

BARNARD COLLEGE CLASS OF 1971 ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The Reminiscences of

Janet Price

2015

## PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Janet Price conducted by Michelle Patrick on April 26, 2015. This interview is part of the Barnard Class of 1971 Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

**Barnard Alumni Class of 1971 Oral History Project**

Interviewee: Janet Price

Location: Michelle Patrick's home,  
New York City

Interviewer: Michelle Patrick

Date: April 26, 2015

00:00:36. 21 Q: So this is Michelle Patrick, and it's Sunday, the 26th of April, 2015, and I'm interviewing Janet Price, and you're going to spell your name for me.

Price: P-R-I-C-E.

Q: And Janet?

Price: J-A-N-E-T, easy, peasy.

00:00:57 Q: For the Barnard 1971 Oral History Project, Class of '71. So just for some initial things, where did you grow up?

Price: Well, I was born in Chicago, that's where my parents and my grandparents were from, and when I was about six we moved to Skokie, which is close enough to Chicago I could ride my bike and see my Chicago cousins, very close.

00:01:31 Q: Half a mile, a mile?

Price: A couple miles.

00:01:33 Q: Was Skokie where they had that Nazi—?

Price: Yeah, that was after I was long gone, but yeah, the Nazis tried to get a permit, I think they actually did get a permit to march in Skokie. The ostensible reason is there's a lot of

concentration camp survivors there so they thought that would be a great place to march. And the reason—

00:01:54 Q: Is that what it was!

Price: Yeah, the reason there are is because they started building up Skokie just when the German reparations money was coming in, so just when survivors had money for a down payment Skokie was getting built up. It hadn't been a Jewish neighborhood but it became a Jewish neighborhood, not exclusively Jewish but it was a place where there were lots of Jewish families, so survivors that come.

00:02:21 Q: How did that happen? I mean, there must have been new communities sprouting up all over the country, so why Skokie?

Price: Well, I don't know. It's funny how communities become one thing or another; I don't know exactly how that happens. But in any case, we lived on the North Side of Chicago, and we were outgrowing our apartment, and my mother wanted to live in a Jewish neighborhood, and so we moved to Skokie.

00:02:50 Q: When you were a small child?

Price: Yeah, I was six.

00:02:56 Q: And you had brothers and sisters?

Price: I had a younger brother who alas, died December of '13.

Q: I'm sorry.

Price: He was only sixty. And he just sort of fell at his desk, just worked himself to death. And a dog, named Bagel, and our grandparents lived with us also. So we were the “rah, rah, rah American—

00:03:20 Q: And what kind of house were you in? Was it a warm, friendly atmosphere in your home, or were there tensions?

Price: Well, of course there were tensions—my grandfather was a wonderful, wonderful guy, he was really an extraordinary fellow, and while he was alive he was a good buffer between my mother and my grandmother. But my mother shouldn’t have lived in a house with her mother. My grandmother was a lot of fun, but she was an absolutely horrible mother, and she never had a kind word for my mother, so it was bad for my mother to live with her and therefore not so good for the rest of us. So my mother called my grandmother, “Queen Lear,” [laughs]. But my grandfather was a really cool dude. My big ambition in life is to write his story or at least fictionalize the character.

00:04:15 Q: What would his story be?

Price: Well, here’s a story about my grandfather. He was born in Chicago; his mom was born in St. Louis, his father was a Litvak, a Lithuanian Jew. They had a few children and then his mother died in childbirth. So his father went back to Europe to get a strong European woman and he left my grandfather and his younger sisters in the care of relatives. Times were hard and money was tight, so my grandfather was out on the street selling newspapers, shining shoes, and the local firehouse took him in. They were all Irish right off the boat, Irish accents and all, and they raised him. And they knew he was Jewish, and they made him go to Hebrew school, and they paid for his Bar Mitzvah.

00:05:02 Q: That's a wonderful story!

Price: That's the beginning of his story. And then he went out and had this amazingly adventurous life. At some point around World War I he was in Burma drilling oil for the British—I just can't imagine this Jewish semi-orphan from Chicago hobnobbing with the Pukka Sahibs. And he was such a good-hearted man, I can't imagine how he coped with that. It's an interesting story. So then he came back to marry my grandmother, and she just refused to go back to Burma. So he had a grocery—

00:05:40 Q: He had met her in Burma?

Price: No, I think he met her on leave here. And they got married, and his family invested his nest egg into a grocery store for him to run, and he ran it into the ground. So then he had to go back to Colombia—he went back to drilling oil, He came back with malaria, and when he got better he wound up being the custodian at a school for kids with TB [tuberculosis] in Chicago. And during the Depression they couldn't pay him so they gave him food, and he would feed the whole neighborhood. I forget what the name of the neighborhood is, but it was a diverse, mostly Jewish neighborhood. Then there was a whole lot of white flight, and today it's a black neighborhood. And the old Temple Judea where my mother went to Sunday school is still there, and we went to something called Temple Judea in Skokie which is where it moved to, and we would go back and tutor kids at the Temple Judea which had become like a 'Y' [YMCA] or something, yeah.

00:06:56 Q: That's the typical—in the Midwest, in Detroit. There'd be the WASPS, the WASPs would move, the Jews would come in—

Price: Right, that's exactly what happened in Skokie—

00:07:03 Q: The Jews would move, there'd be some overlap and then the blacks would come in, and it always ended up in an overlap, but this is a—

Price: That's a funny thing about Skokie, I went back for my 45th Reunion—this is a little bit off the beaten track, isn't it?

00:07:20 Q: There's no track.

Price: But I went back for my 45th Reunion, and we went and took a tour of the school, and it was even bigger than when I went there, it was like shopping mall high school when I went there and now it's even bigger, but *so* diverse, *so* much better a place to go to school. Diverse racially, and sixty different languages are spoken there, and it's like a really cool place now, Skokie, it was [whispers] so boring when I was growing up.

00:07:50 Q: I don't know, the Nazis weren't boring enough.

Price: Well, that was later, that was after I was—

00:07:54 Q: Whenever I hear Skokie, or whenever somebody's name is Skokie, , “This is Janet Skokie,” and like, [Laughs]—

Price: Oh, that's funny, oh, that's associated with the Nazis, but they didn't live in Skokie, you may be sure. And they did this as a publicity stunt; what they were really interested in was marching in Cicero, against blacks moving into the neighborhood, that was their real thing. It was a loss leader—they didn't care about Jews, they were into segregation, racial segregation, that was their thing. They were just using us “yids.” [Laughs]

00:08:31 Q: So your parents were political, not political?

Price: My family is very strongly Democratic: my grandparents were precinct captains [laughs], my grandmother used to get a Christmas card from Mayor Daly every year—the original Mayor Daly. She could fix tickets, because she was a precinct captain, she could fix tickets, so she was very popular in the neighborhood—parking tickets. My parents were very interested in the Civil Rights Movement, and in a little small ways they did things.

00:09:07 Q: They did what sort of things?

Price: Oh, they took us to a demonstration once, and they housed a college student one summer from Oberlin who was doing some kind of civil rights work, thinking how to stop redlining Skokie. So that was a big interest of theirs. And in my temple, it was a Reform Temple, and the theology of Reform Judaism is really beautiful—the service is a little Lutheran but the theology is so beautiful. It's that, "Okay, we're the chosen people, what does that mean? It means that we have a special responsibility to bring about social change." So a lot of the people in the congregation, especially the rabbi, were a little left of center.

00:09:52 Q: Reform?

Price: I think a lot of my ethics comes from that upbringing.

00:10:00 Q: What did your parents do for a living?

Price: My Dad was a CPA [certified public accountant]. One of his clients was Sammy Davis, Jr. [Laughs] The reason that he became a client, even though he didn't live in Chicago, is because one of my Dad's first clients was the Chez Paree—like the Copacabana of Chicago—and that's where Sammy Davis, Jr. would perform. And the Chez Paree guy said, "Sammy, your finances are terrible, you gotta get yourself a Jewish accountant," [Laughs] so he went to my Dad's firm.



And because of Sammy Davis Jr. , my Dad wound up doing the books for legitimate activities of a Chicago gang—they had a gift shop and a breakfast program.

00:10:51 Q: Mob lawyer on the side.

Price: Yeah, right. (laughs) Most of it was small potatoes kind of CPA, usually it was small businesses.

00:11:03 Q: You though, when you were in high school in Skokie, it was not an integrated situation?

Price: Oh, my God, no. No, in fact there are a whole lot of kids who didn't come to my sixth grade birthday party. All my friends in the neighborhood came, but other kids from my class weren't allowed to come because a rumor spread that there would be black kids at the party. So there was a lot of racism, yeah. It was like people came from neighborhoods where their property values were going down, they came from white flight situations. They *said* it was about property values; what it really was about, of course, we know was—

00:11:46 Q: Well, but it *was* about property values—

[Cross-talk 00:11:43]

Price: That was part of it—

Q: A black person moves into the house all of a sudden it's—

Price: Yeah, there were only two communities in the Chicago area back in the day, when we were kids, that managed it so that there was integration and whites stayed and two that I know of

anyway, Oak Park and Evanston. And when my brother and sister-in-law got a house they got it in Oak Park for that reason.

00:12:08 Q: Did any black children come to your birthday? Did you even know any?

Price: No, I didn't know any, no.

00:12:12 Q: I wonder why they thought you would—I guess because your parents were into the civil rights?

Price: I don't remember why, I just remember that that was the case.

00:12:23 Q: And how did your parents handle that in explaining it to you?

Price: Well, they did explain it to me. I remember my mother and I talking about it at some length. And I wasn't pissed at my parents, I was pissed at these people who didn't come, but my real friends came. The people that I was friends with came. So screw the rest of them.

00:12:45 Q: A lesson in that.

Price: Yeah, oh, my goodness, yes.

00:12:48 Q: Yeah, absolutely. So why Barnard?

Price: Well, when I was sixteen, I think at the end of my sophomore year (??) in high school, I was in this Bible contest.

Q: Bible contest?

Price: It's sort of like a spelling bee, except instead of spelling words you just memorized certain books of the Bible—they picked different ones every year—and then they ask you these trivial questions, like, “Who begat who?”

00:13:15 Q: Was this at your synagogue?

Price: Well, somebody from—a friend of mine, Stuey Einstein and I decided to do this thing, and the head of the synagogue Sunday school was our tutor. One year Stuey won, and then the next year I won, and I won in Chicago, and I won in Midwest, so we had to go to New York. So we said, “Oh, let's make a vacation of it,” so my brother and my father and my mother and I all went, we drove; it was the first time I'd ever seen mountains when we went through Pennsylvania. Same thing for you, right?

00:13:49 Q: Yeah, no mountains. No “Mountains Majesty.” [Laughs]

Price: Yeah, yeah, right, Skokie was so flat that I could see all the way to Oakton which was like eight blocks away from us. So that really blew my mind, and we just loved New York, we all had a wonderful time. I didn't study, I didn't do any last minute studying, bombed out at the Bible contest, but that was it, I really loved New York, so, that's why Barnard.

00:14:16 Q: Do you remember the day, your first day when you walked through those gates? I remember they had blue and white balloons streaming from the gate, and it was a beautiful September day, and they gave us I think white carnations maybe, or maybe roses. That first day, do you remember that at all?

Price: It's so funny, I don't remember the flowers or the balloons. What I remember is I got the day wrong. So we came a day early. [Laughs] So it was great for me because I got to stay with

my parents in a hotel and see a Broadway show. [Laughs] Because they were planning to stay over. And we had a big trunk packed with my stuff on top of the car, and I remember them getting a handout about being careful about getting robbed and carjacking and what not, and they said, “Oh, my goodness, where are we sending our girl to school. ”

00:15:12 Q: Well, New York really has changed.

Price: Oh, it’s completely different now.

00:15:17 Q: So, okay, but the real day that you went in, were you assigned a roommate?

Price: Yes, oh, yes, yes. AniaAnia Gromadzka, who became a very, very, very dear friend—sadly she died in her forties, of lung cancer.

00:15:33 Q: Could you spell her name?

Price: Ania, A—N—i—A. Gromadzka, G—R—O—M—A—D—Z—K—A. And her parents were from Poland, they’d come after the war. They were in the resistance, and the British army and stuff, they were really kind of cool people, but her mom was crazy as a loon. But anyway, my parents were there, and AniaAnia’s parents were there, and AniaAnia and I immediately liked each other, and it was like she was the perfect roommate for me, I guess. But my mother was thinking, Oh, she[Ania’s mother] looks like—I think the term was Gal Lighter ??), something like that, the person who pressed the button in the gas chambers. My mother was like horrified.

00:16:21 Q: She thought Ania looked like that?

Price: No, Ania’s mother. So my mother was a little—

00:16:27 Q: Was her mother a Holocaust survivor?

Price: Her mother was a Polish Catholic, who'd been a nurse in the British army. She certainly did not have blood on her hands, and she and Ania's dad were both in the British army; they were in the Polish army and then they linked up with the British, and that's how they met, so it's not like her mother had any guilt. But this was my mother, she saw this big Polish woman and she said, "Oh, she must be anti-Semitic." So, I don't know if you remember Claudette Hammer, her mom was from Poland—I don't know if she was a survivor or she came before the war, I can't remember, but her mom said, "Don't worry, I know these Poles, I'll watch over your daughter."

[Laughs]

00:17:10 Q: A Pole handler! [laughs]

Price: Yes, a Pole handler, right. In fact Ania was a wonderful, wonderful friend, very, very talented, a talented person. She was linguistics major, and she had Kate Stimpson, if you remember Kate Stimpson.

00:17:20 Q: I had her too.

Price: Ah, you might have been in the same class with Ania. And so when the Women's Liberation [movement] started in the spring, Ania took me to a meeting at the West End [Bar] with Kate Stimpson and Kate Miller, and Serge Gravonski.

00:17:39 Q: The Spring of '68?

Price: Yeah.

Q: See, I was occupying the building.

Price: Oh, so was I. This was afterwards.

00:17:48 Q: Oh, you couldn't get enough. [laughs]

Price: Oh, this was much better. We'll get to that! [laughs]

00:17:52 Q: So do you remember what you were wearing?

Price: Wearing when?

00:17:58 Q: When you walked into Barnard to stay there—

Price: Oh, what a great question, I have *no idea* what I was wearing. Probably—I remember something that I wore early on, when I met Susan, which was a burnt orange sweater and a navy skirt, which is funny because those were my high school colors. I wore that navy skirt a lot! I didn't have a lot of clothes.

00:18:25 Q: What length was it?

Price: It was much longer than was the fashion—it hit my knee.

00:18:33 Q: But your knee could be hit in September—

Price: Right—

Q: But by November—remember how we had to keep hemming our clothes?

Price: Well, I remember people did, but I didn't because I was a big girl—I was always kind of overweight. People would say I was plump; I wasn't in any condition to wear miniskirts.

00:18:53 Q: Did your style change dramatically between the fall and spring?

Price: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I had a guitar with me—I had been in a folk music group in Skokie, we played at Sweet Sixteens and Bar Mitzvahs—I painted a flower on it. I had bell—bottoms, and I had a scarf that I wore around my head.

00:19:18 Q: Gypsy scarf.

Price: *And*, the first few months that I was there—I felt like a country bumpkin, like an “Okie from Skokie,”<sup>1</sup>. Obviously I wasn’t, and academically I was well prepared, that wasn’t a problem, but I felt very unfashionable. So I went to Vidal Sassoon [Salon] and got my hair cut—the Vidal Sassoon.

00:19:41 Q: A Twiggy haircut, or—

Price: Something like that, yeah, it was a nice haircut.

00:19:47 Q: So you were happy with that.

Price: I felt a little relieved. And I got a pair of—there was a classmate named Susie Gurlock —“Hi, Susie!”—who I think is a professor now, who I liked a lot, and I wanted shoes just like hers—I thought that she represented chic. So I went out and I got a pair of shoes like Susie’s, and then I began to feel like I fit in more.

00:20:09 Q: Do you remember what those shoes looked like?

Price: They had a stacked heel. People often wore them with white tights, do you remember that?

Q: Oh, yeah. And they were a little bit like a loafer, but they had like a little metal thing.

00:20:25 Q: Oh, they were like Gucci’s.

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<sup>1</sup> Play on words of popular song title, “Okie from Muskogee”

Price: Like that, but not \_\_\_\_\_(??)

00:20:32 Q: Were you at any time overwhelmed, either by the need to form a social group, academically, by homesickness, by feeling that you didn't know exactly what you were doing? Or anything?

Price: Yes. [Laughs] I was somewhat homesick, but I formed my—by November I had my posse. And it was Ania, and Susan who lived down the hall. I was also friends with Eleanor Montgomery who lived across the hall. And then Caroline Quigley—because Q comes after P so we met during orientation—and her best friend from high school who was at Barnard for a little while before she ran off to Yale with her boyfriend—Anna. So this was our posse, maybe there were a couple of other people in and out of it. And they were my friends the whole time, we sort of huddled together for warmth.

00:21:38 Q: So you had a social comfort level.

Price: And I think if I hadn't felt so overwhelmed I might have reached out more, because I was fairly gregarious in high school. But I was a bit shy in college. And I was very intimidated, like when I went to a mixer or something like that.

00:22:04 Q: But what was it about the other people that intimidated you? What sort of person would you have found intimidating?

Price: Oh, you probably. [Laughs] I remember you from college!

00:22:17 Q: You do?

Price: Yeah, you were very pretty—as you are now, I was struck by how pretty you were. I was intimidated by people who were better looking than me for one. Better dressed than me. More



cultured than me, the art history people, the people who knew music. I was very easily intimidated.

00:22:42 Q: I was intimidated too by \_\_\_\_\_(??) . What were your expectations, academically, socially, romantically, when you walked in? For example did you have any idea what your major would be, or did you have any career plans, or thoughts? Let's take that first, was there anything floating through your mind that you thought you might kind of flow in one direction or another, academically?

Price: I wound up majoring in history, and I always loved it in high school, and my dad was a big history buff, so I may have always intended to major in History. But I wanted to be a journalist, because I had been the co-editor of my high school newspaper, *The North Star*. And in fact I'm still—the only high school friends I'm in touch with at all are the folks I worked with on *The North Star*. That was like a wonderful experience in high school; it kept me from dying of boredom. I went over to the *Columbia Spectator* and wrote some articles for them, but I found *them* intimidating. God, I was such a wuss.

00:24:03 Q: Well, they were all upper classmen.

Price: That's right, that's right, but, yeah—I was trying to find a niche for myself. Every day at five, my gang would come to Ania and my room, and we would listen to Joni Mitchell, and Judi Collins records until it was time to go to dinner, and so I always had—I never was lonely. But I was trying to find a niche for myself in the larger world, and I found that very hard to do. I went to an SDS meeting where I met a great gal—do you know Nancy Biberman? She was in SDS.

Q: Oh, yeah—very small.

[00:24:41] Price: She's one of the people you kicked out of Hamilton [Hall]. [Laughs]

00:24:46 Q: Well, we didn't kick people out, it was a whole—

Price: I know, I know the story, and I learned a lot more about it at the—

Q: The strike reunion?

Price: The reunion, and that was very interesting, and why it was the right thing to do—I'm kind of joking when I said, "kicked out." But she told a great story about that. At the time she felt just terrible, and she had these groceries, and they were falling out of her hands and spilling all over the place, it was very sad. But anyway, she was a junior or senior when we were freshmen, and I thought she was like a really "good" person, this was a person I could imagine being friends with and stuff. And she was in SDS. But besides her I just couldn't—I just couldn't rock them(??)

00:25:33 Q: Well, were they too humorless?

Price: Probably. [Laughs] Which is a fatal flaw.

00:25:38 Q: Just a guess there.

Price: They took themselves a little too seriously—and took me not seriously enough.

00:25:46 Q: So you didn't \_\_\_\_\_(??).

Price: No, I didn't stay there. And I think I did a story—I must have been all year at the *Spectator*, because the night of the bust—I was a night editor at The *Spectator*, and I had to leave them in the lurch so I could go get arrested. But that's another story.

00:26:03 Q: That's pretty brave for a freshman to go in and volunteer for The *Spectator*.

Price: I didn't lack courage, that wasn't the problem. I lacked self-confidence.

00:26:18 Q: That's because you're so related. If you hadn't thought you were a pretty good writer you weren't going to be walking into the *Spectator*.

Price: Oh, I knew I was a good writer. That's why I had the courage to go in, because I knew I was a good writer. It was much easier to go into the *Spectator* than to say you go to a mixer, because I knew I had something to offer.

00:26:41 Q: Speaking of mixers, do you remember your first date?

Price: I do! It's funny, the guys I was interested in were never interested in me, and the guys who were interested in me—it was sort of like that Woody Allen joke, "There must be something wrong with them," right? I wouldn't join any club that would have me. But there was a very nice guy, a Columbia student who worked in a book store, and he asked me out, and I actually liked him very much. And then he told me this story about how he had taken—we were talking about that Catherine Deneuve movie, *Repulsion*.

00:27:15 Q: I never saw it.

Price: Oh, it's a really weird movie, where she's kind of like going crazy. I remember she had a rabbit in her purse that got kind of rotten. And she was a manicurist and she hurt her customer. Anyway, it was Catherine Deneuve having a breakdown on film, beautiful. I think it was a Roman Polanski movie.

Q: Was it?

Q2 (videographer): Yes.

Price: So, he was telling me how he took a girl to see that, a woman to see that, and how afterwards she just looked at him and ran away. And somehow his telling me that made me think, Well, then there must be something wrong with him. And then I wouldn't go out with him anymore. That was my first date, that was freshman year, yeah.

00:27:59 Q: Wow!

Price: In the spring, I went out with—lost my virginity to an African economist that I met during the strike.

00:28:08 Q: A graduate student?

Price: No, he was an economist, he just happened to live—he was at the UN [United Nations], so he was a lot older.

00:28:17 Q: How did you happen to meet an African economist at Barnard?

Price: I met all kinds of people during the strike. I met this great guy who was Chinese, and had a Jamaican—not a Jamaican, but some sort of West Indian accent, and he was a graduate student, his name was Barney. So a Chinese guy with a Jewish name and West Indian accent. [Laughs] I liked him a lot. So I met all kinds of people during the strike.

00:28:41 Q: During the strike—I'm still just a little *pre*-the-strike. Before the strike do you remember any—just any date that you might have gone on before the strike.

Price: Well, that was before—in the fall I dated this guy who worked at the bookstore. I think I went out with him a couple of times, but I didn't go out on a lot of dates.

00:29:01 Q: Before you found out about the movie?

Price: Right.

00:29:05 Q: Had you ever seen the movie?

Price: Yeah, I loved that movie.

00:29:08 Q: Can you see why a woman would have run after seeing that movie? I don't know anything about the movie—my husband obviously would have seen it.

Price: Well, it is kind of freak-out movie. Maybe she identified with Catherine Deneuve, who would have run. Or maybe he said something that she found offensive, I have no idea. Because to this day there really wasn't anything wrong with him, other than that he was interested in me, there was nothing wrong with him.

00:29:36 Q: [Unclear] What sort of guy were you interested in? Your type? Intellectual, political? Just plain ole' handsome?

Price: Later on I developed a "type," sort of dark and swarthy. But back when I was a freshman I don't think I had the foggiest idea what my type was, but the kind of guys—I mean I met a lot of guys who were friends of Caroline's boyfriend, Graham. And one of them said to me, "Oh, Janet, you are such a mind-fuck. "

00:30:27 Q: What does that mean?

Price: What he meant was, I was really interesting to talk to and you could really have a conversation with me.

00:30:33 Q: Because you wouldn't necessarily interpret that as a good thing.

Price: No, no, no, but that's what he meant.

00:30:37 Q: And you knew what he meant.

Price: That's what he meant, and I thought at the time, Why are guys only interested in my brain? But then, the other guys were only interested in my body, and so I was not too fussy about what the guy looked like or what their politics were. But I would have liked to have met a guy who was interested in both.

00:31:01 Q: And did you?

Price: Not for a long time, no. My first real boyfriend was my junior year of college when I was in Israel, and he was a crazy English guy.

00:31:11 Q: The '60's sort of happened in different time periods for different people—when you came to college did you think that the first person you slept with would be the person you'd get engaged to and marry?

Price: Oh, absolutely not, no, no, no—I knew I was going to have adventures. And that's one reason I had to be far from home, so I could have the adventures without upsetting my parents. [Laughs] My mother thought that way too. I could have gone to the University of Chicago, and I would have gotten just a good an education, but I would have been too close to home, my mother really encouraged me to leave the nest.

00:31:51 Q: And so what was your anticipation? You'd date a few people, or you'd date a few people and *then* meet the person, or was meeting "the one" not even in your framework?

Price: Nope. No. It wasn't even in my framework, no.

00:32:08 Q: That's interesting.

Price: No, it really was not. When I was twenty-seven, after having one pretty serious boyfriend, and one very serious boyfriend, I came out, and I have been married to a woman, well, we married a few years ago, but I've been with her for thirty-five years. So it could be that one reason that it wasn't was because I was just looking—I had no idea that I was interested in women at all. Well, I wasn't, I just had a sea change. But—I must have known on some level that I wasn't the kind of person to settle down with a man. I just didn't know. So I just wanted experiences, and I wanted to be wanted.

00:32:56 Q: Do you remember your first heartbreak?

Price: I think—it was my first woman was my first heartbreak.

00:33:03 Q: And that was how much later?

Price: When I was twenty-seven, twenty-eight, yeah, I got my heart broken.

00:33:10 Q: Was that also your coming to awareness that you were gay?

Price: Well, she thought I was just a heterosexual woman out for a few kicks. All I knew was that she rocked my world, and she just wasn't as interested in me as I was in her. I kind of got out of the habit of being with men, and I actually was seeing her and I had a boyfriend at the same time—mega-confusing? And she was seeing other people too. But I got out of the habit of seeing men and into the habit of seeing women, and it just sort of happened organically, I didn't plan it, it just happened.

00:33:57 Q: So tell me about the period—I believe it was eight days—of the strike, and to what extent you were involved in it, did you stay in a building the whole time, did you go in and out, I

so what building? What was your sense of what the whole thing was about? What was your opinion about the various demands of the various factions?

Price: Well, I was in Fayerweather [Hall], and why Fayerweather? Susan and Caroline and AniaAnia and I decided we had a consensus, “Let’s go into a building.” So the first question is why, right? And the real answer to that to be honest is, “Why not?”

Q: [Laughs]

Price: But I felt—I’m sure they did too—very strongly about the gym. It was a great symbol of what the problem at Columbia was, and—and what the larger problem was.

00:35:07 Q: And the world.

Price: And the world, yeah, but—it was so concrete. It was something so near and concrete. You know how, like all politics is local? So it really angered me, and that I thought was a good thing to be against, to be involved in, to be active in opposing. And of course the war research as well. I’d been to the March in Washington in the previous—

00:35:39 Q: October, I think it was.

Price: It was either October or November, it was the one that Norman Mailer wrote about.

Although I have to say I didn’t get tear-gassed. [Laughs] My biggest problem is I didn’t pee for like eighteen hours. [Laughs]

00:35:53 Q: You were young enough.

Price: Yeah, right. [Laughs] Well, actually later on in life I was a teacher, so I still can go a long time without peeing because it develops that ability.



00:36:07 Q: Olympic bladder contest.

Price: That was the biggest hardship of being there. So I was very against the war in Vietnam. I actually had gone to demonstrations as a high school student, written about them for my newspaper and was famous for this in my high school. But it was the gym I think that particularly moved me. But the other thing was it just seemed like a really, really, cool thing to do. So we did it! And why Fayerweather? Well, it's very easy. It had a window that was really easy to get in and out of. So I don't think we even knew when we went into Fayerweather who was there. But we just thought that's—

Q: Access.

Price: Yeah, because Mathematics you had to practically rock climb to get into, and Low Library, I don't know what the problem there was. By the time I got involved Hamilton was—yeah. So, so Fayerweather seemed like the best option. But once I was in there it really was the best option. Oh, then there was Avery [Hall]. I don't know why I wasn't in Avery, but Fayerweather was a really good option because it was mostly graduate students in Fayerweather, and so the level of conversation was a little bit more sophisticated, and there were more ideas and less four letter words. Not that I have anything against four letter words—I feel I'm an expert in using them, I certainly had enough practice—but it did occur to even my eighteen-year-old brain that they were being used instead of ideas.

So I liked Fayerweather, the political conversations. Don't ask me anything about what they were because I don't remember. But I just remember that I felt I could listen and learn and that I was among—just like my Dad said, “Always be with people who are a little smarter than you”—that I was among people who were a little smarter than me, or least a little bit more experienced

and knowledgeable, and I can listen and learn something. *And* I made tuna fish salad, and I gave backrubs, and I did all those girly things.

00:38:13 Q: Now your building, was it one of the ones where you could go in and out?

Price: Yeah, and I did. In fact I had to go out to do the night editing at the *Spectator*, and that's how I knew that we were getting busted because somebody came in and told the *Spectator* folks. So I warned them in advance, we had a contingency plan, but I had to leave. But [laughs] while I was in the building, before the arrest, my aunt and uncle came to town from Mississippi of all places—

Q: Oh, God!

Price:—and I had to meet them for brunch. So I had to climb out of Fayerweather—my wife said to be sure to tell them the story, so I'm telling the story—I had to climb out of Fayerweather, go to the dorm, shower, put on my best bib and tucker, go have brunch with them and do whatever sightseeing we did, and then go back. Of course I didn't tell them what I was—

00:39:03 Q: So obviously you were passing.

Price: No, no. Yeah, I was passing, exactly, but I came back, changed back into my jeans and went back into Fayerweather. So Fayerweather was perfect for—

00:39:15 Q: Well, Fayerweather, my impression, and correct me if I'm wrong, was one of the better maintained buildings?

Price: Yeah, when Occupy Wall Street happened, I thought, “Oh, that was what it was like in Fayerweather.” We had committees—I was on the Tuna Fish Salad Committee—I was on the Food Prep Committee, of course.

00:39:34 Q: Well, the girls would—

Price: Ah, tell me about it. I mean I was only a freshman, so what I was doing was appropriate for a freshman anyway. But this is where for the first time it dawned on me that this was a sexist world we were living in. When I was growing up I didn't really notice that so much; I was valued in school for what I was good at—I never felt that I was less valued because I wasn't a boy? My dad was the kinder, gentler person in my family, so he wasn't a typical alpha male father; my brother was younger, not older. So I grew up feeling empowered. Maybe it would have been just as bad anywhere else, and I'm just blaming it on the New York scene, but I felt like a second class citizen—not at Barnard, which is why I treasure Barnard, because you could go to a class there and you knew.

[00:40:37 Price: But when I went across the street, and I took many classes at Columbia, really good classes with Fritz Stern, and Edward Said, oh, he stole my heart. Edward Said, that's my perfect—

00:40:49 Q: You had a class with Edward Said!

Price: I had such a crush on him, oh, my God, he was a genius. And he's gorgeous. *That, that's the guy for me.*

00:41:02 Q: Yeah—oh—go ahead.

Price: It was very well-maintained, and it's very interesting, because there was an article in the *Times* the day after the bust, with a picture of a ransacked office, it was a hot mess, and they said it was in Fayerweather. And that's when I knew, don't trust *The New York Times*, that's when I knew, because that wasn't in Fayerweather.

00:41:29 Q: I had exactly the same experience.

Price: With Hamilton? Which I'm sure was extremely well organized.

00:41:34 Q: Ah! Boot camp. To fight the stereotypes.

Price: I shouldn't speak about your experiences, but my sense was that many of the older people anyway in your building had been doing civil rights work for a while, and they had the drill down, they knew what you were supposed to do.

00:41:56 Q: Well, we were also black, and we knew—our parents and grandparents had said, “Whenever you go out into the world—in a restaurant, on the street, on a bus—you have the grace, you have exquisite table manners, you say polite things, because you're a soldier for the race by showing how eloquent and gracious you are.

Price: Right. Right. But also the folks who were in the building with you could not be trusted, the white folks who were in the building with you.

00:42:29 Q: Oh, well there were so many different types. First of all, there were so many that were just thinking it was a carnival. So they were littering, and putting up posters of Mao—we weren't interested in the violent overthrow of the United States, we just didn't want that gym. And how it represented—

Price: Well you were also—I don't know if you had a separate set of demands from Hamilton, from the demands in general, did you?

00:43:00 Q: We supported the IDA, International Defense [Association]??—there was military—

Price: Recruiting—

Q:—recruiting, and also research, research into weapons.

Price: Columbia was like this with Dow, I believe.

00:43:17 Q: Yeah, we supported the fact that other buildings—that was on their list, it was not on our list. Our list had to do with, you don't build a building in 1967, and black people come in one side and white people come in another. Haven't we learned that yet? And we were in sympathy, in other words we issued statements in sympathy, we are in solidarity—but that was not our thing, that wasn't what it was going to take to get us out of that building. All we had to do is say, "We're not going to build a gym," and we would have left, because we were—I talked too much —

Price: No, this is good.

00:44:05 Q: Anyway, we're talking so much— so talk about your first sexual experience?

Price: Oh. Okay, but we haven't gotten done with Fayerweather yet.

00:44:21 Q: Oh, wait, okay, let's keep going with Fayerweather.

Price: We had a wedding in Fayerweather.

00:44:26 Q: I remember that.

Price: The bride wore my friend Caroline's "wheat jeans"—remember we used to call white jeans, wheat jeans, remember that? Well, anyway, she wore her wheat jeans, so that was a lot of fun. Fayerweather was just great, and it was just my speed, because—for a couple of reasons, one was because I was still a nice Jewish girl from the Midwest, and two is because I could smell

bullshit a mile away, even then. So there was much less bullshit in Fayerweather than some of the other places.

00:45:03 Q: So when you say in Hamilton that there were—not to be trusted, what did you—

Price: Not to be trusted. Yeah, that was the sense that I got, that you couldn't be sure what they—even folks like Mark Rudd actually turned into a very nice man as a—

00:45:21 Q: He wasn't nice.

Price: No? I thought he was pretty nice. He was a math teacher. Well, nicer than he was.

Q: Yeah.

Price: But they were puffed up assholes, the people who were running the show. During the strike I just said, "Whoa—"

00:45:41 Q: How did you know that Mark Rudd was a puffed up asshole? I mean, I agree with you, I just would like you to go on tape as saying—

Price: "Sorry, Mark, I think you turned out okay. Mark, you turned out okay. I think you were a wonderful math teacher, and when I was a principal I would have hired you. But you would be the first one to admit, I think, that when you were running SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] you were a 'puffed up asshole.'" Yes! How did I know that?

Q: How could you tell?

Price: How do you notice that somebody is arrogant: they're speaking and not listening—using four letter words instead of sharing ideas, all the megaphones and the strutting around. I was extra sensitive to this because I was a woman—now I can say I was a girl but back then we said

we were women, and I knew that they were treating us like second class citizens. We were okay to fuck, we were okay to sweep the floors and make the sandwiches, so that made me even more sensitive to the happy horseshit that was coming out of their mouths than I would have been if I had been male, I think.

00:47:12 Q: Well, you were a lot smarter than most of us, in terms of gender relations. We were clueless really.

Price: Well, maybe, I don't know. I have to say that I give a lot of credit to my Dad. Because I grew up in a home where my father, when he spoke he had something good to say, and he never dominated the conversation. So I had a standard for male behavior based on my father that these men were not meeting.

00:47:48 Q: Uh—huh. You mentioned earlier about the Women's Movement coming right after the strike?

Price: Yeah, it was during the strike we had our first meeting.

00:47:56 Q: See, I was unaware of the Women's Movement until 1970.

Price: Wow!

00:47:59 Q: So what was your first introduction to the Women's Movement?

Price: It was this meeting, and I don't know *exactly* what we talked about.

00:48:14 Q: It was a meeting for—

Price: It was Kate Millet and Kate Stimpson, with help from Serge Gavronsky, who was a good friend of theirs—

Q: The big guns!

00:48:23—who organized this meeting, and it was mostly their students that were there.

AniaAnia was friendly with Kate Stimpson from English 101, so she dragged me along. And darned if I remember what was said. Isn't that sad? It's funny the things you remember—like wait until we get to when I was in jail [laughs], what I remember of jail, but it's funny the things that you remember. But I remember thinking, Boy, this is just what we need, because I was experiencing this ridiculous—what we now call sexism. I was saying, “Call the cops pigs? You guys are pigs.” Did you say male chauvinist pigs back in '68? Probably not, but I mean these guys were so—

00:49:13 Q: No, it was “shaven head war mongers,” was the thing. [Price laughs heartily] And gender was—secondary to race, we thought of ourselves as a race, and not divided by gender. We felt we all needed to—[Price agrees] But do you remember anything else that happened? What did they bill the meeting as? In other words—

Price: They were founding Barnard women's liberation. This is the very early days of the second wave of feminism. There was a nice movie out, a nice documentary called, “She's BeautifulWhen She's Angry,” that documents those early years—have you had a chance to see it?

Q: No, I've never seen it.

Price: It had a week or two showing at the Film Forum a few months ago, but I bet you can get it and see it. It had a pretty good and interesting account of the early years, but they didn't mention our meeting. But what was going on in the early years was really interesting—after *The*



*Feminine Mystique* came out, and Simone de Beauvoir had already written [*The Second Sex*], and then it was Kate Millet's book [*Sexual Politics*], so things were really cooking then.

00:50:40 Q: I had Kate Stimpson for an English teacher and she didn't invite me anywhere—

Price: Well, maybe I knew the staff and would run into her.

00:50:48 Q: Yeah, I was so clueless that by the time they had a Women's Movement Convention—in 1970? [Price confirms]—at MacIntosh [Center]—they had an all-women dance, a women's band, and a women's dance.

Price: Wow!

Q: And I was so stupid, and I thought, Well, okay, but isn't this going really far to prove that you can have fun without boys?' [Price laughs] It never occurred to me that these women might be couples, or attracted to each other. I just thought it was—

Price: True confessions, I probably would have felt the same way"—[Q: laughs] What's the point?" But a conference just for women, that I would have understood.

00:51:37 Q: Yeah. So you talked about jail, do you mean the jail after—

Price: When we got arrested.

Q: Yes. You were in jail too, right?

00:51:41 Q: Oh, yes, I was in jail the whole next day, till five o'clock.

Price: Well, they arrested us in the middle of the night, right?

Q: Yes.

Price: And I remember it was a pretty sleepless night. I'm in one of two defunct institutions, first the Women's House of Correction, which is now a basketball court near NYU [New York University], right. And then the Tombs—I think maybe they rebuilt something, but it wasn't like the Tombs we were in. Oh, my God those places were sad.

Q: Horrible.

Price: All I could think of was to feel bad for people who were regularly arrested. There was vomit all over the benches, an open toilet. Oh, God it was so gross.

00:52:30 Q: Remember that thorough body search?

Price: Oh, yes, I suddenly do.

Q: [Laughing]

Price: They were very interested in my breasts, which even then were lollapaloozas, oh, man! Yeah, that was an experience, *but* it was also a lot of fun! We sang. I think Linda LeClair, the gal who was kicked out of Barnard for—

00:52:50 Q: You were in the cell with her?

Price: Yes.

Q: So you were in the cell with me.

Price: You're kidding!

00:52:56 Q: You were in my cell.

Price: Oh, my God, isn't that funny! So we sang—

00:52:59 Q: I *hated* that. I *hated* that.

Price: That we sang?

Q: Because to *us* this was serious: This wasn't a kid's game. This wasn't singing because you want to live with your boyfriend—who cares if you want to live with your boyfriend, the world doesn't depend on it, the world depends on equal justice! So, yeah, and then Josie was in that same—she had a big gash on her forehead, and she said, “You were chickens at Hamilton, you should have fought back.”

Price: Oh, please!

Q: Right, and I wanted to put another gash on the other side of her forehead. But instead I patiently explained, “Shut the fuck up.” But, no we—

Price: Is that why she didn't come back?

Q: [Laughs] Well, this part gets excised. [Imitates sound of a cat aggressively meowing]

00:54:01 Q: When I was in that cell—I don't know how I got put in that cell—when Linda LeClair sang I could have strangled her! This was not trivial, this was not frivolous. This was not a dance around the maypole to us. You think our parents, our grandparents, our *great-grandparents*, they had very seriously not skipped around the maypole, but put their bodies on the line, for equal justice in this country.

Price: And do you think now that maybe—maybe you took yourself a little too seriously? Not that what you were—

00:54:39 Q: It's not that I took *myself* seriously, it's that I took the movement that I was representing seriously. When we went out we were told we represented the race. I wasn't representing Michelle, I was representing the whole four hundred years of—

Price: I certainly didn't have that on my shoulders, but to me singing meant something different, not frivolity. Singing to me meant—because I knew I was part of a movement, a political movement, and I took the demands very seriously. And my top demand personally was the gym, because it was so in my face, but for me singing was something that was part of being political.

00:55:33 Q: I think it was who was singing and about what. Linda LeClair was—I thought she was an attention-getting, “I’m gonna sleep with my boyfriend, and I’m living with him.” I just thought it was so trivial.

Price: Well, she may not have been, but she got thrust into the limelight because she got expelled, and then that's how she coped with it. But the thing is, in the scheme of things I have to say that you're right, that social justice issues are *the* most important, and racism is more important than parietals, and living with your boyfriend, of course you're right. But looking back, I think what motivated a lot of us was how oppressive the in loco parentis thing was—not being able to have a guy in your room and just “do it” if you wanted to, it was very oppressive. Linda LeClair shouldn't have gotten expelled, and if she'd been a guy at Columbia she wouldn't have been. And what Barnard was doing, perhaps with the best of intentions, was invoking a double standard.

00:56:55 Q: But to me it was like mixing martinis with fruit punch, you know what I mean? Okay, this is martini time, go home with your little box juice and do the parietal thing. Don't mess with our pure message about pure social justice.

Price: Right, yeah, and part of the problem was that most of us were there for a whole bunch of different reasons, only one or two of which were of interest to the students at Hamilton.

00:57:33 Q: That's why the students at Hamilton asked the other students to go. The minute we started looking around and there was garbage, and—oh, no, we cannot represent in that way. So you weren't hurt though?

Price: No, there were three kinds of arrests in Fayerweather—we decided how we were going to get arrested. There were folks who went without resisting, and there were folks who passively resisted, and then there were folks who chained themselves to furniture. And I didn't resist, I just walked out.

My arresting officer was a narcotics detective. Part of the reason that people got hurt, particularly in Avery, was because the cops were intimidated, they weren't properly briefed, they didn't know what they would find, they didn't have a clear line of sight; at least this is my impression, I may be wrong about this but I think that's what happened. So sometimes people who weren't resisting arrest *did* get hurt, and I believe that happened in Avery. But in Fayerweather there was a clear line of sight. The cops, at least my arresting officer was not going to be intimidated by a little pipsqueak like me—he was a narcotics detective for Pete's sake. So it went very smoothly and I was not hurt, in fact we made the mistake of chatting him up because he was an interesting guy with an interesting job, and so he remembered us at the preliminary hearing. Note to self: next time you get arrested, do not talk to the arresting officer.

00:59:08 Q: [Laughs] You're so friendly, though, I can see it happening.

Price: Yeah, that's a problem, but like I said, I've never met an uninteresting person. Well, he would have been interesting even to you, he was an interesting guy. He was an African-American narcotics detective.

00:59:21 Q: Yeah, I bet he was fascinating.

Price: Very interesting, a very *nice* guy. A real gent in arresting us.

00:59:27 Q: You were saying that you wanted to tell about your jail experience. What other things about it?

Price: Well, the other thing I remember, you may not remember, is how awful the food was. They gave us weak tea that was too sweet—I do not take sugar in my tea—and baloney, one slice of baloney and stale white bread—[Cross talk]

00:59:52 Price: I don't know whether I ate it or not but I remember what we were offered. And I said, "Oh, boy this jailbird life is not for me."

01:00:03 Q: Do you remember, and this is one thing I don't, how many people were there in our cell?

Price: Too many—it was awfully uncomfortable.

01:00:11 Q: Was it thirty? Was it twenty?

Price: It was about three times as many as the cell was built for, that's how many were there. Lots of people. Well, I'm honored to be in such distinguished company.

01:00:27 Q: Well, Josie, and Linda LeClair—you were in the cell of fame.

Price: There you go. There you go. But who was I compared to them.

01:00:37 Q: Well, I wasn't anybody! Did—I know the answer to this, but did the people at Fayerweather make you phone your parents every day to make sure you were all right?

Price: No, but I bet yours did.

01:00:52 Q: Yeah.

Price: No, actually most of us didn't tell our parents. This is how my parents found out.

01:00:58 Q: Oh, that's right, you were undercover, you were passing.

Price: I was passing, right. So I am one of the luckiest people who has ever lived, and this is an example of it. That night, you may remember, the lawyers from Barnard were sent down to make sure the girls were all right, which I thought was very sweet.

01:01:15 Q: That was a friend of my father's.

Price: Really—oh, isn't that a riot!

01:01:20 Q: He called Charles McKinney, a lawyer we knew, family friend, and said, "Look, I don't know what's going on down there but can you see what's happening?" And it turned out then that Charles McKinney was one of three lawyers that represented everybody, just because he had a house next door to us at Martha's Vineyard.

Price: Oh, wow, isn't that interesting. Well, I had a similar experience. The next day when we were—I don't think I stayed there till five, sometime in the afternoon I was arraigned, I don't know exactly when. It couldn't have been too soon! [Laughs] And who was the lawyer

representing my crew? A guy from the ACLU. And who was he? He was the son of one of my mother's best friends.

01:02:04 Q: Oh, my God!

Price: *What a **luck out***, one of my mother's best friends in Chicago. *What a luck out!* So he called my parents for me and told them what happened, and said, "Janet's going to call you right away, and you should be so proud of her."

01:02:23 Q: [Laughs boisterously] You have a way of landing on your feet!

Price: I know! \_\_\_\_\_ **(??) lucky**. My parents would have come around anyway, because on the one hand they thought they were sending me to finishing school—it wasn't like—

01:02:35 Q: Well, it was a very prestigious school, a "girls" school.

Price: Right, they had no idea. But as I said before, their politics were good. They were Adlai Stevenson Democrats. So they would have come around. And I explained to them how everything in my upbringing led me to this moment, I had to fight the gym, I had to fight the war research, yada, yada. And so they were proud of me. But the idea of anybody in our family [whispers] *getting arrested*. And so the other thing he had assured them of was that the charges would be dropped, it wouldn't ruin my chance— it was a very minor charge, I think it was "criminal trespass, third degree." Is that what they charged you with?

01:03:24 Q: I don't remember what they charged me with. But whatever it was, I was made to understand that it would not have any permanent repercussions.

Price: Right. So he said, "This is like, one, they're going to drop the charges; two, even if they don't it's no biggie, so don't worry. And it was the right thing for her to do, blah, blah, blah, blah. "



So they were more worried about my getting arrested than about my being involved in this political action, that was okay. But I remember my dad in particular was very proud of me, and his brother-in-law, my Uncle Teddy—who we loved very much because he was good to my aunt and my cousins, and was a good family man—but he was right of Rush Limbaugh—I mean he was, “Ugh.” And so I remember he and my—

01:04:09 Q: Did he find out about you?

Price: Yeah, everybody in the family knew about it, it was a close knit family. So I remember him and my dad having this huge argument about it, and my Dad’s ears getting all red, because he was so *proud of his girl*. [Laughs]

01:04:24 Q: Oh, that must have made you feel really wonderful.

Price: I did, yes. My Dad was one in a million.

01:04:31 Q: What was your absolute happiest moment at Barnard?

Price: I don’t know a particular moment above every other, but one of my great joys in life was gathering with my friends and listening to the music, and then going down to dinner together. And one of my *proudest* moments was I was taking Edward Said’s course in English literature, and he said something that seemed off to me—and like this guy was a God, he was so brilliant, and he really taught me how to read literature, and I just—I worshiped him. I had the *hots* for him, oh my God, I had such a crush on him then! But he said that E. M. Forster was a gay man and therefore hated women and you could see that in his books. And that was like the craziest thing to say. We were reading *Howard’s End*, and in particular in *Howard’s End* the women were

very sympathetic, and the guys were very—they were alpha imperialists. I was too shy to say anything in class, but I went to his office, during his office hours—it was very intimidating.

01:05:49 Q: You were brave!

Price: Yeah, I was very brave. And I said to him, “You know, I think there’s another way of looking at this.” And it’s funny because I didn’t have any gay friends at the time; I had no idea that I was going to turn out to be gay—well, strictly speaking, I suppose I’m bisexual, but I’m also *extremely monogamous*, I’m a radical monogamist and I’ve been with the same woman for thirty-five years, so. And if anything happens to her I’m just going to have the dog and that’s it. But anyway, it wasn’t like I knew much about being gay, but I knew he was wrong about that because of my reading of the book. What I knew was that his feelings about homosexuality had colored his judgment. This is my thinking, he has a big aversion to homosexuality and so he’s assuming that if you’re gay you hate women. And I don’t think that’s necessarily true.

01:06:52 Q: You were really smart, you must have gone to Barnard.

Price: I must have gone to Barnard. And I said—so this is my thinking: I don’t think that’s necessarily true, and he really shouldn’t say that again. In any event, now that I have something smart to say to him I’m going to go to his office and say it. And I think he put his arm around me, because he was [whispers] *a lech*—but that’s as far as it went.

01:07:17 Q: Did he concede your point?

Price: No, but he listened very respectfully, and we had a good conversation. And I think I was so proud of that, and *that* maybe was the moment when I came into my own—intellectually—when I realized, Oh, yeah, I’m as smart as the next guy.

01:07:40 Q: Did I ask you what you thought you might be going into?

Price: Oh, yeah—I thought I would be a journalist. I had a scholarship to Barnard—I’m not sure we could have afforded it if I didn’t have a scholarship—but I had a full tuition scholarship from the *Chicago Sun Times*.

Q: Oh, that was great!

Price: Yeah, because I was on my high school newspaper. And so I assumed that I’d be a journalist. And my mother thought I ought to minor in education, just in case—

Q: The fallback.

Price: Just in case, right? It’s interesting because by the time I graduated and I was thinking about it, I was interested in alternative schools and thinking maybe I could teach in an alternative school. She said, “No, no, no—go to graduate school, become a professor.” So she had changed and her ambitions for me had grown.

01:08:26 Q: Did you do that?

Price: I did go to graduate school, yeah.

01:08:27 Q: Are you a professor?

Price: No, I’ve never been a professor. I should have. I had a great professor at Barnard named Hester Eisenstein, who didn’t get tenure; she was too “out there”—Barnard can be a little bit stiff—but she was a wonderful influence, and she really helped me with my writing and my historical thinking—and she thought I’d go to Santa Cruz to their History of Consciousness Program. But I stayed in New York for whatever reasons. And that’s too bad, I should have gone

to Santa Cruz, that would have been interesting. But I stayed in New York and I went to Columbia for two years in European History, and I studied with Jacques Barzun, who was a very, very, very interesting guy to study with, so that was a good experience.

01:09:21 Q: Was this a master's program?

Price: I was in the PhD program. I finished my coursework and I was preparing my orals list, and I said to myself, This is crazy, I'm not a scholar, I can't see myself writing a dissertation, why don't I get a real job? And Barzun actually had said a year before, "You're in school because you're good at it, why don't you go out and get some experience and then decide." So he was mad at me when I didn't continue—because he'd invested another year in me, so why didn't I listen to his advice a year ago? But I just followed his advice a year later. [Laughs] And I got a job at W.W. Norton, writing brochures for their college texts, so it was like an advertising type of a job, at this relatively small, privately owned publisher—they do all the Norton anthologies, and this and that. And that was a really great experience. I had been very turned off during the strike to politics, and absolutely didn't do anything political for years after that. I spent the strike in Butler Library in the microfiche room—generations from now somebody is going to listen to this tape and say, "What's a microfiche?"

Q: They'll look it up.

Price: Yeah. So, doing a paper on Emma Goldman, the anarchist—

Q: Oh!

Price: Isn't that funny? So I didn't want to have anything to do with these puffed up guys with their megaphones. I was thinking to myself, They're just as bad as Grayson Kirk, they just have a different style of being.

01:11:02 Q: Yeah, oh, you were very bright.

Price: Yeah, yeah. Wise beyond my years.

01:11:11 Q: Yeah, you were.

Price: Like I said, always had a nose for bullshit. But while I was at W.W. Norton, the Hyde Amendment was passed, banning Medicaid or any government funds for abortions. That really angered me, so I got involved in a group called CARASA, The Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse. We linked the two issues, because there was a whole lot of sterilization abuse where women were being forced to be sterilized, so that we thought was just as important.

In '77, the first meeting was during the blackout. I was interested in integrating my life more, because I was doing three things—when I wasn't busy sleeping with people—I was working at Norton, which I enjoyed very much; I was writing short stories; and I was doing this CARASA political work. So I thought, if I go to law school I can integrate them, and I'll have much more interesting stories to tell, because my life has been too sheltered—what do I have to write about anyway? And I can do my politics during the day and get some sleep at night. So I went to law school.

01:12:37 Q: At Columbia?

Price: At NYU.

01:12:42 Q: What was that like?

Price: It was a lot of fun. It was much better having been out of school for a while and then coming back, because I wasn't as intimidated. Kids who'd just been to school felt really bad if a professor called on them and they didn't know the answer.

01:12:58 Q: You are the only person I've ever known in my whole life who'd called law school "fun." I just wanted you to know that you hold that singular distinction.

Price: Wow, isn't that interesting! Because I was just talking to Janis Nelson who was in our class, and she like me had worked—she worked even longer before she went to law school—and she said it was fun too—she went to UCLA. So I think the secret is to have worked really hard, and to have had to deal with a lot of mean bosses, then you go to law school and it seems like a walk in the park. I found it intellectually very stimulating. One of the reasons that I went to law school was because my first woman lover was just finishing law school, and I could never win an argument with her. And she was just so logical. So the other reason I went was, "I want to be a really good arguer, I want to win every argument." So I went to law school.

01:13:51 Q: Do you practice law now?

Price: Well, no, here's what happened. I had some really cool jobs: one summer I worked for the Center for Constitutional Rights, and I worked on the [Filártiga v.] Peña [-Irala] case, where it was decided that the old laws against piracy applied to torture, and you could sue a torturer wherever you found him. So this torturer from, I forget whether it was Uruguay or Paraguay, got tagged in New York, so we were able to prosecute him there for the torture of political prisoners. So I worked on that, and then my second summer I worked on a Navajo reservation on all kinds of matters, and that was really interesting.

01:14:42 Q: Family law mostly?

Price: No, we did some education law because we were representing the School Board, and we did a lot of repo cases, repossessed vehicles and stuff like that, and folks running over cows, there was a lot of that. If we did family law I wasn't involved in it. But it was really interesting and I got to work with the Navajo and Hopi. And then I did the Criminal Law Clinic at NYU, so I got to actually represent medium-level felons. I got a wig heist—

Q: Somebody stole wigs?

Price: Yeah, I had a client who stole wigs off a truck, and I had a client who stole fish off a truck.

01:15:27 Q: Oh, you have to write a book.

Price: So that was fun. But then after school I was interested in education, health, any job I could get really, a public interest job. I got a lot of job offers outside of New York, but I'd just gotten together with Linda and I didn't want to—

01:15:48 Q: This is Linda, your wife now?

Price: Yeah. I didn't want to be separated, so I called my old friend Fran Pantaleo, who had been like my big sister, my mentor assigned to me in law school. She had a job in her office, and I applied for it and I got it and it was education law, so I became an education lawyer.

01:16: Q: That's great. Is that still what you do?

Price: No, I did that for maybe five years or so. Slowly I got more interested, I sort of moved into education policy. Because here's the thing about education law, and I think it's probably true in

many areas of law—you get a lot of pyrrhic victories. Look at the deseg[regation] cases for instance—did they have happy endings? Not so much.

01:16:37 Q: Only theoretically.

Price: Yeah, so—

01:16:45 Q: But you didn't know that.

Price: No, of course not—you find out. So I was a lawyer for a while because I thought that was the way you fix things. I represented a lot of bad boys who got suspended, right, not so bad boys, so I got them back into school. You know what? The schools weren't good enough for them: the schools weren't meeting their needs, and the adults didn't care about them. And I thought, what's the good of getting them back into school? We have to do something about these schools so that they're good enough for them. So I got more into education policy.

And then in '89, **Beth** Lief who was a classmate of ours, founded an organization which was called The Fund for New York City Education, which later became New Visions for Public Schools. I was the first person she hired after her secretary, because I had all these connections at the Board of Ed[ucation], from suing them. [Laughs] But a lot of times a lot of people at the Board of Ed were actually glad we'd sued, and I had good relations with a lot of people. So I helped her get this organization off the ground, and we started a lot of small schools with community-based partners. Eleven-ninety-nine [the health care union] started a school with us—

01:17:57 Q: Now are those called charter schools?

Price: They're not charters; they were regular public high schools, but small schools. Over time I got to know a lot of principals and teachers at these schools, and I said, "I want to be like them,



this is what I want to be when I grow up, a high school history teacher.” So I became a high school history teacher. And I did that for seven years. I taught at a school for recent immigrants called International High School, there’s a whole mess of them now, they’re all over the place—it’s a very good model. And that was a lot of fun. And then I started a high school and I was its principal, in fact I’m wearing my class ring. When I left in 2006—no, 2010—I started the school in 2004, and I was the principal for six years, and then my blood pressure was getting really high because it’s a very stressful job.

01:18:53 Q: What was the name of the school?

Price: It is, Brooklyn Preparatory High School, and it’s still going on.

Q: It’s still going on?

01:19:00 Price: Yeah, it’s going strong, it’s on the north side of Williamsburg. It’s performing, its graduates are—

Price: Yeah, we got kids into Cornell [University] and Spellman [College] and—

01:19:09 Q: Is it a competitive entrance school?

Price: No, no, no. This is the interesting thing, when I was in Advocates for Children I wrote a big exposé about high school admissions called, “Public High Schools: Private Admissions.”

One thing I found was their integration policies were really crazy, because they were operating under this idea that 50% was the tipping point, and there were a lot—

01:19:38 Q: In terms of black and white?

Price: Yeah, that if you had more than 50% children of color, white families wouldn't send their kids there. And so they were having people come into interviews and stuff to see what color they were. What it meant was a lack of equal opportunity because there were a lot fewer whites than blacks and Latinos. Back then there wasn't as big an Asian population as there is now.

Q: No. And it was just like crazy and arbitrary, and it didn't make any sense because in fact New York, like San Francisco, is really a multi-racial or a multi-ethnic city, and you didn't have to have 50% this, and 50% white, it didn't make any sense at all—that wasn't what was motivating white families, at least not most white families. So, anyway I wrote this big exposé and it did lead to some changes. One of the things I recommended was a random selection—that if you applied to the school, that everybody who put it as a first choice would be randomly selected.

01:20:53 Q: And is that still happening now?

Price: Well, well! Here's what happened: by the time I started my school—it was a big small schools movement, and some of the schools were screened, some of them were unscreened, there were all different kinds of admissions criteria—but by the time I opened my school Gates was subsidizing the starting of these schools. Partly because of Gates and partly because of work that I had started quite a long time before, most school were unscreened, and so is mine. So in fact what I recommended was exactly what happened: I got hoisted by my own petard and I couldn't select my kids—

01:21:34 Q: Oh, you couldn't select?

Price: No. And so how did that work for you?

Price: It was great, it was great. Because what we did is we couldn't select, but we could give preference to kids who came with or without their families to an Open House, who had learned about the school and not just put it down randomly. So we were able to market the school as a college prep school. As a result from the very beginning I got a nice mix of kids—not racially—it was almost all African-American at the beginning. Then because we were on the border of Clinton Hill and Bed[ford] Stuy[vesant], because of the neighborhood we were in that's who applied, but economically and in terms of their family background—I should say it was African-American and Caribbean African-American. We had folks from all over the African diaspora, and we had folks of different economic backgrounds. So I had a nice hard core of kids whose parents were school secretaries, were school teachers or bus drivers, stuff like that, and that was a really good thing for everybody because I had this core of kids who came from really solid family backgrounds and raised the level for everybody. That was just one reason why the school was so successful. We got a lot of kids into college, we got an A on our stupid report cards—you know, those stupid report cards that Bloomberg had? But that was a good thing for the school—we won an award called the Goldie Anna Award that some founders of Google had created for—

01:23:24 Q: Scholarships?

Price: No, but the school won an award for some innovative stuff we were doing where kids didn't just get course grades, they had to present a portfolio of all of their work, and there had to be projects, which meant the teachers had to assign projects. We did a lot of innovative things which we had learned at all the places we had worked before. And we brought all the best of the best to my school.

01:23:52: Seven years—

Price: So I taught for seven years and then I was an intern principal for a year at The Heritage High School up in East Harlem, and then I was the principal of my school for six years. And then my blood pressure got too high because it's a really stressful job. So I decided I needed to do something less stressful. So I went back to New Visions, and it was the beginning of the era of Common Core [State Standards], so teachers needed a lot of support to teach to the new more rigorous standards.

01:24:20 Q: What year was that?

Price: 2010.

01:24:23 Q: Did you know Linda Booeey?

Price: Yes! I know Linda, yes. She's from Detroit also. Yes, in fact for a while we sat right next to each other. Yes, I love Linda. She's still there as far as I know.

01:24:36 Q: I haven't been in touch with her but I think she's still there.

Price: Yeah, she's the library \_\_\_\_\_ (??)

01:24:42 Q: I grew up with her.

Price: Ah, oh, isn't that interesting, that's right, I forgot she's from Detroit, yeah. One of the people I hired was also from Detroit so we were always talking about Detroit. The other guy, a little pipsqueak. But anyway—

01:24:59 Q: Where are you on the testing question—teaching to the test, which is so—

Price: Well, it's so interesting, because there's some pretty strange bedfellows opposing testing these days. So in the old days before Common Core it was easier actually to answer that

question, because the tests were encouraging really bad teaching. The worst test as far as I'm concerned—but it's because of what I taught—is the Global History Regents. It's a disgrace.

01:25:41 Q: In what way?

Price: It tests everything from the Neanderthals to NAFTA and beyond on either side, so it's one of those things that encourages a curriculum that's an inch deep and a mile wide. If you teach to that test the kids are going to learn to hate history. So a lot of the tests in many states were dumbed down so that kids would do well on the tests and therefore the state would look good—that's certainly what the Texas miracle turned out to be. So on the one hand, the tests were too easy, on the other hand the important stuff you can't test with a paper and pen test—kids had to do projects, sustained effort over time, critical thinking, applying math to real world situations—you can't do that in a timed test. And the tests were incredibly unfair to kids with disabilities. One of the things that my school did for various reasons, we took in Special Ed[ucation] kids from the beginning and they were totally integrated into the mainstream—and most of them should have been; there were very few of them who needed to be segregated, so they were better off with us and most of them fared better than they would have just about anywhere else, which was my school's main claim to fame. But they really struggled with some of these tests. My niece who is very bright, she went to Hampshire College, but she's kind of a space cadet. So my sister-in-law who's very sharp got her an IEP [Individualized Educational Plan], got her called Special Ed so she could have extra time on the test. The tests were on the one hand too easy, so that they weren't teaching the important stuff, and too narrow in what they tested—and on the other hand very, very unfair to kids with disabilities who might in fact have mastered the content but can't show it on a paper and pencil test. Now—

01:27:52 Q: These are the old tests.

Price: The old tests. The new tests are better to teach to than the old tests because they're more rigorous—they're trying to test the right things, but a lot of these things can't be tested with paper and pencil timed tests. So they're going to wind up not working.

01:28:30 Q: Give me an example of something that can't be taught—there is, “Yes/No/Maybe” but then there are essay questions.

Price: Take any test prompt that asks you to write something: there's no time to revise it. If you're teaching for those tests you're basically never giving kids a chance to do their own research—

Q: I understand.

Price:—to think through, to have debates, to change their minds. To have a first draft, a second draft, and a third draft, because there's not going to be time on the test for that so why teach it? So that's one example. The other problem is, I don't think the tests that are emerging are necessarily that good. I'm not speaking of the national tests but the local—New York State tests that they developed to be aligned with the Common Core. I mean one thing they're doing is just making the reading harder. Some of the questions are very ambiguous—there could be more than one right answer, or like, “*What?*”—what's this about anyway? So they're not well-constructed tests, and that's a problem—everybody wants to hold kids accountable and now teachers accountable, but who's holding the test makers accountable?

01:29:45 Q: And who does? Who should?

Price: Well, I think every state legislator and every state education official should have to sit and take any test that they're imposing on kids, let alone tests that they're holding teachers accountable to. There is a need for testing. The interesting thing is "No Child Left Behind" [Act] had a lot of support on the left, including [Edward] Ted Kennedy and including The Education Trust, even though it was testing the bejesus out of kids. It would have labeled virtually every school in the country a failing school, so it didn't work. But there was a really important civil rights reason for it, because especially in schools that had a diverse population, they look good because the middle class kids, or the white kids or the General Ed kids were testing well enough—but the poor kids or the Special Ed kids, they weren't being served, they didn't have to serve them cause on average they did just fine—right, so they could shove those kids under the carpet. So that's why folks to the left like Education Trust wanted to hold schools accountable and it was broken down by—you were a failing school even if you had good test scores in general but you had more than thirty kids in column A or column B that weren't doing well.

And what *my school* was recognized for—it got extra credit on the report card, or was how well we did with kids who came in in the bottom third of their classes on the test, and how well we did with Special Ed kids. And how well we did with African-American kids in some years. We never got any extra credit for Latino kids, I don't know why. But anyway—I don't think we even had enough of them. But anyway, it's a very complicated issue because you have to have some tests in order to see *on the whole* how we are serving people. But if you hold kids accountable to the test and teachers accountable to the test it gets really murky. And if you don't have a more multi-faceted and more robust, more triangulated way of evaluating schools *and* kids *and* teachers, then you're always going to wind up teaching to the test, and the best-constructed tests still have limitations.

01:32:31 Q: It sounds like terror, like reigning by terror to me: the tests, you get fired as a teacher, this terrible case in Atlanta—

Price: With all the cheating.

Q: Yeah, yeah. I read that in *The New Yorker* article and your heart goes out to these teachers who are really trying to teach, and—

Price: Right. Well, yeah, it's very common. There was a lot of pressure on them to do the cheating, and on the other hand you don't want your kids held over; you could be doing some cheating because it's in the best interest of the kids. There's a whole lot of different reasons about why—

01:33:09 Q: That was the impression that I got—

Price: There's a whole lot of different reasons why people cheat. But all this reliance on testing, that's another one of the problems, is all the cheating. And then not having kids come to school the day of the test, holding kids over so that they aren't tested—all kinds of shenanigans like that, none of which is good for kids.

01:33:33 Q: So I see you're a very passionate person, you have very firm beliefs. Do you think you would be at all different now had you not gone to Barnard? Suppose you had stayed in Chicago, or was it Brandeis that you—?

Price: No, it would have been University of Chicago or Antioch [College].

01:33:53 Q: Or Antioch. Do you think you'd be basically the same Janet if you had gone to another school, or is there something about being in New York, something about being in an all-women's school?



Price: I think being in an all-women's school was very good for me. Not every girl needs that, but I needed it. I needed to have a safe place where I took at least half of my classes where I knew I was respected and equal—that was very important for my development. I think the experience in '68 was a really important experience for me, and it's very hard for me to put in words exactly why that is—

01:34:43 Q: You mean being in the building, the hierarchy of power in the building?

Price: Well, I think it was important to me in two ways. It's something that I'm very proud of. For instance, when I went before the Character Committee you have to say you've been arrested, so I mentioned that, to get into the bar. And my interviewer said, "Wear that with honor! That's another reason for you to be a lawyer—we welcome you." So I was very proud of standing up and being counted, that I wasn't chicken. So I think that helped show me how much gumption I really had, yeah. And that I could be very brave, and do the right thing—even if I didn't necessarily do it for all the right reasons. [laughs] Sorry about that, Michelle! [Both laugh] But at least I'm honest about it, right?

01:35:47 Q: Absolutely.

Price: So, yeah, I wouldn't have done it if I hadn't believed in the demands, but I got a whole lot out of it besides the politics, yes. That was important also, and if I'd gone to University of Chicago and had been involved in their— whatever they had there—I would have gotten expelled, so it's a good thing I went to Barnard. One of my cousins has a cousin, Steve Kindred, he was a union organizer that got expelled from University of Chicago around the same time, maybe a couple of years later. So it's a good thing I went to Barnard; I got the great experience, and I got to have my cake and eat it.

01:36:34 Q: Did you have a moment or a period of time of despair, or deep disappointment? And it could be just an incident or a period of time, it could be about your career or love life, or a crisis of—you look at me like you've never heard of such a thing, so I'm thinking, no?

Price: No, no, of course I have. I'm thinking about how much to tell you. [Laughs] Of course I have. Yeah, it's funny because depression runs in my family, but I think I also have—twenty percent of the population, according to *The New York Times*—although we shouldn't trust them—but the science—I know the husband of the editor of the Science Supplement, because he was a friend of mine in high school, we were on *The North Star* together. So I'm sure the *Science Supplement* is an exception [laughs]. Because she wouldn't mess around with the truth. But there was an article that ran—of maybe it was in *The Week in Review* section—that said that about 20% of humans are just wired to be happy. And ironically I think that's true for me, *and* I have the depression genes. If there's *any way* to be happy, I'll be happy, but there have been times in my life when I have been among the walking wounded, clinically depressed, and it always has something to do with work every time, and not my love life. I got my heart broken, but if anything that turned out to be a fantastic experience, because then I knew when Miss Right came along. It's like you have to have rainy days in order to really appreciate a sunny one.

01:38:17 Q: Just not too many of them.

Price: Well, to be honest, I only got my heart broken once, that's about the—

01:38:24 Q: Really, oh.

Price: Yeah, maybe because I was too guarded and careful and not adventurous enough in that realm.

Q: That could be.

Price: I mean not that I didn't have—didn't get rejected or be—

01:38:38 Q: Yeah, everyone has disappointments, but—

Price: But I wasn't—I only got my heart broken that once. So it was always work things. Once was when I was at Advocates for Children, our director left and she kind of left things in a bad situation financially, and we had to reduce the staff and we needed to take pay cuts and stuff, that was very, very difficult. And I was waking up in the middle of the night, like this—[gestures] but we lived through that. But my Dad and my Mom both suffered from depression from time to time, as did one of my grandmothers, so it's something that I dealt with. But better living through chemistry.

01:39:27 Q: I totally agree with you. So it wouldn't have been so much the issue that you were depressed about as it was the fact that you just had a tendency toward—I mean enzymes do stuff no matter what's going on.

Price: Right. Right now what's occupying my mind is I'm very, very, very concerned about the Israeli occupation of Palestine. I was in Israel recently with my synagogue which is a really cool lefty synagogue in Park Slope, and so I was with like-minded people—we might not have exactly the same ideas about what ought to happen or whether we support a boycott or whatever, but we were all very concerned that the Israeli government had gone *way* far astray for a long period of time. So that is really something that's breaking my heart. And very, very sad and disillusioning because my parents were rabid Labor Zionists, and they would smuggle guns, in '48, and all that kind of stuff. I have to say the year I spent in Israel kind of cured me of my Zionist tendencies, at least in times of wanting to live there, *but* I always—

Q: It always does.

Price: Well, this was in '69, and Israel was more like the '50's, so it was just more that it was a very uptight, repressed culture, a lot of racism within the Jewish community. Like if you were an Ashkenazi Jew you weren't supposed to marry a Jew from the Arab world, a lot of craziness like that.

01:41:04 Q: And look at the poor Ethiopian Jews.

Price: Yes, and look at the people who are seeking asylum and are being treated much worse than they are in Europe. And this is what it means to be a chosen people? So I'm very, very, very disillusioned and upset about that, and trying to figure out—. Until Gaza last summer I just basically didn't deal with it—"I'm over Israel." Now that I'm not working full-time—because I stopped working full-time in May, and then Gaza happened, so I have a little bit more time—I'm still doing a lot of consulting work, and I'm sometimes ridiculously busy, but I have more time to do things outside of work again, *and* I feel like I can't bury my head in the sand anymore. So I'm trying to figure out like, do I join J Street? Do I join Jewish Voice for Peace? There's this new group called, "If Not Now," from the sayings of the fathers, "If I'm not for myself who will I be, and if I'm only for myself who am I, and if not now, when?" Just pretty good for everybody.

Q: Yeah.

Price: So that group is, "If Not Now." I'm trying to figure out where I fit in, what I think about the boycott, but it's a very, very, very hard issue to talk about. I'm sure there are comparable examples of things in the black community, but it's—

Q: Of course—

Price:—it’s the hardest thing to talk about. Many places I go you just have to— like I went to [laughs] you call it a vegan fat farm—I went to a health spa in Florida with Linda, and there were some people there who said, “Why you haven’t moved back to Israel?” and, yada, yada, yada. There were Jewish people there and they wanted to talk about Israel, and I asked them questions, and I realized, we can’t have a conversation about this, we’re going to wind up—I’m here to relax. I mean because they’re so rabid. It’s a real existential issue.

01:43:12 Q: In what sense, how do you mean that?

Price: Well, on the one hand anti-semitism, just like racism, is something that we’ll always be fighting and we’ll never really win it. So it’s a good thing that there’s a place for Jews to go— [whispers] *unless it happens to be Ethiopia and they have their quota already*. After the Holocaust in many cases it was the only place that people could go. I grew up thinking that it was a wonderful thing, we finally had a country of our own—I don’t want to live there, but isn’t it great that we have a country that’s Jewish, where we’re the majority—isn’t that great? But on the other hand, I never expected Jews to act like Nazis. You spend any time in the West Bank, you speak to any Palestinians, you realize—obviously they’re not gassing people, but it is coming very close to apartheid. And in some ways it’s worse than apartheid, because they’re constantly destroying people’s homes. And the Jewish-American community in general is very supportive of Israel—“My country right or wrong.” My friend Susan Slyomovics, who runs the Mideast Institute at UCLA [University of California], and really tries to have good programming and be fair—she’s in the Anthropology Department, and she’s written a really wonderful book about a Palestinian village called, *Object of Memory*. So she’s very sympathetic to the Palestinians, but nevertheless she’s trying to be fair and reasonable in her programming. And she’s called a self-hating Jew, and an anti-Semite, and it’s so ironic because her mom was an

Auschwitz survivor. And although she doesn't put it this way, I've always thought that this was Susan's way of saying, "Never again." And it's a much better way of saying, "Never again," than saying, "Oh, we can do anything we want to the Palestinians because this is our country, this is our land, God gave it to us.

01:45:23 Q: It's *owed* to us, yeah.

Price: *Or*, "We can do anything we want because they want to push us to the sea." We wanted to push the British to the sea back in the '40's. Begin was bombing the King David Hotel, and bombing the shit out of the British. I mean if you're an oppressed people don't you have the right to rise up?

01:45:50 Q: What's the difference between a Freedom Fighter and a terrorist?

Price: Right, exactly. So what's really, really distressing is—and during the Oslo Talks it seemed like the two-state solution was viable, and now especially with all the settlements it's now clear that it is a one-state solution—it's not clear that anybody will ever accept a secular one-state solution: Jerusalem and the area just north and south of Jerusalem is very sacred to the Jews, Christians, *and* Muslims—nobody wants to give it up. So there's where my despair is these days, where all my—the joy sort of checks itself at the Jaffa Gate. Yeah, I feel like I have to do something, that I can't just stand by. Jeremiah said, at the time of the destruction of the first temple, that God was angry with the Israelites—one, because they were worshipping idols, but what's worse than that is they were treating each other unjustly. And what was worst of all, was that nobody was standing up and speaking out against the injustice. So there are Israelis, as well as Palestinians of course, in Israel and the West Bank in Palestine who are speaking out, but—

01:47:23 Q: You don't hear so much about those people.

Price: Well, no, but they're there, and we visited a lot of them. There's an organization called Rabbis for Human Rights that stands between the tanks and the Palestinian houses, and especially is active in the Negev, trying to protect Bedouins from just ridiculous policies—Bedouins who are Israeli citizens. I mean, don't get me started.

Q: [Mumurs sympathetically, concurs.]

Price: So it's very, very important for American Jews to speak out, and to try to change American policies. And it's very scary for a nice Jewish girl from the Midwest to get into fights with other Jews about what it means to be Jewish and what the right thing to do is about Israel.

01:48:16 Q: So you're really embroiled in that struggle right now.

Price: Yeah, mostly in my mind, but everybody who was on the trip is with me. I mean we're all trying to figure it out, because we can't not do anything, it's just too—

01:48:27 Q: Where do you go, to think tanks, and—what do you do?

Price: I don't know, I have to find out! You either support the boycott, sanction and divest movement, or you have protests in front of Jewish organizations saying, "Come on, let's talk about these things," and you get arrested. Or you join J Street, and you try to lobby for better positions. So I have to just figure out what kind of person I am. I'm more of a J Street person really, but I'm not sure that they go far enough. So, we'll see, but they've kind of gone to the left, they're trying to find a place within the Jewish establishment now that [Benjamin] Netanyahu has been re-elected—and [considering] everything that he said and did in the election—and it's not just him, it's the people who voted for him. I think they're moving to the left, so I might find a comfortable home in J Street—but I've got to do something, and I can't do it on my own—I

have to join some organization and pitch in. So I don't know what it's going to be, but a year from now I'll tell you what I've done.

[End of Interview]



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