CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

EILEEN FLANAGAN

Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures

Transcript of a Research Interview
Conducted by

Roger Eardley-Pryor

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

on

7 July 2017

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This oral history is one in a series initiated by the Chemical Heritage Foundation in partnership with PennFuture, PennEnvironment, the Energy Coordinating Agency, Citizens Climate Lobby, and Planet Philadelphia on G-Town Radio. The series, titled "Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures," documents the personal perspectives of Philadelphia citizens interested in impacts on their city from energy use and climate change. The series records individual histories and then asks participants to imagine the future of Philadelphia, particularly with regard to energy production and use.

The "Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures" project is made possible, in part, through funding from Philadelphia's Climate and Urban Systems Partnership.

http://www.cuspproject.org/

THE CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION
Center for Oral History
Release Form for Research Interview

Title of the Research Study: "Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures"
Principal Investigator: Roger Eardley-Pryor, PhD, Chemical Heritage Foundation, REardley-Pryor@chemheritage.org
Co-investigators: Zakia Elliott, Penn Future, elliott@pennfuture.org; Sandi Pope, Penn Environment, sandi@pennenvironment.org; Thomas Flaherty, Energy Coordinating Agency, ThomasF@ecasavesenergy.org; Sarah Davidson, Citizens Climate Lobby, sarahcdavison@gmail.com
Emergency Contact: (name, address, phone and email): Roger Eardley-Pryor, PhD; Chemical Heritage Foundation, 315 Chestnut St., Phila. PA 19106; ph: 513-659-8301; REardley-Pryor@chemheritage.org

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You, **Eileen Flanagan**, are asked to participate in an interview with **Roger Eardley-Pryor**, representing the Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF), on **July 7, 2017.** If you participate, your oral history interview will be made part of CHF's collections and will be available for educational, non-commercial use. This document is intended to inform you fully of what you are being asked to do and of your rights as an oral history participant. If you choose to participate, your recorded oral history interview will be transcribed and used in an educational workshop exploring storytelling, future visioning, and deliberation; possibly included in a local Philadelphia radio show and podcast featured on G-Town radio; and stored on a public website documenting the project, which will remain online as a model for local educators to host classroom workshops envisioning Philadelphia's energy futures.

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Support for this Oral History Project

"Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures" uses a narrative approach that encourages deliberation, storytelling, and creativity to imagine a future where Philadelphia uses, produces, and relies on renewable energy. The project is made possible by through the Climate & Urban Systems Partnership (CUSP).

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the creation of this oral history before or during the recording of the interview, or about the processing of the transcript, please contact the Director of the Institute for Research at the Chemical Heritage Foundation.

Jody A. Roberts, PhD
Director
Institute for Research
P: +1.215.873.8281
F: +1.215.629.5281

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After you have read the information contained within this release form, and Roger Eardley-Pryor offered to answer any questions or concerns about this document or the interview, please consider whether you would like to sign this agreement. If you are interested in participating in this research interview and consent to the process as described above, please sign below.

(Signature) Eileen Hennessy
[Interviewee]

(Date) 7/7/17

(Signature) RE-P
Roger Eardley-Pryor

(Date) 7/7/17

(Signature of Parent/Guardian of Interviewee if under 18)_____
Parent/Guardian of Interviewee

(Date)_____

This research interview is designated **Free Access**.

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315 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

The Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF) serves the community of the chemical and molecular sciences, and the wider public, by treasuring the past, educating the present, and inspiring the future. CHF maintains a world-class collection of materials that document the history and heritage of the chemical and molecular sciences, technologies, and industries; encourages research in CHF collections; and carries out a program of outreach and interpretation in order to advance an understanding of the role of the chemical and molecular sciences, technologies, and industries in shaping society.

INTERVIEWEE

Eileen Flanagan was born in Philadelphia in 1962. She grew up in a one-bedroom apartment in Bala Cynwyd, just outside of Philadelphia. She attended Friends' Central High School and graduated from Duke University. In the mid-1980s, Eileen served in the Peace Corps in Botswana, in Southern Africa. After returning to the United States, she earned a Master's degree in African Studies from Yale University. Eileen then moved back to Pennsylvania to become a writer and teacher who explores topics in spirituality, social justice, and environmental justice. Eileen married and, in her early thirties, became a mother to two children. Her religious affiliation, as part of the Society for Friends, is Quaker. Eileen lives in Philadelphia, where serves as board chair of Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT).

INTERVIEWER

Roger Eardley-Pryor is a historian of contemporary science, technology, and the environment. His work explores ways that twentieth and twenty-first-century scientists and engineers, culture-makers, and political actors have imagined, confronted, or cohered with nature at various scales, from the atomic to the planetary. Before earning his Ph.D. in 2014 from the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB), Roger was a National Science Foundation graduate fellow at UCSB's Center for Nanotechnology in Society. After earning his Ph.D., Roger taught courses at Portland State University, at Linfield College in Oregon, and at Washington State University in Vancouver, Washington. In Philadelphia, Roger accepted a postdoctoral research fellowship in the Center for Oral History at the Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF). Roger co-designed, earned funding for, and managed this place-based oral history project titled "Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures."

PROJECT

"Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures" is an oral history and public education project about energy, climate change, and the future of Philadelphia. The project uses a narrative approach that encourages deliberation, storytelling, and creativity. It asks the following questions: As climate change reconditions our lives, city, and planet, how do Philadelphia citizens imagine using and producing energy in the year 2067, or 2140, or 2312? And how might the personal histories of these citizens shape the ways they imagine Philadelphia's energy futures?

The project consists of oral history interviews with a small but diverse set of Philadelphia citizens. The oral history interviewees were selected in collaboration with the project's partners: the Chemical Heritage Foundation, PennFuture, PennEnvironment, Energy Coordinating Agency, Citizens Climate Lobby, and Planet Philadelphia on G-Town Radio. The majority of each oral history interview records a participant's personal history. Next, interviewees share their visions of energy use and production in Philadelphia by imagining three time periods in the future. The future time periods are the year 2067, fifty years from the

present; the year 2140, nearly one hundred twenty five years from the present; and the year 2312, nearly three hundred years from the present.[1] Content from the oral history interviews then serve as the basis for further storytelling, future visioning, and deliberation in a public educational workshop held at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in October 2017.

"Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures" is based on the idea that discussing visions of the future can help individuals and groups construct and articulate meaningful stories about the current challenges they confront, identify potential solutions to those challenges, and reflect on how these might influence themselves and their community as a whole. Research on ways to enhance societal capacity for governing complex energy transitions reveals that narrative and storytelling helps facilitate improved engagement and decision-making among mixed groups. Stories and narratives enable the incorporation of contributions from different groups of people to build collective frames of reference. In light of our need to transition to renewable energy sources, narratives offer communication strategies and practices that can help promote broader engagement and participation in energy choices, more diverse kinds of policy information and input, and greater capacity to imagine and invent new energy futures.[2]

Imagining and discussing Philadelphia's energy futures allows city residents to imagine—and inhabit, in their minds—multiple, alternative visions of the future that may result from choices made today. Energy plays a powerful role in any city's techno-economic systems, yet energy use and production is also inseparable from a city's social systems and environmental relationships. When Philadelphians imagine renewable and distributed ways of using and producing sustainable energy in the future, they are not just imagining new techno-economic systems. They are also re-imagining the ways social relations and political power works in their lives. And they are re-imagining interrelationships to our local, regional, and global environments.

"Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures" was funded, in part, by Philadelphia's Climate and Urban Systems Partnership (CUSP). The CUSP approach to climate change education emphasizes local, relevant, and solutions-focused methodologies. The oral history interviews and public education workshop for "Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures" takes place in Philadelphia with local Philadelphians. The project is relevant in wake of the recent failures by Philadelphia's energy industry and the city's environmental activists to find any compromise on a vision and framework for Philadelphia's energy future.[3] Collaboration to achieve Philadelphia's systemic energy transition to renewable sources must be broad-based and

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[1] The years 2140 and 2312 were selected to complement Kim Stanley Robinson's science fiction novels. See Kim Stanley Robinson, *New York 2140* (New York: Orbit, 2017); and Kim Stanley Robinson, *2312* (New York: Orbit, 2013).

[2] Clark A. Miller, Jason O'Leary, Elizabeth Graffy, Ellen B. Stechel, Gary Dirks, "Narrative Futures and the Governance of Energy Transitions," *Futures* 70 (2015): 65-74; Rob VanWynsberghe, Janet Moore, James Tansey, and Jeff Carmichael "Towards Community Engagement: Six Steps to Expert Learning for Future Scenario Development," *Futures* 35 (2003): 203-219; Jana-Axinja Paschen and Ray Ison, "Narrative Research in Climate Change Adaptation: Exploring a Complementary Paradigm for Research and Governance," *Research Policy* 43:6 (2014): 1083-1092.

[3] Katie Colaneri, "Philadelphia Fails to Find Common Ground on 'Energy Hub,'" *StateImpact Pennsylvania*, March 11, 2016: https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2016/03/11/philadelphia-fails-to-find-common-ground-on-energy-hub/. See also the minutes of the meeting of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Board Committee from January 28, 2016, http://www.dvrpc.org/Committees/Board/2016-01.pdf, accessed February 25, 2017; "Philadelphia Energy Vision Working Group," *Raab Associates, Ltd.*, last updated January 13, 2016, http://www.raabassociates.org/main/projects.asp?proj=134&state=Services (accessed February 25, 2017).

inclusive. This project seeks to produce and re-produce, on a small and manageable scale, efforts to build a shared vision of that renewable energy future, from the bottom up, with local Philadelphians. “Imagining Philadelphia’s Energy Futures” is solutions-focused in that formulating and sharing visions of the future can help individuals and groups make meaning of contemporary challenges they confront; it can help determine possible solutions to those challenges; and it can help individuals and groups consider ways that certain solutions might impact their lives and their community as a whole.

INTERVIEWEE: **Eileen Flanagan**

INTERVIEWER: **Roger Eardley-Pryor**

LOCATION: **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

DATE: **7 July 2017**

EARDLEY-PRYOR: All right. So today is July 7, 2017. This is Roger Eardley-Pryor conducting an energy futures oral history with Eileen Flanagan. This project is part of the Imagining Philadelphia's Energy Futures Cusp Project here at the Chemical Heritage Foundation.

So Eileen, could you tell me your birth name and spell it out for me, and then also the year that you were born?

FLANAGAN: Eileen Marie Flanagan in 1962.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Great. And born in 1962. Where were you born?

FLANAGAN: Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: A Philly girl from the start! I love it. If we were going to be meeting over the phone and we had never met before, how would you describe yourself to me?

FLANAGAN: Middle-aged, not graying too much, average height, love to hike.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Tell me a little bit more about you.

FLANAGAN: About me. I'm a person who has always loved being in the outdoors from the time I was a little kid. It's an important spiritual base for me, although my religious affiliation is Quaker. I'm part of the religious Society of Friends. I'm also a writer, and an activist, and a teacher, and a mother, and a wife, and a local.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Perfect. That's great. So you said you were born here in Philly. Where were you living in Philly when you were born, as a little girl?

FLANAGAN: So I grew up in a one-bedroom apartment over the Bala [Cynwyd] Movie Theatre on Bala [Cynwyd] Avenue. It's just a few blocks from City Avenue, so just outside the borders of Philadelphia. I feel like I had a really interesting experience because I grew up in a working-class family in a one-bedroom apartment, but in a very wealthy neighborhood. And went to private schools and had friends who were affluent. So I felt like I grew up with an awareness of economic difference from the time I was pretty young. I figured out that some kids had a lot more toys than me.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Tell me a little bit about your parents, then. What were they doing in Philly at the time? What were their names?

FLANAGAN: My dad's name is Joseph Flanagan. He was from Pottsville, Pennsylvania, an old coal-mining town. And all of his siblings left during World War II. He was in World War II. In hindsight, I think he was really traumatized by World War II, but people didn't talk about that. He was on the biggest ship that was sunk during the Normandy invasion and stayed alive paddling overnight in the water while getting shot at by Germans. And survived and also saved another guy at the same time. So he was a tough person, a great storyteller. But he didn't—he was also very proud—so he didn't take advantage of the GI Bill. He never went to college, even though he was very smart. He could read a novel in a night, much faster than me. And had that sense of, we do things on our own. But I think, as a result of that, he never really had a job where he got to use his full gifts is my sense of it. After the war, he was in the Merchant Marine for a number of years. He worked for a butcher for a while. And for most of my life, he was a bartender. So he got to use his storytelling gifts in that way. My mom worked for the Signal Corps. She worked for the government for many years in downtown Philly.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What was her name?

FLANAGAN: Helen McNaboe, and then Flanagan when she got married. And she also did not have a college degree but was very sharp and ended up becoming a school cafeteria cashier. And worked in that job for many years.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: When you were born, do you have brothers or sisters?

FLANAGAN: I don't have any full brothers or sisters. I have a half-sister who I didn't know about growing up. The other thing I'll say about my parents is actually right before I was born, they opened a business. They scraped together some money. Both my mother's parents had just died, so she had a little bit of money from them. But their timing was bad. They bought a

laundry business just as Americans were **<T: 05 min>** starting to buy their own washing machines, so the business went bankrupt when I was a baby.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Oh, wow. And that was when they were living in the apartment above the theatre.

FLANAGAN: Yes. Which my mother died in, in 2005.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: So that was your home throughout all of childhood.

FLANAGAN: That's right.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Great. And they stayed there, as well. What was it like living above a theatre?

FLANAGAN: Yeah, it's not directly over. It's right next to and over. It changed over time because when I was little, it was not the Arthouse Theatre that many people remember today. I remember them showing X-rated movies. My mother accidentally brought me to one. My Irish-Catholic mother brought me to Snow White or something that had that kind of name. And all I remember was being dragged down the aisle by the elbow because it was not what she was expecting. But that block of Bala Cynwyd really saw a revitalization during my childhood, so that as I went back as an adult, it played the kind of films that the Ritz plays and became a very nice theatre.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Yes. I love it. You mentioned that your father's family was also from at least the region, but then all left. So were grandparents or uncles and aunts a part of your childhood growing up?

FLANAGAN: Aunts and uncles but not grandparents. My mother's parents had both died, and my father's father had died, and my father's mother died when I was a toddler. So I don't remember her. I had two aunts in the area who I knew, both named Aunt Mary. If you're from an Irish-Catholic family, you've got to have at least one Aunt Mary, maybe two. And yeah. They were the people that we were closest to. And then my other aunts and uncles were spread more geographically.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What are some of your memories of being with family?

FLANAGAN: I remember that both of my Aunt Marys liked to cook, and that they would be the host of holidays. And so we would kind of alternate. I remember going to one set of cousins, and they always had more gifts than me. And so there was that sort of—my mother never told me about Santa Claus because she thought it was an unfair thing to say to children. You know, if you're good, you'll get whatever you want, when that's not true for a lot of kids. I remember my Uncle Mike, who was off the boat from Ireland and had a very thick brogue, playing solitaire and always trying to get people to eat more. Those are my main memories of him.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What are some of your memories of playing growing up?

FLANAGAN: My mom—one of the things I'm very grateful to her for—started bringing me to Valley Green when I was very young.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What is Valley Green?

FLANAGAN: Valley Green is a beautiful spot in the Wissahickon Park. The Wissahickon is part of the Greater Fairmount Park system. But the creek that runs through Northwest Philly, and it's surrounded by beautiful woods and Forbidden Drive, the main road that people walk down that no cars are allowed on. And Valley Green is an old inn from the colonial era, this white inn that faces the creek. But people refer to Valley Green as that part of the park, so not just the inn. And my mom would bring me and my friend, Mary Carlin. And she would sit on a bench and watch the ducks or read a book. And before helicopter parenting, let us just run off and play in the woods.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What do you remember with Mary Carlin? What kind of stuff would you do in the woods?

FLANAGAN: We would go to this area with a big rock that overlooked the creek. I remember looking for Devil's Pool, which is a spot along in the Wissahickon that just sounded very adventurous, you know. And we also played in our neighborhood in Bala Cynwyd and mostly walked everywhere. Walked way more than my children walk, I must say. I would walk to the library. I would walk to Mary's house. When I got a little older and started babysitting, you know, I would ride my bike much further distances than I think a lot of kids do today.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Did you have a car?

FLANAGAN: We did.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: But you didn't use it much. Or at least you didn't have access to it as much?

FLANAGAN: Yeah, I think my mother **<T: 10 min>** didn't pamper me. I think she just assumed I'd get—she would drive me places if I needed to go somewhere further. But if I could walk there in twenty minutes, I probably did.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Do you remember taking public transit?

FLANAGAN: I did. I went to school in Philadelphia, at a Catholic girls' school that's now closed, called Ravenhill Academy. And I took a school bus home for a while, and then I remember I started to learn to take SEPTA. Back before the buses had numbers, they had letters. So I took the A and the E, which is now the [Route] 32 and the [Route] 65.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: How old were you when you started riding the SEPTA buses?

FLANAGAN: Probably eighth grade, which is the age I had my kids start taking the buses, too. And yeah, a few other places I would take SEPTA.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: So do you remember from that house that was, the apartment that you lived in, what kind of energy access there was? Was it coal-fired? How did you stay warm? Do you remember?

FLANAGAN: I have no idea. Radiators, yeah.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Was there air conditioning in the summer?

FLANAGAN: There was no air conditioning, no. I think when my mom got older, she might have gotten a unit air conditioner. But mostly, we just opened the windows.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What kind of car was it that you had?

FLANAGAN: My mom bought a Pinto. I think I was in about third grade, so whatever year that would have been. And she didn't drive that much. She kept it in good condition. And whenever—oh no, wait. Yeah, I think when she bought the Pinto, I was with her at the dealership. And I said something like, "If you keep this car as long as you kept your last car, I'll learn how to drive on it." And the dealer looked at me like I was crazy, but it was true, I think. I'm trying to remember the details of exactly when that was. But my mother was extremely frugal. She didn't waste anything.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Child of the depression.

FLANAGAN: Yeah, child of the depression. And then going bankrupt. So I have a funny story about that, if you want. She was frugal in lots of ways, but the one that I'll never forget is that she would always buy the same brand of stockings. And if she got a run in one, she would cut off the leg and use it as a duster. And then keep the other leg until she had a second pair with one run, and then she would wear one leg from each.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: That's efficiency. I like it.

FLANAGAN: And get as much wear out of them as possible.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: I love it. You mentioned going to a Catholic all-girls school and growing up in a big Irish Catholic family. What was the role of religion as a child in your house?

FLANAGAN: Well, my immediate family wasn't big, because I was growing up as an only child. But religion, I think religion was part of identity more than anything. So we were "IrishCatholic," one word, no hyphen kind of. So my mother and I would go to mass on Sunday. Because my dad was a bartender, he got a pass to sleep in on Sunday morning, like many men. There were more women in church for sure. But yeah, I feel like neither of my parents really kind of talked about spirituality or talked about a relationship with the divine. That didn't seem to be the central part of it. It was more like, this is what we do, part of tradition.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Do you have memories of Sunday school or the religious classes that happened at Ravenhill?

FLANAGAN: So because I went to Catholic school, I didn't need to go to Sunday school at church until I got confirmed. And then I took a class at church. What I remember is that the experience of those two were really different, and what I understand now is a lot of religions have a spectrum of values and practices. And my school was run by the Sisters of the Assumption, who are a wonderful order who are still in Philadelphia. They're a small group. They have purple habits. Very committed to peace and social justice. And this was the seventies, so they were into the guitar mass, which is where I learned how to play the guitar**<T: 15 min>**, in mass and at Girl Scout camp. But definitely a sense of participating. And when we say the Our Father, everybody comes up and stands around the altar and holds hands, which is very awkward, girls. Nobody wanted to stand next to the priest and hold the priest's hand. You know, there was some of that silliness.

But there was a really strong sense of community and spirituality that was part of my religious experience there. I had a lot less of that in my parish. In my parish, there's a part in the Catholic mass called the Kiss of Peace, where you're supposed to turn and shake your neighbor's hand. And I always had the feeling people wanted to shake as few hands as possible, as briefly as possible, because they just wanted to go home to brunch or whatever. So when I got older and decided to choose a different religious community, that was something I was really aware of, wanting to keep the best of my Catholic experience and not the kind of community that was our local parish.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: When you think about school, in the Ravenhill Catholic School, a sense of community is important. What are some of the other things that you enjoyed about school? Are there particular classes that you were drawn to, or teachers you can think of? Like gosh, he or she was fantastic.

FLANAGAN: Sister Christine, who helped me learn the guitar, was great. And Sister Sheila taught me to write. And I'm now a professional writer. And I'll never forget that she said, "If you can write a sentence, you can write a paragraph. And if you can write a paragraph, you can write a book." And so I'm very grateful for that. I remember friends. I think we were a nice community. We were very small. Up through eighth grade, we were extremely small. And then the school closed when I was in ninth grade. We had gotten bigger that year for our class, but not big enough to keep the school afloat. There were beautiful grounds at Ravenhill, which are now part of Philadelphia University's grounds, with old trees and a field that we would run in. And an old fishpond near the sisters' cemetery.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Did you ever play in the fishpond?

FLANAGAN: We would jump over it. So if you went in, it was by accident.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What did you usually eat at school?

FLANAGAN: I don't really remember. All I remember are the little boxed milks, but yeah. Actually, I don't . . . I don't remember.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Do you have memories of how you got to school? Would you walk? Would you get dropped off?

FLANAGAN: No, I think I usually got dropped off by my mom and then took the school bus home. It was an extremely long route because I didn't live within Philadelphia. I was on the long suburban route. It would take an hour to get home. So I assume that's why my mom drove me in the morning.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What was high school like?

FLANAGAN: So when my Catholic school announced they were closing, my mom wanted me to go to another Catholic high school. And Quakers have a word that we call a "leading," which is sort of like a calling, like a sense of inner spiritual guidance, what I feel like I'm destined to do. There might be different ways people describe it. But I think of this as my first leading was that I said, "I want to go to Friends' Central," which was the school where my mother was the cashier. So I had only been there a few times. I didn't know anything about Quakerism. I didn't know much about the school. But I sensed the same kind of community spirit there that I felt at Ravenhill. And my friends who went to bigger Catholic schools, all I ever heard were complaints about the uniform. Like, there seemed to be a lot of emphasis on how long or short your skirt was, which wasn't that interesting to me. So I talked my mom into letting me go to Friends' Central. And she said, "If you get in and you can get a scholarship, you can go." And she told me twenty years later that she didn't think I would. I think she still wanted me to go to Catholic school.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: But you showed her that you could, and that's where you went. What were your experiences there? Was it that sense of community you were looking for?

FLANAGAN: It was. It was. It was a little bigger than Ravenhill, but not a lot bigger. Very strong academics. It really boosted my confidence in academics. At Ravenhill, I think every report card said, "Eileen is not living up to her potential." For years. And I was just starting to realize that that was true. Around eighth grade, I remember helping a friend study for a test, **<T: 20 min>** and she got an 'A' and I got a 'B.' It was like, what is this? And I realized that I just didn't study. But because I needed to prove to my mom, I studied and got straight A's my first

semester. And that really changed the way I saw myself. And it really changed my life, in terms of academic opportunities and things. I think switching—I think Friends' Central was really good for me, but even if it hadn't been that school, switching schools was really good for me because I had gotten into my little comfortable groove.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: So when you said that changed your life, in what ways?

FLANAGAN: In every way. I changed religion. Not immediately, but I left the Catholic Church my freshman year of college. And apparently told someone that I would probably be a Quaker someday but I wasn't ready yet. And so it was in my late twenties that I started going to Quaker meeting, which is the weekly gathering. I met my husband, who is not a Quaker. He's actually a Catholic, but I met him at a Quaker study center outside of Philadelphia called Pendle Hill. I went to universities that I don't think I would have likely gone to if I hadn't gone there to high school. I went to Duke as an undergrad and Yale to grad school. And that was just not something my parents were thinking. They wanted me to go to college, but they wouldn't have been able to teach me how to apply to college or help me set my sights there. You know, I probably would have gone to a local college. Which might have been a great experience, but it would have been really different.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What are some of the other memories you have about being in high school? What were the things that you did with your friends, and what kind of things were you interested in then?

FLANAGAN: I was in a lot of activities. We had a requirement at that time that you had to play sports, so I did [field] hockey and lacrosse. And I was in the choir, and I was in the chorus of a play or two. Probably one of the bigger things was—well, two of the bigger things were the yearbook and the Allen Club. Because I had been in the Girl Scouts—I was a Girl Scout for thirteen years, all the way through high school. And so I loved camping and stuff already. And when I got there, there were a couple of guys that were founding an Allen Club to go backpacking and things. And I thought, that sounds fun. So I joined. And the two guys that founded it, the rumor is—I'm putting it on tape—but it was a rumor that they got kicked out for smoking pot on the first trip. And I was pretty dorky. So the faculty made me the president of the Allen Club. And we did great things. We went rock climbing and spelunking and sailing in the Chesapeake.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Where else would you go for the Allen Club? That sounds wonderful.

FLANAGAN: The Appalachian Trail, canoeing in the Pine Barrens in New Jersey. We really explored a lot of things in the area.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Yeah. So those early memories of being in the Wissahickon really kind of expanded to beyond the region.

FLANAGAN: Right, right.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Beautiful. Let's talk a little bit about that transition into college then. So you were here in Philly. You'd grown up in Philly. Your family's from Philly. And you decided to go to school down in North Carolina.

FLANAGAN: Yeah, I think I wanted to get out of Philly. The other reason I looked there is the only people in my family who had gone to college were my cousins, who went through the military. So initially, I was thinking of applying to the Air Force Academy or getting a ROTC scholarship. And Friends' Central's a Quaker school with a pacifist mission, so this is an unusual ambition for a Friends' Central student. But the guidance counselor said, "Eileen, I think you might have other options." So I let go of the Air Force Academy, but I still applied for a ROTC scholarship, in case that was what I wanted to do. And a lot of northeastern schools dropped ROTC in the sixties, when it became more controversial. And Duke was a very good school that had a lot of options. I had no idea what I was interested in studying. It had a lot of options, a beautiful campus, gorgeous gardens, and ROTC. So in the end, I did get enough financial aid that I didn't need to take the ROTC scholarship. But that was part of what steered me in that direction. Which people find hilarious, since I'm now a peace activist. **<T: 25 min>**

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Yes. I love it. So many paths that could have been traveled.

FLANAGAN: That's right.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What was the experience when you went there? Coming from Philadelphia and seeing some of the region, with some of the outing trips and other kind of things. But that's a very different place.

FLANAGAN: It is. There are a lot of Northeasterners there, but still a strong Southern culture. A lot of formal dances with long gowns and things like that. I did join a group my freshman year called Project WILD, which was Wilderness Initiatives for Learning at Duke, where it had mostly been backpacking. But freshmen who joined this program would go spend ten days or something backpacking in the Blue Ridge Mountains in western North Carolina. And it was a little bit modeled on Outward Bound, kind of test yourself in the wilderness, build community. I

came the year they decided to try an experiment of a bike crew. So instead of backpacking, we biked from Durham, where Duke is, out to western North Carolina. We only went backpacking for like a day or two. And they weren't sure how hard this was going to be, and so the challenge was they didn't give us a tent. They didn't give us food. They gave us a very small food budget. And just to make it as hard as the backpacking was, we were supposed to figure out how to take care of ourselves. Well, that turned out to be extremely easy because all the stereotypes about Southern hospitality were true for us. We would show up in a little town and say, "We're Duke students biking across the state. Is there some basement we can sleep in?" And all of a sudden, the church was feeding us. So we actually had a very, relatively, cushy time. But of the friends who I'm still in touch with from Duke, two of them I met on that program.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Beautiful. On that bike trip?

FLANAGAN: One was on the bike trip and one was one with the hikers.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: That's awesome. Did you get much outside of the East Coast? Most of the adventures and the travel you had done at that point was here on the East?

FLANAGAN: Yes. In college, I started traveling internationally.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Oh, tell me about that.

FLANAGAN: So one of the things at Friends' Central, there was a class on Middle Eastern history that piqued my interest. So my freshman year, I signed up for Arabic. And then with some other students from the class, ended up going to Tunisia for six weeks in Northern Africa for an Arabic program there. And then my junior year, I studied in Ireland for a semester. Both of those were part of what probably prompted me to join the Peace Corps after college, because I had great experiences traveling.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Wonderful. You mentioned that you had left the Catholic Church as an institution in your freshman year at Duke and then ended up traveling through the Middle East and learning Arabic. Were you searching for a new spiritual home, or had Quakerism kind of really—

FLANAGAN: No, it wasn't—I didn't think of it as a spiritual home at that point. The backpacking was more—I did have an experience on a second trip to western North Carolina, where I was really grappling with, what do I believe? And the reason I stopped going to mass

was I wasn't sure I believed everything in the profession of faith. And I didn't really want to recite something if I wasn't sure. So at that point, I was really kind of obsessed with this. And I was going around to people saying, "What do you believe? Do you believe in God? What do you think of Jesus?" And a lot of people were like, whoa. But on that trip, I sort of, looking out at the mountains, I just had this sense of peace. Like there's something bigger than us, and it's okay if I don't know what it is. So I think through most of my twenties, that was the attitude I had.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Before you did the Peace Corps, what did you study at Duke? What were the classes that really drew you in?

FLANAGAN: So my major was called Comparative Area Studies, where you looked at different parts of the world. And it was very interdisciplinary. So I ended up, my senior thesis was comparing the PLO and the IRA. And why would ordinary people be drawn to support terrorism. I was just really intrigued with trying to understand that.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What did you determine? Do you remember what some of the takeaways [were]?

FLANAGAN: Yeah, that a lot of it was political frustration, where people didn't feel like they had other options where they could make a difference. I remember writing that there were some people who were **<T: 30 min>** kind of on an extreme, who were easy to provoke into violence. But that when the mainstream of a society starts endorsing violence, that that means something has gone amiss. And people's ability to advocate for themselves through other means --

EARDLEY-PRYOR: When you were finished at Duke, did you have a sense that you knew that you wanted to go into Peace Corps right away? What was your idea?

FLANAGAN: I had no idea. I was all over the map. I had one resume for international banking, because there was part of me that thought like, you know, I'm the first person in my immediate family to graduate from college. And my parents are getting older. And I should go make a lot of money. And then there was another part of me that was thinking about the foreign service or thinking about just all kinds of different possibilities. But when the Peace Corps came through, that really felt right.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: It felt right. And this was around what, the mid-eighties?

FLANAGAN: Eighty-four.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Eighty-four? All right. Where did you go in the Peace Corps?

FLANAGAN: Botswana in Southern Africa, which my mother had—because she never threw anything out—her map was from I don't know when, but before most African countries got independence was how old her map was. And so when I called home, you know, on an old-fashioned call collect from the hall phone, and I told her, she got off the phone and she looked it up in the atlas. And then the next time I talked to her, she was like, "You're going somewhere that's not on the map." I was like, "What are you talking about?" She was like, "I looked. I looked all over Africa. I do not find this country." And I finally realized it's because she was looking at the colonial name Bechuanaland.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Wow. What was your experience like there?

FLANAGAN: Oh, I loved it. I had a great time. Botswana is one of the more peaceful countries in Africa and one of the more well-governed. Part of it, I like to say, is the British didn't think [the Botswanas] had anything worth having, so [the British] didn't screw them up too badly. The British built a railway from South Africa, where they colonized very intensely, which led to the system of apartheid, which was still going on while I was there. There were diamonds and gold and everything in South Africa. And then there were mining operations further north in what's now Zimbabwe and Zambia. But Botswana they didn't think had anything, so they just built a railroad through it. And I think that was actually best for Botswana. They didn't have a lot of the other things that happened during colonialism. And they did, it turned out, have diamonds that they discovered and were able to access right around the time of independence. So Botswana's done a pretty good job of putting that money into schools and roads and things that they didn't have in the colonial era. So it was a great place to be a Peace Corps volunteer, because there's some question about, are Peace Corps volunteers really helpful? And I think it really depends on the country. And in Botswana, they actually were. They didn't have an older generation. They didn't have enough educated people in their own population to educate everyone, which was their goal. And so the school was about half African teachers, half people from outside, mostly United States and Europe.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: And that's where you worked? In the school?

FLANAGAN: Yes. So I taught the equivalent of junior high in a village that had no central electricity. My first house, I had a spigot outside the door, but when I moved into the village, I didn't even have that. I had to go into a village tap to fill up buckets of water to have water in my house. So candles and kerosene were the light at night.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Really? Where would the kerosene come from?

FLANAGAN: That's a great question. A lot of things like that got shipped through South Africa. Where they originated, I don't know.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: That sounds like an amazing journey.

FLANAGAN: Yeah, yeah.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: How did it change you? Did it?

FLANAGAN: It changed me, yeah. I think growing up, I always felt poor compared to other people in Bala Cynwyd. And right off the bat, I realized I was not poor, that it's all relative. But I also felt confirmed in I had never felt like I needed a lot of stuff. I never felt like I wanted the most fancy whatever. And that was really confirmed by being in the Peace Corps. **<T: 35 min>** Seeing the kids make their own toys, walk or ride bikes everywhere, seeing all the time. Yeah, I remember taking our students to a sports meet. And we crammed an absurd number of kids into the back of a big truck. It was like a giant pickup truck. And everybody was just sitting in the back, bouncing along. And the kids just sang for hours on the way to this meet. And it felt like there was a joy in that that I think is tied to living in a culture that's not so focused on materialism and competition.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: When you came back home, how did that change the next steps?

FLANAGAN: Yeah. Coming back home was really hard. So I came back to the Main Line, to Philly, and had a hard time explaining my experience. I worked for a caterer who did lots of big, fancy events, which were very lovely and nice. And I worked with all really nice people. But the amount of food that got thrown out at the end of the night just made me nauseous. And, you know, people would turn on the tap to wash a pot and walk away and forget the water was running. And that was a big deal in Botswana, because this is a hot, dry country. If you picture your image of West Texas, that's probably more or less the kind of climate in Botswana. And when you have to carry all your water in a bucket on your head, you get very careful about not wasting it. I remember one friend who worked there but who grew up in Kenya. If she had a cup of tea and wasn't going to finish drinking it, or a glass of water, she would walk to the nearest tree to dump it out rather than wasting it. And so I just saw with new eyes how much waste was in our own society.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Had you taken any environmental classes at that point, or had you kind of done environmental reading?

FLANAGAN: Not really.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: But it was all around you. You were seeing it and registering it.

FLANAGAN: Yeah, yeah.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Where did you go from the catering job?

FLANAGAN: Well, I worked for a landscaper for a summer, and then I went to grad school at Yale and got a Master's. I was thinking about an academic route. And two years of that environment cured me of the desire to be an academic. And actually ignited a realization that I wanted to work for social justice issues.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What did you get your Master's in at Yale?

FLANAGAN: African studies.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: You were craving something there.

FLANAGAN: Yeah, yeah.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What was the experience like living up in New Haven?

FLANAGAN: It was okay. I spent a lot of time in the library, so I didn't get outdoors nearly as much. I felt like I didn't really experience New Haven so much as the university community.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Yeah. Duke's a fairly elite school, and Yale is another level of eliteness on there. What was that experience like, being in that sort of upper atmosphere? Especially having this experience for a few years in Botswana.

FLANAGAN: Right. Well, because I was in African studies, I was with people who are interested in Africa mostly, including some people from Africa who were among the friends who I've stayed friendly with. I remember going to, again with the food waste, there was a program that had gatherings like once a semester of scholars interested in Southern Africa. I remember going to this dinner where everybody had their own Cornish hen, and looking at the South African guy, and he and I were both like, "Oh my God." You know, so much food waste in these giant piles, so that we can sit around and talk about a region that actually has a huge amount of poverty. So that was a little ironic. But it was also good being with people who were interested in those kinds of issues.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What was the instigation for the desire to work in social justice, then? Was that part of it? Was it part of thinking the books weren't really—

FLANAGAN: Yeah. I think that was a big part of it, of realizing that—so that was another way that being in the Peace Corps changed me, especially in those **<T: 40 min>** years in the mid-eighties. One of the teachers at my school, who was really a mentor to me and a lot of other Peace Corps volunteers, was the deputy headmaster. And he was a South African who had spent ten years on Robben Island because of advocating for universal education. And he was a very calm, very peaceful, very wise man. Got along with everybody, extremely insightful, but also had this just quiet strength, clarity about what was right. And he was in Botswana because it wasn't safe for him to live in South Africa anymore. And there were a lot of people in Botswana at that time who were, you know, fleeing the regime. So I think that, I think seeing the inequality on a global scale, learning more South African history was part of what made me feel like I wanted to do work for social justice. And that it made sense to do it actually in the United States. This is where I'm from, and we have enough of our own issues here. I mean, sometimes I've said, like, there's no reason that a girl from Philly should have to go to Africa to have to discover racism and economic inequality. But even though I was somewhat aware of those things, it was, that experience made me come back and learn a lot more about my own city and explore different parts of the region and read more American history and things like that.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Tell me about that journey back, then. So from New Haven back to Philly?

FLANAGAN: Well, via Maryland. Yeah, I lived a couple of different places in my twenties and thirties. But eventually came back to Pennsylvania. And in my early thirties, I also developed this interest in writing and spirituality. So I think part of that period was about

integrating those things. But I guess I've lived back in Pennsylvania from '92. So Wallingford, which is just southeast of Philadelphia. I lived up in Scranton and north of Scranton for a couple of years and then came back and have lived inside Philadelphia since then.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: You had mentioned in your late twenties you really embraced Quakerism as a religious home for you, and also met your husband. Can you tell me a little bit about how all that came together, around this same time period?

FLANAGAN: Sure. So the place in Wallingford, Pendle Hill, is a spiritual study center that was founded by Quakers. And my husband was doing a sabbatical there himself. I had come as a student and then stayed as a staff member and was actually getting ready to leave. It was one of those serendipity things where circumstances just happened so that I hadn't left yet when he came, even though I had originally intended to. And so he ended up moving back to Pennsylvania the next year.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Where was he coming from?

FLANAGAN: Milwaukee. He was a Catholic priest for sixteen years, and so he was at the point of making the decision to leave the priesthood. So we were friends when he first came here. But then after he made that decision—

EARDLEY-PRYOR: So when he came to Pendle Hill, he was still within the Catholic order?

FLANAGAN: Yes.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Wow. And so that was part of his time being there, and that's where you met?

FLANAGAN: That's right.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: When you left from Pendle Hill, where did life take you?

FLANAGAN: So at that point, I had decided I wanted to be a writer. I didn't have any idea really what that meant, just on a leap of faith. And I knew a few friends who lived north of Scranton in the Endless Mountains and they had a house-sharing opportunity with a friend in a

beautiful area that's a lot less expensive [than] here. And so I could write and walk in the woods. And so I lived there for a couple of years, and then when Tom and I got married, we lived in Scranton while he got his Master's in social work. And that's where my daughter was born.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Up in?

FLANAGAN: In Scranton. But when she was still young, when Tom finished his Master's in social work, we decided to move back here to be closer to my mom.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What's Tom's full name?

FLANAGAN: Thomas Volkert, Richard Volkert.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: But goes by Tom.

FLANAGAN: Yes.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: And so Tom and you met. He moved from Milwaukee **<T: 45 min>** while you were living with this group of friends up in Scranton.

FLANAGAN: Yeah. I was living north of Scranton, and he actually was looking for what is his next thing and got a vista position, working with low-income housing in Scranton, so it was like half an hour away.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What were you interested in writing? You wanted to become a writer. What was that about for you?

FLANAGAN: You know, it's interesting because my last book was a memoir, where I went back and I re-read my journals and my letters. And one of the things I realized is that part of the initial impulse was to write about the exact kind of issues I'm writing about now, which is about integrating an environmental perspective with a justice perspective. Thinking about our economy and how things are set up. But that's not what I wrote right away. I don't know why. So I guess partly because of being at Pendle Hill, I got very interested in spirituality. My first book is about dating and deciding whether or not to get married, which was very much on my

mind at the time. Kind of from a spiritual perspective, so I interviewed a lot of people about how they made that decision and what it meant to them.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: How did that shape your own decision-making?

FLANAGAN: Yeah, I felt like I kept learning just what I needed to learn from the people I was interviewing. That was very interesting.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: The book was a "leading" for you.

FLANAGAN: Yes, it was. I would say patience was one of the biggest -- like, it's okay if you don't have the rest of your life figured out by thirty. And then my second book was also about spirituality. That one's called *The Wisdom to Know the Difference*, and it's about the idea of the serenity prayer.[4] That we need serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can change, and the wisdom to know the difference. So again, I interviewed a lot of people from different backgrounds about, how do you figure that out? How do you figure out when to just say, "Well, that's the way it is," versus actively trying to change something?

EARDLEY-PRYOR: I love it. And this was at the time where Tom was also getting an MA?

FLANAGAN: The first book was, I was working on it before he moved out here. So I had to re-write it, actually, because it was originally about being single. And then I sold the book, actually like the week after I had my first child. And then it came out. It was published when I was hugely pregnant with my second child. And so then the second one, *The Wisdom to Know the Difference*, it took a couple of years more to write that book, with two little kids.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: With two little ones. What are your children's names?

FLANAGAN: Megan and Luke.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Megan and Luke. And they came up in your life, when did you become a parent? Around how old were you? Early thirties?

[4] Eilieen Flanagan, *The Wisdom To Know the Difference: When to Make a Change and When to Let Go*, (The Penguin Group: New York, 2009)

FLANAGAN: Yeah. How old was I? Probably thirty-three with Megan and thirty-five with Luke. Something like that.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Beautiful. You don't live in Scranton, up north of Scranton anymore.

FLANAGAN: No. We moved down after Megan was born.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Moved down to, where do you live now?

FLANAGAN: To East Falls, Philadelphia. And yeah. It really felt like a homecoming, coming back to Philly. Megan was born in a hospital in Scranton. I really liked my doctor, but I definitely had the feeling that they weren't used to women who had opinions about their care and asked a lot of questions. I got labeled "the troublemaker" in my Lamaze class because I have friends in Philly and all these other big cities who know what contemporary birthing practices are. And they were still a little old-fashioned in Scranton.

So I remember one time coming into a doctor's office and giving my name and saying, "I'm on my husband's insurance," and having to explain that I had a different last name than him. And I remember the nurse saying, "Oh, you mean like Nicole Kidman?" I was like, "Exactly like that. Just like that." So then we come to Philadelphia. I got pregnant pretty quickly after coming to Philly with Luke, and went to Pennsylvania Hospital for an ultrasound. And I'm checking in, and the woman takes my name. And I said, "I'm on my husband's health insurance." And without blinking she said, "Does your husband have the same last name as you?" And I said, "No. Thank you so much for asking." And I told her about Scranton. And she says, "Oh, honey, we don't even **<T: 50 min>** assume you're married to a man." And this was 1999. I was like, "I'm so glad to be home." But both the attitudes and the racial diversity, and there were a lot of things that I did miss [when] not living in Philly.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Yeah. And that was—was that part of something that you wanted to have your kids be exposed to as well?

FLANAGAN: Oh, absolutely. Yeah.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: That's great. When you think of the word home, what kind of things come to mind?

FLANAGAN: Food, family, community, the plum tree outside our back door.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What role does Philadelphia play in the sense of home? Is Philly home?

FLANAGAN: Yeah, I think it is. I feel really lucky to be from Philly, and I also feel really lucky to have gotten to see some other places. I think Philadelphia has a lot to offer that's really great, and sometimes it can be kind of parochial. So I feel grateful for both of those. Coming back, I was much more aware of all the art that the city has, of all the natural places that the city has, like the Wissahickon and the rest of Fairmount Park. And more aware that that's not something to be taken for granted, that a lot of cities this size just don't have that. You know, you can go to great museums and things, and still the cost of living is much less than New York. I have a lot of writer friends who are New Yorkers who moved here. And there's a long history of fighting for social justice and people concerned about issues and working together. I think sometimes Philly has, in terms of that serenity prayer thing, of when do you believe you can change something, and when do you believe you just have to accept it because that's the way things are? I think sometimes Philly leans in that direction. Oh, well that's just the way things are, you know. But there's also a lot of good people working hard on a lot of important things.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: After you wrote the serenity prayer book, what came next for you, for the thing you wanted to communicate and dig into?

FLANAGAN: So that was really the transition for me of figuring out what was next. At that time, I was teaching some part-time courses in different places, including University of the Arts and Pendle Hill. But I started feeling this kind of sense that I should be doing more around climate change. I had known about climate change since 1989, before I had my kids.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: How? What's your memory of that?

FLANAGAN: When I was living in Maryland, I went to a lecture who, it turned out, was the father of a friend of mine, an early climate scientist who explained this concept of global warming and all these predictions. And just feeling like wow, that sounds really bad, you know. But nobody seemed to be taking it that seriously, in terms of our actions. You know, a lot of people took the idea seriously but not in terms of actions. And I still, you know, as I said, I don't really feel like I need a lot of stuff. I don't really care about having the latest whatever. But definitely with parenting, it became much more difficult to live simply. Like, the baby was born and all of a sudden she had eighteen things to carry her in that people gave us. Like the sense of being consumers really increased. And so I went through a period where I really thought that that's how I would make a difference, in terms of climate change and environmental issues was

just using less, was trying to be frugal. And eventually realized that that was not the solution, that there's just too many things about the way the system is built and too many big forces that are contributing to climate change that, if I remember to carry my reusable bottle, that's great. But that's not going to solve the issue.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: This might be a nice point **<T: 55 min>** to take a little bit of a break, and then we can make a transition, now that we're kind of on our way towards the climate and energy issues? Great. Let's take a little break.

Okay. Start up again here. For the transitioning here, the next question I'm going to ask is an abstract one. It says, what are some of the things that you value most, that you love most?

FLANAGAN: I love my kids. I love my husband. I love, I still love the Wissahickon. And I think one of the things that shifted for me in the last several years is really seeing creation in every part of our city. So it's not just in the park, but the beauty of all of it. I love and really value being part of an interracial city and a multi-ethnic city. I think that brings an incredible richness. I love my friends.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What are some of the things that you would work to protect or even fight for?

FLANAGAN: Things I do fight for are really that combination of things. Fairness to our communities, fairness to children who are going to inherit a terrible mess that they did not create, as well as the natural world. When I speak about environmental issues, I don't speak so much about the trees and the birds because those issues have such a profound effect on people. And I think people are just wired to think, how does this affect us? But I really value both. I feel like I'm fighting for creation, and human beings are a really important part of creation. And there's so much in our current system that's not fair. So fairness is part of it.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What are some things that most scare you in life?

FLANAGAN: I'm doing research right now for a book that's about the intersection of issues. I'm thinking of organizing it by river. And so far, every single river I have Googled, I have found some kind of environmental catastrophe, usually environmental injustice, which means that the people dealing with the pollution or the toxins or the-what-have-you are people who were already disadvantaged in some way. Usually, it's low-income communities. Often, it's low-income communities of color. But every single river I've Googled has some kind of toxic something. And I just think, what in the world are we doing to our kids? You know. I forget the question. What am I afraid of?

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Yeah. What scares you?

FLANAGAN: Yeah, that scares me. That scares me. I can't imagine that we can continue polluting our communities and our rivers in this way and have a good outcome. Something's got to change.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What are the things that give you hope? **<T: 60 min>**

FLANAGAN: Let me say one other thing that scares me is the rising tide of hate in our country that this last year has particularly revealed. And the answer to that, what gives me hope, is the number of people that are waking up from that, that are wanting to stand up for something different. After the election, I started offering online classes for people who wanted to get involved and work for— my tagline is, "a just, sustainable, and loving world." And I've had hundreds of people take my classes, because a lot of people are feeling like, "Yes, that is what I want." And I don't take it for granted in this political environment. I need to figure out how to make my voice heard, how to make a difference. So that gives me a tremendous amount of hope.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: That's beautiful.

FLANAGAN: Another thing that gives me hope is something a friend of mine said, George Lakey, who is seventy-nine. He's been an activist since the Civil Rights Movement. And he said that the times of the most progress in the United States have been the times of the greatest political division, of polarization. They've been times when the Klan was on the rise, when we've seen more of this kind of hate, like in the thirties and the sixties. And yet, those were the decades where we actually made progress on social justice issues. So that gives me a lot of hope.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: So as difficult as it may feel, it's a good time to be active and involved.

FLANAGAN: I absolutely think that.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: I love it. Moving to some environmental questions, we've talked a little bit about nature, your memories of nature. And you hinted at this, about how your

understanding, your sense of the environment has changed as you've gotten older. Could you talk about a little bit of why you think that happened and how? What's going on with that?

FLANAGAN: Yeah, I think it relates to our history that—I think I grew up with an idea that nature was somewhere to escape, so I escaped the apartment by going to the park. I escaped by going to Girl Scout camp or where ever. And then, as an adult, I escape email by going camping in the Adirondacks or someplace far away. And I think that idea of nature as some place far away, that you need vacation to go to, is actually a really toxic idea. That [idea] is part of this stereotype we have of the environmental movement being John Muir and, kind of, the guys of old who set up the park systems—John Muir, the founder of the Sierra Club. And I've realized much more that nature is the air we breathe. It's the water we drink. It's the food on our tables. It's also the trees that we can see right now outside the window and the grass that pops up through the crack of the sidewalk. But it's really elemental, and we're part of it. And so, as much as I still love going to the Wissahickon, I've shifted in what I think of as the environment or nature.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: You mentioned that climate change was something you had been exposed to, as early as the late eighties, but it's taken on a much more powerful role in your life and the vision you have of what motivates your work. When did that start becoming something that you then needed to act on yourself?

FLANAGAN: I think there were a couple of things. One was parenting, thinking about my children's future and feeling like I've gone to all this trouble to raise good kids and to make sure they're fed well. And what are we leaving them? A world where every river has a toxic problem. So that was part of it.

I also felt like part of it was changing my understanding of what makes a difference. I think I had protested the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan when they were beginning and kind of felt discouraged by the fact that we didn't stop those wars. I went to a lot of silent vigils with Quakers. And I remember one, not far from here, at Independence Hall Visitors Center. My daughter was very young, and it was a bunch of people with microphones giving speeches to each other. And my daughter looked up. She was like five or six. And she said, "Mom, this is not going to change George Bush's mind. Can we go get ice cream?" And I thought, she's right.

So part of what shifted for me was learning a different way to do activism, learning that there were options that actually could make a difference. And so that really changed things. Like carrying my water bottle is not the only option. And then the last thing, I would say, is that because I was in the Peace Corps, I still have a good friend in Botswana, a couple of friends. And because of that, I've followed what's happening with climate change in other countries, especially in Africa. And the predictions are horrific. It's like hundreds of millions of people are predicted to die in this century from climate change. And just as a moral issue, how can we not do something about that? And then when you study it, you realize, <**T: 65 min**> and we're not

immune from that. Like, the temperature's going up in Philadelphia. And there's going to be more heatstroke and all kinds of issues.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: And having studied some of this stuff and dug into it, what do you see as the drivers causing climate change? What's making it happen and continuing to make it happen?

FLANAGAN: You know, it's more complicated than some other issues because there are multiple drivers. But some of the biggest ones are our continued use of fossil fuels, even when we know there are other alternatives. I would say money and greed is actually one of the common denominator drivers. Money and greed, because Exxon suppressed the data that they had on climate change decades ago. Fossil fuel companies continue to lobby against legislation that we need. And so we are stuck in a dirty fuel past because of the corrupting influence of money in politics. There are other things, like the way we do agriculture, which again, there's a lot of money invested in there. There are more localized kind of food alternatives. And then there's the thing I mentioned about consumerism and the kind of culture that encourages more and more consumption. I think all of those are part of the problem. And the work that I'm doing is really focused on the fossil fuel part. The dirty fuels are something we can replace.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: When you think about energy, fossil fuels being one form of them, what comes to mind? Energy. How would you describe energy? What do you think of when you think of energy?

FLANAGAN: I think of the ability to move, whether it's a generator, whether it's the old coal-fired plant. My great-grandfathers were coal miners up in Pottsville. I think of the sun having such a tremendous amount of energy and how we're finding ways to harness that, and the wind. So at its core, it's about movement. It's about harnessing the capacity to move things, whether it's your vehicle or the mechanisms in your heater.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: How do you use energy in your life?

FLANAGAN: I use it all the time. I'm a writer. I plug in my laptop and my phone. I still drive a car. One of the things I realized when I started doing activism was that I wanted to continue to try and do personal consumption practices, but that that wasn't the focus. So I almost think of it as a spiritual practice. For my integrity, I need to be doing some things but without getting obsessed on that. So I try and hang my clothes on the laundry line instead of using the dryer. We have the heat in our home on a timer and keep it pretty low in the winter. We have a solar panel for hot water for showers and things like that. So we do actively try and reduce our home energy use. But I haven't given up my car. I'm looking forward to being able to afford an electric car.

Yeah. Thinking about my life in Botswana, I'm very aware of how much more energy it takes just to live in this society.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: In Philadelphia here, how do you think renewable energy would make a difference in the way people live, either in health or air quality or water? Even economic opportunities. What are some of the things? How do you see renewable energy playing a role in Philadelphia to make a change?

FLANAGAN: Absolutely all of the things you just said. So starting with air quality and kids, we have high asthma rates and they are absolutely influenced by neighborhood. So having more clean energy and being able to shut down Eddystone and Croydon and these **<T: 70 min>** different old fossil fuel energy places that we still have in the region, I think would be good for everyone's health. But especially the people who live closest to those facilities. And definitely preventing any more dirty energy coming into the region. The green energy economy will create a lot of job opportunities. Thousands of jobs could be created just from doing local solar. We have huge pockets of inequality in our city. And so the group that I work with is pushing for those jobs to be especially available to people in low-income communities, because those are the communities that need the most, and they're the communities that have been hurt worst by the dirty fuel economy. And also, wealth savings. I mean, the energy from the sun is free once you have solar panels. So part of the way that economic inequality gets sustained is that when there's a new opportunity, people who have money have access to it first, right? And I think we're at a moment where we can really make a different choice and make sure that the free energy of the sun is available to everybody. So people who really could use a break on their electric bill have the option of getting that. And when we all have electric cars, we can plug them into solar stations so that—I really do think a lot is possible.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: You mentioned an organization that you work as a part of. What is that?

FLANAGAN: So I am the board chair of a group called Earth Quaker Action Team. And we are a part of a campaign called The Power Local Green Jobs Campaign, where we're partnered with another organization called POWER—Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild. So our campaign is really focused on getting PECO [formerly the Philadelphia Electric Company], our local utility, to make a major shift to solar, and to do it in these ways that we're talking about: to prioritize hiring people from low-income neighborhoods, to make sure that solar is accessible to all, that it's not just the utility gets to benefit from solar, but that average people and especially low-income people get to, as well.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: I like it. That sounds like a nice transition point to think about the visioning point. So I'd like to move through three different time frames to think about. And of course, however you want to envision this future is up to you. There's the extreme of "business

as usual." Nothing changes, climate change runs rampant, and there are no switches in the way we use energy. There's the very dreamy opposite end of that spectrum where everything is completely renewable. There's massive greenhouse reductions. More likely, some sort of hybrid in the middle of that spectrum will evolve. But these stories are for you to figure out. The arc of your vision could be a story of growth or of collapse. It could be a story of discipline being imposed or coordinated from within, a story of transformation. So with the first one, I thought maybe we could imagine a person who's living in these futures. And you can tell me what they're experiences of that time is like.

I'd like to just start with just fifty years in the future. That would be around the year 2067. Just as a memory point, fifty years in the past was 1967. So things were different, but not a ton different. Certainly social things were different, but energy use was basically very much oil-focused and coal-focused. Natural gas was rising, and renewables were really kind of off the radar, except in certain regions that might have water access, hydropower. So in the year 2067, how do you picture life being? And how does energy work in that world? Does that fit in even with the vision of the work that you're involved in?

FLANAGAN: Yeah, absolutely. And you want me to pick one person?

EARDLEY-PRYOR: No, tell me however you want. What does Philadelphia look like? What does it feel like? What colors do you see? What's the vibe in the city? How are people getting about, and what are they doing?

FLANAGAN: Right. [pause] **<T: 75 min>** So you mentioned that in some ways, things hadn't changed that much in the last fifty years. But I would say that a lot of the technological change that we've seen has been in the last twenty-five. And so I do think technology is going to continue to change quickly. In fifty years, I imagine that we will have solar panels all over the place, many, many, many buildings. All new big buildings will have solar panels. Which France actually just passed a law that all new big buildings, for all new buildings, I think, have to have either solar or a green roof on top. Philly's a little behind Paris, but we're not fifty years behind. In fifty years, I think we'll be doing that, too. I think a lot of people will have chosen to do it because of the economic benefit. I think that every school in the school district will have solar panels on it, and that the energy savings will be able to supplement the budgets of our public schools, so that we're not so dependent on Harrisburg as the only gatekeeper of funding. I think that we will have moved to an economy where energy is more distributed, where not everyone gets everything through PECO, that it's not as centralized. That the new energy economy is going to have lots more opportunity for distribution, for micro grids, for communities maybe sharing energy. So that if you live in a neighborhood where some people have a lot of roof and some don't, those neighbors can share energy more directly. I think I would love to see a city that has upgraded public transportation rather than cutting funding to public transportation, and has made it so good that more and more people are leaving their cars at home. And that the cars

that are in the city are electric and fueled by solar panels that are in every public lot. You know, that there's a way to plug in your car when there is parking.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Do the solar panels that you're picturing, do they look like today's?

FLANAGAN: I think the old ones do, and that there are probably newer ones that you hardly even notice on these historic buildings that we can look out here. There's probably a way to have a panel that's less conspicuous than it would be today. And that like the architecture of the city, we'll see a variety as people adopt at different times.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: And when people are moving around on public transit, how is that being powered?

FLANAGAN: Yes. In my future version, SEPTA does not build all the gas plants that they are currently thinking about building. They go with the pilot project they're doing now of solar. There may also be wind energy that they access to charge up their buses. But by then, the technology for storing alternative energy will be much better. It's already improving, the ability to store renewable energy. And so the bus will charge up in the same way we charge up our cars.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: So batteries will run. And this is mostly, again, all from solar panels.

FLANAGAN: Solar. There's probably a big role for wind, especially outside of the city. But I think within the city, there's so much potential for solar. On the roofs, on things like parking lots, you know. Parking lots today, on a summer day, where somebody might park and they come back to their car and it's hot. In fifty years, there will be a canopy of solar panels collecting energy and also shading people's cars.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: How are people moving around on the streets, if they're not in the cars? They're not in public transit?

FLANAGAN: I think that we will have gone back to more walking than we currently do. I think people will have figured out that paying to join a gym that you drive to to walk on a treadmill doesn't make quite as much sense as just walking places. And that like some cities in other parts of the world, we'll have moved away from the big mall in the suburbs kind of thing and revived actually some of the more localized economy so that people can walk to things. **<T: 80 min>** In my vision, every neighborhood has fresh, good food that people can walk to.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Where's that food coming from?

FLANAGAN: Some of it is coming from outside of the area, but much of it within a hundred miles. I think the community gardens that we already have are blossomed, at that aquaponics have given people the opportunity to grow more food locally. Just like [during] World War II—the Victory Gardens—that that will continue to grow as a cultural phenomenon, of people growing things in their own backyards or out on the front step in a pot. Part of my vision is that these things exist in every neighborhood and not just in some neighborhoods, that the economic opportunities of this new economy really have been spread fairly. And it's hard for me to imagine that in fifty years, we will have undone the centuries of economic inequality, but that we're moving in that direction rather than moving in the opposite direction, which we have been.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: In fifty years, in this time period, in 2067, how old will your children be?

FLANAGAN: Well, I'll probably be dead. I'll be one hundred and five, so my daughter will be seventy and my son will be sixty-eight.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What kind of day do you imagine them going through? What have they done with their time these past few years in Philadelphia?

FLANAGAN: Yeah, that's a great question. I hope they have a strong sense of community, and that if they have grandchildren yet, they get to live near them and near each other. Yeah. I imagine them staying healthy walking, growing some food locally. I hope people have learned more about how to get lead out of Philadelphia's soil by then, which is an issue for a lot of our gardens. And there are natural ways to do that, but I hope that people have learned more about that. It's hard for me to imagine what choices they will make. You know, I think they're going to have a lot of choices. I brought my daughter to visit one college, where the admissions person said, "Most of you will be doing something that hasn't been invented yet."

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Let's move to a further invention, further dreaming. Let's talk about the year 2140. So this will be almost one hundred twenty-five—one hundred twenty-three years into the future.

As a reference to what the past is from today versus, if we're talking about one hundred twenty-three years in the future, one hundred twenty-three years in the past was 1894. This was

around the time when coal had really overtaken wood as an energy source in the United States. Massive, massive inequality of wealth with the rise of robber barons, a lot of it driven from this industrial economy that was really booming. Thomas Edison, in the early 1890s, had just built the world's first coal-fired plant in New York City. So we're going to step forward to today one hundred twenty-three years, and then even further into the future, into the year 2140. Maybe great-great-great-great grandchildren of yours would be living in Philadelphia? What does Philly feel like then? What images are you seeing?

FLANAGAN: I think Philly continues to have a variety of architecture. We have this old colonial red brick, next to the skyscrapers, next to whatever-the-next-thing is. That it's all kind of mixed together in the history of the city, and that this time that we're in now is a time that people look back on as a turning point. And in the same way that we look back on the Civil Rights Era or certain kind of periods in history, that people will look back on this time as a period when people chose to shift away from our more destructive tendencies. I think **<T: 85 min>** one hundred twenty years from now, that to have a healthy community, we can't have the kind of economy that we have now, that's based on more and more consumption. And so people have also grown in the same way that there are eras where people grow in their ideas. People have grown past that feeling like they need to have the newest thing. And so people will still have gadgets that they can communicate with and everything. Those gadgets will be made to last for twenty years at a time, not to be outdated every year. And you'll have a plug that can work on every gadget, and you don't have to buy another plug for everything once it's updated.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Are we still plugging into walls to charge things?

FLANAGAN: That's a great question. No. Those things are like antiques, like the card catalog we just passed in this library. They're curiosities that you explain to your kid what that used to be for.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: How does it work now? What's the energy—how does it get moved or made?

FLANAGAN: I think, in one hundred twenty years, we've gotten much—we've figured out how to move energy without losing so much of it. Right now, if the wind energy that's produced a hundred miles or so outside of the city, a lot of it is lost in the transportation. But that's a thing that people have figured out. They've figured out how to either produce the energy locally or transport it without the same kind of energy loss. So we don't see so much of our energy structure. We don't have these ugly substations tucked away in certain neighborhoods.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Far more distributed.

FLANAGAN: Far more distributed.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Solar seemed to be a big part of the year 2067 in your vision. In the year 2140, what's the main energy source?

FLANAGAN: Yeah. I still think the sun and the wind, and probably something I can't imagine. I think the solar panels at that point will be so effective that we might not even notice them. Like computers that, when my mother was young, in her job at the Signal Corps, the computers were the size of a room. I think the solar panels will shrink over that time. My hope is that the racial and economic divisions and inequality that we have now will have, if not disappeared, then greatly, greatly diminished on the economic front. And that the racial differences that we have, that people will still have a sense of community and culture. My vision isn't that people lose that sense of identity, but that it's not a dividing line in the way that it still is today.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Does energy use play a role in that?

FLANAGAN: Yes, because people having access to their own producing of energy is an economic equalizer, as opposed to the fossil fuel economy, which has literally fueled economic inequality. Some people have gotten very rich off of dirty energy fuels, and other people have gotten very sick. And if you think about if you live near the oil refinery and your kid has asthma, and you have to lose work in order to take them to the emergency room because you don't have medical coverage to go to get preventative care—all of those things are intertwined. The current system actually encourages inequality or exacerbates it. And we now [in the year 2140] have an energy economy that's actively shrinking inequality.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Thinking of shrinking or expanding, given some of the climate change that is baked into the system that we cannot avoid, there are some expectations of waves of refugees and destabilizing governments in the future, perhaps mass extinction of plants and animals. In this year 2140, is Philadelphia a bigger city? Is it a smaller city?

FLANAGAN: **<T: 90 min>** Interesting. Well, I think, first, that those problems that you identified are part of—that the shift around the inequality is not just "Solar is great, it gives people free energy and jobs." But that the climate crisis actually brings people together, that the climate crisis wakes people up to say, "We have a common home. We need to work on it together. We need to advocate for these things." Those big institutions that are in the way, whether it's fossil fuel companies or our local utility, that we are actually going to work across

these divisions in order to create the world we want. Because I don't think the world that I'm describing is just going to happen on its own. I think people are going to have to fight for it. And that very process is part of what's going to create a deeper sense of community, a deeper sense of respect, and a more responsive local government. I think that humanity is going to have figured out, one hundred twenty years from now, that, just as we can't continue to grow and have the newest whatever, we can't continue to grow our population globally. So I think that we will have more people in Philadelphia one hundred twenty years from now, but it will have kind of leveled off, stabilized. The suburbs, we'll still have people in the suburbs. But they'll have revived local, as I said, downtowns, places that people can walk and shop and things like that.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: How do people travel and move goods around? How do things come in and out of Philly?

FLANAGAN: I just had an image of horses.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: I love it.

FLANAGAN: I actually think that some of the old ways were not so bad. And just like there's a bike lane, maybe it will be for bikes and horses. I don't know. I think we'll still have vehicles of some—

[END OF AUDIO FILE 1.1]

[START AUDIO FILE 1.2]

FLANAGAN: —kind. Yeah. I think that part of what's driving climate change in our current economy, I mentioned consumption and also fuel industry. But with the consumption right now, the priority of the industrial economy is making things as cheaply as possible. So, you might—I don't know. Maybe this wood came from Indonesia, and then it was processed in India, and then it was shipped somewhere, and then it got here, right? So many of the things we use, different thing, happen different places. And even in the Paris Climate Accord, my understanding is that that did not account for the transportation costs of shipping things from China. That doesn't count on China's balance sheet and it doesn't count on our sheet, but it's a huge contributor to climate change, the transportation.

So, I think that there will be more thought given to what do we actually have the capacity to produce locally? And what do we really need to get from somewhere else? And cost will be a consideration, but it won't be the only driver to the economy. That if we can produce local jobs making furniture here and we have enough woods in Pennsylvania, if we log

responsibly, that there will be much more of a value put on that. And so, there will still be transportation, but it won't be like everything is coming from somewhere else.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What about other animals aside from humans, whether they be plants, trees, grass, or other critters that live in the city? What's that like in one hundred twenty-three years?

FLANAGAN: I think that the climate crisis I'm describing also wakes people up to living in more harmony with those other critters. Right now, there's a lot of critters in Philadelphia that people don't even notice. There are fox in my neighborhood of East Falls. In the city limits, I've seen fox several times. There's birds, there's raccoons, there's ground—we have groundhogs in our neighborhood too.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Would there be more or less of that in a one hundred twenty-some years?

FLANAGAN: I think there will be more respect for the life that's here. One of the things I think is miraculous is how those species have survived in the city. But a lot of people probably see them as just pests and not things to be respected. So, my hope is that people have learned to live in a more balanced way.

I just heard a Mohawk man recite a—it's not quite a prayer. Some people call it "The Words that Come Before All Else." It's like a preface to any gathering, where they kind of express gratitude for everything. Not just the sun and the moon and the food, but the birds and the animals and the rivers and all the different parts of life. And it's quite long, because there's a lot to be grateful for. And when I talked to him about it afterward, he said that he thought the core of it was respect. And so, that's part of what I would love to see is a future where human beings are far more respectful of each other and also of other living beings.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Let's take a step even further. And this is where we're going to get really abstract and as imaginative as you want to be, because this is so far out there. But let's visit the year 2312. Okay, so this is about three hundred years. It's two hundred ninety-five years, almost three hundred years into the future.

And, again, as a reference point to think from where we are back two hundred ninety-five years. That was the year 1722. So, North America had a number of Europeans that were warring and trying to colonize different areas, but it was North America was still very much a Native American homeland. It was unclear how the future would evolve. **<T: 05 min>** Philadelphia as a city was already forty years old, but the American Revolution wouldn't happen for another half century. As far as energy goes, wood was the dominant energy source

with food and plants being another form of fuel to power human muscles and animal muscles. But the age of coal would not happen in the United States for at least another one hundred fifty years.

So, from where we are today in 2017, we're going to step not just a one hundred fifty years, but double that, almost three hundred years into the future. The year is 2312, around then. Imagine somebody and they have some sort of energy technology. What does that technology look like? What is it doing? And what is that person doing near it?

FLANAGAN: It's hard for me to imagine the specifics of what that will be. But what I know about people is that growing healthy food and providing food to people will be a key part. Providing a moderate temperature, not too hot not too cold, and helping to regulate that, because I think the Earth probably will be a lot hotter.

Ways of people communicating, I think, will still be important. People wrote a lot more letters back in the 1700s with quill pens, and I don't think they could imagine the iPhone. And so, I don't think I can imagine what the thing will be, but I know that being able to communicate with that friend who lives far away will be one of the human needs that people figure out how to meet. Our ancestors sat around a fire and told stories. And I think that human need will still be there, whether it's a lamp, whether it's a kerosene lamp like I had in Botswana, or something lit by solar. I don't know what it is, but I know that people will need places to gather and tell stories and break bread together.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: What does Philadelphia look like in three hundred years from now? Are the buildings tall? Are they small? Is it still a mix?

FLANAGAN: I think Philadelphia has held onto its historic buildings, because people have decided that that's important. I think a lot of the buildings will be taller and more compact, but that is more efficient. I think we'll have a greater sense of community in those buildings. Sometimes now, big buildings—ironically, the more people you have, the less sense of a community you have. But people will have deliberately sought ways to foster community. I think there will be very few people who look at white as I look, that we will be a city of different hues without the stark lines that we have today.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Where are people getting their food or how? Does food look the same?

FLANAGAN: Well, I don't want to live in a world of Soylent Green, so I'm going to say yes. I'm going to say—

EARDLEY-PRYOR: It's your vision, right?

FLANAGAN: [laughs]

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Absolutely.

FLANAGAN: We still have green veggies. And I'm curious as to whether people will still eat animals in three hundred years. If I could travel to the future, that's something I would be really curious about. My suspicion is that they will not, or they'll eat much, much less. I think even in one hundred twenty years my guess would be that people still eat animals, but they eat far less than we do today.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: How are people moving around?

FLANAGAN: I don't know. Maybe they'll finally have the hover boards that *Back to the Future* predicted. [laughter]

EARDLEY-PRYOR: Okay. Are there any **<T: 10 min>** other things as we're wrapping up here—are there any other parts of your vision or things that you want to share?

FLANAGAN: I think that part of my vision is that people come to see our commonalities more than they see our differences. Not erasing difference, but that we understand we all need to eat. We all need community. We all need to get around. And that there are better ways of doing those things that could be better for everybody.

EARDLEY-PRYOR: It's been wonderful talking to you. Thank you for making so much time with us today.

FLANAGAN: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]