

Final Transcript

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Narrator: Thuylinh Chau

Interviewer: Brandon Chau

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Brandon Chau: This is Brandon Chau. Today is Friday, November 5th, 2022. I'll be interviewing for the first time. This is Thuylinh Chau. This interview is taking place at our house in West Covina, California and this interview is part of My Việt Nam Story: Oral History Project at UC Irvine. Would you state and spell your name, please?

Thuylinh Chau: My name is Thuylinh Chau, T-H-U-Y-L-I-N-H and last name is spelled C-H-A-U.

Brandon Chau: And when and where were you born?

Thuylinh Chau: I was born in 1966 in Đà Nẵng, Vietnam.

Brandon Chau: So do you have any memories from when you were a child living in Đà Nẵng, Vietnam?

Thuylinh Chau: Well, because I'm Amerasian children, so most of the time I'm just—my mom keep me very close to home. I'm not out on the street too much, because you know the—the difference between the Amerasian and the Vietnamese kid is, you know, it's not the same.

Brandon Chau: And what kind of differences did you like, see? Or like experience between Vietnamese kids and Amerasian kids?

Thuylinh Chau: The different is because I was, you know, mixed Vietnamese and American. So to the Vietnamese, it's a shame to the family when a woman have a Amerasian children. So there's a gap between—both sides.

Brandon Chau: And did that affect your relationship with anyone at all? Like maybe the kids your age?

Thuylinh Chau: Yeah, because I can be bullied. I can be harassed. Most of the time.

Brandon Chau: Okay, did you have any friends growing up in school, or did you have any like close friends?

Thuylinh Chau: In school, most of the time, I'm by myself. But I have a couple of friends that um very close. I can consider them like a best friend. Sometime they protecting me. They're on my side, you know, helping me out if I got bullied or something.

Brandon Chau: And when you said that they were protecting you, or you got bullied, was that from other Vietnamese children? Is that because you are Amerasian, or was it something else?

Thuylinh Chau: It's because I'm Amerasian. It's not many of us in school, so you know. When you different, they can use that against you.

Brandon Chau: And was that what you experience like all throughout school?

Thuylinh Chau: Yes.

Brandon Chau: Aside from the school life and other children, how did adults treat Amerasian children?

Thuylinh Chau: The adult will tell their children don't play with me and they will always bring up like, "Oh their mother is no good. So to have a kid like from other like from America, from American man." So most of the time they will tell the children-their children that don't play with me.

Brandon Chau: And would you see these things happen? Like in person? Would you overhear them, or would the kids tell you that that's what they said, or what was the case?

Thuylinh Chau: All the time. If i'm out of the house when they play, I go near them-I want to play, They will say, "No, we not gonna play with you." And they they call out names. They have thing that they said they call out, names, that that thing that they like to say to hurt is it's really hurtful?

Brandon Chau: If you're comfortable sharing, what was one of those names that they would call you

Thuylinh Chau: Scum, um, it's like-it's kind of like racist, because, like mixed-race children, mixed-race kid you scum. You don't belong here.

Brandon Chau: And at the time when you were growing up, and you heard all of these things and you experience them, how did it feel?

Thuylinh Chau: It's sad-this was sad, and the thing is my mom will always say, "Just stay in the house." She don't want me to get hurt. She have to keep saying you know, "Don't-don't go outside when I'm not home." She don't want me to get hurt.

Brandon Chau: And why did she keep saying-why did she keep saying that you should stay inside so that you don't get hurt? What was the-

Thuylinh Chau: Because I got hurt a lot of time. Sometime, they push me into chicken wire and my clothes all rip-rip up, or they dump food on my body and um-or they chasing me, try to hit me.

Brandon Chau: Uh, and how did the teachers treat you um compared to like all the other students?

Thuylinh Chau: The teacher pretty fair. Um, I don't have-I have a problem with one teacher only because we were-I'm so poor, my mom is so poor so I don't have school supply, or I don't have uh, you know, the money to buy stuff to make a project and then she will call me a lazy don't want to do work. So it's happened in school, but only one teacher, but the rest of them I have I don't have a problem.

Brandon Chau: Okay. So it seemed like the teachers didn't really

Thuylinh Chau: They don't-yeah- they don't- it's not because I'm Amerasian but because they think I'm lazy and don't want to do work because they didn't know that we don't have money-we're so poor. But other than that not about Amerasian.

Brandon Chau: So before 1975, before the Americans left, what was life like then as a child going to school?

Thuylinh Chau: That is time that is not that bad. I have to skip school for a long time because we have to travel from Da Nang to Saigon. So, I miss like few year of school. So, I got to go to-I was delayed by like one or two years, I believe, and then at that moment, because Ba ngoai work for one of the high rank Vietnamese colonel navy- so to do their housework, housekeeping-so he let me go to school with all of his children in same school. So, that is the time that is really safe for me in school and, like,I have the good couple years before the 1975.

Brandon Chau: And you said you traveled from Da Nang to Saigon?

Thuylinh Chau: Mm-hmm.

Brandon Chau: Um, what was the reason for the move?

Thuylinh Chau: Because my younger brother passed away and uh, my mom was so poor so we have nothing left and she feel like maybe we need to go to Saigon to change the life and see if it can change-everything can change and it get better for me.

Brandon Chau: Um, you mentioned that you have a little brother. What was it like growing up with him? Like, how was he?

Thuylinh Chau: He's a wonderful brother. We always together, like we-we always, you know if I'm out the street-we little but the thing is-he's my protector. He's always with me, he always follow me. And he-he protect me but he passed away.

Brandon Chau: And do you remember um, his name?

Thuylinh Chau: His name is- first name Lam, L-A-M, last name Le, L-E.

Brandon Chau: And you said that like he was protecting you. What was he protecting you from?

Thuylinh Chau: If other kid want to hit me, he will jump right in the middle.

Brandon Chau: Okay. And you said he passed away. What did he pass away from?

Thuylinh Chau: From the malaria disease.

Brandon Chau: From malaria?

Thuylinh Chau: Malaria, yeah.

Brandon Chau: All right. Um. Getting back to moving to Saigon. You said that it was a fresh start for you and you lived with a colonel in the Vietnamese navy?

Thuylinh Chau: Yeah.

Brandon Chau: And did you get to live like in his house as part of the move?

Thuylinh Chau: Yes, my mom work for them, like cooking and do housework, and he let me go to school with all his children in the same school so his children will be around me. He treat me just like one of his kid.

Brandon Chau: And how did his uh children treat you?

Thuylinh Chau: Very fair. Very fair-very, very nice. There's no bullying, nothing.

Brandon Chau: So were they all-uh- how would you describe your relationship to them?

Thuylinh Chau: We just like sibling. We have a driver that, you know, from the Navy that drive all of us to school every day.

Brandon Chau: And so, it was because um they were always around you, and because you live with someone who was of that stature in the military things were safe.

Thuylinh Chau: Yes.

Brandon Chau: Okay, and uh during these few years, you said that it was probably one of like the safest and better years. What did that look like? Was there like a lot less bullying and treatment from Da nang than in Saigon.

Thuylinh Chau: Its big difference. It's very big difference. Its-It's like a normal childhood life that a kid should have.

Brandon Chau: And do think that's because maybe- or what do you think that's due to, the difference in treatment in Saigon to Da Nang? Do you think it's just because of the family you lived with or was there anything else that you think added onto that?

Thuylinh Chau: I think it's because of that family.

Brandon Chau: You said that after '75, uh, how did it become to live in Saigon, after the Americans pulled back?

Thuylinh Chau: It's horrible-uh-from the day that we have to-when the communists is coming, near to Saigon, the life is already chaos. And then, my mom have to-because the rumor coming that they going to kill all the Amerasian kid on the way, if they see it-they see any Amerasian kid, they going to kill. So, my mom take me to the church. It's a Franciscan brother church-Francisco brother church and ask for me to stay in there, to like, hiding. So, I was in there, um, hiding for couple weeks, until, when-after they come over and thing calm down so I can go back home.

Brandon Chau: And where did you both hear about the rumors um that the communists were going to kill all the Amerasian children.

Thuylinh Chau: I don't know, there just the rumor around.

Brandon Chau: So did you hear that from friends or was it through people on the street? Like, a newspaper?

Thuylinh Chau: From the adult, you know adult was talking. I didn't hear it personally but my mom heard it and you know, so to be safe, she just-we move into the church for couple week. We stay inside the church and we got home-actually we-at that time, we no longer have our home. We no longer live with the navy officer because-so we live with my uncle, my mom's brother. We have to stay with them temporary.

Brandon Chau: Okay, and when you lived in the church, what was it like to stay there with the idea that the communists were going to target you?

Thuylinh Chau: As a kid, that is not in my mind. I had no idea. At that time, I really have no idea what is going on. We just know that the communists come over. For me, at that time I still don't know what communist mean, what is-who is communists because we been live in the republican life and I'm very naive kid. I have-I'm kind like still little kid. I still don't know this kind of thing but it's the adult, you know.

Brandon Chau: Um, so after the communists came, did you have any encounters with them?

Thuylinh Chau: Um, they even station in your neighborhood-around, and when I walk by, they call name. You know, they call me name and stuff like that and it get worse after the communists come take over the South. Even on the street, I got called name all of the time. I got, you know, assault, I got attack, I got bully all the time because even the communists when I walk by they say something, so people think they have to follow.

Brandon Chau: So you think that um people started doing the same thing that the communists did just because the communists were doing them?

Thuylinh Chau: No, the communists they will say thing like," You don't belong here." Um you are like the scum of society, you are scum of America people. So, when they say something like that-and then at that time, because the communists at that time don't like American. So, people on the street, they know that. They know that, you know, American already left and then for us, we don't belong here. For me, I don't belong here.

Brandon Chau: Did you see any, um, like encounters with the communists? Like, how they treated people after they took over?

Thuylinh Chau: All the people that in the Vietnamese, Vietnam military and the south or people that work for American people, they have to appear in front of the communist government and they have to sign up-and they have to go into hard labor camp with the promise that for three months hard labor camp to, you know, but end up people have to be in hard labor camp for 10 year, 12 year, 15 years.

Brandon Chau: And that was just because they were with the former government and the Americans?

Thuylinh Chau: Yes. Yes.

Brandon Chau: Um, did you ever like-Backtracking a little bit-when you-before the Americans pulled out, did you ever see any sort of conflict growing up? Like, between the Americans and the communists?

Thuylinh Chau: No, but I only know that the day the-day before the takeover there's-we have to hiding because the helicopter and I don't know who fight with who, but it was in the sky-on top we can hear from our roof of the house like the fighting, the shooting, and we can hear shooting everywhere. So we have to build like uh a sandbag cave inside the house so we can inside there in case the bullet don't-the bullet don't hit us.

Brandon Chau: So, after the communists took over and after you like had these encounters with them, did you ever have any experience yourself with-sort of like the new government formally?

Thuylinh Chau: Me encounter with them?

Brandon Chau: Yeah, like any personal encounters with any of the communist soldiers?

Thuylinh Chau: I was, like walk on the street and they start to call me name, so I turn around and I tell them to stop it. And then, that person pull the gun out. They in uniform, in communist uniform. They pull out the gun and they put it on my head. And hten, the neighbor people saw that and they just ran out and pull me and tell that communist officer that," Oh, sorry, sorry, sorry, please don't hurt her because she just a kid. She don't know anything." So, that neighbor help me. That person was save me-save my life.

Brandon Chau: And how old were you when this happened?

Thuylinh Chau: That was-oh that really-I think about-I was about 11? 11/12?

Brandon Chau: Did you get to know this neighbor more after they helped save your life?

Thuylinh Chau: No I just move into that- I just move to that neighborhood, like, years earlier or something, so- Right now, I don't remember who is that.

Brandon Chau: That's okay. So after moving to that new neighborhood after the communist takeover, how was it trying to make friends there?

Thuylinh Chau: I don't have friends. The neighborhood kids don't play with me. I have to go somewhere, I have to go with my mom. I don't go out to the street alone because from my house I have to walk through that neighborhood street that is very scary. I never go through that neighborhood street and survive. I will get hurt. So, I have to go with my mom only.

Brandon Chau: And if she went with you, nobody would like approach you?

Thuylinh Chau: No, they won't approach me. They can stay from far away, they can still say name, they can call me name but they won't go near.

Brandon Chau: And so you just spent the rest of the time in your house?

Thuylinh Chau: Most of the time I'm just home.

Brandon Chau: Did your mom try and find any other work to support you?

Thuylinh Chau: My mom-I help my mom every day. She woke up very earlier and she make the steam rice cake, it's like Bánh Cuốn [steamed rice rolls], and then I will help her like 2/3 o'clock in the morning. I will walk to the market, get all the vegetables and stuff, all the supplies that she needed she already ordered ahead the day before so every day it's the same thing. I will go pick it up while she at home make the steam rice cake, the rice roll-steam rice roll-and then when she done, she will carry in the basket with the bamboo stick in the middle to the street to sell and I will follow her and I will have all my book with me and before the school bell ring, I run to the school after I help her.

Brandon Chau: So you and bà ngoại [maternal grandmother] would sell food at a market or somewhere in the street-

Thuylinh Chau: Yeah, on the street. She will walking-she will carry that to all the street and I will help her carry her sauce, Nước Mắm [fish sauce], and by the time that I can refill that into her basket and her stuff, and then I tied the container to her basket and then I ran to school.

Brandon Chau: And you said before that you had moved into this neighborhood, you were living with one of your uncles, but it doesn't sound like you were living with them any more, is that true?

Thuylinh Chau: Oh, that was when the communist come over. It just for temporary until after they took over and after the church, we come back out, me and bà ngoại was finding somewhere else to live. So, it's still close to him but it's one street over.

Brandon Chau: And afterwards, did-afterwards did he help out with anything after that?

Thuylinh Chau: He's in labor camp.

Brandon Chau: Oh he got sent to a labor camp?

Thuylinh Chau: Yeah, he's in the Vietnamese-Vietnam-South Vietnam military.

Brandon Chau: Okay, wow. That's really surprising. Did you get to see him at all after that?

Thuylinh Chau: After like ten years, I think, I think he come home like '70 about '82. I saw him for the last three years before I left Vietnam.

Brandon Chau: Did life at least improve when you were living under the communist rule or communist government? At some point did it improve?

Thuylinh Chau: Mmm, improve. It's not improve much. I-right before that I got arrest and put in jail for like a month. That was when I was in 9th grade. I was- I went to visit a relative in a countryside and I think I'm the only Amerasian in that area and they pay attention to me and one night they came to the house, the whole group of them, and they arrest me. They say-they said that I tried to escape by the boat to America, which I don't have to because I'm processing the document to leave to America. So, the next day, they want the family to come with a lot of money to-so they can release me but my relative is very poor, they don't have that kind of money to give them. So they put me in the car and they drove me to jail and I was in jail for a month.

Brandon Chau: And what was your experience like in jail?

Thuylinh Chau: I was the youngest. Most of all the female in that jail cell was either like they in the business, you know, gambling something they got in jail or some of the people prostitute and I was the youngest. The people that do business that they got in jail, they pull me to their side and they want to keep me on their side. They say don't go to the other side because we going to protect you on this side. They gave me some food to eat but every day I have to do hard labor too.

Brandon Chau: And what did hard labor look like for you in that camp?

Thuylinh Chau: Every morning when the bell ring, they want me to come out and then I have to carry, um wow, two hand each side is like at least 4/5 gallon of water and I have to go to the well and get the water and carry back to the jail so people can shower-and they take a shower. And when the time to get back inside the jail, I would have some water for myself to shower.

Brandon Chau: And what was the prison like with the other prisoners? You said some were trying to protect you, what was it like with them?

Thuylinh Chau: I think they got in jail few time because, you know, they do business, they traveling, and they do business, and so they got caught or something, but they will let me sleep with them. And when they have extra food, they have money, they can-they give to somebody to help them buy food or something, like the guard. So they help me out.

Brandon Chau: And you said that you were in jail for about a month. But other people were in jail for years, like maybe 10 or even 12, so how did you get out only a month of hard labor?

Thuylinh Chau: Well, also my mom don't have money so- all they want is money. If we have money, I can be out pretty soon. But the thing is even my mom so poor and don't know when

they gonna release me, so end up she have to go look for this person. He's a very high rank in the communist officer. Before this, for a while he really like me and he keep want me to call him dad like a godfather, but I don't-I won't accept it. I never call him that but then when my mom cannot get me out of jail and they won't release me and she remember about him and she went to look for him and she ask him for help to get me out. And he just pick up the phone and call down there because he's a very high rank, and I don't know what rank he is but he's really high, and next thing I know I got call up and they release me.

Brandon Chau: And why did he like you so much?

Thuylinh Chau: Well, I don't know how come. Maybe because I look so cute. I'm very quiet and I'm very you know like calm person. I'm not like other kid. I'm not kind like hyper or something.

Brandon Chau: And you said you don't remember who he is?

Thuylinh Chau: I don't even remember his name to this day.

Brandon Chau: And after you got released from prison, what were you- like what were you going to do? How did you get back home?

Thuylinh Chau: Oh, I was stand in front of the gate and I no have no idea what I'm doing. But to this day, I don't know how I- I think I ask one of the people on the street how to get to the area where my relative live and I think he even give me the ride. I got there and even my relative family was so surprise to see me walk in and at that moment, they, one of them-one of my mom cousin hurry up and just pack up some clothes and take me and we use the bus to go back to Saigon. And even at that time, my mom don't even know I was released because she went to ask him but she didn't know is it help or not. And then I walk near the house and I heard she cry and I look in and I saw she sit there and cry and I feel so bad. She was so sad and I call her, I say," Mom!" And she was-she look up and she saw me and she broke out in a big cry. She ran out and she hold me because she thought-she don't know if I can get out or not.

Brandon Chau: So it sounds like your relatives, like your cousins, your aunt, helped you get back. So was your extended family like that? Very active and like supporting and helping out?

Thuylinh Chau: At that time?

Brandon Chau: In general, like were you-like were all sides very connected?

Thuylinh Chau: Yeah, we're connected. We're all poor family. When they come to visit or something, it's just about talking or something. Talk about the old days maybe with my mom. Other than that, you know.

Brandon Chau: And you said that when the communists came and they took you to jail, you said you were processing some papers. What were those papers processing for?

Thuylinh Chau: At that time, they have a program that the America-somebody was try to create the program that called "Bring Amerasian Home Act". They create that and it start to let Amerasian kid processing and my mom heard about it and she already-we already put in the paperwork and we still waiting for the interview with the American embassy-America embassy to process.

Brandon Chau: And you said that this was around how old?

Thuylinh Chau: This was 9th grade so about 14? No I was 15 because 15-

Brandon Chau: Okay, and so you were processing some papers. How long did that take, the process?

Thuylinh Chau: It fail the first time and I don't know why- actually, I know how-why we fail because you know when you go through the government at that time to do paperwork, you have to have money. And you have to hiding money in your paperwork and to give to the person who process it. But if you don't have money, your paper going to be put aside. So the first time it failed.

Brandon Chau: And this was in the American embassy?

Thuylinh Chau: No this was the Vietnam communist government?

Brandon Chau: So they required some sort of bribe to-

Thuylinh Chau: Yeah you have to bribe them. So the first time we end up lost it because it didn't go anywhere and then we apply again. And this time we got further but I don't know the second time did my mom get any money to bribe them or not. So I don't know but then we got to-finally we got to the America embassy interview.

Brandon Chau: And what was it like interviewing for the embassy?

Thuylinh Chau: At first, when we go in we sign up because the list is there, our name is there. When I got call in and same thing again. The officer, the Vietnam-the communist officer was on the first floor- I got reject again. They say that my paperwork is fake. They think my birth certificate is fake. And then, we got rejected and by the time that it's closed for the day, me and my mom was like," Oh my god we got reject this time and we didn't get to go up to see the American person." So we didn't follow the bus-there's a bus that take us home but my mom don't want to leave so we sit outside the gate, we wait. We just sat outside the gate, we don't

know what to do next and then we saw this gentleman, American gentleman, walk out and he turned to us and he look and he spoke Vietnamese and he said," Why are you still here? How come you didn't go home?" And at that time, I was look up at him like," oh my god he speak Vietnamese." And then I look at him, I say," They don't let me go up to see you." And he say," Why?" I told him," They say my paperwork is fake. My birth certificate is fake" in Vietnamese. And he say," Okay let's go in." He told me and my mom go back inside and he took us upstairs second floor where his office is. And we talk and I forgot how, what is he talking to me about. Maybe he ask me the same thing, where I'm from, Đà Nẵng , and stuff like that. And end up he say," Do you have a picture of you and your mom when you was little?" I say yes but I didn't bring it. I didn't know I could bring that picture. He said," How about you go home and you send me a copy of that picture?" And then he gave me the address and then we went home and we photocopy that picture and I send it to him. And then maybe three weeks to one month later, we went to check the listing of people that got accepted to go and I saw my mom and my name on the list.

Brandon Chau: And do you remember who the embassy worker was?

Thuylinh Chau: No, I wish I know the name but no.

Brandon Chau: Hmm. Okay and afterwards, so that means you were legally allowed to leave Vietnam?

Thuylinh Chau: Yes.

Brandon Chau: And what did you have to do to prepare to leave Vietnam?

Thuylinh Chau: We have to go to do a blood test and we have to go and have our x-ray taken because they want to see if we have any lung problem. Any lung disease and we have to go to see one kind of doctor. I don't know what doctor it's for but then he look at my skin, he talk to me but he-and then ask me a lot of question. And then, we just prepare and then we have the list what day to leave America-for America.

Brandon Chau: And did you have to do anything else as part of the program or were you allowed to leave just straight to America?

Thuylinh Chau: At first, we have to get to Thailand to processing more paperwork so we was stay there for like two days. And then, the thing is I left without-because I don't have clothes to pack so I only wear one set of clothes on my body and we left to Thailand. For two days, I didn't take a shower or anything because I don't have clothes to change. And then we got transferred to [unintelligible], Philippines. So, it depend on how much English we know that how long we going to stay to learn. So, my mom have to study for six months while I have only three months of ESL to learn. And then, I work for the- we all have to have a job and my job is the post office.

So, in the morning I study and the afternoon I have to sort mail and stuff at the post office in the immigration camp.

Brandon Chau: And is that where this photo was taken?

Thuylinh Chau: Yeah, processing to get there?

Brandon Chau: And what was the number that's on the screen?

Thuylinh Chau: I think it's like the cycle, the group that enter the camp at that time? Like our ID?

Brandon Chau: Okay. And you said that you took some ESL classes that was like a requirement?

Thuylinh Chau: Yeah but I learn some English when I was in 9th grade and I'm very good at it so that really helped me.

Brandon Chau: And for these other people-

Thuylinh Chau: That's all my teacher. The front is my two teacher and I'm right next to the-these two are my teacher and the rest is my classmate.

Brandon Chau: Okay. And so after you were able to improve your english and pass a test, you were allowed to come to the U.S.?

Thuylinh Chau: We didn't have to pass a test at that time because during that time, they have to find people to sponsor us.

Brandon Chau: So going to the Philippines, that was more of um- to give time to find a sponsor?

Thuylinh Chau: And also you need to learn how the life in America is.

Brandon Chau: Okay. And in time, how long did it take for them to find a sponsor?

Thuylinh Chau: I think within 6/7 months, they found a sponsor for me in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Brandon Chau: And who were the sponsors?

Thuylinh Chau: It's the Sisters of Divine Providence. Uh it's a nun-

Brandon Chau: A convent?

Thuylinh Chau: The convent!

Brandon Chau: And when they took you in, what was it like coming to America for the first time?

Thuylinh Chau: I have six sisters came to the airport to pick me up and it was snowing, it was January, and they took me to a restaurant and I look at the food, I'm like, "I don't know how to eat it." If I see the word "rice", that's what I order, anything that has the rice. And then when we done, they make me learn right away. The convent, the sisters, they want me to learn right away, they give me money, they say, "Okay you pay the bill." Everywhere-and I live with them for six months. During the time I work-the second day I live in the convent with them, they will tell me they will give me the job in the convent and how much I will get paid for but the two hours of my work will be pay for my rent, for the room that me and my mom live in because they want me to learn to make the money and to pay the rent and to pay for expense. So, they train me very well.

Brandon Chau: So part of their sponsorship was to, I guess kind of like along with giving you a chance in the U.S. to teach you further how the U.S. works?

Thuylinh Chau: No because they know they have to teach me how to live independently because for sure they don't want me to live in the convent forever. But to live with them for six months is save me on the rent. I will pay them just a little bit rent, just a little responsibility, but to teach me that okay how much you make, how much you have to rent, and stuff like that. So when they think I'm ready to move out, they wanna make sure I know how to take care my life without them.

Brandon Chau: And from what year did you enter the convent and what year did you eventually leave?

Thuylinh Chau: I live with them January '86 to about June '86 and I move out but I still work for them until I leave-I left Pittsburgh.

Brandon Chau: And do you still know who these nuns were? Do you remember their names?

Thuylinh Chau: Yes, in 2018, I went back there and I visit the convent and I visit the three that the most help me out and the most contact with me: Sister Paula [unintelligible], Jean Antony, and Sister Betty Sundry.

Brandon Chau: And do you feel like um living with them prepared you well to live in the United States?

Thuylinh Chau: Yes, definitely.

Brandon Chau: What else would they have you do around the convent?

Thuylinh Chau: I do all-I like the housekeeping, I clean their bedroom. There's like 100 to 200 nuns, it's a big convent. I take care like third floor and fourth floor. Most of the nun is old so I clean their bedroom, I clean all of the bathroom for them and then I do their laundry.

Brandon Chau: And what was life like outside of the convent? Like, how was it going out and experiencing like American society compared to Vietnamese society?

Thuylinh Chau: It's very, for me, the life that I live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is very peaceful. Just very, just nice. People are very nice. They treat you with respect.

Brandon Chau: So it seems like it was a pleasant experience?

Thuylinh Chau: Oh yeah.

Brandon Chau: How would you compare the racial attitudes, being Amerasian in Vietnam to the United States?

Thuylinh Chau: How to compare- It's totally different. It cannot compare. It's not compare. I feel like when I enter the United States, they never think of me as Amerasian, they think of me as one of their own.

Brandon Chau: So you would say that-would you say that you had a much better reception?

Thuylinh Chau: Oh yes.

Brandon Chau: Well, do you feel like you have any sort of like feelings for Vietnam? Do you miss Vietnam?

Thuylinh Chau: Mmm no. I went back in 1999 with my three older children, (*mockingly*) without my youngest one because he's not born yet, to show them the life in Vietnam and I really don't like it. I have to-when I arrive at the airport and I show out my passport, I have to bribe them again. If I don't put the money in my passport, they give me a difficult time. And the life is not change over there. I went back but it's still-the feeling in me is still the same. It's not the place for me. It not the place that I love. It's more sadness so the day that I left again I feel so relieved. And until now, I never look back and if I have a chance to go again, I won't go. My life is here, not over there.

Brandon Chau: Alright well we're approaching the end of our interview. Is there anything I have not asked you that you feel is important to add at this time?

Thuylinh Chau: No. I love America, that's all I can say (*laughing*).

Brandon Chau: You love America! Me too, me too! Alright, well thank you very much for allowing me to interview you.