Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

VICTORIA FRIDAY

Radio Operator, Army

2012

OH
1736

OH
1736

Friday, Victoria M.,(b. 1964). Oral History Interview, 2012.
Approximate length: 3 hours 35 minutes
Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

In this oral history interview, Victoria Friday, a Wisconsin native, discusses her service in the 124th Signal Battalion. She was stationed in Colorado in 1983. She discusses sexual assault in the military, including her own experiences as a victim of sexual assault in the military. She also discusses the experiences that are linked to her diagnosis of PTSD.

Biographical Sketch:

Friday (1964-) served with the 124th Signal Battalion. She left the military in 1986. Her children were born in 1988, and 1991.

Archivist's Note:

Transcriptions are a reflection of the original oral history recording. Due to human and machine fallibility transcripts often contain small errors. Transcripts may not have been transcribed from the original recording medium. It is strongly suggested that researchers engage with the oral history recording as well as the transcript.

Interviewed by Molly Graham, 2012.
Reviewed by Robert Brito, 2017.
Abstract written by Robert Brito, 2017.

Interview Transcript:

[Beginning of Friday.OH1736]

Friday: Okay, this was the making of a cartoon, because they asked me, the eighth grade class asked me, how my life related to the work that I was doing. And what I used for coping mechanisms when I was recovering from post-traumatic stress disorder was I started drawing cartoons, because it was too hard to tell my story. Because a lot of the things that happened to me shouldn't have happened to people. So in my recovery, my mind said, "Well, what if it happened to animals, then could you tell your story?" And I thought, "Yeah, it could happen to an animal," so I ended up starting to make cartoons. So this was the presentation that I made. Most of the people in my life are veterans or family members of veterans. This is my son, on one of our horses. As a young person I didn't always understand why I made the choice to serve, but I'm always thankful for the blessings that service has brought to my life. This is my son with his new baby, my granddaughter.

Graham: Oh, what's her name?

Friday: Ellie.

Graham: Oh, very cute.

Friday: People who serve in the military have something in common, like families do. This is my daughter and my niece—[whispers] they're going to prom.

Graham: Yeah. Where is she now?

Friday: She's in Appleton. She's going to school to be a vet tech, and she's pregnant with my grandson.

Graham: Oh, my goodness.

Friday: When I first joined I was going to college, because I wanted to be a commercial artist. Now that my children are all grown, and I'm even a grandmother, I'm finally getting to do that. Writing and illustrating stories about lessons I've learned in my life is my career goal at this point in my life. I learned a lot when I was serving on active duty. I learned to work as a team, I learned to do things I wanted to know how to do, and I found out that some things are worth working for. This is one of my friends facing her fear of being on stage. This is my son and daughter deciding who's going to get to drive the car. She's succeeding in baseball now. My son graduating from basic training, and this is my daughter and his wife, and this is my daughter teaching our two-year-old draft horse how to ride. That was one of his first lessons. This is my son and my granddaughter. He's in the Navy. He helped me develop the first cartoon character, Bobo, which you'll see an illustration of over there. While my kids were growing up we spent a lot of time inventing games to learn how to do multiplication, and learn how to cook things like cookies and pancakes, and funny stories about some of the things our animals did. We also sometimes wrote and drew pictures about things that were not going so well. These

are some of the designs. This is a card back designed depicting my struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder. This is a pencil drawing of my son the day he graduated from Navy basic training.

It has taken me a long time to share my artwork with others. Most of my designs are still on the drawing board. Being a veteran means accepting duty and responsibility. It's a life-changing experience. At times it was fun and exciting, other times it wasn't what I thought it would be. This is a painting I did for the church while I was hospitalized. Getting on the road to success can sometimes be an issue, especially when mother nature stacks the deck. There were more than a few obstacles to overcome to create the first edition of my newsletter. I have a lot of trouble dealing with the loss of the people I really loved. This is my mother being treated for cancer while I was on active duty. I was sent home on a compassionate assignment to take care of her while she struggled with cancer and died.

Graham: What kind of cancer did she have?

Friday: She had small cell carcinoma, lymph node, cancer, and this was the first death of someone close to me that I had to experience, and it was my job in the military to provide care for her. That's why they re-stationed me. I was on an Army Married Couples Program, and my husband was shipped to Germany, so at eighteen years old I faced this alone, and I was the baby of the family. So I had a lot of responsibility over my head at a time in life, and I was in a position of prestigious public relations as a recruiter, and I was the only female in the state. So I had a lot of pressure on me as an eighteen year old, and some bad things happened to me while I was on active duty that were really hard to deal with. But if you take a look at it, life is kind of like that. So God doesn't waste the hurt, but it lasts for quite a long time. My family and I have survived a lot of difficult times. In 2008 the house I was born and raised in burned.

[00:04:55]

Graham: Where is that?

Friday: Across the road?

Graham: What happened?

Friday: This is the property I was born and raised on.

Graham: Oh, okay.

Friday: In 2001 there was a storm. It had did some severe damage to the house that the insurance company didn't repair, and so five, six, seven years go by where I'm trying to fix, with little and no income, cause I'm home taking care of an Alzheimer's patient, two little kids. My ex-husband is still active duty. He's off saving the world and being a hero, and I'm home trying to keep the house together. This was the house that my parents built. They were pioneers. My mother was a youth minister and my father was a mechanic, and he worked for the foundry. He was orphaned when he was little, so he

had really good people skills about helping people, so we kind of lived in a—my parents took in foster kids, and a lot of them were teenage kids in crisis that couldn't live with their parents, so they'd come here for recovery, and my parents would provide a home for them and get them back on their life path, and that's not easy with teenagers. And I was my mother's little shadow, so by the time I was four years old I was teaching seventh grade curriculum to the kids that were older than me.

An interesting life. I gave a lot of talent to my life. I can do just about anything. I can draw, I can paint, I can play the piano, I can fix things. I mean, I got a lot of really good life skills, and now I'm standing in a place in my life going, "What should I be doing with, how can I share, what I've been given with others in a way that is not going to hurt me, but help the world?" So I try to count all my trials as blessings. I don't do it every day, but I try. I think my military service has helped me have the skills I need to get through the rough spots in life, and some I'll see the brighter side of living. And I think that's a lot—part of the curriculum that the military has in officer resiliency training, is learning how to get through the rough spots in life, and I've had my share. This is the house we're standing in now. A year later they built me a new one. So I've been drawing and painting on a lot of things. This is a picture I painted while I was in the hospital being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder. It's a painting of me listening to someone play the guitar at an ice cream social. I painted it on the tank top I was wearing that day.

The biggest reason I joined the Army was because I wanted to go to college, and I didn't have the money. I'm finally getting to study what I wanted to—art. I painted this color wheel in design class. After a few practices I began to learn that I could draw an outlined sketch. I could then add details of each character and start putting stories together for each one. This is Bobo, this is my son's cartoon character. He's a big blue bird with a big blue butt that has big, big feet, and he's just a happy-go-lucky character, and he's really actually like that in real life, too. He's a nuclear electronic technology instructor in the United States Navy. He teaches nuclear electronics down at the [Nuclear] Power School. This is the first plaster sculpture of the character, Bobo, which is my son's character. It's called *Rebirth*. It's him laying an egg. It took me about forty hours to carve. We lost this in the fire, but each frame also needed a background environment, so this is the start of a background. This is a sculpture of his house. It's made out of goose eggs, and feathers, and a few other things. This is a view from the top down. This is the creation pod on the top, and then all the little different environments that he can choose to live in as a cartoon character.

The idea of the cartoon really took shape the year our house was wrecked in a big wind storm, and we had to live in a homeless shelter for a while. That's where we drew the character Monkey Face, which is my daughter's cartoon character. This is Monkey Face, and you can see the real one on the wall. This was—I had to go to school and learn how to use a program called Illustrator and scan this in five different places and learn how to put it together, just to have that sitting on the screen. It took about a year of school to learn how to do that. These computers are a whole education all in themselves. Getting this from the drawing board onto the computer has taken quite a bit of time. After two years of schooling I'm now starting to understand how to use the computer's drawing tools. I found out that making a cartoon is a very time consuming process. I've been in

school for three years now learning how to put the pieces together, and I did this like a year ago. I've graduated now.

[00:09:39]

This and this next section I'm just going to kind of flash through. This is kind of what a mockup looks like if you're going to take it to a printer, and at this point in the discussion I just kind of stopped doing the interview. These are some of the statements that I learned needed to be shared: I took the time to grieve today for loved ones I have known. I didn't turn to salt, and I didn't turn to stone. Do things a little at a time, break them up into smaller pieces, understand the pieces, and then fit them back together. That's from some of the recovery training that I've gone through, and to learn to just summarize my learning and not get stuck in some of the problems. Because problems can really overwhelm you in a lifetime. Then I kind of took it to the next level, where maybe I could make games, and these would be then the answers to the games. Express your ideas, learn to love knowledge, seek divine wisdom, practice this mastery, study the work, try to be enthusiastic, you've got talent, improve, count your trials as joy, try new things, move forward—that's one I keep working on—make mistakes and try again, accept your reality, embrace life and laugh. These are kind of my secrets to success.

Graham: Did you come up with all those?

Friday: Mm-hm. Well, they were pieces of learning. I would learn something, and it would relate to me, so I would write it down and play with it so that I would remember it. When I went to school I started to learn how to script a commercial, so this is a script of a commercial depicting recovery. It's a picture of life happening, and then a hammer is shattering your life, and you say "Now what?" And this is like a screen of confusion, a cry yourself to sleep and dream—yeah, right, that doesn't work very well—busy yourself running in circles—that wears me out, too. Focus on other things, like vegging in front of the TV, right. It just doesn't go away, and there's a photo of a burning piano there. Then this is a photo of fire curling up and consuming a building. You could try to ignore it forever. Life happens. There's still hope for the future, and that's a putting out a flame, and then a rebirth, the cracked pod. Then I developed—one of the first classes in college that really helped me was newsletters and news releases. I developed an eight-page newsletter about me in recovery, and I used Word to create the document, which helped me really get good at Word.

Graham: Just for the audio, can you say what this is called?

Friday: This is called *Trash into Treasure*. It's a funny paper. It's a self-help newsletter about adapting to some of life's changes, and the theme of the newsletter is overcoming adversity in the face of panic without losing your smile, because it's about believing in possibilities. This was the sketch that I used to create a paper drawing of this piece of art out of black and white paper, which took me about forty hours, and I have the original.

Graham: And how did you come up with *Trash into Treasure*?

Friday: Years ago, years ago I learned to believe that God doesn't make junk, and in my rural

community, where there's a lot of people with backwoods-country-hick behavior, there's sometimes a term that they use on people that's a nasty label, and they call them white trash. Well, my mom used to tell me, "God doesn't make trash, but even if he did, he'd turn it into treasure." And so I decided to call the cartoon *Trash into Treasure* because I felt that I was a diamond in the rough kind of thing, going through really bad times, and that someday there would be a good come out of all of the bad things that had happened to me. I don't know what your rating for your audience is, but there's one other deeper meaning besides *Trash into Treasure*. The initials *Trash into Treasure* actually spell out tit, and it's kind of my sarcastic remark about too many people trying to suck me dry, or be a tit baby, or not grow up and take their own responsibility and actually cause more harm than good, especially after dealing with the political realm that sometimes becomes its own little problem, because rather than try to get along, they try to argue because that's called job security. So some of it is a bit sarcastic and tongue in cheek.

[00:14:27]

I wrote some articles about—because this was part of the assignment. But writing these articles really helped me deal with my situation, because here I give a history, and then talk about how I feel, and bring in my children and talk about how the animals help with the therapy aspect—a pet's love is a great stress reliever, because some of their antics, I mean, sometimes if you're having a bad day all you got to do is play with an animal, you know what I mean?

[00:15:00]

How you go out with the old and in with the new, how change can either weigh you down—pennies can be heavy, or they can stack up and lift you up. And then how negative experiences can taint your self-image, and some words of wisdom, and then building a support group. Then I—this is a section of my daughter's struggle with depression and how to get connected, and then a really nice quite from my niece. "Sometimes it's frustrating when the light at the end of the tunnel is so dim that a candle outshines it." I thought those were pretty wise words. And then I downloaded a page of jokes for mental health. They were pretty funny, especially the one about the bubbles.

Graham: What's that one?

Friday: Well, this one's "I do whatever my Rice Krispies tell me to." Oh, this one, "Therapy is expensive, and popping bubble wrap is cheap." Yeah, that one really got to me. This was a sculpture that I made in college. It's called *Creative Play*, it's the layers of the earth. It was made out of all different kinds of wood that I found and cut up into little pieces, and then it was a great big pile of wood mess. Then one of the things that I used was they had a piano all torn apart, and they took the design off the piano and cut it apart into layers, and I pulled it all apart and then just made designs with all of this wood that I had. What I ended up creating was creation. There's the above ground and then the layers of the earth and how things—this is a dinosaur bone, and these are two little dinosaurs playing down in the primordial ooze while little worms are feeding this little pot full of coconuts, and then the dirt seeps up, and the rain comes down, and the sun shines up above the earth. So I just called it *Creative Play* because it was kind of like

this is the process of the circle of life.

Graham: Yeah, I like that.

Friday: The original's downstairs. You can see it better. Then at the back of the newsletter I wrote—I took this photo the day that they laid this house. I was coming to see it for the first time while it was getting off the trailer, and on the edge of the road there was an eagle eating a deer. So I snuck up on him and took his photo, and I couldn't believe he stood there and let me photograph him, that close, before he took off.

Graham: That's amazing.

Friday: It even made the paper. I was amazed that this—this eagle brought me a sign of you can live again. And the words that went through my mind while I was taking this picture was that the eagle doesn't worry about where his next meal is coming from; he watches for opportunities and seizes the moment, eating a deer on the side of the road. So that's the thought that went through my mind. So I addressed this newsletter to whomever is concerned, worried, grieving, overwhelmed, or could just use a good laugh, and all that laughter is actually the best medicine of getting through life.

Then I designed packaging. This is a package design. Never underestimate the value of a laugh. So I've got kind of bunnies running into the ground by a tree, and a little laughter there. And this was the first cover. When I decided that I was going to publish my work I made refrigerator magnet covers. So I drew a design and went to a printer and found out what it would cost to print like, say, a hundred of them. And then I was going through a mental health recovery group at the time, and this is their model of how thought gets in, and how it's processed, and what happens in the mind when too many traumatic experiences occur. So I thought that would be kind of appropriate. Then these are just more to color, if there was a hundred of them.

Then to start to write ads, this was one of the practice ads that the kids and I came up with for just somebody that might want to advertise in our cartoon. It's kind of full of little inside jokes. Then this was the copy. It's actually kind of funny copy. You know, we were like talking about—we were being sarcastic. We had a lot of toilet humor in our life. The kids and I used to tell jokes to each other in the bathroom, because that was the place we—that was the place I would sit down long enough where they could come and talk to me, so there was always jokes going on in our bathroom. Since I've spent—I've had a lot of surgery in my gastrointestinal area, so I really did spend an awful lot of time in the bathroom, so I kind of had to make the bathroom kind of an office area where I could be sitting on the toilet and nobody would really know it. It became our meeting place, which is kind of funny.

Graham: It's a great way to multitask.

Friday: Yeah, there you go. Well, my father had Alzheimer's disease after my mother had cancer, so I moved home to take care of him. He didn't have what you would consider to be socially acceptable boundaries, so we locked no doors, because it would upset him, and whatever his routines where they were, he was oblivious to whether or not I was

sitting on the toilet, or no matter what I was doing, if he needed my attention.

[00:20:00]

He followed me around like a two-year-old. When my dad had Alzheimer's disease, and I was taking care of my kids, it was a lot like watching my dad turn into a baby while my children grew up. And I saw the connection as being the only opportunity the kids were ever going to get to know their grandpa, and also an opportunity for them to connect. Because he needed them, and they needed him, and his intelligence was still relevant. He was a whiz at math, and gears, and motors, and learning, so I would have the kids teach Grandpa what colors and flash cards, and numbers, and Grandpa would teach the kids whatever would come out of his mouth. And between the two, they learned from each other to the level that my son's a nuclear electronic technologist. He scored in the ninety-ninth percentile because he saw my father as his grandfather, and he loved him. He didn't see him as an Alzheimer's patient, and I think that made a gigantic difference in their lives.

Plus we got animals, so we did purposeful activity, and kind of went back to the pioneering days. We made homemade ice cream by tapping a maple tree, making maple syrup, getting chickens, growing them up so that they gave us eggs, getting a cow and milking it so we had the milk and the cream, and putting all those ingredients together that we made all those ingredients ourselves, and made ice cream with it. And it was, I kid you not, the best ice cream you'll ever have in your whole entire life.

Graham: I bet.

Friday: Especially since they made it themselves, you know. I mean, it was—I had a lot of problems in my life, but they all turned out to be something decent. After my father went into the nursing home, because after a while it becomes overwhelming, you know, I started volunteering at a horse ranch that was growing millet, and they were also interested in getting into the market of meat goats. So I designed this card for the owner of the business, because we were working in this environment and learning. This is where my daughter learned all of her veterinarian skills, was working on this animal farm, developing a Boer goat herd. She learned artificial insemination, she learned—she won the draft horse championship when she was eleven. And now she's going to college to be a vet tech. She learned so much being bathed in this environment of growing a farm from the beginning to a multi-million dollar operation. It's the biggest one in Wisconsin actually. She came home with a pet ferret one day, and this just seemed to be appropriate. The critics have seemed to be the nastiest part. The hardest part about going forward with anything like this is I am so sensitive to criticism.

Graham: Where are you getting criticism from?

Friday: Oh, criticism comes from everywhere, and some of it comes from within, being real sensitive to people that don't understand my ideas. I'm known as the crazy lady on the east end of the lake. I'm known as that strange person, or sometimes that really smart person. But there's sometimes a level of distance between me and the rest of the people in the area, especially since I was diagnosed. There was like a stigma. When I was

diagnosed with a mental health disorder, people kind of felt that it might be contagious or dangerous in some way. When people that don't have a mental health disorder hear the words "mental health disorder," they think guns and postal, shooting up a school, something like that, and that is like an exception rather than a rule. But people's fear of what they don't understand really makes a mental health disorder worse than it has to be. I know a lot of people that have mental health disorders that just don't admit to it.

Graham: Right.

Friday: But mine was really public, so I had no way of hiding it.

Graham: How was it public?

Friday: This is a small community. Word travels really fast, and when they found—I'd been born and raised here. When I was little I used to sing in all the churches, I was really successful in school. I was an over achiever. I was one of the very few female veterans in the area, plus I came home and worked as a veteran in the community. I worked at the newspaper in printing and advertising, so I knew a lot of people, and when word got around that I had "gone crazy," everybody knew. So there really wasn't anyplace I could walk that people weren't asking me questions or avoiding me or afraid of me because of, well, one, my behavior was outrageous.

Graham: Will you tell me about that?

Friday: When my father got Alzheimer's disease, it wasn't a real popular or well-known disorder, and there wasn't any services available within the community for me to get a break or him to get a level of care that was relevant to his life.

[00:24:59]

My dad didn't read and write. He was partially deaf. He was mechanical—he was functionally illiterate for the most part. I used to read his documents for him. So when he needed care, there wasn't really anything that was person-centered or informed about what would be relevant to his life. So his social worker and I started piloting and developing new programs that would be designed to be centered and appropriate for each person, not just a simple institutionalized care. And it created a lot of controversy in the area because people don't like change, and they're real resistant to change. And if it's not politically correct or not going to make enough money and actually help people rather than line someone's pocket, there's always controversy. When it came time for my father to go into the nursing home, it was a struggle. The first nursing home didn't work out very well. In fact, he was good at escape. He could hear the tones in their security system, so he'd listen for the tones, and when they walked away he'd hit the tones and leave the building. He didn't want to be—my father's whole entire dream was to live in the home he built and the home he bought. It was not to go to a nursing home. I don't know many people that live as a pioneer that can stand to be incarcerated in a nursing institution at the end of their life when they're used to being free, and figuring that one day God's just going to take them. To find out that they're going to spend the rest of their life court-ordered forced into a nursing home was not on his list of things to do in

his life.

So I advocated for him and got myself into a lot of political trouble, sometimes losing my temper and saying the wrong thing to the wrong person at the wrong time. It wasn't real popular, and that's the age in life where you find out that sometimes, sometimes family isn't going in the same direction as you think they are. That's when you find out what sibling rivalry really can be, and how issues of jealousy, and issues of insecurity, and issues of feeling, whether or not mom's favorite was the oldest, the middle child, or the youngest, that kind of all comes up and hits you square in the face when you're faced with the end of your parent's life. At an age in life where really somebody that was in my age group at that time, in my thirties, you're usually not facing the end of your parent's life, and I was facing that of both of my parents' life really early in life, and I was the one that was having to deal with all the fallout, because neither one of their diseases was something that was just like they were gone. They both got sick, went through the process of dying, and wondering if there was recovery. Then there was decisions to make about, well, what kind of appropriate medical treatment? This is uncharted water. So I've kind of always been in uncharted water. That's kind of why I finally realized, you know, I might be some kind of a little bit of a pioneer.

Graham: Yeah, it's a good thing you're so resourceful.

Friday: Resilient is the—if we launch a product called the resiliency ranch, there's the feasibility study to build a recovery resiliency facility for people to kind of go, hey, life can be something you can live through. Even when you're dealt a bunch of lemons, you can still make lemonade. So that's kind of—my daughter brought home this ferret. Her name is Emily. She was one of her constant companions, and the day that the house burned down, she had Emily in the car, or Emily would have died in the fire.

Graham: Then why do you use this picture for the slide about critics?

Friday: Because look at the look on her face. She looks like she's just judging me, doesn't she? Doesn't she look like she's completely judging me? And I did alter it in Photoshop, by the way. I made her claws stand out, I made her eyes really pop. Because that's kind of the look you get when people are giving you criticism, is "I'm a ferret, and I want to bite you." Plus [whispers] ferrets are stinky, yeah. But this was one of the—an early attempt at marketing my idea, but I needed more education. This is "If you can't dazzle them with brilliance, baffle them with business." That's just a funny thing that ended up in my study. And then I started going to—I always went to church, but I started taking my drawing boards to church with me, and rather than take notes on the sermon I started drawing pictures of what the pastor was talking about. I need books written now, and this is the church that I usually go to. This was one of the earliest times I'd started, rather than taking notes, I started drawing pictures in church.

[00:30:00]

Graham: Now this is something you started to channel after your diagnosis?

Friday: Yes, probably.

Graham: And just so I'm clear, the diagnosis is post-traumatic stress disorder?

Friday: We've gone through a few changes in my diagnosis. Originally they just said you're bipolar, but then after they did some more research they realized that what I was suffering from was post-traumatic stress disorder, with an aspect of military sexual trauma. Because what happened to me was I was taken advantage of by people in positions of authority over me, and there wasn't anything that I could do about it at the era that I was—that I suffered the damage, there really wasn't any recourse for action. And in the community that I was born and raised in, being originally a boomtown, my life experience, there's a lot of problems with inappropriate power and control issues between men and women, especially if you consider the fact that my grandpa's sister used to run the chicken ranch of the town.

Graham: Oh, yeah?

Friday: Back in the day. My grandfather's sister ran the chicken ranch. So there was a lot of having to deal with that in real life as a child. And it wasn't until after I went through about twelve years of therapy that I understood that. Even though my parents weren't drinkers, and my mother was the only girl in the family, and what happened to her was definitely not her fault, that she was born under the conditions that she was born under, and that my father was orphaned, and his mother died when he was four, and they together raised kids that were in crisis. Even though it was a really good thing, it was still a dysfunctional environment where people were coming that were really broken and learning to take the tools that they had and live life, but that there would be some consequences of that for me. I thought that was the perfect life, until I got into the larger world, and went, "Hey, how come your family is not—" Well, my family is—well, I don't fit in. Why am I such a people pleaser? Why am I having, doing good things and getting bad results?

And part of that was learning what the effect of having been raised in an environment of that much crisis, which is probably what caused me to have to vent by drawing pictures and writing music, because there was just so much around me. And, you know, soldiers face that and more. They're not there by choice, well, but they did choose to volunteer. But they wouldn't really feel that way if they knew the people that they were dealing with. So their spiritual beliefs of people should live in peace conflict with their patriotic belief of "we should make sure that we have peace, and we're willing to kill to do it," which is an oxymoron, to try to bring about the fact that that is a reality of the broken world that we all live in, and the problem is bigger than any one of us can handle, and there is no easy solution. That takes a lot of thought process and maturity to figure out what is my part in that. I can't solve the whole world's problems, but what is my part, and can I live up to that?

Graham: So is your stance about war and your service changed over time?

Friday: I would say yes. When I first joined the Army, it was peace time.

Graham: When was that?

Friday: Nineteen eighty-two.

Graham: Okay. I think at some point we'll sit down and kind of go through chunk by chunk. Right, so 1982.

Friday: I joined the Army in 1982. And the biggest reason I joined the Army wasn't to protect my country. In fact, I think, if I remember right, when I decided to enlist there was a box you had to check about whether or not you were a conscientious objector, and I was like, "Well, what's a conscientious objector?" I don't really even understand what that word means. I object consciously. What does that mean?

Graham: How old were you?

Friday: That means that—does that mean that I'm sitting down on the outside, but standing up on the inside? Is that what that means? That I'm protesting, but I'm doing it anyways? And I think that that's—they must have told me, "Yeah, that's kind of what it means, that on the inside you kind of protest, and you don't really agree with the whole entire thing that you're doing, but you're willing to obey and comply and do what you need to because you're a citizen of the United States." I said, "Well, that sounds like me," so I think I did check that box.

Graham: How old were you when you checked that box?

Friday: Seventeen.

Graham: Okay. Did you have to have someone sign it?

[00:34:53]

Friday: My parents had to consent. And one of the biggest reasons I joined the military was I was in college, and I'd never really thought much about it. There was no other really gigantic military presence in my family. We don't have like a bunch of generals or anything like that. My father served in the Air Force, and several of the people in my family were drafted in a war. My father avoided the draft because he was going to—he volunteered because he knew he was going to get drafted.

Graham: When was that?

Friday: He was in the Korean War, and he joined the Air Force. Most of the people in my parents' age category didn't join the military because it was a life dream, they joined the military because their number was so low on the draft that they figured if they joined the military voluntarily at least they could get a job they wanted rather than become a target. But a lot of people didn't really believe in the wars that we were fighting against, other than to stop some of the horrific cruelty like, you know, Hitler. They were up for that kind of thing. I mean, that—it's a really hard judgment call. So I try not to judge it, because thank God I'm not a judge.

But it's a real simple reason why I joined. I was in college trying to be a commercial artist, and I found out that just because you're talented doesn't mean you're going to succeed. I wasn't really sure if that career was going to be something that I was going to actually be able to do after a semester of taking drawing, and painting in space classes, and color classes, and going, "I don't know if I'm that artistic." Even though I was good at art in school, that was in Wild Rose, in a small community where I fit in, and my art fit the community. Here in the big city, you people are crazy. [laughs]

Graham: Where was the big city?

Friday: Oshkosh [University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh], yeah. [laughs] Oshkosh was the big city, the university. But realize there's eight hundred people in my hometown, you know, so it was a big change to find people that were drawing things that I was, like, "Where is your mind that you can draw something that abstract? And I don't get it." I was still kind of stuck in my own reality, and money wasn't—my mother gave me her last four hundred dollars. That was her life savings. Raising kids and foster kids, you don't have money. She had saved—she had cookie-jarred away four hundred dollars. She gave me four hundred dollars to start school with, because I was the first kid in the family that was really going to go through school, and I was really—I got good grades, and it was easy for me to catch on. I was smart. So when I went, "I want to be a commercial artist," because, you know, I'm talented and all that, and I can sing and dance and whatever, and I want to do the fun stuff. Who doesn't?

Graham: Right.

Friday: Right. So college wasn't what I thought. I missed home more than I thought I would, and I was, like, "You know, I'm not so sure that this is the right life path for me. What am I going to do?" And I saw this big sign that said, "I'll pay you twenty-five thousand dollars to go to college, give you good work experience. All you got to do is join the Army for three years?" Well, it looked like an adventure, like a *Private Benjamin* adventure. So I went into the recruiting office, and they said, "We could make you anything you want with your test scores—language interpreter, the Army Band. You could even do the cavalry thing, ride the horses thing. You could play the piano thing. You could do the singer—you could be on tour, because you're really talented, you could be a world-wide language interpreter and travel around interpreting language." They made it sound really well.

Graham: Like you could still be creative?

Friday: Yeah, I could still go do a lot of things, because I was taking Spanish in foreign language. They said, "You can do—you can be all you can be in the Army." So I went, signed up. I went down and checked it out. I brought it home to my parents, and I said, "You know, the college scene really isn't for me. All these kids are doing is drinking and playing around, and they're really immature, Mom. I can't stay in this college environment. These kids are a bunch of really immature kids that should go home and get spanked, or have chores. They've got all this idle time on their hands, and they're—you wouldn't believe some of the stuff that these kids are doing." That kind of a lifestyle was something that I—you didn't do that around here. You didn't mouth off to your

parents. You had your jobs, you had your chores. You stayed focused. I mean, if you got off the be-a-good-kid wagon, you were careful how far off you got. I mean, you did your naughty stuff, but it was within reason. So I just, I wasn't really fitting into that college scene, and the Army kind of seemed to be a great way to grow up a little bit, experience the world, find out what people from other cultures were. I didn't know a lot about people from other cultures, because of my limited world existence. We'd go into Florida in the winter. I was four years old before I even saw a black person. And I was, like, "Hey, Mom, she's got a really nice tan. I want one of those." She's, "That's not a tan, Vicky, that's the color of her skin." I was like, "What?" So, I mean, at four years old meeting my first person of a diverse culture was an interesting experience.

[00:40:04]

And then to find out, listening to some of the adults, the bad things they had to say just about the person's color of the skin didn't make any sense to me. So I had a lot of questions. And joining the Army seemed to—it was a really good solution. I don't regret joining the Army, but I basically did it for the college money, and to be paid to go travel, because I couldn't afford to do it, and I was going to get to go to all these wonderful places, you know. My boyfriend changed some of that.

Graham: Uh-oh. Well, let's start, let's continue from there. Maybe we could sit down somewhere, and I could just sort of be able to take notes and things.

Friday: Okay.

Graham: Do you want to—do you need to finish this first?

Friday: Um. I haven't looked at this. Where did the glasses go? I'm good at that. I'm good at playing with my glasses. If they're nowhere else, I check my heart, and that's—oh, this was the first time I appeared in public as an artist.

Graham: What was that like?

Friday: I was scared. I'd never painted in front of people before, unless they were my family, or a real—not strangers, just people that knew I painted that didn't care, because I painted—I used to paint artwork on the walls of my house, like, I'm starting here, over, so it was no big deal to be an artist in my closed community group. But to go to the library and paint, and not knowing what I was going to paint, and not having been in the company of other artists where I might look ridiculous, I was really afraid. So—

Graham: Right. And these aren't just paintings, these are reflections of how you're feeling and what you've been through, so it's a little more [inaudible].

Friday: By this age in my life I realized that, yeah. So I'm, like, what do I really want to show people? So I went in, and all the other artists paint with, like, paint you buy in an art store. I paint with like wall paint, because it's cheap, and you can get a lot of it. So I'm not even painting with the same materials. They'll come in with this nice little neat art case and this nice little neat canvas, and I'll have a homemade canvas and a case full of

have-to-bring-it-in-because-it's-paint paint. So it's, like, I stick out like a sour thumb. Everybody else is all—they all look so well collected, and I look so rough around the edges. I'm painting on my clothing, you know, I'm really sticking out, even in my own community. But they encouraged me to go in and do it anyways, they said, "No, go ahead. There's nothing wrong with what you're doing," and I'm like, "Yeah, but isn't this why you diagnosed me with a mental health disorder?" So there was a lot of me having to swallow my pride and just be who I was to allow myself to appear in public. So I spent a lot of time in the library with my children, so this is—my kids are checking out books, and my little boy checks out the biggest book in the library, called *Commemorative Records*.

Graham: Is that your grandson?

Friday: No, this is actually a picture of my son. He wasn't that age when I did this picture, but he had blonde hair and blue eyes, and his hair stuck up like that. So this was actually a book in the library, and I was fascinated by the intricate designs in the cover of this book. There's all these intricate designs, so I started just drawing the intricate design in the book on paper for practice, and then there was some flowers, so I drew those. But I was really fascinated with this book itself, so I painted the book, just the blue part of the book, and this is stuff that I had done on paper. This is paper glued to the end of it, because I ran out of time. It took a lot of time to paint all this detail, so it was a two-week project, and at the end of the two weeks I'm still on the drawing board, and everybody else is done with their work, so I just kind of put something together so I could finish it, ripped the corner of the book in paint, and called it *First Book*, and put it on display. And I ended up donating that to Fox Valley Tech's day care center. They have that, and they framed it and everything. It's like, wow, it looks really professional in a frame.

Then we share our animals. This is another thing that you should meet the horses before you go. That'll make a big difference in your life. This is Jumper when he was a baby, and you'll see him. He's a grown-up six-year-old now, here he's just a baby, in the wintertime, we're just feeding the animals. And that's probably why I draw a lot of horses. This is the cutout paper of that sketch design you saw. It took me like forty hours. It's real pretty in real life. It doesn't look as good here as it does like if you actually see it. Then I learned how to make a banner, because I was going to call it *Trash into Treasure Cartoons*.

[00:44:48]

And then this was going to be the rest of the ads for my—because I spent a period of time in the advertising sales. That was my career after the military was I was an advertising sales rep, and I worked at Quad/Graphics, and I worked at what's now RR Donnelley—it used to be Banta. I used to make book pages with an X-Acto knife and film for a living, through a magnifying glass. I used to hand cut cartoons, and I really enjoyed doing that. So it's really not that much of a stretch, but they don't do it by hand any more, and learning the computer technology is really difficult. So you're welcome to flash drive a copy of this, if you'd like, so I thought that might be something that you might be interested in doing, so I'll leave it open.

Graham: All right.

Friday: I have a four gig if you want to—

Graham: I'll give it back with the CD, when it comes.

Friday: I have a fresh—I have one I haven't used. This is—they gave it to me in college, and I used all but one. Or I can, I can't electronically send this thing, but that's—it's a learning curve. I sent copies electronically, and sometimes they don't arrive, so it would take us a while to figure out the technology. But it wouldn't be—I'd be willing to go through the learning phase of sending you a PowerPoint either e-mail or Gmail or whatever, because they're supposed to be able to be shrunk. They're supposed to be able to be shrunk—oh, and I don't know how to do this right now, but the size of the file is a problem, because this is like, if I remember right, if I remember right it's large, but now large files aren't as large as they used to be and whatever.

Graham: Right. Right. So you want to sit down somewhere, and we can just kind of go through my questions, and I just have a piece of paper for you to fill out.

Friday: Okay.

[break in recording] [00:46:48]

Friday: When I went through my internship, I sometimes live in my horse trailer.

Graham: Oh, yeah.

Friday: Oh, yeah, sometimes horse events are overnight. This is actually my horse trailer-camper. I've got everything I need to go on a camping trip with horses. The back's got to lay down chaise lounge in it.

Graham: Oh, that's kind of nice.

Friday: It ain't fancy, but it works.

Graham: Yeah, whatever you need.

Friday: I think if more people kind of lived the way I live, their lives would be more fulfilling.

Graham: You know what? I agree. I think there's something lost in the hustle and bustle, and I think you need a large dose of this kind of lifestyle every once in a while.

Friday: And that's kind of why I thought about building—about turning this facility over to the community. I fought the state tooth and nail to keep this.

Graham: Oh, yeah?

Friday: When my dad went in the nursing home.

Graham: Why would they want to take it away?

Friday: The state has a right to take the property in exchange for the care of the veteran.

Graham: Oh, wow.

Friday: Veterans can't live in a veterans' home unless they're penniless.

Graham: Oh, really?

Friday: If they have any assets, the state takes the assets to pay for their care, so I had to buy the property from the state to keep it.

Graham: Right. One of the things I forgot to do was there's a little introduction, in case I lose the—

Friday: Can you pause that for one second?

Graham: Sure.

[break in recording?] [00:48:09]

Friday: We married out [??] a couple service problem.

Graham: Okay.

Friday: So we're both—besides we are commitment, I extended for a couple of months, because I was going to reenlist, but because of the politics, I got out.

Graham: Okay. Well, let's back up a little bit, and I just have to start at the beginning.

Friday: I did do active reserve time, too.

Graham: Okay. Well, you'll have to tell me about that, as well. Let me just make sure I'm recording. So how this works is, it's going to sound a little bit like a monologue. I want to hear your voice more than I hear mine, and so one of the things I'll do is just an introduction for the interview, in case I lose—

Friday: Jesus, just don't let anything wrong come out of my mouth today. Amen.

Graham: [laughs] But that's what's so wonderful is that we get to hear you talk about yourself in your own voice, the way you would do it, and so I appreciate, you know, the more authentic the better, I believe.

Friday: If I had to do an interview where I wanted nothing to go wrong, instead of speaking I'd just play the—

Graham: So just as a little introduction for the tape, I'm just going to say that this is an interview with Vicky Marie Friday—

Friday: Victoria is my given name.

Graham: —who served with the US Army during 1982 to 1986. This interview is being conducted at her house at the following address, [redacted] on the following date, March 26, 2012. The interviewer is me, Molly Graham. And so I like to start at the beginning and have my interviewees describe themselves, just sort of introduce themselves to the tape. So the idea is that this interview is going to last longer than we do, and so the person listening to this wants to get a good sense of who you are. So if you just would describe yourself or introduce yourself?

[00:49:59]

Friday: I'm the youngest child in a family of pioneers who has always lived in a rural community and looked at life hopefully the way that God wanted us to look at life. I've been through a lot of life experiences, and I still have a positive attitude, and I think that's probably the best thing that you could say about me. I'm short. My voice is low, because of some of the physical problems that I've had with surgeries and things in my life. I used to be a soprano when I was little. I'm talented, I'm outgoing, I'm friendly, innovative, interesting, sometimes known as strange, but I have a good heart, and I love people. So I guess I'm a human being, just like the rest of us are, and I happen to also have served my country in the United States military. I held a lot of different interesting jobs and have had a lot of interesting life experiences.

Graham: Could you kind of describe where we are right now?

Friday: We are in God's country, about ten miles away from town, sitting in front of a brand new construction, a small cottage home is what they call it, in rural Wisconsin, on a beautiful, unseasonably warm spring day, enjoying the sunshine and having a nice conversation.

Graham: Yeah. And I like to start interviews at the very beginning, and so you were born across the street?

Friday: I was born in a hospital actually. I was one of the kids in the family born in a hospital, but my parents owned this property. They bought it in 1960. I'm the youngest in the family. I have three biological brothers and sisters that are older than me, and then my parents took in foster children, mostly teenage kids. They've owned this property since 1960, and everything that you see here was hand built by the people that lived here. My mom and dad did most of the carpentry, plumbing, construction electrical, and even though this house was commercially built, a lot of the other things I've kind of taken over doing things by hand. So you're kind of in a homemade country hick environment.

Graham: And what are some of the things you have to do on a daily basis here?

Friday: Take care of the animals and do some landscaping. This land was destroyed by storms, as well as fire, so healing the land and recovering the natural gifts of the land. And a lot of the time I spend time sharing this with other people in the community that want to come out and just get away from life and find another reason to put a smile on your face, because this is a good place to do that.

Graham: Well, can I ask what year you were born in?

Friday: I was born in 1964. I was born in November.

Graham: And then just talk to me about your childhood and what it was like being the youngest, and also having foster kids come into your home.

Friday: Well, according to my brothers and sisters I'm the spoiled-rotten-angel-darling brat of the family, because by the time I came along my mom and dad were—my mother was thirty, and my father was thirty-four when I was born. So by the time I came along they were already a little more relaxed in their parenting skills. So I kind of got away with a lot of things that the older kids needed to have discipline. I was able to see discipline from observation, rather than having to actually go through the discipline. I learned from other people's mistakes.

By the time—I started school when I was four years old because at the time you still could, and my parents went to Florida in the wintertime, so I used to be able to get my assignments for the whole school year at the beginning of the school year, get all my school work done by Christmas, so I could go to Florida from Christmas to Easter, and then finish the last two months of the school year with my class. I didn't have a regular curriculum because I was academically gifted, so I started school as a four-year-old with a seventh-grade academic reading level. I tutored children with learning disabilities, so I never really had a regular structure of education. I more had mentors that taught me at my academic level. Then I kind of did a teach-to-learn environment where I would pass on those skills by teaching reading and writing to people that weren't as good at it as I was, and most of the kids that I worked with were older than I was, or had some sort of barrier to learning where they didn't learn with a conventional method. They would learn by learning words to a song or coloring a picture with a certain pattern. It was kind of an unconventional learning style that's now becoming mainstream.

[00:55:02]

Graham: Yeah. I feel like unconventional seems to be the theme, and just to have a kind of home base that shifts every year, and then also changes with who's in the home, you know, with the foster children and things like that. Could you just tell me about some memories of who came to the home?

Friday: When I was really small, one of our first foster children was a sister that lost her mom, because her dad was my father's orphan buddy in the orphanage, and she came to live with us because her mom went away for some reason. I wasn't even old enough to see over the table. I probably was two or three years old when we got her, and she lived with

us her whole entire childhood. Then all of a sudden there were a lot more. When I came home from school I never knew what new brother or sister was going to be arriving, and it was real—most of them were really good kids that just needed a stable home environment.

I guess probably the most memorable one would be when my brother got a brother. My brother was the only boy in the family, so he was way outnumbered by the girls, and he was my buddy since he was only five years older than me. Him and I spent all of our time together, doing our chores, and our biggest chore was the garbage. We were supposed to gather all the garbages and burn them, and then it was also our chore to take care of unwanted rodent populations, which meant hunting, which I wasn't really that into, but I liked to walk around in the woods. So when my brother got a brother, I was like, well, who's going to take care of me now that he has somebody his own age to play with? I kind of feel alone, when am I going to get somebody my own age to play with. I found out I didn't really need somebody to live in the home at my own age, that I was kind of lucky to not have to share everything that I had. I shared a lot of my toys, but a lot of it, they were homemade toys anyways.

Most of the things that we had to play with we made. So I really kind of ended up being the—when I was four years old, my brother, I think I must have been in first grade, which would be five years old, when the last foster kid came, which was my brother's brother. I got from Santa Claus a homemade Suzy bake oven and a whole kitchen set, so when the kids would come home from school I got to bake all day long with an actual oven, because my mom actually converted the Suzy bake oven to be a real miniature oven. So I would, when the kids would come home from school I would provide the after-school snacks. I had my own blackboard. I had my own set of teachers' books, and I got to do homework after school. Then I was kind of off duty when the dog and I could go around and find out if all the kids did their chores. This made me unpopular, by the way. But the kids were overall decent to me, because they understood I was just a little Polish word shneppa [??] that was mom's little eyes in the back of her head.

We had plenty of animals to play with and a regular life. My mother baked bread every week, we milked a cow twice a day, we had pigs, we had chickens, we had animals that had—and that's how we sustained ourselves. We only went to town once a month, and the funnest thing to get in town was a jar of Miracle Whip, because you couldn't make Miracle Whip, and it tasted really good. My biggest memory of starting school was milk in a carton. It smelled like perfume, and so did the bread. There was perfume in bread and milk, where we had the thing, the natural thing, that came from the farm. It was really different to see things that were purchased with money rather than made off of the materials that you had on the land. So it really was—I mean, even though we had indoor plumbing and a house around us, the ceilings in our house on the upstairs was—they were only six and a half feet tall, because it was cheaper to heat six and a half feet than an eight-foot ceiling. So anybody that was tall had to duck the light bulbs. The house was always in a period of construction. Most of a regular day was spent—when I wasn't in school and I didn't have to go all that often—once or twice a week or three or four days a week, depending on what grade level I was in. And as I got older I did more of regular school experience. When I was little, school wasn't the forte, because I was kind of schooled, but homeschooled.

[01:00:02]

We took care of the farm. We built something. I followed my mother around. I was her little helper. I followed my father around fixing an engine or participating in some kind of operation that helped to keep the little hobby family farm going. And every day it was like a farmer's life, there's a different project every time of the year, every day of the year. Summer is really busy. You get everything done by fall, so that you can relax and pack to go down to the farm in Florida in the wintertime, where my father worked with—he actually worked at Knott's dairy. On the island that we lived in Florida in the wintertime my father worked at Knott's dairy as the mechanic there. Well, there I got to make cookies with Grandma, Grandma Knott , and I got to ride on Willie's shoulders.

So since I was so little, I kind of more observed and participated in—we'd go in the ocean and find shells, and then we'd make art out of them and take them down to the local store where they would sell them on consignment, so that we had money. The eggs went to a store where we'd get the money back from the eggs. The extra bread went to help feed the homeless, and we also were the janitor at the church. We were the custodian. We cleaned the church. My mother was the secretary and the treasurer, she ran the youth group. So we had this actual community. And we visited people, if they were sick, if they were in need of something, if they had a project that needed to be done. There was all kinds of community, people-helping-people environment.

Graham: Yeah. It sounds like you were very engaged, the whole family.

Friday: That was the environment. My mother had five brothers, and she had friends in the community. She sold jewelry through Sarah Coventry for a period of time, so sometimes there were parties where we got to wear fancy stuff. My mother sewed, so she would sew clothes. She paid for my piano lessons by making an afghan for my piano teacher.

Graham: It sounds like you were always much older than your years, you know, beyond your years. And so then what was growing up like, and becoming a teenager in high school, and things like that?

Friday: It wasn't—grade school was kind of tough.

Graham: Why?

Friday: The other little kids were so much in a learning phase of things that I already knew that grade school was kind of tough. The first time I went to kindergarten I got picked up in a car. Mrs. Smith picked me up in a car, and I had afternoon kindergarten. And I used to get car sick, so I had to sit in the front on a booster seat to see out or I'd throw up by the time I went the five miles to the Pleasant View School. I'd throw up in the car on the way there, so I had to sit and look out so I didn't throw up on the way to school. And when I got there there were a couple of kids that I identified with, but everything there was kind of plastic. The teacher kind of took me under her wing, so instead of me sitting with the other kids, I sat on her lap and read. When it was story time, I was the reader. I sang in all the churches and played the piano when I was four, so a lot of times if I was

appearing in public it was because I was going to perform. I was either going to sing with my brothers and sisters, and usually I had to stand on a chair to be tall enough, or I was going to play the piano, or I was there for some—actually I have slicks of the photos of me being the star of Mrs. Troxyl's school plays, the costumes that my mother used to hand make for me. A couple of those pictures survived the fire, because I happened to have them not in the house when the house burned down. I wish I could tell you I had a regular existence, but honest to God I didn't.

Graham: Well, it sounds like it shaped you into who you are today. But it also sounds like you always identified more with adults.

Friday: I had friends my own age. As a child I had a cousin that was two months apart from me, and we were pretty much run buddies. But back in that date parents didn't dote over their children the way that they do now. Our parents would do their thing, and we would interact with the adults, and when you interacted with an adult you did it on the adult level. Like a very popular game in our family was Pinochle. I was a crack whiz at it, so I could sit on my grandmother's lap and play the cards, or go fishing, or any kinds of—fishing was a family activity. My dad could always out fish me, but I could really keep my—I could put my hook down there and wait for the fish to bite it and yank them up, too. So a lot of our stuff was—when we played baseball, we had enough people in the family, we'd play baseball at family reunions, and everybody pretty much did their own thing. A lot of the people in my family were what would now be considered entrepreneurs. They were very resourceful. They didn't throw anything away.

[01:04:57]

They were frugal—not cheap, but frugal—and made the best with everything that they had because my parents' generation came up through the Depression age. So you didn't waste anything, and if you didn't know how to fix it yourself, apparently you didn't need it, because we didn't have the resources to hire somebody outside the environment. My mom's father was a sawer, and he bought the generator that used to light the streets of Waupaca in 1920, knowing nothing about electricity. They took the generator apart, put it on a river, and generated power so that they could run their sawmill cheaper than others. Then they taught themselves to weld. So they ended up having a welding operation that they could outbid everyone else. They welded the crusher rolls. Because they didn't have to pay for the electric expense they were able to provide services cheaper than everyone else. And then they went into dairy farming for a period of time, and eventually they started playing with things that fly, airplanes and things like that, hang gliders, and stuff. They had one of the earliest airplanes in the community, and they taught—they were self-taught people, so they taught themselves to fly. Going to college was kind of an unpopular family decision by the time I decided to go.

Graham: Yeah, I'm wondering, you know, among all this sort of hard work and survivalism, where you're wanting to become an artist and being so creative emerged from?

Friday: They told me not to quit my day job, that that was an unstable career, so I really, even though I went to college for it, I felt intimidated by going. I really don't know if I could ever get over this, Why can't you live your life the regular way that everyone else is

living? And that's what led me to join the military, because that was a stable, respectable environment where I could put off my own ideals of going to be an artist, and go through college, and get a college degree, and comply with my family's outlook on life to earn a good living and provide for my family.

Graham: So what was their reaction to you going to art school compared to their reaction to you joining the Army?

Friday: We didn't tell them I went to art school. [laughter] And I joined the Army—I went to college in September. I decided not to go and to just work for a year so I'd have the money, and I was really upset about it, and my mother said—my mother was the one that encouraged me. My father did, too, but I was a girl, so. My mother encouraged me, and she said, "Vicky, I really think you need to follow your dreams. It's one of those things that God really wants you to follow your dream. You have a purpose in life, and you're talented. So I think that you should not listen to the guys and follow your dream and go to school. Go for art school. There's no reason why you shouldn't other than listening to family pressure, and you really shouldn't listen to that family pressure. They don't always know what they're talking about. As much as they love you, it really is in your best interests to do what you think you should do with your life."

So I enrolled in school. But the pressure of staying financially stable, that's what led me to joining the military where I could go get three years of work experience and then go to college part time, having the money already set aside in a financial bank account. There wasn't a more stable job in the community than the military in the early eighties, because that was one of the other recession periods. So they all kind of went, "Hey, good for you. Wow, joining the military, that's a heads-up work decision." So actually they would rather have had seen me in the Army than the art school, which they thought was worthless.

Graham: So tell me about the steps leading up to you enlisting, and then we'll go from there.

Friday: It was really pretty simple. I took my first semester of classes, and I was really interested in language, because I guess working with animals gives you a lot more language skills because you're working with a population that can't actually speak words, so you have to see a lot of nonverbal. And since I was raised in an environment of animals and people who didn't communicate well, especially the foster kids were not very good communicators, you kind of had to go on your gut feeling or really observe in order to find out what the reaction was going to be, especially to keep your butt from getting whopped by an older sibling. When they decided to go have one of their—what do they call it now, manic episodes—in order to keep myself safe I had to learn to read people and find out when that feeling of danger would come in. So I tested really well in the aptitude-to-learn-language category. In fact, that was the first job that the military actually offered me was language interpreting, interpreting a language.

[01:10:00]

I was going to school for Spanish, because in our community we have a lot of Hispanic-speaking workers, and I was raised—we have pickle farms and potato farms, and a lot of

those have Hispanic population that migrates and follows the crops. So I learned that there was another language besides English, and I started to get fluent in Spanish, so I thought it would be within my best interests to be bilingual, to at least understand both languages. So I took Spanish, and then I took the art classes that I wanted to, because nobody in my family was going to see me take art classes, and my mother was encouraging me. But they weren't exactly what I thought they'd be. I did have a boyfriend at the time that didn't really life from the same angle that I did.

Graham: What do you mean by that?

Friday: Well, he went to school at a tech school, and he wanted to be a mechanical engineer, but his family promoted college. My family no one got divorced, his family everyone got divorced. It was an opposites-attract relationship, and we were so in love, because we were so young. He was the hottest catch in Plainfield. He was gorgeous, he was talented, and he was intelligent, but he didn't like to do his schoolwork, so he got me to do it for him.

Graham: Uh-oh. [laughs]

Friday: Although I tutored him, and he learned the material, he kind of like skated and got by and wasn't really as engaged in knowing what he knew, just having people think that he knew what he knew. He's learned his lessons in life because of that, so we're not going to judge him, because he is a real good dad, and he's become a great grandfather.

Graham: So did he become the father of one of your children?

Friday: He's the only father of my children.

Graham: Oh, okay. Okay.

Friday: Yeah.

Graham: So what year did you meet him in?

Friday: I met him in 1980. Our schools had a field trip to Great America. Wow, Great America.

Graham: What's Great America?

Friday: It's a theme park, Six Flags theme park, in Gurnee, Illinois. They had the world's largest wooden roller coaster named the American Eagle. And we were going to actually get an opportunity to go, and it was sponsored by a federal grant program, so it was a collaborative effort to connect teenagers as an alternative to drugs and alcohol, to connect teenagers within the community, and give them purposeful, positive interaction and activity. Because they found that that kind of was a good thing to do in the communities, and that finally got to our rural community where we had a grant to do that. So they bussed us all down to Illinois, an overnight camp. Granted he was one of the coordinators of the event. Well, I went there because it would be fun. He went there because it was part of his community service activity, and he was the president of this

council on drugs and alcohol, because he struggled with an addiction problem when he was a teenager. His parents worked. His mom was divorced. He had a stepfather. So that was a total realm of life that I really had never seen. I mean, we had the foster kids, but we didn't have to deal with their parents. He was still living in an environment where it was constantly changing, and his mother had a couple of relationship issues where she ended up married to her third husband by the time I had met him, and I had never really seen that realm of reality before. So I was fascinated by the way that their family dynamics were so much different than ours. Plus he lived in town. I'd never had an in-town boyfriend.

Graham: Yeah, kind of a big deal.

Friday: I was a little isolated, so I was actually kind of pretty naïve about what the world was all about. And he was so charming and easy to get along with, and we—I fell in love right pretty much right away. And I had dated before, but I had so many other outside interests that dating wasn't a big priority for me. We ended up, I met him in 1980, in June, and we married in 1982, in November.

Graham: Okay. So had you enlisted?

Friday: I enlisted the month before I married him. That's how we ended up getting married. My plan was to not get married until I graduated college, but reality spoke. When you're a teenager and you're going through that love phase, and you're worried that if you disconnect, you're never going to get back together again. And life turns out to be what it is, and you're faced with some major decisions that maybe prince charming should be mister good enough, and you should not worry about having the fairy tale life that everybody thinks that they want and then life doesn't turn out to be that way. So we just felt that between the two of us, we could tackle all of life's problems.

[01:15:00]

I decided—he went to tech school in Wisconsin Rapids and moved in with his grandparents. I went to college in Oshkosh and was living in the dorms. And things were not turning out to be the fairy tale existence after high school that either one of us thought it was going to be. So while I was kind of contemplating my decision in life, as a late seventeen-year-old, because I graduated a little young, I decided to join the military and joined the military before I told him. And he decided that going to college wasn't something that was really going—the rigors of tech school wasn't working for him, so he dropped out of college and moved home with my parents. He moved in with my parents, and I was in college, so now I've got this conflict of my boyfriend's living with my mom and dad, and I'm going to college, and I joined the Army, and I'm leaving. "Well, I tell you what, hon, I'll see you in four years, and then we'll get married," and he said, "Take me with you." I'm like, "Are you sure you want to go?" and he said, "Yeah, I really do." So we went down and we negotiated my contract so that we could have a life where we would share together, and what worked out was being radio multi-channel-communication operators, kind of like Ma Bell, where you go establish communication, you got your own van, you put up an antenna, you talk over the phone. So we both—I renegotiated, and we both took the same career because we

thought that that would help keep us together.

Graham: So he joined the Army, too?

Friday: He joined the Army a month after I joined the Army, because I joined the Army, and then they said the only way we could stay together was if we were married. Otherwise they wouldn't even consider combining our orders. So because I joined the military, and we wanted to have a life together, we decided to join the military under the Army [Married] Couples Program so that we would have a chance to be stationed together.

Graham: Okay. And can I ask why the Army? Why that branch?

Friday: They had the fewest years of commitment and the largest college bonus.

Graham: Okay.

Friday: Twenty-five thousand dollars to go to school with.

[break in recording] [01:17:06]

Friday: Do you really want to talk about that on the history tape? I mean, it's up to you, if you do, because I really don't care. But I was diagnosed with endometriosis when I was in high school, and I had surgery. I had surgery as a fourteen-year-old; I lost an ovary.

Graham: Oh, my gosh.

Friday: And then I had two laparoscopy—belly button surgeries to control the scar tissue and things like that before I graduated high school. So I had a significant amount of surgical experience. And dealing with having been put on morphine when I was fourteen years old, because of a surgery, allowed me to actually understand people that suffer from a drug addiction, although the doctors are so much smarter about how to step me off meds than they are now. They do a much better job—they did a much better job when I was a youth than they do now, being responsible about the drugs that they prescribe to the kids that they prescribe them to. They're not careful about how they prescribe drugs anymore, which eventually leads to me being able to deal with my daughter's problem with—when drugs are such a prevalent part in the community, to understand without judging what effect that medication can have on a body. But it's kind of off topic and not chronological.

Graham: No, that's okay. Did that make you worried about having children some day?

Friday: I was told I wasn't going to be able to have children, but that was—who cared? I was going to have a career. At fourteen years old, do you think you care if you're going to have a baby or not? You're almost like so what, I'm not dating anyways.

Graham: So what did you tell your husband when you guys got married? Do you say, we might—

Friday: Oh, he knew before I got married, because we met in 1980, and I'd already had—I lost

one ovary, but I still had one. They sent it down to Madison to analyze it, to fix whatever was wrong with it, and I was so unconcerned. I was into horses. I was showing horses. My best friend had horses. My best friend's family, they were well off. It was a rich-kid-meets-poor-kid story, so we got along, because she was—her family had more money than most of the people in the community here did, and my family had less money than most of the people in the community here did, so we were a perfect match. Come here and be in the country-hick environment, and I could go there and be in the lap of luxury, and so we were instant best friends from third grade right through where we started parting ways because we were finding, you know, guys we were going to marry and everything. So I had a best friend all the way through high school that really helped life go along and be fun. We joined 4-H. I spent a lot of time—I spent more time at her house than I probably should have. If I'd a known my mother was going to die of cancer I'd a stayed home a little more.

Graham: Really?

Friday: Well, yeah. You don't know you're going to miss your mom when you're eighteen years old. You don't think your mom's going to die when you're eighteen. So when you're a teenager you don't bother to spend a lot of time with your mother, because, come on, that's teenage years. You're out there doing your thing. And I was out there doing my thing.

[01:20:05]

Graham: So it seemed like so much changed in a short period of time. You joined the Army, you got married, and your mother gets diagnosed with cancer?

Friday: Yeah, I joined—I graduated from high school, went to college. I stopped work—I had a job, a full-time job, that I gave up to go to college, which was itself a decision, cause, gee, I was financially stable, I could afford my own car payments, I had a full-time job. It could have led to a full-time job with benefits. For me to give all that up and go to college, where I'm going to go into debt to get a job. Really? Or should I just manage a restaurant? Come on. So I made the decision to go to college and follow my dream, and then the dream kind of crinkles around the fact that it's not going to be the dream, so I joined the military to be able to be all I can be, and we're doing that. My husband married me in between space and color. He married me in between space and color. Isn't that poetic?

Graham: What do you mean?

Friday: It sounds like an abstract thought, but I had space class at one o'clock, and color class at 6:30, and we got married at four o'clock in the afternoon, so we actually did get married in between space and color. It was two classes I had in college.

Graham: I like that.

Friday: Isn't that hilarious? I use that whenever I can, because it's funny. And so I joined the military. I finished my semester of college, and then we came home and lived with my

mom and dad until we went active duty in the middle of February. So we kind of had a vacation. Then we both went off to serve in the military. I got stationed for basic training at Fort McClellan, Alabama, which is where the MPs train. He got stationed at Fort Knox, because we weren't allowed to do basic training together. So that was, like, I got homesick, being away from home. That was kind of my first really away from home, no parents, no nothing. Here I am all alone, having to exercise. Oh, my God.

Graham: And you're newlyweds, too, so it must have been hard to be apart.

Friday: Newlyweds. Yeah, oh, yeah. We were still like so much in love and everything, but our AITs [Advanced Individual Training], our schooling, we had both taken the same job classification—it's called an MOS, Military Occupational Specialty—and that was going to be in Augusta, Georgia. I have family in Augusta, Georgia, so that's not so bad, plus it's in the South, and I'm a snowbird by nature, from my family going down south in the wintertime. So I was like, well, I think I can handle this, Alabama, then Georgia, and then who knows from there, because we didn't have a guaranteed station. So we both got through basic training all right.

Graham: How long did that last?

Friday: My basic training was six and a half weeks, and his was like nine.

Graham: Okay. And what did you do during basic training?

Friday: You learned the basics of military service, team work, how to shoot a gun, how to throw a grenade. There were thirty tasks that you had to do, and if you got a perfect score you got a weekend pass. So I made sure that I got a perfect score so my parents could come down for the weekend so we could leave post. My parents came down, and then we got leave in between, so we were able to go visit my aunt. My mom did my hair and all kinds of stuff like that. And I did have, my sister had a two-year-old boy that she went to school, and my mom took care of him, and he was my best little buddy, so I got to visit him, bought him little military outfits that looked just miniature of mine. Then we went on to school, and then my husband joined up with me. That was when we got our first house. It was a trailer house with the biggest cockroaches you ever saw in your life in a community with other young military couples, so that we would be where other couples were experiencing their first bits of marriage, and they had—you know, they fought more than we did, so that was okay.

Graham: And where and when was this?

Friday: That was in 1983. No, it was still 1982, because—no, it was 1983, because I joined October 25, 1982, I joined. I went active February of '83, and then all summer long was Augusta, Georgia, of 1983. It was a thirteen-week course, so by fall of 1983 we were getting ready to get our first duty assignments. I got orders to Colorado Springs, to Fort Carson, Colorado, and my husband got orders to Fort Hood, Texas. And I said, "What's up with that? We're supposed to be married Army couples." And they said, "Well, you joined when you were a maiden, then you got married. It took us a while to process that paperwork. It's going to take us a little while longer to link your records, so this is what

we're going to do. You're going to go ahead, and we're going to keep him behind till his records catch up." So I had to move us to Colorado while he stayed in Georgia. So I came home and picked up my cousin, 'cause I didn't want to travel all that way alone, picked up my cousin, and she helped me establish a household out in Colorado while we were waiting for my husband to get orders to Colorado, which after about forty-five days he finally did.

[01:25:02]

Graham: Just backing up a little bit. You know, you talk about growing up and how you had so many just different people in the house, and you're doing so many different things, and you were going back and forth between here and Florida. So what was it like as you were transitioned from a kind of unstructured, chaotic way of life to a very regimented—

Friday: It was just as chaotic, because you're always getting re-stationed, you're always getting a different job, you're always learning something new, and this structure was stable as far as I understood, because my parents always owned the property. Everybody in our family went to Florida for the winter. That was just like a farm year. In the spring you plant your crops, in the summer you work your butt off, by fall everything's put away. Between Christmas and Easter you rest, down in Florida, where all you're growing is fruit on a tree that does it all by itself, and you hire somebody to pick it off. So that was kind of the vacation period. From December to April was kind of a layoff, and then the worst, the hardest work, was from April to September here in Wisconsin, where there was a lot of work to do. Then you button it up by September, go to school for one semester, between September and Christmas, and which is busy with the holidays anyways. That was a regular annual routine, so there wasn't anything, as far as I understood, chaos was just a part of life. So it didn't seem chaotic to me.

Graham: So the rhythm of basic training wasn't hard to adjust to?

Friday: The hardest part about it was being physically active where you had to run around a track instead of chase a cow. It's easier to chase a cow, you have adrenaline, you have a reason to catch the cow. What's the point in going around a track to get a time? What's the point in doing all these pushups? So it was a mindset more than a physical reality change, where—why am I doing this? What is the reason? And I was a strong-willed child anyway, so without a reason I don't want to conform, unless I know why I'm doing something I don't really want to do it. It doesn't make any sense to me. I don't see any reason. You know, I am a bit of an advocate for change, and I've been accused of being a rule breaker.

Graham: So did you break any rules at basic training?

Friday: Yeah, I did. [laughs] I found out that if you volunteer for KP, which is going to work in the kitchen—it was more like a regular civilian way of life. So whenever I had the opportunity, I would volunteer to go work in the mess hall, where I would get to have a regular day of working in a restaurant environment, providing food, mopping, things I knew how to do that was just a regular way of life, caring for people, feeding people,

cleaning up after people, cooking. Cooking? What's hard about cooking? When you're cooking for a dozen people it's not hard to cook for six hundred. And the cook was a civilian, so I even got to make lasagna one time while I was there. They ordered the material so I could make lasagna. The biggest thing that happened to me that I broke the rule was my shot records got to go to the shot clinic the day that I didn't have to go get the shots.

Graham: What does that mean?

Friday: You get vaccinated several times in the military whether you like it or not, and they'll use like this gun and shoot you, and I don't like vaccinations. I don't really like needles. Having surgery kind of gives you an aversion to that.

Graham: I bet.

Friday: And I found out that since I was also able to manage records, that if I shoved my records in the stack, I got a vaccination certificate and didn't have to go through the extra vaccination. And I was smart about finding out what the vaccination was. I had already had a tetanus shot, I didn't need another one, so that day I volunteered for KP, because I didn't need two tetanus shots. I already had one, and they were just going to revaccinate me for something I already had. To me, with my strong will, it made no sense. That's a good day to go to KP and take a day off. So I did. And there was also—it was a transitional time in the military because it wasn't popular to have females in the military in the early eighties. We represented less than 1 percent of the military population, and they were still trying to figure out how to get women through basic training without them quitting or breaking them down to the point where they would be service connected right out of there due to the stress levels of pick up this gun and whatever. So, I mean, the training for war is a little more serious than my military experience, because I never actually faced war. In a lot of ways that makes—that's probably one of the biggest reasons why sometimes I never even admitted to being a veteran, was because I didn't have to go face war. I got stuck in the administrative political arena, and I didn't actually have to lay down my life, put my life on the line.

Graham: But it sounds like you had other challenges. Before we get [inaudible].

[01:29:54]

Friday: I did, and I don't want to go into a period of self-loathing and guilt about the fact that I have a bit of survivor guilt over that, but I want to make sure that I respect people that really did put their life on the line and actually lose it. Because I was a pencil pusher, after all.

Graham: Can you tell me what some of the other women in basic training were like? You know, what's different about these women that joined the Army in the eighties?

Friday: Oh, yeah. I could—the group of ladies that I went through basic training with, we ended up calling ourselves—and please forgive me, girls, if you don't want me to tell your story, but I won't use your names, and I do have nicknames for everybody in my life, so

everything you're about to hear is more or less true, but I've changed the names to represent nicknames. We called ourselves the Vanity Eleven, because apparently there was like some kind of popular Vanity Nine thing. There were women there from all over the United States. Some from New York, where we—when we got together it was all of our first experience being away from our hometowns, and the differences were incredible. Black girls did their braids—they called them cornrows, and they braid it from the bottom up, and the braid stood up on the top of the hair. That was really fascinating. They didn't have oils in their hair, natural oils. We had too much oil; white girls had too much oil. Black girls had not enough oil. That was pretty fascinating. They had a different way of walking around town than we had in a rural community, so there was all this period of being curious about other people's life styles and understanding that there was different cultures.

So eventually, because we're going through the same kinds of things, and we had women from me being barely eighteen years old to we had a thirty-five-year-old lady in our basic training group, and she had probably—being thirty-five years old going through basic training. More struggles than we could ever hope to because her body wasn't conditioned to be put through the realm of caring a forty-pound rucksack over five miles and carrying all the rest of this weight around, just so that she could have a decent life, what she had to have gone through to even have decided to join the military. And she didn't really turn into like a mother figure. She was just another one of the soldiers. There were the people that worked really hard, and the people that skated, and we even had—we had a stinky girl, and she ended up breaking her leg, and we got in trouble because she didn't take a shower, so we ended up with some of the bad behavior of what they call the blanket party.

Graham: What does that mean?

Friday: In the middle of the night, because you got in trouble, a group of girls that are coursed by the drill sergeant, and we had a female and a male, and that was for somebody that didn't even knew there was such a thing as homosexuality among women.

Graham: What gave you that clue?

Friday: We had a homosexual drill sergeant, and she had favorite girls, and I didn't know what that meant, but I found out later on. Our company got in trouble because of the issue of homosexuality.

Graham: Was she having relationships?

Friday: I don't know for sure, but she had favorites. I don't know all of what happened. I know that we ended up getting—there was investigations and problems, and because we were at the level we were at, we didn't get details. There were incidents of girls getting caught going over by the guys, escaping to do what girls do when they're eighteen years old, and their biological clocks are ticking pretty fast. It was like maybe I needed a husband rather than a career kind of thing. People are people. That kind of stuff happens. It's one of the problems that they had to face in the military, putting women in the same environment with men. So we had an aspect of all of that to deal with, and it worked out

for the best, because the problems created the possibility for solutions. And to look at it, and to understand that, you're going to go from one set of problems to another in life, and this is what we're going to deal with today. Today we're going to deal with how are we going to work together and still get a mission achieved when we're having personal lives mixed with business lives, because you're a soldier twenty-four hours a day. You don't get to go home from work, you don't get to quit your job. How are you going to deal with this when you're under fire? How are you going to deal with this problem when you've got another set of circumstances? How are you going to deal with this problem if you're pregnant? How are you going to deal with this problem if your boss is a jerk?

[01:35:00]

It was a lot of—for some women it was like being in a war experience without ever actually going, if they led a more sheltered life, and for some other people that were able to understand that this is just another phase of training, it didn't go so bad. So for me it wasn't so bad, because I had enough diversity that I was just mesmerized and fascinated by the changes, because the academics weren't difficult for me. Learning a task was—it was the socialization skills that I really got the most benefit out of, to find out that in the larger world I fit in, even when I really didn't in the small world, the skills that I learned here in the small world, it's like the country mouse and the city mouse. I was the country mouse, and I can go to the city and function. But the city mouse going out into the field, that's a problem, especially if they can't stand the sight of, oh, my God, a cockroach, or that kind of thing. So I ended up being a lot of people's smart friend, because I could under crisis be calm and help solve problems rather than be one of the people that were having trouble functioning. So all the things I learned as a child benefitted me in basic training, and we moved on to schooling, where I even actually met a couple of people from my own community who were serving, that had joined the military as well.

Graham: Okay, so fast forward to Colorado.

Friday: 124th Signal Battalion. I started out as a radio operator. Then my husband joins me, and we get stationed in the same company, separate platoons, and our job was to go train for the purpose of war, desert training, because they were already anticipating a problem with the Gulf.

Graham: So someone who might tune into this or listen to this, can you kind of talk about what's going on in the world, and what those preparations meant?

Friday: The only thing that was really hot at the time, during my period of service, there was this little coup in Grenada, which I didn't really care about current events too much. I really kind of wanted to limit my exposure. There was this little coup, but it didn't affect us, because in our area of communication we were in a place where we supported Korea and Germany, and then came back and supported Korea and Germany. But we needed to train for desert because there was a possibility of expanding our area of communication. So a lot of the soldiers that I served with, they'd come and train, and we'd do training for the regular country that we were operating in, which was similar to being deployed to Germany or Korea, and then there was also a once-a-year exposure to training in the

desert, which was done at a training facility in California where they actually have a desert. And what was back when they had—right now you'd call that laser tag. We called it MILES [Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System] equipment, because we had the technology before it was laser tag. It was these great big huge breast collars with lights on, and if somebody shot you, your lights would go off. So we did that kind of training for thirty days out of the year, and we took turns deploying to do that. Then we'd do our regular job of training for war readiness, just in case something would happen, that we'd all be ready to go.

Then people would deploy over to Germany, and for the most part it was pretty sweet duty, but there were some people who would get stationed where there was actually hot spots going on. We didn't have a lot of casualties then, because it was mostly just a little sniper activity here and there. It wasn't like full-fledged war; it was more like maintenance, trying to keep the peace. At that time we really couldn't fathom the possibility of actually going to a war, so we were—some of us felt like we were training for the purposes of training, that there was never really—that this was going to be world peace, and we were never going to actually have to get into a war again, because after all, we were from the eighties.

Graham: [laughs] Right.

Friday: And we were smarter than those people that had a war before, so we weren't going to do that again. In most of our mentality, we actually believed that we were never really going to need to use the skills that we had learned to survive, that we were just going to make sure we brought about world peace, and our generation wasn't going to make the same mistake that the generation before did and allow something that bad to happen in the world. So we all went through the motions. As far as I know, for the most part, at least in my friend group, we didn't really believe we were actually going to actually have to do anything nasty with our lives, that we were just having a job, serving our country, making sure that the presence was there, and providing for our families.

[01:40:03]

Graham: So how long were you in Colorado for?

Friday: I was in Colorado from later of 1983 until in the spring of '84. [whispers] I had to be there longer than a year. I was there twice. I went there in August of 1983, cause I was done with school. Went through the winter. God. I'm drawing a slight blank. It was either '84 or '85. I was either there almost a year, or a year and a half.

Graham: So then what happened next?

Friday: We came down in orders for Germany, and so I must have been there for twelve months, because it was at least a twelve-month assignment before you got deployed, and I know it was March. I know I came down on orders in March, and so did my husband. We both came down on orders for Germany. So we were going to go to Germany. Right after we came down on orders for Germany—and what happened while I was in Colorado was after I went to the desert, my platoon sergeant was inappropriate with me, and so when I

got back from my first field training exercise in California I quit my job. I walked into the battalion, and I quit my job.

Graham: Did you quit the military?

Friday: Yep. I walked into the colonel's office and said, "I quit. I'm going home. See you later." Chaptered me out.

Graham: Did you tell your husband what happened?

Friday: Absolutely.

Graham: So what were the repercussions?

Friday: Snagglepuss got busted, and they reassigned me into the battalion—they talked me out of quitting. They got me counseling through a chaplain, which would be confidential. He got punished, the platoon sergeant got punished, and they reassigned me to headquarters and promised me that was never going to happen to me again. So then I was in headquarters, so I stayed, because then I was working in the administrative area, and the colonel himself made sure nobody messed with me. He was a good colonel.

Graham: Good.

Friday: That was my first problem with the reason I'm service connected. Anyway, so life is going on great. We're having a great time serving. We come down on orders for Germany, and shortly after that I got a phone call, and my mother was in the hospital. We went home on emergency leave and found out she had cancer. So now I'm supposed to go to a foreign country while my mother's dying. This is a dilemma. It's my mom. She's my best friend. So I asked what were the possibilities, and they said what we can do is we can put in for compassionate reassignment, a humanitarian assignment, based on whether or not anybody else in your family can take care of your mother. So we went through all the siblings, and nobody could provide care. We went through the Red Cross, went through the chaplains' department. We did everything that needed to be done, then we put in the paperwork. The doctors wrote letters, the community wrote letters, identifying what was going on with the situation, and what was actually happening, and how people were relating. What the military decided was that I should be reassigned here as a recruiting—so I could be close to my mother, because they didn't plan—her prognosis was grim. But they decided that my husband wasn't related to my family, so they shipped him to Germany.

Graham: Oh, wow. So you stayed here to take care of your mother.

Friday: I had a decision to make. I had to either deny the assignment and go to Germany, and let my mom die, or follow my husband to Germany. I picked my mother.

Graham: Yeah. Do you think that changed your relationship?

Friday: It changed my marriage.

Graham: Yeah. How?

Friday: At eighteen years old, choosing your mother over your husband, and he's going to a foreign country for the first time in his life where they can have—what, no drinking age? It actually allowed him to be out on his own for the first time in his life and make his own choices without having to have a girlfriend, because he didn't actually become independent in between childhood and adulthood either. It gave us both a chance to grow up, but we grew up in different ways. He grew up in Germany, and I grew up watching my mother die, and taking care of my family.

Graham: So did things started to deteriorate with you guys?

[01:44:50]

Friday: We had a six-hundred-dollar fight at two dollars a minute, because the phone calls were two dollars a minute back then. We had a six-hundred-dollar fight. There was four months where I couldn't even find him, and by the time my mother's condition became—we tried to put in for assign—he wanted to come home. He wanted to be where I was, helping me. The day my mother's hair fell out, I got a hold of him, and I called him and I said—this was in no way degrading to him, when we were young—"My mother's hair fell out today." "Well, I don't care what kind of problem you're going through. Do you know what it's like to be out here alone and not be able to do anything about what's going on in your life? And all I'm hearing is, 'You selfish SOB.'" "My mother's hair fell out. Whatever you're going through can't be nearly as bad as my mother is dying," and his opinion is "No matter what you're going through, at least you're home, and I'm over here in a foreign country powerless over what's going on in my life." So both of us were going through stress that neither one of us could help each other, and it didn't help the relationship at all." Eventually things go probably really south, you know. There becomes, at that time in recruiting, there was a two-drink minimum at lunch. It was just the way the bread was sliced.

Graham: Yeah. Plus you're going through all these—

Friday: My mother's dying. They offer me better working conditions if I cooperate, so I cooperate. Well, then there's guilt on top of that, because Jesus, I just cheated on my husband with my boss, because I was coerced into it, and there was a lot of alcohol involved, but that was—hey, where do you think we recruited? Do you think we actually followed the rules? Where are people hurting and in need of a job change in a recession? Out drinking in the bars. Guess what? I was a crack shot at pool. My dad was a pool legend. We used to go to the bars all the time. My family owned bars. I didn't have to drink in the bar, but under bad conditions I would. And that doesn't mean I made a lot of inappropriate mistakes. I made my share. And it doesn't really matter so much about the civilian things, it was the military ones that—hey, these people were supposed to be in a position of authority over me. And so, yeah, I am kind of holding them to a higher standard, and yeah, I deserve every penny of that six hundred dollars a month I get to have to swallow the guilt over the mistake that I made as an eighteen-year-old, but they made it with years of experience.

Graham: You're referring to a relationship you had with a superior?

Friday: What they call, yeah, they called it sexual harassment. But really what it was was coercion. They called it coercion, too. I was baited, that if I cooperated I could have this schedule, and if I didn't cooperate this is what they were capable of doing. And rather than give you details, one life was easier than the other life, so I took the easy way out, so that I could be with my mother when she was going through her cancer treatments. I picked my family over myself, because I didn't have what it took to stand up as an E-5 dealing with people that were—I was the lowest rank. Again, I'm baby of the family, lowest ranking person, and people in authority over me were commanding my schedule, and they could just as well have shipped my husband to the front lines. If they wanted me to have a husband, they would have issued me one, and they made that, in no uncertain terms, that I was lucky to have what I had. They didn't have to let me come home to take care of my mother. They could make me go to work, they could re-station me, they had me by the short hairs, so it was in my best interest to just cooperate and do whatever I was supposed to do to make things go the way that they were supposed to go. Eventually everybody kind of, sort of, gets reprimanded for that behavior over the course of time. One of the people that did the least amount of being inhuman takes the most amount of punishment for that and defends me, which was why I'm service connected, because one of the people that took blame helped me get my claim through, and I still appreciate that.

Graham: Okay. For those who don't know, can you just describe what it means to be service connected?

Friday: Having a disability related to your military service, that's something that happens to you in the military. That's like a work-related injury. It's like a workmen's comp claim.

Graham: Okay. And so this was a—

Friday: Like if you lose your arm on the job, if you're in a printing press, and the printing press takes your arm away, that's a work-related injury. A service-connected injury is a work-related injury, and there are mental-health injuries that are work related.

[01:50:02]

Graham: Okay. So maybe just walk me through the steps of making that claim and following through on that.

Friday: It's not something you should take lightheartedly. It's not a free ride. It's not a fun day. It's very time consuming. There's a lot of medical help. I avoided it for a really long time, until enough people pointed out to me that that was why I kept cycling my behavior. That was why I kept going back and recreating situations, that's why I was having so many problems in my life that were not resolving themselves, was because of the unresolved issues over the circumstances of my service while I was on a humanitarian assignment. And that cycle ended up repeating itself in my life several times.

Graham: So you have this experience where you're sexually harassed, and then life goes on in a way, but things are different?

Friday: Yeah. I never told anybody about what happened.

Graham: For how long?

Friday: Twelve years.

Graham: Okay. So you finish your military service how much later?

Friday: My mother died in October of 1985, and my husband got to come home for forty-five days during that period of time, so he got indicted into the recruiting behavior, too. And part of me is fearful about talking about this.

Graham: Yeah. That's okay.

Friday: Because it's really politically devastating, especially since you have my address.

Graham: Yeah. Well, I think you're giving a voice, Vicky, to something that women in the military experience.

Friday: There were people that went through worse things than me. I once met a nun, I once met a nun that was violently physically raped by her bosses. Who's a nun's boss? The highest position of respect that there is, the head of the Catholic Church. What happened to me pales in comparison to what happened to her. I actually wasn't physically beat up, so I don't have the worst story. I made some really bad choices with some really bad information, and I probably, if I was older and she keeps telling me not to judge my younger self with my older self, because it's pointless, but you almost sorta kinda can't help but go, couldn't I have been a little bit smarter?

Graham: We don't have hindsight.

Friday: I understand that, but the thought still processes in everybody's life of, aha, and then you—how did Julia Roberts put it in this movie I just watched? You acknowledge it, you pray for light and love for it, and then you drop it and move on. But that takes a minute. So could we have a five-minute break?

Graham: Sure. Sure.

[break in recording] [01:53:28]

Friday: When I was in basic training, we still wore men's clothes, and I have little feet, so I got little boots. And one of the ways they break your feet into boots—I had never wore boots like that before. We didn't deal with—we had rubber boots, not leather boots. And your feet conform to the boot, so I ended up with a bunion, tendinitis, unable to walk. I had cushions in my boots, because my feet conformed to the boots, which caused a

permanent injury in my foot. Eventually it gets bad enough that they do surgery on my foot. They did. They called it a bunion, because the bone grew differently. And they did surgery on my foot from here to here, and they said it was just going to take a couple of days to heal, but there was a problem with the surgery. It was complicated. They cut off so much bone and things like that, and I ended up having an allergic reaction to the stitches. Then it abscessed, so they had to go in twice. And it took six months for the skin to even heal. I ended up going through—the only thing that actually worked, the drugs that they gave me didn't fix the allergic reaction. They had me on seven different kinds of medications. I reacted to a lot of the medications, because there are side effects. Every medication has a side effect.

[01:54:51]

And they tried to just medicate it away, and it didn't work, so they re-did the surgery, and then they sent me to a holistic practitioner that did acupuncture and chiropractic medicine on my foot, and gave me natural methods of ice and heat, and actually electrical stimulation to get the scar tissue to break up and get out of there, so I could use my foot again. Because for a while I used to walk around with my foot up above my head because it would drop if it wasn't. It would turn purple. I mean, it was like a year of—ever try to fix a fence with two kids, an Alzheimer's patient, and a bad foot? Yeah. It's kind of a—plus I worked as a waitress just to get out of the house for a while. This was a service-connected injury because originally my foot was injured in my boots, so thank God that the military, as many times as you can say a bad word about it though, that they will take care of you for the rest of your life. It's not like a civilian job you quit, and then you can never go back to it. They don't go out of business; it's the government. So as long as there's a country, there's a way to fix the damage, and that's all people can really expect, you know.

Graham: Yeah. So how would you say they're taking care of you today?

Friday: They put me through vocational rehab. They've allowed me—they've bought the equipment that I needed, they've given me the tools that I need to move on with my life, and the people that are helping me are supportive of what I'm trying to do. They're not trying to make me get a job I'm not qualified for. They're doing what they can to help me through the system so that I can—I'm only forty-seven years old, and they're trying to encourage me to be able to have a productive life again doing something I'm able to do, which is share my gifts with others. It's just that we're not really sure what that looks like right now.

Graham: Yeah. And I'm wondering how you got here. So we might have to back up a little bit. Your husband comes home from Germany. Your mother passes away.

Friday: My mom passed away. My husband came home while my mother was still alive. There was a couple of times where we thought she was going to bite the big one. She lived to be fifty, and her birthday was in March. During that period of time she was taking enough treatments that it didn't look like she was even going to live through the treatments, so I think he was home during the time where she turned fifty in March. And we kept him home—he was home for like three or four months. But he had to go back to

Germany because the regulations clearly stated that the spouse of a veteran wasn't entitled to humanitarian assignment, so we kind of bent the rules to get him home in the first place. It was one of those things that I paid for. It was one of the privileges I paid for was finding an academic—finding an administrative trap. Yeah. So we used an administrative trap to keep him home for a while, but it was a matter of time until he had to go back to Germany.

Graham: Do you think he could tell that you were changed?

Friday: Everybody was changed then. My mother was dying of cancer, and he was changed, too, because I thought I was the only one that was guilty of sin. Guess what? He was guilty, too.

Graham: How did you find that out?

Friday: Oh, I caught him red-handed.

Graham: You saw it?

Friday: Yeah, I caught him red-handed. There was a lot of—that's one of the reasons why they don't do the eighteen-year-old hometown recruiting program anymore, because when all those eighteen-year-old girls come home there was too many recruiters that were coercing their eighteen-year-olds inappropriately because there is probably nothing more vulnerable than a woman who's just gone through basic training, learning how to follow orders before they ask questions, and having somebody in a position of authority that can go, "I can make this easy on you. Let's go out for drinks." It's a really—it's like preying on a vulnerable population. It's like screwing a retarded kid. Come on. It's really, really inappropriate, and I hope and pray that that's not the course of business anymore. I believe in my heart that that's been totally changed and that it's the exception rather than the rule anymore. I really hopefully believe that. I really have to use the bathroom.

[break in audio] [01:59:31]

Friday: —and a happy place in life.

Graham: Let's go to a happy place and then we'll call it a day for now, and I'll come back another time.

Friday: Okay. Because it's always important at the end of a therapy session, because this is no different than talking to my psychologist—that we find a place where I'm okay, not where I'm broken down to end an interview.

Graham: Well, want to tell me about a positive memory or something.

Friday: Can you remind me exactly where we left off?

Graham: Well, I don't think we left off in a best place.

Friday: Right, but remind me where we were so I can pull you out of that story.

[02:00:01]

Graham: Okay. Well, you had just caught your husband cheating.

Friday: Oh, during the recruiting days, before my mother died. Yeah. After my mom died, and my whole family played at the funeral. I played the piano, and we all sang, because that's what we did when I was growing up, we all sang together. So we did that. We ended up burying my mom in October of 1985, and my husband went back to Germany. He came home in 1986, and there were no jobs, so the recruiter that was kind to me put him back in the military, and we went back to Colorado. When we went back to Colorado I did a congressional to find my Army college fund, because they somehow lost it, but they found it. I enrolled in Regis University, and I went to college, which is something I had wanted to do for how long. I went to college. My husband was back in the 124th Signal Battalion. He went back in the Army for another three years, and I went to school. While I was in school we decided to have a baby, and even though I only had one ovary and he had a few barriers to success—okay, if I only had one ovary, he had undescended testicle surgery as a teenager. So he had one, and I had one, and between the two of us we had two kids.

Graham: [laughs] All right.

Friday: It happens.

Graham: You made it work. [laughs]

Friday: Sometimes testicles don't descend. We had a gelding that that just happened to, too. But we were able to conceive like clockwork, because the doctor's therapy worked just like clockwork. The military even let me stay with my civilian gynecologist-obstetrician, because he was the leader in the field of that disorder, and we were able to conceive, and we gave birth in June of 1988 to my oldest son, Kristopher, who is now a nuclear electronic technology instructor in the United States Navy, because he's that smart.

Graham: Yeah, he sounds like a smart guy.

Friday: He's a happy-go-lucky kid. He was born six pounds, 12 ounces on the only rainy day of the year, and he—children are the light of your life, and both of my children are shining lights of my life.

Graham: All right. Well, I think maybe that's a good spot to leave off on.

Friday: That's a great spot, because I'm going to see my daughter. She's pregnant with my grandson.

Graham: That's so exciting. Is that her first?

Friday: This is her first, yeah, and she's going through college pregnant just like I did, because I got pregnant while I was in college, which is why my son was smart. I read him textbooks. I read him business law, philosophy, tax accounting. I just read it like it was Walt Disney, but because I read my son textbooks his first words were like malevolent, benevolent, instead of good and bad, because he understood language, because I was speaking to him constantly, reading to him. I read my assignments out loud. It made my kids smart. Think about that. How smart your kids can be if you're in school when you're pregnant.

Graham: I know. [laughs]

Friday: So now my daughter's going to be a vet—she's going to vet school while she's pregnant.

Graham: She's going to have a smart little baby.

Friday: That little boy is going to be smart.

Graham: Well, that sounds wonderful. So we'll pick up where we left off next time, and we'll just kind of text each other until we figure out a good date to do that?

Friday: Okay.

Graham: But this is really nice. I'm glad I made it up here and glad I got to meet you. And the next time I want to see the animals and maybe have you show me some of your art.

Friday: Okay.

Graham: Would that be all right?

Friday: Yeah.

Graham: Okay. All right, well—

Friday: I guess I can figure out, are you interested in that PowerPoint?

Graham: Yeah. Yeah. I'll bring up a jump drive, too, and so you don't have to give me one of yours.

Friday: Come to the house—

[break in recording; apparently different date] [02:03:49]

Graham: Right. So I don't quite remember where we were the last time we talked. We talked for a while, but maybe I'll just set the scene briefly. This is the second part of an interview with Vicky Friday, who served—you were in the Army, right?

Friday: Yes.

Graham: During the eighties. What years were they again?

Friday: I was active duty from 1983 to 1986.

Graham: Okay. This second part of the interview is being conducted at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum on 30 West Mifflin St., in Madison, Wisconsin. Today is May 25—oh, my gosh. And the interviewer is me, Molly Graham. I thought we could start with one of the things you talked about last time we met was how artwork was sort of an avenue for you to deal with your PTSD. I know you had gone to school for art before. You needed it as a tool for recovery. So I'm wondering how your art changed when it was a tool for recovery and not just something you were doing for a living or for leisure?

[02:05:00]

Friday: My artwork became the only way that I could tell my story, and it was also the only way that I could really explain what was going on to my children, and it became an avenue of communication between me and my father, because he had Alzheimer's disease. So it became an avenue of communication for me when I couldn't tell what happened to me. I could convert my stories into things that happened to cartoon characters and let the stories play out that way. It was also a way that I could create a happy ending so I could see a way out of my difficulties.

Graham: And just to sort of remind me and somebody listening to this interview, how would you describe those difficulties?

Friday: I've had a number of significant life experiences. Actually using the cartoon as a coping mechanism kind of started when I had a series of traumatic events in a very short period of time, and it started right around the year 2000. I divorced my husband, moved home to take care of my father, with my children, in September of 2000. The divorce was final, and my father ended up needing to have institutionalized care in a veterans' home by January of the following year. And I lost my job three days after I bought the house that I was living in, and it's the house that I was born and raised in. I lost my job three days after I closed on the home, which was like two weeks after my father went into the nursing home, and within four months the house was destroyed by a storm. By the end of the summer my children and I were living in a homeless shelter, because the storm was huge. The insurance companies were behind on even making claims. There was also some other things that happened during that period of time, and we ended up living in a homeless shelter.

While we were in the homeless shelter—it was a homeless shelter for men, and I was there with two little children, because that was the only place. It was kinda like there was no room at the inn, so they put us in the men's shelter. [laughs] And the kids were afraid, so in order to keep them occupied I started drawing our safety plan in cartoons on my jeans. We had gone to the store and bought a whole bunch of jars of gel pens, so we were drawing on my jeans to distract them from what was going on. My daughter had fallen down the steps of the shelter and hit her head, so I was watching her for a concussion, and keeping her awake and engaged was a way to make sure that she wasn't

having a severe reaction to falling down the steps. So the cartoon that we drew was my daughter's cartoon character and her safety plan. She used to make this cutest little monkey face at me, so we named her favorite cartoon character Monkey Face and drew all of the aspects of safety—her cell phone said, "Call Mom," and a lot of happy thoughts into her cartoon character. Then on a piece of paper later we drew a picture of—we called it "Monkey Face takes a header," and drew a picture of her falling down the steps. Well, then we needed a story to go with the cartoon characters, and so we decided that she would fall down the steps and then remember what had happened to get us to that point, and we would draw that into a story and then continue the story on from there from what was happening to us.

Graham: Okay. Did it feel a little bit like it felt—I remember when we talked last, and you said you were going to go to Germany, and then you decided to do—what did you call it, where you were—humanitarian leave, so you could take care of your mother?

Friday: Mm-hm.

Graham: So did this feel again like another moment where you put yourself on hold and take care of your mother?

Friday: That was kind of the—that was the deciding moment in life when I was put in—I put in for a deletion from orders because my husband and I both came down on orders for Germany, and my mother was dying with terminal cancer. And the orders shipped him to Germany and gave me what was called a compassionate reassignment on a humanitarian transfer to take care of my mom and my family, while she was dying of cancer, because they didn't expect her to live very long. That kind of was the moment beyond my measure of control that changed my life.

[02:10:03]

Graham: How do you feel life would have been different if you had gone to Germany, and your mother hadn't gotten sick?

Friday: I'd probably still be on active duty, and I'd probably have had a successful career. I'd probably be kind of close to where my husband's at now.

Graham: Where is he?

Friday: He's active duty Coast Guard.

Graham: Okay. Is this your ex-husband?

Friday: Yeah, the children's father.

Graham: Okay. So maybe, and I know it gets tricky, but maybe you could just sort of walk us through your humanitarian leave or your compassionate assignment to the part where you are discharged, or leave the Army, or are not active duty anymore.

Friday: Well, my mother was diagnosed with cancer, so I was reassigned to the recruiting company for the state of Wisconsin, and I was a recruiter's assistant. So I delivered talks at high schools and events throughout the state, and I also assisted the recruiters with processing and identifying and qualifying recruits to join the Army.

Graham: For those who don't know, can you just kind of talk about the responsibilities or what a day in your life looked like then?

Friday: That's kind of the area in life where I suffered from military sexual trauma. The rules in the Army were not that well enforced in the recruiting command. There's a significant amount of hanky-panky going on, and a lot of the rules were not exactly followed, and it kind of put me in a really compromised position, because I was the lowest ranking and the only female in the company. And there was an awful lot of things not being practiced the way that they really should have been. And so a typical day, if I was doing my job, I was doing my job, and if I wanted time off, I wasn't doing my job.

Graham: But how would you—let's see. Was this sort of the moment that changed things?

Friday: It shattered my belief system. I really believed in the ideal view. I believed that people in positions of authority would be respectful and worthy of respect. The colonel that I had before I was assigned in recruiting was certainly a very upstanding individual, and so it really kind of was degrading.

Graham: Did it change your view of the military or working for the Army?

Friday: I kind of thought it was isolated to the recruiting command, because they were so not—it was an autonomous position with not a lot of people that knew what was going on. It was a political position. It was a public relations position. So I kind of thought it was isolated to the recruiting command and kind of the nature of the beast, after I was well into it, that that's just the way the bread was sliced in the recruiting aspect of the military, which gave a lot of reason why people hated their recruiters.

Graham: Well, I'm wondering how your sort of attitude changed going into work. You know, I love my job, and so I love coming in every day, but I think if something like that happened to me here, and I had to keep coming in every day, my attitude would be different. So how did things change for you?

Friday: My mother was dying of cancer. My husband was shipped overseas. My entire family was relying on me to take care of everything, and so I was just kind of numb. It was just an area of my life where I was functioning, and there really wasn't a whole lot of room there for me to do any decision making. I would react to whatever situation I was in, and after a while it just was—life was crappy anyways with my mother dying, so what's one more piece of crap. It became easier to do what they wanted me to do that wasn't up and above the board. Drinking made it easier.

[02:15:05]

Graham: Is that when you started drinking, or using that as a coping mechanism?

Friday: I used drinking as a coping mechanism.

Graham: And it started with that incident?

Friday: With being re-stationed, mm-hm. In fact, we recruited a lot in the bars, because in the eighties, during the recession, there was a lot of people that were miserable, and I was really good at shooting pool. My family owned bars and restaurants, and my father was a really good pool shot, so I could go to the bars and shoot pool, and attract attention, and bring recruits into the office, because I could challenge them to a game of pool. So I used to go to bars in uniform and recruit, and if I had too much to drink, they took me home in a government car, let me sleep it off.

Graham: Was it hard to recruit people into the Army knowing that this was the place that had hurt you in this way?

Friday: Not at all. The Army that they were going to wasn't the Army I was in. I was in a special situation, and I believed I was the only one in that situation. I was isolated and alone, and there were so many bad things happening to me at the time that it really just didn't matter.

Graham: Right. I think sexual assault does that to someone. I think it makes them feel removed. So how long do you feel like you were just going through the motions?

Friday: How long did I just go through the motions? The whole entire time I was enlisted in the—

Graham: So until 1986.

Friday: In the, yeah, until I got out of the military.

Graham: And talk to me about getting out of the military.

Friday: They offered me a position to stay in, but they wanted me to stay in recruiting, and I refused to stay in recruiting. So I spent sixty days in an administrative hold down in Illinois.

Graham: What does that mean?

Friday: I was sent down to Illinois and put on administrative hold, which means you just stay there.

Graham: Just to hang out.

Friday: Just kind of hang out, waiting for an opening that I would be willing to reenlist for, and that opening never came. The only thing that came up was for me to go to recruiting school and become a recruiter, if I wanted to stay in the military, and I didn't want to stay in recruiting, because of all the damage. That was the only option that I was offered.

So when I refused to re-sign, I got out of the military, and one of the recruiter friends of mine offered that they would put my husband back in—the military—back in the job class that he had before, and send us back to Colorado, and that was my way out.

Graham: Had your mother passed away at this point?

Friday: Mm-hm. She passed away the previous October, and this went on the following February through April.

Graham: Okay, so all this was just happening at once.

Friday: It all happened in a short period of time. There was a lot going on with my mom at the time and my family, so it was one disaster after another. It was kinda like living in a combat zone, but it was all personal, family occurrences.

Graham: How did you picture life changing after your mother died, and after you got out of the military, and your husband was coming home? Did you see that as sort of a light at the end of the tunnel?

Friday: I thought that maybe going to Colorado would be a clean start, because I got out, and my husband signed up for another three years. The economy was bad, and he couldn't get a job on the outside, so it was a decision to be made. My father could follow us, because he was alone, and he was having problems with depression, because my mother died. It seemed like things would get better if we went back to Colorado, because I was happy in Colorado. Before I was re-stationed into the recruiting command I was happy there. I liked my job, and I was going to make the military a career. So I decided that if we could go back to Colorado it would fix my life, so I enrolled in college, used my Army college fund, and then my husband went right back to the command that we had left when he went to Germany. And there were still a few people there that we knew, so it wasn't bad. I started college, and I got some friends, and life started to move on past my mother's death. My dad started to adjust, and I went to school.

[02:20:00]

Then we decided to start a family, so I got pregnant with my oldest son while I was in college, and things were okay for a period of time. I still carried a lot of guilt, but I thought that would probably fade with time, too.

Graham: Did you ever explain to him what happened, to your husband?

Friday: Absolutely not. Absolutely not. There was an incident. He was angry about being sent to Germany. He was just as young as I was. Nobody knew what was really going on, and I couldn't tell him. There was an incident where he had an inappropriate relationship with one of the female recruiters himself.

Graham: In Germany?

Friday: No, when my mother got sick he was transferred home for a period of time, and they did

some creative paperwork to bring him home and put him on recruiting duty for a period of time, too. So for a period of time he was one of the good ole boys, too. It ruined our relationship, you know. But young people kind of tend to do that. I mean, there was a lot of pressure, and we weren't together all that much, and so he became one of the good ole boys for a period of time, too.

Graham: How did he tell you that he had—

Friday: He didn't tell me. I caught him.

Graham: Oh. Okay. What did you go to school for when you were back in Colorado?

Friday: I went to school to get a degree in business administration. I emphasized in marketing, and I took a minor in sociology. One of the reasons that I went to that school, it was a Catholic Jesuit university, and I had some questions about religion. I was questioning my faith. With all of the things that happened to me, I was having an argument with God by that time.

Graham: Yeah. So where are you guys at now?

Friday: We're pretty good buddies now. He's explained a lot of things to me. I think that's one of the reasons that I illustrate sermons. Because it allows me to see and be able to really get the picture of what's going on, write songs, draw pictures, and illustrate the pastor's sermons on Sunday, and then relate those to my life, and that's how the cartoon ends up having a lot of episodes.

Graham: Right. So you had your son when you were in school and in Colorado, so maybe just keep walking me through the—

Friday: We did three years. He went and reenlisted for three years. There were a few things that went on that were interesting that kind of led to more of my life unfolding purpose as to why things happened in my life. One of our friends, we had some friends, and she'd get pregnant and miscarry, and get pregnant and miscarry. I was pregnant with my son, and I don't remember exactly the timeline, but she got pregnant and miscarried, and my son was two months old. We ended up going—her husband was shipped to Korea on an unaccompanied tour for a year, and we went to her family's home. They told her that the reason that she was miscarrying was because there was a genetic flaw in their family, and back then when girls got in trouble, sometimes to make things look better, the mother of the girl would raise the child as their own and not even tell the child that their sister was their mother. And there was an incestuous relationship there, and it was because she was too closely line bred that she was having all these miscarriages. So when she understood that, she was able to have a healthy baby. Knowing what she needed to know about genetics she was able to actually have a healthy baby.

Graham: So she was the result of an incestuous—

Friday: She was the result of an incestuous relationship, and she didn't know it, and they weren't going to tell her, and it became important for her to know because it was the

reason she was miscarrying. So once she knew, then they could do something about understanding how she needed to reproduce so that she could have a healthy baby. And that was kind of an important aspect in my family. We had a problem that was similar in nature in the generation before me.

[02:25:00]

My father was orphaned when he was four because his mother died. She had a burst appendix and got peritonitis, and she passed away when he was four. And all of the children were put in an orphanage. When my father's father took the kids out of the orphanage, in order for him to do that he ended up marrying his genetic niece, and they had children, and there was incestuous problems with reproduction with those children. That was kind of why I had a knowledge of why some women can miscarry. So that information kind of helped solve a puzzle in someone else's life later on.

Graham: Okay.

Friday: It's kind of—that gets kind of really deep as to how genetics play—one of the jokes that my family always told was the first—children take nine months, except the first one can come anytime, and now people have their children tested to find out who the father really is. But that was a lot more prevalent when it was a secret, and it's that secret of incest, and that secret of childhood rape and inappropriate boundaries in that whole generation of inappropriate behavior between males and females that kind of culminated in me being a survivor until I joined the military and then becoming a victim myself.

Graham: How do you feel about men today?

Friday: How do I feel about—I've been accused of being a man-hater several times in the last couple months. I think that you shouldn't judge someone by their gender, but that people shouldn't—it's not my job to judge, but it's hard sometimes for me to see—I'm a little intolerant, not just of men, but of people that make bad decisions with their lives and cause hurt to other people. So I try not to delve into the stereotype and give everybody credit, but I'm a lot more careful about how close I'll get into a relationship. I haven't had a lot of success with finding a relationship that's going to last, and I'm sure maybe someday Prince Charming might come my way, but I don't see that happening anytime really soon.

Graham: What do you think would have to happen?

Friday: Well, I'm still going through—it's taken a long time for me to be in a place where I felt safe enough to talk about what happened to me years ago and understand the effect that it's really had on my life. Because I tried to just bury it and move on for a really long period of time. Recently when I decided to go back to work, I went through the vocational rehab program with the Veterans Administration, and the closer I got to graduation the more symptomatic I was getting again. And when it came time for me to—I had completed all of their requirements for my degree, and I was supposed to be in a job search—I started having more episodes. So about three weeks ago I started to go back to therapy, and this is the first time in my life that the Veterans Administration has

authorized me to talk to a female psychologist instead of a male. And there's a lot of difference between what you're willing to tell a female about a woman's issue and what you're able to solve with a male psychologist. So I just started doing that, and she recommended weekly therapy for a period of time. I'm also now connecting with a group of women who suffer from military sexual trauma. The statistics that the psychologist revealed, she said this is a lot more common than you would think. She was quoting 20 percent.

Graham: Yeah. So I think it's great you're talking about this. You know, I think it's this thing that does get swept under the rug and that people don't really realize goes on, and so I think this is hugely important.

Friday: I think it happens to civilian girls, too. It's one of those areas where nobody really wants to talk about it, and everybody's really kind of uncomfortable about it. Even when I was growing up, one of the reasons that I had the amount of knowledge that I did in my childhood was because I had a female condition called endometriosis, and the kids in school thought I had an abortion, because I had surgery on my female organs. They were tumors, not babies. And because I didn't have the same hormone levels as the other girls in school did—I lost my ovary when I was fourteen years old, so I only had one operating ovary—I probably didn't have as much boy craziness in me as some of the other kids in school did.

[02:30:01]

I was a little tomboyish. I was reluctant to date. I would rather had boys as buddies, not have them touching me. Not that I had no desire whatsoever, but it was kind of latent, probably because of the disease that I had. So I had a lot of doctors in my life, and I was kind of sheltered as far as being just a regular kid, because I was incredibly academically gifted, school was easy for me, and having a medical condition, I didn't have to go to school a lot, so I wasn't in any of the regular social groups that the other kids in school were in. I kind of ended up having more of a protected childhood, where I talked to people that were doctors, and medical professionals, and pastors, and educated individuals. Because of the nature of the illness that I had, there was a lot of talk about the female reproductive system and what was supposed to happen, and what was appropriate. So I not only had my parents for advisors, I had doctors and pastors as advisors. And it kind of gave me a different outlook on how a relationship should be formed, and what was appropriate and what wasn't appropriate. So it really knocked me for a loop to be one with that much education and then become a victim of circumstance, even with all that information.

And during school, when the kids had a question about reproduction, I was the go-to girl, because I knew the birds and bees speech from the doctor, so I didn't have to deal with any kind of rumors about, "Hey, I heard you can get pregnant if you kiss a boy." "That's not true." "I heard you can get pregnant if a pregnant woman sticks her finger in your ear." "That's not true either." So I kind of provided a lot of information to the other kids in school, because they would ask me questions rather than their parents, because it was easier to talk to a peer than it was to talk to a parent.

Graham: So what was it like when you were pregnant with your first child and finally something very positive was happening?

Friday: I had a great time being pregnant with my son. Life was really good at the time. Up until I was seven months pregnant everything was great, and then the military sent my husband—excuse me—I had excellent pre-natal care at the Air Force Academy. It was one of the first ultrasounds. I got to see his heart beat as a little orange square when he was like ten weeks along. It was just one little orange square. That was it; that was the only ultrasound technology available then, and it was at the Air Force Academy. When I was seven months pregnant my husband came down on orders to go to leadership school, so he left for leadership school. I didn't want to be in Colorado alone having a baby, so I went home.

Graham: So you're back in the place where all the trauma took place?

Friday: Right.

Graham: Where is your husband now?

Friday: He's in Georgia.

Graham: That's where he went for leadership school?

Friday: Yeah, he went to Georgia for leadership school, and he promised that—he promised and the military assured us that he would be able to come home for the baby to be born. That didn't happen.

Graham: So what did happen?

Friday: I went into labor, and I called the—you have to verify an emergency with the Red Cross. I called the Red Cross, and they were unable to reach him. By the time they reached him, the last flight had taken out for the night, and by the time he could even think about getting on a plane in the morning my son was already born. And he decided he might as well finish school, and so he didn't meet his son until he was ten days old.

Graham: What was that like for you?

Friday: It was tearful, but it was my first baby. I said, "Well, you'll be there for the second baby." I'm pretty forgiving. It didn't make any sense for him to come after the baby was already born. Everything was fine, and my family was there. We had a video camera, so there was a tape, so he got to watch him be born on tape, and I think that really was more—he missed it. He really missed it.

Graham: It sounds like that was a theme for you guys.

Friday: Whenever the chips were down, I was alone dealing with it, and he wasn't ever able to be there. But he is a really important person in the lives of a lot of other people because he ends up being—he's done a lot of really heroic things in the military and he's saved a

lot of lives, and he's a really good guy, and he's a great dad now. You know. It was just there was so much that happened to us in our relationship that it's almost like it should be a movie.

[02:35:00]

Graham: Maybe someday it will be.

Friday: It might be.

Graham: So did you stay in Wisconsin with your son, or did you go back to Colorado?

Friday: We went back to Colorado. We had to stand up in a wedding for our friends. Kristopher was born the 28th of June, and the wedding I think was like the 14th of July. I had been measured for a dress when I was seven months pregnant, and I had to fit into that dress. But nursing a baby takes the weight off really fast, so my oldest niece came out to help with the baby, because I have a niece that's nine years younger than me. And it was summertime, so she came out for the summer to help with the baby, and we went back to Colorado, and I fit into my dress. And we stood up for the wedding, and the rest of the enlistment went pretty smooth. I had a little baby, and Jeff had a pretty regular job with the military there, and we finished our enlistment. He ended up getting out of the service eight credits before I had my bachelor's degree, because I took a fast track to get my education. I was supposed to finish like in June, and we got out like in March or April, so I had one semester of college that needed to be finished when we moved home to Wisconsin. They didn't offer the classes in Wisconsin that I needed to finish my degree, so it just kind of became unimportant for me to need that degree. He got out of the military, and—what did happen?

Graham: What year is this?

Friday: Nineteen eighty-nine, because Kristopher was born in 1988. He got out of the military and came home. He got a job with cable television.

Graham: Your husband?

Friday: Yeah. Because being a radio multi-channel (inaudible), it was either the telephone company or the cable company, those were the jobs that you were qualified for. So he had no problem getting a job, but the wages were really bad. So I went to work at my cousin's. My cousin owned a bar and restaurant, and that was a place I could nurse and take my baby to work with me, so I went to work and took my baby with me and worked with my cousin at her restaurant and bar while my husband installed cable TV.

Graham: Was it weird for you to be back in bars and restaurants?

Friday: Not really. I wasn't recruiting. I was there back in my family atmosphere of a bar where we were all protected. My cousin owned the place, so nobody messed with me.

Graham: Right. So how did life unfold from there?

Friday: We had a pretty good time for getting out of the military and being with family again. My dad was kind of adjusted by then, and he was doing okay, and so it wasn't a bad time. He ended up transferring his job from one cable company to another, and when he transferred, he transferred closer to my mom and dad's house, well, my dad's house, and I got a job. It kind of came time for me to go to work. Being at home was one of those things where—my parents used to run a foster home, and a lot of the kids that were raised through that foster home had learning disabilities. They also had life struggles and barriers to success, what now would be considered learning disabilities or minor mental health disorders. But that wasn't something that was even talked about back then. They were just who they were, and there wasn't any attempt at trying to help people that had barriers to success other than, you know, my brother was dyslexic, and we taught him how to read. My sisters had academic problems. They also had problems succeeding in the independent living situation, so there were several periods of time where one or more of my family members would come and move in with me, because they would lose a job or they'd lose a relationship. So being back home got me right back in the center of the hub of—instead of my mother doing all of that work, now I'm doing all of that work. My family's relying on me again. I ended up—I went to work to support my family. My sister had a baby. She needed a job, so my oldest sister failed a relationship, she needed a place to live with her daughter, so they came to live with me, and I went to work, and my husband, we went to work to support not just our family but the extended family as well.

Graham: It's like you're recreating a foster home environment.

Friday: We created the foster home environment, yeah. Living in that place, I don't see an escape from that. I still do it.

Graham: What do you mean?

[02:39:58]

Friday: I still take in strays. I haven't now for—I haven't taken in a stray in—it's almost like quitting smoking or quitting drinking—since Christmas.

Graham: Well, you're doing pretty good. [laughs]

Friday: I've been stray free for five months now, but there's this cat that I have to go rescue, right. [laughter]

Graham: And why do you think you have that sort of want or feeling?

Friday: Well, I believe that you should not judge people, and there's a reason why everybody exists, and if you give people a hand up, not a handout, that it will help them get where they need to be in their life. And a lot of people talk to me, and it touches my heart.

Graham: Yeah. Do you ever feel like you wish the tables were turned, and some of these were to take you in and care for you?

Friday: When my house burned down I felt like that. At times when I've had—I've had a nervous breakdown a couple of times, and when I have had that nervous breakdown it was for that reason. It was time for someone to take care of me, because I had given until I was empty and given more. There seems to be—a lack of an appropriate boundary somehow causes you to give what you would want to give, but what gets taken is more than what you were going to give, and you end up being trapped with your giving, because if you start to reach out, you have to reach out further. It's kind of like opening up a can of worms. You can't just let one worm out; they all get out. And I've been in that situation enough where my resources were taken to the point that I was absolutely depleted, and that became obvious when my father was put in the nursing home. I had taken care of as much as I could take care of, and I collapsed.

Graham: And this is fast forwarding about ten years to 2000?

Friday: Two thousand and one, mm-hm.

Graham: Okay. If you need to take a break or anything while we're going, feel free to just say, when you feel it, okay.

Friday: I got therapy for three weeks in a row, and what they're doing is giving me prolonged exposure to therapy, which is going over and over and over and over this until I stopped being so emotional about it, so that I'm able to take a better look at it. As I'm going through it, they are allowing me to understand rather than judge myself, and it's starting to help, where I don't feel so in the situation, because I've talked about it. Actually I think the process of forgiveness, which is more of a fourth step, it's kind of a fourth step process, and it takes—you can't just forgive yourself and then boom, it's better. There's a process to it.

Graham: What are the four steps?

Friday: Oh!

Graham: Uh-oh.

Friday: First there's the forgiveness. You have to be willing to forgive, so that the guilt can be released. Then you have to actually receive the forgiveness. You have to be willing, and then you have to receive it. And then there has to be a reconciliation or a restitution that happens. It's like one F and three R's. And restitution is part of it, to have something good replace that something bad, for the bad things in life to have a meaning and a purpose, for God to use that bad to give you a tool to help someone else. It's still kind of that cycle of helping, but it's helping on a healthier level so that I'm able to have a choice again rather than just be a force to give more than I am able to give.

Graham: Well, it sounds like you're helping yourself finally, instead of putting all your help somewhere else.

Friday: I feel a lot less obligated to help other people to the extent that I used to feel obligated to

help.

Graham: Good. All right, so let's back up a little bit. You're living with your two sisters, your kids—

Friday: They're living with me, yeah. Well, one sister was babysitting. My one sister was babysitting for me, and my other sister was living with me for a while. My husband was installing cable TV all over the country. There was contracts all over the country, so he was traveling again.

Graham: It must have been when sort of cable was—

Friday: Cable was being installed in new buildings, yeah. They were pre-wiring houses at that time, because cable was really making an explosion then, and that was when the internet came out, in '96, and this was '89.

Graham: Yeah, I feel like around 1990, that's when our family got cable.

[02:45:02]

Friday: And that's when they started pre-wiring it into the buildings, because it was going to be just as much of a household—it was going to replace regular television, the analog signal was going to be replaced with the digital signal, so the technology had moved forward that far. So he was doing cable TV installation, and he had the opportunity to go and work on bigger contracts, which made better money. Then I got a job. It came time for me to go back to work, and I was going to. There was a job being a prison guard at the mental health institution where they housed the criminally insane, and I was—it paid really good money. I was afraid to apply for it, but as a military person I was well qualified, and it was the money that we needed, so I went and applied for that job. And I got all the way through to the part where they were offering me a position, and the day that I was there I heard what happened to the person that I was replacing. One of the inmates had kicked him in the head, and he wasn't going to make it, and I was like, "Please, God, don't make me take a job like this. I have a baby." Well, there was a job in the paper that said, "Self-starter, apply" blah, blah, blah. And I had applied for that job as well, so I went to the interview, and I was just about to accept the position, and I went home and I got sick, and my son had an ear infection, and I got sick. And I'm in bed and all of a sudden the phone rings, and they asked, "Is this Vicky? We're interested in interviewing you for this job that you applied for with Stag Graphics," and I was like, "How much does it pay?" I was sick. I was really short on the phone. "How much does it pay? What kind of hours is it? I've got this offer right now, and yeah, I'm interested, but I've got an offer on the table. But I'll consent to an interview." I went, and I was like, "I would really love to do this job, but you're not paying enough money," so they offered me more money to take that job. So I thankfully didn't have to become a prison guard. I don't think I'd have lasted very long in that environment.

Graham: It doesn't sound like (inaudible).

Friday: I probably would have tried to convert them to God or something, you know, or else I'd

take them home with me like a whipped puppy. I don't know. But I ended up being able to work, and that job was making books.

Graham: Oh, wow.

Friday: With a magnifying glass, a piece of plastic, and an X-Acto knife, and you would hand cut the masks that made cartoons and books. It was a fabulous job. I learned the process of print technology from—my job title was stripper, graphic stripper. So my husband used to think it was funny to tell people that I was a graphic stripper, and I worked at Stag Graphics. Page lay-up artist is what the position became known as, because it was really kind of, you know, I'm not a stripper. I don't take my clothes off, I (inaudible) paper—

Graham: A graphics stripper, at that.

Friday: Right, a graphic stripper, yet. And it was a fascinating job. I absolutely loved it.

Graham: And it sort of took you back to your original path, which was you had gone to school in Oshkosh.

Friday: To be a commercial artist, yeah. That's exactly what a page lay-up artist is the commercial artist. And I progressed in that career, and everything was going great. We lived just far enough away from home to have an appropriate distance. I even had my horse. I even had my horse passion. We rented to own a ten-acre parcel that the people that we were renting to own from, we did a lag contract. They raised race horses, and they asked me to take the brood mares so I could give the brood mares prenatal care and then halter train the babies. So it was the perfect life for me. It lasted almost two and a half years.

Graham: And then what happened?

Friday: I got kicked in the head by a horse.

Graham: Oh. So not a prison, or not someone from the—

Friday: I was in an accident. Yeah.

Graham: So what happened?

Friday: I used anger and alcohol and had bad results. My dad and my husband went to an auction, and I bought a race cart, the kind that the harness race, the trotters. I bought this little race cart for my quarter horse, and my sister's boyfriend had a horse on our property that he was boarding there, and the horse was mean, and him and I didn't get along at all. And my dad and my husband had bought an orange speed boat. When we got home, I needed their help to get my harness on my horse. I needed their help to fix something, and they didn't want to help me. And I had had a couple of drinks at the auction.

[02:50:00]

I got really angry that they weren't going to help me with five minutes, that they had to play with their toys. All I needed was their help for five minutes so I could play with my toy, too, and I always come last, and I was sick of coming last, and I decided to take a stand and get really angry. Well, so we had this altercation, me and my husband had an altercation, and so I told him off and said, "Fine. I'm just going to go riding. I'll be back later on, when I cooled off," and I grabbed my bridle and ran down into the barn. I wasn't looking, and I ran past the horse that didn't like me and surprised him, and he kicked me in the head. Split my—I lost the hearing in my ear and I had a hairline fracture in my skull. I woke up yelling, "Dad, don't shoot the horse," because I thought for sure he was going to kill the horse, and it was kind of my fault. I was drinking. And I really shouldn't have run into the barn, and I was angry, and I got knocked for being angry. I was responsible for that accident. I shouldn't have done what I did. I wasn't thinking. I was drinking. I was angry. I spent six months trying to get my balance back. I was in the hospital for a couple of weeks, and I thought it—

We were trying to have a baby at the time. We were trying to have our second baby. So I was worried that I was pregnant and had a skull fracture and everything else like that. So that kind of—everything crushed in. I had to let family members take care of me, because I couldn't get out of bed. I had to have help to take care of my son. I wasn't pregnant. Then I had trouble getting pregnant, because they said that the kick in the head screwed up my pituitary gland, and I only had one ovary to begin with. So they decided that—I mean, my son, me being able to have my son was a medical—he was a miracle. The doctors had to do some things for me to be able to ovulate and become pregnant in the first place. My husband had a low sperm count, so it was a miracle that I had my son. When I got pregnant with my daughter, it was an absolute gift from God. But in the meantime, I couldn't get pregnant. So I was like, wow, we're just going to have one kid. And the job was going well. And my husband decided that his job wasn't going very well. He was not having a really good time outside the military environment, and he has a diagnosis of manic depression back then, which is now called bipolar disorder, and so lacking structure was never a good environment for him. He failed without structure, which was probably why he ended up marrying me, because I was able to light a fire under him constantly to keep him on the straight and narrow, but the minute my back was turned he was always pulling something.

Graham: Yeah, that's probably why also the military life appealed to him, because it's so much structure.

Friday: That's why he wanted to get out of the military after six years, but then he failed in civilian work. He got back into the same kind of trouble that he was in high school, when he was outside of the military, and he decided that he had always wanted to be in the Coast Guard, and that really in his life is the only time his life really was succeeding was when he had the structure of the military environment. The military is fair. If they're going to screw with somebody, they're going to screw with everybody. They don't necessarily just single out—I mean, there are incidents, but it either sucks for everybody, or everybody gets a—at least it's a pretty—justice gets served more often in the military than it does in the civilian community, because they don't have to go

through the same kind of things that civilian judiciary people have to go through. If you do this, then the consequence is this. You can lose your rank, you can lose your pay, you can go to jail. There's more—the environment is more controlled, and it's just. And those kind of boundaries are important for a lot of people that don't have enough structure in their life. So it was a good environment for him, so he decided he wanted to go back in the Coast Guard.

And I was like, okay. I'm about to buy this company. I'm doing so well as a graphic artist that there was a plan for me to take over and buy the company and make all the money that we needed, the health insurance was paid, and I didn't really want to go back into the military life. So that kind of creates a rift between us, but my Catholic ideals kicked in, and I couldn't possibly be a single mother, so I said okay. He kind of—it was kind of a "I'm joining, or else, anyway." So he joined the Coast Guard, and I gave up getting pregnant with my daughter.

[02:55:00]

About a month after he joined the Coast Guard, I found out I was pregnant. I found out I was pregnant because I started having what everybody thought was a nervous breakdown. They thought I was having a nervous breakdown. I had to take my husband to Milwaukee to join the Coast Guard. It turns out I was four months pregnant at the time. I took him down to join the Coast Guard, and on the way back I started running fevers and getting what I thought were hives. I thought I was having a meltdown, and it was resulting in hives. I went back to work the next morning, and I felt really bad. I dropped him off, you know, and they thought I was just stressed from him leaving. And my boss sent me to the doctor, because I started breaking out in hives all over my body. She sent me to the doctor, and I had chicken pox and I was pregnant. Four months.

Graham: What did you think?

Friday: I went, "The pregnant I can get, but the chicken pox? Where would I have gotten the chicken pox? Are you sure I'm not having a nervous breakdown?" Sure enough, I never had them as a kid.

Graham: Oh, wow. You can get them so much worse when you're an adult.

Friday: I got them bad enough to almost die.

Graham: Oh, my gosh.

Friday: And the only medication I could take was twenty-five milligrams of Benadryl, which was enough to knock me out cold. So my cousin took care of me for like two weeks that I don't remember much of, while I recovered from the chicken pox while I was pregnant. Well, apparently having chicken pox can be toxic to the baby, in the first or the third trimester, so thank God I was four months pregnant, so it was relatively safe, and things kind of worked out. But by the time I was seven months pregnant my relationship wasn't going real well.

Graham: What was happening?

Friday: Jeff was moving on. He really didn't like the home life all that much, and he was moving on with his life. He really didn't take to the kids at home, father with Alzheimer's disease, all of this family stuff. He wanted out, but I was pregnant. So it got really difficult. He was really conflicted, because he wanted the family life, but really it just really wasn't working out, and I wasn't willing to let go of the relationship, and he didn't really want to. So it was a really rough struggle, plus I'm pregnant. He did make it home a week before she was born, because he was in Coast Guard. He had joined the Coast Guard, so he had to do basic training and then schooling, so he was gone while I was pregnant with her, too.

Graham: Again this is another time where you're struggling at home, and you're just left alone a little bit.

Friday: Well, I had family around me at the time. I ended up staying with his mother.

Graham: How was that?

Friday: I really got to know her really well. It actually—it really made us close at the time, you know. There was a lot of unsolved issues and a lot of unanswered questions in my life at the time, and we kind of got to where we were pretty good friends. It kind of helped fill the role of the mother that died on active duty. I kind of really got close with her at the time when I was pregnant with Kayla, and that was in 1991. And shortly after Kayla was born, he got transferred, he got assigned out to Cape May, New Jersey. They were rescuing Haitians. So he ended up needing to go to sea for six months, so he was going to be gone. He had established a relationship with another Coast Guard member at the time, a female, and asked, sought a divorce. He wanted to get divorced. But he didn't tell me until I got all the way out there. So I went there.

Graham: To live or to visit?

Friday: To live. The guy was going to be stationed out there while he was he was out for—you know, you move out there, then if your husband is gone, they were supposed to be gone like six months, and then he had to move on. And so I went out when Kayla was two months old. It was February of 1992. I went out there to move, and the woman that he was in a relationship with showed up.

Graham: At your house?

Friday: She showed up in town, and I caught him.

Graham: Again.

Friday: Yeah. So I called up my dad and "Send me home. I'm done with this. I'll be leaving, and I'm not going back. I'm done with this." And he was really conflicted, because he was convinced he was in love with both of us. Whatever. Well, it's really hard to have a relationship and be gone a lot. And it's more common than you would think for military

servicemen to have an outside relationship, and it's a lot more common than you would think for the wives at home to have someone, because he's gone all the time.

[03:00:02]

Well, I had family. So, you know, it was like—

Graham: It's unnatural I think to be away from—

Friday: To have that much separation is really hard on the relationship, it really is. And I can see that with my older eyes. But living through it, it was just unacceptable. It was just absolutely unacceptable. So I called up my dad, and he came and got us, and we moved home. I didn't file for divorce, and he decided that he didn't want a divorce, and so he flew home and asked me a few months later, you know, I lived with his mother again. And he asked me not to get a divorce, but things—and by then I had kind of a meltdown.

Graham: What happened?

Friday: I just didn't know—there was too much tragedy. I didn't want to make this decision between should I keep him in our lives or should I take the kids and move on. I was just kind of unable to even make the decision, and so we stayed married. He ended up, because of my—I told him "If you leave and go back, I'm going to move away where you can't find us. That's it. I'm done. Or I'll leave the kids with your mother, and I'll go and start my life. Why don't you let your mother raise our kids?"

Graham: Yeah. Because you haven't had this opportunity yet to—

Friday: To do anything with my life, right. Every time I left home, something bad happened. Every time I left home, they called me back home to take care of something at home. So I just kind of had it, and I told him I was going to move to Minnesota and go work in a printing industry there and leave the kids with his mother and disappear. Well, he told the Coast Guard, because he was pretty sure I was serious, and I wasn't sure if I was serious or not.

Graham: Yeah, I was going to ask. Do you think you really could have done that?

Friday: I don't know if I could have gone through with it, but I said it. I even put it on paper. So they stayed him home, because I was mentally unstable. So they moved him to Wisconsin. Well, that fixed everything for about five years, because they stationed him in Wisconsin, and he stopped leaving, leaving, and we had a couple of nice years raising the kids. I went to work for Quad Graphics then when they were building the Hartford plant, and that was really interesting. I had a really nice interesting job. Again, life started to regulate again and be what it was that I thought it was supposed to be. Then he got re-stationed from Milwaukee up to Sheboygan and started not wanting to come home again. He wanted to stay in Sheboygan all the time. Then he volunteered to go be a hero with a rescue of some little kid from Florida that had to be taken back to Haiti. He was a part of that rescue, Then he volunteered to provide the security for the presidential

inauguration, which was a nice—he's got all these career feathers on his cap. He's decorated from here to here, and as far as his work life was, he had a great work life, you know. But I felt like I was just sacrificing my life over and over and over again, and I was beginning to really get bitter about it.

Graham: How were you doing with drinking during this time?

Friday: I have always drank to a certain extent. Usually in a bad situation I'll drink. When my life is going well, I don't drink. When my life is not going well, I drink.

Graham: Well, it's a great way to not feel how badly it's going.

Friday: It numbs it a little, but I'm not going to condone the activity, because it's not for everybody. And there's consequences. There's consequences to smoking cigarettes, too.

Graham: So he's off and about, and you're in Sheboygan?

Friday: He's in Sheboygan, and I ended up giving up my job, and I liked my job and the house that we were living in, and I liked the house. I liked the life that we had. I gave up the life that we had and moved to Sheboygan, because that's where he was. And I had signed a piece of paper when he joined the Coast Guard that said that I agreed that my job would not stand in the way of his career. So we moved to Sheboygan. We put the kids in parochial school, and I found some friends, and so I was actually kind of okay there. It was not as bad as I thought it was going to be. I stayed at home for a while and decided to become a professional decorator. So I started a career with Home Interiors, as an independent consultant, doing those in-home shows with the decorating items. I was really good at it, and the kids loved it. It was like having Christmas every week.

[03:05:01]

Some of my family members came to live with me, so there was that drama again where I had family members living with us again. And that was kind of okay. But then Jeff started the eloping thing again after—we're up to like 1996 by now, because we must have moved there in '94 or '95. By '96, '97, things aren't going so well again with me with my relationship with my service man. The command there was the good ole boys that they'd have their meetings down at the strip club, and I thought that was inappropriate. I mean, they had their own bar stools down there. So here we're back in the same sexual immorality situation, and my kids are going to parochial school. I didn't agree with it, and I couldn't get out of it because he was okay with the immoral sexual life, and I wasn't. It was a lifestyle that he was okay with, and I'm not judging him for it, but it was not okay with me.

I had tried to go as far along as I could, and my conscience just kept bothering me. This shattered my belief system that I believed in monogamy, and I didn't believe in all the rest of that stuff. And even in the military, when it became—I still have the built from the military from when I had to do—I mean, that was the first time I cheated on my husband was when my training NCO made me do that, and after that it was like I was damaged goods. Because my boss forced me to. So all of those memories came back in

spades of here I am being a hypocrite because I was guilty way back then, and this just must be my punishment in life for having cheated on my husband while my mother was dying of cancer. It just must be my punishment in life, to always have to deal with this horrible aspect in life where there must be no one that's able to live a life without sexual immorality in it. It just must be everywhere, because I can't get away from it.

Then my father was struggling with Alzheimer's disease. He started having symptoms the year my daughter was born, but they got bad enough that the court system started getting involved. It became necessary for somebody to become his guardian. My sister tried to be. She's a nurse. She tried to be his personal guardian, but it really interfered with her life, too, plus it was hard for her to have a living in geriatrics and then come home and take care of a geriatric patient. There was no break there for her. So I ended up consenting to be the guardian of both the person and estate, because my father went on a vacation down to Georgia to see his sister, and he got picked up by the mental health authorities because he had a meltdown and didn't know who he was, didn't know where he was. They tied him down, you know, in a mental home, and we had to go get him. And when he came back it was obvious that he couldn't be alone anymore. So I went to court and became a guardian of both the person and the estate, and my relationship was over.

Graham: With your husband?

Friday: So I made the decision to move home, get divorced, move in with my dad, sell our assets, part ways, start over, take care of my dad, and raise my kids as a single mother. Kayla was six, and Kristopher was nine, and Dad was two. What I did was repopulate the farm with the menagerie of little hobby animals that we had. We grew food, we milked a cow, we raised pigs, chickens, we had ponies. We had that farming, like we made homemade maple syrup. We took our little products around to our closed family group, and they would help with expenses or feed, because it was home-raised, really good food, and we spent our existence and the kids' childhood raising my dad. It helped get through the pain. That's where the cartoon stories, the animal stories—because my dad and my kids and myself, with my dad having a mental health disorder, living out in the environment that we were living in, and my dad was always really good with animals and really kind anyway. Our animals didn't act like animals. They acted like people. They lived in the same environment. It didn't matter what species they were. They came in and out of the house. My dad would let them in the house, out of the house. Some mornings I'd get up, and the pony and Dad were picking out breakfast in the refrigerator, or a raccoon, or a deer, or a skunk, or a potbellied pig, or a chicken, or whatever. We had this storybook life that you only see on cartoons.

[03:10:06]

Graham: Yeah, I was just thinking about that scene in Cinderella when she's getting ready for the ball, and the mice are—

Friday: There you go, and the mice are helping her. That was our life. We actually were living the fairy tale, the children and I and dad. We were living the fairy tale. That was probably the most blessed, happy, content period, because it was kind of like a shell

around the storm that was going on around us. Alzheimer's disease was not well thought of. People didn't really understand. When my mother had cancer, they thought that was contagious. They thought Alzheimer's disease was contagious. But after a while they started questioning my mental ability when I would share what we were doing at home. People would go, "You're doing what? You have animals in your house?" and then the rumor mill would fly, and it got really unreasonable. It wore on me after a while, and there was too much. When the divorce became final, instead of being able to be a stay-at-home mom, I had to go back to work, because we didn't have enough income. So I was doing all of that, plus working a full-time job. That lasted for nine months before my doctor said, "That's it. You can't be supermom anymore. You're going to die. You're going to die."

Graham: It sounds like you were spreading yourself way too thin. So what happened?

Friday: I collapsed. I decided, okay, I'll take the doctor's advice. There was problems at work because the company that I was working for actually was selling out, and so there became stress at work. It was fun to go there to get a break from the kids and the house, even though the babysitters were $550 a week. It was a break to go to work, to give me a break from my home environment so that I had enough energy to do both jobs. But things started getting really stressful and unpleasant at work. Of course, I've always been somewhat of a whistleblower. I mean, I didn't blow the whistle back then, but because I didn't blow that whistle, I blew a lot of other whistles in my life. I blew a whistle of sexual harassment at that paper that I worked for in Sheboygan, and it turned out that they were sold out, too, and I was successful with the sexual harassment complaint that I complained there, because they were compensating the men two-thirds again as much as they were giving me. And I proved sexual harassment in that workplace. Well, it was the same industry, it was just a different paper. In fact, I think the same paper was buying them out. But they bought out the paper I was working for, and people started leaving like rats leaving a sinking ship. I kind of went, you know what, I've seen this before, and something smells rotten in Denmark. I wrote a letter to the boss outlining how difficult it would be for us to be in his shoes, and I was hauled into the office, and he chewed me out for a good ninety minutes.

I was like, I can't take this anymore. So I went to the doctor's office, and he said, "You're having a meltdown. You need to quit your job. You're going to have to go on a vacation." I was like, "How can I do that? My dad just went in the nursing home, and I just bought the farm I was born and raised in. There's issues with the health department, because it was originally—it was an unofficial dump site, back in the day, and so all of that had to be cleaned up. There was too many unregistered vehicles. The house was not up to code, because it was homemade. I mean, it was like—imagine like a little house in the prairie with plumbing and electric, but all homemade. Our entire existence was homemade. My mom and dad actually with their own two hands built it, figured out what needed to be done. My mom did the carpentry work, my dad did the plumbing, the wiring, the electrical, the cement work. He was a mechanic at the foundry. You know, he was a mechanic for a construction company. And they were smart enough to figure things out on their own, so they didn't like have it built, they built it themselves. And the foster kids, that was part of our activity was to help build that house and help run the farm. The animals that we got on the farm were the ones that the farmers were going to

kill, like the piglets that had hernias. We'd get them and put a button on their belly and fix the hernia and raise the pig. So we got everybody's trash and turned it into treasure. That's why I originally called my cartoon—

Graham: Right, I remember that.

Friday: —*Trash into Treasure*, because we were the white trash, because we were a bunch of foster kids, a bunch of kids nobody wanted, you know, and we had a bunch of homemade stuff that second handed and discarded. My mom and dad made gold out of straw, all their lives.

Graham: Yeah. It sounds like that's been a recurring theme for your whole life. I also think that sexual assault has that result on someone. I think that you feel like they are someone who'll just be crumpled up and thrown out, like trash. And so it sounds like a wonderful way to recover from that feeling.

[03:15:04]

Friday: I felt discarded most of my life by most of the people in it. My parents didn't discard me though, and a lot of my teachers didn't. A lot of my teachers saw value in me. But I've felt discarded a number of times in my life.

Graham: And how do you think you're overcoming that now, if you are?

Friday: I try not to see it that way, even though it feels that way sometimes. I found that if I tell people that I like them and feel comfortable around them, sometimes I've found out that they're not discarding me, they feel intimidated by me because I am really mart. I have a new-found respect and friendship from my pastor. We got a female pastor, and I was like, wow, it's the bling lady. Oh, my God! She looks just like my mother-in-law. She's all together, she's got it all together. She's got her life just going the way it's supposed to go. She's perfect in every way, you know. She's the perfect grandma person, she's the perfect person. She's a lawyer! And a pastor! How can you get better than that? She's got to have the most perfect life in all the face of the earth, you know. I don't measure. I'm worthless in her sight, as far as I'm concerned. If I say one or two words, she'll give me a real short answer and brush me off the other way, which is typical, cause why should somebody even notice me, you know. I'm the lowliest thing that I've met in a long time, you know.

Well, I feel that way around all of these fancy city people, or, you know, people that can afford to throw stuff away, and people that don't have their whole entire house furnished with stuff that came from the dump, and people that have house built by professionals, not have to make it yourself, because the stuff that I have to make, you can tell it's homemade. You can tell it's not professional though, you didn't buy it in a store. I didn't even have a—my mom made my lunch bucket out of a Shedd's Peanut Butter can, and it was cool till the kids picked on it. But she made our clothes. It wasn't popular to have homemade clothes. When my kids went to school, it was popular. Everything I made for them, the kids just loved it, so I got self-esteem from my children liking my work. But in my own age group, I'm still at this place where I haven't gone there yet. And all of a

sudden we get this female pastor, and I'm trying to measure up to her, and it's not working very well. So incidents happened where I tried to have the opportunity to talk to her, because oh, my God, she's a lawyer, you know.

Graham: This is recently?

Friday: Yeah, this is present day. I end up finding out that she's a victim of sexual assault. I'm like, how could she possibly be a victim of sexual assault? She's a lawyer.

Graham: It doesn't matter. I don't think assault—

Friday: I figure out I've got my own stereotype. Well, after I started going back through this therapy that I'm going through now, I got a female psychologist. She started explaining to me how I can unlock this puzzle and get on with the next phase of my life, because I'm stuck again, right now in my life. I'm stuck between work and school, financially, either going under or being successful. I've got a series of books written that nobody has ever seen. I've got all of this creative material. I've got cabinets full of this stuff. When I die and they go through my diary, it will be like looking at Anne Frank's, because I have documented all of this stuff, because I wrote and illustrated, because I didn't have anybody to talk to. I talk to Jesus on paper, or my kids, or whoever. I've written tons of letters to people I've never sent. And she looked at me. She finally, last week, after I got through the military sexual trauma thing, I started crying and I couldn't stop. I cried all week. Then I went to the next session, and I was still crying, and this was just this last week. Then over Mother's Day, she went to deliver a sermon, and she told her story, and she collapsed, and they had to take her out of the church. They thought she was having a heart attack. I think she was overwhelmed by having to share her story with the parishioners, because that's how I would feel. She finally fell. I saw somebody in a position of authority like that, feel the same way I did, that telling that story makes you pass out.

[03:20:00]

They can't continue. You can lose your voice and consciousness even, to just be overwhelmed by realizing that that many people are now able to judge you because you've given them all this personal information that can be judged, and criticized, and scrutinized, and ridiculed, and that's who you are.

Graham: Well, you're not just talking about it, you're reliving it, and remembering it, so it's like it's happening all over again.

Friday: It does.

Graham: And so I think it's great you were telling me about how you're going to expose your therapy, and so when you start to name something like this, I think you can kind of get control over it. It becomes something that you can begin to handle.

Friday: My last psychologist, the male, he had to take me back through—it was a rapid-eye-movement desensitization procedure.

Graham: EMD or EMR [EMDR, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing], something like that.

Friday: He would have to actually get—I'd have to have a pulse in each hand in order to bring my body to go back there and experience it and then bring me back forward so that I could solve the problem, and I would be sick for an entire week after I did that.

Graham: Yeah. It's very intense.

Friday: There would be emotions, and I'd take acupuncture to balance my body, because I would be hyper sensitive, and hyper vigilant. I can't believe—although I believe it, because I've lived through it—how much of an effect that has on your whole existence, and the psychologist would explain to me that even if I consciously tried to block what happened, my body still remembers, and when I get into a situation that's similar, that my body will react to it without me even—

Graham: You get freaked out.

Friday: That happens. So it's been really important. For her to become human, we had a conversation, and she looked at me and she said, "How smart are you? I bet you're off the charts." And I was like, "I don't know." Humility is probably the better part of valor. I do have a lot of information that I think that not a lot of people have, that I've been able to connect the dots because I was musically gifted, and because I was artistically talented, and grammatically exposed. I was good at English and math. I was kind of an all-around well academic, that I probably—even though I have a hard time believing it, that I probably am one of the more talented people that I know.

Graham: Where do you think you'd be if you didn't have all these tools? If you didn't have art, if you didn't have music?

Friday: I'd be a regular person. I'd be normal.

Graham: You think so.

Friday: If I didn't have all this talent, I'd be normal, yeah.

Graham: Is that appealing to you at all?

Friday: Do you know what? It's kind of hard to have being normal appealing when I would miss out on all the things that I want to do. For years I wished I was normal, for a long time. Growing up in school I wished I was normal. Whenever people ridicule me, I wish I was normal. But ultimately I find that I have more of an obligation to help other people feel comfortable around me than I really thought I did, because I felt so uncomfortable around everybody else, because I thought they thought I was stupid. The more I felt they thought I was stupid, the more I studied. So if somebody would ridicule my piano playing, I would be like, "How can you ridicule my piano playing? Are you any good at it?" Well (inaudible). You can always meet somebody that's more talented in any one

area than you are. You always can. And usually if I start feeling puffed up about how good I am at something, I'll meet somebody that's much better at it than I am. But I think that if I wouldn't have lost all my self-esteem I probably would have been able to capitalize on my talents. I may have even become a major figure, you know.

Graham: It's hard to imagine different paths that life could have taken.

Friday: I mean, I don't think I'd have been as off the wall. If I'd a focused on nothing but piano, I could have probably been Liberace. If I'd a focused on nothing but country music, I could have probably given Reba McEntire and Dolly Parton a whirl or two. Because before I lost my voice, I could imitate most of the major country artists, including Hank Williams.

Graham: Oh, wow.

Friday: Dolly Parton, Tanya Tucker. I could do Patsy Cline. I used to be able to do voices, singing voices, and sound a lot—I used to be able to imitate other people's singing voices.

Graham: Oh, wow.

Friday: So they were telling me there's a possibility that if they fix this little polyp, I might be able to sing again.

[03:25:00]

Graham: That would be nice.

Friday: It would be fun to imitate those voices one more time.

Graham: Yeah. One more thing I'll say about therapy, and I can probably take this out of the tape later, is have you ever heard of this thing called neurofeedback? It's a little bit similar—

Friday: I've heard of biofeedback.

Graham: Yeah, it's a little bit like biofeedback where they hook you up, or they just put sort of like a shower cap on your head. It's not like they plug it into you. And you do sort of these video games for your brain, and you retrain the synapses in your brain to fire correctly. So if you have anxiety, and you watch sort of like a Pac-Man, like if you're in a maze, if your brain gets anxious the Pac-Man will stall in the maze. If your brain finds an un-anxious place, you'll get rewarded by the Pac-Man going through the maze. So if you're positive reinforcement, it retrains the synapses in your brain to fire correctly, you know, eliminating depression, bipolar anxiety, trauma. I think it should be on the cover of every magazine and newspaper.

Friday: Do you know when I get upset my computer freezes?

Graham: It's like that, and it would unfreeze as soon as you get un-upset.

Friday: Whenever I get angry my cell phone disconnects. So I've had technology has done that to me accidentally a few times. If I get angry, it drains the battery out of that cell phone.

Graham: Well, I think neurofeedback would be something to at least look into.

Friday: It sounds interesting, yeah.

Graham: Do you feel like we've gotten the chronology or are there things we're missing? Do you want to walk me through?

Friday: I think that the only thing really that I'd like to see is the opportunity to be able to share some of the music and visual aspect of my life, because I can sit here and draw for hours. How many people want to sit and listen to an interview that's this long? You know. I mean, what, six people are going to listen to this? But to be able to have an avenue for the work that I've created that might be able to help others, I'd like to be able to have meaning to my life, to have that become a reality.

Graham: I think there's this woman you should be in touch with. Her name is Yvette, and she's actually a veteran herself. She's a little bit younger. And she does printmaking with veterans where she has them tell their story and then do a print. So I wonder if there's sort of a collaboration there with the two of you. In the meantime, if you want to leave the jump drive with me, I can pass it over to the archives manager, and she can decide what to do with it? So I think those are going to be good next steps. So when we go upstairs—or maybe I'll—you get e-mail, right?

Friday: Mm-hm.

Graham: Okay. I'll e-mail you Yvette's information. If you want to leave the jump drive with me, if that's okay, I'll hand it over to Gail.

Friday: No, it's not okay for me to leave the jump drive here. There's more than just that on it.

Graham: Maybe I'll plug it into the computer, and then put it on my desktop. I'll just save the information that you want me to have.

Friday: Yeah, I could let you copy off the PowerPoint, because I have to—there's two or three versions of it.

Graham: Okay. That's what we'll do. We'll go upstairs to my computer, and I'll save a copy on my desktop. I just have a couple sort of reflection questions, unless there's other things you wanted to bring me up to speed about.

Friday: I can't really think of anything. You've been kind of a load of horses, the horse therapy aspect of it is something that I do know, too.

Graham: Tell me about that.

Friday: We started using horses for therapy before it was popular. I had a horse when I was eleven years old, and I had her for twenty-five years. We lost her in that storm that took the house, when we ended up in the homeless shelter. And I think that there's a direct connection and significant connection to recovery for people that do animal therapy, and so I think it's important to continue that aspect in society. I've had five therapy animals now, but not because I need five, because five babies wandered into our life over the course of our life, and once you have a baby you kind of keep it. And animals never grow up and get married. So accepting a horse is a thirty-year obligation, or it can be. That aspect has helped an awful lot, too, to interact with the horses with people. I find that their fight or flight or freeze response speaks to people without having to use words, and I've been sharing my animals with people in the community for quite some time now, and it's really helped a lot of people get better.

Graham: How does it work? Say I came to you for a session of animal therapy or horse therapy. What would we do?

Friday: There are people who do that, they have a program. I'm not a structured person where that's concerned, so it depends on the individual. There's five horses that live in my pasture, and usually a person that wants to meet the horses will align with one of their personality types.

[03:30:04]

Then it kind of lets me know where their issues are at, because they're all so significantly different that whichever one they align with makes a big difference as to how that's going to work out for them, and what they really came there to get. I've had people come, and they'll come once, or a half a dozen times. I'll have some of them don't even ride, they just need to face their fear. But if somebody wants to, like, get up on the big horse, their fear of falling, or their fear of being taken off with, their fear of being out of control all comes into play, because it's always a possibility. And to get up there and then connect with the animal, and feel their balance, and then feel their freedom, and then be able to let go and be in tune with the animal, I've watched people lose their fear. So a lot of times a fear of a horse is an irrelevant fear in the first place. So it helps me to use the horses to help other people, because it helps me help them release their fear, and it's a place where I feel safe. And the horses have more appropriate boundaries sometimes than I do. A lot of times they can tell something about someone's character that I can't. So it's a safer environment for me, too.

Graham: Well, I guess just some wrap-up questions. This is the Veterans Museum, so looking back after everything you've been through, how do you feel about your military experience.

Friday: I think I'm still serving. I don't regret anything that's happened in my life, because I've been able to use that to help my children face issues that they're facing, or help other people, or people help me. I mean, life, it's a journey and a process, and everybody has a significant number of issues to get through in their life. So I think the military way of life is probably not a bad experience for probably everybody to go through. I think that it's beneficial to understand what it's like to be a veteran. People who have a veteran's

mentality have more of a sense of perseverance. They have more of a sense of resiliency, and they tend to be able to get through some of the harder things in life, because they have that framework of that basic core training on getting through something, better than a lot of civilians do. So I really think that's beneficial for people to be in the military. I still do. I would almost think that if I got to make a rule, that it would be a mandatory exposure for people to at least be exposed to it. I think it's kind of important if we're going to stand on the laurels of being American and understand what that's like and live in a country where we feel superior to others, whether we like it or not, that we should understand why we feel that way, you know. Because getting into this global economy, I think we're going to get our butts handed to us a couple of times over cultures that don't believe that they should be making all these rules. For people to learn to live together, they need to understand everyone else's culture as well, and there's a lot of diversity where you don't get so pigeonholed and just being in one culture. You at least get exposed to a lot of other people's beliefs, but you have one common thread of operation. So I still think the military is a beneficial thing for people to do.

Graham: Okay.

Friday: I don't regret it.

Graham: Why is that?

Friday: I still serve in the Veterans Administration.

Graham: Oh, yeah, I was going to ask about that. Are you sort of connected to other veterans or involved in veterans organizations?

Friday: I've become, now recently meeting other women, and I still have a desire to be connected to the Veterans Administration. I would like my vocational rehabilitation to result in a position called resiliency training development coordinator. I think that's the job that I could do, because it's the job title I created for me. So I would like to actually be able to be a resiliency training development coordinator and help develop programs for people to get through situations in their life, whether they're veterans or civilians. That's kind of one of my future goals, and why I wrote the business plan that I wrote in a way to focus my materials and share them. I think that that would be a good venue to share them in.

[03:35:00]

Graham: I agree. All right. Well, anything else before I turn off the recorder?

Friday: Thank you for interviewing me.

Graham: Well, thank you.

Friday: It's been an interesting experience. I hope that this interview helps people.

Graham: I think it will. I think it will. All right.

[End of Friday.OH1736] [End of interview]