career path which had opened up to me in my senior year—not senior year, I mean my fourth year of naval service, which was to be a teacher of English right here in Cheshire, Connecticut, where I’d gone, at the same high school where I’d been a student eight years earlier. So, I declined the idea of a naval career in favor of being part of a peace machine rather than a war machine. Looking back…[both talk at the same time]

CALCATERRA: I’m wondering… Oh, sorry, continue.

WHITE: Yeah. Looking back, I have no regrets about that, but there was for a time a sense of being unsure of my spiritual orientation. When it finally was clarified for me through a mystical experience, I became in my heart a pacifist. Now, my outward status was, I was a nuclear weapons officer with a couple dozen nuclear weapons in the storage area of my ship, and I had an obligation which I had willingly taken on myself to serve. So, I say this with a sense of amusement, I may have been the first pacifist nuclear weapons officer in US history, world history. But, I kept largely to myself until we got back from the Pacific, at which point I, shortly before I left naval service, I declared to the executive officer of my ship that I was a pacifist in my metaphysical perspective on life, and that if told to serve in any way involving my nuclear weapons, I would do so, but I wanted to be on record as saying that I simply wanted to leave naval service with a clear conscience and a clear record, which I did. So, I’ll pause there.

CALCATERRA: Yeah, that’s really important context as we’re going through your narrative and your story, and it sounds really challenging when you were kind of going through this discovery of parapsychology and your spiritual identity, while also in a structure like of the ROTC and then the Navy of

more of a regimented and, you know, a rational, logical, again, regimented…

WHITE: Unquestioning.

CALCATERRA: Uh-huh, unquestioning structure. And I'm wondering if, how given these tensions and given what you were thinking about, if you had any impression on other social political issues at Dartmouth while you were there, if there were discussions of racial tension, and there were a lot of prominent civil rights events happening while you were a student there, the Little Rock Nine and different sit-ins and Greensboro. I'm wondering if that was on your consciousness at all, if that was on the student consciousness, if people were talking about any other political issues? I know that President Kennedy visited the school in 1960 as part of a campaign trail, and I'm wondering if that was at all on your radar, as well, when you were kind of dealing with these questions of identity, and also dealing with being a part of the Navy and the military?

WHITE: Yes to all of the above. I was not politically involved in any deep sense of membership in an organization, but I did go to listen to John F. Kennedy when he spoke on campus at the 1960 campaign. He was on a platform in the center of The Green, and he was surrounded by hordes of thirsty questing minds of students and citizens alike. I was not unaware of the emerging civil rights movement, but I was not deeply involved in that. I had my platter full with naval training. And, so I just—I won't say I marched in lockstep with the military, but I certainly did try hard to attain a status as a naval officer that would be regarded as respectable, if not admirable, by my peers and my superiors. I had a job to do. I had willingly taken it on, even though I later came to feel a sense of regret about that.

In fact, I had such a deep division within me once I was actually in naval service training to be a nuclear weapons officer, division between that and my emerging sense of conscience and consciousness, higher consciousness, spiritual awareness, if you will, that I was - looking back I would describe myself as clinically depressed. Not a good state for a guy who's got his hands on the red button. Somehow I gritted my teeth and got through it.

But, I can recall sitting in my stateroom when I was in dry dock in Boston—and this was on a weekend—I was pretty much alone on the ship with the duty, and pondering vast metaphysical and philosophical questions to the point where it seemed that life was absurd to me and that anywhere I go, the only thing facing me was loss of life, death which seemed to be an endless dark abyss at that time. I had little understanding of post-mortem existence, but I was beginning to get that understanding through my pursuit of parapsychological research. So, there I was on the ship in Boston Harbor dry dock, with the .45 pistol in my safe as I sat at my desk pondering my very existence. I opened my safe, or unlocked my safe, took out the pistol and put it to my head and sat there debating whether I should pull the trigger, because that's how absurd life had come to appear to me, I mean, not just life, but existence. And obviously, I did not pull the trigger. I put the gun away and decided to live despite the huge pain and suffering I was experiencing from being torn apart between pursuing a sense of my ultimate identity and seeing that in conflict in many ways with my social identity.

But, as I sat there in my stateroom alone with a gun to my head, I reviewed my life and knew some things very clearly. One, I did not want to leave my, at that time my only child with the stigma of a suicide father, and incidentally, my family knows all of this, so I'm not revealing anything which I don't want publicly discussed or in print. I knew that I did not want to leave my daughter with the stigma of a suicide father. I knew that I did not want to leave my wife. And I knew that I did not want to pursue training as a nuclear weapons officer, but I had willingly taken on that responsibility and felt a moral obligation to pursue it to the best of my ability, quite a split in my psyche. And that's why I say I was clinically depressed and suicidal.

But, one thing had emerged from my parapsychological studies at that point, and it was a fairly strong sense that life is continuous across what's called the veil or into post-mortem existence, and that if I pulled the trigger, I would simply wake up dead in another realm of existence with exactly the same problems in my indestructible mind or consciousness. So, I decided to put the gun away and get on with living my life such as it was. And, as I said earlier, that was resolved about six months later through a mystical experience which provided profound clarity to my view of

and understanding of the nature of existence. And thereafter I could see that I had a duty to perform, but that at the end of that four-year obligation, I would probably want to return to civilian life and serve the values that I espoused by being a teacher of English and literature, and using the talents that I had and studies that I had to help others find their way to an inner sense of peace and belonging to a larger community of life than just a nation. So, I will pause there and let you ask questions or comments.

CALCATERRA: Well, it sounds like that was a really painful and confusing and unsettling time. And I'm wondering if you had anyone that you were confiding in or if you were sort of going through this, you know, this split in your psyche and this identity search alone, or if there were people around you, like your family or friends, or even other people you were being trained with? You mentioned your wife. What were they saying about your prospects in your naval career? Were they supporting you or were you confiding in them that you were conflicted at this point? Yeah, I'm just kind of wondering if there was any sort of way for you to communicate this with people, or if you were sort of dealing with this internally?

WHITE: The latter. I was dealing with it internally. There was no one around to whom I could turn, except those characters and authors in literature who seemed to offer some guidance to a lost soul. No, it was bite the bullet time, take the pain and get on with what needs to be done. And that's the way I see myself back as having gone through that back in the early '60s.

CALCATERRA: So, you're graduating with your English degree from Dartmouth. And at that point did you, were you able to decide to go to Rhode Island or were you assigned there? Did you have any time off? And you mentioned getting married and commissioned all at once in this moment. Was that overwhelming for you? And yeah, and then maybe you can start describing a little bit more what your training was like and what led you to this nuclear specialty, or if you were able to choose this route? Or if there were other potential routes you were considering? And yeah, I'm interested in this period right after graduation that you've been talking about a little bit so far.

WHITE: I was assigned to a destroyer in Newport by the Bureau of Naval Personnel, but it met all my requests, all my preferences. Newport was a lovely place to be stationed at that time. It was a busy, thriving naval port, as well as a rich hub of American history, and my wife and I had a very nice time living there in our little apartment not far from the base. We didn't have an awful large social life. It was largely confined to other officers of the ship I was on. But that was okay. And my training consisted of going to sea several days a week to test new kinds of sonar in a research and development group. We, the ship and its crew, were fortunate to be able to pretty much be home, be ashore several weekends out of the month. So it was an exhilarating time to enter naval service.

The dark clouds would begin to gather in my mind later on as I got further into my studies of parapsychology and world religions and philosophy and things of that sort, and the Vietnam War loomed closer as I finished my third year of naval service and was transferred to the West Coast. But I didn't have any great sense of [brief silence--gap in recording] Well, I'm not sure I'm speaking directly to your question at this point, but while I was in Norfolk on a destroyer, *USS Conway* (C-o-n-w-a-y), hull number DD-507 (David-David), we got activated because of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and went out to the Cuban blockade. One of my duties on the Conway at that point was to lead boarding parties of the Soviet ships if so ordered, and I wasn't too happy about that, but it was part of my responsibility, so if it came to that, I would have strapped on my .45 and gotten into a motor whaleboat and gone over to a Soviet ship and fought our way onto it if that was what was required, and take command and turn it around, send it back. But, the ships all turned back before they reached the line of demarcation, or the blockade line, so I didn't have that direct experience of boarding a ship or leading soldiers, or sailors I should say, in a boarding party with their M-1 rifles. Nevertheless, it was an occasion for deep reflection on the meaning of my life and of life itself, and the nature of death. I survived that.

And then, on one occasion I went to the Bureau of Naval Personnel and requested a duty station on the West Coast after my third year of East Coast service, and a larger ship. And I got that exactly as I wanted, too, and [inaudible] the *USS Pine* (P-i-n-e-) *Island* (I-s-l-a-n-d), hull number AV-12

(Alpha Victor.) So, through the ordinary workings of the naval organization and my own assignments, I was exposed to profound questions of *who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?* And, by the time I got to my ship, the *Pine Island*, I had—the ship itself had been deployed to the far Pacific shortly before I was to be transferred to her. So I had to fly over to Japan and meet my ship at Iwakuni, Japan, and went aboard her I think about August 2nd or 3rd, just shortly before the Gulf of Tonkin events that we can talk about later.

So, I was, psychologically speaking, feeling a lot more comfortable, but being in the Navy, performing my duties as assigned, and also having clarification of the larger questions which were still in the background of my existence. And not only that, the opportunity to see the world, at least the Pacific world, was deeply gratifying to me. I recall feeling comfortably at home in Japan because of the beauty of the countryside, the courtesy and good manners of the people, the delicious food. Just everything about my Pacific experience was deeply gratifying and appealing to me. So, that brings us to the point where the Gulf of Tonkin events occur, if you want to use that as a jumping off point.

CALCATERRA: Yeah. I'm wondering with this experience, this Cuban Missile Crisis experience where you really had to face down potential direct contact and combat with the enemy, and then your transfer to the Pacific, what kind of sense did you have of the greater political, geopolitical context that you were playing a role in in your military involvement? Were you given any information about civil war in Vietnam, or were you given a lot of context about the Cold War and the Soviet Union, or were you sort of just going along with your assignments, seeing yourself as performing whatever operations you were asked to perform? Or just I'm wondering how you saw this greater political and geopolitical context of when you're sitting there in the Pacific, or after this Cuban Missile Crisis, sort of how you were framing your involvement in this?

WHITE: The geopolitical situation as I recall viewing it at that time was in the depths of the Cold War, about to go hot with nuclear war from missiles launched at the US from Cuba. So, I took my duties extremely seriously, wanted to perform in a manner that would be exemplary of good naval service in the tradition in which I stood, going back all the way to the founding of the US Navy in 1775. I was conscious of

tradition, conscious of values, conscious of the requirements on me to be a good officer and live up to the requirements placed upon me. In all of that, however, Vietnam was barely more than a strange word.

Not until I was on my way to the Pacific did I have any real introduction to it. My focus had been largely on the Soviet Union, rather than let's say China. But, I at least got an introduction through baptism by fire, so to speak, of the Vietnamese situation, because I had hardly gotten aboard my ship, the *Pine Island*, in Japan, when a few days later we were ordered to get underway at high speed to set up a seaplane base in Da Nang Harbor, Vietnam, and it was because there had been an alleged attack upon two of our destroyers which had allegedly been steaming peacefully on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of Vietnam. That took place in evening of August 4th, 1964, just a few days after I'd come aboard the *Pine Island*.

I was orienting myself to my new responsibilities as nuclear weapons officer, and in the course of reading through the daily classified messages which promulgated new information about nuclear weapons or policies or weapon handling things that directly related to my job, I saw also on the clipboard of classified messages the messages which had been sent directly from the commanding officer of the two ship unit, patrol unit, to the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, and then, of course, copies to the Department of Defense. What those messages said as I read through them was very puzzling to me. At first the messages said essentially, "We are maneuvering at high speed to avoid multiple torpedoes coming at us," and it continued that way for about an hour-and-a-half. At one point one of the messages said something like 26 torpedoes in the water coming at the ships who were maneuvering to avoid them.

And then about an hour-and-a-half into that communications set with the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, there was a message which said, "Recommend no action at this time because we're uncertain about what we're seeing on the sonar scope. It looks like there may be a malfunction and those images that have been defined as torpedoes are false images on the scope." Now, that was a powerful data point in my life as I was getting into my duties and responsibilities while we were proceeding to Da Nang in order to set up a seaplane base, load nuclear weapons onto the underside of

the wings of P-5M ("M" as in "Mother") seaplanes to go after submarines, Russian or Chinese, if so ordered. Again, I'm going to pause to take care of a tickle in my throat. I'll be right back. [He coughs.]

Okay, I'm back. So, we, the men on the ship, *USS Pine Island*, and the men on it, had the understanding we were proceeding to a wartime situation. And when we reached Da Nang Harbor and were set to go in, we were at general quarters, everybody at their general quarters station with a helmet on, a lifejacket, weapons loaded. We thought we were going into combat, or at least we were prepared. As it turned out, there was no such activity. Things were quiet on shore. And we received a one-star South Vietnamese general who gave the officers a briefing in our wardroom of the ship of the situation. That was the first time I really had any exposure to the situation in Vietnam itself. And the…

CALCATERRA: So… Oh, sorry.

WHITE: No, go ahead.

CALCATERRA: I'm just wondering, so you're stationed in the Pacific and then you're given what I understand to be the DESOTO mission, is when you were called to Da Nang Harbor. So, I'm wondering if at that point had the August 2nd attack impacted your morale and feelings of danger? You said you felt like you were going into a combat situation. So, was everyone going in thinking that this was, you know, war with Vietnam? Or was the mission originally more like information gathering, and like you said, sort of setting up weapons and communications? So, yeah, what were the objectives of the DESOTO mission as communicated to you? And I'm wondering now, looking back, if you think that those were actually the objectives or if there were different objectives that you were not aware of or made aware of?

WHITE: Okay, first, the DESOTO mission was confined just to those two destroyers or other destroyers as assigned. We, the *USS Pine Island*, had nothing to do with that. We were there to deliver nuclear weapons for loading on board planes to go after submarines if so ordered. And, although I said we went into Vietnam at general quarters prepared for combat, there was no occasion of that. Things turned out to be calm and peaceful, except for an occasional VC [Viet Cong] attack on soldiers in Da Nang. We, the *USS Pine Island*, went back to

normal peacetime steaming around the Pacific, and so my actual time in Vietnam was limited to about two, two-and-a-half weeks.

But, while there we had exposure to the Vietnamese situation through a briefing by a Vietnamese general who came aboard shortly after we dropped anchor in Da Nang Harbor and were setting up the seaplane base, and he told us the situation from their point of view, the South point of view: the Communists, the Chinese were behind Ho Chi Minh, the Russians were behind Ho Chi Minh, and Ho Chi Minh was trying to take over the South, and although it looked like a civil war, it was really part of a gigantic strategy by the Communist regime, the worldwide Communist regime, to take over Southeast Asia, starting with Vietnam. That was a real startling perspective to be dropped onto the table almost as soon as we got there. Just a minute please, I have to cough. [He coughs.]

CALCATERRA: Let me know if you also need a longer break at any point, but feel free to continue, as well.

WHITE: Well, I'm ready to continue. I'm still looking toward noon or so for a break.

CALCATERRA: Okay.

WHITE: So, my perspective geopolitically speaking was widened enormously at that point, but our mission was other than DESOTO or the ongoing presence of American forces in the Gulf of Tonkin and on land. The August 2nd event in which North Vietnam torpedo boats actually fired on the *USS Maddox* [DD-731] was acknowledged by Hanoi, so we knew that was for real. And the August 4th event was denied, and claimed that it never happened, North Vietnam were not present, and the whole thing was a giant false flag operation or false claim by the US, as it used to pursue a warlike policy in the South. Paulina, I'm on a remote extension which is battery operated, and although I charged it overnight, I'm getting signals that make it appear I'm running short of battery. Can you hear me?

CALCATERRA: I can hear you, but it's getting a little, the connection is decreasing in quality a little bit.

WHITE: All right. I propose to take a break here so I can recharge the cell.

[Break in recording.]

CALCATERRA: Are you feeling ready to get started again?

WHITE: Ready, willing and able.

CALCATERRA: [laughter] Okay. Well, I'm not sure if you want to keep going where you were, or I also have some questions if you want me to kick things off?

WHITE: You lead, I'll follow.

CALCATERRA: Okay. So, I first have some clarifying questions about the actual August 4th events, and then I have some more questions about your relationship to your unit and your superiors, just to understand more about the aftermath of this event. So, first, I'm wondering if anyone else was looking at this messaging board? I know in some interviews and articles that you mentioned, and today you mentioned that you looked at this messaging board to make sure that you were adequately preparing yourself, you were in this new role trying to get a sense of your responsibilities, and trying to stay aware in case anything about nuclear weapons or nuclear responsibilities was discussed on the messaging board. I'm wondering if anyone else was aware of this, or like keeping track of these communications, and if so, if anyone else was also seeing this confusing line of communication, or if you were the only thinking, *Hey, what's going on here*? And yeah, like how that was going?

WHITE: All right. The answer is I was certainly not, emphasize not the only one who read the classified messages. First of all, they came into a part of the ship which is called the radio shack, and so there were radiomen who were receiving the messages and preparing them to be distributed or circulated among ship's personnel appropriately with their need and their security clearance. And, of course, the commanding officer and the executive officer of the ship would have seen these every day as part of their routine. So, was I the only one who noticed that? Certainly not, although I've not really discussed it with any former shipmates of the *Pine Island*. I simply am not in touch with them. But it would have been impossible for that not to be noticed, not only on my ship, but

because the messages are communicated throughout the Pacific Fleet, there were other ships and other shore installations where it would have been noted, as well. And, of course, it went up the chain of command to the Department of Defense in Washington, DC.

CALCATERRA: So, were you surprised that no one else was mentioning confusion, or I guess the confusion sort of would have come about after the resolution was passed, so maybe people were sort of just assuming that the message had been communicated that it had been a false alarm, or I'm wondering if you were wondering *why is no else talking about this?*

WHITE: Yeah. To be honest, I didn't wonder that at all. I was in the midst of preparing to go to war. That was the understanding on the part of the ship's personnel. And in such a situation, there's little time if any for profound reflection in a philosophical sense on what was the situation that caught my interest, but didn't make any sense. I didn't have time to do any real pondering about all that. We were getting prepared to engage the enemy, so to speak. And, so that didn't occupy an awful lot of my mental operations at that time. We simply had things to do on a daily basis getting ready to go to Vietnam or approaching Vietnam. And it wasn't my responsibility, in the second place. There were commanding officers on the destroyers and they had their chain of command, so I just got on with the daily activities that demanded my attention. I didn't think much about it, if at all, until much later. But we did know that the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution had been presented by the President to Congress on August 5th, and that's what had prompted the orders to us, the *Pine Island*, to get underway to proceed to Vietnam. So, it looked like… [both talk at the same time]

CALCATERRA: So, do you think that… Sorry.

WHITE: Go ahead.

CALCATERRA: I was just going to say do you think that if you had wanted to speak up in the moment, if you had the mental capacity to do that philosophical work, which I understand the environment didn't lend itself to that time or space, but if someone had wanted to say, you know, "What happened here? I don't understand this resolution," do you think that according to the climate of your unit and your relationship to your

superiors, do you think that would have been respected or taken seriously, or do you think it would have been discouraged?

WHITE: It would have been discouraged. Do you mean that if I myself had raised the question, or just anyone?

CALCATERRA: Anyone. I mean, it sounds like a number of people could have.

WHITE: Yes, they could have, and to themselves later on, they did. But, when you are commanded to go to war or prepare for war, there's a military mindset which says, "Yes, sir," and gets on with what needs to be done from within that perspective. So, I didn't say anything at the time. I merely noted it as curious and puzzling, and I think a lot of other naval officers did the same thing. I know that there was—I know on the basis of much later revelations, that the CIA and I think it was National Security Agency had their fingers in the pie, too, trying to make it all look as they wanted it to appear to the world. But, I didn't have any such concern at the time. I was very much focused on performing my responsibilities as ordered.

CALCATERRA: Okay. So, did you feel that, so after this resolution was passed, most people call that the beginning of like severe escalation into the full-blown Vietnam War, but I know that according to your experience, after a few weeks it was sort of back to peacetime coasting around the area. So I'm wondering if it did feel like, you know, what did escalation look like from your vantage point? Were you aware of the retaliatory air strikes? Or did it feel sort of like after a while the tone and the atmosphere resumed to the same level of urgency as before the resolution?

WHITE: Well, we were aware of the retaliatory air strikes, but although we were temporarily under the command of the American structure in Vietnam, we had other reasons for being in the Pacific, which included duties to be performed. And so, when we went back to normal peacetime steaming, I pretty much let the whole matter rest in my mind. We were glad to leave the scene, so to speak, and return to our regular duties, which included the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, another Japanese port, and then back across the Pacific in December of '64 to our home port in San

Diego. So, I'm not sure I've answered you adequately, but if I haven't, ask your question again.

CALCATERRA: No, that's very helpful. I'm wondering if you can speak a little bit more to those experiences in the next, you know, before going back to San Diego, did anything sort of continue, did any events or incidents happened that continued a course of maybe confusion or disillusionment, or did any incidents affirm your confidence in the war's aims and sort of affirm your sense of the mission and things like that, or were there any notable incidents or events that you want to describe from that period right before you went back to San Diego?

WHITE: Yes, there were, not before we went back to San Diego. No, we had resumed normal peacetime steaming and the war in Vietnam was escalating. We were aware of that, but it was at arm's length from us and we had other concerns. So, there was nothing which happened on board the ship immediately relating to the Gulf of Tonkin events that later came to concern me, but when we returned to the States, we had a period of shipyard repairs scheduled for March of 1965. We had to steam up the coast to Long Beach Naval Shipyard and stay there for several weeks. That's where a significant event occurred, which I can speak about now if you want me to, or I'll pause and let you continue your line of questioning.

CALCATERRA: Well, yes. I have a feeling this is where the sonarman conversation comes in. But I'm wondering, just right before we get into that, to describe more your daily day-to-day activities in those last few, you know, you mentioned the Philippines, you mentioned other Pacific operations. So, what was sort of the day-to-day of your work there at that period? And then maybe we can talk about this experience.

WHITE: Okay. The day-to-day activities for the rest of our Western Pacific tour were pretty much routine. The ship had to be maintained. We had off periods in which the officers were given ship handling opportunities while cruising in the Pacific, because after all, naval officers have to know how to handle a ship. And if you're spending the whole day in a space down in the inner bowels of a ship as an engineer, you're missing an opportunity to advance your professional skills. So the captain took… Excuse me, just a second. [He coughs.] The captain had some routine training operations for the men aboard, and when we got into various ports, there were activities that were simply outside the purview of

my own position. Took on board supplies, refueled, things of that sort. And continued to show the flag throughout the Pacific. So, it was largely routine after we left Vietnam, but the routine was a combination of shipboard maintenance activities, operations to support the ship and the mission when we came into various ports, and I suppose there were other activities which I simply wasn't aware of directly involving some of the more senior officers and their counterparts in the countries we were visiting.

CALCATERRA: Okay. Thank you very much for that context. So now, if you want to talk about the experience that you were going to describe, when you got back to the States?

WHITE: Sure. We were home ported in San Diego, but needed some repair work, and so we were scheduled to steam up the coast to Long Beach Naval Shipyard and stay there for a couple of weeks of repairs, which we did in March of 1965. And my parents lived nearby at that time. So, one evening I had arranged to go to their place for dinner, and I walked from the ship to the main gate where I could catch a bus to their home in nearby Santa Ana. I think it was Santa Ana at that time. It might have been Orange, but in any case, it was nearby. And it was about an estimated 15 minute walk from my ship to the main gate. It's a big facility and it was after working hours, so there wasn't any way to catch a taxi from the ship to the main gate. It was just shoe leather express. And I was glad to get off the ship and do a little walking for exercise.

So, as I was walking through the shipyard, I fell in step with a chief sonarman who likewise was headed to the main gate. So, naturally enough we started exchanging pleasantries and information about ourselves as we walked together. And he told me, as I later recalled it, that he was a chief sonarman on board the *Maddox*. Now, he did not tell me that. He told me he was chief sonarman on board the [*USS*] *Turner Joy* [DD-951]. But I misremembered, and misidentified him as being on a different ship. That became an important error for me to note later on.

But at the time, that evening as we were walking to the main gate, he told me he was on one of the two ships whose messages I had read earlier, some months earlier. And, so that prompted me to check out with the first-hand source the accuracy of what I recalled in the messages. And he—the

gist of it was this. He said, “Yes, I was the chief sonarman on board the *Turner Joy*,” which was one of the two ships. Not the *Maddox*, as I misrecalled later on. “And I was evaluating the sonar scope during the whole operation, an hour-and-a-half or so of high speed maneuvers. And it was clear to me that those images on the sonar scope were not torpedoes. They were what in technical terms is called a knuckle” (k-n-u-c-k-l-e), “which is a large underwater swirling area of water caused by a ship’s rudder. When it’s thrown from side to side, it causes a vortex in the water, and that vortex gives a solid echo on the sonar scope when it returns.”

Well, the sonarman said to me, told that to me and said, “And I kept telling the skipper, or the commanding officer on the bridge, ‘those are not torpedoes. Those are in effect false images.’” And he, the sonarman then said to me, “And the commanding officer told me, ‘I don’t want to hear that.’” Now, that is reason to consider what the commanding officer might have been thinking at the time, and the sonarman said he, the sonarman, later thought it was, all the activity was part of a sort of a pre-arranged scenario to be acted out, not a real event. But, with all due respect to the commanding officer, if you’re in a situation where you think you’re being attacked by torpedoes, you would probably do exactly as he did—so I’m not faulting him in that regard—take whatever action is necessary to avoid what appear to be torpedoes, multiple torpedoes coming at you.

But, it later became clear that in one of the messages which mentioned as many as 26 images representing in the minds of the ship’s personnel torpedoes, that it couldn’t possibly be true, because North Vietnam didn’t have a torpedo boat fleet large enough to launch 26 torpedoes simultaneously. That became clear later on, but in the heat of the confused battle activity, the chief just went back to doing his duty, kept his mouth shut about the images being false images, and about an hour-and-a-half later it became clear that no attack was underway. And he told me this as we were walking to the main gate to catch a bus. When we got there, we parted our ways. I never had any further contact with him, and it remained, the conversation remained in my mind as a second data point confirming what I recalled having read on the classified messages board some months earlier.

I mentioned to my parents the experience I had just had of talking with the chief sonarman on board one of the ships,

and I'm glad that I did that, because later on when the event became public and there was an actual investigation underway, they recalled that I had told them that evening about my conversation with the chief sonarman. That was confirmation in my own mind that I had not just been fantasizing or creating some illusory event for some unconscious reason. I actually thought that might have been the case at first because the whole event was so vehemently denied by the military establishment that I wondered what the heck was I doing even making such a charge in the first place if the sonarman I mentioned could not be located? But my parents told me that I had mentioned it to them, so I knew it was a real event, not a fantasy, and therefore I had in my mind first the event of reading the classified messages, and second having the content of those messages confirmed by the chief sonarman on board one of the two ships involved. When I left Long Beach, went back and our ship returned to San Diego, and I prepared to leave naval service. I came back here to Cheshire, and the war in Vietnam at that point was, had not yet really heated up.

CALCATERRA: So, at that point I know that in, like for instance in an article in *The New American* that you wrote in 2014, you described early on feeling a sense of allegiance with the cause of Americans fighting Communism in the war, and specifically in the missions that you were involved in. And you did also mention that the experience originally when you read the messages, although it was confusing, you know, you were able to sort of move on from it without reflecting on it too much in your daily life. But was this experience with the sonarman sort of a big disillusionment for you? Or did it still feel like something that was able to recede and something that you didn't reflect too much on? Or did this really cause sort of a crisis of identity or of disillusionment for you? And you also did mention feelings of pacifism even when you were still in the Navy, and I'm wondering maybe that disillusionment came earlier or maybe it still hadn't come full yet, or, you know, if you can speak to where you were on this thought process?

WHITE: All right. I was indeed still feeling pride of naval service, of having served, and as the social context heated up around the war, I found myself in a vise (v-i-s-e), so to speak, being squeezed between feelings of conscience based on knowledge that I had which said that the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was a lie to Congress. It was false information.

And my feeling says that as a patriotic American, to support the military and the government and my former Commander in Chief, President [Lyndon B.] Johnson. Not so incidentally, in 1964, the Presidential election was between President Johnson and [Senator] Barry Goldwater, and Johnson won in a landslide because he had, among other things, a famous advertisement on television showing a nuclear explosion in the background and a little girl picking a daisy in the foreground. And he promised, or he suggested that's what would happen if Barry Goldwater became President.

Well, my familiarity with nuclear weapons persuaded me that I should vote for Lyndon Johnson. I believed him when he said he wants no wider war in Vietnam or in Southeast Asia. So, I had voted for Lyndon Johnson in 1964. I mention that to indicate that I had strong reasons to be supportive and accepting of the President, but by the time I was back in civilian life and teaching in Cheshire High School as a teacher of English, and the war was heating up, the casualties, the deaths were mounting at an appalling rate. I still had friends in the service and I didn't want to see them come back from Vietnam in body bags.

Someone pointed out to me that between the time I got out of naval service—active naval service I should say, because I still had two years of Reserve service—from the time I got out of active naval service in June of 1965 and the time of the Gulf of Tonkin Senatorial study, or investigation, the casualties had mounted from something like 400 to 20,000. Now, when I say casualties, I mean deaths in combat. It was a sickening situation to think about, and I knew that President Johnson and the Joint Chiefs [of Staff] had not given the full story to Congress. They had deliberately withheld the information about the false images on the sonar scope and the confusion about the whole event, and instead scared Congress into rallying around the flag and passing the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution two days later, which it turned out President Johnson had drafted himself through his staff six to eight weeks earlier.

So in effect he went to Congress with the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in his pocket, and asked them to sign it, giving him full authority to conduct operations as he'd seen necessary for the safety and security of our military there. So, here's my Commander in Chief lying to Congress, and I know it, and here's my humanitarian instincts and my love

for friends coming into conflict, because I was highly perplexed as to what I should do, because I recognized that if I said anything in public, it could properly be termed treason, which is defined as giving aid and comfort to an enemy of the United States. And also I would have been revealing secret classified information. That classification had been assigned from the moment the radio messages were sent, and they remained. So, I would have been vulnerable for probably 20 years in Leavenworth, if not worse, and as you might understand, that was the reason for great caution on the part of a young father, young husband, and young teacher who hadn't even received certification, or tenure I should say, as a teacher. My whole life was in a very precarious position.

But, so as I said, I was perplexed. My conscience was bothering me because I saw the body count mounting, and I knew it was being done for a lie. Then, one evening in late November, 1967, I heard Senator Wayne Morse say on the evening news that President Johnson had replaced the Constitution with the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. The Constitution, of course, requires Congress to declare war. Johnson had made an end run around Congress with his Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. And that remark by Senator Morse really helped to crystalize my thinking and my perplexity, resolve my perplexity, because throughout my life I had a great sense of respect and loyalty, not just to the country, but to the Constitution, as well, and I knew that Johnson was giving false information, had given false information, and that led me to decide to write a letter to a local newspaper revealing what I've been talking about here.

A few days after I'd heard Senator Morse's comment, I drafted a letter to the *New Haven Register*, a letter to the editor, saying, "I charge that President Johnson and the Joint Chiefs of Staff gave false information to Congress about what happened in the Gulf of Tonkin, and there was no attack on our ships. They were not steaming peacefully on the high seas. They were engaged…" Well, you had mentioned Operation Desoto. I did not mention that in my letter, but we now know that they were engaged in intelligence gathering activities. But, my letter limited my charge against President Johnson and the Joint Chiefs to two data points: one, my chance reading of the classified messages from the ships to higher command at that time;

and my chance meeting with the sonarman in the Long Beach Naval Shipyard some months later.

That letter was published in December, early December, 1967, and triggered a national uproar. In fact, it was an international uproar. And if you have a copy of my book, *The Gulf of Tonkin Events—Fifty Years Later*[*: A Footnote to the History of the Vietnam War*], I detail what went on at that time. But, for three months my life was in total, I won't say shambles, but disarray. Any sense of privacy and being able to disengage myself from the media just was lost. For three months my life was constantly barraged with media requests for information or interviews, and it was far from favorable, because I had made a mistake in my letter and identified the chief sonarman as being on board the *Maddox*, when actually he was on board the *Turner Joy*. And because of that mistake, the Navy was able to cover up his presence and give a roster of personnel to Senator [J. William] Fulbright's Senate investigation or Foreign Relations Committee investigation of the Gulf of Tonkin events, which had scrubbed the chief's name from the roster of personnel, his and a few others. It was a dishonest action to save face and save the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. So, I did what I did as an act of conscience out of a sense of patriotism, and that requires, as has been said well before me, it requires loyalty to the Constitution, even in standing up against the President. That's how I felt I was behaving. [both talk at the same time]

CALCATERRA: So, there's… You can finish.

WHITE: Yeah. But it was with more than a little sense of trepidation that I got involved in all that because I thought at the very least I'd probably be fired. I might even be arrested and charged with treason. So, that was my state of mind as I entered into the arena.

CALCATERRA: So, there's a lot there that I want to sort of go back into and unpack. But I do know that you mentioned 12:00 might be where you want to take another break, so I want to make sure you're okay with continuing or if you want to stop at any point. You know, let me know where you're at.

WHITE: I'm okay with continuing as long as you want, and I understand you can't do it past 1:00. Is that correct?

CALCATERRA: Yes. So, maybe we'll keep going now, and then around 12:55 we'll find a good place to stop and plan another meeting if we need one?

WHITE: Uh-hum. That's fine.

CALCATERRA: Perfect. So, I have a couple questions, first, just very logistically. At this point had you been involved with the Vietnam Veterans Against the War cause or did that come later on?

WHITE: That came later. After I became a public figure through my letter to the editor, I of course was approached by all sorts of groups. The only one I felt drawn to, sympathetic with, was Vietnam Veterans Against the War, which had been formed by John Kerry at that time. And, so I joined in the sense that I lent my name and permission to use my name in an open letter to America which was run in I think the *The New Republic* by VVAW, Vietnam Veterans Against the War. But I didn't join in any public marches or demonstrations. I observed things in a more quiet, retired way, trying to keep my profile as low as I could in the circumstances.

CALCATERRA: Okay. So, I definitely hope to ask a few more questions about that, but I just wanted to make sure I had that timeline correct. And then, going back to the letter, I'm wondering why specifically you chose to write a letter to the editor of this newspaper, as opposed to communicating your experiences and your concerns in any other way, or if you did consider any other means of getting this message out?

WHITE: I did not consider any other means. I wrote my letter in response to an editorial which had appeared in the *New Haven Register* about the time of Senator Morse's galvanizing remark, galvanizing for me. In my role as a schoolteacher, I was engaging students in the study of literature and in journalism, which included among other things my taking them on a field trip to the nearby offices of the *New Haven Register* and showing them how a newspaper is produced, and then having them do some journalism writing. So, it just seemed quite natural to me to respond to an editorial with a letter of my own. I had never done such a thing before, but the cause was so urgent and the point of view of the editorial was so at odds with my own that I felt it had to be rebutted. The editorial itself said words to the effect that all this marching in the street and resistance

or criticism of President Johnson's policy in Vietnam is useless, wasted breath. And I said in my letter responding to the editorial, perhaps not so. I'm sorry I'm not quoting myself accurately here, but I was responding to, I did say at the outset of my letter that I was responding to an editorial which said a letter to the editor could have no effect on the national policy, and then I launched into my recitation of facts, and ended it with some kind of remark saying, "Let's hope next time there's no sampans sighted off Los Angeles," meaning we'll get into war with China, as well, on the basis of a phony report.

CALCATERRA: Thank you for that, again, more additional information about the letter that you ended up writing. I also wonder if you were—you know, you describe seriously considering the consequences of the letter, including a potential treason accusation or potential arrests and things like that. I wonder if you consulted with anyone, maybe your family, close family members or people you had served with, or any friends or anything about the letter, or if again this was sort of an internal conflict that you decided to resolve? I also know that in one article in 2014 in the *Connecticut Magazine*, you described your wife, Barbara, as supportive but not a cheerleader of the letter. And I'm wondering if she knew about the letter before it was published, or if most people ended up finding out after the fact?

WHITE: Yes, she knew I was writing a letter, and I don't recall whether I actually showed it to her to read or just conveyed the gist of it. But, she was supportive of me, but probably it's fair to describe her as even less politically involved than I was. So, her knowledge of affairs in Southeast Asia was pretty much limited to the evening TV news, and her main focus was on raising what at that time were our two young children, and being a homemaker. But, as far as consulting with other people, not really. I resolved it internally, and later on after it had appeared, I got in touch with one of my friends and former shipmates from the *Pine Island* who lived in Washington, DC, and he and I planned to get together for a meal after I'd finished with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing. But that was pretty much the extent of it. I was not engaged in veterans groups or military discussion groups or things of that sort. I was pretty much focused on my role as a teacher of English.

CALCATERRA: And, as you described sort of this disillusionment, especially around President Lyndon Johnson, and after believing in his campaign promises, and then realizing that he had replaced the Constitution, and as you said, you respected the Constitution like it was a—you know, you had a deep value of the Constitution, and it felt like a fundamental sort of break of trust, breach of trust. I'm wondering if you also had any anger or frustration that no one else in the military, or no one else who had knowledge potentially of the lack of honesty, I wonder if you were frustrated that no one else had come forward yet, or if you felt that you understood probably why people had not come forward, probably had similar conflicts and internal conflicts that you described. Or, if you were angry or if you felt like you wished you didn't have to take this leap. And again, you were facing things like treason, and maybe that was frustrating to you that you had to consider that responsibility.

WHITE: I was trying to cultivate a peaceful state of mind in myself. Yes, I'm sure I had some degree of anger and need for anger management, although I didn't make public outbursts. I handled it internally as best I could. I had achieved, to use the title of one of the novels I was using with my students, *A Separate Peace*, which is the title of a book by John Knowles, a novel, *A Separate Peace*. I had distinguished the war from the warriors. I disagreed and criticized the national policy which put the warriors into combat in Southeast Asia, but I never turned my back on them. They were my friends and comrades in arms. I had been part of that war machine, if you want to call it that, and was proud to have served with them in the capacities that I did. So, I made a separate peace with the war, and supported the warriors while I criticized the policy which put them there. So the anger was pretty much vented in that letter and in my continuing public accounts of what I had to say because I was besieged by the media for so many interviews. But as I said earlier, I didn't march in any public demonstration or anything of that sort. Does that adequately answer you?

CALCATERRA: Yes. Yes, that's very helpful to know. And I'm wondering if you had, if the way that this media storm sort of got out of control, was that surprising to you at all? Were you sort of…

WHITE: Totally.

CALCATERRA: Okay, do you want to talk about you felt as that progressed?

WHITE: Sure. I sent off my letter and just sat back a little anxiously awaiting the results to see if it would be published at all, and if it was, how local citizens, townspeople and colleagues might regard it, because the split in public opinion over the righteousness of the American presence in Southeast Asia was reaching quite a high pitch. The anti-war movement had gotten into full swing, and I was aware of that, but I had no thought whatsoever that my letter would become a focus of international attention. It just started growing rapidly as I was told…

The very first comment I got was from someone who was in the *New Haven Register* editorial room, and he said—I don't know his name; I can't identify him—but he said I ought to send a copy of my letter to Senator Fulbright, because the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings were just getting underway. I thought that was a good suggestion, and I followed it. I made a copy of the letter and sent it to Fulbright. Didn't know if he would respond or what happened, but as it turned out, about a week later I got a letter from him inviting me to come down to Washington, DC, and testify for the hearings, which I agreed to do, and I actually did. He asked me to do it quietly, don't tell people about it. It was still in the information gathering stage. And I said, "Of course, Senator. I have no wish to violate any protocols, or whatever you want me to do, I'll be glad to do it."

And then I called my friend who was in Washington, DC, only with the intention of getting together with him for dinner, but I told him why I was coming to town. He was living in a group housing situation, and one of his housemates was a woman who worked for the *Washington Post*. And he casually mentioned to her the night before I was to catch my plane to Washington that he was going to meet me the next day and why. Well, I got off the plane in Washington, DC, to find that I was page 1 of the *Washington Post*, after I'd told Senator Fulbright that I would observe his request for silence on all this. It was very embarrassing, but I was innocent in the matter, and naïve, as well. But, that was an example of how the thing rapidly escalated.

Another way it escalated was my letter got picked up by the Associated Press and sent nationwide, and I started getting requests from radio stations around the country for

interviews. I can remember Boston and San Francisco as being among them. And since I'd made up my mind to go public with what I had to say, I felt the moral obligation to follow through with the media. I really didn't have much new to say, but I felt I was obliged to accept the invitations to go on the air, which I did. And so, that and my own response escalated the public interest in the whole thing. So, in the course of three months, initially I was front page stories on the three local papers here in Connecticut around my hometown. I was also shortly thereafter, I think, page 1 on the *New York Times* or somewhere very close to that, and of course, the *Washington Post*. News crews came in from the Netherlands and from Japan to interview me.

The National CBS news reporter, Marvin Kalb, who delivered the evening television news at that time, flew up from Washington for an interview, and several weeks later that appeared nationwide on the *CBS Evening News*. So, little old John White just trying to live in a low profile, as a low profile teacher of English in his hometown, was not to last very long, and became either notorious or a celebrity of some sort. In some camps I was praised; in others I was damned. But there was little—how do I put it?—little shielding from public attention throughout that period.

CALCATERRA: So, did you… [both talk at the same time]

WHITE: Go ahead.

CALCATERRA: Did you feel that these interviews and journalists accurately represented your story or did you feel frustrated with the portrayal of you in the media? And I'm also wondering if any responses to your story, whether it was friends or family or any source of a response to you, if any of those particularly stand out, either people supportive of you that felt meaningful to you or any meaningful criticisms of you that you can recall or that stuck with you?

WHITE: As I said, I was trying to inculcate a peaceful state of mind, and so I didn't take great umbrage when there were nasty grams or articles or editorials critical of me. In fact, there was even a half-hour television program broadcast out of the Hartford television station at that time which made me look totally ridiculous. But I knew what I knew, and had said what I felt I had to say, and would let history sort it all out. I had nothing really further to say. I was still teaching in the high

school, and the students there to an extraordinarily high degree were supportive of me and respectful to me, even cheering me at times, because from their point of view I was attacking the establishment, or some of them were more thoughtful about that and had anti-war views. But I didn't get engaged in that either. I tried to sort of walk calmly between the raindrops, do what I had to do and get on with it.

So, I didn't take any great personal offense, nor did I take any great pride in saying what I had to say, because obviously there was something wrong with it, because the sonarman I'd identified could not be found. The Navy said he didn't exist. Well, it turned out later, thanks to the help of Admiral James Stockdale, that he did exist and I was able to contact him. And at that point, which was 16 years later or so, I found out that he confirmed everything I had to say except for the fact that I placed him through a simple error of memory on the wrong ship. But the Navy had used that to cover up his presence, because he told me that when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings were going on, he was in the Norfolk, Virginia Naval Hospital recovering from some condition, and he got a phone call from the Bureau of Naval Personnel. He was told to come to the hospital commandant's office to take a phone call from an admiral in Washington. So here he is in his johnny robe, or whatever you call it, in the commandant's office being told, "There's an admiral who wants to talk to you, and he has with him your former commanding officer on the *USS Turner Joy* listening to the conversation. Well, it was obvious the Navy was taking this situation seriously. But, he was asked, "First of all, do you know John White?" Now, he had no reason to recall my name from our brief encounter a couple of years earlier, and moreover he was recovering from some sort of hospital treatment, so his memory was not all that sharp. And he said, "No, I don't." Well, that satisfied the Bureau of Naval Personnel or the Pentagon, whoever called him from the department, the Pentagon, and that ended the conversation.

But, the chief told me—this was 16 years later—he felt that if he had said, "Yes, I do know John White," he would have been in very deep doo-doo. But, he was responding honestly, and that ended it. But he was immediately given orders to leave the hospital and proceed to Turkey where he was to board a US ship, destroyer, in the Black Sea. And for the next two months until the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee hearings were finished, he was essentially incommunicado. Well, he had only two months left to go in the Navy until retirement, and somebody with such a short time left the service is usually given the courtesy of a shore billet, duty nearby to make the transition into civilian life easier. But not for him. He was taken out of the communications net, so to speak. That was something which ticked me off, because the Navy had deliberately scrubbed his name from the roster of ship's personnel, and then taken action to keep him from being found by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. So, there was an active cover-up directed at me personally by the Pentagon.

CALCATERRA: Do you think that there was ever accountability for that cover-up, or was it ever addressed in the future, especially once the other officer you mentioned corrected the mistake and connected you with the sonarman again?

WHITE: Okay. The answer is, do I think—you asked me a multi-part question. I'd appreciate it if you'd ask it again.

CALCATERRA: Yeah, certainly. So, I'm just wondering if like there was ever accountability in your opinion for that cover-up?

WHITE: Okay.

CALCATERRA: Especially at the… [both talk at the same time] Okay, cool.

WHITE: The answer is no. I don't think any action was taken against anyone within the military world for generating what is essentially a false flag operation, and for any of the ensuing activities. So now you can continue with the next part of your question.

CALCATERRA: Well, yeah, I guess there were sort of like two decades in between your original letter and when things were actually—when you were validated and you realized that there was this misremembering, and that explained what was wrong with the testimony. So, what did that feel like in those two decades of waiting? Did things go back to normal after a while? Or were you sort of frustrated and also feeling some sense of self-doubt throughout that period?

WHITE: Yes, yes and yes. I was pretty much back to a normal routine, but the Navy had left me dangling in the wind at the end of a yardarm, so to speak, having discredited my

testimony and made me look like a public fool, as well as unpatriotic. That was the way things stood for the next 16 years or so. But I forgave all in my heart and just got on with what I had to do in the larger sense, which is working for world peace. But, the officer I mentioned, not by name, only by his position, was Admiral James Bond (B-o-n-d) Stockdale, James B. Stockdale. He was a commander at the time of the Gulf of Tonkin events, and headed a fighter group from the carrier, I think it was the *Oriskany* (O-r-i-s-k-a-n-y), *USS Oriskany* [CV-34].

When the events got underway on the evening of August 4th, Stockdale himself scrambled his fighter and flew cover for those two ships, and as far as I know, he was the only one out there who was in the position to have done that. And for an hour-and-a-half or two hours, he flew lights out air cover for those two destroyers against any North Vietnamese torpedo boats who might appear. But he never saw anything. He never saw any boats, he never saw any wakes from torpedoes, he never saw any flotsam from a destroyed torpedo boat, because the ships had been firing as if there were torpedo boats as targets. He saw no indication whatsoever of any enemy presence. And then, when the engagement broke off and he returned to the carrier to be debriefed or to give a debriefing, he said, in effect, “My gosh, what’s going on here? I was out there for two hours and I didn’t see anything. Nothing.” Now, I’m recounting that from a book he published called *In Love and War*[*: The Story of a Family’s Ordeal and Sacrifice During the Vietnam Years*], with his wife, Sybil (S-y-b-i-l) Stockdale, an account of his naval career and their activities as naval wife and naval officer, including the Gulf of Tonkin events.

Stockdale was shot down shortly after that and spent seven-and-a-half years as a prisoner of war. He was the senior ranking officer at the Hanoi Hilton, formerly known as the Hoa (H-o-a) Lo (L-o) Prison in Hanoi, where at the time of his release along with the other POWs, there were about 600 men under his command. And because of his gallant and determined resistance to the enemy, personally and as he ordered it through to the POW ranks, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his courage and valor and steadfast resistance to the enemy.

So, when his book was published, it was turned into a television mini-series, I think a two-part four-hour program,

which I watched out of interest, having no prior contact with Admiral Stockdale, who was by that time a vice-admiral and retired from the Navy, teaching and in residence at the Hoover Institution for War, Revolution and Peace, or War, Peace and Revolution, something like that, on the campus of Stanford University [Stanford, CA]. So I watched the mini-series, and I was utterly astounded to see that portion of his book recounting his role in the Gulf of Tonkin events. I had no knowledge of that whatsoever. But, when I heard his character in this TV series say, "I saw nothing out there, no torpedo boats, no torpedo wakes, nothing," I was more than a little bit interested in it.

So I wrote a letter to him at his office in the Hoover Institution in Palo Alto on Stanford campus, and was quite surprised and pleasantly so a couple of weeks later when he picked up the phone and called me directly and introduced himself and said, "I'm responding to your letter." And then he gave me a few references to some books about the history of the war in Vietnam, one of which, I think it's called *Truth is the First Casualty*[*: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair—Illusion and Reality*, by Joseph C. Goulden], but it may be another one I'm thinking about. *The Gulf of Tonkin* may be the title.

In any case, one of those books had a footnote identifying chief sonarman Schaperjahn. I'll spell that name: S-c-h-a-p-e-r-j-a-h-n, Chief Schaperjahn, as the person whom I had met at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, and identifying him on the correct ship, not the wrong ship I had mentioned in my letter. So, I was deeply grateful to Admiral Stockdale for making that identification, and as soon as we hung up, I made preparations to call Schaperjahn in Richmond, Virginia, which is where he was identified as having lived. I found his phone number through directory assistance, called him with a tape recorder on, identified myself, asked his permission to record the whole thing, which he very graciously granted. Then for 45 minutes I told him what I had experienced, what I remembered, what I had said, and asked him to verify or challenge any of it to see whether my memory was accurate. And for those 45 minutes, he gave me full confirmation except correcting my mistake about the ship, and the other comments, which I transcribed recently and have available along with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee transcription of my interview in the office of Senator Fulbright. So, those two interviews have not been

published by me in any way. I just have them in my reference files.

But, it was deeply, deeply gratifying to find out after nearly 20 years that I hadn't been substantially wrong in what I had said, and that those who thought I was either a fool, a scoundrel, or unpatriotic could finally have the full truth about what happened in the Gulf of Tonkin, and more broadly what the ramifications were for the US presence in Vietnam, and indeed in Southeast Asia. But, having published that, or given that information to the *Connecticut Magazine* reporter, I just have been getting on with my life. So, I'll pause here.

CALCATERRA: So, do you think at that moment that you finally found out the clarity about the whole event, what had happened, do you think there was also like a public, again, sort of media coverage that this had changed, or did you feel like it sort of silently was resolved and maybe wasn't as publicly recognized in that moment as you would have hoped it would have been?

WHITE: It was not publicly recognized to any great degree. I wrote a letter to the *New Haven Register* giving an account, and it was not a long letter, but I said, in effect, "Here are the facts and I stand by them as I gave them to you years ago." That was a local recognition. I don't remember whether there was anything else. Yes, there was. There was something in *Connecticut Magazine*, too, by another reporter who interviewed me and I gave my side of the story. That appeared. But, it was hardly more than a blip on the screen of world affairs at the time, and I just accepted it and got on with what I felt I had to do.

CALCATERRA: And do you think that the Fulbright investigation, which ultimately, according to my knowledge, in 1970 did repeal the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, do you think that after that or in combination after that and with your experience that the public ultimately sees the Gulf of Tonkin incident as sort of this cover-up or at least dishonest, an event in which the government and military were dishonest? Or do you think that people still believe in the government and in its stated account of what happened?

WHITE: There's widespread recognition in my circles that Vietnam was based on a lie. I've said publicly in some communication that it can be reduced to a simple poetic couplet, "Old men

lie, young men die." That's the way Vietnam is seen widely among my peers who have been in the military, especially in the Navy. But, in the public at large, I'm not certain how widespread the recognition is. Certainly, public distrust in the account of what happened in Vietnam and under Lyndon Johnson is recognized as being false, based on falsehoods, and more generally there's even less public trust in government per se, whether it's a state or federal level. And all of that I personally trace back to the situation in Vietnam when the first real split in the patriotic sensibility of Americans emerged. It was over Vietnam and the role of America in the world.

CALCATERRA: And, so did the repealing of the Resolution feel at all to you like a measure of justice? Or did that also sort of just feel like a blip in the larger chain of events?

WHITE: It was more like a blip in the larger chain of events, because the war went on for another five years, and today in Washington there's a wall with the names of 58,000 men and women on it who died for a falsehood, who gave their lives in service to their country, but their country misused them for covert purposes that I think have little or nothing to do with true patriotism and everything to do with the creation of a new world order in which America will simply be submerged in a global government, global society, and have third world status. That's my personal view, but I know it's widely shared by many I've talked with.

CALCATERRA: And looking back, and now that there is all of this scholarship on the incident, and there has been sort of a public reckoning with the incident, do you believe that it was a case of a mistake or a confusion that the government capitalized on, and simply was opportunistic about for giving themselves justification for escalating the war? Or do you sort of believe some of the other evidence that might lead one to believe that it was actually staged or premeditated in a bigger way?

WHITE: I believe it was staged and premeditated in a bigger way, and I believe that on the basis of my reason, research and personal experience. Notable among them would be the statement by Daniel Ellsberg when *The Pentagon Papers* were released a few years after the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, that his boss—he was working directly for [Robert] McNamara at the time, and McNamara had

received word from President Johnson saying, “I don’t want a single word to get out about us preparing for war in Vietnam.” This was prior to the ’64 election. He said, “I want a total lid on that until after the election.” So, he then took his campaign stance which was a lie, and made the preparations to go to war in Vietnam, despite all his public stance. And the US position in Southeast Asia had been really generated over a fairly long period of time by elements of the State Department, which wanted to maintain US hegemony in Southeast Asia, and the war was part of Johnson’s macho response to the threat of losing Southeast Asia.

CALCATERRA: Well, thank you very much for that analysis and synthesis of those events. I’m wondering, you mentioned Daniel Ellsberg—I wonder if you resonate with sort of being called a whistleblower, or what that term even means to you? And how did you feel when you saw *The Pentagon Papers* published, and also when Ellsberg receives a lot of the same—similar kinds of questions of his patriotism or potential treason?

WHITE: Paulina, I’m conscious of the time here and I don’t want to get on my soapbox and have you miss your appointment. If you want, we can talk at another time. You can play this part of it back and have that question as the opening of our conversation. But, in very brief, I’m proud of what I did, ie., blowing the whistle, not in any inflated egotistic sense, but because it was a genuine response from the depths of my soul to what I regard as righteous action on the basis of principled belief in the Constitution and America. I’m happy to be included in a list where Ellsberg’s name is like a gold star at the top. I’m just a little star way, way down the line, and have no wish even to be thought of as a star. But I do respect Ellsberg for what he did.

CALCATERRA: Well, yeah, I agree that could be a good stopping point for today. And there’s not too many questions I have left. I have some more questions about the post-war period, your career, your involvement at all with veterans communities or Dartmouth alumni communities, and again, your desire to speak publicly about this incident even today. But, I do think that might take maybe another hour, hour-and-a-half of interviewing. And I wonder if you want to plan that now, if you want me to send an email through which we can

connect and schedule something, or, you know, whatever works for you?

WHITE: Yeah. Email would be best. I need to consult my calendar and my wife. Pick out a good time for you, as well. If you'll give me a choice of two or three times, dates, I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

CALCATERRA: Perfect. And thank you so much for taking this time out of your schedule to talk with me. I know you've talked about this at length many times, and I really appreciate your willingness to go through it all again with me, and it really is a service to history and to the record of your life and your narrative. And I really look forward to continuing talking again.

WHITE: Let me say first that I've enjoyed the whole thing, and second, it's gone far longer than I've ever spoken in public before. [laughter]

CALCATERRA: [laughter] Yes, I took a comprehensive approach.

WHITE: Okay, so I'll simply await an email from you.

CALCATERRA: Uh-huh. Thank you again, and have a great rest of your day.

WHITE: Okay, Paulina. Bye-bye.

CALCATERRA: Bye.

[End of Part 1 of Interview. Begin Part 2.]

CALCATERRA: If you're all set, I can start asking questions again. Or if you need a minute to get any water or anything like that, we can take a minute, as well.

WHITE: Ready to go.

CALCATERRA: Okay, awesome. So, as I was reading and listening back to the interview, the first part of the interview, I realize that I forgot to ask you to clarify your wife's name. So, if you could state her name for the record, including her maiden name?

WHITE: My wife is Barbara (B-a-r-b-a-r-a) Devin (D-e-v-i-n) White, maiden name, Devin (D-e-v-i-n).

CALCATERRA: Perfect. Thank you for that. And another thing that I wanted to talk about more that we sort of didn't get a chance to get into very deeply was your involvement with the veterans against the Vietnam War group. I'm wondering if you could describe more how you were first introduced to the anti-war movement, and then to this group specifically? And yeah, just describe that initial encounter, and maybe some of your first impressions of the movement?

WHITE: Uh-hum. I was introduced to the Vietnam Veterans Against the War via the evening news and the newspapers, which carried coverage of marches in New York and Washington, I believe. That was probably about 1967 or so. I don't recall how I got in touch with them. There may have been someone local who put me in touch. But, my membership was always at an arm's length, that's to say I never marched in any street demonstration, I never went to meetings of any sort. My only connection was to allow my name to be used in an ad, an open letter from VVAW which was published in, if I recall correctly, *The New Republic*. And, so I was signatory to a letter with several hundred other names, stating the case against the war. But, I wasn't singled out in any way, nor given special treatment.

And my membership really lasted probably no more than two years, because it became clear to me that there's a difference between an anti-war movement and a peace movement, and that difference, to put it simply, is one is based on anger, the anti-war movement is based on anger; the peace movement is based on love. It's not to say they're incompatible, but I was interested in long-term effects on human consciousness and society, and left it up to others to deal with the immediate situation of hostilities. My thought was it's not the first time in history that hostilities have been opposed. I needed my time for other pursuits. So, that's…

CALCATERRA: Okay. And did you ever find groups that resonated with your desire for a peace movement or a group based on love? Did you ever find a veterans community that sort of gave you that outlet or community around those values? Or was that just something that you never found within the context of the anti-war movement and other veterans groups?

WHITE: My answer is the latter. I did not find anything in the veterans community or veterans' world that spoke directly to my perceived needs for working on human consciousness. So, I

found an outlet in a variety of other areas, most notably working with Apollo 14 astronaut, Edgar [D.] Mitchell, on his Institute of Noetic Sciences, which we set up in Palo Alto, California. His interest was like mine. He had been the sixth man on the moon in February of 1971, and going to and from the moon he conducted an ESP experiment. So, he was interested in the reach of the mind, just as I had been interested earlier, or discovered my interest earlier, that day in Baker Library when I read *The Reach of the Mind* by Dr. Rhine.

So, he and I got together. I initiated it just by writing to him in Houston and asking if I could interview him for a magazine. But, it led to a greater relationship. He was setting up a research institute to use the NASA approach, so to speak, to study the problems of the human mind. And, so I was deeply involved in that and through it became associated with or a member of a variety of other spiritual paths, so to speak, or organizations developing psychotechnologies for higher human development. And that pretty much, I think, answers your question. I did not find it in the veterans community that immediately appealed to me.

CALCATERRA: And during what year was this around? Were you still teaching English or writing, or was this sort of the main endeavor that you were focusing on when you were developing this institute? Or were you doing that remotely? I'm not sure if you went to California to help develop that? Or if you can just talk a little bit more about that?

WHITE: Sure. My membership in the VVAW was probably 1967 to 1969. In 1969, which was my fourth year of teaching English at Cheshire High School, my contract was not renewed. I had become a pain in the ass to the Board of Education and the administration of the school district and my high school. So, since I lacked tenure as a teacher, the Board of Education decided not to renew my contract, and I just had to go elsewhere. I landed on my feet with a public relations position at the telephone company here in Connecticut, which at the time was called Southern New England Telephone [Company]. I stayed there for three years enjoyably, working in the business world, and toward the end of that three year period I made contact with the Dr. Mitchell, or call him Captain Mitchell if you want, or just plain Edgar Mitchell. He was a retired Navy captain with a Ph.D. in astrophysics and aeronautics from MIT, and had been

promised funding from people who admired what he did with regard to exploring extrasensory perception going to and from the moon on his own.

So, in 1972, toward the end of this three year employment at Southern New England Telephone, I left there and joined him as director of education and communications in setting up the Institute of Noetic Sciences. Noetic is spelled N-o-e-t-i-c, and it's a word derived from the Greek root, *nous* (n-o-u-s), meaning "higher mind" or "higher consciousness." So, the institute was intended to explore the nature of the human mind and apply our findings to human problems, areas of society which were especially troublesome for people. I stayed on with him for two years, but he ran into funding problems and could no longer afford to support me, my salary.

So, I decided to leave there and return to my home in Connecticut. I had gone out ahead of my wife and family intending to find a place for us, a home, and then move them out, but the money, funding, never materialized for a variety of reasons, but the main one was that a financial backer of his ran into extreme financial difficulty himself, and withdrew from that, taking all the money in a jointly held bank account with Edgar Mitchell. So, Mitchell had to run like crazy just to meet the bills with a minimum income. He survived that and the institute is doing well today. I think it has a public membership of about 40,000. But at that time I chose to return to my wife and family here in Connecticut and become a freelance writer, which I did for about five years. So, does that answer you sufficiently?

CALCATERRA: Yes. Thank you for that information. After that experience, were you sort of feeling still inspired to study these same questions about human consciousness and some of those things that you spoke about? And did you just choose to use writing and freelance writing to express that, or were you maybe feeling discouraged in those career pursuits and looking for an alternative route? And what sort of was the impetus for the freelance writing choice?

WHITE: I was feeling very encouraged, not discouraged, by my efforts to explore the realm of higher consciousness and communicate that to the public. I had some writing credits which included the *New York Times*, *Saturday Review*, *Omni Magazine*. I published half a dozen books or more in those

early years of my career in freelance writing, one of which was called *The Highest State of Consciousness*. In fact, that was my very first book, which became kind of a bestseller for my publisher, Doubleday. But, books have a shelf life, they tend to, and after five years or so of good earnings as a freelance writer, my oldest daughter was approaching college and it was clear that I couldn't send her strictly on my earnings as a freelance writer. Just a minute. [He coughs.] Okay, I'm back.

And so, I came in out of the cold, so to speak, by becoming the president of a small adult learning institute here in Connecticut called Alpha (A-l-p-h-a) Logics (L-o-g-i-c-s). It was an unaccredited school, but the owner of it had hired me to run it, and our mission was self-directed growth in body, mind and spirit. I did that for two years, but then… [He coughs.] I'm back. Then, chose to leave because I had a better offer, just in terms of income and hours involved, from the electric company here in Connecticut, Northeast Utilities. I joined the communications department there as an editor and speech writer for the president and the chairman, editor of the employee newsletter and the quarterly shareholder flyer. And I stayed there for 14 years until I took an early retirement offer. And since then—that was more than 20 years ago—since then I've continued my freelance writing, but also developed a literary agency which I run from my home here in Cheshire. Next year I'll be 80, so I'm winding down the literary agency to a small number of authors whose income helps to pay the bills here. And that's a thumbnail of John White from early 30s to today.

CALCATERRA: Can you talk a little more about what the literary agency does currently?

WHITE: Sure. I said that I'm winding it down, and so I'm not looking for new clients, although if Stephen King or Dr. Seuss asked me, I would accept them. I have some clients whose names are fairly well-known. Erich von Däniken, for example, is the author of *Chariots of the Gods*, the first worldwide bestseller on the idea of extraterrestrial contact in early history. That book came out in 1968, and we'll have a 50th anniversary edition published later this year. The book is still in print. And a few other authors such as Dr. Marc Seifer (M-a-r-c Seifer, S-e-i-f-e-r), author of the definitive biography of Nikola Tesla (T-e-s-l-a). And not so incidentally, he's going to make an appearance, "he" meaning Dr. Marc Seifer, will make an

appearance tomorrow in a TV program on the History Channel to be broadcast at 10:00 p.m. The program's called "The Tesla Files." And that'll go for, I don't know, maybe half a dozen episodes. So, those are the sort of activities I'm involved with, but mainly I'm trying to wind down my obligations and involvement in community affairs and veterans affairs where I've been very active in both, in order to have more time for my own reading, writing, research and recreation.

CALCATERRA: So it sounds like this literary agency was also another way to be in a community of scholars who also were interested in the same themes and topics that you were interested in. And then, you just mentioned being involved in community and veterans organizing. I'm wondering if you are still connected to anyone that you served with when you were in Vietnam or any time that you were in the Navy? And also, if not, what kind of community you get out of the organizing work with veterans that you do currently?

WHITE: All right. There are two parts to your question. I'll start with part one commenting as you did on my literary agency work. You're absolutely right. It was a way to pursue my spiritual interest, my parapsychological interest, my interest in higher human development, and at the same time to spread the word, so to speak. I've had several hundred books or more published on behalf of my clients, and I saw the activity primarily as karma yoga; that is, working, but giving the glory to the Divine, and I coined a little phrase to describe my work as "raising cash while raising consciousness." The emphasis was on raising consciousness. So, I was trading, or dealing with information for transformation, transformation of the human mind and human culture. I still maintain that perspective for what I do, although as I said, I'm winding down my literary agency.

Now, with regard to staying in touch or being in touch with any of my fellow servicemen from Vietnam, the answer is no, I'm not. The last time I was was probably five years or more ago and that was a fella who had Parkinson's, and frankly I'm not sure if he's still alive any longer. But, there are certainly a lot of veterans with whom I'm in touch. I'm seen sort of as the "go to" guy here in Cheshire for veterans affairs. And for example, just before you called I had a phone call from a man in a neighboring town who's moving and wanted to give away some nice furniture to deserving

veterans. So, I'm going to pass that word along to an email list I have of veterans in town or nearby.

And I'm also the town's representative to the state veterans affairs department. So, I get a lot of information concerning veterans' activities and veterans' benefits. And I simply send it along to my list, as another way of serving veterans. So, I can say that my life is devoted to serving people; well, I'd say, serving God by serving people. And while I have no world headline accomplishments that I can point to, working as I do in the ways that I do has been very satisfying, gratifying, and I'd like to think helpful to the circles in which I move, and radiating outward like a stone thrown into a pond, ever expanding circles of influence through contact with people I've never known who pass along whatever it is I share with them. So that's the… [both talk at the same time]

CALCATERRA: I'm wondering… Yeah, that's really interesting to hear about. And I'm specifically thinking about an earlier point in the interview when we were discussing sort of how the US military's actions during the investigation of the Gulf of Tonkin and their efforts to keep quiet the fact that the sonarman existed, and their efforts to make sure that you weren't credited earlier in that period. That sort of you describe cut you off from a community of veterans or the military community. And I'm wondering how you got from that point to this point of being, you know, the "go to" person you said in your community for veterans affairs. And do you still in these communities, do you talk about your experience as sort of this whistleblower or are you just sort of in a community where everyone is bonded and not necessarily talking about those past issues?

WHITE: Uh-hum. First, I want to say that I learned through my Vietnam experience to distinguish the war from the warriors. I disagreed with my country's foreign policy which put the warriors into combat in Vietnam, but I never turned my back on them. I hold them in the highest regard as brave men and women who served their country as best they understood service. The fact that I disagreed with the foreign policy which put them there did not decrease my respect for them, and whenever I had an opportunity to be of service, I did as best I could.

While I was at—in later years after my kids were sort of grown up and out of the nest, I joined a variety of veterans

groups, Veterans of Foreign Wars most notably, and American Legion, and Disabled American Vets, because I have a disability from my service from firing the guns on the ships. I was there at a time when there was no real thought about hearing safety. I've lost hearing, lost about 50% of my hearing in both ears. And for that I have a 10% disability from the Veterans Administration. So I get my medical care largely from the VA.

Now, with regard to veterans affairs here locally, over time I rose to become commander of the VFW post, and likewise an officer of the American Legion post. But I'm winding that down also, simply because of aging and infirmity. My arthritic knees don't encourage me to march in parade anymore. So, that's all I have to say about that unless you have other questions?

CALCATERRA: Yeah. Well, do you still talk in these communities or does it come up at all, your identity as a whistleblower and the controversy around that?

WHITE: Yes, I do, as a matter of fact. When my self-published book, although it's so short it really deserves to be called a booklet, was made available—it's entitled *The Gulf of Tonkin Events—Fifty Years Later*[*: A Footnote to the History of the Vietnam War*]—when that was made available, I had invitations from senior groups and veterans groups to talk to them about that, and I was more than willing to do so, because it appears from my perspective that America keeps committing the same stupid actions or deliberately pursuing the same stupid policies of generating enemies around the world, and then using that as an excuse to go to war in order to extend American empire.

So, on various occasions I've spoken under the auspices of public libraries or veterans groups or retirement learning centers on my experience in Vietnam, and I'm gratified, very gratified to say that I've never had a tomato or brick thrown at me in any such setting. But, even though the audience oftentimes includes a lot of veterans, I've been well received and have had comments from people afterward saying, "That lying son of a bitch, Lyndon Johnson, never should have gotten us into war in the first place." In other words, the perception that President Johnson gave false information to Congress as I originally charged in my letter to the *New Haven Register* in 1967, has percolated through society. And

my perception is that there's not only a widespread recognition of it, but an endorsement of the fact that our government lied and got us into war on false pretenses.

CALCATERRA: Do you feel a sense of pride that your actions have helped make that truth widely accepted and have this clear up these myths? Do you feel a pride in that that you were successful in your goals to raise awareness about that truth?

WHITE: Pride is not the word I would use. Great gratitude, appreciation for being accepted, and with regard to my actual military service, I would say that I'm proud to be a veteran. I served in some difficult circumstances and like to think that I lived up to the standards of my service, the Navy, as an officer. But, I take no pride in having blown the whistle. It was difficult to do so and, having been raised as a patriot, it was extremely disappointing and sad to me to have to say what I said about my President and Commander in Chief. All I can do, all I've tried to do since then has been to awaken public understanding about how our military can and has been misused in support of—how to put it?—the military has been used to extend American commerce and industry, rather than defending our national interests, but convincing the public of that has not been easy. So, I don't think I've taken any great pride in that. I'm certainly willing to own up to my role in it. I have no shame about it or embarrassment. But, I'm simply trying to live a life as a good American citizen as I understand America to be in its fundamentals.

CALCATERRA: And as you continue to talk about this and share your story, as I think as I've done some research to prepare for this, it seems like you've been very willing to talk about this story, not only when you were first writing the letter, but now when reflecting back, you know, participating in this program and other interviews and writing the *Fifty Years Later* reflection, what does it feel like or what is the experience like to retell the story and to share the story and to be interviewed and things like that? What kind of an experience is it for you?

WHITE: It's an experience which I'm willing to go through because of my sense of moral obligation having spoken up publicly back in the late '60s about this. And I'm grateful for the interest that has been shown in hearing me. I don't mean to lionize myself in any way. I think humility is the only proper response to that, to the invitations to speak in public, humility and gratitude for being accepted. So, I'm proud to have

served my country for four years active military service, and my activities since then have [inaudible] been in what I understand to be in the service of America as it was originated and codified in the Constitution. Hello?

CALCATERRA: Hi. I'm still here. Are you done with that answer, do you feel?

WHITE: Yes, I am. I have a beeping sound and I don't want to answer it. I think it's another call coming in, but let's proceed.

CALCATERRA: Okay. I also wanted to ask if you are still sort of an avid reader on other analyses of the Vietnam War? You know, the recent Ken Burns documentary came out about the Vietnam War, and I think a lot of our modern political discourse sometimes centers on some of the reflections of Vietnam, and some people have even drawn parallels to the war. And I'm wondering, so first, do you like to keep up and read those things about the war? Are you interested in reading and watching that content? And also, has any of that changed your views on the war? Have any modern political events changed your views on the war, or do you feel sort of like your central ideas about pacifism and the dangers of, like you said, the US military being used for unjust means, is that something that's solidified and hasn't really changed since your earlier experiences?

WHITE: That has not changed. I have not changed my views of the war since I decided to go public with the knowledge I had. But at the same time, I haven't avidly read in a scholarly way about the many books that have come out, the many studies that have… I've had only limited time for that because other pursuits have drawn me more and have a greater priority in my mind, and those pursuits are ways to help people transcend their narrow blind patriotism and see things from a global perspective with the role of America as it was created to be at the leading edge of where human evolution is going. I still hear that beeping sound. Is it [inaudible]?

CALCATERRA: I don't hear a beeping, but every so often the sound seems to cut out a bit. We can try… I can try redialing if you'd like?

WHITE: No, no, let's continue.

CALCATERRA: Okay.

WHITE: All right. So, I've not spent a lot of time in reading about the war. My views of it have not been changed, although my depth of knowledge about it has been amplified just by virtue of meeting among Vietnam veterans and hearing their stories and working with them. I saw Ken Burns' documentary, *Vietnam*, and thought it was very, very well done except for two things. It didn't adequately expose the false flag operation with the Gulf of Tonkin, nor did it say outright that Lyndon Johnson gave false information to Congress when he asked them to sign the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

CALCATERRA: And so, seeing that, do you have any idea maybe why that was portrayed that way in this documentary?

WHITE: No.

CALCATERRA: Or potentially, do you think it remains controversial and maybe Ken Burns didn't want to approach it?

WHITE: No, I credit Ken Burns as a careful, courageous documentary filmmaker. I don't fault him in any way on their motivation. I just think he could have lent greater emphasis to those two aspects of the war which I tried to raise publicly.

CALCATERRA: Well, thank you for that information, and certainly understandable that with all your other endeavors there's not much time to keep up with all the scholarship on this. I'm wondering also if we could circle back to a few things. First, I was wondering what your thoughts were when the draft ended? I've heard some testimonies from different veterans from different wars about their views on the draft ending, and was wondering if you had strong reactions to it?

WHITE: I did. I was very glad to see that accomplished because the draft is not in keeping with the tradition of America. America in its ideal form is founded on the highest most universal value, namely freedom. The draft is not. It's based on coercion and a threat. So, nowadays America has a military in which those who want to serve are there by their own choice, and that's the way it should be. The essence of freedom is having a choice. When there was a draft, there was no choice. It sent a lot of people to Canada or out of the country, and was extremely disruptive to the fabric of society in our nation. I see signs of healing going on at a deeper level than you would perceive at the level of the evening

news, but one important aspect of that healing is eliminating the draft.

CALCATERRA: And thank you for that. I think a lot of veterans have said similar things, especially identifying with some of your values with pacifism, as well. I'm wondering also, I had more questions about your description… [both talk at the same time]

WHITE: I want to interject something here, Paulina.

CALCATERRA: Yes.

WHITE: I am not a pacifist in my personal conduct. If somebody wants to slap me in the cheek, I may choose, depending on the circumstances, to offer my other cheek, but I may also choose to give them a punch in the mouth, because I'm nobody's punching bag. But, pacifism at the level of international relations is something that I do endorse in this way: our military should be strong, because there are forces in the world hostile to our freedom. But, we should not use our military to generate wars or covertly, either generate wars covertly or overtly. Our military should be used to defend our interests, and our interests are the security of our people, our citizens. Beyond that, let trade and commerce carry the American message throughout the world, but not on the barrel of a rifle. So, I just wanted to add that. Now, please continue.

CALCATERRA: Yes, thank you for that clarification. I'm sorry if I oversimplified it in my paraphrasing. So, I wanted to talk a little bit more about your involvement in the Cuban Missile Crisis. That hadn't come up in my research and I think I wasn't necessarily prepared with good follow-up questions. But I want to hear a little bit more about how you first were feeling in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, if you had thoughts at that time about how the US government and military had handled that situation, and then going forward, how did you feel the Cuban Missile Crisis was handled? Some see that as something that restored some faith in the government. I'm wondering how those experiences, how you perceived those at the time?

WHITE: At the time that President Kennedy publicly declared the presence of nuclear weapons in Cuba, I was just finishing up a two month course of instruction at Key West, Florida, as an

anti-submarine warfare officer. I went on leave, came home to Cheshire, Connecticut, for 10 days. My wife, Barbara, had just returned from the hospital carrying our very first child, my daughter, Sandra, and it was horrible for me to think about nuclear war overtaking America in such circumstances as a young new father.

At the end of my 10 day leave, I reported to Norfolk, Virginia, where I went aboard a ship, a destroyer, the *USS Conway* (C-o-n-w-a-y), hull number DD-507, and the *Conway* went out to the line of demarcation. My job at general quarters and in combat aboard the *Conway* was to lead a boarding party. Our ship's motor whaleboat would take a dozen sailors or so with their M-1 rifles, and me with my .45, and we would be responsible for boarding a Soviet ship if it passed the line. I was not a happy camper about that prospect, but as I felt throughout my years of naval service, I had really chosen to become a sailor, however ignorantly it may have been done on the basis of not recognizing the larger dimensions of misuse of the military. But at that time in the depths of the Cold War, late 1962, early 1963, I was as gung ho a sailor, as gung ho a military person as anyone could find. And I was feeling great internal conflict about giving my life for America at a time when I'd just become a young father, but I did what I felt I had to do to uphold the standards of my commitment. And thankfully, the Russian ships turned back, the missiles were removed, and I was able to return to my family. So…

CALCATERRA: And did that experience, you just described transferring or requesting a transfer, I believe, soon after that, was that motivated by hoping to avoid similar kinds of confrontations? Or can you describe a little more the…

WHITE: Yeah, heavens know it was not. I never shirked my military duties, because it was part of my sense of personal integrity to give my all to my work in the Navy as a sailor. No, it was motivated more by a wish to see other parts of the world. I wanted to get to the Pacific. I'd seen a lot of the Atlantic and the East Coast, but by transferring to the West Coast and by transferring from a small ship to a large ship, I would be enlarging my own perspective and experience as a naval officer and as a human being. So, that was all there was to it. Little did I know that Vietnam lay ahead for me.

CALCATERRA: And do you think that your experience in the Cuban Missile Crisis had any impact on your experience in Vietnam or your outlook?

WHITE: A good question, and bear with me while I pause briefly on it. Yes, it did. When I went to Vietnam, it was after having voted for Lyndon Johnson in the 1964 election, and having felt that through the Cuban experience, America was a force for goodness in the world and that believing and accepting the official line about Vietnam from our government, that we America were right to be there making the world safe for democracy. I came to learn that it was actually making the world safe for hypocrisy. And so I had to unlearn or make my way through some illusions, but doing so without losing my sense of appreciation for the military in its best aspect and for America in its best aspects. So, that's really about all I have to say, Paulina. It's getting close to our closure time.

CALCATERRA: Yes. I just have one more question about your relationship to Dartmouth in the later part of your life if you have time for me to ask that?

WHITE: Well, let's try. Let's try.

CALCATERRA: Okay, thank you for your patience. I just want to know if you stayed in touch with any of the people you were close to at Dartmouth, any other Naval ROTC folks, or if you visit often and things like that, or if you still feel part of a Dartmouth alumni community?

WHITE: With regard to the latter, a loud resounding yes, or in terms of what used to be an acceptable shout of approval, "Wah-hoo-wah." I suppose that's no longer used on campus, but it was an Indian whooping call of affirmation and approval. I certainly feel part of the Dartmouth community, and you and I wouldn't be speaking if I didn't. As far as staying in touch with other classmates or people I knew from Dartmouth, I'm still in touch. I read the monthly alumni magazine and class notes. I've gone to our reunions on campus every time. And one of my former roommates and I stay in touch by email and phone calls and occasional personal visits. So, looking back, I am profoundly grateful for the experience of having gone to Dartmouth and wish nothing but well and good for it.

CALCATERRA: Well, thank you very much for spending all of this time speaking with me about your experiences. I know you

mentioned it was more comprehensive of an interview than you have had before and I know it's a very draining process to talk about your experiences. So, thank you again. We're really, really grateful to have your story recorded. And I'm really grateful to have met you and to have heard about your story, even if we've only met over the phone.

WHITE: I've enjoyed our dialogue, our interviewing, and have no further questions.

CALCATERRA: Excellent. And I haven't received the book yet. I think it might be still going through Hinman [Mail Services] and I haven't gotten the notification yet, but I'll let you know when I receive it, and thank you so much for sending me a copy of it.

WHITE: Oh, you're most welcome. I'm more eloquent as a writer than as a public speaker, so you may find something there which clarifies anything you later find on the basis of the transcript as being fuzzy. But you're welcome to use it.

CALCATERRA: Awesome. Thank you so much.

[End of Interview.]