

# Interview with Staughton Lynd, January 2020, Niles, Ohio

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**Bob Buzzanco (BB):**.... We're going to talk today mostly, I think, about organized labor unions, where they were, where they are, maybe why so many people in unions supported Donald Trump in 2016. You've been in Youngstown for quite some time. You've been involved in Youngstown politics for quite some time. You were there in 1977 when things really turned badly. Just a little bit . . . What I don't think people nowadays, the union membership is at 10%, I don't think people really know what labor was like, especially in the post-World War Two era, its strength and some of the concessions it made in order to get to that economic position.

**Staughton Lynd (SL):** [00:00:46] Well. Perhaps I should say a word about how Alice and I found ourselves thinking about the labor movement. I was an assistant professor of history at Yale from 1964 until 1967. But in January 1966, the war in Vietnam was escalating very rapidly and in the space of a year, I went from being the master of ceremonies at a Carnegie. Rally in New York City all the way to making a surreptitious trip to North Vietnam with Tom Hayden and Herbert Aptheker and in effect, giving up my academic life not as a voluntary act. But that was the effect of doing that on the Yale community. So we thought, well, the Students for a Democratic Society is going to have its national headquarters in Chicago. Chicago's been a pretty lively place in the history of American radicalism. We moved to Chicago, where . . . and I think five universities, the history department voted to hire me for a full-time tenure-track job. And whoever is in the chain of command and usually just rubber stamps everything of that kind interfered and denied me a further academic.

**BB:** [00:02:51] Five. Simultaneously. Wow.

**SL:** [00:02:54] One at a time. One at a time . . .

**BB:** [00:02:57] Okay. But still. Wow.

**SL:** [00:02:58] And that included Northern Illinois University, where Al Young was teaching, Roosevelt University that had a something of a radical past. Loyola.. . .

**Alice Lynd (AL):** [00:03:14] St Joseph's and.....

**SL:** [00:03:16] And so what to do? And I was still very unclear about that. In August 1968, when the Democratic Party had its convention in Chicago. And the whole world was watching as Tom Hayden and others led street protests, I got arrested for a nonviolent effort to speak in the immediate neighborhood of the convention. And I was just soaking in a hot bath at the end of the day, of being in jail, getting out of jail. I was carefully examining if the Chicago's finest drove up, looking for me, where she might see that they were coming, but not necessarily call herself to their attention.

**AL:** [00:04:24] They were parked outside the house.

**SL:** [00:04:27] And I got a call. I was in the bathtub, a hot bathtub. It was none other than Saul Alinsky, the leading community organizer of the day. Who I think saw me as a kind of symbolic link to younger radicals. And primarily for that reason, offered me a job at a school for organizing that he was creating. And I was one of the initial four faculty members. And one of the other one of the students I was technically a faculty member was a man from Gary, Indiana, who had worked in a steel mill. And somehow he began to tell me about a man named John Sargeant, who he said was kind of the the person ... from whom all good things sprung. And he said he didn't know whether John would talk with me. So I telephoned John, Sergeant. He invited myself, Alice, and our infant daughter to supper. Alice? How old would Martha have been?

**AL:** [00:06:04] She was about three or four. I remember John took her to see the goldfish, and.

**SL:** [00:06:09] The first thing he did ,he took her brother ahead, and there was just never any question about our being buddies of the spirit. Although we have lived quite different lives. And he completely revised my left liberal view of trade unions in the steel industry. United States Steel had entered into a contract with the United Steelworkers of America. U.S. Steel didn't want to strike, didn't want any unpleasant measures. They entered into a contract and Alinsky, a little known fact, took his basic organizing ideas

from the early CIO, in particular from John Lewis, about whom Alinsky wrote the first biography. And so. In hearing Alinsky's views of how you go about putting things together in a working class community, I was really also hearing a kind of reflection from the inside on the CIO. And. It was a time when, despite the fact that there had been no strike in the organization, that US steel, little steel, which meant Bethlehem Republic, Youngstown Sheet and Tube and one or two others, there was indeed a a strike in the spring of 1937, and that was the strike in which ten workers were shot in the back and killed. At a Memorial Day strike support rally in Chicago. And the liberal press, my parents included, just basked in the reflection of the CIO. But what I learned? All right. Well, John Sargeant taught me and which rang a bell as true because of the work I was doing at Alinsky school, which was so derivative, particularly from the organization of the packing house workers on the southwest side of Chicago.

**SL:** [00:09:02] The outline was something like this. The goal of any sensible union movement was so-called recognition by the employer--which was understood to mean that henceforth, in the absence of a very challenging procedure for getting rid of a union once you had it there. . . in order to work at, let's say, a steel mill of any size and significance, you have to be a member of the union. And if you were not and if the company decided to hire you at that moment in time, you would become a member. And from John, I learned to look at at the process in this way. And I, Alice and I put together a book of oral history called *Rank and File*. And in every edition of it, I think there have been four editions, there are these two or three pages from John Sargeant that just for me was like the heavens opening. And for the first time understanding what I was seeing and feeling. John said that, yes, you never saw a period of rank and file activity to compare with the early days of the union at places where the CIO established a foothold. And he said, what people don't understand is what happened next.

**SL:** [00:10:56] Because the the model that all trade unionists were encouraged to subscribe to was that you asked recognition from the employer, meaning that you were the only union that the employer would bargain with. And what went down in that initial contract, if you were so fortunate as to get one, was likely to be the contract for a long time to come. Well, just to give you a feel or a whiff of the new atmosphere, give you a whiff of the new atmosphere-- When you made a comment. Let's take a big mill. This is the one I'm going to focus on, Inland Steel, which was one of the little steel companies. When you voted as a local union on the contract that was being negotiated between the

United Steelworkers of America and the corporation, John told me we would be up on this roof, he putting on new shingles and I listening. What John told me was that the. The negotiation was entirely in the hands of the national Union and that there had been at least one instance where the steel workers at Inland Steel, who had their own contract committee, had unanimously rejected the contract reached between the national trade union and the corporation, and there was nothing they could do about it. Not only that, the company, the typical CIO contract had very. . . There was a great similarity in the initial contracts that.

**SL:** [00:13:28] The CIO obtained an order with the United Auto Workers, rubber workers, packing house workers, electrical workers and so on. What was the guts of a CIO contract? There were two contract clauses to which John directed my attention and which more and more verified themselves as the essence of, of what that tremendous upsurge of labor ended in being all about. Two key contract provisions. The first and most obvious was that, as everyone knows, with certain rare exceptions, like US Steel, the CIO obtained his first contract with the leading company or the leading companies if they bargain together in that particular industry with two clauses-- first clause and the new contract between the CIO and Corporation X or company X was a no strike clause, which should have made people's ears flap from from the very first moment. How had they gotten this contract? How would they gotten that far? Through striking? What was the essence of the new contract? You can't strike during the duration of the contract because, but don't worry, we have this new grievance arbitration procedure through which you will solve all your problems. Well. To make a very long and complex story short, when you negotiate for a contract, in a period following an enthusiastic drive for recognition, the right to strike is a little abstract because people have just been out on strike, they've been scraping through, they've been maintaining their households.

**SL:** [00:15:49] And the labor doesn't have a very strong hand to play. So the first characteristic provision of a CIO contract would be surrender the right to strike and related forms of direct action like slowdowns for the duration of the contract. And the grievance procedure, proposed and enthusiastically administered by many liberal college professors, cheerfully, entered into the no strike clause as an essential constituent part of a CIO contract. Because these were academics, these were people who thought they changed the world through their intellectual conversations. And the best comment on the on the grievance procedure was that of a man named Marty

Lieberman, a radical organizer and an auto [worker], who wrote a poem or short story about a grievance filed in the place where he worked during the summer heat. Can we open the windows a little? And time went by and time went by, And Martin's friend said, Hey, what about that grievance? We're melting now, but pretty soon the weather's going to change. Well. And in January, the arbitrator finally ruled for the union and the management people went through the part of the shop where Marty worked, nailing the windows up so that everyone frosted. It wasn't it wasn't a very good way for, for resolving even small problems because it took so long and it was a disaster for the merger.

**BB:** [00:18:30] The merger. Was this before that?

**SL:** [00:18:32] No, this was before. I'm talking about early. This is what people miss, right? 35, 36, 37.

**BB:** [00:18:42] The CIO has kind of a romantic history.

**SL:** [00:18:44] Exactly. And. What, and in the long view, I think bulks even larger, is that it was assumed, that the steel industry and the American economy and generally, particularly during World War Two, when there were orders from the services that needed trucks and planes and bomb sites and what have you. . . The assumption was a natural one that this way of life would endure forever. And in a town like Youngstown, Ohio, where we are now sitting, there was a kind of a routine for life, which was that, first of all, families from the same area that spoke the same dialect maybe knew each other through intermarriage, which settled in the same part of town. Families would be together two or three evenings a week for a large communal meal. After graduating high school, which was a big deal . . . young men would typically serve in the military for a year or two, come back, their uncle would get them a job in the mill. And before you know it, they were passing on this way of life to their children gradually, with the expectation that it would be college, not high school, and that this child of theirs might come to wear a white collar and do what had hitherto been considered a middle class job. It was a middle class job, and these children of the working class were absorbed into such work, and the parents tended to regard their children's success at living a different way of life than their own way of life was the name of success. Well, it didn't go on forever. As a matter of fact, Youngstown is, I think, distinguished among American

communities that I happen to know anything by the fact that it had three successive steel mill closures in 1977, 1978, 1979.

**SL:** [00:21:44] The resistance grew greater year by year. But the problem not everywhere, but the problem in the steel industry was that so often what was going on was that the company would make money from out-of-date technology at a certain mill. Steel would be made in open hearths instead of in electric furnaces or basic oxygen furnaces. And it meant that if your mill closed and you organized, as we did a movement to revive the mills, to keep them alive under some form of worker or worker-community ownership, you weren't just told you needed \$20 million to buy the land and the existing buildings. And if you could manage the machinery, you were told that unless you put up not only the 20 million to buy the skeleton of what was there, but an additional 200 million to modernize. It was just a cruel joke to reopen because you're still you still would not be able to produce a ton of steel as cheaply as other places, some of them abroad where there are steel mills in our case had been destroyed during World War Two, and they rebuilt. With this newer technology, you had to be able to compete with it if you wanted to survive. And where were you going to find \$225 million? The United States government put up a \$100 million loan guarantee fund for all steel mills for the whole country.

**BB:** [00:23:55] Didn't. Griffin Bell, who was the attorney general, come to Youngstown to talk about this with you or there are some Carter that some Carter administration?

**SL:** [00:24:03] Not exactly. Well, yes. The Carter administration was . . . he came and met in the basement with lots of steelworkers in their shirtsleeves and told them about it, a little bit like Trump, the great things he was going to do and he didn't do them. So what happened was that in addition to the no strike clause in the typical CIO contract you had a so-called management prerogative clause. And what those big words meant was that when it came to investment decisions, when it came to deciding with the company, stay here or move, if it stayed, what new technology would it need, etc. cetera, etc., etc.. Those decisions would be made by, exclusively by, the company. And the union, the representative of all the workers in that place, because after your, the sign in period was over, if you became an ongoing member of employee of the company, you had to join the union. The union simply stood by and wrang its hands and did what it could do to get benefits for people whose work had been taken away. And.

John Barbero, one of the people, because this woman, they moved here, used to say that that was like arranging for funeral benefits. Yes, you got a little money, but your job, your whole future, your sense of where you belonged, how your children would stand on your shoulders and going forward to a better life and so on. All of that was swept away and. There's been absolutely no change in that.

**BB:** [00:26:31] Over 40 years later, we've just seen this in Lordstown. It's 20 minutes away.

**SL:** [00:26:34] We had an automobile assembly plant in Lordstown that opened, I believe, about 1970. And the feeling in the Valley, it's hard to describe. There was one other place that made electrical fixtures for General Motors, where you were also talking about 12,000, 15,000 union members. People said, Wow, we've always got Lordstown. No, you didn't, because. In the last couple of years. I'm talking in ,oh, what am I talking in? It was 19, no, I'm talking of the year 2000. Just a year or two ago, the Lordstown went out of business and they're talking now, now about how they're going to do alternative this and alternative that. But, so people have this dilemma. Should they stay in Lordstown where, and surrounding communities where, of course, they put down roots? Kids are going to school. They fixed up the house in a way that they, they and their wives or their husbands if the union member is a woman. Feel good about. Should they keep all that? But without a job, it's meant going into debt and really scraping along. Or should they move? Giving up any hope of getting back into a UAW sponsored job. Like the one they had previously had. And so you have people. Driving hundreds of miles from, let's say, somewhere north of Detroit. Coming to this area to see their family on the weekend and then on Sunday evening, heading out again for what at least was a job in which they felt that their obligation to maintain.

**SL:** [00:29:11] But bringing the the family under severe stress and, drugs, many problems that lay in wait. So that's the basic story of our last 50 years. We tended to be regarded as people who, despite the fact that they were lawyers, in some sort of academic, Were on our side. Were good people. So, for example, when Lordstown was in process of voting on the recently negotiated contract with General Motors, Alice and I went out to the picket line one day, Lo and behold, people I'd never met before in my life who were autoworkers, not steelworkers, says, Oh, that's Staughton Lynd and he was always on our side. Which is pretty gratifying feeling, but it doesn't put much on the

table for people whose whole way of life has been shot out from under them. And. So. I think Alice and I are left with a sort of dual feeling of distress over the existing situation. I've taught a couple of courses at the local university, Youngstown State University. And the feeling I have there is that the kids are just getting their railway tickets for leaving town. Sure, that there's no real future for people here.

**BB:** [00:31:10] I saw some data last year. Ohio actually is one of the lower states and having college graduates here. And yet we have Ohio State, which is a massive school, a big state university system. And so I'm assuming that kids who do come to school will get a degree. They leave Ohio, they go elsewhere, because this this is just a difficult place. It's very different than what I remember. You know, growing up, my dad was worked for the city. He was the create an AFSCME union at the city of Niles. But most of my friends fathers worked in the mills and they lived well, you know, they bought a house. They could go on vacation, they could send their kids to college, which was affordable at the time.

**SL:** [00:31:49] Second vehicle.

**BB:** [00:31:51] Yeah, exactly. All that. And now I think people don't understand the residual effect. Businesses associated with GM, Falcom Trucking, Trucking went under briefly and then people own little, you know, fast food restaurants and mini marts and things like that go under. And YSU's enrollment is down, I think this year, partly because of that. And of course, as you mentioned, what we call the deaths of despair, opioids and poverty and suicides and things like that are soaring to really, really unknown levels.

**SL:** [00:32:21] By the way, one might say, well, what about the local university? Are they leading a campaign for something or other? No. More than half the classroom hours are taught by. What do you call it? Adjuncts by adjuncts?

**BB:** [00:32:42] Yeah.

**SL:** [00:32:42] That's the adjuncts tend to be of two kinds. They are the wives or husbands of people academically employed at Youngstown State. Where they're not

really worried that much about how much money they make. And in fact, they haven't had an increase in 25 years.

**BB:** [00:33:06] That's true.

**SL:** [00:33:08] And the other thing that drives me nuts is people say, well, but yeah, there are these courses that you can do on television. Yes. Well, maybe there are. But I remember even at Yale. You know, hours, what do they call the hours when a faculty member will be available? And people were sitting on the floor on desks. You know, we were. We were talking about things, and I don't believe you can do at least education, that touches on the nature of society. Who runs it? How can it be changed? I don't think you can do that very well over a television.

**BB:** [00:34:00] No, I've I've done those.

**SL:** [00:34:02] Takes face to.

**BB:** [00:34:03] Face, and it's a huge difference. Some of the students work and they like to do that. But the big classes, I always make sure they're one on one. And it's gratifying because you have a lot of students come in who've been through the public school system in Texas, which isn't exemplary. And, you know, the first day I kind of in a very subtle way say you've been lied to your whole life, so I'm going to tell you something else. And at the end of the semester, a significant number will line up and say, Man, thank you. I've never heard this before. They're working class kids. They're not invested in the system. If I were it Yale or Brown or Wesleyan, they would be very different. So that's gratifying. But one of the things that I've noticed in the last few years is when I talk about labor, I have to kind of step back and say, Oh, you don't really know what I'm talking about and give them a ten or 15 minute kind of primer and what unions are. And, you know, I wrote a book for my class where there's a great deal of labor history and I talk about the great uprising and the Battle of Blair Mountain and Ludlow, which is just absolutely stunning.

**BB:** [00:35:03] The idea that there was a violent class war in the United States is just incomprehensible to most people. So it's it's it's there's always been this sense that, you know, we work. We should be grateful that we have a job. Thank you, boss. Whatever

you want. That kind of thing. And it wasn't always like that. There was a period when workers stood up for themselves, and it's just become more and more difficult. *Rank and File* is one of the ways I was introduced to you, and I read a couple of your articles on the War for Independence, and Staughton is one of the giants in that area. He's written a very famous piece called "Who Should Rule at Home." Is that the name of the very famous article about kind of class dynamics within the the war for independence? And then my labor historian at Ohio State told me all about you. So . . .

**SL:** [00:36:00] We, or during the period when I was, just sniffing about and wrestling with the question, should I be a pretend steelworker or a useless academic? I decided to be a lawyer and it wasn't useless. It wasn't successful. But we put up a hell of a fight. And I'm looking at the oral histories that were offered, by a series from *Rank and file* folks that Alice and I encountered when they moved here who were indeed the reason for our moving here. Because there have been Socialist manual workers in the United States who were not only against the boss, but against the Vietnam War. Who.

**BB:** [00:37:12] Well, wasn't that one of the issues when Lordstown started, there was this kind of revolutionary movement within Lordstown that the union leadership.

**SL:** [00:37:19] Very much you guys.

**BB:** [00:37:21] And you had the Dodge Revolutionary movement, DRUM and Black workers. It wasn't we didn't.

**SL:** [00:37:27] We didn't have quite that because there wasn't the same concentration of African American, but there was a spirit then. I'm trying to.

**BB:** [00:37:41] You know, many, many years ago, I interviewed Lane Kirkland because I was discussing the Vietnam War and AFL-CIO's position on Vietnam. And he said, hey, we were making good money. So, you know, the fact that people are getting killed and Vietnam was getting destroyed was just irrelevant because it was it was good for wages for a certain group of workers in key industries.

**SL:** [00:38:01] Yeah, this I talked about the man named John Sergeant the steel worker from whom about 1970, 50 years ago, I sort of formulated an initial hypothesis. I haven't

changed my mind an inch. I think he really thought and there's a section of this oral history book, *Rank and File* . . . “without a contract, without any agreement with the company, without any regulation concerning hours of work, conditions of work or wages. A tremendous surge took place. We talk of a rank and file movement. The beginning of union organizer was the best kind of rank and file movement you could think of. John Lewis sent in a few organizers, but there were no organizers that Inland Steel, and I'm sure there were no organizers at Youngstown Sheet and Tube. The union organizers were essentially workers in the mill who were so disgusted with their conditions and ready for a change that they took the union into their own hands.” So.

**BB:** [00:39:37] I don't know if you. Oh, I'm sorry.

**SL:** [00:39:38] Well, let me just wrap this up by saying. There is a myth that the little steel strike of 1937 was a failure because the union in steel I'm talking about particularly didn't win a contract. And the place where where John Sergeant worked in Indiana, but near Illinois and Chicago was a sort of medium sized company called Inland Steel. And, they're. Well, let me read. . . Well, what what happened was that in Indiana, where Inland Steel, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, Bethlehem Steel, one of the US steel mills in Gary, were all located. There was a special understanding between. The strikers and the governor of Indiana who kind of negotiated a separate agreement. He wasn't giving them a standard CIO contract which provided for hours of work, retiree benefits, etc., etc.. No, what he said was any group of workers that wants to negotiate with the boss is going to have an open door under this understanding. And that was all John and his friends needed because they had so much more capacity to to enliven the mass that they were part of than anyone else. And so here's a here's a book. The entire book is about the 1937 strike by very good historian. It's called *The Last Great Strike* [Ahmed White]. And he accepts the general judgment that it was a terrible failure. And the worker. Ten people were killed in Chicago. People went back to work dragging their bodies behind them. But look what he also says, “On July 1st, Inland Steel reopened the Indiana Harbor mill amid cries of victory from thousands of jubilant workers, some sporting beards that they had vowed to grow until the strike ended. The Daily Worker joined the chorus, likening the, quote, triumph unquote, to the victory of the Patriots over British tyranny.” Yeah. They thought they had won because they had won, right? They had a right to organize. They felt they could outorganize anybody else on the face of the earth. And they did because they worked there.

**BB:** [00:43:08] That. Let me bring up one more thing, because we've seen what I call, I use the word resuscitation in the last few years of some of some labor activism, particularly among teachers. The Flight Attendants union, which really ended the shutdown, the government shutdown last year. And Sarah Nelson has been very active and and a lot of this stuff has been in violation of state law, you know, and they're going out anyway. Do you think that's kind of a trend or a development that can be built upon? Because at the same time that's happening, we have half of UAW is under indictment, you know, right now.

**SL:** [00:43:40] Absolutely. And if I, we don't travel very much now. I didn't get to West Virginia, but I understand that some of the teachers have a union, but the mass of teachers did not. So you have this really interesting situation where the people who have a union could talk about some of the things they've won. The people who didn't have a union could say, well, we like that and we're going to go out and get it. Yeah, and. Yes, I think that can happen. Everywhere.

**BB:** [00:44:18] And much of this is happening, so-called red states, too, you know, not not in Manhattan, not in San Francisco, but in Arizona.

**SL:** [00:44:26] Yeah, exactly. Colorado.

**BB:** [00:44:28] And that one thing I know, one of the a lot of people around here, people I've talked to, I'm sure people you've talked to who've been union members, worked in the factories, really supported Donald Trump in 2016. Now, much of that in my anecdotal knowledge was because they really didn't like the Clintons. And and at the same time, even though they voted for Trump, they also spoke very well of Bernie Sanders. I just wonder, like, is that kind of a sense of desperation? Like, you know, people have been lying to us, no one's done anything. Trump is coming down here and telling us he cares. Well, is there more to it than that?

**SL:** [00:45:04] Unfortunately. I didn't understand it at the time. I don't think many people did. I thought that fascism was a product of a situation where there was a mass unemployment and people thought they were rebelling against capitalism along with their are other activities. And. I think it was a superficial view. The, what I probably

missed was that this well entrenched father to son, indeed grandfather to father to son, way of life. The rituals around high school graduation, the service and the military. All of that was just being undermined by the fact that there was no job to begin with to to make these other things. Available. And. Somehow. This distinguished war veteran who. Didn't fight because there was something wrong with his foot, but he couldn't remember which it was. Somehow he he picked up on on that and he said, Well, it's simple. You need something. You need me, right? I'm the only person in the world who can do this. Just follow me.

**BB:** [00:46:49] I've seen a lot of liberal and leftist lately writing a lot about labor. None of them ever worked, and they kind of dismissed some of the ideas I think you said is, Oh, that's that's kind of trite or that's corny or that's just, and I've often said, you know, it's like, come to Youngstown, come on on, I'll show you around. And I know that, well, but and I think there is this sense among these kind of intellectuals that that, you know, the working class, you know, they've been conned or they're not that bright or whatever. And I say, you know, they're there. And I think one thing that you really said this some point is this their community has been wiped out, not just the job. Last thing, I'm going to put you on the spot. You sang a very beautiful Ira lullaby to me the other day, and I was wondering if we could get an encore performance of that.

**SL:** [00:47:34] Yeah, well, I was explaining that my parents were both teachers. They hired a young woman from Ireland to be what I guess you'd call our governess. There must be a better word, but I am not thinking of it. And she was a remarkable person who brought with her the songs of the Irish Uprising in 1916. And there were songs about my old Fenian gun. There were songs about Michael Dwyer. The British soldiers surrounded the house where he and his friends took refuge and set fire to it. And a man who had already been shot said they only have single shot muskets, I'm going to go to the doorway. They'll empty their guns and you all make a break for it. So anyway, the song that I sang was a little bit of Kevin Barry "early on Monday morning, just high upon a Gallo tree, Kevin Barry gave his young life for the cause of liberty. Just the last of 18 summers. Still, there's no one can deny. As he walked to death that morning, proudly held his head on high. Shoot me. Shoot me like a soldier. Do not hang me like a dog. For I fought for dear old Ireland on that still, September morn All around the little bakery where we fought them hand to hand. Standing, former turning, former and will free you, Barry proudly answered No." I also might mention one more thing about where, my let's

call it for the moment radicalism, came from, and I want to describe a experience of my father's, which is the thing about his life, of which I am most proud and in a sense gave me a pattern that he managed for a summer.

**SL:** [00:50:54] And I have tried to manage for a longer period of time. He went to Union Theological Seminary, although he had a very... he didn't believe in in in a personal god. I'm not sure how he would have described what he believed in, but it was much more an ethic or sense of solidarity than any kind of ideology. And it was the custom at Union Theological Seminary between the first and second years during the summer, a student would become a temporary minister at a community that had no regular pastor. Something that we ran into in South America later on. A lot of liberation theology came from these people who whose basic relationship was not with some big church bureaucracy, but with a particular community of particular neighborhood. So my dad somehow drew a ticket to Elk Basin, Wyoming, and he arrived there early in the 1920s by stagecoach. And the first evening at the boarding house, he sensed the kind of chill in the air, tried to figure out what it was. Made a decision that very evening, sought out the man who did the hiring for Standard Oil. This was an oil community. Was hired as a pick and shovel laborer. Spent the summer as a pick and shovel laborer and next to people who lived there and preached preached in the schoolhouse Sunday night. And I thought, well, at least that's the beginning of the kind of relationship that might exist between an awful lot of teachers and doctors and lawyers and the working class communities they served.

**BB:** [00:53:25] Yeah, And I think that's something that I hope really stands out. The idea that this is more than a place where you go to work, that it's bigger than that. And there's a community and people used to go out and have softball teams and.

**SL:** [00:53:40] He couldn't preach on during the day on Sunday because everybody went rainbow trout fishing.

**BB:** [00:53:46] There you go. Well, thank you so much, Alice and Staughton, tender comrades, and I appreciate this so much. So it's really wonderful. And you've both been an inspiration to a lot of us.