

Camille Cline. University of Virginia. Class of 1991.

Agnes Redvil

If you could just tell me a little, like a few things about yourself, like your family or your job, or where you're from, or things that you like to do for fun?

Camille Cline

Oh, well, thank you. Well, my name is Camille Cline. I graduated from the University of Virginia in 1991. I went right into publishing in New York City. This was during recession. And I remember my roommate was a civil engineer. And she already had a job way and, you know, way, like months prior to graduation, and I was an English major, and I wanted to prove that I too, could get a job even during the recession. So I worked in publishing in New York City for about seven years. And then I worked in publishing in Texas for about eight years. And that's where I started my family. And then my whole family moved from Virginia, where I'm originally from in the Shenandoah Valley, to Florida, which is where I am now. And so I had been asked by the university back in 2006, if I would help out doing some of the work that I've been doing for free, that they've can maybe pay me a little bit and this was at the beginning of the Office of engagement, I think I was one of the first seven people to work for that office. By the time I left, 10 years later, we had 35 employees in that office, run by Cindy Frederick, or a VP. And so I learned a lot about fundraising, it was just because of the university, I would have never switched careers from publishing because it's the love of my life. But I learned so much in that time with the university that I thought it would be fun to kind of try some things more locally, I was, you know, kind of out and about a bit for the university. And so I was able to take on some positions. And right now I work for the second largest community theater in the country. It's called Venice theatre.

Agnes

That's really great. I love that, you know that you're an English major, I'm undecided right now. But I, I was in the process of like, declaring a major in English as well, I wanted to include that in my email, but

Camille

I will, I will tell you, Agnes r it is I would highly recommend it. And it's funny, because we're much maligned, you know, philosophy in English. But I, it really shows you how a facile mind that you can read and communicate. And it goes so far beyond that. That's what kind of the typical responses, it's so much more than that, I would not trade my English major for anything I am, I have had the most exhilarating career because of it. And so if I can just pitch a little bit, I've, I'll say, I encourage you to do it. And I really wanted to be a book editor. Like I knew that I wasn't necessarily going to be a teacher or a lawyer, you know, which is what a lot of people at that time, you know, who were English majors, I think we were one of the largest majors and so we were able to walk the line, where, you know, a lot of the other majors actually received a we we all walked along, but we actually got to stay on the line to receive our

diplomas where all the other majors had to go into gardens and other places, the English majors. There were so many of us back in 1991 that we stayed on the lawn and got our our diplomas.

Agnes

I love Yeah, that's, that's really great. I love writing. So I feel like it's best for me.

Camille

That's really cool.

Agnes

Um, so next, I would like to know what your UVA story is like how you chose to attend or like what you did while you were there, extracurriculars, Greek life or anything?

Camille

Sure. So the University of Virginia is only an hour from my hometown. And when I was in eighth grade, just speaking of writing, I think they might still have it there was the young Writers Workshop. And it was a summer program that I would be admitted to. We lived in Courtney dorm, which I think is still the farthest away dorm from Central grounds, but it's right by Scott stadium. And so I live there for a few weeks and learn from some wonderful people. I think, Margo. Maybe was the director and Sydney Blair was our fiction writing instructor. She passed away just a few years ago, but she was phenomenal. And so that really kind of got me set on that creative writing path. And then I went back in 10th grade for weekends, they had weekend programs through young Writers Workshop. And so when it came time to apply, you know, we've done our research on best English major departments in the country. You know, you've got your Iowa and your Ivy's. And all of those I'm sure you've done your research to. And UVA, which was literally an in state school, which checked my parents box, you know, had one of the top top English departments So, so it was kind of an easy choice. My dad was a college professor, my sister had gone to even marry. So they were kind of represented other universities. And so I wanted to kind of go my own way a little bit. And then wound up living. The reason why I mentioned Courtney is, I was put in Courtney, for my first true daughter. So they remembered or something, you know, all these years later after my eighth grade experience. So I wound up I might have all I think, was even almost the same room. I think it was like right across the hall from this in this suite. And then, you know, took all of the kind of gen ed classes I did at that time, I don't think people would go in with like 40, APS, you know, credit, and I don't know what your experiences but like, my daughter's a freshman in college now. And she's, she went in as almost as a sophomore, because she had so many APS, you know, so. So I got through that I started working at Clark Hall, and the science and technology library, I met some of my greatest friends there working at Clark Hall. Then I started working for the university, real estate Foundation and the historical renovation corporation for a man named David Westby. And my direct report was a woman named Cindy kid, who is the most fabulous boss I've ever had. She, they gave me a

key to the building. I'm like, you know, like, like, third year, second year, third year, and I have a key to Booker house. And I have my own office. I know, right? Thank you. This is the reaction. I have a key to book her house and my own office in one of those top four windows where the dormer windows are if you when you go by you will, you'll know you'll know what I'm talking about. So find Madison, I guess it would be mad bowl and the president's office. And you'll see right beside it is and it's right across from the rotunda is a building called Booker house. And it's used for other things now, but back then I had my own office and I was a bookkeeper there. And I was the only student who was working for that group. So that's kind of what I did. extracurricular, I was in a sorority, I was a Chi Omega. I pledged my first year had lots of friends in intramurals and did a lot of different sports and, you know, running and things like that. And then in I guess my second year, I declared my English major. And I really got focused on that. And, and one thing I'll tell you a little bit of advice from my college professor father, that I did not listen to until my grades started slipping. He said there are only two tips number one, go to every professor's office hours within the first two weeks of getting into class so that they know who you are, and you can connect with them. And the second thing he said was sitting in front of the class. And it was true once I really did that. I made the Dean's list I you know, my my grades skyrocketed. But it was also because I was learning literature from these thought leaders and these great minds and it was one of the most spectacular experiences of my life.

So I will add a couple of things. I'm from Harrisonburg. And when I was a kid, I'm gonna say around third fourth grade. Our team our basketball team won our high school boys basketball team for Harrisonburg High School, won the state championships twice, because there was a seven foot four battle basketball player named Ralph Samson. I don't know if you've heard about him yet, Agnes, but you will. When you get to UVA, you will hear about Ralph. And so he was he is and was our local hero. And so knowing also that he went to UVA and like watching him, my sister had been a cheerleader watching him play every high school basketball game as a little kid. That was really formative for me. So Ralph has a big reason to why I chose. And I've actually written about this, like why UVA is so important to me, because so many people in our community, were so supportive of Ralph and wanting him to choose, say, over UNC Chapel Hill, and you know, places like that. So that was really important. And then, I guess, in, after I declare, I feel like I'm kind of really talking more to you about maybe being an English major. So please, if I get off topic, let me know. But one thing I really would would recommend is internships. And back then there, there were internships through the sociology department. So you could get for credit hours, you do like an hour a week with a sociology class. And then the rest was field work. So I was assigned to work for the Virginia magazine, which is the alumni magazine back then it was called the alumni news magazine. So I wrote all the class notes when people would send in, you know, their, like the alarms would send in their accomplishments. I wrote those for the summer. And I remember it was really cool. Bill sublette was the editor in chief back then. And he said, You know, there's this young woman who went to UVA, she graduated a few years ago now. But she, we think she's going to take over as the anchor of the today's show, would you consider giving her Carla interviewing her, and I was really nervous. Because I was going to be calling somebody, you know, at NBC. And even though she was an alarm, you know, and he said, Yeah, I think she's gonna take over from a woman named Deborah Norville. She may not be able to talk about it yet, but see what you can, you know, get kind of on the record. And I called her up, it was a woman named Katie Couric. And I don't know if you know who she is, like

So I called Katie Couric and she could not have been nicer. She let me You know, I'm like, maybe a third year, I think I was like, third going into fourth year of college. And I, I asked her questions, and then I

even had to call her back, she called me back right away. And she said, I can't tell you whether or not I'm going to take over. But you know, so you go print can't print anything. But she said it's looking good. And then she became the, you know, the kind of legendary host of the today's show, and yeah, you know, went on, but that those were kind of some highlights for me. I worked for a publishing house run by two alums, Peter grant and Frank Thomason, they had Thomas and grant publishing right in Charlottesville, and I got to do an entire year of a publishing internship with them. And so, you know, between working and internships and classes, and the sorority, you know, and friends, I was, I was pretty busy, but I was lucky to get so many opportunities, you know, and that's the thing and you're gonna, you've probably heard this, and I'm just going to be one in the chorus. You make it what you want it to be, and just take advantage of me. Even if you don't ever go to that thing again, or, you know, whatever, it just try because it's gonna be the best four years of your life. So did I get kind of where you needed me to go? Okay.

Agnes

Yes, that's amazing. I'm gonna be watching this like multiple times. My entire college experience and like taking notes. Did I miss something? Yeah.

Camille

Well, would you please stay in touch with me? Because how things go?

Agnes

Oh, of course. I'll let you know as soon as I declare my major officially too. Oh, all right. Um, so how did you go about choosing to major in English? Was it like an easy decision for you that you thought about all your life?

Camille

Right, right? Well, in eighth grade, I don't know when you kind of started thinking about it. But in eighth grade, I think we were reading a lot of poetry. And I was like this, like, I'm understanding this. And not only an even if it's like old English like for some reason I am getting it, you know, or if it's in different languages or dialects or whatever. So then what I really liked was deconstructing poetry, you know, and deconstructing it. And even when I took like, one out, and I'll answer your question in a minute, but even when I took Mr. wheelers class, a friend of mine was an actual scholar. And so he would bring me into classes that I would not have thought of taking. So there was a man named Wheeler, who taught calm law, commercial law in the comScore at UVA, when he taught us torts and contracts and things like that, I use the same skills that I learned in poetry class with, like with Greg or or Rita Dov, or whomever, you know, to be able to deconstruct contracts. And so, in eighth grade, I was like, I think I want to be an English major, because I could kind of do that I could see words that way. And then, and I was a good speller, you know, it's like, kind of, you know, I could do grammar and stuff. And then I think it was in

second year of college, my dad was like, okay, you want to be an English major? How are you going to support yourself? And I thought about it. And that's when I took, I think I started taking the, this, the internship, and one of the parts of the sociology class that I took, you had to survey, kind of like what you're doing right now, actually, I had to write a list of questions. And I sent them out to people in publishing, who I was connected with, through UVA, like, like alums, UVA helped me find alums who were in book publishing and in magazine publishing, and so I asked them questions about job satisfaction. And they were just like, oh, they could, I don't even need to be paid for this. Like, that's how much I love what I do. I was like, Oh, no, you know, I mean, it's certainly I'd like to be paid. But that became like, it just it just solidified to me that I needed to be an English major. And I did well in there to weed out big, big classes. And I can't remember my friends will remember, but there are two huge classes that basically cover like Beowulf to yesterday in literature, and and I did pretty well in those classes too. And so they'll weed you out so that if you're not doing well, you won't get to continue as an English major. I think all the majors have something like that. You know, no matter what you go into, they really want to make sure you're serious about it. My my I should mention my advisor is a man who's retired now, but his name's Steven Railton and Steven Railton taught American Renaissance and Walt Whitman. He taught all kinds of literature, Faulkner, Twain, which, by the way, I've been to Twain's house I think twice in your hometown.

Agnes

Yeah, it's in Hartford. Yeah.

Camille

I love the top room where you can see where he wrote, I think that's such a cool, cool space. And so Railton would kind of become like, you'd almost see him transform into Walt Whitman before your eyes. Because had he had this very mellifluous, and he still does this very mellifluous voice. And, and he could just make you connect with Herman Melville, or, you know, any of these, you know, great writers from like, the 1800s, particularly, or, you know, I think, and I studied all kinds of things. You know, all and I studied with a man named Charles Rollins, who I don't think is there any longer, but he taught us Southern literature, and just made such an impact. So, there's just such awesome people who I learned from. And so when I was looking around, there's there was something at the time called the Harvard Radcliffe publishing course. I think Denver rice and Howard University's also have them or did at that time. And so I applied to all of them. And I got into the Harvard, Radcliffe one, and attended after summer after graduating from the University. And that I just kind of set me on my path. I worked at PC Magazine, my first job out of out of UVA, and then I worked for a company called St. Martin's Press, and worked in the Flatiron Building in New York City.

Agnes

That's really great. I really like I couldn't understand when you when you said that your dad was like, Oh, do you want to do English? How are you going to support yourself? Because I'm still like, kind of in the

process of getting those like questions from my parents. But I think that there's something So like, I don't know, like, individual about being an English especially in like a creative field that even though this is one specific major, I can essentially do whatever I want with it or write whatever I want learn from like anything. So I feel like that sort of like Trump's, like the money that I'm gonna get from it or anything.

Camille

Oh, it's a lifetime of happiness. It's 100%. And you know, it'll come like, if you're good at it, which I suspect you will be. You'll it'll, it'll just all work out. Yeah. Your parents for you. Thank you.

Agnes

Just one quick question about like, the major itself at the time, what were the demographics like solely gender and race? Yeah, so

Camille

that's a really great question. Um, well, there were, I don't know, if we had even 7%, black and you know, Hispanic students we may have, I know. And remember, my experience at UVA kind of comes in two phases. One is a student, and then the other for 10 years until 2016 as an employee. And so it's hard for me to remember that far back, because it starts getting mixed in with what I consider the better statistics. And the better statistics is the direction that the university is going in now. And I will tell you, that I am strident on this topic, because I was working with a lot of people whose let me give you an example. There was an alum, I think, from somewhere in the kind of Northern Virginia area, middle Northern Virginia area, who was very upset, because I think his grandson had not gotten into the university. And he said, and this is again, when I was working for UVA. And and I said, he said, Oh, because we've had generations, because, you know, women were not allowed until the 70s. And I said, Oh, well, that's great, you know, that you you know, you have such a long history. And he was a little upset about the grandson. And I said, Well, what about your daughter? And he because he was kind of railing about how they'd let women in and all this, they said, Well, yeah, she went to UVA. And I was like, Yeah, but can't you say that she wouldn't, if it kind of like, if you'd had your way, you wouldn't have been able to continue that legacy. So, you know, it was a struggle, because we were trying to make a lot of our older alumni comprehend, that. We needed to encourage all, all backgrounds, all kinds of thought, we were hoping to bring a lot of students and at that time, you know, before the pandemic, we were bringing students over from Asia, you know, India, Africa, everywhere. And I really liked the idea of the University of Virginia being an incubator for democracy. I really believe in that. I know that when I was at UVA, like I was friends with a lot of people who you know, did, like they did step dances, and I'd go to STAT, you know, events, and those were a lot of fun. I worked with a lot so I like I never felt personally like, there was that much of a, you know, strata, you know, with or like a difference with different people. I was just glad to be coming from kind of a more rural area, to a little bit bigger city, Charlotte's Phil's not Hartford necessarily, but it's still a now it's much bigger back then it was bigger. And so I just felt like it was multicultural, you know. And so I had a great experience with that. And my

professors, I had all all different types of professors, from different backgrounds, and I think they're moving in a better direction. I think since I started back in 2006. They've been moving in a much stronger position, and I could not be happier about it.

Agnes

What is your favorite UVA memory or transformative moment for you?

Camille

That's a great question. First, you know again, like it's tough, because back then, I've got so many great memories, even from you know, working. I'll give you one and it's not really fair, but it's reunions. When I worked for UVA, I was told by a lot of alums that you had to go to your reunions, because it's just so fun. And you get to see all these people you don't even remember, you knew. And they really treat you like kings and queens when you come back to grounds. And I've been back to grounds for work. And for other things. I used to be on the Young Alumni Council, which is part of the Alumni Association for six years. I think back when it first started, and you know, I've been treated great, like, every everything I did, I've been part of President castings. Virginia 2020 vision program, be, you know, way before 2020 came around, so I, you know, I, everything I've done has been awesome. But reunions is kind of a singular experience. And what makes it neat is, it's every five years of classes, so you get to kind of mix. Because when you're there, you're going to know people from like, you know, like, as you get to know, people, when you go back to grounds, hopefully this coming fall, you'll get to know people who are, you know, fourth years. And then as you go through the system, and through college, you'll get to know first years like so you'll know, like more than just your class. So I got to know like a lot of different people. And then they bring their spouses and it was just, I have, I don't and I had a lot of fun in my four years at UVA as an undergrad. A lot of fun. Yeah. I don't remember having as much fun as I did. For reunions, it was just crazy. It was so fun. And you know, I lived in New York City, you know, I, you know, in my 20s. So, but this was kind of a singular experience. So I would say reunions was right up there. I'll never forget, when we beat Clemson, I think it was the first time in 30 years in football. And all the guys stormed the the field and I think they tore down both goalposts. But it was that was a pretty amazing moment, too.

There are so many great sports moments. But there's a favorite, I have a favorite tree at UVA, too. And I don't even know the name of it. But it blooms in the spring, probably right around now. And I just that's one of my favorite sites to there's just, Oh, I can't I can't contain it to one, just that one thing. I'm sorry.

Agnes

That's okay. I'm really excited to be able to experience things like that next year.

Camille

Please text me.

Agnes

yes. If I find a tree that I really like, I'll show it to you.

Camille

I do have one memory that I think about occasionally, and I can't find this person. There's a guy from Brooklyn who lived in the dorm room below me. And in first year, his name was Chris green. And Chris, I was curling my hair and dropped my curling iron in my eye and gave my cornea third degree burn in like the first month of being at UVA in Courtney dorm. And I remember everybody else went to the REM concert. But I had a patch over my eye like I couldn't go anywhere. And I was reading the book it and I was sitting in my room. And Chris was like, I'm not going to an REM concert. He came up and he read to me.

Agnes

Oh my god. Wow, that's so silly.

Camille

Isn't that the sweetest thing?

Agnes

You ever met him? And you haven't met him since like,

Camille

we were friends when we were in college, but lost completely lost. I lost weight. That's the problem. Like, you think, okay, now I'm moving on to the next big thing, you know, and you just lose touch with people. But that's the kind of experience like that's how people are, you know, that just, we'd become friends. And he was like, Alright, I'll come up and I'll read to you, you know, while everybody else is hanging out or REM. And it was really nice. So there's just, and there's stories like that you're gonna have experiences like that all the time.

Agnes

Wow, that's really great. I really can't wait to meet other people that are not online.

Camille

Yeah, I know. I know. Now do you get to see your high school friends? Or have they actually gone to college like?

Agnes

Well, most of my high school friends go to the University of Connecticut. So I get to see them occasionally because they live nearby. Yeah, so whenever I'm done to hang out with them, it's cool. of UVA. I haven't met like a lot of people. I mean, I have a roommate last last year and she's great. Um, but other than that, yeah, we like as first years. We stayed connected through, like, chat, so, and there's like a there's like a group means like 2000 people in it. And everyone talks like every day.

Camille

Yeah, yeah, that's really good. And, and maybe that's even better, you know, because there's, you're kind of, not to say it's better than in person, but just to say that you get to have mass communication with people, you know, that it's like a party. Yes. Um, how did you decide on UVA?

Agnes

Um, well, I wasn't, I didn't even hear of it until my senior year of high school. But my one of my English teachers, I should have my English teacher, but I ate lunch in her classroom, for lunch instead of the cafeteria. And she's so great. She's like an inspiration to me. Her daughter went to UVA. And then she's been like, all of lunch when we were talking about like, applying to college, she talked about it. And I was like, You know what, this seems like, a really great place. And I want to be far away from home. And, you know, I just want like, a new experience that, like, I just get away from because this is such a small state. So yeah, so I was like, you know, what, I like the virtual tour. And I was like, you know, the school. So pretty. I'm gonna apply. And I did apply. And then I got in, and I was like, Okay, yeah, is is the best way to get into. And I'd really rather not go to the University of Connecticut. So I was like, You know what, I'm gonna go.

Camille

Well, my daughter's godmother went to UConn. And so we love UConn. And but she and I will always like, have these fights over who had goes to the better school.

Yeah. So that's, that's really, that's really cool. I think it's, um, it shows a lot of bravery, really, to go kind of outside your comfort zone. And, I mean, my daughter's a freshman in college, and I know what you guys in the class of 2020 have gone through, and I'm just admire you so much. And what's going to be amazing is in 20 years, you're gonna look back and you're like, Yeah, I was the class of 2020. You know,

like that's informing all of my generations decision making. And I think that's going to make the planet a much better place to.

Agnes

Yeah, I definitely. Well, I would definitely rather miss my first year than my last year. Yeah, yeah. So my next question is, what was the most challenging thing about you?

Camille

I think getting used to the culture, you know, and even though I was from an hour away, and I think when I was a little kid, my dentist even lived in and worked in Charlottesville. So it's not like, I hadn't been there. But it was, it's bigger. And I think this is something that has, I learned at UVA that I've carried through even when I worked in New York City, is that a place can be big, but if you can find your people, like you can find the people you have like common ground with, you'll make your own community and it'll feel safer and more manageable, and it won't feel so big. And so that's what I did. And with like a lot, like I mentioned, like lots of little groups, like with sports and intramurals, and stuff like that. And so, I think that was Oh, and you know, coming from the country, we wave and say hi to everybody who passes us, like driving or walking. And no one people, I would wave at people and they would look at me, like had three heads. So that took a little while because then I realized, oh my gosh, like I'm literally on campus on grounds with people who like are from not just big cities like New York, or LA or Chicago or Atlanta, but they could be from, like Shanghai or, you know, London or you know, all these different places. And so that that took a little while for me to kind of process and then also just like where am I? And because you know, you're coming, you're probably in your, you know, top percentage of your high school class, and you're kind of the big fish, you know, and so to then be kind of absorbed into this larger community. It's tough to kind of find your place at first and I Definitely went through that. And working helped me, you know, working at the color call in the side side tech library that helped me kind of find out through talking to older students, you know, what classes to take, and you know, what professors were good and you know, different, different stuff on housing, because you kind of feel like you're floating. Otherwise, you know, so having all those connections, and having people you can trust really makes a big difference. Yeah, I think that's the biggest challenge. And, you know, really buckling down. I had a sorority sister who, I think, well, she is a vet now. She really studied, like a maniac. And she would say, Come on, let's go Camille, we're going to Clemens to go study and, and she really got my, my button gear to get my work done. So that was really important to have, like a study buddy to have someone who you were accountable to, and she was accountable, you know, to you and, and, and it's like having somebody to work out with, you know, you kind of keep each other honest.

Agnes

Gosh, yes. My, my roommate said, when we first met, she said, Do you want to go to the gym together? When, like, when we start, I've never been to a gym in my life. And I was like, You know what? Yeah, when we get there, let's do it. Yeah. Yeah, it's really interesting to mention, like, the differently cultures

that you seem, because I know, we grew up around, like the same types of people from the same places. But last semester, um, because like, international students are like staying in, like their countries. I have just one class. And it was it's, it started 11am for me, and we did a lot of group work. And I was always partnered with this one kid, he was from Shanghai. And he'd be like, Oh, it's 2am here. And I'm like, um, do you want to meet later? And he's like, no, it's fine. I already changed my biological clock. And I was like, I thought I was so so funny. And I feel so bad for like taking up his time, but he'd be up like the entire night anyway. And then like sleep during the day.

Camille

That's the first time I've ever heard a story like that. Like it never even occurred to me.

Agnes

Yeah. Because, especially with like, the synchronous classes like, oh, a lot of professors offer like asynchronous, so for to account for people who are outside of the timezone. But I've actually met like, a lot of people, I've met a girl that lived in Japan. So we were, we were on zoom at night. And it was like, bright day. And I was like, where are you? Which,

Camille

again, I think that's kind of cool. Like, I'm trying to find like, the shiny moments from all of this, we get ridiculous pandemic. Like, I think that's kind of cool. Because then not only are you you would have met her on grounds, but you kind of kind of get to see her in her home, like in her environment. Yeah.

Agnes

It's really cool, too.

Camille

Yeah. It really is, like a really like, interesting thing that I wasn't expecting.

And I just, I'll just add to you remember, we didn't even have email. Okay. I think we, when I went to PC Magazine, which was really technologically advanced back then, Microsoft Windows was just getting started. And we were on something called MCI mail, which is like email. But no cell phones, no zoom. So I think it's it. I'm, I think it's really cool that it's kind of bringing the world together a little bit. Yeah.

Agnes

You talked about forming connections with other people and how important that is, um, so what kind of relationships did you form with other women? And did you find it easy to make those connections?

Camille

That's a great, great question, too. These are great. Um, I, I feel like my first year suitemates because in the what's called the new dorms. I think there's even new new dorms now because the really nice ones. But the new dorms, we had suites. And so you'd have a roommate, but then everybody kind of shared a common area. And there was like, maybe five rooms I want to say that can't you know, came off that common area. So I made really good friends with some women. I mean, these are my best friends. My first year. One was Korean American. One was, I don't know, Midwestern American maybe. And then the other one was half black, half Spanish. You know, we were all going to live together our second year, and one of them wound up living in her sorority house. So it was it wound up just being the three of us. So we were really, really close, we got to be really good. And these people are, like, far, Agnus far smarter than I was, I mean, so brilliant. And I, I was just like, felt lucky, just get to hang out with them, you know. Um, and so they. But we so one of the things that it's just like when you go, you know, graduate from college or what or wherever you kind of year to year you, you make a whole new group of friends. So I think we lived together second year, but my third year, I had joined a sorority, and I moved into my sorority house. And so then because I was living with all of these women, we were, I think there were 21 of us in the house. That was like my world, because I ate there, you know, I slept there, I studied there. Like I said, they held me accountable for my grades. And so, so that kind of, in some ways, kind of narrowed my world a little bit, because it was just these 21 and whatever other sorority sisters came in, but by then I will say I was really getting much more serious about my studies, and, and making A's earning A's and all of that. So I didn't need a big world, you know, like, I didn't need to meet a lot of people by then. And I was kind of really hunkering down. And I think that's what you'll notice with upperclassmen, it when you're like, going back, you know, for your second year, is that they really, like while you're trying to discover stuff, they're kind of just like, okay, now I've got to get serious, so I can graduate and get a job. So definitely have fun your second year. And, and so I think it was tough, you know, I made lots of friends, I was a leader in my sorority, and I did a lot of social events, I ran like, organized a lot of social events for my sorority. And so it was nice, because they, you know, we had each other's backs, and we helped each other and it was a wonderful group of people. But I will add that some of my best friends, who I would go out with on weekends, were not the sorority sisters, they were my guy friends and my friends from classes that I'd met, like, through English classes and stuff. And so, and they were good friends, and they would be the people I went on spring break with, and stuff like that. So, you know, I, I, I had good relationships that I'm proud of. And in fact, these sorority sisters, you know, when I posted something about my daughter getting into the College of Education, where she is going to college, like all of these sorority sisters sent me a little Facebook likes, and that, so I'm still in touch with them. And when I would work for UVA, I would check in with them when whatever city I was visiting for UVA. So that helped a lot too.

Agnes

Maybe I should join one next year, would you recommend it?

Camille

I will tell you, I would recommend it because, you know, they they'll tell you Oh, it'll help you with networking, all this stuff. And that might be the case it depends on kind of like, like where you're living and all of that so I wouldn't count on like I it didn't really work for But so I wouldn't count on that. But I will say it's nice to have that connection. Like when you go back for reunions, and, and just having people in all cities and like all over the world, like, one of our sorority sisters was from Bolivia. One was from Korea. We had, I mean, what, like, move back there, you know, so we always had these connections, wherever, and that kind of made it nice.

Agnes

Can you tell me about a woman or multiple women at UVA who inspired you? Or? Or do you inspire you now either now or on grounds?

Camille

Sure. I mentioned I remember her name. Now. It's Margo Figgins, who ran that young Writers Workshop, Margo would have us do, like theater exercises, like where you like make sounds, or you pretend that you're a part of a machine. And then all the different people kind of form a machine, you know, we would do all of these kinds of creative brain exercises. And I'd never been exposed to anything like that before. And, and the brainstorming work. And the way we learned to really expand our minds creatively has helped me my entire career. So Margo Figgins setting up that kind of environment where it was safe, to be kind of wacky and quirky, was great. And then, like I said, Sidney Blair helped me to focus how I wrote. And she helped me to figure out, like, like, not to write for what I thought other people wanted me to write, but to write for what I cared about, like what meant something to me. So kind of writing for yourself first. And, and, and then, you know, crafting a good story, you know, what are the plot points? What's the inciting incident, you know, understanding all of the aspects of a good story characterization.

And then, I'm trying to think, like I mentioned Cindy kid, who was the bookkeeper for the University of real estate Foundation, and the historic renovation Corporation. So she would, let me give you an idea of what her work was, this is just for HRC, they were the management company for most of the fraternity houses, and a few of the sorority houses. And so Monday morning, we would get all the bills from the plumbers, and the people fixing all the broken windows, and all of the messes after party weekends. And we would have to Yeah, so we would get all these bills, and then we would have to investigate what had happened. And then we would cut checks from, you know, from our account to these various vendors, plumbers, and electricians and all of that.

And she just always handled it with such grace. And, you know, even when things were really stressful, she was so calm. And she always made me feel like even though I was a kid, like I was, like her most important employee, and that I was really valued. And, and, you know, it just that, that kind of a supervisor you'd ever forget, I know her name, you know, and I'm, you know, that was back in the 1990s, you know, late 80s. So I still remember her so that she made a huge dent, and she wasn't, she

had nothing to do with my major or with, you know, my classes or any of that. And in fact, I was kind of using the other side of my brain from my English major, you know, working with numbers and doing bookkeeping, and accounts receivable and accounts payable and things like that. So she taught me a lot and taught me because I'd always been a little math phobic. She taught me that I could handle it, you know, like I could balance a, you know, balance sheet and I could, you know, take care of business.

And I didn't have to, you know, have had calculus BC or whatever to have done it, you know. So, I'm just trying to think if there's there was a woman also, and if you'll allow me, I will go back into my notes to try to find her. She was an assistant dean and the what was called the Office of Career Planning and placement. And she recommended me for placement on The Young Alumni Council, because I was really aggressive in my job search. Like I said, I really wanted a job to kind of prove it to my civil engineer roommate, but I could get one too.

And so she saw how hard I worked on my resume. My presentation, when I went up to PC Magazine for my interview, I was going up against kids from like Northwestern j school and all of these other programs. And even though I wasn't a journalist, you know, I wasn't a , you know, journalism major. We didn't even have a journalism, I don't even think we still do at UVA. And so, you know, we've taken some classes at UVA though. And I got the pilot program, they had a pilot program at PC Magazine. And it's a lot as much as it was my my career at UVA, is in academics, it was half of it easily was that Office of Career Planning and placement, which is, I think, is called something else now, like CIC or something like that. But that's an office that when you're ready, take advantage of it, because they'll help you with internships. They'll help you with just like, what to wear, how to speak, like how to answer questions, how to research companies, they'll amazing, it's, it's great, a great resource.

And then let's see, like I say, there's, there was a woman who I worked with, in my internship at Thomas and grant, my professors were always really supportive. I know I'm leaving somebody out, but I think I've hit kind of the major ones.

Agnes

It's really great that like you had, like people to rely on, and like, to help you through because like, college is really hard. Especially when you're doing it like without like someone to guide you. I have a pure advisor, and she's really great on what I would do without her. So I don't know, but everything you say is just so inspiring, like, I'm really taking everything in.

Camille

UVA is 100 times better than it was back then, like 100 times better. So you're just you're, like I said, it's gonna blow your mind. I'm so excited for you.

Agnes

I'm really excited. So how many courses Did you take at UVA? Roughly, just like an estimate, maybe that were taught by female professors? And what kind of like courses? Did they teach?

Camille

Sure. Um, let me think about that. Oh, boy. I don't remember having a lot in my first year. In fact, that's a good point, and may not have even had any. And I'm, I never really thought about that. You know, I don't. I think it was probably for the classes I was taking. It was mostly men in the English major. I took elzinga as econ 201 class, which is a really famous class, and he's a man. So in the major, I'm gonna say maybe five or six at the most. I took a lot of classes with Mr. Railton just because I really liked him. And I wanted to take more classes with him. I took a class from Ed Hirsch, a man there, who he was kind of the guy behind the cultural literacy movement. I don't know if you heard about that. But that was probably 20 years ago. And then, yeah, I actually have my transcript in my other room and can pull it, I can find it. And I can kind of try to give you more specifics. If I look it over. Yeah. Yeah. Not a whole lot, actually.

Well, and so my dad has said like, in college professors like they don't retire. Like they'll still be shuffling around at 80 and 90 years old, you know, like, they love what they're doing. So it's hard to then get that kind of turnover. But when I was at UVA working, one of our goals was to make sure that all the professors who were retiring, that we were bringing in their replacements, and not allowing some overlap with their salary so that they could have a few months to train up the new professors. And that, of course, is a financial burden. And so we were trying to figure out ways to help you know, that get done so there's a really wonderful person named Michelle Packer, in the development office, if you ever run across Michelle Packer, she runs that program, and she does a really great job.

Agnes

Um, what was the presence of women groups and like movements? Like, like organizations?

Camille

Yes. So when we were there, I remember the LGBT, I don't think we actually it was just lb. g. I don't remember there being a t Q. I play with, you know, um, so back then. We had jeans Fridays, so you would wear jeans in support of LGBT rights. Um, and so I remember Mr. sabet. Oh, Larry sabato, who's a very famous political scientist at UVA. He really helped support that movement. And so I think a lot of women's groups got behind that. I have some friends and I'll do some a little digging for you, because I do want to get some good information. But I feel like we did a lot of stuff on homelessness, like there was, like a tent city, that I think they even called like, shanty town that they put on the lawn to kind of raise awareness for homelessness. And, and I know, I'm kind of dodging, but I feel like all these issues are related to women's issues. There was a women's center, there still is a weapon center that was really getting going, going strong.

I just don't remember, like, protesting and stuff like that, like my dad would talk about the protests of the 60s because he was a college professor. And he remembers, you know, sit in lots of sedans, he'd bail. He was always bailing students out of jail, stuff like that. But I don't remember us doing anything of that level. You know, it was more like an awareness. Like don't forget to wear your jeans today, you know, that kind of thing? Um, yeah. Just I don't remember anything specific to women. But I will tell

you, I had a good conversation with Dean Groves, who's the Dean of Students and he's being replaced. He's a great guy. I, the woman he's being replaced by looks awesome. And, and he, he had a lot of concerns about how things were going for women in the direction of, of, you know, particularly this was after, there was a Rolling Stone article, and there was an accusation of a rape that didn't really occur to fraternity house. And a lot of people got up in arms on all sides on that issue. And, and he was having to feel a lot of that, those concerns. And, you know, his point was simply we just need to be a lot more aware. And we need to, and for even women who would be you know, things would happen to them. They need to be with a buddy. You know, like I said, workout buddy, study buddy, going out, buddy, just having a buddy. That's what I've told my daughter is the number one thing that I think a woman on campus and on grounds should do is having somebody who you're accountable to.

Agnes

So what are your personal experiences? If you feel comfortable sharing anything with sexism and misogyny on ground, either in your in your classes? Or generally on campus?

Camille

Um, so yeah, it was some things have not gotten a lot better. It was, you know, I'm, I'm a pretty strong feminist. Um, I, that's how I was raised. And that's who I wanted to be. That's what I wanted to be and become, I. And there were situations at UVA, where it was just, it's, you know, especially back then it's a good old boys network. And the fraternity guys were King. And they were that you know, and so, you know, I, the guys I knew, were exemplary. Like, I was very fortunate, like, my good, my good friends, but just kind of being out. Sometimes it was, it was not the best. And I never suffered anything for at the hands of professors, they were awesome. And we were in some intimate settings to like, I remember, we had a class in the basement of one of the pavilions that was like, at night, and there were only like, 10 of us, you know. And it was taught by a male professor, and but they were always gentlemen, they were always the ones I encountered were great. But the guys, you know, they're 18. And I'm not saying boys will be boys, please, that will that never came out of my mouth. But that that's kind of the mentality, you know. And when I started there, Agnes, UVA, they had just started the US News and World Report, top universities list. And we were in the top, I think we were in the top 20. But we were also in the top 10 for Playboy magazines, top party schools. And we were the only one that could be found on both lists. And so the idea was, you know, party hardcore, you know, work hard party hard at UVA. And it got to be known as a real party school. And so that's why I think the sorority really helped me a lot. Because I had this army of women, our sorority was always received the the top award for highest GPA, highest cumulative GPA. So these were smart women too, and they were driven. And, and we would, you know, like, kind of could rely on each other. So I think one of the worst things I ever suffered actually was in my sorority house, in the lobby of my sorority house by a, like some husband of a woman who was connected somehow with our sorority, she wasn't, she wasn't a student, she had graduated. And I don't even think she graduated from UVA, I think she she was from somewhere else. And there was a little incident with her husband, and she was right there, she was standing there, kind of observing all of this. So that's the only thing that kind of sticks out and still kind of bothers me for as far as that kind of sexism. And but I have a feeling that because my I was like I was attuned to sexism

from a young age, and I used to take some of my high school professors or high school teachers to task for anything that they might say even cracking a joke, I would really get on them about it. So I'm, I never felt like I was in that position so much at UVA. I never felt like like I really, I thought that people had a respect. Definitely all the professors, the administrators, everyone in a professional position. I always felt were were just exemplary. So I'm afraid I can't really give you too much in that way.

Agnes

Yeah, no, that's true. That was a great answer. So in your opinion of what is the legacy of women at UVA?

Camille

Oh, that we keep building the bridges between one another. We keep helping one another. When I was working at St. Martin's, I was the internship director. I asked if I could take over the internship program because I had such a great internship experience at UVA. And so I would bring mainly women, I mean, they don't everybody to apply. But I'd bring interns to work for us in the summers. Because I thought it was so important to help the, you know, the UVA students, so I think, is seeking out help seeking out the bridges between where you are, where someone who's not yet where you are, you know, like a young person, a high school, you know, like this teacher of yours, talking to you at lunchtime, you know, making that connection to someone younger, and then break bridging the gap. You know, with someone older, I think that's we've got to be who's helping who's we really do, we have got to help one another. And we've got to share our stories and share our struggles, where things are not great. And realize that, you know, world is not Facebook, pretty, you know, sometimes it's a little harder than, than the humble brags on Facebook. And that, but everybody kind of understands that. So one of my favorite things about Wahoos. Agnes is that I could not know you. And I've worked with people, you know, who are Mr. saboteurs students, like alums, I worked with lung alarms all over the country, I can meet them. And in the first conversation, we get it, you know, like, we get trying to help each other and they're smart, and they're leaders. And that's one thing that I can consistently rely on, especially of my generation and your generation, like all the gender like the the age groups between us are all really receptive, like Katie Couric was so receptive to me. I think that that's the kind of story that I'd like us to be able to keep telling. And then I'd like us to fund some stuff. I think, you know, a friend of mine, who's the Director of diversity at the theater where I work, he, you know, he's kind of like, do we want more, you know, old white guys names on buildings. Like, women's names on buildings, you know, I'd like to see us get to that financial place where we, we can fund the things that we care about, and education is the most important thing in the world.

Agnes

Alright, so my final question is, if you could impart a piece of advice to a female student today at UVA, what would you tell her?

Camille

Sit in the front of the class, your professors in the office hours within the first two weeks, and then there was an earlier one that I gave you two, I can't remember what it was, oh, make sure you have a connection, like have somebody you're accountable to. And they don't have to be the same person for that. Like you can have a different person for the different interests, you know, but just how just make sure you got a buddy. Those are the three things.