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# The Vietnam Archive
# Oral History Project
# Interview with David Greenway
# Conducted by Kelly Crager
# Date: 19, 22, 26 January 2026; 16, 19 February 2026

Kelly Crager: This is Kelly Crager conducting an oral history interview with Mr. David Greenway. Today is 19th January 2026. Okay, Mr. Greenway, let's start this from the beginning. Give me some background history of your family. Your parents? Where did they come from? What did they do for a living?

David Greenway: My father was an ornithologist. Um. And my mother was a housewife.

KC: Did you have brothers or sisters?

DG: Yes, I have a brother and a sister.

KC: And which. Where were you in the, uh, in the lineup. Were you the oldest? Youngest?

DG: I was the middle. Yeah. My brother is still alive, but my sister died years ago.

KC: Okay. All right. Well, you mentioned your father was an ornithologist. Um, what kind of lifestyle does that lead for a family? Uh, that's kind of an unusual, um.

DG: Well, it was pretty settled because he had a job at Harvard.

KC: Oh, okay. So he was a professor there?

DG: Yes.

KC: Okay, well, tell me about growing up. What sort of things did you like to do as a kid?

DG: Well, I guess what other kids like to do, uh, like, around. Um. I kind of think of anything special. Just a normal kid's life.

KC: Sure, sure. Well, tell me about schooling. Where did you go to school? What kind of student were you?

DG: I went to school at, uh, Milton Academy and, uh, Yale.

KC: Oh, wow. Tell me about those experiences. What was that like?

DG: Um, well, uh, in the 50s was pretty quiet. Uh, and then I spent a couple of years at Oxford.

KC: Tell me about that. How did that come about?

DG: Um, I guess I just decided I wanted to go, and it gave me a chance to read history. I'd been an English major, and it gave me a chance to read history.

KC: Mhm. And when were you in Oxford?

DG: It's 1960.

KC: Okay. Well, what led you there? I mean, that's of all the places in the world you could have landed. Oxford. Obviously very prestigious. What, uh, what brought you there?
DG: Well, because I wanted to learn more about history. I had been an English major and Oxford, I studied history.
KC: Okay. Very good, very good. What did you want to do once you finished with your English and History degrees? What was the next step for you? What did you want to do?
DG: Um, well, I ended up being a journalist, and, um, that isn't what I had planned, but I. I enjoyed it so much that I sort of fell into that.
KC: Well, take me through that. Uh, that period. How did you just fall into journalism?
DG: The Oxford graduate? Well, yes. My wife reminds me of a story. Um, I. I was a stringer. Um. For time magazine at that time. And the Oxford drag hunt. Uh, do you know what a drag hunt is? Playing a drag contest with the. The hounds follow a scent that is dragged along. And not a real fox. And the the scent has to be stronger than a real fox. So the hounds don't hound off after a fox. And, um. So the. The drag. Uh. Got it. Scent from Wolf's urine at the London Zoo. And, uh, the London Zoo was going to put up the price of wolf's urine, and, uh, you'd think that this was going to be the end of Western civilization as we knew it. And Henry Luce liked that story so much that he said, bring that kid down to London the next time I want to meet him. And he. And he gave me a job.
KC: Henry Luce himself. Huh?
DG: Yes.
KC: That must have been quite a moment for you.
DG: Yes. It was.
KC: So you're going to work for, uh, for Luce? Uh, tell me about that time. What was it like early in your career?
DG: Well, um, I started at in the London office in a very junior position, and, um, I guess the first story I worked on was, uh, what was Profumo? Profumo scandal? I don't I don't know if you remember that, but this fellow Profumo was were sharing a mistress with the Russian? Russian and the embassy. And so that was a big story at the time.
KC: What other, um. What other stories do you recall? What? In these early days, uh, getting your feet underneath you? How did how did that go for you?
DG: Uh, I really don't remember what stories I worked on that. And I'd have to give that some thought. Sorry.
KC: No, that's okay, that's okay. It's been a long time, I understand. Um, well, of course, the work that we do is, is with primarily with the Vietnam War era. Um, tell me, when you became aware of what was going on in Vietnam and your thoughts about it?
DG: Well, I got interested in it very early because my father had been, uh, a, uh, Or mythologist, and he had made trips to Vietnam. Um, when it when it was called Cochinchina, I think. And um, so I knew a lot about more than most kids about Vietnam because of my father's trips there.
KC: Yeah. What did you know about what was going on over there?
DG: Well, I knew that the Vietnamese wanted to have their own. Freedom. And, uh, my father always called them Annamites from Annam, Vietnam. Vietnamese wasn't the term used so much when he was there? He was divided up between Tonkin and the north. And

I'm in the middle and Cochinchina in the south. And, uh, they were called in my father's day. Annamites.
KC: Did you have any idea about the political situation shaping up in Vietnam as it was?
DG: Yes. I didn't pay too much attention to it, but yes, I did.
KC: Mhm. Now, before we get too far away, you were also in the US Navy briefly were you. Not for a couple of years.
DG: Yes I was for two years. Well I was on the aircraft carrier Valley Forge and um I enjoyed it. I think it was an invaluable experience.
KC: Mhm.
DG: It taught me how to deal with people and, um. It's from different backgrounds and it, uh, I, I, uh. I think it was very important in my life.
KC: Sure, sure. Going back to what was taking place in Southeast Asia, you're obviously, like you say, perhaps more aware than than most folks are, um, at that time.
DG: Yes.
KC: How did you feel about the growing American involvement in Southeast Asia, even prior to 1964, 1965?
DG: I think I thought that it was necessary to combat communism. Uh, it was only till I got there that I saw that this was more of a nationalistic struggle. And really, communism was very secondary.
KC: What led you to believe that?
DG: Well, just being there and and talking to people. And it opened my eyes that communism was not the major reason the Vietnamese opposed us.
KC: How did you wind up with your assignment to Vietnam?
DG: Um, because I thought that that's where my generation's. A very important point in my generation's existence. That the Vietnam War was going to be, uh, central. And it was, of course.
KC: Oh, yes. Absolutely. What did your family and friends think about your, um, becoming a journalist and going to Southeast Asia to cover the war?
DG: I, I think they were happy with that. Um, I loved the adventures. Um. And, um, I don't think they. I don't think anybody in my family minded.
KC: All right. Well, was this an assignment that you asked for, uh, with time, or is it something they assigned you to?
DG: I asked for it.
KC: So when did you arrive in country?
DG: 1967.
KC: Okay. And what were your duties there with time? What were you? You arrive in Saigon. Um. This is your young man. The. You're the war. And everything in Southeast Asia is right in front of you. Uh, take you through that time.
DG: Well, I was covering, um, the II Corps, as they called it, the northern part of, uh. And I spent a lot of time just going out with the troops. I didn't spend a lot of time in Saigon. Well, in Vietnam, you could go anywhere you want. You had the honorary rank of major, and you could get on any plane or any helicopter. And if they had rum, uh, you could go. I don't think they. I don't think the press has ever had such freedom since.
KC: Yeah, I think you're probably right there. How would you decide where you were going to go? Is this something that your superiors would say? There's a story happening

up here. You know, in I-corps. Uh, go check it out. Or is it something you had the latitude, uh, to determine what you're going to cover? How did that work?
DG: I had I had the latitude to make my own choices. The my bosses realized that the people on the ground close to the story had a better grasp of it than they did. And, uh, a lot of, um, effort was spent in counteracting what, uh, the Washington bureau was telling my bosses.
KC: I read about that in your memoir. Can you explain that? Um, in a little more detail. I think it's interesting that that they're getting two kind of two different versions of what was taking place. Tell me about that.
DG: Well, it's as simple as that. They were getting two different versions of the Washington bureau was um, went along with the party line, and those of us in the field did not. So it was often a struggle between, uh, to get the magazine's attention.
KC: Interesting. How would you how did you approach this? Um, trying to make sure that your voices were being heard from the field.
DG: Well, you just write the story as best you could. And, um, it's interesting, though, because the final battle was to convince Hedley Donovan, who was the boss, the big boss, uh, that the war wasn't going as the Washington bureau said it was going and eventually we. The conversion of Henry Hedley Donovan was a major factor in turning the country against the war. Underrated, in my view. I mean, people say the conversion of Walter Cronkite, but second only to that was the conversion of time life.
KC: And how did you see that evolve? What sort of things would take the take the magazine into that direction as opposed to supporting the war? What sort of issues came up? What sort of things would would help move that needle?
DG: That's a I'd have to give that some thought. Um, I can't give you any specific examples, but I, I know there are some. Let me give it some thought.
KC: Oh, sure. Of course, of course. Well, tell me this. What would a typical day look like for you? I assume you're in Danang. Is that correct?
DG: Yes. Well, you, uh. You find out what operations are going on, and if one looked interesting, um, you'd get on a helicopter and go out and join the operation. Yeah. Usually you could get a helicopter into the field on a on a medevac. In other words, a helicopter was going to bring wounded back would be empty going so you could get a ride on a medevac helicopter. Um, and then if you want to get back, there were resupply helicopters that were bringing, uh, food and Ammunition and stuff. So that's the way that worked.
KC: Once you get a ride out to, uh, where you're wanting to go, what happens next? You get off the helicopter if there's a battle going on. What? What do you do?
DG: Well, if they land you in the middle of the battle, you keep your head down and and and join the American troops. Often you just have a long walk in the sun. Um, so, uh, where you just got on a patrol and nothing would happen. But if you were lucky, something would happen and there'd be a story to write.
KC: You. So you find the American troops? Um, obviously, uh, headed. Headed where there is cover and safety. But what do you do once you're there? Do you mingle around or you watch the lay of the land? What do you do once you're amongst you?
DG: You walk. You go on patrol with them. And, um, I always found that they they didn't resent that they rather liked the attention and, uh, and they the the thing I heard the

most often was. You mean you don't have to be here? They. They couldn't understand anyone coming who didn't have to be there.
KC: Right. Well, what was it like to be amongst the grunts like this? Um, Mr. Greenwood, to work with them, to walk with them, to, you know, to to share the the difficulties of going on a patrol. What was that like to work with these young men?
DG: Well, just as you describe, uh, sometimes it would be a a long walk in the sun, and other times it would be intense. Uh, lighting.
KC: But please go ahead.
DG: No, uh, but but just just repeat the most often comment I got was. You mean you don't have to be here?
KC: Yeah, I'm sure some of them would have traded places with you and gotten out of there pretty quickly.
DG: Yeah.
KC: Well, what was it like to be out in the field? I mean, you're you've got the same difficulties as they have, you know, the the heat, the terrain, uh, the humping. Tell me about what it was like to be out in the field like that.
DG: Well, as I mentioned often, it was just a walk in the sun. Um, but when there was intense fighting, you were in the middle of it.
KC: Can you tell me about some of those times?
Speaker3: What were you like to be in?
DG: Well, um. I guess the most interesting time was when I was shot.
KC: Okay. Can you tell me about that?
DG: I, I marine was wounded, and the corpsman was a small fellow and was having trouble carrying him. So I got up from the depression in the ground and helped him carry this fellow out. And we were hit, probably with an RPG, and it killed the guy we were carrying and wounded me.
KC: What was the extent of your injuries?
DG: Oh, just a leg wound. Nothing serious.
KC: Yeah.
DG: But for a long time, there were little bits of shrapnel that would do too much damage to try to remove them all. So over the years, they would work their way to the surface, and you'd suddenly feel a little bit of metal coming out of your leg.
KC: Did you receive medical treatment for it at the time?
DG: Yes. But there was too much to take everything out. It would have done more damage to take everything out than to just leave it.
KC: So you're out on patrol with these Marines? I assume when you were hit?
DG: Yes.
KC: And when was that? Do you recall?
DG: It was the Battle of Wei in 1968.
KC: Oh, wow. Well, tell me about that. Um, more generally, if you can, um, what was it like to be at Wei during the Tet Offensive?
DG: Well, most of my experience, indeed, the experience of the Marine Corps had been in the open country, in villages. So this was the first urban experience I had had and the Marines had had. So, um, it was very, uh, very different fighting in a city than in the countryside.
KC: And when did you get to Wei?

DG: When was the Tet Offensive in in in 1968.
KC: 68 or late January 68th.
DG: Yeah.
KC: Yeah. So were you there for the whole time?
DG: Um, well, until I was shot.
KC: Yeah. What made you decide to get up and help this corpsman with this wounded marine?
DG: You don't think you just do it? I he couldn't carry the guy, and I said, uh, it seemed like a good idea at the time.
KC: Right. Sure. I believe. Did you receive a, uh, or an award for this?
DG: I did, yes. I can I. You want me to read you the citation?
KC: Yes, please.
DG: Oh, I have it just here. The red one. Thanks. My wife's getting it for me.
KC: Okay, great.
DG: It says. For heroic achievement in connection with the United States Marine Corps operations against regular North Vietnam Vietnam Army troops while on assignment as a corresponding accompanying company D, first Battalion, fifth Marines during the Tet Offensive Way, South Vietnam. Vietnam. During the intense fighting within the walls of the Citadel on February 19th, 1968. Mr. Greenway observed a marine who had been wounded by enemy fire Without regard for his personal safety. He fearlessly in his own bullshit, but repeatedly exposed himself to intense mortar, rocket and small fire, small arms fire to aid the fallen Marines with the assistance of as he carried the marine from an open area. Wounded during the rescue attempt by shrapnel from a B-40 rocket that impacted near him. He was subsequently evacuated as the as a battle casualty. His actions throughout reflected great credit upon him himself, and his profession inspired those who inspired young Marines who saw him go unhesitatingly to help their awarded wounded comrade by his bold initiative and courage. Mr. Greenway earned the respect, admiration and gratitude of all Marines. The combat device is authorized by the Secretary of the Navy.
KC: I can only assume that you're incredibly proud of that.
DG: Well, it was a long time ago.
KC: Where did you, um. Where did you receive attention? For your wounds?
DG: In, um. I was medevacked to. There was a field station, and they patched me up and then flew me to waifu Bay, which was the place where helicopters were coming and going.
KC: Well, take me through what it was like to write Rewrite these stories in real time. You mentioned, of course you got on helicopters. If you can find one, find the American troops and something you think might be interesting. How does the process work by which you write your stories and send them back?
DG: Well, often you'd phone them back and, um, you'd find a place where there was a field telephone, and then you'd work these patches. You'd you'd have to keep saying, working, working, working. So no one the operators didn't think the line was open. And, uh, you patch it from one telephone place to another to another, and then the whole thing could fall apart if somebody pulled the plug. Uh, and so you you I phoned many of these stories out. But it wasn't always possible to find a telephone, so sometimes I write them out and then pigeon them. Do you know that expression.

KC: For someone who may not be familiar with that.
DG: Pigeon, is when you gave your copy to somebody who would take it back to Danang, and you just have to trust that that would happen. The television crews were always pigeon ING stuff, and I remember one. Time in the helicopter when a marine had the ABC, the NBC and the CBS film, and I can't remember which two, but he threw two of them away out of the helicopter window. Out of the door. The open door. I didn't want to say anything because I didn't want him to throw me out, but he obviously preferred one of those television stations to networks, to another, to the other two.
KC: Isn't that interesting?
DG: It was disillusioning.
KC: Yeah. I'd like to know the motivation behind that. Huh?
DG: He never told me. Yeah. And as I say, you had a look in his eye. I didn't want to ask him.
KC: Right. I can certainly understand. Um, so once you've, uh, save phoned in your article, uh, or delivered it or been pigeon, uh, what's the next step? Does it go through any sort of censorship in, in Vietnam before it goes to the States? How does that work?
DG: No, there wasn't any censorship. I think it was the last time that'll ever happen. But there was no censorship whatsoever. I mean, it was a gentleman's understanding that you wouldn't give away any troop movements. And if you did, you could lose your accreditation and you couldn't report anymore. But I'd never met anybody who broke that rule.
KC: Yeah. So what would happen once you found the stories in what would be the next step in the process?
DG: Well, they they would the the copy would be sent to Tokyo and then to New York. And that was that. And you got to work on the next story, right?
KC: Would there be any sort of consultation between New York and you and the in country in terms of, you know, uh, facts or supporting evidence or any sort of confusion within the story.
DG: Well, you you'd be in touch, but, uh, usually I, I can't remember ever being, uh, it was always a battle between us and the field and the Washington bureau. And the Washington bureau kept saying the war was going splendidly, and we kept saying it was going very badly. So that was the constant theme.
KC: Well, I wonder what was. What do you suppose was the motivation, if that's the right word for the Washington bureau to be so in support of the war, when the correspondents in the field were seeing it a different way?
DG: Well, they were getting their information. Second hand. And, uh, it was kind of a establishment inertia.
KC: How did you see the war playing out as it was being prosecuted when you're there in 67 and 68? Um, what did you see that was changing your mind?
DG: Um. I guess just being there. Uh, you began to see that this wasn't about communism. This was nationalism. They they looked at us as just replacing the French.
KC: Um.
DG: And they didn't want foreigners interfering. That was much more important. I came to see than communism.
KC: What about the way the war was being fought militarily?

DG: Well, we had we in the field had a kept saying that it wasn't going so well. And the Washington bureau kept saying it was going swimmingly. And it was light at the end of the tunnel. Do you remember that phrase?
KC: Oh, yes, of course, of course. And it obviously didn't turn out that way. Uh, the next thing you know, we have the Tet Offensive and in which obviously, you know firsthand about that. Um, we've been going at this for about a half an hour. Mr. Greenway, why don't we take a break for today?
DG: Okay. Talk to you again.
KC: Continuing an oral history interview, David Greenway. Today is 22nd January 2026. Okay, David. Um, like we mentioned before, we turn the recorder on. I'd like to for you to tell me about your memories of the Easter Offensive in early 72. Um, when where were you and what were you reporting? What did you see when it came to the Easter Offensive?
DG: Well, there was something called the McMahon line. Um, uh, an arbitrarily drawn line across Vietnam. And the big question was, by this time, you see, the South Vietnamese were on their own. We weren't there with the same. We didn't have ground troops there anymore. We had air power and shelling from naval ships. But my memory is we didn't have ground troops anymore. So the big question in 72 was could the South Vietnamese hold. And, uh, they did. And I think it surprised a lot of people. I remember that the North Vietnamese had really not learned that. I mentioned this before, how to fire a tank when the tank is moving.
KC: Uh, memoir earlier about that. Yeah. Tell me about that. Huh?
DG: Well, they to be effective. Tank has gotta fire and move at the same time. But the North Vietnamese hadn't learned to do that. So they'd stop the tank and then fire, which made them extremely vulnerable, because once you stop, you can. It's easy to get the tank knocked out. So that.
KC: Was.
DG: No, that was a big vulnerability of the North Vietnamese. But we'd never heard tanks before. I mean, it was really scary to hear them in the in the night. Uh, because tanks hadn't been part of their warfare before.
KC: Where do you remember being in covering, uh, all of this during the Easter Offensive? Where were you located? What are you seeing? What are you doing? Well, this is taking place.
DG: Golly. Um. Well, I was up on this Michon line I told you about, and, um. Uh, remembering hearing the North Vietnamese tanks in the night, which I had never heard before. They had never used tanks before, so that was something very new and scary. But as I say, they didn't know how to fire and move at the same time. So it was very easy for the South Vietnamese with Tow missiles to knock them out.
KC: The wire guided missiles. Yeah.
DG: Yes.
KC: An interesting thing I picked up in going through your memoir, uh, talking about the Easter Offensive. Was that because the North Vietnamese were stalled in their advance, that it looked like perhaps Vietnamization was going to work? Um, yes. Revisionist school of thought. Um, perhaps if we had done this properly, Perhaps South Vietnam would not have fallen. What are your thoughts about that?

DG: I don't think South Vietnam was doomed. I never thought it could last. Although some people, as you know, think it could have. It was all hollowed out from corruption and. I think it was doomed from the start.
KC: Did you mention other, um, journalists and photographers that you, um, came across on a, I guess, a semi-regular basis? Tell me about the people that, um, both the competition, as it were, and others who you worked with, who were the correspondents? Um, and, and photographers that come to mind when you think about your time there?
DG: Hmm. Um. Well, Larry Burrows, uh, working for Time Life, I think, was a was a major figure. And, um. In the I think it was the Easter Offensive. Um, they were. No, it was the invasion of Laos on 719, if you remember that. Um, and, uh. Larry Burrows said it the, the they were taking us up to have a look at the incursion by helicopter And, um, Larry Burrows, who was a famous photographer. It was my turn to go. And he said, look, I was wondering if we you could take a later flight because. For a photographer to be there when when these helicopters arrive is everything. And you don't have to see that the way I have to take photographs. So I said okay. And his helicopter was shot down.
KC: Who else comes to mind when you think about your time there? I know you mentioned, um, Peter Arnett, for example, who just recently passed away.
DG: Yes.
KC: Who are these characters that you worked with in in media?
DG: Uh, well, you you've named Halston and Peter. Who else was there? Jb uh, that I worked with. Uh, give me give give me some time to think that now it's a long time ago.
KC: Of course, I certainly understand that. I was just kind of curious when you mentioned the names of these folks.
DG: Um, yeah.
KC: Well, let me ask you about this. Um, not really changing gears, but when do you. Because in 72, I believe it is. You come back and, uh, join the Washington Post. Can you tell me how that came about?
DG: Um. Well, I, I, I had these terrible headaches and, um, really debilitating headaches And I went to a famous diagnostician in New York. I think his name was Doctor Antonucci. And he gave me all sorts of tests. And he said, there's nothing wrong. You don't have any brain hemorrhage or anything serious. But I urge you to change your job. And I did. And the headaches run away.
KC: Perhaps a little stress was leading to headaches, I guess.
DG: Yes. And so the Washington Post I enjoyed working for because they didn't change your copy.
KC: Mhm.
DG: Well time magazine, you know, you had to you were just reporting to a rewrite man in New York.
KC: Right. Yeah. You mentioned last time that there was some sort of conflict between those in in the field and those in Washington.
DG: Yes, the Washington bureau had believed we were winning the war, and those of us in Saigon didn't think we were winning the war. We weren't sure we were losing it yet, but we darned well knew we weren't winning it.
KC: That's a very important distinction, obviously.
DG: Yes.

KC: Well, joining the Washington Post at this time in the early 70s, I mean, it just begs the question, tell me about the Graham family. Tell me about, uh, Bradlee. Uh, who were these people? What what, uh, what kind of interaction did you had with them?
DG: Well. Lee was an inspiring and great fun to work for. Um, when I was joining the post. I was talking to Howard Simons, who was the managing editor. And I said, I think you should pay me. What the same. I don't ask you to pay me more, but I think you should pay me the same as what time magazine was paying me. And he didn't want to do that. And Bradlee came in and Howard Simons said Greenway thinks we should pay him more money. And Bender said, come on, Greenway, you're going to have such a good time, you should pay us. Which was typical of Bradlee.
KC: I'm curious, did you get the raise?
DG: No. But I didn't have to pay them either.
KC: Well, I guess, uh, pushes to win sometimes. Yeah. Well, what about the Graham family? How much interaction did you have with them?
DG: Well, um, my wife, J.B., had worked for, uh, for the Graham's in the summertime as when she was a college girl. Um, so I, I sort of. And the first day I was on the job in the Washington Post office, Mrs. Graham came down to the sitting room and my boss said, oh, Mrs. Graham, we want to introduce you to this new reporter we've hired. And she said, oh, I know David. He married my au pair girl. And so I did.
KC: What an incredible time to be working for, um, the post and joining 72. And of course, Watergate doesn't come out until later. Um, but what an exciting time to be there, I would think. Which kind of leads me to another question, or at least another topic I'd like for you to discuss when you go to the post. This is 72. Um, there's an awful lot of rancor in the United States. The war, civil rights, um, women's rights. It's just a kind of a boiling cauldron of cultural issues coming to the top. What was it like to work for the post in this kind of environment?
DG: Well, the thing about the post was that they were the, uh, they were the writers newspapers, newspaper. They didn't fool around with your copy. They let you write what you wanted. So it was a great pleasure to work for them If you work for the times, you were under much tighter in your mouth. In fact, that's one of the reasons I joined the post.
KC: Did you cover any of the goings on in the States, whether it was, you know, the election of 72 or any of the cultural issues that are taking place? Political issues?
DG: Uh. I was. Uh, what was it? I can't remember. I'm just trying to think. The Profumo scandal. Do you remember that? Um. I think Profumo was a British politician who was sharing a mistress with a Russian intelligence officer. And it was a terrific scandal at the time. And he had to resign. And, um, I helped, uh, the time reporters name was Honor Balfour. And, um, she was on the story, and I was kind of helping her as a junior person. And, uh, there was some question that someone didn't want to talk to us. And, uh, I didn't understand why. And honor told me. Well. We had never been. Time magazine had never been forgiven for the Abdication crisis. Apparently, time magazine was way ahead when, uh, when the king abdicated and, uh, that was still held against time by the establishment.
KC: I also see that in 73, the next year, uh, you were named a bureau chief in Hong Kong. How did this come about?
DG: Well, I think they were just, uh. I was hoping they'd send me to Hong Kong. Um. And, um, I think they were just. I was happy they gave it to me.
KC: Mhm.

DG: I don't know if I. Yeah. Well I was, I can't remember whether I specifically asked for it or not. Um, I just don't remember. But anyway, there it was, and I was happy for that. During my guide, he went up to canton. My wife is reminding me that that was the time when Joe and Lie died. And what a big story that was.
KC: Where were you then?
DG: And we opened our liaison office in Beijing. Where were we when Joe and Lie died? We were in Hong Kong. Yes, we were in Hong Kong. Okay.
DG: And they opened the liaison office in Beijing. But I wasn't part of that. Well, the trade fair was in canton. Everyone went to canton. That was. Every, uh. That was the closest you could get to China. I mean, you were in China, but. They kept a pretty tight rein.
KC: Uh, this must have been a heck of a big story for that part of the world or any part of the world. Yeah, you're talking about there? Yeah.
DG: Yeah.
KC: What are the responsibilities of a bureau chief with the Washington Post? What did what were you responsible for in Hong Kong?
DG: Uh, really? All of Asia? Well, East Asia, not India.
KC: How many weeks did you spend with the. Borneo.
DG: You mean Papua New Guinea? Um, Papua New Guinea was about to be gain independence. And they have representatives in Washington, went to Howard Simons, who was the managing editor of the post and said, why don't you cover this? And, uh, it was a dream assignment. I think it was. At least two months. No, not too long.
KC: Three weeks.
DG: Oh, my wife says it was closer to three weeks rather than two months. But anyway, it was it was a good assignment and great fun because I could just wander around anywhere.
KC: And what did you see going on there? Uh, Papua New Guinea.
DG: Well, you remember there was a guy named Sean Flynn who was Errol Flynn's. If you remember Errol Flynn, the movie actor. And, um, remind me what I was.
KC: What were you up to? Up to the Highlands.
DG: Oh, yes. Yes, we went up to the Highlands of New Guinea together, and, uh, he thought it would be amusing to give marijuana. Marijuana to the Highlanders. In other words, to stone the Stone age men. And, uh, I said, well, you give me 24 hours to get out of the valley, because how do I know this? The stoning the Stone age men might mean we got eaten. Uh, and, uh, so I left and he came back later and said, I did stone the Stone age men, but it made them very merry and jolly, and there was no question of being eaten. And later, um, I was, I there was another, a photographer named Dana Stone. And John and Dana, this was a time when the North Vietnamese were moving around and, uh, because our forces were. Pushing them and somehow they thought they could go and interview them and I. I said, I'm the senior guy from time here, and I forbid it. And you know, you don't forbid Sean Flynn. He just told me to piss off. But he, um, he never it was never seen again.
KC: Yeah. Both he and Stone disappeared, didn't they?
DG: That's right.
KC: Mhm. Well.
DG: Nobody knows what happened to them.

KC: Yeah.
DG: Yeah.
KC: Well you're our, I guess in Hong Kong but you're, I think you're from what I understand, um, kind of casting an eye toward what's still going on in Vietnam. Um, of course we have the agreement for the US troops to leave in in 73. Um, tell me about your coverage of what was going on in Vietnam at this time.
DG: Well, I lived in Hong Kong, but, uh, I was part of the Saigon bureau, so that just meant my family was in Hong Kong. But I was in Saigon. And, um, what can I tell you about that? What specifically? Can help you with.
KC: What it was like to cover the war once the United States had left? Um, what you're seeing of the Vietnamese. Um, until the fall of in April of 75.
DG: The, uh. Well, no one was quite sure whether the Vietnamese could handle it. But they could they they they they held and they, uh, lasted what? We lasted until we stopped financing them. When Congress said we can't give any more aid, any money, then then that regime collapsed. But they held on until then.
KC: What do you remember about the, uh, fall of Saigon? Where were you? And what do you remember seeing happen?
DG: I was in Saigon, and, um. Every day we, um, we, the the Americans would have a briefing of. The military situation. But in fact, uh. It bore no relation to what was really happening. In other words. Well, if you we found that if we went to the market and, uh, certain fish, sea fish was still in the market, it meant that Danang and the coastal region had not fallen yet. Uh, but because the South Vietnamese military was running away before the, the the town had actually fallen. So you could tell by the market what was, what had fallen and what had not fallen. Yes it was.
KC: What do you remember about those days in April of 75, again covering the war? Americans are leaving. Vietnamese are leaving. Those who can. Of course, as the North Vietnamese continue to drive down Bambi to all of this, uh, taking place there, what was what was it like to cover that? The fall of Saigon from Saigon?
DG: Well. The, uh. I I'm looking back, I think I made a mistake. I should have stayed in Saigon. Um, but I thought they would just put us under house arrest and not let us file. So I decided to leave when Saigon was evacuated. And, um. The, um, helicopters. There was a big. Argument over there was a tree in the middle of the American embassy compound. And, um, if helicopters are going to land, the tree was going to have to be cut down. And, uh, it was a big. It was deemed defeatist if we cut the tree down. So there's a big disagreement of whether the tree should come down or not. And finally it did. So helicopters could land later. They could take some people off the roof, but they preferred to have a proper landing rather than a roof evacuation.
KC: Sure. That makes sense. Yeah. The kind of a famous instance of the tree coming down. And that leads me to my last topic I wanted to have you discuss with me today, and we can pick it up again later. But the activities of Ambassador Graham Martin, um.
DG: Yes.
KC: At this moment, this critical moment for South Vietnam and for the United States.
DG: Yes.
KC: Graham Martin handled the situation there.
DG: I don't think he understood how serious this was. He kept talking about going to the French and asking them to ask the communists for a soft landing. You know that maybe

there could be the southern part could be kept in Allied hands for a few years, some kind of transition government. It was all nonsense. But he was grasping at straws. He would have to. It's the kindest thing you could say.
KC: I'm asking you to speculate here. But why do you think he took the approach that he did? Frustrated an awful lot of folks who were there. And later, uh, commentors, uh, about this, why do you think he took the approach that he took?
DG: I think he was wishful thinking. Hee hee hee. You know, the French were never going to be able to talk the Vietnamese into some kind of transition. Uh. Uh. Well, it's the power of wishful thinking. In fact, I often thought, you know, there was so many of us said the embassy was lying to us. I think they were inviting us to join a conspiracy of wishful. Wishful thinking.
KC: Was anyone else interested in joining that conspiracy?
DG: I, I, I I, I'm not sure. I, I well some of the reporters were. But not many. Not many.
KC: Yeah, it sounds like you'd spend enough time there to, uh, realize what was actually shaping up. Um.
DG: Yes.
KC: Obviously there in April of 75.
DG: April 29th was when I, I think the. Wasn't that when the war ended? April 29th. Mm.
KC: Do you go to Hong Kong after you leave Saigon?
DG: Yes.
KC: Okay. Well, that takes us to a pretty good point to stop, then today, Mr. Greenway.
DG: Okay.
KC: Continuing an oral history interview with Mr. David Greenway. Today is 26th January 2026. Okay, David, you obviously have a very long and storied career, um, after the fall of Saigon in 75, although this obviously stays with you in a lot of different ways. Of course, your experiences in Vietnam, but you're also covering all of Southeast Asia. Um, for the for the post here. Tell me about your assignments there. Um, based out of Bangkok, I think for the most part. Tell me about your assignments in Southeast Asia.
DG: Well, I think the most fun.
KC: Yeah, for time magazine in Laos during the war was still going on. But you were based in Hong Kong?
DG: Um, well, I do remember. Did I tell you about Sean Flynn?
KC: Yes, yes you did.
DG: I told you that story. Okay. Um, I'm trying to think, uh. India.
JBG: You can tell him about the Washington Post and Indian Bureau.
DG: Well, yes, the Washington Post was thrown out of India. Mrs. Gandhi didn't like something that our reporter Lou Simon said or wrote. So I was sent with, uh, one. Thing uppermost. I was to avoid being expelled, and I could go anywhere I liked, but avoided expulsion so I could. I just traveled all around. I took my family around and avoided an expulsion order. We stayed at the Lake Palace Hotel in Udaipur and did all these wonderful things. Um, a dream assignment. Just don't get thrown out.
KC: That's a pretty low bar to have to get over.
DG: Yes, exactly.

KC: Well, you covered so many different places. Um, Mr. Greenway, tell me about your thoughts on Indonesia, for example. What was going on while you were. You were covering that part of the world.
DG: I think Indonesia was the most interesting of the countries to cover because it has such enormous variety. Um. Let me ask my JB, was there anything going on, especially in Indonesia? Jb they had Communist revolution. They were worried about communists.
DG: Yeah, they worried about communists. But I'm trying to think of anything other than that happened. Let me give that some thought.
KC: Oh, sure. Sure.
DG: Um. Maybe we could come back to that.
KC: Sure. Of course, of course. I mean, any of the ones that just, you know, what might come to your mind? I think I heard your wife mention, um, the Marcos family, your time covering the Philippines or Burma or Cambodia. It's just so rich with, uh, with experience there. Of course.
DG: I think Cambodia was the most interesting, uh, and indeed the most tragic with the Khmer Rouge. Um. I can. Can we talk about something else? Because I've. I have to think about that.
KC: No, that's that's not a problem at all. In fact, we can keep this a little shorter today if that works for you. But you're just some things that I've, that I've read about your experiences. Um, you know, you, uh, got to meet Robert McNamara. Um.
DG: Yes.
KC: Everything that was going on in Southeast Asia. Tell me about this meeting with McNamara. And what was that like? What were your thoughts on that?
DG: Well, McNamara was at that time was saying he'd never understood anything about Southeast Asia, and he didn't understand the background. And, and, uh, it was kind of a mea culpa. And my immediate reaction was there were plenty of people who could have told you, but you weren't interested. Um, but he was very, uh. Remorseful that he never understood anything about Southeast Asia when he was making his decisions.
KC: Yeah.
DG: But as I said, there were plenty of people who were willing to tell him, but he wasn't interested in listening.
KC: And he's received had received quite a bit of blowback. I don't know if that's the right word for it or not. Um, but coming to these realizations later on in some of the things that he had written, published and spoke out on. What were your thoughts on McNamara and his role in the war and afterward?
DG: Well, he was responsible for a lot of a lot of the war. I mean, it was McNamara's war. Uh, and I found his mea culpas later on, a little hollow. As I say, there's plenty of people who could he he he said, well, I never understood the Southeast Asia. I never understood what was going on. And as I said, plenty of people wanted to tell him or try to tell him, but he didn't want to listen. So the conversion of McNamara was, I thought, a little bit disingenuous.
KC: Yeah, well, you're certainly not the first person to say that. I think that was kind of a widely viewed, uh, in that way. Mm. Another important historical figure you were able to, I believe you were friends with was, uh, the famous spy. Uh, Swanson. Tell me about that relationship.

DG: Well, he was my best Vietnamese friend. Um. Of course, I never knew he was spying for the other side. But, uh, he was a charming guy. Um, he loved birds, and I would oftentimes get a bird for him. Um. And, uh, of course, I. I never had a clue that he was working for the other side.
KC: Mhm.
DG: Well, maybe I did have a clue. In retrospect, he, uh. There was some, uh, an invasion of Laos called Lamson 719, and, um, I went was allowed to go in a helicopter to see them coming out, retreating out of Laos, and I was about to write this up and. Un told me that this was just the rescue column coming out. There's the original column that they were trying to rescue was still inside getting chewed up. And, uh, that was the first hint I had that I didn't think of it at the time. But in looking back now that he had sources that I didn't.
KC: What was your reaction, your reaction to finding out that he had been playing both sides here, that he was indeed a North Vietnamese spy?
DG: Well, I was um. I, um, I, I remember he I, I met him after the war. Went to go and see him and he said he loved America and had wanted to move there, but they wouldn't let him. And I said, but you were a hero of the revolution. I would have thought they would let you do anything you liked. He said, no, no, they were didn't really trust me because I'd spent too much time with the Americans. So even though I was their spy, they didn't really trust me.
KC: Yeah.
DG: I remember visiting him in his house, and he sent his sons and his wife, and there were policemen outside the house and guarding the house. I'd forgotten that. Tell me that again. We went to see him in Saigon, and there were policemen there. There were police cars. Outside of his house. Are police cars were outside of his house. And he'd sent his.
JBG: He sent his wife and his son to America because he wasn't able to go.
DG: Yeah, well, there you are. I had forgotten that.
KC: Did you feel any sense of betrayal when you found out that his, uh, that he had been working as a spy?
DG: Well, I sort of felt at the time that. He. I was just I, I had no idea. So I was more interested than horrified. Interesting to get to get his story.
KC: One of the things that I would like to get your opinion on, because you go back to Vietnam on more than one occasion, um, in the 80s. And then later on, of course.
DG: Yes. I went back seven times, I think.
KC: This would be a great topic then and we can end it after that today, since we're going to try to keep it a little shorter. Tell me about returning to Vietnam. What did you see over the years? And it's not like you just went back and you say 1997 forward, but you've been going back many times. Um, prior to normalization of relations, all of that. How did you see Vietnam transform from 1975 on?
DG: Well. I'm talking to the Vietnamese. If I've said this before, will you stop me?
KC: Sure.
DG: But I realized that communism had very little to do with it, that the whole thing was nationalism, that the Vietnamese didn't want foreigners telling them what to do and that they saw us as just an extension of the French. And while we were so upset about communism, it paid a very little role in in my view, it was nationalism that was at play.

KC: Did you see any changes, um, in Vietnam over the years, say economically or culturally as you continue to go back?
DG: Well, it got a little I was always amazed that there was so little bitterness against the Americans. I think I told you this story, didn't I? Uh, and I asked this contact of mine, I said, why is this so little bitterness against the Americans? And he said, it helps to have one. Did I tell you that if I did. Forgive me.
KC: Oh, no. No. That's quite all right. I think it's a very, um. Very poignant statement to make there. It certainly does help. Yeah. Yes. Mm. Well, what other thoughts come to your mind when you think about the transformation or the changes in Vietnam after 75? Does anything in particular come to mind?
DG: Well, they began to get better off. It was extremely poor for a long time and then it steadily got better. They got better off.
KC: They certainly had difficulties with their neighbours for quite a while. Laos, Cambodia, of course, and China eventually.
DG: And China. Yes. They fought a little war against China and they won.
KC: Were you there to cover those?
DG: No, I was, uh, next door in Laos. Yeah.
KC: What did you see going on in Laos? Also a, uh. Very, uh, very, uh, time fraught with difficulties here. What did you think about Laos as you're covering it?
DG: Let me give that some thought. I don't I don't remember. We could come back to that. Would you maybe would you write Laos down and say, okay, I'll come back to that. Well, I've given it some thought.
KC: In fact, why don't we go ahead and stop there for today? Uh, Mr. Greenway?
DG: Okay.
KC: Oral history interview with Mr. David Greenway. Today is 16th February 2026. Okay, David. Um, we we talked a little bit last time about, um, you know, finishing up your time in Southeast Asia, talking about these different, um, issues coming up. But certainly Laos was a very big part of that. And you said you wanted to make a note of that and talk about Laos a little bit today. What can you tell me about what was going on there in the early 1970s?
DG: Um. I'm trying to remember what was going on in Laos in 1970s. Um.
JBG: There was no war.
DG: Yeah, the war was still going on. I'm not sure I remember.
KC: Oh, that's quite all right. Well, what was your next stop after you left the Hong Kong? What was your next station?
DG: Wasn't it Jerusalem? Jb it was Jerusalem.
KC: Jerusalem was your next stop there. Alright. I know that for a time you also covered, uh, Bangladesh and what was going on with India, Pakistan, East and West Pakistan? Yes, Bangladesh. What do you remember about that? What can you tell me about that?
DG: Well, I think the thing that I most remember, I was caught in a hotel bombing. The, the I had gone down to buy some cigars. And on the other side of the wall in the bathroom of the hotel. Someone had placed a bomb. And lucky for me, I it was better to be close than further back, because the bricks when they blew up, went sort of over my head, knocked me down and went over my head. And the killed the fellow, didn't he, J.B. kill the fellow on the other side. I was sitting further away, and, um. So that was lucky for me.

KC: Yes.
DG: I had a concussion, but it wasn't so bad.
KC: Mhm. Yeah. What do you remember about the politics at the time and what was going on as you were covering it. Obviously the humanitarian catastrophe going on there.
DG: Yes. I think something like 7 million people came across the border there and it was a huge deal. And um, it was on the cover of time magazine. Um, and I was working for time then.
KC: Mhm.
DG: And, um, so it was a big story for me. I think it was the first cover story that I'd done most of the reporting on. And the last.
KC: Do you recall any of the, uh, the things that you've covered during that time?
DG: Uh. Let me, uh, maybe I can come back to that. I can't think of anything that stands, that I can't think of anything that stands out.
KC: Okay, well, you mentioned that your next stop, your next station, of course, is Jerusalem. Um, yes. 1970s. And what is going on in the Middle East in the 1970s? Certainly. Um, in Israel. And, uh, covering all of that must have been a fascinating time. There's so much going on, so much of real world import. Tell me about your time in Jerusalem.
DG: Um, well, it was it. I think it was My best time as a journalist because the stories were just dropping out of the trees. Everything was a good story then. And, um, it was a good time to be in Jerusalem. Things weren't as bitter as they later became.
KC: Mhm.
DG: And, um. I lived on Disraeli Street. And my friend Joe Lelyveld of the New York Times was stationed in South Africa. And I said, why don't you come and visit me in Jerusalem on your way, uh, to South Africa? And he said he wasn't going to do that, but trust me to find the only street in Jerusalem named after the Episcopalian.
KC: What are some of the major events that you covered there in Jerusalem?
DG: Sadat's visit was the big one.
KC: Tell me about that.
DG: Well, no one could quite believe that Sadat was really going to come. And when he did, Israel just went crazy with relief and joy. And, um. They were so relieved. And, you know, because Egypt had been the big enemy all along. But I had visited Cairo. Um, and I've forgotten his name. He was a well-known Egyptian journalist. And he didn't know that Sadat was going to decide to visit Jerusalem. But he did say, you know, we've we've carried the brunt of these wars against Israel. And, um, we're going to put this behind us now. We're a mediterranean power. We have to worry about the sources of the Nile. And, and it's time to patch up this quarrel with Israel. And, um, that was kind of a a hint to me that how things were changing. I'll try to think of his name. It's a well-known Egyptian journalist. Can you remember, J.B.? No, I'll think of it.
KC: Okay. Well, tell me about this. The import of Sadat's visit there. Um, obviously fraught relationship for so many years. What was it like to have him come in, and what was the the political and cultural situation like? Um, at that time in Israel?
DG: Well, Israel, Israelis went wild. Um, they were so happy. Uh, and they because. Coming was the end of the their major antagonist. Um, the Egyptian army's had been the fiercest that they had to face. So they were so relieved. Uh, and, um, it was just a joyous time.

KC: Do you remember any of the specific stories that came out of that?
DG: Well, other than that, Sadat was there. Um, I if I think of something, I'll interrupt and come back. I don't I can't think of anything right now.
KC: How long were you were you in Jerusalem?
DG: I think between 2 and 3 years.
KC: How did you see things change there during your time?
DG: Well, the peace with Egypt was the big one. And, um, that took away Israel's major threat.
KC: Right. What about the Israeli Palestinian conflict.
DG: Well, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict burned on. But that wasn't an existential threat for the for the for the for the for the Israelis. Egypt was.
KC: Well, given the the time that we're in now. Um, obviously, this conflict with the Palestinians is still of great importance to, uh, yes. What are your thoughts on it, then? The Israeli-Palestinian issues then, as compared to now?
DG: Well, I always have thought that one of the great events of the post-war two world was the foundation of the State of Israel, and one of the blackest chapters is their treatment of the Palestinians.
KC: Tell me about what you saw when you were there on the ground.
DG: Well. You mean after the peace with Egypt?
KC: Uh, before or after this, however you want to?
DG: I was I had a I had hurt my neck and had one of those neck braces.
KC: Mhm.
DG: And I was scheduled to go to Cairo on the first Israeli plane to land in Cairo. It was Menachem Begin's return of Sadat's visit and, um. My great friend of the New York Times, Bill Farrell. I showed up at the airport with one of these neck braces And my friend said, what are you going to do with that acts up when you're in Egypt. And Bill Fowler said, simple a chiropractor are.
KC: Easy enough. Yeah. Well, what do you recall from that trip?
DG: Well, just, uh. That. How? Over. Whelmed the Egyptians were. There was a Dutch couple whom the Egyptians thought were Israelis, mistaking Dutch for Hebrew. And they weren't allowed to buy any meals. And everyone. Made a big fuss over them because they thought they were Israelis. So it was a joyous time to be an Israeli in Egypt. The Egyptians were so relieved. I told you, I think, that I'd had a foretaste of this from a famous Egyptian journalist whose name I can't recall right now, but he, um, you would know at the moment I said it. And, um, he had told me before, he said, you know, we. We're we're got to get we've taken the brunt of all these wars with Israel. Um, and we're a mediterranean power. We have to think of the sources of the Nile, and we can't just. And so we're going to he hinted that the change was coming and that they'd make a peace with Israel. I didn't believe it at the time, but he turned out to be right.
KC: Yeah.
DG: You'd recognize the name if I could remember it.
KC: What role did you see the US playing in this? Obviously President Carter has a central role in this. What did you think of his role in the US in general?
DG: Well, I always thought that was overestimated. I thought this was, um, I thought the Americans were left befuddled by this, that they hadn't anticipated it. And this was

something that Egypt was doing. Um, and that the Americans were taken by surprise. I may be wrong, but that's my opinion.
KC: Will you spend these few years here in Jerusalem? What's the next step for you? Where do you want to go next?
DG: Um. Home.
DG: We came home after Jerusalem.
KC: Tell me about that. Where did you, uh. Where did you land in the US? And what was the next role for you? Well.
DG: Well, I live in Needham, just outside Boston, and, um, I was happy to be home. I my parents were getting old, and my children didn't really know what country they belonged to, so. So it was a good time to come home.
KC: And how old were your kids when you came home?
DG: Oh, golly. How J.B., how old was Julia when she came home? 16. And the others were younger than that.
KC: Yeah, I would guess with that kind of background and all the travel and the foreign experience, it would be nice as a 16 year old to, to, uh, have a little bit more so-called normal, uh, environment. Yes. Yeah.
DG: That's exactly that's one of the reasons we came home.
KC: Mhm. Yeah. That makes sense. So what did you do. Where were you uh what were you covering at that point.
DG: Well wasn't I then the editorial page editor? I'm just asking my wife.
JBG: International.
DG: Oh, I was the foreign editor then. I was the foreign editor, then foreign bureaus. And, um, I set up several foreign bureaus, all of which The New York Times abolished when they bought the paper.
KC: So were you with the post at this time? Correct. When you come back?
DG: Yes. No, I was the Boston Globe.
KC: Okay.
DG: I joined the Boston Globe.
KC: How did that happen?
DG: Well, they made me a good offer. I could be foreign editor and go anywhere I wanted and report my own. So it was a dream assignment because I could go anywhere I wanted in the world. And I set up 4 or 5 foreign bureaus, uh, which, as I told you, all the New York Times got rid of when they bought the paper. But it was. Yeah.
KC: No, please go ahead.
DG: Well, it was just very satisfying to set up these foreign bureaus. I felt it was my life's work.
KC: Wow, that must have been fascinating work. Can you tell me about it?
DG: Well. Not much to tell. Just choosing the reporters who would fill these bureaus. And, um, I think it gave. The Boston Globe. I think it there were reporters. If we hadn't had a foreign bureaus that they could aspire to, they would have left and joined other papers. So I think it was good for the globe.
KC: Mhm.
JBG: And Steve Kinser.
DG: Yeah. Steve. Steve Erlanger was my first bureau chief in London, and he's now the chief correspondent of the New York Times.

KC: I was going to ask you about some of the places, the locations and the people you put in place there. Uh, who else did you, uh, where else did you set up these, uh, locations and, uh, bureaus and who who staffed them?
DG: Well, I have Steve Kinzer, um. Covering Latin America. Right. J.b. and Erlanger was in London. And who did I have?
JBG: Uh, Tom Ashbrook in Japan?
DG: Yes. Tom Ashbrook in Japan.
JBG: Uh, Appelbaum and Appelbaum.
DG: Who then went on to greater things. Um. I'm blanking now on the others. But if I think of it, I'll come back and interrupt.
KC: What is your role? Um, here. What are you responsible for doing on a regular basis or even daily basis?
DG: Well, I was looking after the foreign news of the responsible for the foreign news report every day.
KC: Mhm.
DG: And the national news too, for a while. I was both the national editor on the foreign editor.
KC: Wow. Yeah. Well the book for you.
DG: Yes. And the. But the Boston Globe wasn't the New York Times.
KC: Mhm. Sure, sure. And how long were you in the States before moving on?
DG: I never moved on. I'm still here.
KC: Are there any other, um. Uh, any other hot spots or any other, um, you know, assignments that really stand out to you during this time?
DG: Um. Can you think of any. JB oh, well, you covered Iraq. You've covered.
DG: Yeah. I went to Iraq a couple of times, and, um. That was during the Iraq-iran War.
KC: Mhm. Okay. Back in the 80s. Okay.
DG: Yeah. And, um, that was interesting, cause the hotel in Basra. They had nice rooms overlooking the Shatt al-Arab, and then the cheap rooms were in the back of the hotel, but they were the expensive ones because that's was further away from the Iraqi artillery. Should it hit the hotel, it would hit the front rooms. So, um, it was amusing that the cheap rooms became the expensive rooms.
Speaker7: 11:23 a.m..
KC: Do you have any recollection of, um. And this is jumping around in time? A little bit, uh, but the, uh, revolution in Iraq.
DG: I wasn't there myself. Steve Erlanger, I sent there to cover that.
KC: Mhm.
DG: And, um. But I didn't cover it myself.
KC: What about the, um, the fall of the Soviet Union in the late 80s and early 1990s? What sort of coverage do you recall from that, or just the events?
DG: Could you say that again.
KC: The Soviet Union?
DG: Yes. Uh.
Speaker3: Probably about being in Poland.
DG: Yes, I was in Poland at the time, and I had a. Exclusive interview with the head of the Communist Party of Poland. And it was fascinating because he said, you know, all my life I believed in the communist system. And but now I see That the whole thing was.

On a pile of lies. And I'm. Here's my resignation. And you've won. And we've lost. And, um. I rushed to the. Telephone to dictate that story. And my wife said, you better come and watch the television. I said, no, I'm dictating this story to. She said, you better come and look at the television. And the Berlin Wall was coming down.
KC: Mm.
DG: So, um.
Speaker3: Didn't you go immediately to.
DG: I went downstairs and told Anne Applebaum, and she left immediately for Berlin, and I came afterwards. And there was a joyous time in Berlin.
KC: What was that like for you personally, having covered so much of recent events in global history? To see the Soviet Union collapse, the Berlin Wall come down, what was that like for you?
DG: Well, I never believed it would happen in my lifetime. So it was a complete shock and and pleasant surprise. And I remember my colleague said, well, we should enjoy it, because after a while it'll just be another old nasty government in Russia. But let's enjoy it now.
KC: Yeah, certainly a joyous time around the globe when that happened. So much.
DG: Yes.
KC: So much hope for something different. Um.
DG: Yes.
KC: For the Russian people and and all the others, uh, affiliated states as well.
DG: Exactly.
KC: Still a work in progress, I guess we could say.
DG: Yeah, I guess you'd have to say it. Yes.
KC: Well, that's, uh, about a half an hour's worth of work today that I've. I've put you through. Uh, David, why don't we stop there for today and, uh, okay. Later. Continuing an oral history interview with Mr. David Greenway. Today is 19th February 2026. Okay, Mr. Greenway, there are a number of things that you were involved with. Uh, as as editor at the globe, the Boston Globe, and as you mentioned in your memoir, which if if anyone who listens to this interview has not read your memoir, I strongly recommend it. Just very, very entertaining, very, very insightful. I've thoroughly enjoyed that. But your later times with the globe, I mean, there's so many things, especially internationally, that you are covered. For example, Nicaragua, Afghanistan. You spent much time, of course, in Afghanistan, the breakup of Yugoslavia, uh, the Persian Gulf War, Iran-Iraq War, all of these things were part of your your bailiwick, as it were. Which of these stories or events stand out to you in the later part of your of your career?
DG: Um, golly. No, I would say Afghanistan, um. Was the most interesting to me.
KC: Why is that?
DG: Well, it's just so remote and so romantic. I mean, the history of Afghanistan is just amazing.
KC: How did you see that develop? Um, you go into some detail in it with the Soviet invasion, you know, in the late 70s and early 80s, prior to the Americans getting involved in the wake of, of, uh, well, of course, the Americans were involved during that time as well, but certainly after after, uh, the attacks of nine over 11.

DG: Um, well, I was thinking of the whole history of Western intervention, and, uh, the British defeated Gandamak, um, where the Afghans wiped out a whole army. There was only one Brit survived. A doctor. Have you not heard of Gandamak?
KC: Um.
DG: Well, it was. The British were trying to retreat from Afghanistan, and the Afghans ambushed them at Gandamak and wiped out a British army. Only one doctor, Braydon, survived and rode out alive. I don't know how I remembered his name.
Speaker3: We went up to war. And you reviewed the troops. Who? Because we were giving the, um, the, um, Afghans Stingers. He stated that wonderful hotel.
DG: Uh, I'd forgotten. My wife is prompting me, but I can't remember.
KC: That's okay. I hear your wife a JB in the background.
DG: Yes.
KC: Do you own a lot of this as well? Yeah, yeah. Well, perhaps that brings up another, uh, larger question. Um, and you again addressed this in your memoir about US foreign involvement. You know, from Vietnam, you know, up to the present day. How would you characterize that kind of involvement? I mean, obviously so many different places, so many different circumstances. But how would you see the general run of US foreign policy? Um, during during your career.
DG: Getting involved in other people's civil wars? Intervening in places where we really had no business. It always leads to disaster or led to disaster.
KC: Can you give me some examples of that? Obviously. Uh, Vietnam is is one you've spoken at. Uh.
DG: Well, Afghanistan, too, is a failure. Um. I'm trying to think what else? But Iraq didn't turn out as we hoped. Mhm. So it just seems that these interventions always have led to bad things. Mhm.
KC: Let me ask you a question about your thoughts on the profession of, uh, of news coverage and the journalism in general. You've been so involved in this for so many years. Um, and now sitting back, uh, retired watching what we have as journalism today, how would you say it has evolved? And what is your characterization of, uh, of this current state of journalism today?
DG: Well, um, the way it's evolved is that, um. Of course, television wasn't a big thing when I started out, and the visual has really taken over now. And from print journalism, I mean print journalism is still there, but most people get their news from television. That's a big change.
KC: As a positive or a negative or somewhere in between.
DG: Somewhere in between.
KC: Let me ask you just one final question to sum this up. Not to take up too much of your day today. Uh, of all the things that you saw and covered and the amount of writing that you did and observing that you did, and the people that you've known, uh, for all these years in this profession, what would you say are your greatest professional achievements? Obviously family is comes first. But as a professional journalist, after all these years, what did you look back on with the most pride and say, yeah, I did that. I'm responsible for that.
DG: I think it was starting the foreign bureaus for the Boston Globe, um, which I took, was glad to set up these 4 or 5 foreign bureaus and find the best journalists I could.

Unfortunately, when the times bought the globe, they abolished them all. But, um, I had a lot of fun setting it up at the time.
KC: Yeah, I bet so. Well, since this interview began as a Vietnam War project, let me ask you just one final question, if I may, about the Vietnam War. Um, on all these years later, what is the legacy of the Vietnam War as you see it? What's the main takeaway?
DG: Don't get involved with other people's civil wars. It was a civil war going on in Vietnam, and we backed one side against the other two, and it ended in disaster.
KC: What do you think the war has meant for this country.
DG: The Vietnam War? Um, well, I think it caused people to lose faith in government. And, uh, uh, people didn't trust their government the way they had before.
KC: Mhm. Do you think the media's coverage encouraged this lack of trust or a neutral observer? How would you characterize the the role of the media in this?
DG: I would say they were neutral at best. They were neutral observers. They tried to just tell people what was going on.
KC: It's interesting you say that at best. Um, as neutral observers, what about at worst? Is that a fair question to ask?
DG: Yes it is. Um, well, there were those who took advantage of the situation to. Grind their own personal axes and. You know, there's a lot of sloppy journalism going on.
KC: I said the last question I want to ask you one further question, I question, I guess. How have you seen journalism evolve? This kind of journalism evolve since the Vietnam War to where we are today?
DG: Well, the television is completely, uh, out done print journalism. Um, that's the big change, for better or for worse.
Speaker3: What about the internet?
DG: Yeah, well, the internet too. Yeah. That's true.
KC: Oh my gosh, yes. It just revolutionized things. Yeah.
DG: And the decline of print journalism as newspaper after newspaper polls.
KC: Newspapers were so many people for so many years got their, uh, got their.
DG: Yes. Yep.
KC: So much that it offers to me. It seems it would offer fewer and fewer options and opinions and nuance. But how would you how would you respond to that?
DG: Could you say that again?
KC: The closing of local newspapers? Yeah.
DG: I think it's a disaster. Um, and, um, look what's happened to the Washington Post. My old paper.
KC: Yes. Very recently.
DG: Just a shadow of its old self now, which I didn't think Jeff Bezos would permit, but he did.
KC: Mhm. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we bring this to a close.
DG: No, I think that's it. Thank you for your time.
KC: Oh thank you for your time. It's been an absolute pleasure.