

Communication Scholars Oral History Project
Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA

MONROE E. PRICE

interviewed and transcribed by

JEFFERSON POOLEY

recorded by

ANDRES SPILLARI

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Philadelphia, PA

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BIOGRAPHY

Monroe E. Price (1938–), retired associate faculty at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, is a distinguished scholar of international communication. Price has made notable contributions to a variety of fields over five decades of legal and communication scholarship, teaching, and institution-building, including Native American law, freedom of expression, media reform, and cross-border communication in the global system. Price was born in Vienna into a middle-class Jewish family, soon after the *Anschluss* annexation of Austria by Germany. Price and his immediate family escaped to New York City in 1939, before resettling in Macon, Georgia, and, three years later, Cincinnati, Ohio, where he remained through high school. As an undergraduate at Yale, Price was an enterprising journalist for the *Yale Daily News*, with reporting trips to the UK, Moscow, and Cuba. After his Yale graduation in 1960, Price briefly worked for the American Heritage Publishing Company in New York City, before joining Robert Wagner’s mayoral campaign as an advance man. In 1962, after a year at the University of Virginia Law School, Price transferred to the Yale Law School, where he was exposed to Native American and communications law. The summer after his 1964 law school graduation, Price worked on the Warren Commission report, before assuming a clerkship with Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart. The next year Price served as assistant to W. Willard Wirtz, Secretary of Labor, before moving to Los Angeles to take up a law school post at UCLA in 1966. Price conducted extensive work on, and scholarship about, Native American law through the 1970s, including a decade-long representation of the Alaskan Cook Inlet Region group. At UCLA, Price revived his interest in communications law, after serving on the President’s Task Force on Communications Policy (1967–1968). He soon served as deputy director of the Sloan Commission on Cable Communications (1970–1971), and established a Communications Law Program at UCLA (1972). Price published extensively on First Amendment, cable, and satellite issues in the 1970s and ‘80s, and was active in media reform initiatives. In 1982 Price was named dean of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University in New York City, where he created the Howard M. Squadron Program in Law, Media and Society. He stepped down as dean in 1991, just as the Cold War global order was in transition. Over the subsequent three decades, Price traveled extensively for international communication projects, commissions, and centers. In the 1990s and early 2000s, much of Price’s work and organization-building occurred in the post-socialist states of Central Europe, the Balkans, and Russia. Price helped establish the Oxford Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy in the mid-1990s, the first of a number of such centers he helped to launch around the world in this period. Price led a series of projects for the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Markle Foundation, and a handful of NGOs, many of them resulting in edited volumes. He developed influential arguments around the “market for loyalties,” cross-border media technology, and sovereignty in a trio of solo-authored books: *Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity* (1996), *Media and Sovereignty* (2002), and *Free Expression, Globalism, and the New Strategic Communication* (2015). In 2004 Price joined the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, where he

founded the Center for Global Communication Studies in 2006. Under the Center's auspices, Price helped lead a series of projects in Iran, China, Jordan, Darfur, and Mexico, among others. Price, who retired from the Annenberg School in 2020, is married to noted art historian Aimée Brown Price.

ABSTRACT — Session One (October 18, 2017)

The session focuses on Price's family background in Austria and Eastern Europe, his family's escape to the United States in 1938, his childhood years in Cincinnati, and his journalism at Yale. The session lingers on Price's experience in high school in suburban Cincinnati, including reporting for the school newspaper, his experience in a series of part-time jobs, and his relationship to the local Jewish community. Price's visits to, and connections with, family members on both his father's and mother's side are discussed in the session. Price's years at Yale are covered too, with a focus on his overseas reporting, in the UK, Moscow, and Cuba. Price discusses Yale faculty who influenced him, including Harry J. Benda and Charles Lindblom. The session concludes with a brief account of Price's stint at *American Heritage* magazine.

RESTRICTIONS

None

FORMAT

Interview. Video recording at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, 3620 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA.

TRANSCRIPT

Transcribed by Jefferson Pooley. Audited for accuracy and edited for clarity by Jefferson Pooley. Transcript reviewed and approved by Monroe E. Price, Jefferson Pooley, and Samantha Dodd.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CITATION FORMS

Video recording

Bibliography: Price, Monroe E. Interview by Jefferson Pooley. Video recording, October 18, 2017. Communication Scholars Oral History Project, Annenberg School for Communication

Archives, University of Pennsylvania. **Footnote example:** Monroe E. Price, interview by Jefferson Pooley, video recording, October 18, 2017, Communication Scholars Oral History Project, Annenberg School for Communication Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Transcript

Bibliography: Price, Monroe E. Interview by Jefferson Pooley. Transcript of video recording, October 18, 2017. Communication Scholars Oral History Project, Annenberg School for Communication Archives, University of Pennsylvania. **Footnote example:** Monroe E. Price, interview by Jefferson Pooley, transcript of video recording, October 18, 2017, Communication Scholars Oral History Project, Annenberg School for Communication Archives, University of Pennsylvania, pp. 34-35.

Transcript of Interview conducted October 18, 2017, with MONROE E. PRICE (session one)

Philadelphia, PA

Interviewed by Jefferson Pooley

Q: This is day one of an oral history interview of Monroe Price conducted by Jefferson Pooley at the Annenberg School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The interview is part of the Oral History Project of the Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives. The date is October 18, 2017. Thank you Monroe for sitting down for this first interview. I thought I would begin by asking about your parents back in Austria, where they were born, their life in interwar Vienna, and even your father's business.

PRICE: Well, I learned a lot about this, thinking about it, when I wrote my memoir.¹ And thinking about the two very different strands that they represented. My father was a kind of, the secular, worldly Vienna, that emerged from the nineteenth century and the reemergence of Jews in Vienna, and their rise in the professions, etc. My father's father went to university, for example, which was very special. My mother was from a more rural town in Slovakia—what is now Slovakia. And these represented two different strands of Jewish Vienna, in some way. The kind of religious, more rural, Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the core Viennese, more universal way of looking at things.

My father was in the textile business. His family had been in the textile business. Although his father also had a small newspaper. His father died when my father was five years old, and that was quite unusual. And yet another unusual part about it is that my father's father, my grandfather, married an American, who was his first cousin. And so that prepared us for the future in some strange way.

Q: Can you talk about how your parents met and came to know one another?

PRICE: I think they just met socially, at some dance. There wasn't any OkCupid—and they weren't matched. I think my mother had just ended a kind of love with some Jewish family from Morocco or North Africa, and she met my father and they fell in love.

¹ Monroe E. Price, *Objects of Remembrance: A Memoir of American Opportunities and Viennese Dreams* (New York: Central European University Press, 2009).

Q: And your father was in a business partnership with his brother?

PRICE: No, my father only had a sister. As I said, he was really kind of orphaned from his father, who had died, who was a businessman. His uncle, who was a very enterprising person, helped to train my father in the textile business. And they had factories in different parts of Austria, in the weaving business and that kind of thing.

Q: Your own birth was right in this dramatic period in Austrian history. You were conceived, as you wrote, in Vienna, Austria, and born in Vienna, Germany.

PRICE: Yes, I was born after the Anschluss. It was a dramatic period where Austria ceased to be Austria and had become Germany. It was a kind of culmination of 20 or 30 years of change, and I never fully understood, even from talking to my parents, what kind of foreboding they had. Obviously there had been rising anti-Semitism, but I don't think—my parents, like many, many other Jews didn't think it was necessary to be that apprehensive, and to leave. So there they were in 1938—

Q: So in the years leading up to 1938, I don't know if you ever spoke to family members about anti-Semitism that they experienced? Just up to this period.

PRICE: They experienced it. Anti-Semitism was a thing in Vienna. It was an important strain. But it wasn't so overwhelming that people felt, I think, even in those years of the '30s, that they must leave. I don't have a sense that my parents gave thought to this when they got married, for example, in '36.

Q: And by the time 1938 came along, you were born, after the Anschluss, that was in the spring, and just a few months after you were born, Kristallnacht happened, and—

PRICE: Soon after that my father was arrested, and sent to a temporary holding facility for eight weeks or something like that. Obviously, by that time, it wasn't the handwriting was on the wall, but the hands were at our throat, in some ways. And, of course, it was a period in which, it was before the "final solution," and the goal of the Nazi regime was for Jews to leave. And so the focus was on getting my father back, getting the exit visas. Everybody was in a dramatic effort to figure out how to leave, given that that was definitely the goal.

Q: And in your memoir you'd mentioned that Adolf Eichmann was, in fact, in charge of this expulsion in that Vienna region. And based on your research for your memoir, and what your family told you, what was that process of trying to leave? I mean, it involved German authorities, American authorities—it wasn't easy.

PRICE: Well, it was extraordinary because there were all these bureaucratic barriers to leaving. There was an agreement that we should leave, but you had to wind up your assets, for example. You had to present a clean bill in terms of having liquidated your corporate holdings, all other holdings, etc. And that, in fact, was a bureaucratic barrier. For a long time my parents

had tickets, they had affidavits to go to the United States, and I think they had a visa to the United States. And that was because I had this American family, which put us in a kind of privileged space. So we had an easier time getting entrance into the United States. We had a harder time getting exit from Germany—or Austria, or Germany as it then was.

Q: You mentioned that you had this American family connection that was crucial in getting you the sponsorship to get the US visa.

PRICE: Of course, this wasn't true of my mother's family. My mother's family then became stranded and died in the Holocaust—which also was a tremendously important aspect of it for me growing up.

Q: I want to return to that, but before, can you talk about the American family connection that you had, and what role that played?

PRICE: Well, see, it was interesting. It was an interesting problem for me to try to think of myself as having an American descendency, or think of myself as a refugee. In the 1850s, or thereabouts, two of my relatives came to New York to go to what became the Lexington School for the Deaf. They were teachers of a new method of training the deaf in Germany and Austria, and they had been selected by wealthy families in New York who had deaf children and wanted to have the best possible training for them. And they became the foundation of what was, in a sense, the American wing of my family.

Q: And were they the literal sponsor that got you the US visa?

PRICE: One of the descendants of these teachers, the deaf, the Engelsman branch, had moved to Oklahoma, had become relatively wealthy in oil and gas, and he [A.D. Engelsman] sponsored us and gave us an affidavit. Affidavit meant an affidavit that we wouldn't be a public charge.

Q: And once you did all of that, once your father divested his businesses and paid these onerous taxes and liquidations, your family made its way to Paris and then eventually to the [RMS] *Queen Mary*.

PRICE: When you liquidated, you bought your tickets. We had tickets for the *Queen Mary*. And then the question was could we get out and actually catch the boat, as it were. And we were able to do that in March of '39.

Q: Of course you don't remember, as a seven-month-old, any of that trip, but did your parents talk at all about the experience of leaving Austria through France, and onto the *Queen Mary*?

PRICE: It wasn't a celebratory—I don't get a sense of a kind of lavish banquet in Paris to celebrate our exit. I think it was an important time—it was a pleasure, but it was marred by the fact that my mother's parents were left behind. So my father's mother—who was American—

didn't need any visa or any affidavit, and she had left, too. So I would say the leaving was more stressful than it was celebratory. The *Queen Mary* was interesting. I don't know a lot about what happened. I became interested in it because the *Queen Mary* then became an artifact in Long Beach [California], and I always found that an amusing thing.

Q: Right. In part because when you did visit it, it sounded like it didn't express any of those memories you had or memories your parents passed onto you, of the stressful, transatlantic crossing.

PRICE: Yes.

Q: So you arrived in New York City and your parents and you lived in various places, either in or near the city for that year, and you decided to move on, and why?

PRICE: Well, I think it's interesting. Again it goes to this question of who quite we were, and did we know exactly how to navigate. We were, as I say, not unsophisticated, not uncosmopolitan, and not without connections—either in Austria or in New York. So our first place to live was in Long Island, because our relatives in New York thought that's where I should be brought up. And there are pictures of me playing in open fields and grass in Long Island.

I think my father had a hard time finding a job in the United States, and adjusting economically and professionally. My mother, who was a very fiercely independent person, didn't want to be dependent on the charity of our relatives, in some sense, and so they wanted a job. And one of the things that was interesting to me in researching this was the kind of apparatus that existed to help diversify where Jewish refugees lived—partly so that there was a kind of distribution, in some way, and that this was within the different communities. So ultimately there were opportunities in Corpus Christi, Texas, and in Atlanta, Georgia, where people were willing to develop opportunities for refugees who came from New York. And my mother and father chose to go to Atlanta, where they were quickly sent to a city—now well-known—called Macon, Georgia, where my father got a job in the textile industry.

Q: I wanted to ask about that period. I know you were in Macon for three years. You don't have memories yourself of that time, but doing the research for your memoir, you found letters that your mother had been writing, and you mentioned before that most of her family perished in the Holocaust. But during those years—it was during the war—she was still attempting to get them out. Can you talk about that?

PRICE: Certainly I was refreshed myself through reading these letters. And I've often thought about what my mother was like with her parents trapped, and not being in very much correspondence with them and having a sense that their fate was sealed. She had a sister, of my mother, [who] had successfully migrated, and they were in close touch. My mother was doing everything she could possibly do, which she wasn't a friend of the congressman and stuff like that. So that was hard. And I wondered what it was like, how she could both be a caring

mother and an anxious daughter at the same time. So that was a big theme of that period of time.

And also her adjustment to—her surprise at a segregated South—was a very interesting thing. She couldn't believe that she was escaping a society that said Jews couldn't go to certain parks, etc., etc., and coming to an America where there were signs saying colored people can't drink at this fountain. She was just interested in it, and she talked about this with people in Macon, Georgia, in some ways.

Q: And do you know if she—when she learned about the fate of her family, and how she learned—was it through those New York newspapers that typically had notices like this?

PRICE: I don't remember exactly how she found out, and she certainly didn't fully believe it until the end of the war. Because there was always hope, and some of these events were late in the war, in terms of the final—sending people to the concentration camps to die. So it maintained itself through the war and then shortly thereafter. There was even some reading of a name that sounded like her mother's, that looked like that she might be rescued and still alive. And that was after the war, in some ways. So it stayed, and should've stayed, a kind of burning issue with my mother all through her life.

Q: And how did that grief and sorrow express itself in your childhood? Do you remember throughout the years how she dealt with it?

PRICE: Well, I think they were forbidden subjects. There was anger, there was real anger of great magnitude about injustice, or different, other kinds of things that were both about her parents but also displaced and moved upon her parents. And it certainly was a narrative that continued through our lives. It was very interesting to me, thinking about this—as I think everyone does—was I the child of my father and his world, or was I the child of my mother and her world? And were they very distinct, and was this an element of how they were distinctive? Because, as I say, my father had this kind of cosmopolitan, secular upbringing, and very few of his relatives died in the war. So there were these very two different lives, and I think they had to work this out between the two of them in some interesting way.

Q: Can you say more about that? The two ways of being Viennese Jews and then Americans, represented by your mother and your father?

PRICE: I think that they probably engaged with the United States in different ways. I don't want to say wildly different ways, but in terms of their acceptance of things, tolerance of change, openness, etc. Probably my father was more open, in some ways, than my mother. My mother was also very adaptable, but very practical. And probably much more of the idea that I have to be prepared for the next crisis that's going to occur—because there will be a next crisis. The more pessimistic, as well as optimistic—they were both very supportive, very welcoming, very gracious about the future. They both, sort of, established in me really important principles, etc.

I can't exactly say what the difference is between the two. It's too difficult—not emotionally difficult, intellectually difficult. Maybe I'll figure it out by the end of these discussions.

Q: Well, one difference that you discuss in the memoir is just in terms of the practice of Judaism itself. That your mother was more or less committed to orthodoxy, and that your father was less religious in that way.

PRICE: But the question is, what does that mean for life? For example, my exposure to my mother's orthodoxy gave me a richer understanding of a lot of history's myths and study, and religious practices, and ways of living, and tolerance of different intense communities in the United States and around the world, in some ways. My father's secularism opened me, maybe not sufficiently, to music and literature and things like that. But I think my father's relationship to his American forbearers made that a very interesting narrative to me. As I said, the person who gave us the affidavit had moved to Oklahoma shortly after Oklahoma became a state, in some ways. And I've always, and to this day, don't understand how this person who had a life in New York—not because New York is so great—decided to move to Oklahoma, and go into the insurance business there, and make a life of himself there.

Q: Right. A quintessentially kind of American story. When your own family's resettlement to Macon happened, just to return to that, your father was working at this manufacturing plant as a textile engineer. How was he treated and how was your mother treated, back in Macon?

PRICE: Well, this is probably related to this larger narrative. I think my father was fine. There was some—again, I think calling things anti-Semitic doesn't capture what it is—for a lot of people in Macon had never met a person who was a Jew. So they were slightly mysterious in that sense. And people may not have known exactly how do you learn—but people were very open to this. But my mother, partly because, again, of her stress, etc., saw the dangers of anti-Semitism in Macon more than my father. My father had at one point a kind of dispute, and was slightly threatened physically, and my mother said, We've got to get out of here. That's why we moved to Cincinnati. And I view that kind of outburst as traceable, in some ways, to her own history. So my father might've continued to live in Macon, risen through the ranks of the manufacturing company, etc., but my mother would make a decision, say, That's it, we're out of here.

Q: So can you say more about that dispute that your father experienced. Was it in the factory?

PRICE: It was in the factory. It was over some small matter like, I don't know—my father didn't like the way he was performing a task, or the other way around. I have no idea what the—

Q: That directly led to the decision to leave?

PRICE: Yes. Because it was some threat, a physical threat, or maybe a physical action. But it wasn't sufficient—I don't think it would've been sufficient—and I'm projecting here—to upend

my father. But my mother said, This is it. And I can just see my father saying, OK. I can't change your mind about something like that.

Q: So what made Cincinnati the next destination? If your mother had this fear?

PRICE: My father then looked for a job in different parts of the country. Cincinnati had some related textile things that were interesting to my father, and he got a job there. I don't know—it was through correspondence, and responding to an ad, or something like that. And Cincinnati was a very welcoming community in a variety of ways.

Q: And you moved to Cincinnati, into this apartment building called the Warwick.

PRICE: Well, we didn't start there, but we ended up there after a year or so.

Q: OK, well go ahead and, if you don't mind, talk about the Warwick, and your experience in Cincinnati in those early years.

PRICE: The Warwick loomed in my mind as a big—I don't know how big it really was—but to my five-year-old eyes it was pretty big. It had two wings. It was kind of very English, not exactly English manor, but a kind of English building, on 3362 Reading Road in South Avondale, in Cincinnati—which is not far from downtown, the downtown sector. And as I reconstructed it, for some reason or other, a number of refugee families lived in the building. And a lot of my socialization was reading how to adjust through the ideas of the actions of these different families in the Warwick. So there were middle-class German Jews. There were people of different occupations, different backgrounds, different religious formulations, etc.

I remember very particularly a number of things. One was after the war, the arrival of a displaced person, we would call DPs. And this was a shadowy figure, looked sort of like had emerged from a concentration camp. And I can just see her sort of wafting through the stairs and halls of the Warwick, in some way—people also had their numbers on their arms, basically—still had their concentration camp numbers. So there were people like that. So you could just see the next generation adjusting, and different pathways into American culture and schooling and adaptation—assimilation or not, as the case may be. So the Warwick was a kind of school for all of this, in some way.

Q: Since the Warwick was this Central European hothouse, where it sounded like there were even informal divisions between better off German Jews and those Jews from, maybe what we could call Eastern Europe, do you remember anything specific about the food, and the life of the building, the way in which it kind of recreated Central Europe?

PRICE: Well, certainly around the holidays, and around meal times, and holiday meals—Passover seders and things like that—you would get this. There was different forms of mentoring. My mother helped to sort of counsel two daughters of another family in how to—

my mother having, I'm not sure why, but having more sophistication about these kinds of questions. But, yes, I'm not sure I have more to say about that.

Q: OK. You spent a number of years there in Cincinnati, through to, I think, around the late 1940s, before your sister was born.

PRICE: My sister was born in '49, exactly. So I was essentially an only child till I was 11 years old.

Q: And at the point your family decided to move out into the suburbs of Cincinnati?

PRICE: Of course, it's all about mobility, about class, about race. Because definitely Cincinnati was a city where race was changing things, etc. In a way, I wouldn't say we were involved in white flight, but looking at it in a large demographic sense you'd definitely say that we were examples of that, in some way. Moving from what became an inner city, to a suburb that was basically white and middle-class, called Roselawn. And I went to a place called Bond Hill School, which sort of moved me from this inner-city school—which was harsh, not—still harsh and taxing—to Bond Hill, where everyone was given a quick idea of aspirations and upward mobility.

Q: And didn't most of the Jewish institutions follow to the suburbs of Cincinnati—the synagogues and the other agencies?

PRICE: Yes, definitely.

Q: You were now in middle school, and you were in a different climate than the Warwick altogether, and you describe in your memoir a kind of, in many ways, typical American early teenage period. And, at the same time, you had been at the Warwick, you had to come from Austria. How did these experiences mix in that period?

PRICE: First of all, again, there was this confusion about how I thought of myself. Because I didn't constantly think of myself as Austrian. I had grown up here, and in Macon, Georgia, in an American environment, in the American Jewish community, in some way. But on the other hand, there was this Austrian overhang. My father was a member of something called the Gate Club—I loved this—gate meaning gateway, in some way. So, the Gate Club in Cincinnati was the club of all the refugees from Germany and Austria. And at one point he was president of the Gate Club.

And I would go to Mount Airy, which was a kind of open fields, where they played soccer, football—football, a marker of this because football was, at that time, only played by Central and Eastern Europeans and Germans. So I would go there, and I never played football myself. But I was exposed to a culture where they remembered the football clubs of Vienna and Berlin, and the Jewish football clubs of Vienna and Berlin. Because the leagues in Vienna certainly were organized that way. So that was an element of it. And also watching the children of the

Warwick, as they emerged and entered school, and entered different lives, in some way. I'm not sure that I answered your question.

Q: No, you did, and I'm wondering if during that early period of having moved out to the suburbs, if in your middle school and then your high school, if there was that consciousness of your Austrian past. I mean, lots of other American-born Jews were there.

PRICE: Yes, there definitely was a consciousness. I think I remember, for example, a structure of fraternities in my high school. And I came to realize—I'm not sure I realized it then—that they were organized [unclear] on Jewish fraternities, as opposed to other fraternities—and German-Jewish fraternities as opposed to Eastern European-Jewish fraternities. And for some reason or other, I wasn't in any [laughs] of them. And I think it was because I was in a slightly different category, which was refugee, rather than second generation, etc. Although even there I thought of myself as fourth-generation American, or third-generation American, and in that sense not a refugee. But I was also a refugee.

Q: And do you recall having a thought like that when you were in high school, or is this more retrospective?

PRICE: No, I think I definitely had some thought like this, yes. I'm not sure I articulated it that way, but I definitely could tell that there was something—also patterns of adjustment, like either there was something that I hadn't learned yet, or something that I learned more than others. But more that I hadn't learned yet. I hadn't learned how, exactly, to dress the right way, or, not exactly speak the right way, but, whatever.

Q: So you were clearly energetic and enterprising then, and you had a number of jobs as a high school student and probably in the years before, like being a soda jerk and other things like this. Do any of those stand out for you?

PRICE: Well, I think the first thing was the idea that I should work. That probably came more from my mother than from my father, but it definitely came to me that occupying myself—and, I think, also as a way of understanding—and this is an odd thing, maybe I'm making this up—of understanding the culture. That is to say that work was a way both of earning some money, but also of engaging. And maybe the engaging part was just as important—it was like seeing how things worked and how different patterns worked. So, yes. I'm sure I delivered newspapers. I was a soda jerk.

But one thing I was thinking about recently, was remembering, in the movie theaters in Cincinnati, at intermission, or maybe it was double features, they had garage-sale type things that were on—I think I have this right—early television. And you would bring things in and you would sell them, and people would call in and offer. And I remember selling my sister's bassinet on television at the intermission of a motion picture in Cincinnati in 1951, or something like that. So that was early television. Another thing they had was musical performances in these

intermissions, and I produced a—my classmate, Robert Meitus, was a wonderful musician, and I arranged for him to perform at one of these events. And I was very proud of that.

Q: So in both instances, I wonder if you can put yourself back in the shoes of a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old. What gave you the idea to, for example, take a classmate of yours and produce his show?

PRICE: I did a bunch of different things like that. I was very promotional. Maybe, thinking back on my father's Viennese family, which they had a newspaper, which is an important attribute of the family. It was a trade newspaper, but it was very lovely, and the family—we have a special edition that was published on the occasion of my grandfather's marriage to his wife, etc. So that there had been this slightly promotional side of my family that maybe inspired me to think about these kinds of things. It's hard to tell.

Q: Do you have memories of any of the jobs in particular that you did? Like driving a truck, if I recall.

PRICE: It depends on which period of time we're talking about. In high school, as I said, I liked being a soda jerk—a job from which I got fired for eating too much ice cream on the job. I organized something which I was very happy about—I don't know why, how this happened. I went to old age homes in Cincinnati and helped to raise money through card playing for some sort of charitable activities. Maybe I asked them for money for some charitable activity. I can't remember what it is right now, but it was a lovely part of what I did in high school.

Q: In the memoir you mention that you read Thomas Mann's *Confessions of Felix Krull* [1954], published in the mid-50s, and that it had an impact on you. And what was the influence that the book had?

PRICE: Well, it's called *Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man*. And it's not clear to me where this came from, but it sustains itself. The idea that maybe—to put a benign idea—that to some extent everyone is a confidence man. But certainly, to some extent, I was a confidence man. That somehow this was one of the pathways—was slightly manipulating the world, to take facts and information and so shape them that you advanced—not exactly deceiving people, but somehow achieving their confidence. In that sense being a confidence man. And so a lot of these selling things—like even trying to get someone to buy a banana split with everything on it as opposed to just an ice cream cone—is a kind of confidence man activity. Or the idea of trying to persuade people—oh, that was it. Card players to raise money for benefitting Jews in old age homes. That's what it was. So that was a kind of confidence trick, to put yourself ahead, to, in a certain sense, to sell something. And almost all selling is a kind of confidence trick.

Q: And do you think that stuck with you throughout your career?

PRICE: Unfortunately [laughs]. Yes.

Q: And we'll talk about that.

PRICE: Not unfortunately. Whatever, I'm just being—yes.

Q: Well, since we're talking about jobs you had at the time, I thought I would ask about, and skip ahead a tiny bit, to that summer after your first year at Yale, when you had a pair of jobs, one of which was selling encyclopedias, and the other was at Sears, Roebuck [and Company]—if I'm not mistaken—and so you described both of them as being important in a way, or giving lessons.

PRICE: Well, first of all, again, they were engaging with American cultures in ways that I think I learned from, about that—and that isn't the key thing in there. But selling grills in Sears and Roebuck meant that I came into contact with family after family after family. Selling the encyclopedias in rural North Carolina—which I only did for a couple days, I think—the training was extraordinary, because it was the trainer who had a vision of what it meant to be an American, what a house looked like. There would be a chart, you were given a chart—OK, here's the front door, here's the living room, here's the couch. Your job is to get from the front door, to the living room, to the couch. So the idea of charting this out and understanding a kind of tactical way of entering the American imagination was contained here.

The other thing was that they used the term "DP." This is really extraordinary. I'm not even sure I put this in the memoir. But for them it meant damn peddler. You have to change from being a damn peddler to being a trusted human being. But in my mind I couldn't believe that the word DP was applied to this. So, at any rate, the other part of it was to understand the key role that teachers played in recommending which encyclopedia a family should receive. And the idea of competition between Collier's, which was, I think, the encyclopedia for whom I worked, and World Book. So all these lessons were so amazingly present in this just small episode of selling encyclopedias.

Barbecue grills was different, but similar. But my favorite anecdote from this period was a woman who came up to me and said, Are you Jewish? And I didn't know what to say, and I didn't say yes. And she said, You sure sell like a Jew. And she meant it as a compliment. You're effective [laughs]. I think she meant it as a compliment, etc., so that was interesting. And I also learned about the process of upgrading people from a basic grill to all the fancy entities that are associated with a grill.

Q: Like a full banana split.

PRICE: Yes, like a full banana split.

Q: And going back to high school, I was curious to ask about what kind of student you were in the classroom. Did you get good grades?

PRICE: Well, first of all, the high school was so important, because I was so fortunate to be in one of these great Latin schools. It was a competitive school—you had to take an exam to get into it. Everybody took three years of Latin. I took six years of Latin. It was Advanced Placement. Everybody was smart. It was just a great—it was a kind of democratic environment in many ways. It's hard for me to know exactly how multicultural it was. It was multicultural. It was ahead of its time, etc. And the principal was a person who became famous because he became Commissioner of Education in Washington, named Harold Howe II, and I can return to him.

So, in this environment, how was I as a student? Thinking of it, whether this is how I was or not is a different question. But I thought of myself as a good but not great student, and I'm not sure what the right answer to that is. I remember my eighth grade math teacher saying, You have a mind like a sieve. So things would go into it, everything would go into it, but also not necessarily be retained. I think I did fine, but I don't think I was one of the top students of the class.

Q: You mentioned the Latin education you had there, and do you think it had an impact, even, given the Latin status?

PRICE: Well, I think Latin was good for a variety of reasons. One was we read the *Aeneid*, and the *Iliad*. We were interested in the history of Rome, and Caesar, and rhetoric—very important kinds of questions like that. It was a discipline. I certainly felt, must have felt enough about it that I took three optional years of Latin as opposed to just the three basic years of Latin. I think it helped the character of the school. It meant that it took seriously the process of education.

Q: Thinking about your Jewish education during this period, you were going, at least earlier going—in fact, all the way through—to Hebrew school, and supplemental Jewish education in the afternoon, and it was, of course, on top of your schooling you had formally. But what do you remember about that experience?

PRICE: Well, I think the interesting thing—and also I can look at this somewhat retrospectively—was the whole process by the Jewish community of how to retain younger people. How to bring them in. It was before—now there are a lot of Jewish day schools. There weren't as many at that time, and I doubt that we would've—I'm sure my parents were so committed to the idea of acculturation, or assimilation in a good sense, that the public school was the right way to go and was the only way to go, practically, at the time. But there was this effort, which was usually painful, and very not exceedingly well done throughout the country, of having these special schools that gave you an add-on education. And that's the way in which Jewish middle-class children were acculturated in Judaism.

So an important part of my existence was watching that over a 10-year, 12-year period. Yes, through, up to the 12th grade, exactly. It's hard to say what the tools were, or how it affects one's perspective, etc., but it wasn't about—and I've sort of thought about this a lot—it wasn't about belief, but it was about history, about duty and loyalty. I mean, it was pounded into you that there's a kind of chain of being, a chain of existence, and you're a part of this and you have a duty to maintain it in some way.

Q: I was wondering about your experience with journalism in high school. I mean, did you work on the newspaper at all? Did you read newspapers that were published in Cincinnati or elsewhere at the time?

PRICE: Well, the newspaper at Walnut Hills High School was called the *Chatterbox*, and I was a member of the *Chatterbox* staff. My editor-in-chief was Jerry Rubin, who became a famous revolutionary. The paper was really an important part of my life, and I wrote interesting stories for it. I was trying to remember which ones would be examples of this. I tried to write about prisons in Cincinnati. I believe, but I don't have evidence for this, that I tried to write some meaningful journalism for the *Walnut Hills Chatterbox*. Reviews, things like that. And it became important to me when I went to college, but I came to college with a background in writing for newspapers. And I'm sure I read the *Cincinnati Post* or *Inquirer*.

Q: What interested you in joining the *Chatterbox*, and did you have the aspiration even then to be a journalist, when you were in high school?

PRICE: Yes, well, definitely. Well, first of all, I can put it in this romantic past, of my grandfather having a newspaper. And then, I think I learned later, but maybe I learned at the time, but I didn't understand it, that one of my father's uncles had been an editor at a Viennese newspaper, and had committed suicide, had defenestrated, out of—when the Germans were on the other side of the door, in some way. So the idea of newspapers was definitely an important part of my growing up and my life. And being a journalist at Walnut Hills was an important part of my high school existence, and I think I was an adventurous and interesting newspaper person. But I can't remember lots of the instances of this. But definitely it set me thinking about being a journalist.

Q: I thought I would just ask about something that does stretch back into perhaps even Macon, and certainly early Cincinnati, which is that you would take a trip, every year at least, for a week to the Bronx, in New York City, to visit your great aunt Irene Goldstein and it seemed to be kind of a connection back to Austria.

PRICE: There's a couple ways to think of it. One of them was, no matter where we lived in the United States, we thought of ourselves as somewhat New Yorker, New York refugees—refugees from Europe, who should be living in New York, but weren't. And part of this was, that, as I said, both my father's side and my mother's side, but more strongly here on my mother's side, had relatives in New York. And so we came back almost every year in the '40s to Cincinnati, and I spent a week in the Bronx with my, this, Aunt Irene. And that was a really strong set of signals—very different, very much narrower idea of adaptation. She was more classic refugee, sewing hooks on the back of brassieres, helping to polish diamonds, trying to do—just finding any way of which she could, on her own, independently, as it were, develop a kind of occupation, have a period of growth, be independent, and exist in a complex environment with some very important coping skills.

And, religiously, was very orthodox, and I think one of the striking things about coming there was she lived in a two-family house in the Bronx, where the top floor was a rabbi's apartment, and the bottom floor, the living room was the synagogue, and she lived in the back bedrooms. To come there I had to go through the little synagogue, which was the size of a living room—and sometimes, after I was thirteen could make up part of the minyan—and then pass through to the kitchen, and the bedrooms. And every day when I came through I had to kiss the curtain on the place where the Torahs were held.

Q: And can you describe the apartment itself, that your great aunt had?

PRICE: Well, first of all—all these various places were small museums of refugee-ness. Her furniture, for example, didn't come from Vienna, but it came from Cuba. From refugees—not her being in Cuba, but the rabbi's wife had been in Cuba, and had sold their, or had furnished the apartment, with their very heavy, European-like furniture, that had made this voyage, as it were. But I think of it as a place that collected European smells, European tastes, European intensity, and then this very strong religiosity as well.

Q: Do you remember foods from those visits?

PRICE: Yes, definitely. I can think and smell them as I speak. But one of my favorites was her making of—she made wine from muscat grapes. And so there would be bottles and bottles of this fermenting wine. And there would be overflowing things of fruit, and then the special Austrian—she'd also grown up in Austria, but of Slovakian heritage—so the food, there was great pieces of meat, and slabs of meat, and things like that.

Q: And as you walked around the neighborhood with your father, along Grant Avenue and so on, it must've struck you as pretty different from Roselawn, and I suppose you were, in some of those years, in Cincinnati itself, but—

PRICE: Well, you have to make a stronger contrast. My father's relatives lived on East 66th Street. They were already established and, I would say, wealthy, and totally—his, sort of, uncle, I guess—maybe his uncle—had gone to Amherst. There was a continuum between one kind of Walnut Hills High School mobile-ly upward America, and my father's family—New York represented both these things. And the existence of a difference between them, a kind of maximized difference between them, between this very intense tie to Europe, Bronx, and this much more secular, cosmopolitan worldliness of East 66th Street.

Q: Did you find, or did your parents compare, your family life to your father's family, on the East Side?

PRICE: Well, that's probably a really interesting and complicated family history, probably played through the relationship between my father and his sister, in some ways. But it was definitely present, the question of how to live one's life. Because there was my father's family, which was a kind of remote, but really present idea of some way of living. Then there was my father's

sister's way of—and her husband's way of—coping with America, and then there was ours. This was definitely a curriculum—let's put it that way—without saying what the courses were, or how to characterize them. It was definitely a curriculum in how to think and how to adjust in this way.

Q: Well going back to Cincinnati, and to Roselawn, and to Walnut Hills, did you have the aspiration to go to an Ivy League school? How did Yale come about as a place where you applied? What was the road to Yale?

PRICE: First of all, to talk about a curriculum, if you were at Walnut Hills High School, you thought about many opportunities. You could think about going to the University of Cincinnati, you could think about going to Ohio State, but definitely it was an Advanced Placement thing, and you were open to the option of the Ivy League. My best friend—or one of my best friends—at Walnut Hill High School was a kid named Morris, Morry Wise. He was from a quite assimilated, sophisticated upper-middle-class or middle-class family, and his parents asked if I would go along with them for a spring looking at colleges, in our junior year. So with him I went to Princeton and Yale and Amherst, etc. And I went to Amherst because my father's—they went to Amherst.

So, the notion of going to these schools wasn't foreign to me. The other thing is that—in the way that the world works—the principal, Harold Howe, whom I discussed, his brother was the Dean of Admissions at Yale College, Arthur Howe [Jr.]. And so I think I applied—I can't remember—to Princeton, Yale, Amherst. Why I thought those were places—maybe I applied to “safe schools” as well, but I don't remember all of that.

Q: I would like to switch over to Yale, and your experience there. I mean, you described it in your memoir as being this training ground for American elites—a kind of rehearsal, was the word you used.

PRICE: Yes, well I thought that Yale—maybe this is true of Harvard as well, and maybe Princeton, in different ways—it was established in such a way that you kind of rehearsed roles that you would play in the world at large. So that gets us back to the *Yale Daily News*—that the *Yale Daily News* took itself so seriously that if you were chairman of the *Yale Daily News* you would become on the editorial board of *The New York Times*—and, in fact, my chairman, Robert Semple, became a member of the editorial board of *The New York Times*. Jim Ottaway, who was my class, and then chairman of the *Yale Daily News*, was part owner of *The Wall Street Journal*, ultimately.

So, people either knew from family relations, or knew that this was what you did—they knew that there was some relationship between how you acted at Yale—not what you studied—but how you acted at Yale. I mean there could be a relationship, if you're going to be a history professor, or something like that. But many people were basically trying out roles that may be foreordained, or may be family-related.

Q: And did you feel like it was a place that was in transition? I mean it had in the interwar years, and before, Jewish quotas, and in the 1950s it was still the old Yale in some ways, but maybe—

PRICE: Yes, I'd say. A friend of mine, a classmate of mine, Danny [Daniel] Horowitz, wrote a book about this period at Yale called *On the Cusp [The Yale College Class of 1960 and a World on the Verge of Change, 2015]*. It could be true, in other words—I would say we were on the back end of a turning point. So, it was turning, but we were just on the cusp, we weren't over on the other side.

Q: And how did that play out, in terms of even being a Jew on Yale's campus?

PRICE: Well, I guess it was very important to me, but it wasn't critical, and I didn't feel, walking around, that I was necessarily Jewish. I'm not sure I knew about the Jewish quota. Jewishness came up in a variety of ways, but it wasn't defining, like I couldn't do this or I couldn't that because I was Jewish. I didn't feel that. Maybe it was the fact that there were fewer opportunities available to me for that reason, but I didn't perceive that, and certainly I didn't perceive that in any bitter way, I would say. Maybe I thought that was part of the gentleman's agreement, or gentleman's arrangement. But I persisted—the defining thing was that I kept kosher at Yale, in some strange way. And I may have been the only person in my whole class of a thousand kids to keep, to maintain some degree of kashrut.

Q: How did you manage to do that?

PRICE: You mean how did I arrange for it?

Q: Yes.

PRICE: So I went to the Hillel rabbi my first week, and he said, I don't know how to handle this. No one's ever said this to me. So he sent me to college chaplain, Sidney Lovett, who arranged it. All I did was I didn't eat meat. I basically had a kind of vegetarian diet. So it wasn't kosher like I had kosher dishes, or kosher forks and knives, but it was something that the kitchens arranged, to make sure that I maintained whatever I wanted to do.

Q: You mentioned your classmate Danny Horowitz and I understand that his father, was it William Horowitz, was a Yale alum, and—

PRICE: He was class of '29.

Q: —and he took you under his wing as a mentor.

PRICE: Yes, well, he was an influence. He would, in a certain sense, adopt someone in each class, including, [Calvin] Bud Trillin would be an example, Ed [Edward] Zelinsky, various people who became kind of mythology. And he had a bank in New Haven. He was married to Miriam

Botwinik, who was from a family that had made a good deal of money making parts for planes and boats in World War II, and things like that. But he was another role model for me, and that was quite interesting.

Q: Didn't he own a radio station?

PRICE: He owned a radio station. I was part of a phalanx of people on election night, who would go out and get the results from the districts and phone them in, etc. And he almost got a television license. He didn't get a television license. But he was a lesson in what it meant to be a figure in a town, and a figure in political life. He was very close to Joe Lieberman, for example, who was another one of his adoptees, in some ways. So this mythology kind of created, continued in some way, which is, how to be responsible, what's the relationship between wealth and political duties, between family and city, and things like that.

Q: Well, I thought I would ask you more about the *Yale Daily News* in particular, because it was such a crucial part of your Yale years. And first of all, I'm curious if there are any particular stories that were especially memorable to you. And I'm thinking in part of Cuba, and Paris, Moscow—

PRICE: Some of these were back to *Felix Krull, Confidence Man*. But in a way I'm trying to think of ones that I felt closest to. These are the most, sort of, noteworthy and seem sort of out of kilter with the times, and with the idea of a college newspaper. I had decided to try and cover the Cuban Revolution. I'm not sure how I came to think of this. Well, my first one was when the 707 jet planes came into service—it must have been when I was a junior. I convinced Pan Am that I could have lunch in London and be back at Yale for an afternoon class—and that writing this in the *Yale Daily News* would help convince a whole generation that they should take these airplanes and go to Europe. So I wrote Juan Trippe, who was a Yale graduate, and spelt this out. And we now call this payola, or whatever it is, but they gave me a round-trip jet plane fare to—and that was the first time I'd been back to Europe, as it were. And I covered—I went to Moscow on that trip.

Q: How did that happen?

PRICE: Well—I'm not sure how I came to want to do this, but I wanted to cover the beginnings of American students studying in Russia. Really I can't remember—it must've been through Firuz Kazemzadeh, who was a professor at Yale at the time. But I put this package together with Juan Trippe paying for my airfare, and then Cosmos Travel, which had a monopoly on travel to the Soviet Union, paying for my trip to Moscow and my stay in Moscow. And I had a wonderful time, really interesting time in Moscow. And I wrote a series of stories about that. Before that—my first venture was to, and this was in 1958, was to cover the beginnings of a civil rights movement in the South. That was the interesting thing, in some ways. I don't know how the hell I came to do this—but I traveled to Montgomery, Alabama, and to Charlotte, North Carolina, and I wrote stories about—and my co-writer was George Akerlof, who won the Nobel Prize in economics, and whose wife is the head of the Fed. And the two of us—he remembers

this much better than I do, and I haven't—I've been meaning to sit down and talk to him about it. It was really great.

Q: Can you say more about those stories you wrote about the civil rights era in the South? Were they connected, for example, to your family having moved to Charlotte in around that time?

PRICE: I would say not really. Maybe—obviously, it couldn't be totally disconnected. But of that trip, I remember Montgomery, Alabama, the most. And, again—these were signs of obviously very enterprising journalism, but was it great journalism? I can't tell from reading the stories. Were these just undergraduate jottings—I don't think they were Faulkner-like in terms of perception and style, etc. And I'm not sure that they revolutionized people at the Yale campus or anything like that. But it was good for—

Q: Do you remember any story in particular that you wrote while you were in the South? Like any event that you covered?

PRICE: Well, I had a long talk with Clifford Durr, who became chairman of the FCC [Federal Communications Commission], or a member of the FCC—and whose daughter later married the future president of Penn [University of Pennsylvania]—but that's a different story. But I think I was really interested in—I'm not sure there were events—it was before the buses and the marches, in some way, so I have to go back and look. But I do remember them as being important. And traveling on buses myself through the South, and trying to figure out how to handle these stories, and what would make a good story. What kind of interviews would be good interviews, what would be telling and revealing about this, etc.

Q: Well, so that experience in the South clearly gave you the sense that leaving New Haven and being enterprising as a reporter would make sense, and so, if I could ask you about Moscow again. What was that time in Moscow after you had, *Felix Krull*-like, got yourself there. Do you have any memories of that period?

PRICE: Yes there are a lot of things that later resonated, like I did an interview with Ilya Ehrenburg. Ilya Ehrenburg was the great—again how this happened I have no idea—he was a great collector of Picassos. And I wrote an article in the *Yale Daily News* about Ilya Ehrenburg, my interview with him, and how amazing it was to be in his apartment filled with important Western artwork, etc. I was interviewed by Priscilla Johnson—I think that's her name. This resonated oddly because later, when I clerked for the Supreme Court, I was the footnote checker on the [Lee Harvey] Oswald in Moscow chapter of the Warren Report. Because the clerks were seconded to the Warren Commission. And a lot of that was about her, because she interviewed Oswald. Moscow was so restricted at the time that she interviewed every American, practically—not probably every American, but almost every American, including Oswald, who was just an oddball guy. And including me, who was just an odd undergraduate journalist. It was such a restricted environment, there were so few people, that she could be a kind of encyclopedic guide to those kinds of people. I wrote about taxi drivers in Moscow. The

reason I came was I wrote about Moscow State University and America, the first Americans studying there. How it happened, again, I don't know.

Q: Did you have any sense that you were being watched or checked upon?

PRICE: In Moscow I was definitely being watched, and I knew I was being watched. That was part of the deal.

Q: Was there any kind of evidence you saw of that while you were there?

PRICE: Well, one evidence was when I went with the—this is the question of who I watched by, not whether I was watched—when I got to Moscow—this is a story that amazes me to this day—when I got to Moscow State University—and this is also a *Felix Krull, Confidence Man* story—I went to the room of this Marine, American, who was studying there, knocked on the door and there was no answer. I opened the door and I went in, and I looked at the desk, and—this is an amazing story—there's a telegram saying, Unauthorized Yale undergraduate coming to speak to you. Now how the hell did this happen? How did—I knew I was gonna do this, and I told it to various people at Yale. Yale being a kind of CIA-related enterprise in some strange way, I wasn't shocked. But I was surprised that, in that sense, I was being watched. And when I came back I was debriefed.

Q: By Yale?

PRICE: Yale News Bureau, who had—and I can't remember whether in the room—was somebody from Washington or not. But I definitely was debriefed.

Q: And debriefed—was the impression you had that they were asking questions about national security?

PRICE: Well, they weren't debriefing me because they wanted to write a story about it.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about the Cuba follow-up. So you had this decision, or this interest in the Cuban Revolution, and how did you manage to get down to Havana?

PRICE: If I get my timing right, which I may not, I'd already had this relationship with Pan Am. So I wrote them a letter saying, Send me to Cuba and I'll write stories about how you can still go down there for spring vacation. This is just after the revolution and the question was, what was going to happen? It wasn't closed yet, but one of the economic interests at stake was, would undergraduates still go for spring break, etc.? And nobody was buying tickets anyway, so it was not a big deal to give me a ticket. When I got to Havana, the first thing I was asked at the gate was, Are you here for the big press conference, press week? And I said, Yes. So I was sped over to the Hotel Nacional, I think it was.

Q: And to be clear, you weren't planning to be part of that press week?

PRICE: I wasn't. I didn't even know about it. It was terrific—here were, I think, two hundred reporters. I was the youngest one. I became very good friends of the oldest reporter. Adam Clayton Powell was there. It was just a wonderful event, and I covered some of the trials in the stadiums. One of the things that I came away with was, what does it mean to be public?—that “public” has a ceiling as well as a floor, that a stadium is not a public place, in a kind of restricted—it's more of a mob place than a public place. And how do you distinguish between the two?

So I wrote about some of these trials, and I wrote about Fulgencio Batista, who had been the president before [in] Cuba—who was the overturned president. And I went to his house and I wrote about his collection of Lincoln materials, and his obsession with the United States, in a way, and stuff like that. So that was really great.

Q: So what was the reaction—

PRICE: —and I interviewed Fidel [Castro].

Q: Can you tell me about that?

PRICE: Well, that's a place where I wasn't gutsy enough. One of the things was Fidel was going to Venezuela. I think that was his first trip. And I got up in the morning, and I went out to the tarmac and interviewed him on the tarmac as he was going to Venezuela. And I'm sure I could've gotten on the—but that was like one step more than I was able to extend myself. But my whole life might've been different had I gotten on the plane with Fidel and gone to Venezuela. But I don't think he said anything. I'm not sure I asked profound questions that led him to say something different. Somewhere I may even have a dying audiotape of this, but I've never actually listened to it.

Q: What was the reaction back at Yale, given that you were writing these stories for the *Yale Daily News*?

PRICE: Well, one reaction was I got kicked out of *Political and Economic Institutions*. I was in a special honors program, which had very few classes, that allowed me to go on this thing. And I think they probably thought I should be spending more time writing research papers, and less time doing my journalism. But I think people loved—students loved it, the paper liked it a lot. Again, it was good, but it didn't change the world, in some ways. That I know of.

Q: What was it like, internal to the *Daily News*, just the news culture, the office of the *Daily News*? Were you in a leadership position?

PRICE: As I said, I think that the *Yale Daily News* was a great paper. My first work there was a more standard investigative journalism. Again, we'd been slightly put up to this—there was a big split over political science at Yale, and Willmoore Kendall, and a couple of the—especially the right-wing guys—were feeling that Yale was going in the wrong direction. People will know this—this is probably famous in the annals of political science. A very good friend of mine, Albert Pergam, who was a brilliant young student of my class, and I did investigative research with surveys on all of the political science departments in the country, and what their view was of the Yale political science department—what the movement was in and out of the Yale political science department. And we did a three-part series, which I think was mostly Albert's analytical brilliance, on whether the department was weak. But we were being used by—we didn't fully know this, I don't think—but we were being used by one or the other parties in this dispute. But I did that kind of story. And a lot of the people went on to great careers. Richard Rhodes, who wrote about the atom bomb, and stuff like that, was features editor.

Q: How much of your time did you spend at the *Daily News*?

PRICE: I would say I spent a lot of time there. And it was—I set headlines, I helped cut and paste the mockup pages. I mean it was a real training in newspaper-ness. You really got your hands dirty, and things like that.

Q: So you did attend classes as well, and you mentioned just a moment ago that you had this program you were a part of, which I guess would be like a—

PRICE: Yes, it was a great program—I feel, here, more influence than I ever felt before. Because it was run by two great professors, Robert Dahl and Charles Lindblom. It was the two of them and eight or ten students who met once a week, and that was all you did your whole year. And they gave you a reading list, and Sam Bowles was—it was to train you to become a political scientist, or to be on the Fed, or something like that. It was that part of Yale, in some ways. And it was excellent—yes. And I was in it for a year.

Q: You were in it for a year, your junior year?

PRICE: Yes, I just wasn't in it for my senior year—because my junior year I combined it with journalism.

Q: Right, and as a result you were removed from the program?

PRICE: Pardon?

Q: You were removed from the program?

PRICE: It was recommended that I study history.

Q: I see. And was history your major in the end?

PRICE: Yes, I guess. Yes it was—but, as I say, journalism was, in a way, a major for me.

Q: And I was curious to hear whether outside of the *Daily News*, its office, your journalism, whether there were courses, or any particular professors that were especially memorable?

PRICE: Yes, I think especially in terms of communications, there was a guy named Harry [Jindrich] Benda, who himself had been a kind of refugee. He was Dutch, Jewish, and in Indonesia, and his family—he was interned by the Japanese in Indonesia when Japan occupied Indonesia. His class really—for some reason or other it stuck with me—was about the communications methods of the Japanese in the camp. That is to say, how to organize, how to build a, what the community was like, what the means of communication was between the masters and the slaves, as it were. He seemed to be taken with a lot of the material of how to think about propaganda, communications, and control.

Q: And do you feel like you drew upon it later, when you got back into—

PRICE: Yes, I think, probably I drew upon all these things. I mean, I drew upon—Harry Benda was more—there was another class that I really loved which was on the history of the French Revolution day-by-day, and again, it was very much about communications. I probably wouldn't have used that term before I came here, but it was very much about mobilization, about organization, about disorganization, about symbolism, and about new calendars, new ways of conceptualizing the world, etc. So, yes.

Q: Were there any other classes, or faculty, that stick out in your memory?

PRICE: Not right this second.

Q: So you had the aspiration to be a journalist?

PRICE: I definitely had the aspiration to be a journalist.

Q: And it was your intent—in fact, your first job was to work at *American Heritage* magazine

PRICE: I got a job offer, which I somewhat regret not taking, at the *Washington Star*. But it was conditioned on me going into the Army, and I didn't feel like doing that at the time, which may have been a mistake. So that was my newspaper offer. And then I got a letter from *American Heritage* magazine—and somehow I responded to that—from Oliver Jensen. Oliver Jensen had been a figure in *Time* magazine, and it was a spinoff of three guys from *Time* magazine who

started *American Heritage* magazine. This was still early in its career, and I liked the idea so, for some reason or other, I accepted that job.

Q: And that took you to New York City?

PRICE: That took me to New York City.

Q: It's probably a good place to wind down this first session, to ask about that experience as, now, a professional journalist. What was it like that year you spend at *American Heritage*? It was an extraordinary cast of journalists around you—

PRICE: It was a wonderful group, but it wasn't journalism. It was historical journalism. They were pioneering with a different mode. They wanted to popularize American history in a sophisticated way. They wanted to market—thinking of new tools for marketing. As you recall, they had these hard cover issues of *American Heritage*. They wanted to use imagery much more—they were paying a lot of—because they were from *Life*. They wanted to figure out how to make history more vivid through the use of imagery, etc. And they were great, and they were from America's literary tradition.

Malcolm Cowley's son was, kind of, my boss. Eric Larrabee, Richard Ketchum, who was this extraordinary person, who had a great photographic eye, a great makeup eye. And it turned out to be both—and this gets back to *Felix Krull*—both about content, and about sales and distribution. That year I was being trained a little bit on the publishing side, as well as the writing side, but more the publishing side. So, it was more about *American Heritage* books. It was about direct sales. It was about taking your brand and developing games, or Civil War games—like, How do you take the Civil War and turn it into a whole variety of things? But this was all before Ken Burns, etc., etc. So they were pioneers in trying to rethink the packaging and presentation of ideas and writing.

Q: And a good way to wrap up might be this last question about your experience at the *Chatterbox* in high school, then *Yale Daily News*, through to the *American Heritage* magazine, which wasn't exactly journalism. You went, after that, if I'm not mistaken, to work for Robert Wagner, Jr.'s, mayoral campaign, and we can talk about that next time. But my question is, given that you had so much interest in journalism leaving Yale, what was it that changed your mind about sticking with journalism?

PRICE: I don't know if I changed my mind. I just changed my route. Again, I think it was probably, was I going to go into the Army? The draft still existed. Was I going to go into the Army, or was I going to do graduate work? So, I chose to go to law school as opposed to becoming a Marine, or a soldier or something like that. So it was that pragmatic, somewhat ugly decision. I'm not sure it was the right decision, but it was the decision to go to law school. And so I had no pull towards law—but I didn't have a pull toward history PhD studies or anything like that either. So that's the sort of weak and unsatisfactory answer to this question.

Q: Well, we can pick up with—

PRICE: I mean, it looks like a really rational decision, but it wasn't thought through in a rational—and I would say it wasn't an abandonment of journalism. Maybe *American Heritage* had already been some sort of compromise with this. So, yes. I would say the alternate career, and the way law school made sense, was it was becoming more civic. This gets back to the Wagner—even short but intense as it was—which is, the career of being an assistant to someone running for office. It goes back to Bill Horowitz in New Haven, which is more public life, more about public relations, that kind of thing. So I think there always had been this kind of public relations idea in my mind as well.

Q: Well that's a perfect place to end this first session, so thank you so much.

PRICE: Thank you.

END OF SESSION ONE