

## Interview with Bon Bui

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Interviewer: Cassidy Williams

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Williams: Could you start by stating your name, age and where you are from?

Bui: Yes, I am from Vietnam. My age is about sixty-nine years old. My first name is Bon. My last name is Bui.

Williams: Can you pronounce your full name for me?

Bui: Bon Bui, the family name.

Williams: I know you're from Vietnam, but when were you born and where?

Bui: I was born in 1946 in Quảng Bình in the province of North Vietnam.

Williams: Can you spell that home town for me?

Bui: Quảng Bình.

Williams: Can you tell me a little bit about growing up there and your family and your childhood in that town?

- Bui: In 1954, I had to flee Quảng Bình, North Vietnam because in that time my country had to divide into two parts. From the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel to up north belonged to the Vietnamese Communists. Down south belonged to French colonists. My family couldn't live with the Communists, so my parents made the decision to flee the north. In that time, I was just about eight years old in third grade. I had to flee with my father from Quảng Bình to Huế, the very old capital of national Vietnam. When we went to the south, I got an education from the south. When I grew up until I finished high school, my country needed me to defend our freedom, so I joined the Army. I entered into the Vietnamese National Military Academy. I spent four years in the military academy and graduated as a second lieutenant in 1966. From that time, I joined many operations to defend my country against the Viet Cong.
- Williams: Can we go back a little? Can you tell me about your family? Tell me about your parents. Did you have siblings? I'm trying to get the context of your childhood.
- Bui: My parents, if we didn't flee the Communists they would have killed my parents and my family because my family were farmers, but we were rich. Communists didn't like people to have property or money or anything. They want the people to have nothing, so they will kill everybody who has money or land. My parents made the decision to flee.
- Williams: When you guys came to South Vietnam were you again farmers? Were you again wealthy? What was your life like when you were in South Vietnam?
- Bui: You know we had to leave everything in the North. We couldn't bring any more money, just a little bit. When we came to the South, six months later my father died because he was old. At that time, he was about seventy-two years old. My mother had to take care of us. We got supplies from the South Vietnamese government. My mother also had to work very hard to take care of us, so we have enough food and enough everything to go to school. I had a chance to finish high school.
- Williams: How many siblings did you have? You said she was taking care of us. How many brothers, sisters?
- Bui: I have twelve brothers and sisters. Seven brothers and five sisters. I am the youngest son. My oldest brother was a general of the South Vietnamese Army, and at that time my oldest brother was a major of the national military. In the summer, my brother grew up and were old enough to join the Army. In that time, we still had about six, two sons and four girls, so my mom had to take care of six people.
- Williams: Were all of your brothers in the Army?
- Bui: Right, including me. That means seven, seven sons in my family joined the Army to defend South Vietnam and South Vietnamese.

Williams: You kept saying you had to join the Army because you had to defend your country. What were you defending your country from?

Bui: I told you before, we had to divide into two parts in 1954 due to an agreement, but the Vietnamese Communists still want to occupy and take over South Vietnam. Our government needed all the people to join the Army to defend and protect the South Vietnamese because the North Vietnamese, the Vietnamese Communists, they want to occupy us. That is the main reason we had to join the Army and defend my country.

Williams: Can you tell me a little bit more about your military training?

Bui: The first training was I had four years in Military National Academy. I graduated with the rank of second lieutenant. After two years in the battlefield, I got in a big fight, and my government chose me to have training in the U.S. I came here around mid-1968 for U.S. Marine Corps training. In July 1970, I graduated from the U.S. Marine Corps and went back to Vietnam and fight again the Communists.

Williams: What was your first impression of America coming here to the Marine academy?

Bui: When I first came here, I came to San Antonio. After six months over there, we moved to Virginia, Quantico. At this place, we really had training about U.S. Marine Corps.

Williams: What was it like being in America? Tell me a little bit about your interaction with some of the soldiers or just being in America for the first time. How is that different from your experiences in Vietnam?

Bui: I think it's not too much different, just different. When I had training here, I had enough food. I had enough everything, but training in Vietnam we are short a little bit. But almost the same, we had very hard training: night and day, rain and sunny. We had to train, outside and indoors but not different.

Williams: What did you think of the American Marines and soldiers you worked with?

Bui: You know the U.S. Marine Corps is one of the strongest forces in the world. The U.S. Marine Corps joined with us in the Vietnam War, very very hard. I graduated from the U.S. Marine Corps. I still feel it is easier than the training in Vietnam. In Vietnam, we have training very hard, but we have to try to overcome. The training in the U.S., the first thing is we feel very safe. In Vietnam, the military base may be attacked at any time by the NVA, the Viet Cong. We are training, but we are ready to fight. It's a little bit different like that. In the U.S., we don't have to worry about safety until in the battlefield. In the base it is very safe but not in Vietnam. We have to be ready to fight at anytime, anywhere.

Williams: Besides just what you thought about the training, what did you think about the Marines themselves, the actual people you fought alongside?

Bui: You know the U.S. Marines and the South Vietnamese Marines, we need to volunteer. If we are volunteering, of course we have high morals. From high morals, we are brave, so Marines are brave. We are brave. That means that only Marines. I mean all the soldiers. We have to be brave because we have to fight at any time.

Williams: Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to fight the Viet Cong?

Bui: You know in my life, I estimate I have about sixty times had to fight with the NVA, small ones, average, and big fights. We have three big fights, very very big fights. The first was in 1968. We call it the Tet Offensive. The Communists betrayed us. They signed an agreement to cease fire for about three days for the people to celebrate a happy New Year. In that time, we don't have any operation to destroy them. We ceased fire. We stopped it, but the Communists betrayed us. Exactly the first of the three-day cease-fire at twelve o'clock am they attacked all of South Vietnam, around thirty-six provinces and more than eighty districts at the same time. They attacked at the same time. In that time, we believe we have a three-day cease-fire. We give a mission to soldiers to relax and enjoy with the family to celebrate a happy new year. Suddenly, North Vietnam attacked us. It was a very big fight. At that time, I was wounded twice. I wounded twice. Also at that time, I was promoted to the first lieutenant. I had to fight very hard in that time. After that, I put them back out of Saigon, my capital. I flowed through the Huế city and joined the U.S. Marine Corps and pushed the NVA out of Huế.

Williams: During that attack where were you exactly in South Vietnam?

Bui: The first thing in Saigon. At that time, I had to fight to put them out of my capital in Saigon. About one month later, I had to fly to Huế because Huế is very dangerous over there. There were a lot of NVA over there, so we had to fly back to Huế and fight with the NVA and put them out of Huế, too.

Williams: You mentioned you were wounded twice. Can you tell me a little bit about what exactly that meant?

Bui: When I was at the base, the NVA had captured it. I had to re-capture it. I was wounded in my eyes. Right now you see I have to wear these because the lights always make it look like I'm crying. A week later, I got shot at the almost stomach. I was in a hospital just about fifteen days. After that, I fly to Huế like I told you to fight with the NVA and let them out of Huế too.

Williams: What exactly happened to your eye?

Bui: You know one piece of B-40 hit in my eye here. The first time my face full of too much blood. My corpsman said, "Oh commander, your injuries are very

serious. You need medevac.” I said “No. I am still here.” Until the blood poured out very much and I felt tired, they brought me to the hospital. After they cleaned my eyes and face, the doctor said you were very lucky. It just hit right at the end here. After then, he took it. I had to rest about one week and continued fighting. I got wounded again. Also talk about lucky. About one week I could continue the operation. You know if we are a commander and we got wounded but not seriously, we had to stay to command our soldiers. If we leave them, we don’t enough officers to command.

Williams: How many people were you in charge of?

Bui: When I was platoon leader, I commanded about twenty-six soldiers. In that time, I was a battalion commander. I commanded about eight hundred South Vietnamese Marines.

Williams: You talked about wounds that you had yourself. Do you know if you ever wounded or maybe even fatally wounded the Viet Cong?

Bui: I couldn’t count. If the Viet Cong were wounded, I also took care of them the same way I took care of my soldiers. I’m ready to rescue to medevac them to the hospital and treat them like I treat my soldiers because when they are wounded they are not my enemy. They are just my enemy when they are strong. When they are face-to-face with us, they are the enemy. When the wounded or killed, I don’t think it’s my enemy, so I treat them the same as I treat my soldiers.

Williams: Did you lose a lot of your own men?

Bui: It’s a sure thing. On the last day, April 29<sup>th</sup> 1975, when that time I commanded eight hundred South Vietnamese Marines, we defended the highway number fifteen, southeast of Saigon. I got an order from my General. He said, “You must delay the Communists. Don’t let them move to Saigon with any price.” You know the military like that order very, very strictly. With any price, that means we have to be killed, but we couldn’t move. We couldn’t withdraw. I ask why like that general? He said, “We have a special mission.” The South Vietnamese Marines had a special mission to delay the approaching of North Vietnam, Viet Cong, to Saigon at least twenty-four hours for the U.S. embassy officials to have enough time to withdraw out of Vietnam.

Williams: What was it like getting that order and knowing that was your mission? Can you tell me a little bit about what you were thinking?

Bui: I was thinking this is my duty. You know I was a militarist. When I receive an order, that means I have to do it. I was a militarist, but in my heart in that time I can disobey the order because I know it’s about time. It’s the last minute. We lost the war, but I still keep my orders very strictly because I was taught American soldiers and America I owe my life. I don’t want in my heart the

NVA, the Viet Cong, to capture or kill some American in Saigon. I made the decision to protect and defend and stop the approaching Communists. I don't want them to get to Saigon and kill some American. I would like to appreciate the sacrifices of all the American soldiers who lost their lives for the Vietnam War. In my feelings, it was the time that I could help America. That's it.

Williams: How did the mission end up going? What ended up happening with the mission?

Bui: You know we delayed. In that time, we ran out of everything. What do you think of a soldier who runs out of ammunition? What do you think of a tank that runs out of gas? We ran out of everything. In this time, the North Vietnamese Communists got four billion in military supplies from the Soviet Union, Red China and fourteen countries in Europe. In that time, South Vietnam got nothing in military supplies from America even though my president sent a letter to Mr. Richard Nixon to borrow about three billion to buy military aid. We would repay it. At that time, we promised we would repay the debt, but everything was done. Nothing, not even a dollar of military aid for South Vietnam, so I cannot describe my feelings. I feel sad, very very sad. Back to the mission that I had to defend the highway fifteen, we had nothing. The Communists had a lot of supplies, and they attacked us. The NVA ran over our heads, and they killed a lot of my soldiers. Some of my soldiers wanted to run, but they saw me still over there. In the battlefield, when the soldiers see a commander still over there, they stay over there. If the commander is gone, they will run. I was still over there, just about fifteen minutes we can stop it a little bit. After that, we have to move back a little bit and stop it again. It's how we can delay about twenty-four hours. In that time, my battalion we lost about over two hundred South Vietnamese Marines.

Williams: How long did you end up delaying them for?

Bui: I can delay them about thirty-six hours. After that, we had to surrender because we ran out of everything. The new president he gave us orders to surrender, so we have to obey.

Williams: Can you tell me a little bit about surrendering? What was that like? What happened to you?

Bui: When we have to surrender, the Viet Cong came to my base. They asked me how many weapons I had and how many everything. I said I don't know. You can get it. He said, "You have to talk with me." I said, "No, I don't want to." He said, "You want to be killed?" I said, "No problem. You can if you want." Maybe I was lucky a little bit. That guy didn't kill me. They didn't kill me. After that, I had to change my uniform. I wore the civilian and went back to Saigon because my base was about twenty kilometers from Saigon. I had to go back to Saigon. My soldiers had a motorcycle, and they gave me a ride to Saigon. After that, about two days later the Communists came to my house in

Saigon and captured me. They put me in prison that they called re-education camp. They said, "Ok, you guys, the enlisted men and the NCO, just about three days to ten days for class, and officers about one month." It was a trick. The first time I'm very innocent. I thought the Communists just give us about one month for class for school and learn about their government, their policy. I thought it was ok. I thought like that, but after one month they didn't say anything. After one year, they say nothing. After three years, they also say nothing. Until ten and half years later, they released me out of prison that they called re-education camp. It was a concentration camp. That means the first time they threw me in prison about ten and a half years. When the U.S. government meet the president, Ronald Reagan interfered with the Communist government and let all the POW, prisoners of war like us, out of prison. They released me out.

Williams: Can you tell me what the prison conditions were like?

Bui: Terrible. They put us in the forest, no nothing. Not anything that looked like houses, food, nothing. They put us in the forest, and they surrounded us by the police and soldiers. We had to do everything. We cut the bamboo trees. We cut the wood, built the houses. We had to make the plan and plant the food. They kept supplies for us about three months with very small food like that. It just about looked like coals, sweet potatoes, very little rice. We don't have any fish or meat. About in one month, we have one piece of meat like this. They say it's about 100 grams. It looked like how many pounds I don't know. They say they feed us 100 grams per month, but just about one piece like this (the size of his thumb) per month. They let all the countries of the world know they fed the prisoners of war and did good, 100 grams meat, 100 grams of sugar, but we had nothing. Everything they captured, they ate it. We had nothing. Before I went to the concentration camp prison, I was about 65 kilo. That means around 140 pounds. When I released out of prison, I was just about seventy pounds. That means about thirty-five kilo. In one year, 365 days, we were hungry all of them. We don't have any day for our stomach to be full. We had to plant everything. We plant the vegetables, but they take all the fresh. If they liked the vegetables, they ate everything. After that, they give us the extra.

Williams: Where did you sleep in the prison?

Bui: One person had space about sixty centimeters. That means around one yard. A space like this for each person. Some had to lay down on the cement like that. Some had to lay done on the bamboo bed. They make the beds with bamboo.

Williams: So you're hungry. You're sleeping on the ground. What kept you going in prison?

Bui: You know the reason. We can eat everything, insects. Even the small insects like that, if we catch it we have to eat it. Because if we ate it, we have some

protein to survive because they don't give us any protein. One more thing that is very, very bad. They plant the vegetables, but you know how they fertilize it? I wonder can I talk the truth here or not? If I talk the truth, it's terrible. If I don't tell the truth, I feel it's not true. You know they fertilize the vegetables that we plant by urine and shit. Every morning we have to carry some barrel like that with shit and urine in it, and we have to mix it with water and mix it. After that, we bring it to the vegetables. A lot of prisoners, a lot of my friends got diarrhea. When they got diarrhea, they had no medication, no medication, no toothbrush, nothing. It was very easy to get ill and get killed.

Williams: You talked about the insects that helped keep you going physically. What kept you going mentally? What kept you going and was there any source of hope? What were you thinking while in prison?

Bui: You know in that time, I had nothing, but I still had beliefs. The first thing is I believe in God. I think everything must be arranged by God. Second thing, I'm never afraid I will be killed. I was never afraid about that. It was easy. I told them if you want to kill me go ahead. I don't want to live, but because I was a Catholic I couldn't commit suicide. I couldn't kill myself. You can kill me. That means you are helping me. From that, it made me have a strong will. I am never scared of everything. From that, my belief in God helped me to survive. If we just ate the food that they supplied for us, I think we wouldn't have the strength to survive. Because I believe in my God, I was never scared and didn't pay attention to this. I was ready to die. From that, it helped me to be strong.

Williams: When you found out you were getting released from prison and when you were walking out of those doors, can you tell me what you were thinking? What was it like to get out of prison? Tell me about how that felt.

Bui: Suddenly, South Vietnam lost the war. One million South Vietnamese soldiers and our government destroyed suddenly. I couldn't believe it was like that, but I think it is political. I thought if I was in prison by politics, I will release out of prison by politics. I always talked with my friends. Sometimes their morale was very low. I told them, "Don't worry. We will have a day to get out of prison by politics." We can survive.

Williams: So you get released from prison. Tell me about getting released from prison. What did that feel like? What it felt like to get outside again? Do you remember that day? Tell me a little bit about that day?

Bui: Well, when I was released out of prison, we get out of a small strictly prison. About December 1985, we are out of a strictly small prison. They gave us one pair of pajamas. They give us about ten dollars. I waited for the car. When I got in the car, the driver and some people in the car looked at me. They asked are you a prisoners of Communists? Well, yes. Ok, come here. Are you hungry? I said yes, so they gave me some food. They asked me what I needed.



I said, "Nothing, thank you." When I come to my area, they fight me to stay. I have only ten dollars, and I pay for the driver. He says, "No, you don't have to pay. You don't have to pay. I will give you some more." He gave me about forty dollars extra. I feel good because I know my people still love us after ten and a half years living with Communists. They still loved us.

Williams: Can you tell me a little bit, do you remember the first meal you had after prison?

Bui: The first thing that I ate was the food that the people in the car gave me. They gave me a sticky rice cake. In a long, long time, almost ten years, I hadn't eaten it. I liked it very much. I felt very good, but the thing I liked most was my people still loved us. I like eggrolls, but in the car they didn't have eggrolls. I ate sticky rice.

Williams: Can you tell me briefly a little bit about the time period between when you got out of prison and before you came to America? What happened during that time? What was your life like?

Bui: I was released out of prison in December 1985. Like I told you, it was a strictly small prison. When I was out, it was also prison because every day I had to report to them. From six am to four pm I had to go to work, and six am I brought the book to them, and they signed it. That means I'm here. They made sure I was still there. At four pm I brought the report back to them, and they signed it again. They controlled me every day. That means I call it a prison, just a big prison. I had to work, but they don't have me do hair-cuts. They didn't want me to teach someone. They didn't want me to be a teacher or do haircuts because they thought if I was a teacher I will talk with the students something against them. If I do haircuts, when I make a haircut with someone I will talk with them something against them. They didn't want me to do it. They thought I had to do everything I could but very hard labor. I tried to work very, very hard to survive until 1990. I got permission from the U.S. government. They granted me and my family political asylum here. When I came here, it might have been a surprise for my wife and my kids but not for me. Like I told you I had training here for two years. American life, it did not surprise me too much. I saw the same as 1968 when I came here. At the time I came here, the second time I came here in 1990, I saw the price of beer and cigarettes went up. In 1968, I was a smoker. I bought about ten packs of cigarettes for just about one dollar. In 1990, it was about seven dollars. It surprised me.

Williams: Whether it be during your time in the small prison or what you call the large prison, was there ever a time you tried to escape?

Bui: Oh yes. I tried to escape in 1987. I tried to escape out of Vietnam by boat, a small boat overseas, but it was not lucky for me. They captured me again. They captured me, and they brought me to the corps and sentenced me three

years more in prison, but just about one year later suddenly I read in the newspaper from some prisoner with me in camp. I saw the information that they said the U.S. government interfered with the Vietnamese government to let prisoners of South Vietnamese Army out. I told someone over there even though they were just sentenced one year in prison, "I will release out of prison before you because I estimated about that." You know as commanders we have to estimate, and we have to make decisions. I estimated I would release out of prison before them. They asked if I was sure, and I said yes I was sure. They looked just like my kids, you know. They are children, and they tried to get out of Vietnam by boat. They also got recaptured like me. About six months later, the commander of the prison, he was a lieutenant commander, he called me up to the office. He said, "You will release out of prions. I release you out of prison. You have to wait for the U.S. government to pick you up. Don't go overseas by boat. If we capture you again, you will be killed." I said ok, don't worry about that. I never worry about that. I will wait. I estimated right. When I was in prison, it was politics. When I got out of prison, it was politics. I came here by politics.

Williams: When did you meet your wife in this timeline?

Bui: I met my wife in 1986, when I was just out of prison about one year. I went to her hometown and worked over there before I knew her. I came to her hometown and worked, and my friend was also her friend, too. They introduced me to her. She couldn't marry Viet Cong. She had to wait for the South Vietnamese officials to get out of prison to marry. When the first time I met her, I said yes. I thought you are bright. You couldn't marry with the Viet Cong because maybe they are more handsome than me, but she couldn't marry because the education of the Viet Cong was very low. She had a high education, so she couldn't marry with the Viet Cong. She waited for me.

Williams: What was your first impression of her?

Bui: At that time, she was very beautiful. She was just about thirty-two years old. I was almost forty. After prison, I was very thin, but I don't know why she still loved me. I greatly appreciate that because I still have someone who loved us. From that time, I felt happy. I pledge with my heart I will love her all my life.

Williams: Were you two married before you went to prison the second time?

Bui: I was married for the first time to my first wife, but my first wife was killed when she went overseas by boat. At that time, I didn't know her (points to current wife). My first was killed when she went overseas by boat on the ocean.

Williams: When was this?

Bui: Nineteen eighty-five.

Williams: Did she die before you got out of prison the first time?

Bui: No, she died about two months after I was released out of prison. She went overseas by boat because she said she couldn't live with the Communists. She traded her life for freedom. If she got freedom, it'd be ok. If she didn't have freedom, she would die. She accepted it, my first wife.

Williams: So tell me the details of when you married your second wife and the timeline of when that happened and when you got thrown back in prison and all of that.

Bui: When I married my second wife, at that time my wife was pregnant. I looked for information about my situation. You know the Communists, they pressured me too much and my family. I made the decision. I told my wife, let me have freedom. Let me go overseas. I couldn't live with them. If I succeeded, I would bring them to America with me. If I die, I tried to feed the kid. In that time, I knew we couldn't get out of Vietnam, but I couldn't suffer. Every day we had to report to them. Every day I had to work very hard, very heavy labor. I tried my life with freedom. I made the decision to go overseas by boat. In that time, my wife was pregnant. She cried. I still tried to go. I still went overseas. Just about one day on the sea and my boat was recaptured by the Vietnamese Communist police. They threw me in jail again for three years, but just about after one year I was out of prison. In 1990, I came here by plane.

Williams: What was it like to finally get out of Vietnam? Tell me a little bit about what that felt like getting on that plane and taking off.

Bui: When we got permission to come here, the IOM (International Organization for Migration) organization bought for us the air tickets. They said to us we come with a lot of information. That means permission for us to enter the U.S. My family, wife and my kid, and my parents came to the airport and said goodbye to me and my family. My parents passed away. I don't have parents but my wife. We flew from Saigon to Bangkok. We had to wait in Bangkok for about one week. After that, we were flown to here. At exactly nine o'clock pm September 1990, almost all the number nine. With the Vietnamese, the number nine is a lucky number. Nine pm, night, September 1990. I thought my family and me were lucky. When I came here, I got support from public aid. They gave us about one year, but you know to me I thought I needed to cut it short. I know a lot of my comrades, and the U.S. government had to help them too. I tried to cut the time that I got supplies from the U.S. government short. It was just about two months later I began working. I was working at the time. They pay me \$4.25, and I work eight hours per day. After that, I earned enough cash for my family. I reported to the public aid, and they cut the cash. They still supplied for the family food stamps.

Williams: How did living in America compare to your expectations?

Bui: You know America is to me number one. American life, America is to me wonderful. Today I was almost seventy years old. I think if the world doesn't have America, doesn't have the U.S.A. here in the world, the Russian and the Chinese will destroy all the countries and everything. They aren't very fair. The world needs the U.S.A. to stop Russia and stop China. If not, they will destroy the world. To me, America is wonderful. I always teach my kids you eat, you drink American food. You have to serve America, defend America. I always teach my kids like that.

Williams: How many children do you have?

Bui: I have three children, two daughters and one son.

Williams: Have any of them served in the military?

Bui: Yes, my oldest daughter is a teacher now. When my son is small and young, he liked the military. Now he's grown up. He has a job. I didn't hear anything from him talking about the military. I don't know why. I suspect he will the military like his father.

Williams: How old is he?

Bui: He is around twenty-five. He is twenty-five now. He is now a therapy specialist.

Williams: You say how much you love America. You mentioned how we stopped giving you guys money. Was there anything about America and its actions that maybe didn't please you?

Bui: I love America because Americans always want to help people all over the world. Americans didn't like (unintelligible). They like honesty. They like freedom. They respect the people. They are rich, and they are ready to help. If you are rich, but you are not ready to help to me it's not good. If you're rich and you're ready to help the poor countries, it is very good. Only America can do that. Right now China is rich, but they didn't help the people. If they help, they have to get interest or benefit for them, but America never got any benefit. That I love about America.

Williams: Have you been back to Vietnam since?

Bui: No, almost twenty-five years. I've never come back. I am American now, you know. My life will be here. If the Communists are destroyed or collapse and my country got freedom, got democracy, maybe I would go back one time to visit for the last time my country. Right now I took an oath when I became American, so I have to respect my oath. I am American now.

Williams: You mentioned you had so many siblings. Where are they now?

- Bui: My oldest brother, he was in France. One brother is in California, and one brother is here with me. Two are still in Vietnam. They couldn't come here.
- Williams: By my count you only mentioned five siblings. You mentioned you had eleven.
- Bui: I have five sisters and six brothers.
- Williams: You said you had a brother in France and a brother in California. Where are the other siblings? Where are the other sisters and brothers now?
- Bui: There is one sister here with me. That means in Urbana, I have three, me and my brother and my sister. Two of my brothers are still in Vietnam. Four more sisters are still in Vietnam.
- Williams: Are you in contact with those siblings that are still in Vietnam?
- Bui: Not often, but sometimes my sister who lives with me she goes back to Vietnam. I got information from Vietnam by her.
- Williams: You never wanted to visit with your sister?
- Bui: No, I told you I don't like Communists. They still govern my country, so I don't come back.
- Williams: You told me a lot about how you feel about America now. What was opinion of America during the war and maybe even before the war?
- Bui: I graduated from the U.S. Marine Corps. I had many joint operations with the U.S. Marines and U.S. Navy. I understand America very clearly. I understand American soldiers very clearly. To me we have a good relationship with America. I got some medal from the U.S. Navy when I did a joint operation with them many times.
- Williams: Whether it be Americans you served with or South Vietnamese you served with, do you keep in contact with any of them?
- Bui: I still have some friends in South Vietnam. They are still in Vietnam because they don't have permission to come here, but also I know some South Vietnamese soldiers came here. Now, they can come back and live with Communists. I don't have any contact with them because they changed their minds about Communists. If they can live with Communists, ok go ahead live with Communists. To me, no. I have a lot of friends here.
- Williams: In America, do you have any South Vietnamese soldiers that you are friends with?

- Bui: Yes, I have a lot here. I have a lot of soldiers. I have a lot of commanders here. Every year we have a reunion. I have many, looks like a reunion of Marines, reunion of Military National Academy, and my wife she has a reunion with friends of her school. Every year we get together.
- Williams: What does that mean to you to be with other South Vietnamese veterans?
- Bui: We meet together, and we talk about the past. Sometimes we ask about families, situation of health, and everything. The most important thing is how their morale is. That means to us we have to build high morale for us now and for our kids, so our children can follow us to not make the Communists expand. It's a very terrible thing about Communists. We get together, and we exchange the experience on how to teach the kids, so the kid can have strong will and stop communist expansion. We know about it. Communism is a very terrible thing.
- Williams: You talked about teaching your kids the strong will. How did you do that with your own kids?
- Bui: We just showed them the information in Vietnam now. They don't have any democracy and human rights in Vietnam. The Communists, they strip the Vietnamese people, and they are corrupt. They make my country very poor. The Vietnamese Communists, they are very weak to China. They are the hangman to China now. They surrender with China now. China now almost occupies Vietnam. Until 2020 a lot of Chinese will be in Vietnam now. Our country sells for Red China. We have to let the kids now about information like that, and ask them what do you think about that? Some kids they answer me, "Don't worry, Daddy. I'm not in Vietnam now. I'm American." Of course you are American, but your father still has some relationship with Vietnam. I want you to know about this. They said yes, ok we can find out. The problem is they have a problem about language. The information and newspapers in Vietnam are in the Vietnamese language. My kids now, they can only speak and write a little bit of Vietnamese. Sometimes I have to read the paper and translate it to English, American for them. Sometimes I learn the American language from them. We tried to teach them so they can understand clearly how the Communists are. I also took them to Washington, D.C. and looked at the Communist Victim in Washington, D.C. Talk about Communists.
- Williams: What was it like to see that wall?
- Bui: The wall I've seen many times. Many times my family came over there. I want to remember my comrades. I had a lot of American advisors. They sacrificed, and they lost their lives in the Vietnamese War. They have their name on it. Almost every year, I come to the Vietnam Wall Memorial.
- Williams: What's your favorite part or favorite thing about living in America?

Bui: My favorite thing about living in America, the first thing is freedom. Second thing is good people. Third thing is we have enough food and water and housing. The most important thing in America to me is the big heart. America has a big heart to another country and to another people.

Williams: Is there anything I haven't asked or we haven't talked about, anything else you want to share about your experience?

Bui: The first thing is I want to share with America so that they can understand clearly about the Communists. The Communists, they are very cruel. They are very dangerous. They want to kill a lot of people of South Vietnam and the South Vietnamese Army. They want to kill all, but they scared about the war. They want to kill us very regularly. They put us in the camps and fed us with little food and no medication, so we can die regularly.