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JOE MCCAIN INTERVIEW
JOHN MCCAIN: FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS
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JOE MCCAIN
Brother of John McCain
November 07, 2017
Interviewed by Teddy Kunhardt
Total Running Time: 1 Hour 13 Minutes

START TC: 01;00;00;00

QT: 01;00;10;00

TITLE

Growing up a military kid

QT: 01;00;15;13

JOE McCAIN:

Well, of course, we had a life that was different from most people's because we kept moving from place to place because of Dad's changing duty stations and often, that would mean we'd go in the middle of a school year, November, April, and a hard part for us was all the societies had been formed. So you basically had three ways to get along if you were a really superior athlete, new students were welcomed, if you're were really good-looking, and at least I wasn't, or if you had a good rap, you know, you could tell stories, and that's how we got along. And I think that's really why John is so good as a politician is because of those, you know, is having to talk to and entreat strangers.

QT: 01;01;02;03

TITLE

John was a wrestler

QT: 01;01;06;12

JOE McCAIN:

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He was a good athlete, but we didn't play major sports. We were wrestlers, and John played some weight football, meaning a weight-class football but, and he was good at it, but he was a really good wrestler.

QT: 01;01;20;12

TITLE

On John's ability to fit in at new schools

QT: 01;01;25;04

JOE McCAIN:

That didn't take very long time. I mean he was pretty slick and pretty cool. By about the third or fourth or fifth move, he got pretty good at getting his way into a group.

QT: 01;01;37;07

TITLE

The age differences of the McCain siblings

QT: 01;01;41;16

JOE McCAIN:

My brother's about 5½ years older and my sister's about 7½ years older. I was born in April. They were both born in August.

QT: 01;01;50;13

TITLE

On being the baby of the family

QT: 01;01;54;08

JOE McCAIN:

You know, I, it's like being asked about being poor or something. You just don't know, so I wasn't babied or anything that I'm aware of but so it was fine, you know.

QT: 01;02;04;02

TITLE

John and Joe's relationship

QT: 01;02;08;18

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JOE McCAIN:

When there's a 5½-year difference, you're just in different eras of school, like, and I always admired him, I mean everything he did was cool as a kid when I was 10 and he was 16, whatever he did was just, you know just, funny. And he... can I tell you two little anecdotes?

QT: 01;02;28;09

TEDDY KUNHARDT:

Please.

QT: 01;02;28;23

JOE McCAIN:

He was a funny guy. I mean he was a clever, witty guy. Once we were driving along in a car — he probably was 16, 17, so that makes me 10 or 11 — and we got behind a lady at a stoplight and this wasn't in the era of cell phones or anything, but she was somehow drifted off and it went through green and then red and then yellow and then green again, and Johnny leans out the window and he goes, "Hey, lady, that's all the colors we got," and I remember I thought that was so funny as a 10-year-old kid, rolling on the floor.

QT: 01;03;03;00

JOE McCAIN:

There was another time, and this was told to me by a buddy of his. I wasn't actually there, but since the way he told, I'm sure it was true and that's that John couldn't get his car started. It had stalled at a light or railroad or something, and a guy's honking at him, and John leans out the window. He says, "Hey, buddy, I'll tell you what. I'll lean on your horn if you can start my car." And he just looked you know—I mean he would say stuff like that, you know? He's a funny guy.

QT: 01;03;30;17

TITLE

John's notorious temper started as a child

QT: 01;03;35;02

JOE McCAIN:

No, when he was a baby, he used to get real mad and then would get blue in the face. Now this is something I never saw, but my dad and mother told this

story so many times. He'd get blue in the face and finally a doctor suggested that they get a washtub and whenever he did that to put them in the cold water and sure enough, that cured the problem. But as a little boy, apparently, he got really furious at stuff, would just, you know, like that.

QT: 01;04;02;02

TITLE

On John getting in trouble as a kid

QT: 01;04;06;09

JOE McCAIN:

Not that I'm aware of. I mean he was always kind of skittery on the edge, but I think John had a sense about staying within the boundaries like I don't remember any school suspensions or having to go see the principal and never anything involving authorities, anything. He was just, he just didn't like the rules of being in school much, but never did enough to get in trouble.

QT: 01;04;29;09

TITLE

On John fighting as a kid

QT: 01;04;34;01

JOE McCAIN:

He must have, but I just don't know of any personal experiences. There was one time we were at an officers' club and he had taken me and my date along as his guest, and there was some argument that went on between another flight squadron, which those squabbles are common in the Navy, and this guy was actually going to come to John in blows. And I took my glasses off. I was all ready to jump in but then a friend of his name Dietrich came in between the two, and the other guy said, "Look, you have no business here." He said, "This is my business. I'm with John," and the guy backed down because Dietrich was big, you know.

QT: 01;05;14;07

TITLE

Jack McCain and growing up military

QT: 01;05;17;16

JOE McCAIN:

Well, by the time dad got stars, we were all gone. I mean I left when dad had just made rear admiral. One time, he was the youngest rear admiral in the Navy, in part, because he went to the Naval Academy at 16, which he later said was just too young, but so we grew up as kind of a middle-class middle-level officer, which meant we didn't stay in quarters or anything. We had to rent a place, and they had, whatever, so we didn't we didn't live the grand life that the admiral has with the quarters and the stewards and things like that. It's just an ordinary life for a Navy junior, you know for a military family.

QT: 01;06;01;18

TITLE

His grandfather and the family line of John Sidney McCains

QT: 01;06;06;09

JOE McCAIN:

I was born in 1942. Granddad was the, you know, that was two months, four months after Pearl Harbor and Granddad went off to war as a carrier admiral. I apparently only saw him once in my entire life when he came back to the States for some reason briefly, and there was a picture of him holding me and apparently, he said to my mother, he said, "Look, we have the same eyes," and I was probably two maybe. I remember him sort of as this guy that I liked somehow as a little kid, but I never saw him any other time except for that one brief moment because he died when he came home from World War II.

QT: 01;06;52;11

JOE McCAIN:

His name was John Sidney McCain and he became senior. There was another John Sidney McCain, his father, but nobody used junior and senior in the South in those days for reasons I'm not sure, but dad became, or Granddad became senior, then my father was junior and John was the third and his son is the fourth and his grandson, Jack's kid, is the fifth. Now there've been four straight John Sidney McCain's at the Naval Academy. That's never happened, and this little kid, I'm sure, as John says, 'will go into the family business', and so he'll become the fifth. Yeah, it's a boy. That's right, yeah, so he'll become the fifth, but these days, he can be a girl go, of course.

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QT: 01;07;40;04

TITLE

His grandfather and Naval history

QT: 01;07;46;09

JOE McCAIN:

Kind of an interesting story. He was, he graduated from the Naval Academy in 1902 and then he went—he became a, just a junior officer aboard a battleship. As a matter of fact, he was on the last part of the Great White Fleet Teddy Roosevelt sent around the world in 1905. Now do you know who Chester Nimitz?

QT: 01;08;11;00

TEDDY KUNHARDT:

No.

QT: 01;08;11;17

JOE McCAIN:

Okay, Nimitz was the entire Pacific commander in World War II. He really led all those island invasions and so forth and when he was an ensign, my grandfather something called a passed midshipman, which was a probationary period they had in those days for two years, and they run an old gunboat called the Panay down on that on the Yangtze River to patrol those water there. Nimitz was the commanding officer and my grandfather was the only other officer aboard, and he was a passed midshipman. Then he went onto serve in fleets. He'd always—ya know, by the time between the two wars came, all of a sudden, there was this new concept of naval air power, of airplanes flying off ships.

QT: 01;09;03;22

JOE McCAIN:

And my granddad wanted to get into flying but he was too old, 30, 31, whatever he was. Now later, after they start building the brand-new, these carriers, they've got a lot of pilots but none of them had much sea duty and simply weren't fit to command a big ship, so they went around to a bunch of senior captains, Navy captains and said, "We'll send you to a special nine-month Naval Observer course at Pensacola so you can command a carrier." My granddad said, "I'll do it, but I want to do the whole two years."

QT: 01;09;39;03

TITLE

Naval History take two and a story about a student pilot trainer

QT: 01;09;44;00

JOE McCAIN:

Right, in the 1930s, they were building these brand-new carriers but the pilots were too young and too inexperienced to command these big ships, so somebody had a really bright idea and that's to go around to a bunch of senior captains and tell them they would send them to a special short course at Pensacola, which is the Naval aviation's student training, and my grandfather said he'd do it but only if he could do the full two years flight course. They said, "Captain, you can't take two years." He said, "Well, that's my offer. I'm very happy commanding capital ships." Secretly, he wasn't. He wanted to get into air. Well, they actually let him go to Pensacola and he got his wings at the age of 52, when most young pilots are getting them 24, 25, and I think he may have been the oldest man to ever get Navy wings. I'm not positive about that.

QT: 01;10;36;08

JOE McCAIN:

And he was also a terrible pilot. They used to—they used to announce, "McCain's in the air," and everybody would—you want to hear another funny story about Granddad? I don't know if this takes too much time but so when he reported to Pensacola, a captain those days was a more serious rank than it is now, smaller Navy, and he showed up and a student pilot who's a Lieutenant JD was going to give him his first ride in a military aircraft, the trainer, open cockpit, biplane trainer, and my grandfather said to the kid, he said, "Now, I know I'm a captain. I don't want you to worry about that. I want you to treat me just like any other student," and the lieutenant JD saluted and said, "Aye, aye, sir," got him in the plane and in those days, the passenger rode in the front cockpit and the pilot was in the back. I'm sure there was a reason. I don't know what it was.

QT: 01;11;31;23

JOE McCAIN:

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This guy took him up in the air and he's flying along smooth, disconnected the hardwired intercom and went into a dive and did barrel rolls and all kinds of stunt flying to the point that other students in the buildings came out of the buildings to watch what the hell was going up over the airfield. My granddad apparently was screaming. You couldn't hear it but he was terrified. He thought the kid had died and then finally the, the pilot levels off, comes to a smooth landing, and my grandfather white-faced — the pilot has to undo his seatbelt — he goes out on the wing, staggers off of it, and then goes behind a bush and throws up. And when he came back, Mitscher and Halsey were there, and he said, "You know, you're never too old to get a goddamn lesson in leadership," and the student came up, said, "Did I do what you want?" Captain said, "You did exactly right. It was your plane, and I appreciate the ride."

QT: 01;12;34;16

TITLE

His grandfather's Naval career continued

QT: 01;12;38;10

JOE McCAIN:

He was a carrier admiral, but not the senior one. There was some more senior, Halsey, but he commanded all the Naval air land-based aircraft for the Battle of Okinawa and his boss wasn't terribly aggressive — a guy named Gormley — and both of them were sent back to Washington, and Gormley never did anything significant again. Fortunately, Admiral King, who was the CNO, and Nimitz, who was the new command of the Pacific, liked Dad and knew this—there was something awry here. He became then director of the Bureau of Naval Aeronautics, a brand-new job, and finally got out of the war in 1943 and fought for the rest of those two years. He became known as a very aggressive commander going in to attack Japanese ships and planes and that sort of thing.

QT: 01;13;34;14

TITLE

His father's Naval career

QT: 01;13;38;22

JOE McCAIN:

My grandfather had tried to go to aviation school but he had some kind of a heart murmur, which was you know, noninvasive, benevolent, and the submarine doctors knew that, that there was nothing significant about this kind of a murmur. He went to submarine school, got him through the ranks. By the time World War II comes along, he's in command of a submarine, goes into the Pacific and Japanese-controlled waters, and commanded three different submarines in World War II. Dieppe charged a couple times and they had some torpedoes that didn't work, you know fancy new torpedoes that had a glitch, and he was reported to have fired four torpedoes at a battleship and they all went [imitating thudding sounds] without exploding. In fact, we lost some submarine officers early on because of that, I think, and then so he spends a war doing that, submarines.

QT: 01;14;38;03

TITLE

Where they lived during WWII

QT: 01;14;43;06

JOE McCAIN:

We were in Cal—Coronado I think. I should know more. For a time, we lived with my mother's twin sister in Los Angeles and then we lived in Coronado. I'm not real clear.

QT: 01;14;59;10

TITLE

Family dynamics

QT: 01;15;03;13

JOE McCAIN:

There were always family dinners. We weren't allowed to watch TV or anything like that. In fact, my mother and brother and I would get into these complicated arguments about history and politics and so forth. When Dad was there, he'd let it go until he felt we were being disrespectful. He'd say, "Knock it off," and in these arguments were vociferous, I mean, and passionate but like Jewish scholars arguing the same point with little differences and so passions of that kind of thing, if that makes sense.

QT: 01;15;37;09

TITLE

The relationship between his father and grandfather

QT: 01;15;41;19

JOE McCAIN:

The relationship between my father and my grandfather was as close as any father-son relationship ever was I think. As a matter of fact, when my granddad died, my father was still at sea, so he couldn't make his funeral in Arlington. And when my mother flew back to Coronado in a Navy plane, my father had gotten there, and he was wearing an arm band. And Dad said to my mother, he said, "I'm glad I missed it. It would've killed me," and he told me one time that he felt his father's presence sometimes actually walking with him. He didn't—he knew it wasn't a hallucination, but he just felt that, and I thought that must be comforting.

QT: 01;16;24;17

JOE McCAIN:

And my father and my brother had a close relationship but of a different sort in that my dad, my brother always admired my father but sometimes, John being what he was—for instance, my father went to Korea as the executive officer of a cruiser. When he came back, John had grown this long duck tail Waterfront-type haircut, Marlon Brando and all that. My father ordered him to go get a haircut and it was a vociferous argument, which John, of course, lost and he went and got a haircut.

QT: 01;17;04;04

TITLE

On John's resentment of his father's absence

QT: 01;17;08;22

JOE McCAIN:

I never had that sense, so I'm sure John felt that way but it was just something that somehow I knew Dad as a Naval officer would be gone for long periods of time and he was, but my mother sort of ran the family anyway and the reason for that is that happens to most Navy wives because when the husbands are at sea, the mother has to do all the bookkeeping and checks and the family and whatever, so she always ran things. So, I just don't remember any painful absences the way John does. I think he was more aware perhaps.

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QT: 01;17;43;17

TITLE

His father was the discipline, his mother ran the household

QT: 01;17;48;03

JOE McCAIN:

I think Dad's presence was always kind of the iron code, you know of things you just didn't stray, like lying and that sort of stuff, but my mother did all the day-to-day stuff you know, and would—I think she's the one who always picked where we would live in and when a new duty station, probably chose the schools for us and that sort of stuff, but she was a powerful force.

QT: 01;18;14;04

TITLE

Traits he and John share with their mother

QT: 01;18;18;19

JOE McCAIN:

Probably a quickness to—well, first of all, to really enjoy things and to do a lot of different things, but also to be a little quick to temper perhaps, also kinda stubborn in some ways, but in a sense, that stubbornness gave us kind of a staying power in a world that was always changing around us. I think those are the main things, plus I'm not sure, personality is certainly a part of because she's very viable and very personable.

QT: 01;18;53;21

TITLE

Humor and his mother

QT: 01;18;58;11

JOE McCAIN:

One of the jokes between me and my mother, I asked her, I said, "Mother, do you think I'm funny?" And she says, "No!" and I'll tell you another little story if I'm not taking too much time. When she had her stroke, she was taken to Walter Reed, which is in Bethesda Naval Hospital and she was pretty comatotic. Having a stroke is like being hit by a train and for a while, it just knocks all your senses flat. And I came in the next morning and there was a,

just a gaggle of doctors leaning over her bed, and she had tubes coming out, all at stuff, and they were trying—what they were doing is they were trying to assay her cognitive function.

QT: 01;19;36;22

JOE McCAIN:

What did she know? What did she understand? And they were getting a lot of mixed messages. I listened for a while and asked the doctor, I said, "Do you mind if I try something?" He said, "Absolutely," so I leaned down to my mother with all these things. I said, "Mother, do you think I'm funny?" And she said, "No!" and I mean vociferously. I told the doctors, "I think she has a central cognitive function," so you know, and I don't think she thinks John is funny either. Ya know, she just thinks we're wise guys, you know.

QT: 01;20;07;13

TITLE

His dad's physical appearance

QT: 01;20;11;23

JOE McCAIN:

He was a little guy. I think about 5'4", and when he goes to the Naval Academy, I think he was even about 5'2" or less and maybe 90 pounds. He had to get a waiver on that. He had to go meet with a superintendent, director of bureau personnel, rather, to even get in the Naval Academy, so but he was a little wiry guy. Except for during World War II and submarines, he got kind of pudgy and he came back and he was upset with himself with that, and he did these—it was the Canadian Air Force put out a series of exercise. I think there were called 5BX. I'm not sure.

QT: 01;20;55;08

JOE McCAIN:

He used to do those every damn morning and another thing he would do—we lived at—he would walk to the Pentagon every day and that's a pretty good hike and no walking shoes in those days. We had just these, you know just these military uniform shoes, and he's to do that every day, so the guy stayed thin and fit after that spate of being a submariner and eating because that's all he did was drink coffee and sit around and eat, no exercise aboard those old World War II submarines. A World War II submarine is

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essentially a tube Conning tower. In fact, they had to share beds, ya know, bunks.

QT: 01;21;35;15

JOE McCAIN:

He should've gotten an award from the South American Tobacco Company. He smoked about 10 cigars a day. He always had a cigar in his mouth and as a matter of fact, when he got to be senior, people were sending him cigars all the time, big, huge, ridiculous cigars are really good—the one thing he wouldn't do Havana cigars because it was against, a little more serious about Cuba in those days. And he smoked those cigars all the time, so I got used to cigar smoke. Most people don't. I still like it. I walk into a home and there's a guy who's been smoking a cigar.

QT: 01;22;10;04

TITLE

John's favorite movies

QT: 01;22;14;12

JOE McCAIN:

One night, he told me and, again, I think I'm about 10 or 11—no maybe a little older, maybe he's home from the Naval Academy or boarding school, one or the other, and he says, "Here, there's a movie I want you to watch," so we sat down and watched a movie called Viva Zapata! with Marlon Brando and it's still a terrific film, and I thought that was his all-time favorite film. Until he, it was the—I'm sorry. I forgot the other film but, anyway, that was his favorite film for a while. It's a great movie if you've never seen it.

QT: 01;22;48;16

JOE McCAIN:

Ya know, the guy's fights against higher odds and loses a little and wins a little and finally, he dies in the end, but he admired that heroism and character that this guy had.

QT: 01;23;03;23

JOE McCAIN:

On the Waterfront of course, because again that's a guy who's a little guy fighting against powerful organized crime and wins. Rebel Without a Cause.

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That's a famous James Dean movie. He only made three movies before he got killed. Bridge on the River Kwai, I didn't know that because I personally think Bridge on the River Kwai's just too damn long, but again, it's you know, prisoners and—in fact, I'll bet it's because he was a POW that he related to those POWs.

QT: 01;23;35;05

JOE McCAIN:

Paths of Glory is a great film, an early film. Kirk Douglas. He plays this really wonderful role as this guy fighting against the establishment because of the terrible waste of these troops. Viva Zapata! I've mentioned. Again, it's about a true Mexican revolutionary hero who fought against the corrupt presidents.

QT: 01;23;57;23

TITLE

His dad after WWII and later leaving the Navy

QT: 01;24;03;08

JOE McCAIN:

What dad did when he came back, he worked in various war plans and developed this presentation that he became famous for, first called Sea Power then the Two Ocean Challenge and so forth.

QT: 01;24;16;21

JOE McCAIN:

When he left the Navy, yeah, that was hard because he was—his health failed fairly steadily after that, and he was going to be an ambassador to one of the Southeast Asian countries, I think Cambodia but I'm not sure and that was canceled because he had developed some grand mal seizures, which later but to be understood there was some brain damage that he'd had.

QT: 01;24;50;04

TITLE

His father's alcoholism

QT: 01;24;54;17

JOE McCAIN:

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See, my father was—had the kind of addiction to alcohol that heroin addicts had but he would fight it and he wouldn't drink for a year or two years or three years and then when he'd have a drink, he'd go into this binge that would last about three or four or five days. He'd recover from it, so I always admired his character for being able to do that, to get over the damn booze and fight it for another two or three years. It just sometimes got to him, you know.

QT: 01;25;26;03

JOE McCAIN:

In fact, when he used to go on this binge, my mother would simply call into whoever his boss was. He had the flu and that was fine, then McCain came back to work and was always, you know, going 140 miles an hour and doing all kinds of things, so it never—otherwise, he wouldn't have been made captain of the heavy cruiser or especially wouldn't've been made CINCPAC cos the fact that he drank too much was sorta known I guess to his buddies but not that he was an alcoholic. That was pretty well hidden.

QT: 01;25;56;14

TITLE

On his father's high energy and traits from their parents

QT: 01;26;01;07

JOE McCAIN:

I think that's where John gets much of that. Now my mother's all—my father used to say about my mother, "She's the smartest woman I ever met," and the problem I have with her is trying to find out what she wants because she won't always tell me. So if I can find out what she wants and get it for her, then everything's smooth again, so but I think John and dad both were smart. My father was told by his father that gentleman and a scholar literally means you have to be extremely well read, and so Dad had a library that had Oscar Wilde and Dickens and the Rise and Fall by Carlisle and—and he read all these fantastic books. He was extremely well read, and so John followed in that tradition because there were always books in the house.

QT: 01;26;56;19

JOE McCAIN:

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We've always been voracious readers. I mean John may've not done terribly well in school, but he knew more than most people that he was with, just not the calculus and the, you know.

QT: 01;27;08;05

TITLE

Aunt Rowena, their mother's twin

QT: 01;27;14;08

JOE McCAIN:

Let me tell you the story. When, after my aunt's husband died, she would spend a lot of time with Mother and Dad, especially when he got to be these senior commands like Commander-in-Chief of Naval Forces Europe and then CINCPAC, and so you know, these high commands also have a lot of social stuff to them. You have to go to the Kings this or you have to visit a speech but then meet with whoever the rulers were, and so he'd take them both along and they looked very much alike.

QT: 01;27;49;19

JOE McCAIN:

I mean we could tell them apart but most people couldn't, and so there were these two beautiful women up on the stage when he'd make a speech or hold a press conference or something like that. One reporter would inevitably ask, "Admiral, how do you tell these two women apart?" and my father just waited for that. He'd take the cigar out of his mouth. He said, "That's their lookout." and that always got a laugh. He waited that line, but that was his saying.

QT: 01;28;16;14

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, and I even asked Dad once, I said—because I loved my Aunt Rowena. She was my ultimate mother and didn't get mad at me the way your own mother can, and I asked him, I said, "How is it having Aunt Rowena around?" He said. "Look, it makes your mother happy so that makes me happy." Y'know.

QT: 01;28;33;15

TITLE

John meets and marries Carol

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JOE McCAIN:

she was married to another pilot—and they got divorced, and then John and she started dating. I don't know all the details because he was in a different place where I was, but they started dating, fell love, and then got married at Bookbinders in Philadelphia. I went up for that.

QT: 01;28;53;06

JOE McCAIN:

Bookbinders is a famous restaurant in Philadelphia that specializes in seafood and so they, and they'd become friends with the Bookbinders somehow, maybe through Carol and so they got married there.

QT: 01;29;06;15

JOE McCAIN:

Well actually, it was a small, I mean I was part of the wedding party but there really wasn't that [sings wedding march] any of that stuff and I think part of that maybe is because Carol was divorced, they didn't—I don't know exactly but it wouldn't make any difference today but anyway, they had a nice wedding but it was a, you know it was in a courtyard, if I remember. Maybe it was in a church, I can't remember, but I can remember us all being in the courtyard for a photograph.

QT: 01;29;29;08

TITLE

On Carol

QT: 01;29;33;11

JOE McCAIN:

She was, you know, very animated, funny, and you know a lot of fun, basically.

QT: 01;29;43;23

TITLE

Carol's two boys from her first marriage

QT: 01;29;48;01

JOE McCAIN:

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Two boys, Doug and Andy. Doug, as you probably know, was a carrier pilot himself and now flies for American Airlines. Andy is the comptroller or maybe even the vice president for economics or whatever for Cindy's Hensley & Co. Good boys, both of them. I've always liked them.

QT: 01;30;09;23

TITLE

John goes to Vietnam

QT: 01;30;14;15

JOE McCAIN:

Well, he was a trained war pilot. He wanted to get into the war and he wouldn't let them for a while because they wanted him to do this or that or whatever, but finally, he made it to Vietnam and as you probably know, he was on the Forrestal. They had that terrible fire, and then they brought everybody back from the Forrestal, and he said, "No, no, I want to go," so he wound up on the USS Oriskany, and I think it was his 10th combat mission that he was shot down.

QT: 01;30;44;06

TITLE

John is shot down in Vietnam

QT: 01;30;49;06

JOE McCAIN:

I was a newspaper reporter in San Diego for the San Diego Union, and I got a call in the middle of the night. This would be October 27th, the next day, and my father and mother were both on the phone, which was very unusual. Usually one would call me, not the other, and they told me that John had been shot down, and I said, "What happened?" They said, "Well, the fellow pilots report a fireball, and they think he—he didn't make it," and I remember this, like one of those balls that they knock down buildings with, hit me right in the chest, and I remember pausing and I said, "Well, what do we do now?" and my father said, "We just pray for the boy."

QT: 01;31;35;22

JOE McCAIN:

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Now, we weren't, as family members, we weren't supposed to talk to anybody about our kin being shot down because maybe he was still on the ground and trying to escape and any public information about their having been shot down may help the North Vietnamese, but in my mind, he's not alive anymore from what I could tell. I used to listen to a news, an all-news radio station. I'd wake up to that, and I woke up and it was this middle of this story about admiral's son captured by the North Vietnamese, and I woke up and I said, "Did I hear what I think I heard?" and I called a friend of mine who was working for the Associated Press.

QT: 01;32;21;13

JOE McCAIN:

He said, "Yeah, your brother has been picked up." I said, "I'll be damned." Now, in my mind, he'd been dead for two days and maybe it was even 2½, I went into the newspaper that day, and everybody's commiserating and I'm pretty happy. I realized that that's very confusing to them, puzzling, so I had to sit them all down, explain that I thought he was dead for 2½ days and then they understood.

QT: 01;32;47;11

JOE McCAIN:

But his being alive was just like the resurrection itself because the Navy had said he died and told a four-star admiral that, and so when he was picked up—what apparently happened he was on the ground bleeding badly, been battered by his own airplane. They'd smashed his shoulder with a rifle butt, and they just put him in a hut and they're going to let him bleed out and then somehow, they found out that his father was this big warlord, this big Navy warlord. In their mind, all the military commanders were also controlled property and were powerful politically. They didn't understand the U.S., very little power, so they saved him for negotiating purposes. Otherwise, he would've died.

QT: 01;33;34;06

TITLE

Finding out John was still alive

QT: 01;33;39;05

JOE McCAIN:

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Yeah, we had a phone call sometime during the day but it was, you know, after the news broke, it's hard to get a hold of Admiral McCain and they'd said, "Hold on, Joe, and he can't," so, you know, I talked sometime during the day and, of course, we were all just, the amount of relief and joy really can't be overstated you know at that, because we knew he was dead. You know?

QT: 01;34;05;00

TITLE

Their father wouldn't talk about John while he was a POW

QT: 01;34;10;19

JOE McCAIN:

My father never talked about John. As a matter fact, when reporters would often ask him questions, he would say, "As you may be able to understand, I don't like to talk about the boy. I'll just tell you that I pray for him many times a day." He would never—because he didn't want anything, he said to be used in those camps, and the North Vietnamese used everything they could, so he never talked about it, except to say that, "I pray for the boy."

QT: 01;34;39;06

JOE McCAIN:

Well, he and I talked a little, but it was basically, not any particular details, but the fact that he was there and you know, conditions weren't good but he was alive, that he was tough, and that sort of stuff. I don't remember any detailed conversation with him.

QT: 01;34;55;04

TITLE

Their mother wouldn't talk about John while he was a POW

QT: 01;34;59;17

JOE McCAIN:

Nor her. She didn't like to talk about it either because it was hurtful, and but military wives become very practiced in suppressing feelings because the way soldiers, when their buddies drop, they have to keep going or the battle's lost, so they just have to keep chugging, and they take it out private ways.

QT: 01;35;22;19

TITLE

Carol handled John's captivity well

QT: 01;35;28;10

JOE McCAIN:

She handled it actually pretty well but for the same reasons and she actually became involved in the POW-MIA issue. She was living in Orange Park, Florida, which is the last home they had, and so she handled it pretty well and handled it largely by getting involved in the efforts that we all had to force the North Vietnamese to observe the Geneva Convention. They were keeping—they wouldn't identify a lot of the POWs and that's really a problem when you don't know if your husband is alive or dead, so she got involved in that, and then I think she went to work at the White House in the Visitors Bureau, which can be pretty busy, but I think she handled it pretty well. I actually went down to visit her in Florida for two weeks and she showed me a lot of the sites in Florida and she seemed to be handling it pretty well. Privately, we talked about how terrible it was and sad it was but basically, she was like me, "God, he's alive." Ya know, that's the main thing.

QT: 01;36;34;17

JOE McCAIN:

I don't know exactly what she told the kids, but the kids knew, at least the two boys did. I'm not sure if Sidney did.

QT: 01;36;41;00

TITLE

The French report on John as a POW

QT: 01;36;46;03

JOE McCAIN:

I was, again, at the newspaper and a guy at the local CBS station, I think it was, a guy I knew, kind of a semi-pal, called me and said, "Joe, we've got this. We've just gotten this tape of this interview from this French reporter." He said, "Come on over. We'll screen it for you," and here he was in that bed with that one arm up in the cast and talking haltingly and whatever, but so that was, that was hard to watch this guy that you'd always seen vertical and playing tennis and running around and you know, to be so badly but he sounded lucid to me and he sounded connected. And I even understood that

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he was being a tiny bit evasive and to not say too much and also to try to probably give some information to the POW guys.

QT: 01;37;39;15

TITLE

John kept his sense of humor as a POW

QT: 01;37;43;17

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, he'd kept his sense of humor even then. When he was in the POW camps, I understand from some of the other POWs, you had to watch out for him because he'd pull pranks every now and then, and said be careful about that. I actually made an ad that, using Bob Crane. Do you remember him? Hogan's Heroes and so forth, and he made an ad that I wrote saying that the POWs, that these POWs never have a nice day, which they did the, they then did the—they did up a bumper sticker: POWs never have a nice day. Turned out they did have some pretty funny times; I find out later.

QT: 01;38;29;08

TITLE

John didn't talk much about the POW experience

QT: 01;38;34;13

JOE McCAIN:

Well, he didn't talk about it a whole lot. I mean I would ask him questions and he would answer them, but I also understood that it was not easy for him to talk about it and I certainly didn't want to press any wounds. Probably I learned more in an interview he did with a guy who did a book. He was a Reader's Digest writer who did this book called POWs, and during those interviews, I learned a lot more than I knew before. But John just didn't talk about it much and I didn't press him much, you know, because had to be—those memories are tough, you know?

QT: 01;39;10;10

TITLE

Only Carol was allowed to write John during that time

QT: 01;39;16;07

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JOE McCAIN:

Nah, verboten. His wife was allowed to send letters, which he apparently never got, from what I understand. He never got any of them. The North Vietnamese were ya know, pretty (expletive) about—excuse my language.

QT: 01;39;28;22

JOE McCAIN:

But ya know, were not nice about that, but for any other family member, it was just, we just weren't allowed to, for good reason, didn't want to overwhelm him and you know, so it was just supposed to be the wife, not even Mother and Dad could write him, according to the North Vietnamese rules.

QT: 01;39;49;01

TITLE

Letters from John and efforts to relay POW names from captivity

QT: 01;39;55;16

JOE McCAIN:

I think Carol got two letters about a month or so apart but they came together and they were immediately turned over to the intelligence guys to try to see if he was trying, you know, any code in there and so forth. I think there was something because one of the things that the POWs felt they had to do was to identify everybody, to accumulate names so as to relieve the wives and so forth. In fact, I think you know of Doug Hegdahl, who memorized all these names. He did this poem about it, and when he gets off the plane—because he was allowed to do early release.

QT: 01;40;36;14

JOE McCAIN:

The camp leaders told him because he had to get this information. When he comes off the plane, they come toward him with blankets and all. He said, "Give me a tape recorder. Give me a tape recorder," and they didn't know what he was talking about but they did what he said and he just spewed out something like 528 names, one right after the other with rank and name, and he identified a lot of POWs that he been listed as missing in action.

QT: 01;41;05;03

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JOE McCAIN:

Doug Hegdahl was his name. H-E-G-D-A-H-L. He was with SERE for a long time, the survival and evasion school that the Air Force and Navy have set up, and I've met him several—he's a really, he's a good guy.

QT: 01;41;20;14

TITLE

On signing confessions as a POW and John's regret

QT: 01;41;25;11

JOE McCAIN:

Orson Swindle is one the toughest guys I ever met. They put him on a chair for 14 days and he wouldn't crack but earlier on, several of them had cracked and to survive, they would sign these confessions but essentially, as I understand their thinking was they, in Orson's case, he was about to lose it, and was then going to become putty. What they would often do is to do these kinds of things, step back and recoup and then come back in and piss off the North Vietnamese by being recalcitrant again.

QT: 01;42;01;09

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, John's ashamed but he shouldn't be. I mean ropes, especially a guy with two broken legs and a broken arm and a smashed shoulder, I mean that's a lot of pain, so yeah, he signed stuff, but that was just to return and not do stuff again. He shouldn't be ashamed of that; I don't think at all. Hell, I wouldn't've lasted 14 minutes. Oh, yeah, what do you want to know? I mean really, the way they treated those guys.

QT: 01;42;49;15

JOE McCAIN:

I think more it goes to the code of conduct that they're all taught and the sense of duty and obligation to your service and to your country, and to sign a confession, no matter what, is always a mark against that. But in context, of course, it's no bad mark all. It's a survival tactic, ya know.

QT: 01;42;52;19

TITLE

Carol's accident while John was a POW

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QT: 01;42;56;23

JOE McCAIN:

I mean I don't—I wasn't there, but I remember she was driving home from some party I think in Philadelphia or outside Philadelphia and somehow lost control of the car and it flipped, and it—the—the centrifugal force of the car rolling pushed her out of the windshield and the legs just broke, broke, broke, broke as they bent over that dashboard so, yeah, she was really, really—and almost didn't make it and today, has been affected, you know, by—you know, she's about three inches shorter or something and I'm sure has constant pain, but she's tough, you know?

QT: 01;43;37;04

JOE McCAIN:

And then her husband's going to come home and there's a different Carol kind of thing. And somebody asked John, "Well, does that bother you?" and he said, "Well, sure, it bothers you, but you don't love somebody because of their legs." You know, so.

QT: 01;43;53;06

TITLE

John's return

QT: 01;43;56;14

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, March '73, spends sometime in rehab, of course, because he was pretty chewed up.

QT: 01;44;01;19

TITLE

Carol meets John at the airport and the joy of his safe return

QT: 01;44;06;08

JOE McCAIN:

My father and mother, whatever, we decided that only Carol should do that. You know? It should be his wife, but I remember really clearly him stepping off that plane in the Clark Airfield because it was announced that they were

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going to land and a lot of friends over to my house. I was living in Cardiff, California, and I'll tell you, when he appeared in that hatchway, it was hard.

QT: 01;44;30;02

JOE McCAIN:

Oh, god, you can imagine but we all decided to stand back until John had gotten reacquainted with his family and then would call each of us, in turn you know, to come visit him, which we all did. I think I was about third, I stayed down there a couple weeks I think, and it was just, you know we went to the Oak Club and ya know, we did a bunch of stuff, ya know.

QT: 01;44;54;07

TITLE

John's thousand yard stare, the POW experience and his future political career

QT: 01;44;58;21

JOE McCAIN:

Interestingly, he—there was more of a seriousness about him that you could see at some points because he was still voluble and making jokes or whatever but when he would fall quiet, it was almost like seeing that 2000 Yard Stare, that famous painting from World War II, of the guy looking off in the distance, and so there was this—he was different that way, and I think it may even be that experience that led him to do the political thing, I believe. Because in camp, everybody thinks about—they fantasize about what they're going to do. They're going to build an airplane. They're going to build a big house.

QT: 01;45;42;01

JOE McCAIN:

They're going to travel to all the major, whatever, and I think in John's mind, part of it was you know, was to get more involved in a public life, I think. But I also understand—I think he told me once that one of the reasons that he got out of the Navy was that the POWs, the injured POWs were getting, you know were getting, what some people felt was an easy ride, that normally they might not have been promoted because of medical reasons, and John felt that I think, and he decided it was time to retire.

QT: 01;46;14;05

TITLE

On the treatment of the POWs vs the other Vietnam veterans

QT: 01;46;19;07

JOE McCAIN:

Oh it has, and it bothers all of them because they don't, you know they don't think they ought to be treated especially that differently, you know that all these, I mean John's heroes is he says are the guys that left their lives there, you know that gave the ultimate sacrifice, so and for them to come back and parades and this and that, and the other POWs, I mean the other veterans coming back Vietnam, had to kinda almost creep into the country, thinks that's terrible.

QT: 01;46;47;05

TITLE

On attending the parades and POW-MIA activism

QT: 01;46;51;07

JOE McCAIN:

Oh, yeah, yeah, sure, because I was in San Diego and there were a lot of Navy and military families there because it's the biggest naval base on the West Coast, so yeah, and I got really involved in the whole POW-MIA issue. I was one the people, we took up 13 tons of protest mail to the French, I mean to the Vietnamese liaison in Paris, and then out to the place where the Viet Cong, where we took a mile and a half long petition. These were done by different groups in the country, and we just sort of pulled it together and the three of us brothers wore the POW costume with the red and gray stripes. Did as much as we could to you know, to embarrass the Vietnamese.

QT: 01;47;38;06

JOE McCAIN:

This was—we did this in 1970, I'm pretty sure, Christmas, during Christmas 1971, all the way across the country and in this truck with the POW painted sides and collected mail at various points. Basically, it was just, it was to get some news coverage and as we did in every town, and then we left from New York, and they put all the mail on a ship and then we flew over and had to wait three weeks until the French gave us permission to pull off our demonstrations. Because we went right up to the North Viet—, and just banged on that damned door. It turned out that, of course, they knew

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everything because I had been handling the press and I had all the—the press know that we were going to do this, so the North Vietnamese apparently ostentatiously, an hour before we were to show up, got in cars and drove off, so there were nobody home.

QT: 01;48;34;06

TITLE

His father's trip to the Vietnamese border every Christmas

QT: 01;48;39;10

JOE McCAIN:

Dad made a practice every year that he was in Hawaii as Commander-in-Chief, which was four years. On Christmas, he would helicopter to the DMZ, the you know, the 17th parallel where the, where the North and South Vietnamese were officially divided, and he would walk away from those escorting him, and they understood. He would just look across that border commiserating, trying to, I don't know, somehow feel John or send a message to him or something like. It was silent but and he did that every Christmas.

QT: 01;49;18;13

TITLE

On meeting Nixon

QT: 01;49;23;14

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, I did, I mean occasionally, he—I was in San Diego and I'd come back to Washington or something and Dad would invite me along or something, so yeah. In fact, there's a picture of me with Nixon and some of the POW people. And I had, in those days, I had a beard and long hair because it's San Diego and so looks it a little—I know where that photo is, but...

QT: 01;49;43;20

TITLE

Nixon called his dad the "little" admiral

QT: 01;49;48;07

JOE McCAIN:

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The little admiral? Well, he was, I mean, 5'4", whatever he was. He was, he was shorter than I am, and he was kind of hunched back a little. It turned out later, he had a kind of a kyphosis, which is a bent spine, but so he was just a little guy, you know?

QT: 01;50;04;07

TITLE

His father never brought up John to Nixon

QT: 01;50;08;11

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, my dad never talked about John, and especially never asked anybody to do anything for him or about it, you know. He was very, very protective and very careful to not cause in the slightest wrinkle, you know. He just wouldn't do it.

QT: 01;50;25;23

TITLE

What makes John a hero

QT: 01;50;30;15

JOE McCAIN:

There was some fun, but there was a layer to him that was created in those 5½ years, and the thing that makes John a hero is not that he was captured or a POW, but it was that after two years, the North Vietnamese were starting to get a black eye, in part, because of our efforts back in the States, but they were starting to get a black eye about brutal treatment of POWs and they wanted to alleviate some of that image and they offered John an early release, a humanitarian release, which I'm sure he wanted to do but he couldn't.

QT: 01;51;03;22

JOE McCAIN:

He wasn't going to leave his comrades. He wasn't going to betray what he felt was an essential duty to his country. That took a hell of a lot of guts to not come back and get medical treatment and get well again. He stayed another 2½, three years, whatever it was.

QT: 01;51;18;21

TITLE

His personal heroes

QT: 01;51;23;03

JOE McCAIN:

Well, John is the second greatest man I've ever personally met. The other is my dad. He was such an honorable—I don't think the man ever told a lie that I ever heard or misrepresented anything. He really believed in that phrase that a man's word is his bond, and this was taught to him by his own father, and that your, you know, that your word is sacred. He used to say things like to young midshipmen, he'd say, "You're going to be going aboard your first ship," and get a division means that you know, gunners or deck people or whatever, "and you have to be careful because you can't fool those men. They're veteran sailors. If you misrepresent yourself or don't give them the straight scoop, you're never going to get their respect back, never," and so he was very aware of that.

QT: 01;52;22;23

JOE McCAIN:

My dad was always, always ardent on telling young officers that you have to keep your men's respect and the way to do that is to keep your word. Don't lie to them. Don't tell them anything. Don't try to finesse them. They're grown men. They're warriors, and most of them are older than you are, so he was always really careful about keeping men's respect.

QT: 01;52;49;22

TITLE

Moral courage is important to John

QT: 01;52;53;23

JOE McCAIN:

Absolutely, I mean that's at the bot-, I mean that's at his core, that you absolutely have to have that. You know it's not been easy for him to wriggle and wiggle the way politicians sometimes have to. He just has tried never to do that you know, and of course, that really pisses a lot of people off in politics but he doesn't care anymore. I mean the thing about him—now, for a while, he had to care little bit. He had to worry about re-election. He had to

worry about getting bills passed. He just doesn't care anymore. He's going to try to do the right thing, period.

QT: 01;53;30;13

JOE McCAIN:

I don't think it has anything to do with it. I think it has something to do maybe with his last term, but no, I don't think the illness has affect- I mean, has affected him the way we might think of it, mortality, and I've got to do this. I've got to worry about my legacy. I don't think that's a major part. I think the major part is he's been there long enough and it's time to make sure that he tries to do the right thing.

QT: 01;53;55;01

TITLE

The poem John read at his father's funeral

QT: 01;53;59;04

JOE McCAIN:

John has always liked this poem, apparently. I don't know where he read it or when, but I think it was as a young naval officer, and when my father died, my mother asked both John and I to give eulogies. And I gave one by reprising Dad's history, where he came from, his reading, his commands his varying difficulties, and John just simply did this poem and a little anecdote.

QT: 01;54;25;15

JOE McCAIN:

It's called Requiem. Under the wide and starry sky, Dig the grave and let me lie. Glad did I live and gladly die, And I laid down, I laid me down with a will. This is the verse you grave for me, "Here he lies where he longed to be, home is the sailor, home from the sea. Home is the hunter home from the hill." He recited that from memory. He didn't read it, at dad's funeral services.

QT: 01;54;59;04

TITLE

On the pressure John felt from the McCain military legacy

QT: 01;55;04;07

JOE McCAIN:

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He kinda, as I say, it was sort of the family business and he knew that Granddad was a high-ranking officer and he knew that his father was a, was a middle and then senior officer and being around Dad, met lots of other senior officers. I don't think it had a particular effect that I'm aware of. Now, when he went to the Naval Academy, Naval Academy, your world changes. The, you know any officer is sort of God-like because the midshipmen really run the Naval Academy but even that I don't think bothered him particularly. In other words, I don't think he was overly impressed that his father was anything in particular except a Naval officer.

QT: 01;55;43;17

TITLE

Annapolis as a McCain

QT: 01;55;48;01

JOE McCAIN:

Well, I can tell you when and I there, and I tried to keep it a secret, when they found out I was an admiral's son, man, that's when the crap really started because the Navy considers itself very democratic, that everybody at the same level and whatever. No one's better, and to sort of prove it, they'd dump on you, so no, I think he probably took—dad was a captain when he was there, but I'm sure he took flak for that. It's something you just have to bear with.

QT: 01;56;17;19

TITLE

On the story of John standing up for a steward at Annapolis

QT: 01;56;22;15

JOE McCAIN:

A lot of midshipmen would've done that cos that's just, that's unseemly to make fun of somebody or downgrade somebody because they're Filipinos.

QT: 01;56;33;11

TITLE

John has always had a cause

QT: 01;56;37;03

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JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, he has a cause. Yeah, no, I agree with that. I think for a while because he, you know he was messing around so much and kind of still stay within the bounds of that, you know I think he sort of felt like a rebel without a cause, but he's always had a cause and especially after he graduated from the Naval Academy and went to flight school because that's serious business flying war planes. A lot of guys get killed just training in them, so I think that makes him much more serious.

QT: 01;57;05;22

TITLE

He never flew with John

QT: 01;57;09;12

JOE McCAIN:

Weren't allowed to, for one thing, for a civilian or a kid to go up in a military aircraft. You can imagine the—I don't know if you remember when they, when the Navy let some Navy League guy surface in a submarine, and it hit a boat. This was off of Hawaii, killed a bunch of people and it's kinda, you don't let anybody mess around with that stuff.

QT: 01;57;31;07

TITLE

The ships named for the McCains

QT: 01;57;35;12

JOE McCAIN:

There were actually two ships. There was a ship named after my grandfather. It was a destroyer escort launched in about 1954 and served for a long time, was refitted with missiles and then gradually retired. Then in 1998, there was a ship launched and commissioned that was named after both.

QT: 01;57;59;15

JOE McCAIN:

Matter of fact, I argued with the Secretary of Navy that they out to call it the McCain's plural because there was precedent for that. There were a couple of other ships named after two men of the same, but they wanted to keep it 'The

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McCain'. It wasn't a big deal, but I thought it would've been more interesting to call it The McCain's.

QT: 01;58;14;21

TITLE

Launching and commissioning of the USS McCain

QT: 01;58;18;22

JOE McCAIN:

Launching, commissioning. I was there for everything. In fact, I was—John assigned me the role of getting all the other relatives because I had more contact with them, to get them all there too, and I did.

QT: 01;58;32;07

JOE McCAIN:

Of the launching, you know this is the first time a ship will ever touch water and I decided to ask, "Could I be on the ship when it hit the water, while everybody else was on this dock where it was going to come to?" and essentially, did this hard kind of rubbing, sliding and then all of a sudden, you know you're on the water and you're floating so that was cool, and I stood up in the bow, you know as we went over to—place the second thing, the commissioning, I was actually the first one to say anything. They asked me, and I'm grateful for this, to do what they call set the first watch and that was I went to the, went to the place on deck, the quarterdeck, and I told Lieutenant Joker, Joker Jenkins, "Set the first watch," so I got to do that.

QT: 01;59;23;01

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, they were sort of delighted because nobody road down the ways with a ship, apparently. I didn't know that, but very few people did. They all waited in the fancy chairs in the dock and the bunting and all that.

QT: 01;59;35;00

TITLE

Warship construction, launching and commissioning

QT: 01;59;40;01

JOE McCAIN:

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What happens in basic warship construction, you build a ship, you float it, you turn it over to the Navy, and the Navy runs through all kinds of tests, and they have to accept the ship, then it's commissioned. Otherwise, it's just a ... it's called a prospective whatever, John S. McCain.

QT: 01;59;57;19

JOE McCAIN:

I was at both. The launching was about two years before the commissioning. It takes a lot of testing. That was a brand, not a brand, I mean it was the fifth in its class, but this was a whole new kind of ship. This is one not with the captains up on the bridge but down the CIC, and it's got these completely integrated computer control system that controls weapons, detection, everything else. As a matter of fact, I wonder if the reason these Navy ships have been having problems is they've kind of lost the sense of seamanship and there ought to be an OOD and a quartermaster on the bridge at all times.

QT: 02;00;35;13

TITLE

The USS McCain crash

QT: 02;00;40;12

JOE McCAIN:

It ran into a barge or the barge ran into it. I don't know. I haven't looked at the official report, but for a faster agile warship to get struck by a bigger slower ship is just unthinkable, I mean and for it to happen four times in the last year and a half or whatever it's been. Just terrible, and they lost lives, both the Fitzgerald—I think they lost seven men. A lot wounded. I think The McCain lost 10, you know, just unthinkable.

QT: 02;01;11;19

TITLE

Learning of John's diagnosis

QT: 02;01;16;13

JOE McCAIN:

My sister-in-law emailed me, no, called me actually and having been to two years of medical school, I understood basically what a, what a glial tumor was. That just mean—glial is the tissue in the brain, connective tissue in the

brain, but I didn't really understand the darkness of glioblastoma until I researched it, because it has a tendency to recur and it's a SOB. Very few people survive it, but there are, there is a survival rate, I mean a definitive survival rate and so far, John has beaten it. He's had two occurrences and the special doctors at NIH and Mayo are, have created these cocktails that are apparently working very well.

QT: 02;02;06;07

TITLE

Talking to John about the diagnosis

QT: 02;02;10;12

JOE McCAIN:

Well, as a matter of fact, after his last MRI, he called me and he said, "I just had an MRI and I'm clean." He calls me every time there's a significant medical event and he just talks about it in plain facts. The only time I worried is when he talked on CBS about how serious it was and I thought, "I hope he's not caving," and I actually sent that poem that was written, "Do not go quietly into the good night but rage and rage," that kind of stuff but I don't think he was. I think he was just facing a little reality.

QT: 02;02;46;05

TITLE

John's indestructible spirit

QT: 02;02;50;23

JOE McCAIN:

When I talk to him, especially the first time after he was first diagnosed with this terrible disease, "Hey, Joe, boy, goddammit. How are you doing?" In other words, it was the old John McCain, and I'm not sure that John McCain weighted down by the darkness of a glioblastoma is going to be able to do that, ya know, because it sounded really natural, so I think he's handling as best he can, you know, I think.

QT: 02;03;15;02

JOE McCAIN:

I don't know what he thinks his eventual prognosis is, but I think it's positive because he's beaten so many things: four or five airplane crashes, the

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Forrestal fire, the melanoma. There was a time he was hit by a squash ball at the Naval Academy and they thought his eye was, you know, was damaged and he wouldn't be able to go to flight school after all, that kind of stuff, and it healed. He's just beaten a lot of devils. I think he's going to beat this one, has so far.

QT: 02;03;49;13

TITLE

He's proud of his brother

QT: 02;03;56;00

JOE McCAIN:

Well, the particular incident that I'd be proudest of is that turning down, getting out of, that Get Out of Jail card from the horrors and the beatings and the brutality, but in general, he's just—he keeps his head up and he keeps moving forward and he does so with principle, so I suppose in general, I'd say that but I think the hallmark of him is that not taking an early out from POW camp.

QT: 02;04;21;12

TITLE

Dirty politics, the campaign trail and John as president

QT: 02;04;26;18

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, that's right because most campaigns—I'll tell you how dirty they are. This one going in Virginia, they're voting today and it's called—one's pandering to child molesters, just terrible stuff, ya know? And I don't think John—John would never allow that. And I was a surrogate in both of his campaigns, so I was usually on the road someplace like East Tonawanda, New York, while he was doing the \$1,000-a-plate dinners in Atlanta, so I didn't have much to do with the inner things but I—you know, you interact with other people in the campaign and he was just, you know, he was—I mean I think he would've made such an amazing president. That's the thing. With him in command for the last four years, over the last eight years if you assume he got re-elected, I think he would've been one of the most interesting presidents in our history and possibly one of the great ones.

QT: 02;05;24;05

TITLE

John's fighter spirit and commitment to do what he thinks is best

QT: 02;05;30;09

JOE McCAIN:

Well, he would. I mean he'd fight back against anybody. The only time you don't fight back is if you're a Naval officer and your superior officer, you have to take that, but you're a politician, he said, "We're all equals here. Three branches of government and we don't have to take this."

QT: 02;05;48;02

JOE McCAIN:

He's going to do his best. He's got another four years, so maybe do ... A lot of people respect him. A lot people don't like him on his own side of the aisle, and there's some old friends that can't understand why he's doing this, and I just tell them. I said, "Look, he's going to do what he thinks is right." It doesn't make any difference what people think the consequences are. He's going to try to find that middle truthful road and hopefully, if people will follow in his wake and others like him, we'll get back together on this thing. Because everything that happens in the Senate and the House is just a pissing contest. No matter what somebody else does, the other side just denigrates it.

QT: 02;06;33;06

TITLE

John's vote on the healthcare bill

QT: 02;06;37;11

JOE McCAIN:

First of all, I thought it was amazing because I didn't know that he was going to say no, to be that key vote, but I thought—and even if I didn't agree with it, and I'm not saying whether I agree with it or not, I thought, "That is really character. I mean that's cool. Good for you, John," you know? And I don't think much of his fuss is with Mr. Trump over the remark about not being a hero because they'd been having some disagreements before that. I think it's just that, you know, that he's going to do what he thinks is right, and he doesn't think the president is doing the right thing all the time, especially with the tweeting.

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QT: 02;06;37;11

TITLE

On the NFL protests

QT: 02;07;20;03

JOE McCAIN:

Now, I haven't talked about these NFL players, but I'm just flabbergasted because, you know, the flag and the Star Spangled Banner are not political emblems. They're part of the national continuum and why they're showing such disrespect for the representation of the country itself, I don't understand. There's so many other things to protest against. I don't know how John—he and I have not talked about it, so he may disagree but.

QT: 02;07;43;12

TITLE

How he'll remember John

QT: 02;07;47;12

JOE McCAIN:

I will remember him as a man who always tried to do the right thing when he was in a position of responsibility, and every single hall- every single milestone in his life, you can see that, that he tried to get it right. He tried to do the right thing for his constituents, his sailors, his, his comrades, whatever applied. He was a man of character, is a man of character.

QT: 02;08;24;20

TITLE

On John being buried at Annapolis

QT: 02;08;29;12

JOE McCAIN:

Well, there are some Naval officers that to do that. One of his fellow POWs, Admiral Lawrence, was buried in Annapolis. I went to his funeral. You know that's the sort of the seed of things. I mean either one would be a place of honor, but I think he sort of wants to be buried with the, with his boys almost, all those men that have gone back. Naval Academy was founded in 1845 so that would be 173 years I think, if I'm doing the math right, you know, a

continuum of sending men down to the sea in ships to come back with all kinds of problems sometimes but to go down to sea in ship and protect and fight for the nation.

QT: 02;09;12;05

TITLE

The McCain's and the Naval Academy

QT: 02;09;17;09

JOE McCAIN:

Well my dad didn't like the Naval Academy much and he said so, but he said he's extremely glad that he went because there are things that percolate later, you know that you learn there, but my grandfather, father, and John, none of them did very well in Annapolis, you know really. I think they were all at least in the lower third of the class if not lower fourth or something. John was too close. As a matter of fact, he was also—sometimes he doesn't, well, he's wry about things, like he apparently really told one of his roommates when he didn't know, but he didn't know that the anchorman got to meet the commencement address speaker. In this case, it was President Eisenhower. He said, "Just missed it." I said, "You son—are you kidding me? If it weren't for, you know you wouldn't be up there," that kind of thing, but he was a little irritated that he wasn't the—they call it the anchorman.

QT: 02;10;14;08

TITLE

On John's legendary temper

QT: 02;10;19;17

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, one time, his wife and a friend of hers were real late. They were going to meet here and he was pretty cool and pretty cool agitated, but as soon as they walked in the door, roar, you know and they sort of cowered, didn't cower for long because they're the kind of women that fight back, Nancy Reynolds and Carol McCain, but yeah, he carried on for a bit, and was steaming on his way out the door. I didn't say a thing. I'm not going to get in the middle of that stuff. And that's the main incident that I personally was witness to, was him blowing off on his wife because she was like—they had been out having a

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good time and shopping and but John—they need to be there at 6:30 to make some kind of reservation or something and so he was really pissed.

QT: 02;11;11;14

JOE McCAIN:

But John, that was, yeah that was something. It was steam and fire and volume and you know, no insults or anything, but just, "Goddammit. Where have you been? We got to—" "But John, we—" "I don't care, dammit," you know, and that kind of thing.

QT: 02;11;27;18

TITLE

John is a good son and father and a story about Meghan McCain

QT: 02;11;33;12

JOE McCAIN:

He can't visit her terribly often because he's always being pulled in a hundred, but he comes over about once a month, sits with her, and he calls and things. Yeah, I think he's being the best son he can be, ya know, I mean I believe.

QT: 02;11;45;23

JOE McCAIN:

Yeah, I mean, you know his kids seem to be doing fine. I mean Jack, you know, is doing fine in the military. His son, his brother Jim is with Hensley & Company. The two boys in the first marriage are doing fantastically. Meghan, of course, if you turn on The View, 10 o'clock in the morning, you'll see her. Yeah, everybody seems to be fine that I can see, and they seem to respect him and love him. They don't take him as seriously sometimes as he would probably like, but that's his own fault because of the way he kids around and that sort of stuff.

QT: 02;12;19;17

JOE McCAIN:

I'll tell ya—I'll tell ya one anecdote. Meghan McCain, who's now on The View, I think she's 30, 32, I don't know which, but I was staying out there, during one Thanksgiving and I was in a guesthouse and the morning, I would come over for breakfast. I came in one day and there was just this ferocious fight going, I

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mean this argument. I couldn't figure out what it was. And I looked down the hallway, and it was Meghan and John and she was John McCain in blonde hair, and she wasn't going to take any of his stuff, and he wasn't to take any of hers. It was really funny to watch. I wished I'd had a video camera or something, so yeah, so those kids love him. I don't think they take him to seriously though. He leaves himself open, you know.

END TC: 02;13;06;06