

Tales from the Albright
Episode 94: Multigenerational Discussion, Part II

Alyssa Loney: Hello, everyone. Welcome back to tales from the Aubrey. Today we are going to continue on with our multi-generational discussion about our memories from the 90s. It is a direct continuation of last week's episode. There's no introduction and it just kind of picks up where. We left off where we're talking about our own personal experiences growing up kind of across multiple decades at this point, and then the difference is about what it was like when Briana and I were children versus when Ann and Scott were growing up and it's just an interesting discussion and I hope you're enjoying it as much as we enjoyed recording it. And here is Part 2.

Briana Cimino: I'm curious what you each found your favorite like chapter or topic in the book.

Scott Thomas: I enjoyed the 92 election

BC: Oh yes, yeah.

ST: Again and I talked about that before, but essentially, that was the first Time I became politically engaged. I mean, I always voted and I kind of knew where my political side was, but I never during the Reagan era and stuff, I just and so. But in the 92 election its the first time, I really paid attention and really got involved in it, which I've been ever since. In, in, in knowing, you know, all the in and outs of it and stuff. And then really, and so that election for me was was I really wanted Clinton to win. And in those days, people would wait. You never do this now. I actually had even those days was uncool. I had Clinton one of those little buttons.

BC: I mean, some people I feel like there are different versions of that now because I think PJ still has a bumper sticker that says Feel the Bern or something like that from when Bernie Sanders ran.

ST: Yeah, but bumper stickers exist.

BC: Thats true

ST: But, I mean, you know, you know, but wearing, I mean, that wasn't even on cool 92. But I mean, you know, and there was the Ross Perot factor and this whole issue of of Clinton's moral feelings that, you know, some people didn't care about, some people did. And and it was really interesting. And then when he got elected. You got to see because then I got engaged in the election. What would he actually do? And you then I followed it in terms of

who is appointing to his cabinet and trying to get universal healthcare and things like that. So for me that was the chapter.

Ann Kovach: Okay, that's very interesting. I I didn't have a favorite chapter, but I find interesting. You're you're the politics side. You're there and I'm more the entertainment and yeah, like I remember that like when they're talking about how was the rise of country music in the late 90s with Garth Brooks and and like Randy Travis and all of that and of course Titanic was out in the 90s and that's what what I took away more from. This was all the entertainment. The entertainment side of the book.

ST: Yeah, I did not engage in the popular culture.

AK: See that? Interesting though, and like, if you talk more about the politics and I'm more like, oh, yeah, the OJ the slowest chase ever on film.

BC: Yeah, Yeah

AK: But that trial was huge. And I remember following that. And when the verdict came, it was on television, which you never. You never heard saw that before.

BC: And now it's I think so normalized. What was the most recent one with Johnny Depp and Amber Heard and that was big.

ST: That was big

AK: That was big

BC: And then was it Murdaugh murder one was.

AL: Murdaugh one

AK: Oh the Murdaugh's

ST: What is fascinating about those is on YouTube they show these now completely

AK: Yes

ST: and and these these people are commenting on them, some of whom are actually attorneys, some of whom are not, and so. You never had that. You know before, you know, I mean, one of the things that is new and did not exist in the 90s was social media.

AK: Exactly. Yes, very much so.

ST: And and you know.

BC: And that's something. See, I feel like this has become the what did the 90s turn into in and the early 2000s podcast. But I think that's so interesting because as someone who

grew up with social media, I would agree. I don't like it. I don't engage. I don't. I don't have Facebook. Like, I feel like a lot of us who are younger have found that at least the first forms like Facebook and things like that we don't want to engage with and we see the toxicity to it, but at the same time I saw a really interesting argument recently for Britney Spears because her biography was super popular. We circulated so many copies and I saw a lot of people talking about how if social media existed in its present form, when Britney Spears had her had her issues.

AK: Break down, yeah.

BC: Maybe the public would have come out and like the people who liked her, would have been able to raise their voices and defend her, whereas the tabloids at the time had all the say. And when you had all these tabloids in the 90s and 2000s, they got the dominating narrative and regular people didn't get to speak up. So they were able to paint her however they chose, whereas now at least we can create input which can be good and can be bad depending, right?

AL: In a way, I think it probably would have played out the same,

BC: Oh really?

AL: Because I think that was a popular ideology of the time. So I feel like social media could have made it potentially worse because it would have just been people directly attacking her and her, like publicist and everyone that like runs her accounts instead, because I feel like social media has kind of turned into the tabloids of today.

AK: Very much so.

Scott: And with no holds barred and from a political standpoint, again, you know, basically say what you want about media, but it was a gatekeeper, OK? Now, if you go back to again with when there were three major networks and the news was on at six 6:30 every.

AK: Yes.

ST: You couldn't really tell from Walter Cronkite where his political views were.

AK: No, we had no idea

ST: OK, and but they usually had someone doing an editorial like in the newspaper because they were like newspapers. They give the news and someone give an editorial. And they were separate. It was part of the newscast for like, a minute. And now, I mean but I mean and then with the cable news networks.

AK: Yes.

ST: But they still were gatekeepers. To a certain degree, they have even Fox News and will have some kind of limits.

BC: Yeah, that's a good point. That at least before we had the rise of current technology, there was at least like gatekeeping, I feel like has a negative connotation, but it's more of like barriers to every single person who has no perspective and no right to speak on a topic getting to talk, yeah.

ST: Whether they're placed on equal footing with people who are, you know, expert expert, there's such a thing as experts.

BC: Right, yes Right. No. And I agree because I see a lot of that when we talk about things going on in the library and you always get the people who say, oh, libraries are useless, we have those and they don't get to interact with. All the people day in and day out who make use of us and who understand why these exist?

ST: No. And then so you know and it gets around easier than it used to because it used to be, you know, someone might come to the, you know, be standing at the, you know, in the checkout line. And since she's such a terrible experience at the library, what a waste taxpayer money and they they tell other person, they tell four people, you know, now if there's somebody's unhappy or don't like something you do or just don't like, you know, paying tax money for libraries. It gets everywhere with a lot of misconceptions as to what we do and what we're trying to do. It's such a positive cultural force with the best intentions. You know you can't control.

AL: I think the tabloid I remember most vividly, for some reason was World Weekly News.

AK: Oh, was that when I always had like the monkey boy on it?

AL: Yeah or Bat Boy

AK: Bat Boy.

AL: Yeah. I just remember standing in the checkout line of Kmart.

ST: Kmart

AL: And always looking at them.

AL: Yep.

AK: I miss Kmart.

AL: I loved Kmart.

BC: Poor Kmart went the way of Sears

AK: There's a 90s store that's no longer with us that should still be here. But I used to read all of those. I met it. I was a National Enquirer, the World News Weekly. I read them because of the entertainment.

ST: So the 90s were a transition to get back to the topic.

AK: Sorry

ST: It was kind of. Like almost where that was starting to transition in, yes.

AK: Yes.

AL: Yeah and speaking of something that people still argue until today, if it was real or not, what are your memories of Y2K?

AK: Oh, I remember December 31st, 1999. Everyone waited for midnight because everything was just going to shut down.

BC: That is crazy.

ST: And I mean, I worked in the library as IT

AK: Right

ST: And there really was a few fixes we had to put on the servers, but also I tended to have faith in, you know, the experts again,

AK: Yes

AL: Yes

ST: Because they would, you know, and we applied the the fixes and everything was fine.

AK: Everything was fine the next day.

ST: And I knew. You know, again, I mean, you know we, you know we we fixed it, but that was when.

AK: People were doing the bunkers. They were they're like sockpiling food and well, because there were some extremists out there who really did believe that it was going to be the end

ST: And you know, I mean, since I've been conscious, OK, there has been a fascination with the idea of dystopia and and some kind of some kind of collapse. And in our day growing up, it was a nuclear holocaust

AK: Nuclear, yes

ST: There was Y2K. There are, you know, now it's environmental or perhaps economic or or because of a disease,

AK: Yes

ST: You know, and people are fascinated by that so whenever that kind of thing happens, well, this is going to be it

AK: Yes, this is it. This is it.

ST: And Y2K was one of them, but as I said it never bothered me and yeah, I mean did I breathe a slight sligh relief when the lights were still on at 12:01 on January 1st, 2000. Yeah, I mean, I knew you know what we.

AK: Yeah, yeah, that we weren't going to collapse into.

ST: did or our little service

BC: Well, and that was the interesting thing in the book to me was how he mentions that we have no way of knowing if it was our preparedness that helped prevent it from being at least a little bit.

AK: Yes.

BC: Of a disaster, right? Because people were doing these little things to prepare the technology and they're like, well, some people can now still claim, well, if we hadn't done all of that preparation. Everything would have gone gone, you know, to heck.

ST: I mean, a lot of what we have hinges on either the capabilities of people or mistakes they make. So, if you think of the most important one, which is the Cuban Missile Crisis that Kennedy and Khrushchev.

AK: Mm-hmm.

ST: Cooler, talk of cooler heads prevailed. It didn't have to happen that way, you know. And so a lot of a lot of things, you know, a lot of the hinges on just two people talking

AK: Exactly, yes

ST: or making decisions or making mistakes or doing the right thing. So that's a little, you know, and you know, but that's especially.

AK: Yes.

ST: Now that it's unlike anything in history now, everything is so interconnected and reliant upon all these things like electricity. A collapse would be a big one.

AK: Very much

AL: Yeah

ST: It would go like nothing ever before, not like the Black Plague, which that only affected a certain geographical area, you know, now a collapse is is is bad.

AL: True

ST: Even the fall of the Roman Empire, which affected only one part of the world

AK: Its true, yeah it did.

ST: So these are interesting

AL: No, it's one of those things that like I don't know, I think about often. I think it's leftover from growing up in the 90s, and I remember when you had the hour long blackouts. Like I remember my friends in college going home. And it was during like hurricane. Was it Sandy? But one of those, and they just didn't have power for a week. What do you do at this point? And I think about it a lot in terms of how now people are going to like automated home systems.

AK: Oh Yes

AL: And especially with like door locks and stuff like if the power grid goes down, how

BC: Can you unlock your door?

AL: you getting out of your house?

BC: Yeah,

AK: Yeah, yeah.

ST: That's true.

AK: I wouldn't have thought of that, but that's true.

AL: I think that's one of the things I do think about often.

BC: Yeah, PJ doesn't like as an IT person he does not like sentient technology. He does not like having it in our home. I've tried to convince him I would really like a Roomba, but he won't let me have one. It's crazy.

AK: Yeah, I agree with him. Because anytime anyone talks about like the smart houses and have the lights that light up and I always keep saying Terminator. Has no one seen Terminator? The machines come up, you know, I always think of

AL: My reference is always Smart House from the Disney Channel

BC: Oh yes, I remember that. I remember that.

AL: Because I was a Disney kid

ST: The other way of looking at that. Is if you know I have, we have a Roomba and we have all the switches and all that kind of stuff. Just shut off the Wi-Fi router and they're done.

BC: Yeah, thats true

ST: They're not going anywhere, you're controlling them

AK: Yeah

BC: Just kill the power.

ST: Gain access

AK: Sometimes I think it would be cool though like to have like Alexa and be like turn my TV on do this and you know.

BC: Yeah.

AK: Then I am like no, no

ST: it is very convenient

BC: It is

AK: I think it is more about the convience than anything

ST: Oh it is

AK: Thats exactly what it is.

AL: What do you remember about, like, television talk shows? The book really goes into more Oprah. But I feel like that was another way that people had kind of like the tabloid gossip

AK: Yes, The Jerry Springer

AL: Yes

AK: But then we had Oprah. Yeah, I'm. I'm not a big fan. Of Oprah. I'm just. I was never a big fan of her.

BC: Yeah

AK: So yeah, anybody else.

BC: interesting

AK: Yeah, I wasn't. I wasn't into her show as much.

ST: I didn't watch any talk shows. So, except for political ones, again

AK: Yes, so.

BC: I vaguely remember Oprah. I remember growing up in the early 2000s with Ellen

AK: Oh Yes

BC: My Grandmother watched a lot of Ellen. The Ellen DeGeneres Show

AK: Yes, when she first started, she was. And, and of course, we all know what happened later on down the line with, you know the toxic workplace and all of that.

AL: Yeah, my great aunt loved Oprah. She loved Rosie O'Donnell.

AK: Yep.

AL: And I think that's about all she watched from when I was growing up that I remember.
But

AK: And was it?

AL: Yeah.

AK: Was it the late 90s or early 2000s when, like Jerry Springer started?

AL: That was 90s

ST: The 90s. It was the 90s.

AK: And then

AL: Because I remember growing up my parents used to watch Jerry Springer.

AK: I watched Jerry Springer

AL: And then there was Montell

AK: Oh Montell Williams

AL: And Montell would always have the psychic lady that turned out to be a fraud on her.

AK: A fake fraud, yes

AL: I vividly remember those.

AK And then Maury would always do the paternity tests.

AL: Yeah. You are not the Father.

BC: Oh I have heard that. I've heard that

AL: He's retiring this year right?

AK: Yes

AL: Yeah, yep, Maury is still on in the house all the time.

BC: I, I keep saying that I think Alyssa's house exists in the 90s still somehow from the stories she tells. Your whole family just lives in the 90s.

AL: I, yeah basically

AK: And of course the show that your generation still love Friends

BC: That's true.

AK: I don't know. I wish someone I wish you could tell me what it is about Friends

AL: I don't know. We're not a Friends household and never have been.

ST: Well, I mean it it was. I mean the characters are, so you know the relationships they had. They were not and they were not married or anything like that.

AK: Right, true

ST: They just, you know, it was well written

AK: It was very well written. I mean I always enjoyed it when it was on but it always surprises me like my cousin's daughter was like 19, 20, right around there. A year ago she was obsessed with Friends and I just like.

BC: Yeah, like the fact that it can be timeless enough

AK: Yes

BC: That someone 20 years later could watch it. Yeah.

ST: And your generation doesn't seem to have a fascination with Seinfeld, which is another one

BC: Which is funny because its what my parents loved

AL: My family loves Seinfeld. I never liked Friends. I do like Seinfeld though.

BC: So wait, did you like Seinfeld then,

ST: Yeah, I did

BC: See, okay, so here's the theory then. So the interesting part about that is my parents also were getting married at the beginning of the 90s and starting families. And I wonder if Seinfeld was more the show for, like, you know what I mean, like couples, families establishing, and Friends is more like the young people still finding themselves single doing their thing. But I also don't know much about the plot of Seinfeld. I only know.

ST: There wasn't one

AL: There's not a plot

AK: There was no plot

ST: Yeah, the characters were completely awful

AK: Really not nice people sometimes.

ST: No, no they weren't and that's what made it very interesting.

AL: Like last week, my parents were watching Seinfeld and crying laughing.

BC: Oh wow. That's.

ST: Yeah, it's it's, you know those of us who grew up with it. They can just, you know talk about Newman and all this kind of stuff and you know.

AK: Yes

ST: Unlike the Friends, characters who were very likeable.

AK: Yes, they they were very likeable. Yes

ST: And it's fascinating that you folks and the fact that people, as a Scrantonian, are interested in The Office long after it's over and I loved that show too, and it's just not, not city pride, but I did love it and you know, but that's another one that we see them come in here, you know.

AK: Or you go somewhere and say you're from Scranton and they are like oh my god that's where The Office was at and I'm like okay

ST: It wasn't as popular it was. It wasn't as when it was on.

AK: Yeah, its the reruns Yeah, because yeah.

ST: So I mean, what, what captures the next generations?

AK: Yes, what's going to be the next thing?

ST: Is is you know cause in my day, okay, with Star Trek where it was on the late 60s and got canceled and by the time we got into the there was motion picture. Still, it's a franchise even now. I mean, God knows I'm a big enough fan and you know, but that didn't happen until the mid 70s so you never know.

AL: I remember like coming home from school and I would put on like BBC America and it would be Star Trek and then for 1/2 hour and then X-Files for the next half hour

BC: Interesting. See, I don't remember. Like the I didn't remember the Star Trek revival, but now we have the Star Wars revival of like the now, which is that Star Wars has come back with all the new content.

AK: Yes Yeah.

ST: Ann and I remember when when it was started

AK: Yes

ST: Now its been revived

AK: Yes, Yes

ST: Star Trek. I don't remember when it started. I remember its revival

AK: Yes. I remember the revival

AL: I remember the 90s like all the movies that everyone hates with. Star Wars. I remember those were out. Like the ones

BC: Oh those ones

AK: We don't talk about those.

BC: See

AL: I remember my cousin being like very into it and was like, okay

BC: See, my friend who loves Star Wars told me the problem with the Star Wars franchise is that for the 1st 3 movies it was good because people told George Lucas yes. And then for the other three it was bad because people, George told George Lucas. So they kept telling him yes when they should have told him no. So I don't. It's interesting. I don't and now we've got all of the spin offs and it's become whole.

AK: Yeah.

ST: The sequels

BC: All of the stuff they've made now.

ST: You know, as it becomes and and Star Trek is the same way. Multiple timelines and multiple generations of it.

AK: I mean, I remember watching it when we came like in syndication, but I was never like a big fan. But I do remember. Some of the episodes being, I always remember the one where they go back to the 1920s Chicago for some reason where they were the gangsters. Oh my. Not the gangsters they, so they had to go back and believe the girl if something happened. The girl she didn't die history would change or something.

ST: That was called, that was an episode called The City on The Edge of Forever.

AK: That's it, That's it

ST: They went back through pre-World War II.

AK: Yes

ST: And yeah, it was. It was a great episode

AK: And I remember that, yet I'm not.

ST: about the impact of changing time.

AK: Yes

BC: That's cool.

ST: So you know that and its successors dealt with a lot of issues that racial ones, certainly, and a lot of social issues and in metaphorical way.

BC: That's really interesting, yeah.

AK: And all the different like incarnations to start all the different people that were in it that you don't even realize, like Patrick Stewart. Like, you're just like, wow, you know?

BC: Yeah,

AL: Yeah. I feel like the long running shows are like the ones where you see, like, a random person in a show and it's like they're either have been in Law and Order,

St: Yes, Law and Order

AL: like Doctor Who, or like the Marvel Cinematic Universe

AK: Somewhere in there.

BC: Oh yes

AL: And you're like, OK, that's where, like I've seen them before.

AK: Yeah.

BC: Yes. They're pervasive.

AL: Yeah.

ST: And and you know and as a way of us concluding, because this is, as librarians, the question then becomes if you don't start from the beginning, as with book series,

AK: Exactly

ST: Are you sunk? With the Star Trek you you could probably get in in the middle and not need to know. The Star Wars not so much

AK: Not so much, no. Now you have to. Yeah, you have to follow.

ST: Yeah, so I mean.

I feel. Like, that's how Marvel like became, which is why. I never got into Marvel.

BC: That's true, yeah.

ST: And I mean I will, because I, you know, when I ever see a book that I just see the word series. And I know I'm not going to read it because then so.

AK: Right. And you see your book and you're like, oh my God, this looks so good. This is the 12th in the series

ST: Yeah no

AK: And I'm like, oh. Got to be kidding me.

AL: I think that's where the Internet comes in helpful, because they would like tell you if you could read them, like as standalones and then go back,

BC: Yep

AK: It's still. I can't.

BC: And that's why you ask your helpful librarian to help you find book one

AK: Yes exactly. That is true. You are so true.

AL: So, does anyone have any final final thoughts?

BC: I think this was great. I think we've all learned a lot about each other's generations.

ST: Yeah, which is which is, yeah, very valuable.

AK: Yeah, we've covered a lot, yes.

BC: Valuable learning and what we're all about here, right?

AK: Yes, exactly

ST: Thats, yeah. So that people who come from different perspectives to talk to each other, that's what the library is really all about

AK: Yes

BC: Yes, exactly

ST: so, you know more we can do it better we are.

BC: Yes, and books bring us from different places in our lives and perspectives into one conversation, yes.

ST: Yes, well said. And and I always say that what our collection is about is all these different viewpoints living in harmony

AK: Exactly, yes

ST: in our shelves and if if books can do that, so can people.

AL: Thank you again to Ann, Scott and Briana for agreeing to be part of this discussion. I think we learned a lot about each other, and I think it was kind of fun in a way to hear all the different perspectives on different events that happened over the course of the 90s and the bit before and a bit after. Next week will be our very first video podcast. We are going visual now. Everything will still be on SoundCloud and the audio only platforms that you have been enjoying Tales from the Albright on since the beginning of the podcast, hopefully, and I hope you're still with us and you're still enjoying it. I hope you enjoy those as well. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or anything else, please feel free to e-mail me and aloney@albright.org that is A L O N E Y@albright.org or feel free to call the library at 570-348-3000. Thank You.

