

# KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN INTERVIEW  
*JOHN MCCAIN: FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*  
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

**JOHN MCCAIN**  
**Senator**  
**September 21, 2017**  
Interviewed by Peter Kunhardt  
**Total Running Time: 1 Hour 9 Minutes**

**QT: 01;01;03;22**

**TITLE**  
On his health

**QT: 01;01;09;04**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

My condition is improving, still significant challenges, this is a very vicious disease and we should make no illusions about that fact. I am feeling well, I exercise, everything is fine but we still have further treatment challenges ahead and I'm confident and I'm happy and I'm very grateful for the life I've been able to lead and I greet the future with joy.

**QT: 01;01;39;01**

**TITLE**  
He is in the midst of his second round of chemotherapy

**QT: 01;01;43;18**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

No, I find it about the same. I think the secret is attitude, exercise, lousy food. None of the food they make me eat do I like and—and attitude. Attitude is so important and again I am so grateful for having had the life I've led and obviously I'm motivated to continue that but I am a happy person and a grateful person.

**QT: 01;02;14;10**

# KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

## **TITLE**

On cancer related symptoms and impermanence

**QT: 01;02;19;19**

### **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

There's been no impact of this problem that I'm facing, there's been none whatsoever. But that's not to deny the fact that if it gets worse, then it's bound to have effects over time. I greet every day with gratitude and I will continue to do everything I can. But I—again, I'm also very aware that none of us live forever. I believe that it was Saroyan that said, he said, "I always knew that no one could live forever but I thought—always thought there might be one exception." I'm—I'm counting on that.

**QT: 01;03;05;09**

## **TITLE**

On his relationship with Joe Biden and Joe's son Beau

**QT: 01;03;10;15**

### **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I talked to Joe as short a time ago as yesterday. I talk to him a lot, but we've talked for years and years. We've been close friends for years. We have discussed many issues; we've worked together on many issues. He's one of the nice and good people that I have known and obviously the burden of his son's demise to this terrible disease has been an incredible challenge to Joe and the entire Biden family. But Joe is one of the gentle souls that I have known in my life and the Biden family has borne this burden with courage and I'm proud of them.

**QT: 01;03;57;14**

## **TITLE**

Biden and McCain's bipartisan respect for one another

**QT: 01;04;01;21**

### **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I've always valued Joe's views. He and I have had very different positions on many national security issues but those differences have been out of respect and affection and honest differences of opinion but his – his views even if I

may not agree with them are important for me to have in my decision making.

**QT: 01;04;28;04**

**TITLE**

His current disagreement with Lindsey Graham over the Healthcare bill and friends in the Senate

**QT: 01;04;33;06**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Perhaps for the first time in our long relationship—we've had differences in the past but this is a very significant difference that we have and even though we have, like Joe Biden, even though we have a significant difference, we'll still be the closest and dearest of friends. You know that old line of Harry Truman's, "If you want a friend in Washington, buy a dog." That's not true. I have some of my closest and dearest friends of my life that I've had the honor of working with in the Senate and Lindsey is up there in the top two or three. The other being my beloved friend, Joe Lieberman who is still one of the most decent people I've ever known in my life.

**QT: 01;05;17;02**

**TITLE**

On the Healthcare bill and the importance of regular order and bipartisanship

**10;58;47;03**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I've made up my mind that I will vote against it for a variety of reasons including the fact that we didn't go through the process that we need to go through, and that is a legislative proposal, a committee, hearings, debate, witnesses, and then turning out a product that can then be brought to the floor of the Senate for debate and amendments and final passage. We just passed the defense bill, the committee that I'm a chairman of, of some 80-some to 6. Why? Because we went through nine months of a process where everybody was engaged, where every democrat and republican on our committee voted for it because they'd all been part of it. Now again, we're basically doing the same thing that I complained so much about Obama did and the democrats back in 2009, ramming things through on a party line vote.

**QT: 01;06;19;22**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

You couldn't—you shouldn't do that to the American people when we're talking about 1/5<sup>th</sup> of our gross national product, so I'm going to urge again that we start through the committee and that would be the – Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray and have hearings, have debate. And they're always worried about 51 votes, if you do it on a bipartisan basis, you don't have to worry about 51 votes. The system is broken to a large degree and the American people don't like it, and we need to do a better job for them.

**QT: 01;06;56;09**

**TITLE**

His relationship with John Kerry and their work to normalize relations with Vietnam

**QT: 01;07;01;11**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

John Kerry and I were in strong disagreement concerning his activities against the war and those were just difference of opinion, but they were strong differences. But I also respect the fact that John Kerry served in Vietnam. To make a long story short, he and I were together and we agreed to work to get a full accounting of those who were missing in Action and normalize relations between our two countries. I am proud of the work that we did together, particularly on resolving the missing in action issue and a process of normalization of relations between our two countries. Don't get me wrong, Vietnam is not a paragon of democracy; there's still human rights problems, there's still issues that remain, but they have made significant progress. They are proud of our relationship and they are making progress. I—the main reason though why I was in favor of normalization was to try to heal the wounds that still exist to this day over that conflict and I think it's been enormously helpful in that direction.

**QT: 01;08;20;22**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I can't tell you how many Vietnam veterans have come up to me and said, I took my grandkids and my kids to Da Nang where I was stationed and I've showed them where it was that we fi—I mean, the healing process still got a long way to go but it's come a long way and it wouldn't have happened

without normal relations between our two countries. Look, all wounds have to heal. This was the most divisive conflict since our civil war and it's still there and we still haven't honored enough, those who served and sacrificed. The POWs were heroes, everybody else not well treated much to our shame.

**QT: 01;09;04;20**

**TITLE**

His relationship with Bill Cohen

**QT: 01;09;09;16**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Bill Cohen is one of the finer men that I've had the opportunity of knowing. When he came to the United States Senate, he—he heavily engaged in national security. Over a short period of time, he, Gary Hart, Sam Nunn, others who worked together in a bipartisan fashion for the good of this nation and at that time, our military was not in good shape and they were very important. He was important in my relationship with him. We spent a lot of time traveling together, we spent a lot of time talking, reading. We all went, Sam Nunn, Bill Cohen, John Glenn and I as the Navy Liaison officer, went to Beijing together. So, I—I have great respect for Bill Cohen not only because of the kind of person he is but in intellect. He is really a very wise and thoughtful individual and he has helped me in my development enormously.

**QT: 01;10;18;20**

**TITLE**

His relationship with Hillary Clinton and her work on the armed services committee

**QT: 01;10;23;11**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Hillary Clinton came to the armed services committee and got to work. She really got to know the issues, she engaged in all of the defense and national security challenges, she was a very active member of the armed services committee and among other things we travel together a fair amount where we got to know each other and I consider her a friend and I have had my disagreements with her but I also believe she is honest, I believe she is of integrity and I hope that as a friend, that she can get this election behind her

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

because she has so much more to contribute to the betterment of this nation and I intend to work with her wherever I can.

**QT: 01;11;12;03**

**TITLE**

His Annapolis roommate Frank Gamboa

**QT: 01;11;17;20**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Frank Gamboa is the classic example of what America is all about. His parents were common laborers, one I believe was a waitress, the other was—picked fruit. And here's their son who joins the United States Army and then applies to the United States Naval Academy, graduates, becomes the commanding officer of a large Navy ship. That's what America is all about and that's what the military is all about and that's why I'm so proud of our military and to me, Frank Gamboa epitomizes what opportunity, hard work can accomplish and contribute so much to the security of this nation.

**QT: 10;12;05;01**

**TITLE**

On Morris K. Udall

**QT: 01;12;09;20**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Morris K. Udall came from a Mormon family; when Brigham Young established Utah, he sent his first, quote 'missionaries' to Arizona where they populated it and still today are very significant and very impactful. Mo Udall became a member of the United States Congress, his brother was a member of Congress and made by Jack Kennedy Secretary of the Interior. And Mo Udall had a generosity of spirit that—it was wonderful. He and Barry Goldwater, the convicted—the committed conservative and Mo Udall, the liberal were the closest of friends. They were just—it was wonderful to see their relationship. So to make a long story short, I become a member of the United States Congress, I came on Mo Udall's committee of which he was Chairman and he literally took me to raise.

**QT: 01;13;09;08**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

We traveled Arizona together, we did issues together, we visited the Indian nations together we spent so much time together and none of that was required of Mo Udall. He did it because he believes in Arizona and that our relationship would help Arizona and along the way we became fast friends. There's so many stories about Mo Udall but could I just mention one?

**QT: 01;13;35;20**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

And that was when he finally had gotten beat by Jimmy Carter in the primaries in Wisconsin and it was over and the next morning, he went before the media and all the media was there, and he said, "The people have spoken, the (expletive)." And only Mo Udall could have made a statement like that. I loved him, I revered him, he became very ill and yes, I used to go and visit with him not for any reason except the fact that I loved him.

**QT: 01;14;08;21**

**TITLE**

On Henry Kissinger

**QT: 01;14;13;14**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Henry Kissinger in my view will go down as one of the great intellects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He—in the 21<sup>st</sup>. Henry Kissinger had an intellect and a grasp for the issues that – and a vision which was remarkable. He understood the whole dynamics of international relations. And he wasn't always right. He made mistakes and those are also part of his record but when you look at the opening to China, when you look at so many of the aspects of our European alliance that Henry Kissinger was behind. It is not an accident that presidents up to and including Donald Trump seek his advice and counsel.

**QT: 01;15;03;09**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Henry Kissinger to me was—is a role model in many ways and the fact is that they offered Henry Kissinger when he was in Hanoi after the Peace was signed to take me home and on his plane before everybody else when we were supposed to go in order of our capture and they said you can take McCain and he said, "No. McCain will want to come home in turn." And I've always been grateful to him for that and I've always been grateful to him

# KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

because of the—not only friendship but affection that we have for each other and I'll always be grateful as long as I live for his friendship, his support and frankly saving my honor.

**QT: 01;15;54;19**

## **TITLE**

McCain condemns anti-war protestors of a Senate hearing

**QT: 01;15;59;00**

## **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I remember it very well and I remember that day with embarrassment; Henry Kissinger and George Schultz were testifying and there was a group of these—I think they called themselves Code Pink and they literally ran up and started shoving against Henry and George Schultz and of course they're older men. George Schultz's wife leg was somewhat injured. It was one of the more embarrassing moments; the most embarrassing moment, and of course, all of us, republican and democrat on that committee stood and applauded them and I went so far as to say, "Look, if that ever happens again, I personally will bring charges against somebody who does that in that most disrespectful fashion." Kind of an interesting after effect of that, that has never happened again, I'm happy to say.

**QT: 01;17;04;03**

## **TITLE**

Growing up in the military and attending boarding school

**QT: 01;17;09;18**

## **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Well, as true with military families, it's an itinerant existence. My father would be based in one place or another for in those days for like two years at a time so when I entered high school, it was—a decision was made to send me to boarding school, which I was all for, which would then give me a permanency of four years. So I didn't interact a lot with my brother Joe because I was away and my sister Sandy, so our relationship obviously is a brother to brother and obviously the time I was away and then at the Naval Academy was sig—separation but affection.

**QT: 01;18;06;21**



# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

## **TITLE**

Childhood memories

**QT: 01;18;11;05**

### **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

You know, one of my childhood memories is being out in the front lawn, I was very young, six years old I believe and a car driving up and a guy who was on my—I think he was the executive officer of my father’s submarine said, “Jack, the Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor.” And my father went upstairs, packed a bag, left, I didn’t see him for five years as he was in the Atlantic and then in the Pacific. I remember that vividly. I also remember when my father was selected for Admiral. That was really poignant and not only for him but his father and all the work that—that he had done. It—it was really a remarkable moment and I guess the other memories that I have is because my father was gone all of World War II is, my mother basically raised us, my sister and my brother and me and she did a wonderful job, she really was remarkable and so I attribute if any good qualities that I have to my mother as well as the image of my father.

**QT: 01;19;31;17**

## **TITLE**

Meeting his first wife, Carol

**QT: 01;19;38;06**

### **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I had met her at the Naval Academy and then about, I guess three or four years later, I’d encountered her again and we started dating and then later got married.

**QT: 01;19;53;08**

## **TITLE**

Plebe year at the Naval Academy

**QT: 01;19;58;18**

### **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

When you’re in your first year at the Naval Academy, a lot of time is spent on teaching you about tradition, about honor codes, about conduct, about the traditions of the Navy and our forbearers who were—performed acts of

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

courage and heroism and also at the same time there's a lot of disciplinary actions. I was not a good plebe. I was always in trouble, I was always getting demerits and spent a great deal of time marching on the back terrace. If you had a certain number of demerits, then you would spend a num—certain amount of time marching with a rifle. I—I'm not sure I had the most time on the back terrace but I guarantee you I'm up there amongst the top 20.

**QT: 01;20;50;23**

**TITLE**

Carol's car accident

**QT: 01;20;54;23**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

A few years before I was released, she was driving on I believe a Christmas Eve and had a accident, I think icy road and very serious injury to her legs and a long recovery time. I was not informed of it until when we were released, came to the Philippines and I was told about the injury. She bore it with courage, she raised our kids and she did an outstanding job and was very active in the POW/MIA movement and I was very proud of her and the way she not only her courage, but her also, dedication to our effort.

**QT: 01;21;41;06**

**PETER KUNHARDT:**

Great.

**QT: 01;21;42;00**

**TITLE**

On Ronald Reagan

**QT: 01;21;46;23**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Ronald Reagan as Governor of California became heavily involved in the POW/MIA issue. The carriers in the pacific, many of them were based out of California, the air bases, there was so much connection between California and our military and he became committed to the cause and got to know some of the family members. He is a very sentimental man, he was very deeply moved and so he became committed to the POW/MIA issue much to our benefit and so when we came home, some of their welcome home

activities were in California and I met him and Nancy and spent some time with them and he was helpful in my house race and my senate race. And you know, the thing about Ronald Reagan was he had an intellect and he had an instinct and he had patriotism but he also had a very, very big heart.

**QT: 01;22;55;00**

**TITLE**

On torture

**QT: 01;22;58;21**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Well obviously as is well known, the North Vietnamese subjected us to very cruel and harsh punishment, not for military information but for propaganda to get us to make anti-war statements and contribute to their effort to undermine American support for the conflict in Vietnam. I believe that the efforts that they made were cruel and they were not humane and I've always even before that disagreed with cruel and inhuman treatment. One, it doesn't work. If you inflict enough pain on somebody, they will say whatever they think you need to hear in order to make the pain stop. Second of all, it undermines the very fundamentals of our beliefs that all of us are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights.

**QT: 01;24;04;15**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Those rights are violated when we subject someone to physical torture and it makes us the same as our adversaries. The great strength of America has been our moral authority, and yes, we've made mistakes and we could go through hours of all the mistakes we've made but we've never abandoned that principle of American morality and concepts of respect for human life. And so when this went on in the name of national security, it was wrong, it was wrong. One of the stories that has been told many times is, Khalid Sheik Muhammad had been water boarded I think 97 times or something like that and they sent back to CIA and said, "We've water boarded him all these times, we can't get anything out of him." From the CIA came back came, "Water board him some more." That—that's not what the United States of America should be all about.

**QT: 01;25;09;08**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

So they have successfully suppressed this study of the things—of the torture that was committed all during that period and it's disgraceful that the American people have not been made aware of it. To this day, members of the Senate and House are doing—and the administration are doing everything they can to make sure that report is not made public. If it's the last thing I do on earth, it will make that report public.

**QT: 01;25;41;17**

**TITLE**

The torture he endured as a POW and small kindnesses

**QT: 01;25;46;18**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Everything ranging from straight beatings to being tied up in ropes in a very uncomfortable—very, physically uncomfortable and harmful position, to standing—being forced to stand for many, many hours to – they had a lot of different techniques. One time I was in one of the interrogation rooms and they had put me tightly bound in ropes. There were different guards in the camp. One of them – some of them were just security guards that walked around the camp. And it was about, I would im—it was about some time in the middle of the night, this gun guard, one of 'em that was just a security guard, came in, went like that, loosened the ropes and then about three hours later came in and tightened them up, never obviously saying a word.

**QT: 01;26;52;18**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I'm sure he didn't speak English or anything. The following Christmas which was a couple of months later, we were allowed one by one separately to stand outside of our cells for a few minutes and then taken in and the next one. Well I was taken out and the courtyard in front of my cell was a dirt—was dirt. And he came over and he stood there for a minute and with his sandal he drew on—in the dirt across and stood there a minute and then he rubbed it out and walked away. If there's one person that I have wanted to see, it is that guy. I can't tell you how much that meant to me.

**QT: 01;27;36;14**

**TITLE**

On coping under duress

**QT: 01;27;42;01**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

You—you develop a tolerance to—to pain. You just develop it over time, your body and your senses adjust and interesting, as I've gone through this, the doctors have said that I had eight times the normal tolerance for pain. And I'm sure that that—it should probably goes back to my time in the Senate but actually that's from the past experiences. They said after undergoing this brain surgery, first person they ever saw that when I came out of it knew what day it was. So I've been blessed in that respect. So you build up a tolerance for pain, you know that others are counting on you to do the best that you can to not betray them and you get tougher and tougher with time. It just is the environment that you're in and knowing that your fellow prisoners are counting on you to do the very best you can. But also your fellow prisoners know that all of us have a breaking point none of us are immune to at some point.

**QT: 01;29;03;02**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

And our instructions were, don't go to the breaking point. Stop before then. Give them some information, because if they break you completely, then you—you give them whatever that they want. But one of the aspects of this that was so important is that I knew there were guys in cells in my prison that were counting on me to do the very best that I could, and that's why communicating by tapping to each other was so important and the reason why they tried to keep us from it.

**QT: 01;29;42;15**

**TITLE**

What he learned about the military decisions in Vietnam once he was released

**QT: 01;29;48;22**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

It didn't change my mind but what it was very revealing was how mishandled that the conflict was and how there was never a strategy for victory. That there was this belief that if we bomb them a little they'll come to the negotiating table. The dependence on Diem, the then later assassinated but

leader of the South Vietnamese, that there was also—the most offensive to me was that we didn't tell the American people the truth. They had these meetings with the press in Saigon that were called the "five o'clock follies" and they would give briefings that—information that simply wasn't true.

**QT: 01;30;41;01**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

So that led to cynicism on the part of people like Walter Cronkite and Morley Safer and Dan Rather and other names that are well known who became now cynical and started reporting in contradiction to what they were told, this leading to a lack of confidence in the military and that—that the snowball continues on down the hill so that the American people become disillusioned when their keep being told that victory is just around the corner, which it was not.

**QT: 01;31;17;17**

**TITLE**

The influence of Vietnam on his thinking around military strategy

**QT: 01;31;23;03**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Not everything I base my views on is about Vietnam but one heck of a lot of it is. Example: Ronald Reagan was my hero. There's problems in Beirut. They said they're gonna send a bunch of marines into Beirut and I said, what's the strategy? Don't do this. Don't do this. You haven't—you're just putting them in there and we don't have a strategy as to how—what their mission is and how they carry it out. Tragically as you know there was a bombing and I think a hundred and some marines were killed and that could've been avoided. So whenever I saw the Congo, I said, "Look, don't go there when you don't have any strategy for winning and somehow you're gonna bring this to a close. And of course we know Black Hawk Down. So with the experience with Vietnam, I always have a template which to judge whether we have a strategy for success.

**QT: 01;32;36;15**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

One of the problems in the last how many years—in 12 years I guess—let's see, 2002, 15 years in both Iraq and Afghanistan, especially Afghanistan, the

# KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

strategy was don't lose. If the strategy is don't lose, then you don't win. And so there are echoes of Vietnam in what happened in Afghanistan and Iraq but remember, in Vietnam, 58,000 brave young Americans gave their lives. That is a tremendous sacrifice. I go down to the Vietnam Memorial fairly often and you know, I just go and say thank you to them.

**QT: 01;33;30;16**

## **TITLE**

The importance of the military in his Senate responsibilities

**QT: 01;33;36;03**

## **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

As chairman of the Armed Services Committee, that is my top responsibility, so obviously the care, training, equipment of the—for the men and women who are serving. Every fourth of July, Lindsey Graham and it was Joe Lieberman and I go to Cabo and have fourth of July activities with the men and women who are serving. We go at other times but the fourth of July is reserved for that. I spend as much time as I can with our military. We have a lot of bases in Arizona, so I don't neglect my other responsibilities but I view particularly my position as Chairman of the Armed Services and the—the men and women who are serving, that I owe them a lot. Just a few days ago, we had a hearing on the fact that the Navy has had all of these accidents and needless deaths.

**QT: 01;34;39;10**

## **SENATOR MCCAIN:**

One of them was the USS John S. McCain, the ship named after my father and grandfather and I met with the families and I'm telling ya, it breaks your heart. And it didn't have to happen, because we in the Congress and the President have cut the funding so that these ships are not ready and when they're not ready and they're not well trained and they're not well equipped, we have these accidents. We have lost more recently of these brave men and women in operational accidents and problems such as collisions than we have in combat. That's not acceptable. That's our fault.

**QT: 01;35;24;00**

## **TITLE**

The first USS McCain

**QT: 01;35;29;04**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

There was a destroyer named after my grandfather and I went to the christening. I was in high school at the time and the speaker was Admiral Hallsy who was still awake then, who was very close to my grandfather. Remember, there were small classes out of the Naval Academy and they all knew each other from their academy days and I'll never forget, he started to speak about my grandfather because it was the commissioning and he just said, I—I can't—I can't talk about it and went and sat down. And then I saw him at the reception and started telling me about—about my grandfather and their relationship going all the way back to the Naval Academy, class of 1904 and the class of 1906, so it was great and everything but frankly, I was just in high school and I did not have the appreciation that I gained in later—in later years. So that ship was around for a long time, retired, and then they named this next ship after both my father and grandfather.

**QT: 01;36;35;04**

**TITLE**

The honor of following in his father and grandfather's footsteps

**QT: 01;36;40;19**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

It's just wonderful and moving and honor—your honored and also it gives you—it gives me—it has given me an added sense of responsibility to carry on in their tradition of service and sacrifice. The day the war was over, there was a peace signing on Missouri. My grandfather was there because he was commander of the carriers in the pacific. My father was a submarine commander and took a Japanese ship into Pearl Harbor. So the day of the peace signing, my father and grandfather were together. I have a picture of the two of them, it's really, very remarkable. So my grandfather was on the Missouri, on the peace signing, as you probably see a picture of him in the front row. He flew home the next day, got home, to Coronado where my grandmother was and had a heart attack and died.

**QT: 01;37;39;05**

**TITLE**

Having served helps with his military constituency



# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

**QT: 01;37;44;19**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I think that the fact that I served in the Navy has had a effect on the young men and women who are serving which gives me some legitimacy, but believe me, these young people aren't easily fooled. They want to know what you're doing, they want to know why you're doing it, and one of the things that I do when I go to these military bases is try to have a kind of town hall meeting with them and tell them what's going on and tell them what we're trying to do and I guarantee you they have very little respect for the fact that I am a United States Senator. They have some respect for the fact that I served in the United States Navy.

**QT: 01;38;31;22**

**TITLE**

A story from a political visit to a ship

**QT: 01;38;36;23**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

One brief story. Lindsey Graham, Fred Thompson and I are out on the Theodore Roosevelt, this is about 15 years ago, and we have all the sailors on the ship out, it's a couple thousand people, and the Captain says, and here is Senator John McCain, former Naval officer. Clap, clap. And here is Senator Lindsey Graham, a member of the Air Force Reserve and the United States Senator, clap, clap, clap. And here is Senator Fred Thompson. **(Makes roaring crowd noise)** The upright—just the enthusiasm, ya know. Hunt for Red October. He was the Admiral in Hunt for Red October. I'll never forget that. Anyway, probably irrelevant but it's a good story.

**QT: 01;39;28;15**

**TITLE**

The ending of his first marriage

**QT: 01;39;34;04**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

It just is—I—it had a lot to do I think with the many years of separation. She's a wonderful person, she is a wonderful mother and any responsibility for the break of that—of that marriage rests entirely on me.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

**QT: 01;39;54;07**

**TITLE**

When he first met his second wife, they both lied about their ages

**QT: 01;39;58;18**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

She added about ten years to her age and I subtracted about ten from mine, so when we went to get the license in Phoenix, the person was asking the question of age, and she told the truth, I was stunned, and then they asked me my age and I told the truth and she was stunned. So our marriage started out on a basis of lying. **(Laughs)**

**QT: 01;40;30;04**

**TITLE**

In the beginning, Cindy lived in Washington

**QT: 01;40;35;23**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Yes, and then she got pregnant with Meagan and we thought it was better for our kids to grow up in Arizona and so she stayed there in Arizona and frankly it's not that hard. You get off on Thursday afternoon and you don't have to come back till—till Monday and the other advantage is that it takes you home, it brings you home, and people expect to see ya. Not just when you're running for re-election or election, so it would bring me home and was, I think, very important to my success of being at home but it's—I thin—I've always recommended to New Senators, don't move to Washington and it's not that much separation as they say. We get off on Thursday afternoon, we have a month off in August, we ha—ya know, it's not as if you're being deprived.

**QT: 01;41;36;01**

**TITLE**

Adopting a daughter from Bangladesh

**QT: 01;41;40;19**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Cindy has been involved in various humanitarian efforts and traveled to different places to try to provide medical care and as a—has had a lot of volunteers who go with her. She was in Bangladesh seeing Mother Theresa which is of course an incredible experience and Mother Theresa at the end of their meeting brought out two little babies and said, you must take them. You must take these babies otherwise they won't live. When Mother Theresa tells you, then obviously—so Cindy comes home, I meet her at the airport and she walks off the airplane with two little babies and I said, "Wow." and Bridget was one and the other was adopted by very close friends of ours, a couple. The both of them had very serious physical problems. Bridget had a very pronounced cleft pallet that simply, she wasn't going to live and the other baby, same thing with a heart problem. So, she's been with us, she's enriched our life and our children and she's—she's doing fine.

**QT: 01;43;00;11**

**TITLE**

Cindy's addiction to painkillers

**QT: 01;43;06;04**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Cindy had had some physical problems and like a lot of other people, she had gotten onto pain pills and it was serious and she went and got counseling and obviously has not had a problem but it's something that is obviously widespread but when it gets personal, it's very disturbing. I'm very proud of the fact that she's been quote "clean" for many years now. It's—as we all know; opioids are a epidemic problem in this country but I think that it's very important for us to try to have early detection.

**QT: 01;43;53;10**

**TITLE**

Cindy had a stroke at the age of 49

**QT: 01;43;58;16**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Yeah, I was here in Washington and I got a call that Cindy had had a stroke. She had been able to drive to a medical facility and she was being treated. Obviously I flew home and there was a period of recovery. She's been fine now for many years but I gotta admit, it was a scary moment. She went on

strict diet and exercise and all the things you need to do. Her health is fine now.

**QT: 01;44;33;03**

**TITLE**

Melanoma and the dangers of sun exposure

**QT: 01;4;37;13**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I was very aware as far as melanoma is concerned, that fair skinned people with exposure to sun, particularly at an early age have a proclivity for Melanoma but that's just a—that's just a fact, and I was very fortunate that it was detected early. One was up here and another one years later was further back. The one further back was—well they were both—required surgery but I was very fortunate to have that surgery and my dear friends, if you listen to anything I say today, if you are fair skinned and you are in the sun and you don't wear a hat and a long sleeve shirt and use sunscreen, then you are putting your life in danger. Do not allow your children to be in the sun without protective covering and sunscreen. That's the end of my lecture for today.

**QT: 01;45;32;16**

**TITLE**

Growing up in the sun

**QT: 01;45;37;07**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

We lived in places like Coronado, California, in New London, Connecticut. Being a Navy family, we were always out the coast and always out on the beach and of course in those days there was not the appreciation of the dangers of sun exposure. I'm also by the way happy to say that there's been a lot of advances made in combatting melanoma and that is good, and I'm very proud of that progress. It is—lives are being saved now that—are—it's incredible.

**QT: 01;46;14;10**

**TITLE**

# KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

The risks of a deep tan

**QT: 01;46;19;14**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Pre-sunscreen, not only that, the desire to get a good, deep, tan. That was part of the deal and we all know that that does damage which can come out much later on.

**QT: 01;46;33;11**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

But by the way I not only had a Coppertone tan, I had a lot of sunburn because that was the way you tanned, was to go out and get sunburned and then tan would come after that.

**QT: 01;46;43;17**

TITLE

Running for president in 2000 and the Straight Talk Express

**QT: 01;46;49;06**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

When I first decided to run for the Presidency in 2000, in—in 2019 I guess it was, 2020—

**PETER KUNHARDT:**

19, 19. 1999.

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Excuse me, what am I saying.

**JULIE:**

1999.

**QT: 01;47;09;22**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

In 1999, I don't know why I said two—anyway, in 1999 I had been in the Senate since 1987. I had established a reputation. To make a long story short, with the consultation of a lot of friends of mine decided to run. Why not? And I felt that there was a lot that I could do and a lot that I could contribute and

so we started out in New Hampshire a decided underdog. And we thought that the best way to campaign, especially in New Hampshire was to have as many as five town hall meetings a day and have total access to the media. That's what the straight talk express was all about. Every morning about 7 or 7:30 in the morning, we'd all get on a bus together and literally spend the day at various stops and at town hall meetings and then going from one place to another with the media and that's what we named it, the straight talk express.

**QT: 01;48;16;08**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

And of course the victory in the New Hampshire primary was largely due to the fact that we had come in contact with so many people. Brief story; there's a place called Peterbur—Peterborough, it has a large building that's kind of like a auditorium and in the summer we had a ice cream social, about 20 people showed up. The night before the primary we decided to go back to Peterborough. There was—the place was jammed, there was hundreds of people outside, we had to put up loud speakers so that they could hear and of course the next day we had a big victory in New Hampshire.

**QT: 01;49;02;07**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

George W. Bush was the—by far the favorite going into that.

**QT: 01;49;08;18**

**TITLE**

Dropping out of the 2000 presidential primaries

**QT: 01;49;13;17**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

We didn't drop out then, we dropped out after quote "super Tuesday" when he won the majority—we won some states but he clearly was in an insurmountable lead.

**QT: 01;49;25;13**

**TITLE**

On the dirty politics in the 2000 presidential primaries

**QT: 01;49;30;23**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I was more angry than bitter. I know that when they—thousands of phone calls were made saying, “Do you know that the McCain’s have a black baby?” and, “Save our flag.” They asked me about the flag and I said, “Well, it’s up to the state.” Which by the way was the wrong thing to say. But the campaign that was run in South Carolina was really—you know. There’s no reason to get mad, the reason is that, what my reaction was, gee I can’t believe they’re doing this and second of all then after a lot of agonizing, I figured we had two choices. One was to get into the mudslinging or the other is just take the high road and frankly I was tempted. But we decided in the long run to look, run a good, clean, campaign, if we lose, we lose. And clearly we lost.

**QT: 01;50;37;21**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I was reasonably sure that taking the high road we were gonna lose.

**QT: 01;50;43;12**

**TITLE**

On accusations that he ran a rough campaign in 2008

**QT: 01;50;49;16**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I think a seminal moment obviously was when the woman at the town hall meeting said he’s a Muslim, etcetera and I repudiated that. Look, campaigns are tough. They’re not bean bag but I’m not sure I did anything I wouldn’t have done in 2000. I respected Obama, I never questioned his heritage or his birth or anything like that, so there may have been times in a tough and rough and ready campaign but I think most historians judge that as a rather clean campaign.

**QT: 01;51;32;01**

**TITLE**

His relationship to his father vs his father’s relationship with his grandfather

**QT: 01;51;39;12**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I think I had great love and affection and respect for my father but I didn't really know him that well with all the periods of time that he was gone. It wasn't a lack of affection, but my father and my grandfather were extremely close, spent a lot of time together and so the relationship was somewhat different in that with my father and grandfather it was much more personal. I went away to boarding school when I entered high school, then the naval academy, you know. So there wasn't that closeness but there certainly wasn't a lack of respect. I can still remember being very young and being in Washington and my parents would invite their old friend's over and they would tell stories about World War II being submarine commanders. I was riveted. These—at the exploits, so my father and I, there was great respect, affection, but not the closeness that was between my father and grandfather.

**QT: 01;52;46;15**

**TITLE**

On retiring from the military and his father's alcoholism

**QT: 01;52;51;13**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Well I think it's a drastic change in lifestyle. You are going from a command of responsibility for a million people and you're the commander in the Pacific and all of that, to a person who is now a private citizen who does not have those responsibilities at all and it's a drastic lifestyle change and understandably requires a lot of adjustment. My father fought alcohol his whole life and almost all the time he succeeded. Sometimes he didn't. As they say in AA, he had slips, but he never let it interfere with his work in the United States Navy. It never kept him from his job or anything like that. But he did; he had an addiction like many people do and he fought it and fought it every single day and most of the time he won. Occasionally he lost, but he was never a—it was never—you know, it would be a slip. He would—he would be at some place and he would have some drinks but it was not anything that really interfered with his lifestyle.

**QT: 01;54;13;20**

**TITLE**

His father died the same day he retired from the Navy

**QT: 01;54;17;22**



**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Isn't that interesting. It was just one of those—one of those coincidence. Look, I'm very superstitious. I would not be alive today if it were not for luck. So, things happen and they happen for a reason and my father will always be a shining example to me of honesty, integrity and honor. He upheld those traditions and standards his entire life.

**QT: 01;54;50;15**

**TITLE**

What makes a great leader

**QT: 01;54;55;16**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I think the first quality that makes a great leader is the adage of treating people as you want to be treated. If you are good or tough or not on someone, it should be based on whether you would want to be treated that same way. If you stick to that adage, then you will never go wrong. Second of all, I think you have to have understanding of the importance of serving the country and how you are the one that serves that gets the most out of it because the honor of serving is something that all of us would be proud to have. And, as I face this disease, I am more and more cognizant of the importance of having served a cause greater than yourself.

**QT: 01;55;54;16**

**TITLE**

The importance of learning from history

**QT: 01;55;59;10**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I think we should all study history. I believe that the only way as is said the lessons of history are not repeated is if we learn from them, so I think we should study the Vietnam war. I think we should study the Korean war. I think we should study how our government works. I think that if we study history going all the way back to the Roman empire, we will have a better understanding and if we ignore those lessons, obviously the old adage, we'll repeat them. I am an avid reader. I am an avid student of history. I am—if I've learned anything, it's because of my own experiences but also those experiences to a large degree were guided by my concept of service.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

**QT: 01;56;53;19**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

When I was 12 years old, I found a four-leaf clover. I went to my father's library to put the four leaf clover in a book. I started reading that book and I was mesmerized, and I didn't stop reading until I was finished. It is still the loadstone, the guide that I have and it's called, For Whom the Bell Tolls. Robert Jordan is my hero then when I was that age and Robert Jordan is my hero today. Nothing is better than the story of someone who sacrifices for causes greater than themselves and Robert Jordan was that. Besides that, he also had a beautiful girlfriend.

**QT: 01;57;39;09**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

And by the way, Robert Jordan's last thoughts were, it's been a great life and well-worth fighting for. And that's the way that—that sums it up.

**QT: 01;57;50;11**

**TITLE**

Tradition, heritage and finding a way to serve

**QT: 01;57;53;23**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I'm very keenly appreciative of the tradition of my family and I'm very proud of the service of my sons. But at the same time, I think each of us finds our own way and it isn't service in the military the way you can serve. There's Peace Corps, there's AmeriCorps, there's going down to the St. Mary's Food Bank, there's so many ways that we can—we can serve our country and that's what I am proud of, some of the opportunities like AmeriCorps, like our IRI and so many other ways to serve our country but also in the—in the practice of bearing arms is still probably a little bit different from all the others because you're going into harm's way.

**QT: 01;58;53;05**

**TITLE**

On reading

**QT: 01;58;56;15**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I read all of 'em. I read all the newspapers. I wake up early and I read all the newspapers and it's important nowadays because you'll get a different take on various issues depending on—but I read all of them, I read all the time, I think the important thing is to keep up with what's going on and I read histories all the time. I read novels. I re-read Hemingway's short stories all the time and I find great pleasure in reading.

**QT: 01;59;32;22**

**TITLE**

His return from Vietnam

**QT: 01;59;37;03**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

There was a parade in Jacksonville Florida and there were several other POW's who were also with me. Yeah, it was wonderful. The welcome was just wonderful. And I was so appreciative yet I felt over time a little bit guilty because so many of these brave 18 year olds that had been drafted were mistreated when they came back so frankly I felt a little guilty. I was grateful but I felt a little guilty.

**QT: 02;00;09;16**

**TITLE**

On women in the military

**QT: 02;00;13;22**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I believe that I went through a period of adjustment but I was also commanding officer of a squadron that had a lot of women in it and that was way back after I first came back and I found that obviously the job done and the capabilities, everything that women do in the military was clearly strong qualifications. I did have concerns about sending them into combat. Here's why. That if a man and a woman are fighting and a woman is wounded, then it may have a little bit different effect on combat effectiveness but I had that concern. But now thanks to the advances made in equality of women, that they are clearly capable of doing everything that men can, just though however meeting the same standards. I believe that we should register women for selective service so that if we ever go back to the draft, which I

# KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

pray god we never do, that they will be treated on the same basis as men. In other words, numbers will come up and whoever has that number will have to serve.

**QT: 01;01;47;01**

**TITLE**

LGBTQ and the military

**QT: 02;01;52;09**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I believe that gays in the military are obviously appropriate and I believe that to tell someone who happens to be gay that's serving in Afghanistan or Iraq, that they have to leave the military, I'd like to meet the person who supports that idea. Now, on the transgender issue, there's a study going on right now conducted by General—by Secretary Mattis and I want to see the results of that study. I have great confidence in him.

**QT: 02;02;27;15**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

In the meantime, let's not do anything about the issue or people who are serving that are transgender until we get that study and get his recommendation. What's wrong with that?

**QT: 02;02;41;17**

**TITLE**

Dreamers and the military

**QT: 02;02;47;13**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Could I—could I also mention the issue of dreamers? There are some 900 dreamers who are serving now in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, are we gonna go to these young people and say, I'm sorry but you have to go back to El Salvador? You were brought here as a child, you're serving in uniform. I'm sorry but we're gonna throw you out and send you to some other country that you came to as a child that you don't even know. It's—it's hard to understand.

**QT: 02;03;21;01**

**TITLE**

Trump attacked McCain, saying POWs aren't heroes

**QT: 02;03;26;20**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I've been in tough campaigns before and it didn't bother me. What bothered me was the effect that it had on all POW's, especially World War II. I went out to a retirement community in Arizona not long after that where an individual who had not gotten his medals from World War II. He was 92, and we had a nice ceremony. It was really—it's always very touching, particularly with the World War II, and he said to me, he said, "Senator, explain to me, why would Donald Trump not like me?" You know? You shouldn't do that to—and by the way he had weighed something like 110 pounds when he was – when he was found so that part bothered me, that part bothered me. Me? Look, I'm supposed to be—I'm in the arena as Teddy used to say.

**QT: 02;04;25;07**

**TITLE**

The three amigos, McCain, Lieberman and Graham

**QT: 02;04;30;22**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

We got the name three amigos from General David Petraeus because the three of us would go to Iraq when he was in Iraq and running the surge and then in Afghanistan when he was there. We had such—so much interface with him, not to mention his appearances before the Armed Services Committee. So obviously he was from the movie and he named us the three amigos and that stuck and spread everywhere so that's how we got the name that is still with us.

**QT: 02;05;05;03**

**TITLE**

The happiest moments of his life

**QT: 02;05;09;16**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Oh, I would say that—probably the day that I left prison was still one of the happiest days but the birth of a child, the winning an election, surviving a

crash. There's so many days in my life where I really believe that are more than coincidental. I have been so fortunate that it has made me believe that I am here for a reason and that reason is to do things to help my country.

**QT: 02;05;54;11**

**TITLE**

Luck and gratitude

**QT: 02;05;58;12**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I'm religious but I also happen to believe that I'm just a lucky guy. I'm just a very fortunate person. The crashes that I—airplanes that I crashed, getting shot down, being pulled out of that lake, the—the illnesses, the—everything, the melanomas, everything is be—is sa—I look back on and people look at it and say, wow, you know? But I am grateful for every single minute of every hour of every day and I think that that matters in that it motivates me to do the right thing, which I haven't always done.

**QT: 02;06;43;12**

**TITLE**

How the family is handling his illness

**QT: 02;06;48;01**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

I think they're handling it well. I'm upbeat, I'm optimistic, I don't lie to them. I do tell them that this is a very, very tough thing and the odds are sometimes very tough, but I also try to tell them that I'm happy, I'm full of joy and I'm full of happiness to having them and that it's—it's—it's not something that we should fear, it's something we should welcome with joy.

**QT: 02;07;30;09**

**TITLE**

Burma the dog

**QT: 02;07;34;21**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Burma is our dog who is a Chesapeake Bay Retriever who is attached to me like I can't believe to tell you. She sleeps with me, she follows me around

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

and—and I wanted to name her Aung San Suu Kyi but I thought that was a little long so I just named her Burma.

**QT: 02;07;56;10**

**TITLE**

His favorite animal is a rat

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Why is a rat my favorite animal? I

**QT: 02;08;02;13**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Yeah, a rat is the most resourceful animal probably on earth, and yet I certainly don't appreciate its temperament. But some of my staff might say there's a certain similarity.

**QT: 02;08;18;16**

**TITLE**

What he'll miss the most

**QT: 02;08;22;22**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Serving. I really will miss my service in the military and in the Congress. I was 17 when I walked through the gates of the Naval Academy. I spent 27 years in the United States Navy, now 35 years in the House of Representatives and the United States Senate and nobody ever, ever had it as good as I've had it, to be able to serve that long, some 60 some years is a unique privilege and I'm so grateful every single day.

**QT: 02;09;05;20**

**TITLE**

Thanks

**QT: 02;09;09;21**

**SENATOR MCCAIN:**

Thank you, and I will look forward to all of my words being distorted and turning me into a liberal, commie, pinko.

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

**END TC: 02;09;19;14**