

Part of the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

An Oral History Interview with HILLARY CLINTON

Interview by Timothy Naftali
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The following is a transcript of an Oral History Interview conducted by Timothy Naftali with Hillary Clinton on July 9, 2018, in New York, NY.

Naftali: Hi, I'm Tim Naftali. I'm a clinical associate professor at NYU and I have the honor and privilege today, July 9, 2018 to be interviewing Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton for the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum. Secretary Clinton, thank you for doing this.

Clinton: Thank you for having me. I'm very happy to participate.

Naftali: I always think it's important for people to get to know those that we're interviewing. And I'd like to start with a story that precedes Yale Law School, but I think it says a lot about you. Tell us a little bit about the salmon incident in Valdez, please.

Clinton: Well, I graduated from Wellesley in 1969. And a group of my friends and I decided we wanted to go spend our summer in Alaska. And there were two other young women and a guy who one of the young women knew. And we got together and we drove up the Alcan Highway, which at that point was not paved. It was quite an adventure. We camped out every night, fished for food, bought food, whatever we could and we ended up in Haines Point Junction around the 4th of July. And then we worked our way from Haines Point Junction up to Fairbanks and then down to Valdez. And when we were traveling, we were picking up odd jobs to maintain our -- have some money in our pocket. And when we got to Valdez, I took a job at a salmon cannery which was on the end of one of the piers. And this was shortly after the terrible earthquake had hit Alaska and much of Valdez had been damaged. And so I went to work. My first day, they gave me a pair of hip boots and a spoon. And they had two Japanese gentlemen who were responsible for cutting the salmon open, taking out the caviar, and then throwing the salmon into a big pile. And my job was to take this spoon and clean out the carcass and then throw it in another pile. So I was diligently trying to clean out the carcasses and the Japanese gentlemen started screaming at me in Japanese. I had no idea what they were saying. So the plant manager came over and said, they're saying, hurry up, hurry up, you're getting too far behind. I said, well, I'm trying. I mean, you gave me a spoon. I'm doing the best I can; blood and fish guts and everything all over the place. So I lasted two days doing that job and then he basically kicked me upstairs to work on the packing. So there was a conveyor belt and the boxes would be put on the conveyor belt down from where I was, and then we'd pick up the salmon. And it would be a head-tail, head-to tail, head-tail. You'd get five or six salmon and depending upon their sizes.

So after doing that for a few hours I said to this manager with whom I'd already had this one issue because I wasn't going fast enough with my teaspoon, I said, "Some of these fish don't look very healthy. They look

kind of green and black.” And he said, “Shut up, just do your job.” So I did my job, came back the next day, which would've been the fourth day, would've been Thursday, and started back on the conveyor belt, packing the fish. And I went to him again. I said, “Really, I'm sorry, I don't know anything about salmon, but these don't look healthy.” And he goes, “Look, we have inspections. They get tested. And besides, what do you care? They're all going to Japan.” I said, “Well, we don't want to send bad salmon, whatever, to Japan.” And he just shook his head. So he fired me and I said, “Well, I want to get paid for the four days that I worked because that's how we're supporting ourselves.” He said, “Okay, come back tomorrow.” So I went back down the dock and the whole operation was gone. They had picked up in the night and moved somewhere else. So I don't know what lessons to learn. I often say that sliming, that's what they called it, cleaning out the salmon. Sliming salmon was one of the best preparations I had for politics.

Naftali: Well you were a whistleblower.

Clinton: Well, I didn't even consider myself a whistleblower. I was just asking questions, which this gentleman clearly either couldn't or wouldn't answer.

Naftali: How many women were working with you there?

Clinton: None. I mean, this was set up for the salmon season and it would have been gone in a few weeks anyway after the salmon run had finished. So I went to work there. One of my other friends went to work washing dishes. We just worked our way across Alaska. We ended up in what's now Denali National Park, one of the most beautiful places on the continent. And I washed dishes and another one of my friends -- two of my other friends waited tables. So it was just one of those great summer adventures.

Naftali: Let's move to Yale, there's not a real segue here but I want to ask you about a Yale incident that -- you were at Yale during the turmoil of the spring of 1970. In order to help future students and the interested public understand what Vietnam and the tensions Vietnam created, could you just put us in the time and place in New Haven, spring of 1970?

Clinton: Well, there were a number of events and forces that were all convening on one another in New Haven that spring. The continuing uproar over the Vietnam War did not abate. We were still living with the aftermath of the assassinations of Dr. King and Senator Bobby Kennedy. There was a Black Panther which was a group that was considered very radical at that time, a trial going on in New Haven. It was a tense, fraught place during that spring of 1970. '68 was fraught, '69 was fraught, but in 1970, a lot of it came to a head. So we had so many difficult experiences, the Kent State

killings, the threats to the law school and other parts of the campus. It just was a really difficult, dangerous feeling that we confronted.

Naftali: Did you put out the fire in the law school?

Clinton: I was part of the group. We basically had a fire brigade because it was the international law library that somebody had set on fire. Obviously the fire department got there. But until the fire department did, we were passing water down a line to try to save the books.

Naftali: Why did you decide to go to law school?

Clinton: I decided to go to law school because I wanted to help make positive change in our country. I cared deeply about that. I cared about using the law and where it was not useful, changing the law because we needed to figure out how we're going to deal with poverty and race and war and all the things that were part of my time in college and law school. And I thought going to law school would give me tools and an opportunity to try to help fix what I saw as broken.

Naftali: I don't need to know. I mean, I'd be surprised if you knew exactly the number, but what percentage of the law school class were women?

Clinton: My memory is that it was about 27 women out of, I don't know, 235, something like that. So no more than 10%, probably slightly less.

Naftali: Did people try to discourage you from becoming a lawyer?

Clinton: Yes. I faced discouragement both when I went to Harvard to take the law school admissions test. I went with one of my friends from Wellesley who was also taking it. And this would have been probably in the late part of the first semester of my senior year or the second. And we were taking the test to apply to law school. And we were among the very few women in this large room at Harvard, and the boys and the men around us were taunting us the whole time. Like, "what are you doing here? If you get in, I'll get sent to Vietnam and I'll die." I mean, it was really a breathtaking amount of harassment to try to knock us off our stride, to try to just rattle us. And we just sat there very quietly. We put our heads down, we didn't say anything. And then the test started. We took the test. Then when I got admitted, trying to make up my mind between Yale and Harvard, I went to a cocktail reception at the law school for potentially incoming students. And I had a friend who was at the law school and he took me around to introduce me and he got me in front of one of the professors there, a very imposing guy, looked like the character in Paper Chase, that big burly look with a three piece suit and a watch chain across his stomach. So my friend says, "Professor so and so, this is Hillary Rodham. She's trying to make up

her mind between us and our nearest competitor,” meaning Yale. So he looks down at me and he goes, “Well, first of all, we don't have a nearest competitor. And secondly, we don't need any more women.” And that was what decided me to go to Yale. I had no other option at that point. I wasn't really going to pick a place that didn't want more women.

Naftali: Who were your favorite professors at Yale?

Clinton: I had a group of professors, but probably someone who I really liked a lot was Charles Black, the great constitutional scholar. He was so down to earth and he would seek students out. He would be incredibly warm and gracious. I worked closely with Abe Goldstein, and Joe Goldstein who were involved in areas of my interest, particularly Joe Goldstein in terms of child development and children under the law. So it was a good experience. I really had a lot of great teachers. But it was, I think, fair to say more the interactions with our students, our fellow students that made the biggest difference to me.

Naftali: Before we move on to that, did you ever cross paths with Alexander Bickel?

Clinton: I did. I crossed hands with, with Professor Bickel, with Professor Bork, with Professor Calabresi, people who are pretty well known.

Naftali: Well, let's talk about your fellow students. Tell me how you met Mike Conway.

Clinton: I met Mike at law school. And we became friends. I mean, most of the friendships happened in the hallways, in the student lounge, in the dining hall and Mike was just somebody with a very wry sense of humor that I enjoyed spending time with.

Naftali: What was your favorite pizza place then?

Clinton: That's a question that can get you exiled, but probably Pepe's.

Naftali: Not Sally's.

Clinton: Not Sally's, Pepe's. Yeah.

Naftali: Please tell everyone what the barristers' union prize trial rdf.

Clinton: Well, the barristers' union was a student run organization that put on trials during the year and it was to give students trial experience. There was also a moot court program that was to give students the appellate argument experience. But I joined the barristers' union. I think I was the only woman

on the board. We had a really great group that included Mike and my husband. And we had a lot of fun because as members of the board, we had to make up the cases and then students would be selected to try those cases. And we always worked to have a distinguished former lawyer, a distinguished lawyer or distinguished judge, even former serving actually hear the case.

Naftali: How is it that Abe Fortas was invited?

Clinton: I don't remember. This was for our prize trial where I was teamed with Bill Clinton and Mike Conway was on the other side. And Abe Fortas must've been asked by one of the faculty members because I don't think any of us knew him. He had just stepped down from the bench. Asked him if he would come to New Haven and preside over the barristers' prize trial, which he said he would.

Naftali: And how did it happen that Mr. Doar was invited?

Clinton: John Doar had come earlier in the years, my memory, to preside over another trial. He didn't preside over our prize trial, but there was another event, either a moot court argument or another trial that he presided over. And Bill and I were asked if we would meet him and kind of be his support system while he was in New Haven, which of course we love doing because he was just a delightful person to be around.

Naftali: Could you share with people who wouldn't know this, and I'll learn more about Mr. Doar shortly, but when you are in law school, who was John Doar?

Clinton: John Doar was a highly regarded civil rights lawyer from the Bobby Kennedy Justice Department who had been responsible for going to the South at difficult times and building cases, collecting evidence, interviewing witnesses. But he also found himself on at least one occasion that I recall, in the middle of a mob which he then had to try to disband. And all he had was his voice, his authority, but he was able to protect the black plaintiff's witnesses that he was spending time with from a white mob that was in the early '60s a very common occurrence because of the work to try to expand and protect civil rights.

Naftali: So you got to know him when he came for the aim for the moot court?

Clinton: I think it might've been a moot court. I don't remember for sure. I mean, we knew of him. It was just one of the reasons we asked him. He was also very close with Burke Marshall who probably asked him to come. We probably asked Burke for that help. So he spent probably the whole day at

Yale, he spent time with Burke, maybe with Owen Fiss. I don't remember. He was another friend of his. And Bill and I kind of squired them around.

Naftali: Is this in '73 or '72?

Clinton: I don't remember.

Naftali: Was it your last year or the--?

Clinton: The prize trial was our last year, the one that Fortas presided over. I think that John came in probably the semester before. But that's all I can remember.

Naftali: Before we move to the impeachment committee, did you get to know Burke Marshall?

Clinton: I did.

Naftali: Please tell us.

Clinton: Well, Burke Marshall was another really admired inspirational professor from the civil rights years at the Justice Department. He was close to the Kennedys. He was obviously close to John Doar. He was a very quiet man. He didn't assert himself, but he had the kind of authority and quiet force. They don't look anything alike, but I think of Gary Cooper in High Noon. I mean, somebody who could walk into a room and just sit there and listen and then give people his assessment of whatever the decision they were making would be. And he always just carried so much weight.

Naftali: Tell us how you met Rufus Cormier.

Clinton: Rufus and his wife Yvonne became good friends of Bill's and mine. So I had known Rufus and when Bill came a year after me to the law school, he got to know him well. And so we would have dinner with Rufus and Yvonne. Yvonne was getting a PhD in biochemistry, Rufus was at the law school. They were fun. They were just a terrific couple to spend time with, and they've remained friends all these years later.

Naftali: When you graduate in 1973, what do you expect to be doing in 1974?

Clinton: Well, I expected to be doing what I started out doing when I graduated, which was to go to work for the Children's Defense Fund for Marian Edelman. I had interned for her, I think after my first year maybe. And again, I think that's right. I wanted to go to work with her so I moved to Cambridge and began working, doing investigations and litigation around issues like the incarceration of juveniles with adults in adult prisons or the

efforts to give tax exempt status to private segregated academies so that they didn't have to pay taxes. I mean, issues like that, expanding childcare, getting better conditions for migrant workers. I mean, that's the kind of work we were doing. And that's what I started doing when I graduated and went right to, to Cambridge to work for her.

Naftali: Please tell us about the call from John Doar.

Clinton: Well, this is a very funny series of actions. I was down visiting Bill in Arkansas, I think it was right after Christmas, if I remember, either right before or after. And Bill's phone rang and he got a call from John Doar. And John Doar said, "I've been asked to put together a team of lawyers for the House Judiciary Committee to investigate whether there are grounds for impeachment of President Nixon. And I have a list of people that I'm going over with Burke Marshall. And you're at the top of the list if you would like to come to work." And Bill said, "Well, actually I'm going to run for Congress so I can't." And then Bill said, "Well, who else is on your list?" And John said, "Well, Mike Conway, Rufus Cormier and Hillary Rodham." So Bill says, "Well, Hillary Rodham is standing right here. And so he passed me the phone and John Doar asked me if I wanted to go to work in Washington for the impeachment inquiry staff. I said, "Yes, I'm very honored to be asked." And so shortly, sometime after the first of the year, I left my job at the children's Defense Fund and moved to Washington and went to work for John Doar.

Naftali: How long did you think this was going to last? When you said yes, because you had to say to Marian Edelman how long you were going to be.

Clinton: Yes. I don't know that I thought like that, Tim. I think when you're really young and you're just starting out, how long does a job take? I didn't even know what the job was at that point. I had no time timetable at all.

Naftali: Was there any concern on the future President Clinton's part that your doing this might somehow affect his ability to run?

Clinton: No, no. I mean, first of all, he was running for Congress, a race which he lost by the way. So if he had not been running for Congress, I believe it's very likely he would've said yes. Because a chance to work with John Doar on such a historic assignment like this and you're just a really young out of law school lawyer, hard to say no to that. And Bill never gave it a second thought about my doing it.

Naftali: Did he talk to Ray Thornton about this? He's as important as—

Clinton: I have no idea. I don't know.

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- Naftali: Okay. So in January you arrived. Joe Woods thinks that it was January 19. It doesn't matter which day it was. When you arrived, you were among the first, right?
- Clinton: I think that's right. Yes. Yes. I think those of us from Yale who were going to be the youngest lawyers on the team, my memory is we all got there about the same time. But that's just what I remember. And it was a startup law firm. It had to be put together. There were a group of senior lawyers that John either knew or knew of that he had recruited. And then there were us, I mean, there weren't very many lawyers in the middle of between people like John Doar and Joe Woods and Bernie Nussbaum and Richard Gill, people like that, who had a lot of experience already in the law, some of them in government, and then us newly minted lawyers.
- Naftali: This may surprise people who watch this, but there was an effort to make this a single committee. Although there were people chosen by the minority staff, and one of those that met you right off the bat was Bill Weld.
- Clinton: Yes, that's right.
- Naftali: Could you tell us what you remember of him?
- Clinton: Well, I think there was a very serious effort which I think mostly succeeded because Peter Rodino in the majority hired John Doar and the minority hired Burt Jenner who had started this massive law firm, Jenner & Block. And both Jenner and Doar were experienced lawyers, had really done complicated cases, either civil rights or business or any other of the challenges lawyers face. So Bill Weld was there very early. He was one of the first people that I met and I got to know and I worked with. And it was a great team. And I think we all felt like we were on the same team. I never had the feeling that there was the majority and the minority staff. Obviously they were hired by different members, but we worked very hard to overcome any sense of separation.
- Naftali: People looking back on that era will think there was a certain inevitability about what happened. Historians don't treat it that way. But when you started out, you were supposed to look for grounds for impeachment, but John Doar wasn't asking you for a prosecutorial case.
- Clinton: That's right. I think there are several aspects of this that I hope historians and citizens, particularly young people understand. There were three big challenges that Doar wanted us to meet. One was, well, what are the grounds for impeachment? There had been Andrew Johnson, there had been a number of judges who had been impeached. But the team looking
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at that, and I was a very small part of that doing the research, that team was looking all the way back to early English precedents since the founders took the idea obviously from the common law. There was the issue of how do you proceed? How do you actually set up an appropriate process to consider all of these issues? And then the third was, what are the facts and how do we understand the facts? So there was a team working on grounds for impeachment, how you described what high crimes and misdemeanors were, how it needed to relate to abuse of office and power, if it were, in keeping with the precedents such as they were.

And then there was the process standards that I worked on a lot about, okay, what do we do and how do we do it and what is our role compared to the role of the committee? And then finally, the facts. And this was a method that Doar had used in the Justice Department and probably in his law practice in Wisconsin. And they were statements of information. They were not characterized as evidence because we concluded that it wasn't our job to make a prosecutorial case and present the evidence that supported that case but rather to present the facts to the committee and then the committee would form their own conclusions. So I often laugh thinking about it, but we had these little note cards and we were supposed to put one fact on a note card. So for example, I remember we were working on this and Doar said, "Go right back to the beginning. Who is Richard Nixon? How did he get where he is?" So a fact would be Richard Milhous Nixon was born on, you'd have his date of birth and then you might say in Whittier, California. And Doar would say, "Nope, those are two pieces of information." So you have one card for the year he was born and one card for where he was born because apparently in John's practice he would use these cards to find patterns. And if he didn't have enough of the facts, he couldn't deduce the patterns. So we learned, I mean that's why we had these little cards and they attempted, as I recall, some method in the library to organize and sort them. But really computers were not in common use. And I think John preferred his system anyway. So we spent a lot of time doing these cards and looking for anything that could be a piece of information that might go into the presentation we would make to the committee.

Naftali: Is it true that they used knitting needles as a way of sorting these cards?

Clinton: Well, I think that was a short lived experiment. I don't remember because I wasn't really doing it. But yeah, you took the fact, which was predominantly handwritten, at least the ones I did were hand written. Then it was like transferred onto a punch card and then the punch cards had certain holes in them. And the idea was, it was so primitive that if you took a knitting needle and there you at a stack of these cards and you were looking for his childhood experiences or the committee to reelect the president, whatever it might be, you would take a knitting needle and

you'd go through and you'd pick up the cards that would have the whole in a certain place. I think it was a lot easier if you just kept the cards in front of you and you shuffled them around. And I would see John and some of the senior lawyers talking about that and what's the significance of this piece of information and how does it fit and what does it tell us.

Naftali: Governor Weld told a story about when you arrived, when both of you arrived, John Doar said to you on a Friday, "Would you please produce a memo like grounds for impeachment by Tuesday? I won't ask for Monday because I want you to have a good weekend." Now, it would actually take the lawyers a long time to figure this out. But how did you approach this problem? I'm sure you didn't study this in law school.

Clinton: No. But Bill Weld is absolutely right. I mean, we never had a weekend. We worked 16, 18 hour days. We sometimes would leave the building to go to dinner but then go right back. So this first assignment was just the beginning of what would be the most intense effort that one could imagine. And the grounds for impeachment was part of the research that I contributed to. The procedures, okay, what does this mean? How are we going to do this? Is this a trial? Well, the trial is really in the Senate. So what is it that the House does and how do we set ourselves up to serve the House? And so I worked closely with Joe Woods on what the procedures are. In fact, there is a picture of me sitting at the table with Doar and Woods appearing before, if I remember rightly, one of the subcommittees of the Judiciary Committee to present ideas about process.

Naftali: Maybe Congressman Kastenmeier?

Clinton: That sounds about right. Yes.

Naftali: And Hungate.

Clinton: Mm-hmm. That sounds about right. Yeah.

Naftali: Help people understand what the difference between the committee and a grand jury was.

Clinton: Oh, yeah. Well, the grand jury is first and foremost part of the executive branch of our government. A grand jury in a federal matter is convened by a U.S. attorney or by the Justice Department for the purpose of presenting evidence to determine whether the grand jury will bring an information or indictment against whoever the target of the potential prosecution might be. Its proceedings are supposed to be absolutely secret. The person being questioned does not go in with a lawyer. You go in all by yourself and you're there with whoever the prosecutor has, investigators, FBI, whoever it might be. And then there's a grand jury made up of citizens from the

area. The Judiciary Committee is part of the Congress, and the Congress has the sole authority for determining impeachment. The House brings the articles of impeachment. If they so decide, the Senate conducts the trial. And for us, we were asked by Doar, and I think this probably came from Rodino and others on the committee, to recognize that they were the authority. It wasn't our job to present an article of impeachment. It was our job to present information, to present the legal standards in whatever process we agreed upon. And then it was up to the committee to determine whether it would move forward.

Naftali: To what extent were you involved in the debate over whether James St. Clair, the president's lawyer, should be in the proceedings?

Clinton: I was not involved in that. I knew about it. That was really among the senior lawyers led by Doar and the House members. And my memory is that they were very expansive in permitting St. Clair to be privy to information to be part of the process. But I don't know any more details.

Naftali: Did you have to do any research on subpoenas?

Clinton: I don't recall doing that because we were in a position to negotiate. Remember, the Watergate Committee had already subpoenaed and obtained a wealth of information. And part of the process that Doar had to go through is to work out an agreement with the Watergate committee, Senator Ervin to share what they'd already gotten either voluntarily or through subpoena. That included the tapes to a great extent. So, I don't recall us, but I don't have perfect knowledge of this either. I don't recall us having to subpoena, we had to work out agreements and maybe as part of that, there was a subpoena that had to be either issued or quashed. I don't recall.

Naftali: I know this is a long time ago. But you, you're in your 20s, and you're part of a group that's trying to figure out an issue that this country hadn't looked at for a century. Some people like Bill Weld for example started out thinking that an impeachable offense is a crime and then he changed his mind. I know it's a long time ago, but can you remember how the research affected the way you thought about this?

Clinton: Well, I think similar to Bill Weld once I had done the research it seemed clear to me that the president was not above the law. The president did have certain authorities, certain standing. So it didn't require that there be a crime charged in order for there to be an impeachable offense. But what that impeachable offense was often keyed to what we think of as criminal behavior. So obstruction of justice is a crime. And whether a president is ever charged with obstruction of justice or not, the obstruction of an investigation can represent abuse of power that rises to the level of high

crimes and misdemeanors and therefore be the basis of an article of impeachment.

Naftali: Do you remember thinking about standards of evidence, probable cause, appearing convincing beyond reasonable doubt? The constitution didn't say anything about that.

Clinton: Right. But that's why I think Doar was very careful in what he eventually presented to the committee. I think he believed that the whole enterprise really turned on there being sufficient evidence, not necessarily to the level of beyond a reasonable doubt for a criminal matter, but certainly enough to be persuasive, clear and convincing, because this was in effect the charging mechanism. If there had been a trial then I think Doar would have had to pivot toward a more explicit reliance on beyond a reasonable doubt because that would be how the public would perceive it. But there was no real guidelines for that because what did it mean and who got to determine it? Well, in the end of the day, the articles were passed. If some came out by the House, the trial was held by the Senate and they had the right under the constitution to impose their own understanding of what an impeachable offense was.

Naftali: So one of the debates that some of the fence sitters had was, should you vote for an article of impeachment if you don't think that the Senate will vote to remove. So they were actually already thinking about the trial.

Clinton: Right. Well, I think that that's one way of looking at it and it certainly is defensible. But I think another way of looking at it is that if you are persuaded that the president has abused power, committed a high crime or misdemeanor then it's up to the proof that has to be presented in a trial to determine whether two thirds of the Senate agrees with that. And remember the senators could bring whatever assessment they wanted to this determination. And you couldn't second guess that, you couldn't preempt that. It had to be left to them.

Naftali: As you were doing this research, what were the surprises for you?

Clinton: Well, I mean, it hadn't happened in a presidential setting for over a hundred years. And there was a lot wrong with what was done to Andrew Johnson. He was hardly a paragon of political rectitude, but it was more than it should have been in our assessment, a proceeding based on politics, not on evidence of high crimes or misdemeanors, however one to find that. So a hundred years later you have a crime, the break in of Watergate, you have a very vigorous investigation going on through the Congress already, through the Watergate Committee. And so we were trying to impose an understanding of the law and the history combined with a process that would be viewed as fair, providing due process to the president if articles

of impeachment were decided. So we trying to rely on precedents as much as we could, but we were kind of making it up based on our best understanding of the law as we researched it.

Naftali: Secrecy was important.

Clinton: Totally.

Naftali: And how did Mr. Doar enforce secrecy?

Clinton: I think that, first of all, there are no cell phones, that makes a big difference. But I think he, by just force of character, made it clear to all of us. We did not know where this was going to end up. I certainly didn't. I didn't come into it with any preconceived notion that, okay, this is going to be easy. We're going to lay out all this stuff then the House will impeach and then he'll be convicted in the Senate. I certainly didn't do that. I don't know anybody who did. And because it was such a historic experience, we all felt the weight of that responsibility. And John made very clear that we would be betraying our duty as lawyers and our historic obligation if we talked. And when we would occasionally go out for lunch, the building where we were working would be staked out by reporters who'd be yelling at us. I particularly remember Sam Donaldson who had a really loud yell and he got to know the names of the lawyers, so he would yell, "Hillary, Hillary, come over here and talk to me." We would just walk by. I remember when I appeared at the hearing, at one of the hearings with a Doar and Joe Woods before I went over there because Doar wanted to take me because I had done so much of the work and I appreciated it. But he said, "Don't talk to anybody. Don't make facial expressions. Don't portray any opinion. We're there just to make a presentation to the members of the committee." So it was a matter of honor that we would maintain the secrecy that was so critical for this for this whole investigation.

Naftali: There were a lot of leaks, but they weren't from the staff.

Clinton: No, they weren't. They weren't, not from the staff.

Naftali: How many women were with you on the team?

Clinton: Boy, I don't know. I want to say maybe I mean I can call the names, see the faces, five. There might've been more, but those are the ones that I interacted with the most.

Naftali: I think on Joe Woods' team, on his task force you had John Lintwoods, David Haines, John Davidson, as well as Bill Weld and yourself. After Mr. Woods leaves in May, is that when you move to Bernie's team or does

Bernie take over? Can you remember what happened when Mr. Woods left?

Clinton: No, I really can't remember. I remember working closely with Joe, particularly on the standards to be applied, working with John Lebovitz on the grounds of for impeachment along with Bill Weld. I shared an office with a young lawyer who was in John Doar's law firm in Wisconsin by the name of Tom Bell. And he was very focused on aggregating and recording the facts, the statements of information. So, I don't remember. I do remember that starting in early summer, maybe this was through Bernie, I began listening to tapes. And I began to listen to the tapes of President Nixon talking to his staff members, talking to Henry Kissinger, talking to his Filipino valet. And I particularly remember what we called the tape of tapes, which was Richard Nixon taping himself listening to tapes. And I was one of several people whose job it was, was to try to insofar as possible perfect the transcription. So we would sit there with the headphones on, just exhaustingly listening, trying to make out words. Some of the transcription already occurred, but some of it was garbled, it was not at all clear. But the tape of tapes was a big revelation to me. I had no idea that he would be taping himself listening to tapes and then coming up with rationalizations. So he would call somebody into the room and he would say, "I want to play this for you. Now when I said that, here's what I meant." So it was really a shocking experience.

Naftali: What do you think you concluded that the president, then president was involved in the cover up?

Clinton: I think for me it was listening to the tapes, and particularly the so called tape of tapes because it was almost a textbook example of someone trying to get stories straight and getting other people to get their stories straight. I tried really hard not to have an opinion during the winter and spring. But then we would hear from John and Bernie and others how they were piecing together the facts that they had had us accumulate. And there were a couple of facts that they found particularly telling like this has been written about numerous times. But when Nixon threw the ash tray, and I think that that fact had a big impact on some of the members of the House committee because when you're given information that you expect, but it doesn't come out the way you wanted it to, so you pick up an ashtray and out of frustration, anger, disappointment, you throw it. I had the feeling that that was a turning point when that fact was placed in with everything else for a number of the lawyers.

Naftali: So you actually can remember that moment?

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- Clinton: Yeah, because I mean that was just a turning point because either he didn't know and he'd been manipulated by his staff, or he did know and he was trying to cover up, and that's how it came across.
- Naftali: I think that information came from Colson.
- Clinton: Could be.
- Naftali: The day before Article I was passed by a bipartisan majority, Congressman Sandman and Wiggins went on an attack against Congressman Sarbanes, I'm sure you will remember this. But it had an effect on the staff because that night the attack was, you don't have enough specifics. We need specifics. And you cannot impeach a president without specifics. And that night staff worked tirelessly to put together specifics to go with every charge in Article I. Did you participate in that?
- Clinton: Yeah. I recall that. See, that was the necessary transitioning away from just presenting the statements of information. I think Doar and the other senior lawyers were very aware that they didn't want to get ahead of the committee, which I think was the right position for them to be in. But then when the committee was saying, "Wait a minute, I can't wait through all of this. You've got to tell me what it means. You have to construct an argument and if you're looking at Article I, you have to tell me what are the pieces of information that either support it or disprove it." And that's when we had to pivot into producing a much more detailed case, if you will.
- Naftali: Do you remember the work done by C. Vann Woodward?
- Clinton: I do. I do, yes. I don't know whether John knew him or Burke Marshall knew him. I don't remember that. But he was brought on board to provide some historical perspective and analysis.
- Naftali: Were you sort of the liaison?
- Clinton: I worked, I can't say I worked with him. He produced his own material, but I was available to him to do whatever he needed done.
- Naftali: I know we don't have a lot of time. I just want to ask you a few more questions if I may. Do you remember working with Fred Altshuler?
- Clinton: Oh, very closely, yes.
- Naftali: Tell us about him please.
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- Clinton: So Fred is a meticulous lawyer. I mean, he had a very clear view about how to gather facts, how to evaluate them and how to present them. He worked incredibly hard. He was somebody that I admired and really valued as a colleague.
- Naftali: Did you do any research on the abuse of powers, IRS issue?
- Clinton: I don't remember. I don't know. I probably pitched in on everything, but I can't remember.
- Naftali: Where were you when the articles were being passed?
- Clinton: I think I was in the office. I think that's where I was.
- Naftali: Was it a surprise?
- Clinton: Was it a surprise? By the time they actually were voted on, it wasn't a surprise because I think Rodino and his committee staff had a pretty fair idea of who was going to vote for it by then.
- Naftali: What was your reaction to the Supreme Court case, U.S. v. Nixon?
- Clinton: About the tapes and the--?
- Naftali: Yes.
- Clinton: I thought the outcome was really required because the tapes were done in the course of his official role as president. And so I think that having to turn them over and having to get them cataloged and be available for the public was the right decision.
- Naftali: Okay. Just three more questions then we'll be done. What do you remember of President Nixon's resignation?
- Clinton: I was not at all happy or jubilant about him resigning. I thought it was a very sad chapter in our history. I thought the actual departure was a really poignant, painful moment for him and his family as well as for the country. So I watched it on TV, like I guess everybody else did. And it was a really very unfortunate, sad outcome.
- Naftali: What was it like to meet President Nixon?
- Clinton: I met him when Bill was in the White House. I don't recall ever meeting him before, but I haven't thought hard about that. He had been to Russia, he called the White House and asked if he could come by and brief Bill about his trip to Russia. Bill was fascinated by the idea because despite his
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resignation and his abuse of power, he was an incredibly experienced, intelligent person who knew a lot about the world. And so Chelsea and I and Bill, he was brought into the White House and brought up the elevator to the second floor because Bill was going to meet him in his private study. He came at night as I recall, but maybe just right after he got back from Russia. So Chelsea and I and Bill greeted him, welcomed him back to the White House. He had obviously thought about what he wanted to say. So when he saw me, he said, "Well, I know you're working hard on healthcare. That's really a big task." And when he saw Chelsea, he said, "My daughters went to Sidwell like you are." So he had something that he'd prepared to say to us. And he had a folder so I think he'd written a memo. But then he and Bill went off out to talk about Russia.

Naftali: And you went to his funeral?

Clinton: I did. I went to his funeral. And one of the really few regrets I have about our eight years in the White House is that I didn't go to Pat Nixon's funeral. I think we were just not well informed or understanding of the protocol. We had other things and I think the schedulers or whoever was looking at this basically didn't appreciate the significance that it should've had. So I deeply regret not going to Mrs. Nixon's funeral, but we did go to President Nixon's funeral.

Naftali: And President Clinton gives a eulogy did, were you involved at all in how he described Nixon?

Clinton: I don't recall. He probably talked to me about it. We kind of bounce ideas off of each other. I may have seen a draft, but I don't recall any specific advice that I gave him.

Naftali: What was it like to be in that -- you were among people that you had studied. How did it make you feel?

Clinton: Well, by that time I was much more familiar with the role of being First Lady. And it was the right and proper thing to be at his funeral to represent the country as we were all doing. So, I talked to a number of the former presidents whom I knew, the former first ladies whom I knew. And it was a beautiful day in Yorba Linda and it was a very touching funeral memorial service.

Naftali: What should the country have learned from the House's role in impeachment in 1974?

Clinton: I think that it's such a serious undertaking. Do not pursue it for trivial partisan political purposes. If it does fall to you while you're in the House to examine abuses of power by the president, be as circumspect and

careful as John Doar was. Restrain yourself from grand standing and holding news conferences and playing to your base. This goes way beyond whose side is on you're on or who's on your side. And try to be faithful purveyors of the history and the solemnity of the process.

Naftali: And I guess that lesson wasn't learned.

Clinton: That lesson was not learned. And that's why I think it's important to keep talking about how serious this is. It should not be done for political partisan purposes. So those who did it in the late 90s, those who talk about it now should go back and study the painstaking approach that the impeachment inquiry staff took. And it was bipartisan. You had a bipartisan staff and you had both Democratic and Republican members of the committee reaching the same conclusions that there were grounds for impeachment.

Naftali: Secretary Clinton, thank you for your time today.

Clinton: Thank you. Good to talk to you.

Naftali: Thank you.