

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

University of Arkansas
1 East Center Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701
(479) 575-6829

Arkansas Memories Project

John McDonnell

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford and Andrew Maloney

July 7, 2010

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center website at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
 - annotations for clarification and identification; and
 - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

See the Citation Guide at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu/about.php>.

**Scott Lunsford and Andrew Maloney interviewed John
McDonnell on July 7, 2010, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.**

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Well—uh—John—uh—today's date is July 7. The year is 2010. And we're out here at the McDonnell residence—your home—um—and—uh—the Pryor Center. I'm Scott Lunsford, and I—I'm gonna do half of this interview—uh—with you today. Uh—Andrew Maloney is gonna do the second half. And—um—I guess I need to tell you that this recording is gonna be archived in the Pryor Center archive. A copy of it will be in the Special Collections unit at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville in the Mullins Library. We'll take this recording, and we'll give it all back to you in the form of DVDs for you and your family to have. We will preserve this recording forever. Um—we will take selected highlight clips—video clips. Uh—we'll take all the audio and all the transcript after you're satisfied with what's been said and it's clear, and we'll post that on the web. Uh—folks will be able to see and hear and read—uh—this interview, and they will ask if they can use some of it

for documentaries or for research purposes or, like in Andrew's—uh—case—um—he'll—uh—want to write a book with some of this material. And I guess what I'm gonna ask you now—if it's okay with you [*John McDonnell clears throat*] that we're recording all this stuff and it's gonna be archived and it's gonna be used for educational and research purposes—purposes.

John McDonnell: Ah—yes.

SL: Great. Thank you. [*Laughter*] First of all, I've gotta [*JM clears throat*] tell you it's a great honor to be sitting across from you. Uh . . .

JM: Uh—thank you.

SL: . . . you're—you're kind of a legendary guy, but I don't wanna talk too much about your career—uh—just yet. I'm gonna let Andrew do that. What I really wanna know [*JM clears throat*] is—uh—kind of how John McDonnell became John McDonnell. [00:02:00] And I—I guess the first question I have to ask you is—first of all, is John McDonnell your full name?

JM: Yes, yes.

SL: No middle name?

JM: No middle name. No.

SL: Um—and—um—you could tell me when and where you were

born.

JM: I was born in—uh—Crossmolina, County Mayo, Ireland, July 2, in 1938.

SL: And was that in a hospital, or was that a home birth?

JM: Home.

SL: At home.

JM: At home. Midwife.

SL: And—uh—how many brothers and sisters have you got?

JM: I have—uh—five sisters and two brothers, so there was eight of us in the family.

SL: Were all those home births? Did . . .

JM: All of them were home births.

SL: That's kind of pioneer stuff there.

JM: It—absolutely. [*Laughter*]

[00:02:54] SL: Well, do you wanna go ahead and—uh—[*JM clears throat*] run through your—uh—brothers' and sisters' names real quick? Do you know—can you remember . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . all of 'em? That's a lot.

JM: I—uh—I think I can.

SL: Okay.

JM: I think I can. My oldest sister is Mary and then Annie—uh—

Philomenia, Margaret, and Catherine. And then my brother—my oldest brother was Patrick, and my other brother was Michael.

SL: And you were the youngest.

JM: I—I'm the second youngest.

SL: Second young . . .

JM: Mike—Michael is the youngest.

SL: And—uh—I've met Patrick, and do we call him Paddy? Is that . . .

JM: Paddy.

SL: *P-A-D-D-Y?*

JM: Yeah.

SL: Right. Yeah.

JM: Paddy, yeah.

SL: Yeah. He was a good guy.

JM: Yeah, he's a—he's a—he's a man—he stayed on the dairy and stayed home.

[00:03:39] SL: Um—well, let's—uh—I—I wanna talk all about your home and all that [*JM clears throat*], but I wanna—first of all, I wanna talk about your mom and dad. Um—what was it that—um—your mom and dad did for a living?

JM: They were—uh—farmers—uh—that raised—uh—cattle and pigs and—uh—sheep and—uh—dairy, you know, dairy cows and just

a—a little bit of everything.

SL: Uh—so let's see, now—and—uh—your father's name was . . .

JM: Michael.

SL: Michael McDonnell. No middle name?

JM: No.

[00:04:17] SL: And your mother's name?

JM: Uh—Bridget, and her—her maiden name was Hopkins.

SL: Hopkins.

JM: Yep.

SL: Now—uh—you were born pretty late in the order of—of birth, so did you ever get a chance to—to meet your grandparents at all?

JM: Uh—no. Uh—my—uh—the last one—my grandfather—he died the year before I was born.

SL: And—uh—can you give us his name?

JM: His name was Michael also.

SL: Uh—on your—this—your grandfather on your father's side.

JM: Grandfather. Yes, yes.

SL: And what about your grandmother and her name?

JM: Um—Mary.

SL: Mary.

JM: Hmm.

SL: Do you remember her maiden name at all?

JM: Uh—she was—um—[pauses] no.

SL: Okay. Well, we [*JM laughs*] can get that later. And then—and now, what about the grandparents on your mother's side of the family?

JM: The—they were—uh—they were deceased also, you know . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: . . . before I was born, and—uh—I didn't—uh—their—their names were—uh—of course, Hopkins.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: And—uh—William, I believe, was the—uh—man, and I don't—the mother—uh—the grandmother—I didn't—I didn't know her name.

SL: Well, that's understandable.

JM: First name, yeah.

SL: I mean, you didn't—you didn't get to meet her . . .

JM: Meet her, yeah.

SL: . . . or spend any time with her. Did . . .

JM: No.

[00:05:42] SL: . . . did your father—uh—ever talk about his mom and dad at all?

JM: Oh, he did. Yeah, he—uh—my father was—um—uh—I think—uh—the type of guy that—uh—he—uh—he—he was a great—I

think he would—coulda been a good athlete because he—I remember back that he—uh—he used to do those jumpin' jacks every mornin' when he got—uh—up in the morning. He'd go out and stretch and go—you know, a farmer doin' that in those days wasn't—uh—it was kinda strange, really—uh—physical fitness. [00:06:21] So he'd—uh—[clears throat] he always told us—the thing that I remember more than anything was he would tell me about his—uh—what they made—uh—how people worked for, you know—uh—where his father worked—how much they got paid. And I—I thought, "Oh my God, how did they live back in those days?" Uh—like a—the pounds and shillings back in those days. And it was, like, two shillings a week, and—uh—it didn't make sense to me. And now, as the—as the pendulum has swung back and forth, I can't understand how we lived [SL laughs] because—uh—the way money is—got sorta devalued, you know, compared to back then, you know. So that's—those are the type of things that he handed down about the hard work, and you know—uh—in—in those days, a lot of thing was done by hand. You know, you didn't—you had a team of horses, and—uh—there was no tractors until later, and so—so it was very—it was hard work.

SL: So it's interesting. He'd started each [exhales] morning with

calisthenics—uh . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . essentially. And—uh—you said that was pretty uncommon.

I mean, do you think that he [*JM clears throat*] did have some kind of athletic background? Um . . .

JM: He—he—he always said he—he—he—he—uh—coulda been a runner, but never had the time [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . when I started runnin'. And I—I believe him because he—he was very—he wasn't a big man. The—my size—I'm over six foot. That came from my mother's side of the family. He was—my dad was probably about five nine and—uh—slightly built and—and was very light on his foot. You know, he was—you could see that he coulda been a—an athlete, but that was durin' the wars and was—people were more interested in gettin' somethin' to eat than—uh—uh—doin'—doin' sports or anything like that.

[00:08:25] SL: So did he have any—uh—was he a—a veteran of World War I or—or—um . . .

JM: Uh—no, but his brothers were. They—they—uh—they were—um—they came to America. They left and came to America in—to Scranton, Pennsylvania.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: And—uh—they were in—in—in the war, and—uh—they were in—
uh—France.

SL: That was—uh . . .

JM: Hmm.

SL: . . . that was tough—uh . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . a tough war . . .

JM: It was. It was.

SL: . . . in France in World War I.

JM: Yeah.

[00:08:57] SL: Did they all survive, or—or do you know?

JM: They—they did—uh—but they were—uh—pretty badly injured,
but they . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Um—so do you—uh—did you know your uncles at all, or had
they moved on? I guess they'd . . .

JM: They . . .

SL: . . . probably moved on by the time you . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . were born.

JM: I—I met their—I met their—uh—uh—kids.

SL: Their kids.

JM: Their—or their family.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: Two—two boys when I came to America at first. They—they have passed too.

SL: Uh-huh. [*JM clears throat*] Um—so let's see—how old was your father when you were born?

JM: Hmm. I was born—uh—[*makes whistling sound*] he must be—uh—[*makes whistling sound*] must be in his forties. Yeah.

[00:09:49] SL: Um—so he was too old to—uh—be a part of World War II or—or any of that.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Now—um—you were probably—you probably do remember World War II.

JM: I sure do. [*Coughs*] I was, of course, born in [19]38, and—uh—and the only thing that I remember is that—uh—later, I knew that Ireland was not involved in the war . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: . . . but the—uh—the planes used to—uh—circle over Ireland, and—uh—these—and—uh—that was probably in—uh—in [19]44 and [19]45. I was just a kid. But the thing I remember was

[*clears throat*]-uh-and Ireland-uh-Dublin got bombed by mistake. They threw some bombs in-in Dublin and-uh-but of course, they were bombin' London. And-uh-we used to-my mother-uh-God be good to her-she'd always say-we'd get-the planes were circlin'-uh-one after anoth-and you didn't know whether there were-you know, and we'd all get down on our knees and pray. I remember that as a kid. That's something I never forgot. And I was in-I guess I was six years old or somethin' like that. And I don't remember much at that age when that-but I remember that 'cause that was scary.

[00:11:18] SL: [*Sighs*] Um-were there-um-were there families around you that their-their children were in the war, or do you remember any-uh . . .

JM: I don't-I don't remember, really.

SL: . . . homecomings or . . .

JM: No.

SL: Um-well, now, let's-I-I wanna get back to that-um-but let's talk a little bit about your mom, too. What-what do you remember about your mom?

JM: Well-uh-[*clears throat*] in Ireland-uh-you know, the mom really ran the house, and that was the way it was in-in-in Ireland for the-she-uh-did-did the-did mostly everything.

The—the—the father—uh—he just went out and worked in the fields if you were a farmer, and she took care of everything else. And [*clears throat*]*—and my mother was a fantastic cook, you know, and she—uh—'cause I remember back—uh—everything was rationed—you know, you could only get so much sugar and flour and—uh—you could grow things on the—on the farm, but you—you—you didn't get the flour. And sometimes the flour would be real bad. You couldn't make—I remember she'd be tryin' to get—uh—make—bake bread with—with it, and it—and it—it had—uh—she'd have to get yeast, and sometimes it was hard to get yeast to make the bread raise.*

SL: Uh-huh.

[00:12:49] JM: And—uh—but she did what she could, you know, with it. And—uh—we'd—uh—get—you'd go to the store to get—the shops they called 'em over there—and shop, and you'd have your little coupons, and you could—didn't matter if you had money or not, you—you wouldn't get it. You know, they'd just give you whatever those coupons—uh—allot—allotted you for the size of your family. That's what you got, and you paid for it. And if you—uh—I remember [*clears throat*] we used to get—uh—and I know it came from America—it was—uh—cornmeal and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: . . . we used to call it Indian meal.

SL: Sure.

JM: Yeah. And—uh . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . gosh—uh—I hated that stuff. [*Laughter*] We used to have it—uh—we used to make it for—uh—breakfast, you know, and oh, it was horrible. [*SL laughs*] And then my mother also used to make bread out of it and—uh—mix it with fl—with flour to make it go further—make the flour go further, you know.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: And—uh—that wasn't too bad, you know. But—uh—I'll tell you—uh—it—they were—uh—and that went on until, you know, [19]48, you know. It was a . . .

SL: The rationing?

JM: Yeah, the rationing.

[00:14:08] SL: Even—so it wasn't just war related? Uh—it—it went on after the . . .

JM: It did because the—all the countries in Europe had been so devastated, you know, by the wars . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: . . . you know, and it took—it took Europe a long, long time to

recover.

SL: How far away—uh—were you from Dublin?

JM: About a hundred and thirty-five miles or so.

SL: And you'd still see the—the planes overhead.

JM: Well, they circled [*clears throat*]*—I think what they did was—uh—they—they came out and—and—uh—circled around. Maybe they were—uh—just waiting to go back in—you know, something like that. And . . .*

[00:14:51] SL: Did your mom ever talk about her folks at all?

JM: [*Coughs*] Oh yeah.

SL: What'd she—do you remember anything that she had to say about 'em?

JM: Um—her—uh—uh—her family lived—um—in—uh—in—at—in that area, too, and they were in the—uh—they weren't farmers. They were—uh—in—uh—the—uh—business of—uh—they had those limestone quarries, you know, where you got sand and stuff for the roads and stuff like that. That's what they were in.

SL: Mh-hmm. So they were kind of—uh—construction material.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Materials.

JM: Materials for the . . .

SL: Mining material.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. And—um—so do you have any idea how your parents met?

JM: Not really.

SL: Not really.

JM: No.

[00:15:43] SL: Now—um—okay, so let's—let's talk a little about the—the home, then. Um—the—uh—how—how big was the house? What was the house like that you grew up in—were born in and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . grew up in?

JM: [*Clears throat*] It was—um—one—uh—two, three—uh—there was three bedrooms. Three bedroom with a—a—a living—kitchen, living room, and—uh—a dining room.

SL: Uh—so that's . . .

JM: It was . . .

SL: . . . pretty few rooms for . . .

JM: Yeah, we . . .

SL: . . . what, ten people?

JM: Yeah, we used to have—there'd be two beds in each—in each—um—room where—uh—uh—the girls'd sleep together, and—uh—

two boys would, you know, sleep together, so—when we were young.

SL: Did you have a—a porch on the house or . . .

JM: Uh—yeah, there was a porch, but there was no—uh—there was no roof on it. You know, it was just . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: You could sit out there, but—then, of course, it rained a lot in Ireland. You didn't want to sit out there in the rain and cold.

[*Clears throat*] Course, I—I remember the winter—or the summers back then, you know, when I was a kid were—were pretty decent. They were a lot better than they are now. They didn't get as much rain in Ireland back then.

SL: But now, they're—it seems like . . .

JM: Seems like it rains a lot now—now or . . .

[00:17:15] SL: Hmm. Um—well, let's talk a little bit about—uh—what you did around the house growin' up. What were your—did you have some chores that you were responsible for?

JM: Oh yes. Uh—since I was knee-high to a grasshopper, as a man said, I had to milk some cows. And back then, you had to milk them by hand, and—uh—I'd milk a cow or two—uh—before I'd leave. Everybody had to do it 'cause there was enough of us. Of course, my older sisters—they had the—when I—when I got

to be, like, ten or twelve, they had already left home, you know.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: And—uh—but we'd—but there always seemed to be three or four of us out there milkin'. And I used to hate that because we'd have to do it before we went to school. And—uh—[*clears throat*] and especially when you get a—a—a young cow that was never milked, she'd kick the bucket, and [*SL laughs*] boy, that wouldn't—that wouldn't be good if you got—lost all the milk because—uh—my mother'd get mad, you know, 'cause you know, milk was very important, you know.

SL: Sure.

JM: We—we used to sell it, you know, and—uh—uh—and then—uh—then we had a—a—you know, when we'd come home from school, we had a lot of chores to do, like makin' hay or pickin' potatoes or the—doin'—uh—harvestin' the oats or wheat or whatever. We always had lotsa work to do.

[00:18:47] SL: So—um—I'm going to gue—I'm going to assume that your water was from a well.

JM: It sure was, yeah.

SL: And you did not have electricity?

JM: We hadn't electricity until [*clears throat*]*—I guess I'd be about—uh—thirteen or fourteen when we got electricity. And before*

that, we had what the—I don't know what the—it was called—
uh—uh—it had a mantle in it—and it was a—call—it was a
kerosene lamp.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: And we called 'em Tilley lamps, and you pumped it every so
often, and the—this mantle that burned very bright white, and it
was a great light. And they were the—they were—if you had one
of those, you were in business, you know. And—uh—then, of
course—uh—you—you—uh—you'd have to get up every so often
and pump.

SL: Pump it.

JM: Yeah. And that's a—that goes—they were different times, come
to think of it now.

SL: Yeah. Well, did each room have its own—uh—lamp?

JM: No, the—that—that was in the main room for the family—eat and
stuff like that. The other ones, you know, had a candle or
somethin'.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: Yeah.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:06] SL: And so there was no running water in the house.

JM: No.

SL: So the . . .

JM: Had an outhouse.

SL: Had an outhouse and probably did all the laundry outside.

JM: Yes.

SL: Hung on a line.

JM: Yes.

[00:20:23] SL: Did—so did the women in the family take care of the laundry end of stuff? I mean . . .

JM: Oh yes. Yeah.

SL: And the cooking—they did [*JM clears throat*] all the cooking as well?

JM: Yes. My mother especially. She was a—well, like I said, she was a great cook, and I mean, you know, we raised our own chickens and geese and turkeys, and we always had, you know, some meat if the fox didn't get them.

SL: Yeah.

JM: We had lots of foxes, and they'd—as the old saying goes, they'd raid the chicken house, and you know—well, we only raised—we didn't raise them to sell or anything like that—just enough to have eggs to eat and to have somethin' for cookin', you know.

SL: Right. And the—your mom would wring the necks and . . .

JM: Wring the necks. Yeah.

SL: . . . and clean the—and pluck the feathers off and . . .

JM: Pluck the feathers off.

SL: What about hogs? Did you have any hogs?

JM: [*Clears throat*] Yes, we did, and later on in our—I think I was a little bit older when we got into the hogs, but they were really a good business because we kept—we used to breed them and sell the little ones then—when they were about twelve weeks old for somebody else to fatten them and grow them out. [*Clears throat*] But there was good money in those.

[00:21:43] SL: Do you remember—you know, here in Arkansas, I hear a lot about the hog days where they'd slaughter a hog. Did you ever see them slaughter a hog or . . .

JM: Oh . . .

SL: . . . take part of that?

JM: . . . oh yes, I took part in it. [*Clears throat*] My—we had a neighbor—his name was Sonny Gough, I remember, and he would come with his big, long knife, and it was a big deal. The hog was supposed to be on a certain day, and he'd come and kill the hog and hang it for so—a few days and then come and cut it into pieces and put it in a wooden barrel and salt it and—to preserve it, you know. And then after, 'twas in there for—I'm not sure how long, but three or four weeks—take it out and hang

it up in a cool place—cellar. And that's how we'd eat our . . .

SL: Did they ever . . .

JM: . . . get our bacon.

[00:22:44] SL: Did you ever smoke the hogs? Was there ever a
smokehouse or . . .

JM: Later on, but not when we were young. No.

SL: Uh-huh. And . . .

JM: Didn't have a smoker.

SL: . . . did the neighbors around you—I mean, did you all kind of
share the hog stuff, or was each family . . .

JM: Every family, I think, used to have a hog—have a—enough one
or two or—if they didn't have one, they'd buy one from a
neighbor and kill it.

SL: And every part of that hog would be used, right?

JM: Every part. They'd even [*clears throat*]*—it sounds, like, bad,*
but, like, they'd save the blood and make blood—black pudding
out of it. And, like, they'd put rice in there and lots of other
things and use it—it was—tasted real good.

SL: Well, let's [*JM laughs*] talk a little bit about the food for a [*JM*
clears throat] second. What—you've mentioned a couple of
times already that your mom was a great, great cook. What
were your favorite meals growin' up? I mean, what do you

remember early on as your favorite stuff?

JM: Well, I liked chicken the best and—'cause we didn't—never killed a beef, you know, because couldn't afford to kill a beef. They were big, and you had no place to save that much meat anyways, you know. So if you had beef, you'd just go to the store and buy some, you know, for Sunday meal or somethin' like that, but chicken and goose. Now, goose is kinda greasy a little bit, but when it's well—it's cooked the right way, like my mother used to do it, it was pretty good. And she—course, she had a lot of kids to feed. And she was a great lady. She—she'd be the last to eat. Everybody'd be fed at the table, and then we'd be all gone—she'd be eatin' at the end of the table, you know. And if we—like, if we were workin' in the hay fields, we'd go out, and it wouldn't be half an hour or an hour later, she'd have everything washed up and clean, and here she comes helpin' us outside. So she . . .

SL: Is that right?

JM: . . . worked hard. Yeah.

[00:25:07] SL: So the boys never helped with the dishes? I'm sorry. What?

Dwight Chalmers: Disk space.

SL: Okay. Let's just—we just won't worry about that.

DC: Okay.

SL: Okay. So I'm sorry. That was a little technical issue. We were talkin' about how your mom would not only fix the meal, serve the meal, clean up the meal, and then be headin'—you'd see her out in the fields thirty minutes after . . .

JM: After.

SL: . . . the meal was done.

JM: That's right.

SL: And . . .

JM: She was a [*clears throat*]*—she was a fan—great worker. I mean, she—and I think most women did that in those days. You know, everybody chipped in and did—if those girls, you know, in the family, which we'd had, and they helped her too, you know. But it was everybody—sorta like a crew. You do this, then go on to the next thing, and everybody—nobody was left behind. Just because you were a female, that didn't keep you out of it. You know, you had to go out and work.*

[00:26:21] SL: So were you up and at 'em before the sunrise?

JM: Well, we got—the—I'll tell you, in the summertime—very long days there. You know, it gets bright, you know, at five o'clock in the morning, and it'll be bright until about ten at night.

SL: Wow.

JM: So if you tried to work all those hours, so—it'd be tough, but most—mostly, like, seven or eight o'clock, you get all—get at it and—but you'd be workin' twelve-hour days at least, you know. In the summertime, whatever it took, like it does here with the farming, you know. Whatever it tooks—takes to get the hay up, you know, and in case rain comes or diggin' potatoes. Potatoes was a big crop, of course, in Ireland and the . . .

SL: Well, you know, that's kind of the stereotypical produce as far as Ireland goes. I mean . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . everyone has heard about potatoes and potato famine . . .

JM: Famine, yeah.

SL: . . . and all that. But it was a main staple in your-all's household as well.

JM: It was. Yes, absolutely.

[00:27:33] SL: So the—in the summer months, it was—typically, you'd put in twelve hours. The fam . . .

JM: Oh yes.

SL: All the family would be out . . .

JM: Yeah. [*Clears throat*]

SL: . . . there workin'. That was the time for the farm to produce.

JM: You had to produce and get ready for the [*clears throat*] winter

and spring. And I remember with the potatoes, we used to—we didn't put them inside. We'd put them—build 'em in the—a big, long line—put—stack them about three feet tall in a nice, neat row and then cover them with the grass and put—or hay, actually—put hay on top of 'em. And then put dirt—clay about eight or ten inches on top of that. And they'd be dry and safe for the—so the winter, you wouldn't have to worry about them bein'—the frost gettin' to them or anything. And as you need it, you'd roll the clay back and—or the dirt—topsoil and take your couple of buckets of potatoes out as you needed 'em.

SL: Well, that's pretty ingenious.

JM: Yeah.

[00:28:53] SL: And no varmints or . . .

JM: No, but it . . .

SL: . . . bugs or . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . would mess with 'em at all.

JM: Exactly.

SL: That's cool.

JM: Yeah.

SL: So let's see. What about clothing? Did your mom sew as well?

JM: Oh yeah. Yeah. And I remember [*clears throat*] when we used

to wear short pants—you know, little pants like the shorts in this country. We had—that's what we had goin' to school until you were twelve, thirteen years. But I always wanted to have a long pair of pants, you know. And [*clears throat*] I think I was twelve or so, and my mother bought me one. And I'll never forget they were blue, and they were kinda a woolen type of pants. And the first day I wore them, I was jumpin' over a fence and got caught in the fence and tore a big hole in the back of my seat of my pants. [*Laughs*] Gosh, I never heard the end of that. [*SL laughs*] I cried because my pants—my new pants—the first day, I got tor—a tear in it. Course, she stitched it up and mended it and [*claps hands*] . . .

SL: Yeah, but still . . .

JM: That was my first long pants. [*SL laughs*] I remember that.

[00:30:14] SL: That's interesting. The—so did the girls—did the sisters help with the sewing, too? Did they learn to sew early on and . . .

JM: Yes. Yeah, they did. And like I said, they—my [*clears throat*] sisters—like, Mary was the oldest and then Ann, and they were—when I was twelve or thirteen, they had already left. They were gone. They went to nursing school. [*Clears throat*]

[00:30:48] SL: Do you remember—well, what about—what'd you do

to play around the house? What were your games that you played?

JM: We played cards a lot, and especially in the long winters—in the winter's night—the reverse of the long days was—like, in wintertime, it'd be goin' dark at, like, four thirty in the evening and wouldn't be bright until about seven thirty or eight o'clock in the morning. So it was a long, dark night, and I'm telling you, the nights over there were dark. I—you know, they really were, unless the moon was up. If the moon was out, that's the differ—I know it's between the states and here—or between the states and Ireland was—the moonlight nights in Ireland were bright, bright. You could see a person walk around his house a mile away, you know. And—but when there was dark, he could be standin' right next to you, and you wouldn't see him. So it was absolutely—'twas black and white as a man, sort of—black and light, and it was one or the other.

SL: In the winter it was cold.

JM: Cold and damp, but you know, back then, you didn't know any better. You know, you just—you dressed accordingly, and a lot of times, you were always—if you didn't work in the rain or the wet, you didn't get anything done 'cause it rained so much. So a lot of times, people had to work—you'd be workin' in the pourin'

down rain gettin' things done. [*Clears throat*]

[00:32:32] SL: How did y'all heat the house?

JM: Peat. We called it peat. It was tur—it was cut out of the mountains, and it—you—it's kind of a soapy—they call it peat or turf, and it's a soapy kind of material, and you cut it in long—about eighteen inches long and about four inches square or round and throw it out on the ground, and the weather would dry it up—you know, the sun—and then it made great material to burn in the fire.

SL: So did it burn hot or . . .

JM: It burned hot, yeah.

SL: And . . .

JM: 'Twas not like coal, but it was cheap because it was abundant in Ireland—this type of land bog—they called it the bog. And so it was a—we used to—you know, we did that along with tim—wood. We cut some wood, too, you know, for fire. That's how we heated until the electricity came along. [*Clears throat*]

SL: And is that what your mom cooked with as well?

JM: Yes.

SL: And was the kitchen kind of outside or . . .

JM: No, no, it was inside.

SL: It was inside?

JM: Yeah.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: Had a big hearth—a big—and you'd have a—like, a big ol' crane where you'd hang the pots . . .

SL: The pot.

JM: . . . on it, and you swing it in and out over the fire.

[00:34:01] SL: Uh-huh. And was that the same—was it one fireplace in the house, or did the kitchen have one and the . . .

JM: Yeah, every house—every—every one had a—even the bedrooms had a fireplace.

SL: Oh. Well, that's good.

JM: Yes. So you'd have a—you could put on a fire. I remember my mother used to have a—every single night, she'd have a fireplace goin'—the fire goin' maybe about an hour before you go to bed in the rooms. The kids go to bed so that the room'd be nice and warm. And then . . .

SL: So she saw to that . . .

JM: . . . eventually it'd burn out, but you'd be under the clothes and warm then. She thought of everything.

SL: So speaking of going to bed, what kind of bedding was it that you guys slept on?

JM: Well, beds were basically what they are today, you know.

SL: Really?

JM: Yeah.

SL: It was a mattress?

JM: Mattress, yeah.

SL: A manufactured mattress and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: And did—were they store-bought blankets and quilts or . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . did your mom work on those, too, or . . .

JM: Well, I think they were store-bought, you know, but she'd sometimes make fancy ones, you know. She'd make them herself.

[00:35:19] SL: Let's talk a little bit about church around the home. Was church a part of your life growing up?

JM: Oh, very much so. We're Catholic, of course, and [*clears throat*] I remember my mother used to say that a family that prays together stays together, and we used to pray every single night as a family. You know, we said the Rosary at—right before we go to bed, and everybody was there. Nobody went to bed until the Rosary was said. So there were—the—we got a great—I wouldn't say we were poor poor, but we weren't rich. But we had—our parents were—taught us at a very early age to—what

was right and what was wrong, and you know, that it was an upbringing that you don't realize until later—you know, you thought at the time you were being punished, but it was the way to bring up kids. [*Clears throat*]

[00:36:35] SL: So attending church—was that just on Sundays?

JM: Sun—just on Sundays, yeah.

SL: And there was probably a church nearby for the community, or . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . was it a big . . .

JM: The church was about three miles.

SL: Uh-huh. And you'd go . . .

JM: Used to walk.

SL: . . . there in a buggy or walk?

JM: Walk. Yeah.

SL: Uh-huh. Most of the places that you went, did you walk?

JM: Oh yeah. And later on, you know, you'd—oh, I must be fifteen years old before I got a bike. But when you were young, you had to walk and even goin' to school—you know, we used to run to school. And in the summertime, we—we'd [*clears throat*—instead of havin'—in the wintertime, you had shoes, but in the summertime, barefooted.

SL: You'd run to school.

JM: Yeah, run to school.

[00:37:22] SL: What time did school start in the morning?

JM: About nine o'clock.

SL: Nine o'clock. So to run three miles, when did you have to leave?

JM: Well, it depends. It took us longer to get there than to get home. [*Laughter*] Well, you had to be home, so you'd get—be at the table first. No, just kiddin'. I guess it—I never realized how long it really took because you just did it. And we used to cut across the fields—weren't raised in the country. We'd just run across other people's fields. We wouldn't go on the road in the—because in the summertime, the weather was pretty nice, and you know, the rivers or creeks wouldn't be very high. So, like, the shortest line from *A* to *B*—that was where we went.

SL: And it was—you were barefoot doing this.

JM: Barefooted. Yeah, in the summertime.

SL: And you attended school barefoot in the—so you went to school in the summer? Is that . . .

JM: In the summer. Yeah. And you get—later, like, in the later part of the summer, you had it off. We'd be off in August and September.

SL: Harvesting, probably.

JM: Harvesting. Yeah.

SL: Now, that's—that was kinda standard procedure here, too.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SL: There'd be—here it was—it evolved around cotton pretty much, but . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: So—but in the winter, you'd have shoes to . . .

JM: Oh yes. Yeah.

SL: . . . to get to school. And so did you go to school year-round except for those months off for . . .

JM: Yes, and you got a—some time off at Christmas. You'd get a—you'd have a week or so off at Christmas and—basically, what is here—you know, bout the same time off.

[00:39:13] SL: So were all those families around you—were they all Catholic?

JM: No. [*Clears throat*]

SL: No?

JM: There was four or five Protestant families in the area, and we used to work for them. They were good people. There was no animosity at all. And I remember [*clears throat*] one thing—you know, the Catholics didn't eat meat on Friday back then, and later they gave that up and said that you could eat meat. The

pope said, oh, I think in 1950 or [19]60, you could eat meat on Fridays. It wasn't that important. But I used to go to work with those family to help them with potatoes or whatever they were doin'. I'd go and help them, and it was just like they wouldn't pay me any money, but they'd do something for us. They'd come help with horses or something else. There were three brothers with 'em, and none of 'em were married. [*Clears throat*] And so when they'd be workin', puttin' up—what we were doin' was puttin' up potatoes for them, and the neighboring woman would come in and do the cooking for them on that day. And I remember when I came home on Friday night, my mother said to me, "Well, what did you have to eat at"—their names were McKinleys. And I said, "Boy, they had the best chicken. It was great." She said, "I knew that." [*Laughter*] [*Clears throat*] She said, "Don't you realize it was Friday?" "Oh," I said, "I never thought of it."

SL: Oh!

JM: And I didn't, but you know, that was kinda . . .

SL: So Friday was fish—it was strictly fish . . .

JM: Oh, fish . . .

SL: . . . day when you were . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . growing up.

JM: Yeah. And there used to be a guy with the little—I'll always remember him. He was a fisherman. We called him, and he'd come round with a little truck, and he'd be sellin' mackerel and herring that he'd caught from the sea. And we'd—they'd be fresh, and my mother used to buy them for Friday.

[00:41:29] SL: So County Mayo does front the Atlantic Ocean, doesn't it?

JM: Yes, it does.

SL: So how far were you from the ocean?

JM: Bout nine miles. Nine, ten miles.

SL: Is that right?

JM: Mmm.

SL: So you really got ocean weather then. You . . .

JM: Oh yes.

SL: It blew in from the . . .

JM: We were on the west coast, and as a matter of fact, we are the closest point of Ireland to America. [*Laughs*]

SL: Is that right?

JM: Yes. The planes used to—when they take off from Dublin or Shannon, they go out over the west coast of Ireland headin' for America. And it gets to—the Atlantic gets rough. I mean, it's

pretty, pretty country—pretty scenery, but I—you know, you wouldn't—when we're young like that, we wouldn't be caught dead back there. It was so cold and blustery and windy, and nobody hardly lived on those—on the coast.

SL: Well . . .

JM: And now everybody wants to live on it.

[00:42:25] SL: Were they cliffs on the coast?

JM: Cliffs. Huge cliffs—you know, straight down into the Atlantic.

SL: Uh-huh. So you really didn't spend much time oceanside.

JM: You bet. [*Laughter*] Didn't—it was different because the weather was cold. You know, swimmin' was not—a lot of—I never learned how to swim because the weather was [*clears throat*]*throat*—the water was always cold, and the Atlantic was very cold. And you know, we used to go there and pick some fish and stuff like that—like, what do you call them—mussels?

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: And that type of stuff every now and then. My mother used to like to do that.

SL: Go dig mussels?

JM: Yeah.

SL: So the—but somehow . . .

JM: Just for fun.

SL: . . . or another, you did get down to the beach, then, to do that.

JM: Yeah. Oh, there was some beaches that was nice—sandy—but the majority of it was real cliffs and beautiful—I mean, beautiful scenery. I mean, the sheep—the wild sheep, you know, were all over that thing, you know, walkin' out on the edge, and you wondered why they didn't fall in. But it was that nice. Later on, I appreciated it a lot better than I did when I was a kid.

[Laughs]

SL: It was just always cold and . . .

JM: Cold, yeah.

SL: . . . kinda dangerous.

JM: Dangerous. Now, a lot of those—that countryside—that—in County Mayo, John Wayne had a house over there built out in the thing, and a lot of actors and people from America built homes and a place to go in the summertime.

[00:44:06] SL: Ireland does have a artists' legacy, doesn't it? I mean, it seems like they've always been supportive of . . .

JM: Oh yeah, they are [*unclear word*].

SL: . . . artist types of folks and . . .

JM: They have. Yeah.

SL: And I guess—what was the famous movie that John Wayne was in?

JM: Oh, *The Quiet Man*.

SL: *The Quiet Man*.

JM: Yeah.

SL: He probably got his property over there [*JM laughs*] during or after that . . .

JM: Yeah, probably.

SL: . . . making that film.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SL: What a great, fun film that was. So . . .

JM: That was fun.

SL: . . . in *The Quiet Man*, there's a trout creek that I guess the priest . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

[00:44:46] SL: . . . is always after this one fish. Were there creeks on your farm? How big was your farm, first off?

JM: Back then, when we were growin' up, it was only, like, forty acres. And then, of course, my brother has added 'cause a lot of people had moved and just left—and left the land, and he bought up a lot of it. Neighbors' places.

SL: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. Well, did you have any creek or river experiences growin' up as a kid?

JM: Yeah, there was rivers. Yeah. [*Laughs*] There was one—I

remember maybe the reason I never—didn't like the water—we were at a river, and those guys didn't know I didn't swim—those other kids—and they pushed me into the river, and it was pretty deep. And luckily I got—there was a branch I caught onto, you know. But 'twas, you know, eight or ten feet deep. [*Clears throat*] And . . .

[00:45:48] SL: How old do you think you were then?

JM: Oh, I was fourteen or fifteen.

SL: Oh, that old?

JM: I was that old. Yeah. And I—gosh almighty, when they found out that I didn't swim [*laughter*], I was screamin' at them to catch me—to pull me up, and they finally did, you know. At first they thought I was just . . .

SL: You . . .

JM: . . . havin' them on, you know.

SL: Yeah. Uh-huh. So you never really developed an affinity for water . . .

JM: No.

SL: . . . in any way.

JM: No.

SL: That's interesting. What about the rest of your family? Did they . . .

JM: Yeah, some of them did; some of them didn't. Even today, you'll find Irish people that don't swim because of the cold climate that they have.

SL: Right.

JM: Cold and damp.

SL: Why get in? [*Laughs*]

JM: Yeah.

SL: You're gonna get cold.

JM: Kind of a shower. [*Clears throat*]

[00:46:43] SL: Well, okay. Let's get back to the home, then. Now, you mentioned about the fishermen bringing by some fish in a wagon for sale. Were there other vendors that rolled wagons by the house? Did—I mean, kinda like a store on wheels—were there . . .

JM: There sure was. Yeah. We used to call it the traveling shop. And there were—I remember there were two brothers—Goughs—Bill and Edmond Gough—and they'd come with this lorry—we called them lorries—they called them trucks here. And good sides, but they had all those shelves in there, and they'd come—they usually were there at the same time every day, you know. [*Clears throat*] They'd come once—I think it was once a week they came. And they'd do different parts of the country.

And my mother'd know exactly—she'd have her list of what she wanted, and we'd go out there, and we'd be all out there when we were little kids wanting to get some candy, you know. Sweets as they called it over there, so—but they'd have—they had everything just about you can imagine in that shop—traveling shop. And if they didn't have it, they'd say, "Well, I'll have it next week for you," you know. And so they lasted a—quite a while, you know, and then eventually—I'd say they were in operation probably ten or fifteen years, and then they died out. [*Clears throat*]

[00:48:25] SL: Now, were—was it a horse-drawn truck or . . .

JM: No, just motor. Motor.

SL: It was an automobile.

JM: Yeah.

SL: A truck.

JM: Truck.

SL: So these roads were still dirt roads, though.

JM: They were dirt roads back then.

SL: And probably pretty narrow.

JM: Very narrow. [*Clears throat*]

SL: So did you see many automobiles growing up on those roads?

JM: There was—there wasn't that many automobiles at that time.

They had—I remember, though, the family that lived back from us about a mile or two, and they had a—one of them had a taxi car. They called it a hackney car. That was the name that they called it. And one of the boys—Tanneys was their names—if you wanted to go anywhere or go to the railroad station or to get the—catch the train, you'd just [*clears throat*] ask them, and they'd drive you for so much money. They'd take you in there and drop you off and . . .

[00:49:31] SL: So the train station was quite a ways away or . . .

JM: The train station was about six miles.

SL: Yeah. Not something you'd wanna haul your luggage walkin' or . . .

JM: You wanted to haul. Yeah.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

JM: And so—and that was—those—that's the thing that I like to do now when I go home—I go by and see where those people were born. You know, like the guy that had the car, and of course, the house is still there, but it's—nobody lives in it and . . .

SL: Uh-huh. It's abandoned.

JM: It's—yeah, it's kinda sad because [*clears throat*], you know, they were good people, and they're all dead and gone, you know.

The—none—my brother that stayed on there—he tells me, you

know, all of what happened to them, and so there's a lot of the places that when we were kids, they're no longer there.

Somebody else owns the land, and they went—those people left—went to England or America or Australia, you know.

SL: Was that . . .

JM: Never came back.

SL: Was that Michael that stayed or . . .

JM: That . . .

SL: . . . or Paddy?

JM: No, Paddy.

SL: Paddy stayed.

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: And is he still there?

JM: He is.

SL: Well . . .

JM: And you know, it's—but it's a different Ireland now, you know.

The—you know, they're way different.

[00:50:49] SL: So let's get you back in school. Let's talk about the size of your school. How big was the school?

JM: There was about twenty-eight to thirty-five students . . .

SL: And . . .

JM: . . . in elementary. Yeah.

SL: . . . was there one room, two room, three rooms . . .

JM: The first one was—it was a two-room and two teachers.

SL: And did they divide it up—you know, this teacher had grades one through three or four and the other teacher had the other grades, or did they . . .

JM: No—yeah. Yeah, they—yes. The one teacher—all of the—yes—lower grades, and the other one had the upper grades.

SL: So they kinda divided up in half.

JM: Divided up. Yes.

SL: Maybe fourteen in each room.

JM: Yes. Roughly, yeah.

[00:51:41] SL: Well, what do you remember about that school?
What . . .

JM: Well, [*clears throat*] it was—the one thing that I remember about Ireland—and this, I guess, has to do with a lot of countries in Europe—class distinction was big in Ireland. As the old sayin' goes, "A dime looked down on a nickel." You know, if you had money, you were special—you know, you were treated better and—even in school. And that was the one thing that I always felt was—wasn't good. You know, like, the people that came from affluent families, they got special treatment.

SL: So there was some influence even in the farming community

there, or is that . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: Did they come from—I guess, where was the nearest town to . . .

JM: Well, the nearest town was really bout three miles.

[00:52:42] SL: And wouldn't it have its own set of schools?

JM: Oh, they had their own set of schools. Yeah.

SL: Uh-huh. So . . .

JM: And—but in the—even in the farming community, there was some people that was bigger farmers than others, and you know, the—they had—it's really just the way it was, you know, like, as far as the way you were treated, you know. And the school that I went to—they had a—they had four—was it four roads—three road—one, two—three roads comin', 'cause one group went down one road, and a group went down—another group went up the other road where we were from. And that—we always had [*clears throat*], like, little—when we'd play games, it was always against . . .

SL: The roads.

JM: . . . the road to the north and the road from the east, and we sorta ganged up on one another, really—the kids did. And—but 'twas in a friendly way. You'd never—there'd be a lot of fistfights

with the boys back in those days because—I don't know—'twas just thing to do. I guess that's how Ireland got the fighting Irish, and you'd have a fight, and it'd be over—you'd be friends—you know, it'd be nothing.

[00:54:04] SL: Did—you know, I meant to ask this earlier. You were talkin' about your father doing calisthenics. I mean, was he ever a boxer or a fighter at all? Do you know . . .

JM: No . . .

SL: No?

JM: . . . no, he wasn't.

SL: I just—it's fascinating that he was out there . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . warmin' up and . . .

JM: But the [*clears throat*]-back in—when I was growin' up, there was a lot of boxers in Ireland, and a lot of 'em were boxers because that was kind of a way out, too, to make money—the great amateur boxers and some professionals—you know, there was—came—a lot of 'em, of course, came to America. And so it was a thing that was done, and so instead of—now, they use a knife instead of their fist, you know, so you settled the score with your fists back then. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right, and lived to tell about it.

JM: Which is all right.

SL: And lived . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . and survived it.

JM: You lived to tell about it, yeah.

[00:55:01] SL: Yeah. So when you were in the school and you talked about how class differences were pronounced and you were treated differently depending on your station.

JM: Yes.

SL: Your family's wealth, I guess. Did that mean that the more well-to-do sat on the front and the families that weren't as well-to-do sat further back, or were they grouped where the teacher would address the well-to-do over here and then the also-rans over here or . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: Were you all mixed together or . . .

JM: Well, you were all mixed together, but they tried to always—if anything happened out in the playground or anything like that or—the get—kid that'd be—had—have the less support would get blamed for it, you know.

SL: They'd take the brunt.

JM: Take the brunt. And I—and of course, we were taught when we

were kids brought up by our parents that, you know, you stand up for what's right. That's how I got into a lot of [*laughs*] fights. We used to get into a lot of fights, my brother and I, because I'd take up for a kid that was accused wrong, you know. And we were pretty good. We could use our hands pretty good, you know, so we could defend ourselves where the other kid couldn't or some—you know, they'd pick on a kid.

SL: Right.

JM: Yeah, some of the bullies. And they were—not that they were—they were just—thought they were better than that kid or something or better than us, either—you know, that type of stuff. We didn't take that too good.

[00:56:56] SL: But by standing up for what's right and helpin' the kids that couldn't help themselves, I mean, did you—do you feel like y'all gained some respect from those well-to-do folks or . . .

JM: Oh no.

SL: No?

JM: No, no.

SL: No, they just . . .

JM: You just give them a good hammerin', and . . .

SL: And then you'd get in trouble for it.

JM: . . . they'd stay away from us.

SL: Yeah. [*JM laughs*] That's fun. Was the—were there—was it ever Protestant versus Catholic in school?

JM: No.

SL: I mean, was the school a Catholic school?

JM: 'Twas a—well, it wasn't a Catholic school. It was just a public school. [*Clears throat*] And there was the parsons—they went there—we didn't know that differ, you know, and there were—and course, in southern Ireland, there wasn't that many Protestants, you know, over the whole population. But where they were, they kept to themselves, you know, as far as church and stuff like that, but you know, otherwise, they mixed and—except when we were very young, they didn't ma—tried—they tried definitely not to marry a Catholic, you know. So—but that changed shortly after I left over there. [*Clears throat*]

[00:58:25] SL: So early on, it was—there was some prejudice that you were aware of growing up and . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . and you saw it . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . happen. Were there—well, did you have any good Protestant friends growin' up?

JM: I did. Yeah. The one thing about the Protestants were—they

were—they didn't—never used swear—cuss words or anything like that, you know. They were good people, and like I said, we used to work with them because there were—was [*clears throat*] a few families that lived close to where we were. And we worked, and they did lots of things—good things for us, too, you know. And so we never had any problem, you know, 'cause a lot of that Northern Ireland thing was—that was down there, you know.

SL: Right.

[00:59:29] JM: And—but they had—I remember if there was a place being sold, they'd like to sell it to another Protestant, but that was all right.

SL: Well, like . . .

JM: But it was prejudiced a bit.

SL: . . . most things like that, you know, it was just the way life was then and . . .

JM: It was. Yeah, you didn't . . .

SL: . . . and people didn't really think that much about it or . . .

JM: You didn't.

SL: . . . what the implications were . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . or the reasons why. It was just . . .

JM: That's the way it was.

SL: . . . accepted. Yeah.

JM: Or the other thing that we had when we were young—if—when one of the Protestants died, [*clears throat*] they'd go to the priest—you know, the Catholics weren't supposed to go into the Protestant church to the funeral. You could go to it, but you'd have to stay outside.

SL: Uh-huh. To show your respect.

JM: Respect. Yeah. So everybody'd go to the funeral, but they wouldn't—it was against the Catholic religion at that time to go into a Protestant church.

SL: Did y'all ever . . .

Trey Marley: Scott, we need to change tapes. Excuse me.

SL: Oh, good.

[Tape stopped]

[01:00:35] SL: Okay, Coach, we're startin' on our second hour here.

Just had some lunch, so we'll probably be good to go here for another hour anyway. We were talkin' about some of the Protestant/Catholic—kind of almost customs and culture back then [*JM clears throat*] with that—there was some prejudice, but there was also an accepted culture about it. And we were talkin' about actually going to a Protestant funeral and Catholics were

not allowed in the church during the service, but they could be outside the church. And it was a way of honoring and respecting each other's differences, I guess, without there being a confrontation. It was—it's not quite the back of the bus [*JM laughs*], or it's not quite the white-only drinking fountain, but still there was this ra—it was not racial, but it—this religious divide . . .

JM: Divide.

[01:01:35] SL: . . . even in southern Ireland. [*JM clears throat*] It was more pronounced in Northern Ireland, but you saw and experienced some of this stuff personally growing up.

JM: Oh, I did. Yeah, because it was, I think, more respect for the dead—you know, that a person is dead, and we respect 'em, but it worked kinda evenly both ways. You know, they'd come to the Catholic funeral, and they'd stand outside, and then when the body'd go to the cemetery, they'd, you know, walk with—or drive after it to the burial, you know. So that was the way it was, you know, and it wasn't [*clears throat*], I guess, all that bad. The only time—like I'd said, you know, they would—wouldn't—lost my train of thought there. They wouldn't . . .

SL: There—well, you were . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . talkin' about some of the—well, actually, I guess the preferred treatment was more—had to do with class. Now . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . I'm assuming there were [*JM clears throat*] poor Protestants just like there were poor Irish—or poor Catholics.

JM: Yeah, there was poor Protestants, and—but they wouldn't—the thing I was tryin' to say was that they didn't—the marriage—they didn't marry into one another at all, and that was what sorta drew the line. Where that has now completely changed or—it took a long time—probably didn't change until up in the late [19]70s, you know, 'cause I know some of the people that I grew up with that their families now are all married to Catholics, and they're all mixed in and out, you know.

[01:03:38] SL: Mh-hmm. Let's get you back to around the home, and so far the—you talked about playing cards, especially in the winter. What [*JM clears throat*] other fun things did you do at—around the house?

JM: Well, we did have a thing with the cards. I wanna mention something about that was—they'd have what they call a raffle, and they might be comin' up to Christmas. They'd have a turkey. They'd play—you'd play for a turkey. This guy'd have a card game at his house, and you'd go and have to pay two

shillins or somethin' like that to enter it, and then you'd play for the turkey. And whoever won it had a turkey for Christmas, so that type of stuff. And there was a lot of games that was—they were good times, really, in that respect—that particular thing—'cause all the neighbors got together and visited and had fun, you know, playin' the cards. And course [*clears throat*], as people emigrated from Ireland—start—the emigration started gettin'—they were leaving faster, then all of a sudden there was—there were no people to play cards, or same thing with playin' football. We used to play a lot of football, and then all of a sudden there wasn't enough to—people—young people around to play football. They'd all left and gone to Australia or England or America. [*Clears throat*]

[01:05:19] SL: Okay, a couple of things here. When you say football, for us, you're—for Americans, you're probably talking soccer. Is that . . .

JM: Well, soccer, and then they had a game—they have a game over there called Gaelic football. It's [*clears throat*] like the Australians have Australian Rule football. Ireland has—it's very similar to Australian football. And everybody played that or soccer.

SL: So Gaelic football—what—I mean, is that more like American

football, or is that . . .

JM: Well, what it's like—it—they can catch the ball with their hand and kick it. They can kick it into the field, and then you can jump up in the air and grab it and—or two or three people jump up to grab it. And whoever gets it comes down with it, and if he has a clear shot at the goal, he'll take a—he can try and kick it into the net and . . .

SL: The shots are still . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . with the foot and . . .

JM: Yeah, with the foot.

SL: So, really, it's just—you're able to touch . . .

JM: It's a rough . . .

SL: . . . the ball with your hand.

JM: It's a lot rougher than soccer, but it's not as—it's not like—well, it's a little bit closer to rugby, but a different thing, you know. It's a—it's not like runnin' with the ball. You—when you catch it, you can only—you can [*clears throat*—every so many steps, you got to move the ball from your foot to your hand, you know.

[01:06:42] SL: And then the other thing—you're talking about kind of a flight of the population leaving Ireland. I mean, you—did you experience that growin' up? That you saw more and more

families leaving and . . .

JM: [*Clears throat*] Yes. You know, when I was small, you know, up until I was fourteen or fifteen, I—there wasn't that many leavin', and then all of a sudden, they started to leave and—'cause the one person I remember—he was a neighbor, and he—the night before he left, we all went by to see him, and he was only bout twenty years old. And he went to New York, I remember. And the next day [*clears throat*], we heard a—I remember watchin' the sky, and there was a plane flyin' up—'twas a clear day, and we said, "That could be him, you know. He's probably on that plane." But—and he never to come—I never saw him again. He never came home, you know, so a lot of the Irish did that. They left and never came back.

[01:07:48] SL: So it was a—the economy was just that depressed, or they just felt like [*JM clears throat*] there was more opportunity somewhere else, or . . .

JM: Well, the economy—it wasn't good, you know. There wasn't—there was no jobs that was of any consequence. You might get a job workin' on some type of construction or a road or somethin', but it was temporary. When that was finished, then you were out of a job, and you had to wait until some other project started. It was a bit like we have here right now.

[Laughs]

SL: Yeah.

JM: And so it—a lot of people just—that had anybody—family in America—you had to have somebody in America to claim you out. You couldn't just go out—go to America without somebody claiming you and sayin', "I will take care of you in America."

[01:08:39] SL: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. Well, what about—I know you didn't do much fishing, did you? I mean, you didn't . . .

JM: No.

SL: . . . have a whole lot to do with water. What about hunting? Did you . . .

JM: Oh yeah. [*Clears throat*]

SL: . . . learn to hunt?

JM: I did. We did. We loved to hunt. And I had—my older brother, Paddy, and myself used to go—we used to hunt rabbits at night with a lamp. And we had this carbide—a carbide lamp, and it was run on carbide, and it threw a big, old beam, you know, of—and you'd have to—when the carbide had—have all—the gas has gone out of it, we'd have some in a little pouch, and we'd put in some new stuff and relight it. And we had two greyhounds [*clears throat*], and they were greyhounds—we'd go into a field on a real dark night. And the minute you get into that field, just

turn the light—you keep the light shined down at the ground until you got in there, so they wouldn't see you coming. And then you turn the light up, and the rabbit'd start takin' off, and the hounds'd get after them. And [*clear throat*] we only had one light and—but I used to love to tag along. My brother—I was—well, let's see—four years younger than he was, and he—course, when the rabbit'd get up and start runnin', he'd go—keep runnin' and shine the light on it so the hounds could see where he was. And then I'd be comin' behind, trippin' [*unclear words*] in my way 'cause I'd have no light [*SL laughs*] and it'd be in the dark. And so that was a lot of fun doin' stuff like that. I used to love to do that.

[01:10:31] SL: So actually, the greyhounds would . . .

JM: Catch the rabbits.

SL: . . . catch the rabbit. It wasn't like y'all were carryin' a gun and . . .

JM: No, no, didn't shoot.

SL: . . . and shooting.

JM: No.

SL: So you—the hunting was . . .

JM: They greyhounds'd catch 'em, and then we'd [*claps hands*]—I'd—I would carry them. I'd put the legs together in the back

and put them on a—I had a rope. Put—hang them on my back, and you know, they were warm because they were just killed. And boy, it'd start gettin' tough after a while, me carryin' fourteen or fifteen or sixteen rabbits in on my back.

SL: Wow, so you were that successful?

JM: Oh yeah. We used to catch quite a—and—but on these special nights—the best night was a pitch-dark and a little mist fallin'. Boy, they'd be out. The rabbits'd be out grazin', you know. So it—that was fun. It really was.

[01:11:25] SL: Any other [JM clears throat] types of hunting?

JM: We used to hunt foxes—those foxes and badgers. You didn't get nothing for hunting badgers, but foxes were kind of a vermin as far as they would kill chickens and do all that type of stuff. So the—when they were gettin' overpopulated, you'd have to—the government would give [clears throat]—and I remember back then, which was quite a bit of money, they'd give you ten doll—ten shillings, which is half a pound, for the head of a fox. You'd have to bring the head. And we'd go—we had a—we'd go out—you hunt them in the daytime. And we had a—what they call fox terriers. And they'd go into the ground after them and chase them out, and then the greyhound'd get them, you know. The greyhound'd go after 'em and grab 'em. We didn't have any

gun. And you—foxes are pretty cute. You know, they're smart, and they'd—it's hard to catch too many of them, but we—if we caught two or three, that was quite a bit of money . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . back then.

SL: Yeah. [*Clears throat*]

JM: And [*clears throat*] so that was basically the type of hunting that we did.

[01:12:54] SL: Is that something that your father taught y'all how to do?

JM: Yes. Yeah, he did. And now, badgers—we've all heard of "as tough as a badger," and they are tough animals. You—it—they'd tear up your dog. They had big ol' claws that's two inches long, and they bite a little bit, but they do most of the damage—tear the dog's face all up. So we tried to keep the dogs away from the badgers. Badgers were—they were a match for any dog.

SL: That's interesting. You know, I've never heard of hunting without a gun or a bow or . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . or somethin' to . . .

JM: Well, yeah.

SL: . . . to shoot. But . . .

JM: Well, we used to hunt—course, it wasn't—now, we had a gun [clears throat]—I used to hunt pheasants in the season that they were in. And we had quite a lot of them. There was lots of pheasants 'cause we used to—all the farmers grew some grain crops, and that's what they were attracted to, you know. And I was a pretty good shot, you know, get—the problem with them is when you go into a field and you'd shoot once, they're all gone, you know. They take off. They all fly off, so you're lucky just to get . . .

SL: A few.

JM: It was a single-barrel shotgun, so you'd get one if you were a good shot, and then you'd have to wait around till—for a—or go to another field somewhere else and maybe get another one. And pheasant was very nice to eat. It was nice meat.

[01:14:32] SL: Well, what kind of mischief did you get into when you were young?

JM: [Laughs] [Clears throat] One thing I remember was when we'd be comin' home from school, this man had a—an orchard—an apple orchard. And he did a lovely job of prunin' the trees—took a lot of pride in it, and his apples were topnotch. You know, they were nice—the beau—you know, those yellow-colored apples, and then he had red ones. And [clears throat] we

always wanted—he had a hedge there and—but the hedge was no match for us. We could get in, you know. And so he'd be always watchin' from when we'd be comin' home from school, especially durin' the season that the apples'd be gettin' ripe and ready to pluck off the trees. And I remember one time, I crawled in and looked underneath the hedge. And as I raised my eyes, I was lookin' right at him about thirty feet away behind a tree [*SL laughs*] lookin' right at me. [*Laughs*] He could hear me gettin' under the hedge. And he said, "Get the hell out of there," you know. And there was three or four of us. Well, we took off, and he had a bike. And he came after us with the bike, and course, he was gainin' on us, so we took to the fields. [*SL laughs*] We started goin' cross the field, but he could—you know, course, [*clears throat*] we went over a little bit of a hill on the big, long grass, and we laid down. And he kept circlin' around waitin' for us. He knew we were in there, but he didn't know where. [*Laughs*] And finally, after about an hour, he quit and went—left, and we got up and went home.

[01:16:21] SL: Well, were there any consequences? Did he come to your father or . . .

JM: Well, there was consequences when we went home 'cause we were an hour late gettin' home for dinner from school, and we

had chores to do, and my mother, you know, said, "What were you guys up to?" [*SL laughs*] You know, and all that type of—so there was consequences, you know.

[01:16:43] SL: So any other shenanigans going to and from school?

JM: [*Clears throat*] Oh, one time I remember my younger brother—he's—lives in Oklahoma now—Michael—and he was three years younger than me, and he had glasses. He was only about—I think about ten at the time or eleven. And I was older than he was, and there was [*clears throat*]*—in this field, there was two donkeys in there. Well, they were wild. Nobody ever rode them. And we were comin' over one evenin', and I said, "Wouldn't it be fun if we could catch them—those things?" And he said, "Okay, let's try and grab them and ride them." Well, we had no halter or reins or bridle or anything. [*SL laughs*] So we did get them in a corner of a—there was a little corral in the field, so we ganged them up into it, and we caught them and started ridin' them. Well, got on them and held on by—held on to their mane with our hands. And [*SL laughs*] anyways, donkey is pretty smart, too. He—all of a sudden, he was gallopin' as fast as he could, and next thing, he stopped just like [*makes whistling sound*]*—put the brakes on, and I went right over his head, and my brother got knocked off, too, but my brother had**

glasses. Couldn't find his glasses. And we searched—we pulled every bit of grass for about ten feet in a circle, and we finally found the glasses broke right in the middle. And boy, that was—he was—he got a few whacks from his mom when he got home [SL laughs] for breakin'—'cause it—the glasses were practically new and . . .

SL: And expensive.

JM: Oh, they were expensive back then, you know, for—you—we didn't have a lot of money, and they—the glasses broke right in half.

[01:18:43] SL: So let's talk a little bit about discipline around the home. Your mother was capable of giving a whack, as you say.

JM: Oh yeah, yeah.

SL: A spanking.

JM: Yeah.

SL: And she'd use a switch or just . . .

JM: Switch, yeah.

SL: Uh-huh. Yeah.

JM: And sometimes—most of the time, we needed it, but [SL laughs] a lot of times, we were—it was—just her tone of voice was enough. You knew, "Hey, we better get in line," you know. And so it—and we worked—you know, we had to work pretty hard to

get all the chores done . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . you know. So—and [*clears throat*] we used to help our dad a lot, you know, when he'd be workin' out in the fields, and we'd go out and help him and some—when we'd get—the thing I used to like best was—when I'd come home from school was—he'd be doin' something out in the field and my mom had made tea—sandwiches and tea in a flask, and I'd carry it to him. I'd hightail it—you know, quarter of a mile or a half-mile or whatever it was and—to give him the tea. And he'd always—she always made him—'cause he worked hard—really good food, you know. And he'd always give me one of the sandwiches. [*Laughter*]

[01:20:19] SL: Well, was your father involved in disciplining the kids at all?

JM: He wasn't as—no, he was more kinda laid-back, and she—my mother took care of it, you know. And—oh, he'd say something, but not as much.

SL: So early on, right and wrong was under your mother's domain primarily.

JM: Oh yeah. Absolutely. And she always preached—you know, doin' things that's right and not to be gettin' caught up in—'cause we used to—like I told you, the—when we'd get into those

scuffles in school—and we weren't the only ones. The kids just did it back then. She—she'd get mad and say, "What—when are you guys goin' to grow up and stop that nonsense?" and all that type of stuff. But that—then it'd get back to normal.

[01:21:26] SL: How were you in school? I mean, did you—were you a good student?

JM: Oh, I just did what I had to. Always, always. I wasn't that fond of school. I was more fond of the outdoors and doin' other things, you know. But I'd always, like, do what I had to do and—not like my sisters. They were—they went on to be nurses, and they were more studious than we—than the boys were.

SL: Well, was that kinda the way the culture was? I mean . . .

JM: It was.

SL: . . . it sounds like to me the men and the boys were responsible for the hardest part of the labor.

JM: Yes.

SL: The real . . .

JM: You worked.

SL: . . . exhausting stuff . . .

JM: Yeah, you worked hard.

SL: . . . out in the field.

JM: And [*SL clears throat*—to make some money. And like I said, I

grew up in times that were tough, you know. It took Europe a long time to recover from the wars, you know. From the World War II. [*Clears throat*] And there were, you know, very few jobs. Like I said, most of the kids left and went abroad. But there were—even—I remember around that time when I was about seventeen or eighteen—that's when married men started goin'—that actually had farms—they started goin' and workin' on construction and gettin' jobs on roads mak—buildin' roads and stuff like that. That'd never happened before.

SL: It was always farm life.

JM: It was always farm. And now, things were beginnin' to change. You know, they were—it was almost like here. It's now where you have to have two jobs to exist, you know. And that's what started that back to . . .

[01:23:33] SL: Was there any—anything—any study—any—I mean, were—did you have an affinity for math or English?

JM: Oh, we had to—yeah. I was pretty good at math, but we had to do our homework—you know, do our homework and whatever we had to do. And then we did the chores.

SL: So you'd go—you'd come home and do homework first.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SL: And your mother would probably supervise over . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . that—make sure that . . .

JM: And . . .

[01:24:08] SL: Did she help you with your homework or . . .

JM: She would, yeah. And she—and I remember she always had a saying, "Education is no load to carry, so get an education because that's what you're—if you don't, you'll be workin' like we are, you know. Get an education. You have an opportunity that a lot of people"—you know, I guess, at that time, we were gettin' out of the—what—the black days of the war and all that type of stuff where school wasn't that important as—survive was the main thing. So we were the generation that was climbin' out of that [*clears throat*]-the war days.

SL: Did y'all have a storm cellar or any kind of place that you would hide in bad weather or if . . .

JM: No.

SL: . . . there was a . . .

JM: We never got that type of weather in Ireland. You'd get straight-line winds—you know, it'd be off the Atlantic. Sometimes—back then, of course, we didn't—never were told that 'twas blowin' at seventy miles an hour or anything like that, but there was times when it'd almost blow you over, so it was

blowin' pretty hard and rain blowin' sideways. [*Makes whistling sound*] So that was—but not—no hurricanes or anything like that, you know. The only thing—it'd blow—it had to be pretty strong winds 'cause I remember big ol' trees'd be [*makes whistling sound*] flipped right over, you know. But it was just—that was the way it was. Nobody made a big deal of . . .

[01:25:51] SL: You know, most of the images that I've seen of Ireland—I see a lot of beautiful, rolling, green hills, but I really don't see that many trees. Were there really a good stand of—a good forest?

JM: [*Clears throat*] In places, there was, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And then later on, after I left Ireland, the forestry department took over a lot of the poorer land and planted trees on it. And I mean, there's a lot of—you're right, though—a lot of Ireland didn't have trees. It was all rolling, green fields and all that. But they—that has changed. There's a lot of—you'll see a lot of forests now, and you can know they're planted because they're square and rectangle [*laughter*] . . .

SL: Uh-huh. Yeah.

JM: . . . and all that type of stuff.

SL: That was a . . .

JM: They're not—they don't blend into—like here—the Ozarks. They don't blend in like that. So you—they're planted pines and stuff like that.

[01:26:47] SL: What about your elementary school teachers? Did you like them at all, or were you—felt like you were in the lower class and they didn't treat you fairly or . . .

JM: Well, there was one teacher, and she was kind of a—not that she treated me that bad, but she had her favorites, you know, in the class, and you know, I'll always remember that. And [*clears throat*] then we left that school—my brother and I did—we were the last two—and went to a school that was closer to us, you know, 'cause I don't know how we ended up goin' to that school in the first place. It was a mile further away from us than this other school, so we switched to a different school. And that was a lot better.

SL: Was it the same size or . . .

JM: Bout the same size. Yeah.

SL: That's interesting that they sent you to a—they had you go to one that was further away.

JM: Yeah. Well, I think what had happened was our parents when we were young—real young—just when I was bout born—they moved from one house to—well, it was about, oh, I don't know,

three or four miles and—to a different farm. And so they kept goin' to the same school they were goin' to 'cause the kids—the old—our oldest—the oldest of the family had gone there.

SL: I see.

JM: And then there was—my brother and I were left—my younger brother—and [*clears throat*] so, finally, we decided to leave and go to the other school.

SL: Mh-hmm. And you liked it . . .

JM: For the last . . .

SL: . . . and you liked it better.

JM: We only—like, last three years of our . . .

SL: Did you like it—and you liked it better?

JM: Yeah, I liked it better. Yeah.

SL: So—but you—still, you were just doin' whatever it took to get by on the . . .

JM: Well, yeah, just—most people [*laughs*—90 percent of them did the same thing. There's always a few kids that's real studious and does everything perfect, you know.

[01:29:04] SL: So you didn't have any particular favorite subject area that . . .

JM: No.

SL: No.

JM: Not really. I could pass any of the subjects, you know, but that was a—and you know, when you—even though my mother and father always—they just pushed that education and kept talkin', "You know, you gotta get an education because [*clears throat*] you're gonna have to leave home," and most of the Irish families were big—you know, six, eight, ten kids. So only one person could stay, you know. Then everybody else left, so education was pushed, you know, to get—try and get an education. And some—most people did. They didn't go on to secondary school or some of them didn't, and some of them just went abroad. And it wasn't that they wasn't smart, you know. They just had to get out and make a livin'.

[01:30:22] SL: Did you still experience the same kind of class discrimination at this closer school that you had in the one you started in?

JM: I think it was a little fairer 'cause I had a man teacher in the second school. And he was—you know, he had a big ol' long—a cane about this long, though, if you got out of line, he'd [*claps hands*] slap you on hands [*claps hands*] with it. But you had to put your hand out [*claps hands*] and—but I didn't mind that. If you did something wrong, you deserved it, you know. But that—I'd rather get that than a lashin' of the tongue, you know.

[Laughs]

SL: Really.

[01:31:04] JM: Yeah. You know, you can—the tongue can be more painful than . . .

SL: It can.

JM: Yeah.

SL: It can be . . .

JM: Yeah, the . . .

SL: Much heavier scars.

JM: Heavier scar. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And so he was a—I remember his name was Mr. Lynch, and he was a real brilliant man—never married, and [*clears throat*] he used to live—I often think back of his life because what—how he lived was he had a room—a board—in this boarding house where only—just a room, and the—those people used to make his breakfast, and he'd bring a lunch with him to school and then his supper. So he'd walk home to that house—'twas out in the country, and you know, I often would think later, "What the world did he do all the time?" you know. He—I'm sure he read a lot. But he also spent quite a bit of—there was a pub about three miles away. [*Laughs*] And he spent a lot of time in that

pub and—but still, that was a—my brother and I often talk about him. What a life. He never married. He was—at that time, he was probably pushin' fifty, and he had—a great, great teacher, you know, and very fair to everybody. And—but he led just kind of a life that—lived in a little room and went to the pub . . .

SL: Never had a wife and—or kids and . . .

JM: Never had a wife and went to a pub at night and had a few—several pints of Guinness, I guess, and that was his life. It's amazing, too, but that was kind of—that man always—I think of him often, you know, 'cause he was—I learned a lot from him because he was a—just a decent—very decent person.

[01:33:14] SL: What—give me an example. What—do you remember any conversation you had with him that . . .

JM: Oh . . .

SL: . . . really [*snaps fingers*] made somethin' click for you?

JM: Well, he always—he really emphasized to all—he said, "You boys, you may not think it right now, but you're gonna need this education 'cause you're not goin' to be around here 'cause there's nothing for you, and you're goin' to go abroad—wherever it may be, and you're gonna run up against kids that have an education." And he said, "Believe me, I know what I'm talkin' about." And I didn't know what his background was—where he

came from. He wasn't from our part of Ireland. He came in there as a teacher. So he was a great influence in my life, too, to [*clears throat*] get some—get an education of some description, you know. It opens the door. It doesn't guarantee you . . .

SL: Oh yeah.

JM: . . . anything. But it's like gettin' a college degree here. Once you get it, you get your foot in the door, and then you have to prove yourself anyways.

[01:34:23] SL: Right. So this second school that you're attending—it's still elementary school.

JM: Mmm.

SL: And elementary school for you lasted through—what would it be basically seventh grade here?

JM: Seven. Yeah, yeah.

SL: And then there was no junior high school. You just went straight on into high school.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Is that right?

JM: No, I'll tell you what I did. I didn't go into high school. I was out of school about three years, and I finished elementary—the elementary. I worked on the—with the electric company—you

know, climbin' the poles and all that type of stuff. And then I went to [*clears throat*]*—*I had a first cousin. His name was Frank Lynn, and he lived in Dublin. And he brought me, and I went to live with him. My parents, I think, asked him, you know, for—if it—if I could go up there. And I went to a private school at night—like a—'twas called Tutorial Institute. What he was was a—the man that ran it was a—kind of a—he was a professor at Trinity University that was a real brilliant guy, but he quit—he fell out with 'em. He didn't wanna teach what they—you know, and he left and opened up his own school, you know. So that's where I got my secondary education, and I did it—I used to work durin' the day and go to school at night.

[01:36:06] SL: So did you—but you finished elementary school?

JM: Oh, I finished elementary, but . . .

SL: And . . .

JM: . . . this was . . .

SL: . . . and . . .

JM: . . . this was secondary school. Yeah.

SL: . . . how did you get a job with the electric company? How'd that come about?

JM: Well, it was—they were startin' at that time puttin'—stringin' those electric poles and goin' from one place to another. And

[*clears throat*] this man that we knew—that the family knew—had influence, and you had to have influence to get the job, believe it or not, even though it was just a—what I did was I used to climb those poles and tie the wires on at the top, you know. Front, on each side, and on the top. And it paid real good. And at that time, money was important, but then after three years of that, I went with my cousin to Dublin.

SL: Dublin.

JM: And I had started runnin' at that time, too.

[01:37:07] SL: Okay. So now, let's talk a little bit—now, when you moved to this other farm, did it already have electricity?

JM: Yes.

SL: So it was a—it was kind of a quality-of-life change, a little bit . . .

JM: It was, yeah.

SL: . . . then. And so that electricity not only gave you light. Did you have radio at this . . .

JM: We did. And I'll tell you what, I didn't have the radio until we were about—I think—well, a good radio. I think we had an old radio, but it wasn't a very good one. And when I was about ten or twelve—but there was a man that lived—and of course, there was a lot of bachelors, and a lot of Irishmen didn't get married back in those days. They lived alone and blah, blah, blah.

SL: Well, the women probably couldn't put up with them, right?

[01:38:01] JM: Probably. [*Laughter*] But this one fella—his name was Peter Dooher, and he had lived in England for a while. He had been in England for several years, and [*clears throat*] I used to do some work for him as a kid. He'd—and he'd give me some money—you know, pay me. And so I remember goin' back and listenin' to—he had this fantastic radio. He bought it in England. And he was—you could listen to a fight from the Polo Grounds in New York—all the way from New York. And we'd go—we loved boxing, and my older brother and myself—Paddy—we'd go back across the fields. We'd arrive there around two o'clock in the morning because, you know, we had to—that was the time change. Bout ten o'clock in—whatever it was—ten—nine or ten o'clock in Madison Square Garden or the polo—'twas the Polo Grounds. And I remember listenin' to fl—not Floyd Patterson, but Rocky Marciano fightin'. And Joe Louis. I think he fought Joe Louis, and oh, I used to love that, you know. Gosh. And then we'd head off home at five o'clock in the morning and have to get up for work two hours later, but . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] And go to school.

JM: And then he was—this Dooher man was a—he was a good to—he was—he liked us 'cause we used to do things for him, you know,

and every time there'd be a fight, he'd call us and say, "Hey, there's a fight comin' on." And I remember we went back one night, and there was a—an Irish guy—his name was Billy Kelly. He was from Northern Ireland, and he was fightin' a Frenchman for the world featherweight championship. And he was Ray Famechon—he was a French. I'll never forget his name. Well, the commentator—the fight was in Dublin, and he must be—the commentator must be pro-Irish [*SL laughs*] 'cause we thought that Kelly had killed this guy. You know, "Kelly, right and left to the head. Right to the body. Left to the head," you know, and went on and on. And when the decision came up, they gave it to the Frenchman. [*Laughs*] And they tore up the place. Tore the seats out of the . . .

SL: Riot.

JM: Riot. Yeah. So I don't know if it was because of the commentator or a bad decision, but I don't know. That's something that sticks in my mind.

[01:40:41] SL: Now, you also mentioned that your friend with the radio would also call. So did you get a . . .

JM: Well, no. He'd send word to us, you know.

SL: I see. Okay.

JM: He only was about—cross the fields about a mile and half or so.

SL: Just a mile and a half.

JM: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] He'd tell . . .

SL: And you're still walkin' . . .

JM: . . . he'd send them . . .

SL: . . . everywhere you go.

JM: Oh yeah. Yeah, we were walkin', yeah.

[01:41:03] SL: Were there any other amenities at this newer farm—
at this new farm that—besides electricity?

JM: We got—well, yeah, there was a nice—some nice, newer
buildings and all that. And the most important thing—we got
milkin' machines . . .

SL: Oh.

JM: . . . for the cows. Boy, that was a relief. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, but you had to know how to run the machines, and you still
had to get up and . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . man them, right?

JM: You had to get up. Yeah.

SL: And you still had to attach and . . .

JM: And put—attached 'em.

SL: And do . . .

JM: But 'twas better . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . than kickin'—that thing kickin' you.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, those new cows—you know, the—they were—but it only—that only lasted a little bit—you know, them kickin' you. But that was so great 'cause some of those cows were so hard to milk, 'cause they didn't wanna give it to you, you know. The—they're smart, too, you know. But it seemed like the machines'd just—it just massaged 'em the right way. They'd be there, and they'd have to give in, I guess, finally, you know.

[01:42:13] SL: Well, it would seem like the milk—or the cows would get so full with milk that they'd—would be uncomfortable and they'd . . .

JM: Oh, they would.

SL: . . . want to get rid of it.

JM: They would. Yeah, they . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . would.

SL: Yeah.

JM: That's true, too.

SL: But there were some ornery cows that . . .

JM: Oh yeah. Oh, there was.

SL: . . . made it hard.

JM: And they were wild, too, you know—some of them. Some of them were perfect—they'd walk right in, and the milk'd be almost fallin' out of them. You know, you'd just [*makes whistling sound*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . [*unclear words*], you know, the bucket filled in a heartbeat.

[01:42:39] SL: Was this house any bigger or smaller than the other house? Was it about the same size?

JM: Bout the same, yeah.

SL: And was it newer?

JM: Newer, yeah, yeah.

SL: So you—but you—did you have a fireplace in every room?

JM: Oh yeah, same thing. Yeah.

SL: It too. And so let's see—so you were still burning wood and peat . . .

JM: Yeah. [*Clears throat*]

SL: . . . in that house, too.

JM: Yep.

SL: Any other—besides the milking machine, were there any other mechanized . . .

JM: I . . .

SL: . . . implements that your father gained or acquired by moving to this farm?

JM: Well, we got more—well, not really. The milkin' machine was the most important one, and we still had—we didn't get—you know, did a lot of stuff with horse—horses, you know. Work teams of horses, you know, like [*unclear words*] you see here in the movies. So that went on for probably until in the—think we got a tractor probably in—around [19]50—1950—[19]48 to [19]50.

SL: And you were at the newer house.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Newer farm then.

JM: Mh-hmm.

[01:44:12] SL: Was it about the same size—the farm itself?

JM: Yeah.

SL: Bout forty acres?

JM: Mmm.

SL: And was it closer to town—away from the ocean, or was it actually . . .

JM: Bout the same.

SL: Bout the same. So you still had the same weather and . . .

JM: Oh, same weather.

SL: . . . and all that. Yeah.

JM: In Ireland, you cannot get away from the weather. [*Laughter*]
It's a small country, but it's—now, in the—up round Dublin, it's—
the weather really is a little bit better. [*Clears throat*]

[01:44:42] SL: So—same sort of social mannerisms at this new
school? You still had scuffles, and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . you still had to kind of take up for those . . .

JM: Well, especially—you know, we had quite a few in that new
school because there was—we were the new—two new brats that
showed up, you know. And . . .

SL: So you were challenged immediately.

JM: Yeah, challenged, you know. And—but it soon settled down, and
it was a much better experience. Yeah.

SL: Bet you missed the orchard, though, didn't you? The apple
orchard?

JM: Missed the orchard. [*SL laughs*] We had no orchard. Oh, we
had—I'll tell you what we had on that other one. We had [*clears*
throat]*throat*—one of those Protestant people—he had gooseberry or—
bushes.

SL: Yeah.

JM: He had a bunch of them.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And big, old . . .

SL: Currants.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Gooseberries. Yeah.

JM: Gooseberries. And we used to get—I used to go in to talk to him. He was an old—he knew me—the old man. Now, he had three sons, and the sons were full-grown at the time. But I'd go in and talk to him 'cause I used to be over there workin' for them. He was the guy that fed me the tur—the chicken on Friday. And so he knew me, but he got smart to me, too, 'cause when I'd be in talkin' to him, the other guys'd be takin' the gooseberries, you know. [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh.

JM: And when he—when I'd be comin', he'd—he walked with a cane. He was an elderly man. He'd be headin' for the door with the cane. "I wanna chase those guys out of my gooseberries." You know, he used to make gooseberry pies. So . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] So you graduated to gooseberries.

JM: To gooseberries. [*Laughter*] Next best thing. [*Clears throat*]

[01:46:45] SL: Well, any other trouble that you got into at the—
besides the scuffling? Is there any other shenanigans that you

got caught? I can't help but feel like that there's a trickster side to you and your brother, and your stuff that y'all did together. I mean . . .

[01:47:10] JM: Oh yeah, we used to do some—there was a man that when we went to the new school, and he was a little bit—well, as this man would say, "A nickel short." He had a—he was—and he was afraid of the dark, you know, and that type of stuff. And even though he was a big man, he was—gosh, he must be six five—a real big man. But he was—I guess if you're afraid of something, you're afraid of it. But he used to—we used to pull some tricks on him because he had a—people—he had a nickname, and boy, he hated you if somebody called him that name, and 'twas Bollard, you know. And we'd—we would—my younger brother and I [*clears throat*—if we'd see him—he used to come across our land to go to the—to work his peat. You know, where he cut his turf and peat for the wintertime. And he'd be walkin' cross, and we'd lay in the long grass and say—one of us'd be over on one—bout a hundred yards apart, and we'd say, "Bollard!" And he'd look around, and he'd—my other brother'd say, "Bollard!" [*Unclear words*] [*laughs*]. And he used to say, "I know you. I know where you are. You'd better stand up right now, or I'm gonna be talkin' to your mother," you know.

And of course, we'd get hell for—we'd finally stand up and—
because he'd go up and talk to my mother, and then we'd get
whacked for doin' it, you know.

SL: Well, yeah.

JM: 'Cause he was a little bit simple, you know.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

JM: The guy was.

SL: Well, bollard—I guess that's like post . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . here.

JM: Yeah.

SL: So they [*JM laughs*]*—it was kind of a derogatory . . .*

JM: It was. It was, you know.

SL: . . . name, yeah.

JM: And he was a—oh, he wasn't a bad, old guy; he just was a little
bit simple, you know. Anyway, we were young—didn't know any
better.

[01:49:06] SL: Okay, so you're still [*clears throat*] walkin'
everywhere, you know. All this walkin' and runnin' and stuff that
you did growing up—I mean, you probably had no idea that you
were con—preconditioning yourself to get conditioned to be a
runner. When—and so did you start actually running while you

were still in elementary school, or did that happen after you worked for the electric company?

[01:49:34] JM: It happened while I was workin' for it because my younger brother used to be—he was runnin'. Michael. And I was around—out there in the pasture—cow pasture—kickin' a football around. And he had a track set up on the—you know, a two-hundred-meter track, or 220 yards back then.

SL: Yeah.

JM: [*Clears throat*] And he said, "You want to help me? I want to run a time trial for 880 yards." And I said—he said, "Do you want to help me?" you know. And I said, "Oh yeah." I said, "What do you want me to do?" And he said, "Well, I'll give you twenty yards of a head start." I said [*laughs*], "You're gonna give me more than twenty. I'm not doin' it for twenty. You're a runner, you know." And anyways, I finally worked it where I got about fifty yards on him. I said, "You give me fifty yards, and I'll do it, you know." And of course, I told him—I said, "Now, you just—you're at the back, and I will"—so I was runnin' really fifty yards less anyways than the 880 [*laughs*], which was better. And, "Yeah," I said, "you just tell me 'Go,' and when you are ready to go, I'll go." Well, I took off like a scalded dog, you know. You know how brothers are.

SL: Yeah, sure.

JM: I didn't want him to beat me, you know.

SL: Yeah.

[01:51:06] JM: So I ran like hell until in the last two hundred yards, I was seeing stars. I was ready to pass out, you know [*laughs*], 'cause I had run so hard, 'cause I sprinted—I didn't know how to run—I sprinted as far as I could as long as I could. And I could see stars, like, in front of my eyes 'cause I wasn't in shape, you know. But he never caught me, and when I looked back, gosh, he hadn't gained anything on me, you know. I was still well ahead of him. And he said, "Dang!" He said, "You can run," you know. [*SL laughs*] And so the next—bout two weeks later, they had a local sports—they used to call them, and—where they had races—the—from hundred yards and two hundred [*unclear words*]. I think they went up to—the mile was the farthest. [*Clears throat*] So he said, "Boy, you should run that mile." He said, "You could"—"Mile?" I said, "That's twice farther than I just ran!" [*Laughs*]

SL: [*Unclear words*]. Yeah.

JM: And I'd a hard time gettin' that far. But anyways, in the two weeks—I knew so little about the trainin'. I figured—I said, "Well, I better train a little bit, you know." So I started runnin' a

little bit around in the fields. I mean, I didn't know anything about runnin', really. So [*clears throat*] I went to the sports, and there was a—when I got there, my brother—my older brother, Paddy, said, "Oh," he said, "you're foolish runnin' that thing that—there's a guy from the local town—a university student, and he's really good. He's a university 800-meter—880-yard champion." I—he said, "I heard he's runnin' in it." And I said, "Oh," I said, "it doesn't matter to me." So—and he said, "Oh, you'll make a disgrace of yourself out there. That guy is gonna run away from you"—blah, blah, blah. [01:53:06] So [*clears throat*] by gosh, I was determined. I had to prove him wrong because—so anyways, I lined up and—myself and another kid from—oh, must be ten or fifteen miles away. He was a—I didn't know him, but I got to know him later. He was a really good athlete. And anyways, we both beat the guy. I won it [*SL laughs*], and that other kid was second—that other guy was second, and that's where my runnin' started. And that guy—you know, the university student—he had a—I remember he had a white warm-up, and I had just shorts and a trunk top, you know. [*Laughs*] I just didn't—I beat him. Anyways, so that's where my—where I got the idea that I could run.

SL: So the contests weren't affiliated by schools or . . .

JM: No.

SL: . . . towns. It was just kind of a open enrollment or open . . .

JM: Yeah, open. Open competition.

SL: Open competition.

JM: And even today, high—secondary schools in Ireland—there's no organized athletics. You know, you usually run for a club. Now, the last few years, they're—they've started—the last while, they've started—they'll have—they'll run a high—secondary schools championships. But they—it's run—you know, there's no paid coaches or anything. It's a—maybe a teacher that takes the kids out and takes them to meets and stuff like that. Very unorganized, you know. And until you get out of the secondary school, then you go into the clubs.

[01:54:59] SL: So was it Paddy that was telling you you shouldn't run . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . you'd embarrass yourself? So . . .

JM: Oh yeah, he was tellin' me . . .

SL: So he ate crow . . .

JM: He ate crow. Yeah. [*SL laughs*] 'Cause he, yeah—well, and then later, that guy that was second to me that day—his name was John Gardiner. I never beat him again. He was good. And

he never—matter of fact, I go to visit him when I go home. And he never left over there, and he always reminds me, too. He said, "You only beat me one time." [*Laughter*] I said, "That's true." And I said, "You could've been a lot better runner than me if you had gone and got a coach, you know." And he could have. He was gifted guy, you know. But . . .

[01:55:50] SL: Now, your parents were still alive and . . .

JM: Yes. Oh yeah.

SL: . . . and well when you started running and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . all the time that you were working for the . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . electric company. And they kinda talked to their—to the—was it a relative in Dublin?

JM: Yeah, first cousin.

SL: First cousin.

JM: Yeah, Frank . . .

SL: And . . .

JM: . . . Frank Lynn. Yeah.

SL: So the idea was for you to move to Dublin and go to school or . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . continue working or . . .

JM: To go to school. I'll tell you what I wanted—they wanted me to do. They wanted me to be a policeman. 'Cause I had an uncle—a policeman. And I didn't want to be a policeman, and so I went to school instead and got my secondary education finished so that I could, 'cause [*clears throat*]*—*and they came along at that time. A guy named Ronnie Delany—he—and he ran for Villanova. He was an Irishman, and he won the gold medal in the 1500 in Melbourne in 1956. So he was my idol, you know.

SL: Sure.

JM: Even before he won the medal. But when he won the medal, you know, when I was—what, 1954—that'd be [19]38, [19]48 . . .

SL: Sixteen.

JM: . . . I'd be sixteen. So I started—that's when I started gettin' interested, because of him. And then he won the gold medal. Well, I went ape. I gotta go to America. You know, so that's how it all happened. And he roused up a tremendous interest in athletics in Ireland, you know, because . . .

SL: Well . . .

JM: . . . he won the gold medal.

[01:57:40] SL: What about your cousin that you were living with?

JM: Yeah.

SL: Did it—was he athletically inclined at all then?

JM: No, no, he was—he had like what they call a self-drive car business—a car rental. It'd be like Hertz. He had a business like that and . . .

SL: So he was much older.

JM: Yeah, he was older than me. He was [*clears throat*]*—his—he* was probably ten or twelve years older than me, and he had gotten into that business and was doin' real well at it. So he was the guy that put—I stayed with him.

SL: So there's gotta be a huge difference between living on the farm and runnin' around in the fields barefoot and then being in the city . . .

JM: City.

SL: . . . in Dublin.

JM: I'll tell you, there was. And I remember the first night when I arrived there, [*SL clears throat*] I wanted to do it because I had found my niche. I wanted to go to America, you know, and get a scholarship. And the first night I was there, all I could see was those big buildings, you know. And you know, I was so homesick. If there was a bus, I'd have got on it, 'cause he hadn't showed up—I arrived there on a bus, you know. And this

Frank Lynn, my first cousin, was supposed to meet me. Well, as I found out, usually he was always late, and he was late that night. [*SL laughs*] And nice guy, but . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . but if he had wait—if there was a bus—I must be about forty minutes waitin' for him, and I was scared, you know. I was . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . I mean, I was never away from the country, you know.

SL: Well, you're sixteen years old.

JM: Yeah. So anyways, I—finally, he showed up, and the rest was history. I mean, he was a great person. He made sure that—you know, he—that—the school—he paid for it—paid for my school and all that. He was a great guy.

[01:59:51] SL: This second farm that you moved to—now, it still didn't have running water?

JM: It did. It did.

SL: It did have running water.

JM: Well, yeah, it did. Yeah.

SL: So was there an indoor toilet?

JM: There was. Yeah, yeah.

SL: And . . .

JM: Oh yeah, before I left.

SL: . . . the kitchen was . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . it had running water and . . .

JM: That all happened right, I think, around when we got the milkin' machines. Everything—the electricity was there and then the water.

SL: Mh-hmm. Still a dirt road.

JM: Still a dirt road.

SL: And so when you get to Dublin, though, what kind of place did your cousin live in?

TM: Excuse me, Scott. We need to change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[02:00:34] SL: Okay, John, we're on our third tape now, and I'd gotten you to Dublin. But we're gonna backtrack a little bit. But even before we backtrack, you and I were just talkin' off camera about the difference between then and now and how there are still some things that are kind of constant, but it's a little bit different. We were talkin' about, you know, learning the difference between right and wrong, tryin' to do right, tryin' to make yourself better, help other people, work hard, keep the faith in . . .

JM: Faith.

SL: . . . whatever faith you've embraced. And you mentioned some things have changed, like, for instance, the computer stuff, and we can't really—we really don't know if it's really a better thing, or it's kinda like you gain in areas and you lose in areas.

JM: Yeah. Well, exactly. And it's like—you think that—I always thought that computers'd make life easier. I think it has made it harder because, my gosh, there's a trail everywhere. And you almost have no privacy anymore.

SL: That's right.

[02:01:49] JM: And that's the thing that bothers me, is like—and people can get on the Internet and blast you for—and say bad things about you, and you can't do nothing about it.

SL: Once it's out there, it just . . .

JM: It's out.

SL: . . . keeps goin'.

JM: Keeps goin'.

SL: Yeah.

JM: So that's the thing that I think is—you know, that's no addition, that's for sure. And [*clears throat*] as far as usin' up more trees, we're definitely usin' up more trees because we're—those computers—you know, the paper that rolls out and stuff like that is amazing. You know, people that have to send you—first it

was the fax, and then it was the written e-mail. You have to print it out and look at it on another sheet of paper. And there's only one line on another sheet of paper. You know, I don't know.

SL: It's mixed.

JM: It's mixed, yeah.

[02:02:47] SL: It's mixed. Okay, now, we were saying—we started talkin' about Dublin, but you know what? I want us to go back a little bit more before we get into the city life. And I think there's gotta be some more stories about the farm life that you had, and maybe some other chores that you were involved with, 'cause . . .

JM: Well, yes, there is.

SL: I mean, there's no end to the work.

JM: No. [*Laughter*] There was one particular one, and I was—I had an aunt back in the mountains—they had a place back there, and my father said that they were lookin' for somebody to put out—to take the peat—the turf that they burned for the winter—take it off the bog and put it out in stacks. [*Clears throat*] And course, my father, God be good to him, volunteered me, and I'd go back there for a week. Well, I was real young when it happened. I'd be about twelve or thirteen. And [*SL laughs*]

anyways, I had a donkey with a little cart, and I'd fill it up with turf. And my sister brought me back there—Philomenia—brought me back on the back of—pedaled. It was about six miles. I was sittin' on the back of the bike on the—and she was pedalin' and brought me back there and left me back there in that for a whole week. [*SL laughs*] And I—man, when I saw her leave and she said, "Well, I'll be back next week to get you," I almost had tears in my eyes 'cause I hated that place, you know. [02:04:31] Well, anyways, I started puttin' out the turf—went back there Monday morning to the—saw this turf that I had to put out. Gee, it was about a quarter-mile long. There was so much turf there. I said, "I'll never get this stuff out in a week, you know. [*Laughs*] There's so much of it, you know." And the old donkey was so slow, a snail could move faster than he could. And [*clears throat*] anyways, to make the long story short, after I was—it was gettin' halfway through the week, and I wasn't halfway through havin' all of that work done. And I said, "My gosh, I'm gonna be out of here, that's for one thing." So there was long—we used to call them rushes. They grow in the bog. They're like a weed. They grow that tall [*uses hands to suggest height*]. Well, what I started doin'—but I started throwin' the turf into the rushes, but you couldn't see it 'cause once you

threw them in there, they were—they disappeared because the grass was so long, and boy, I was gettin' rid of all types of turf, you know. [*Laughter*] But I wasn't helpin' that guy's winter out or anything. [02:05:39] So when the—when he came to—when my sister came for me on that Sunday, I was—I said, "I'm finished. You know, I'm ready to get out of here." Well, about, oh, a month later, my dad was talkin' to his sister, and she said, "Do you know what that kid did? He threw half it into the hole [*laughs*—into the long grass. He didn't put it out at all—half the turf that you burn." So he said—I said, "Oh, I just threw a few sods—you know, a few of those things." They're about that long [*uses hands to suggest size*—about a foot long and four inches in diameter, or eighteen inches long. But I threw it into the long grass. Boy, they were mad about that, and 'twas a terrible thing to do 'cause that was their—really, that was their firewood and heat for the winter.

SL: And so all that stuff that was in the tall grass was wasted, then.

JM: Wasted. 'Twas all wet 'cause the ground was wet under and got wet back again to the—it had been dried up, but it soaked up the water [*laughs*] out of the grass, and 'twas no good.

SL: Oh my gosh.

JM: But I was never asked back there again, so I fixed that one.

[Laughs]

[02:06:54] SL: Man! So you got caught on that. So what were the consequences back at the home on that?

JM: Oh, my dad was mad. He said, "What in the world got into you?" I said, "Well, I told you I didn't want to go back there." And I said, "That old donkey I had puttin' out the turf, he was as slow as a snail. You know, I'd be there for another week, and I wasn't gonna put in another week out back there." 'Cause, you know, when you're young—that age—you—I was used to my mother's cookin' and everything like that 'cause I never had anybody—any other cooking. And I didn't like the way she cooked. I didn't like the food, you know. Gee, it was like a week in prison. [Laughter]

SL: You were ready not to like anything about that place.

JM: And I was ready.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And I wasn't—I hardly ever went back there again.

SL: So you had electricity. You had running water. But you were still burning wood and peat in the second home there on the farm.

JM: Yeah, for a good while, and then we got [*makes whistling sound*]*—I had left home when they got the central heat, you*

know. And that came quite a few years later.

SL: And—but there was no telephone.

JM: No, we didn't get—they didn't get a telephone. We could've—they should've got one sooner, but they probably didn't get a telephone until—in the [19]60s.

[02:08:21] SL: Okay. M'kay. Is there anything else you wanna say about your mom and dad and your brothers and sisters and farm life growin' up before I take you on to Dublin?

JM: Well, lookin' back at it now, you know, it wasn't that bad—you know, after you get away from something. But [*clears throat*] it's—it was, in a way, not a bad life, you know, because we were taught all the—that's one thing I'll give to my parents. I heard it every day, you know, "Get an education. Get yourself a job—a decent job—because"—and it's kinda sad when you think about—'cause I'd help my kids to do it if they came in and told me they were goin' to Australia or something like that. But that was—that's what the Irish did. They raised 'em and exported 'em. Kids went away, you know. So it was tough on 'em bein' a parent.

SL: You know, you're a teenager there at the second home. Were there—what about girls at that time? I mean, were you starting to . . .

JM: Oh yeah, they . . .

SL: . . . pay attention to the girls at all?

JM: [*Laughs*] Yeah. They had a great social back then—great social life as far as I thought—and simple that—they used to have—they had dance halls in the local towns, and all the girls would go to the dance hall and the boys. And no alcohol allowed. You couldn't drink alcohol there, even though Ireland was a great place to drink. But not in those dance halls. And they'd have a nice band, and you could dance. You'd go at nine o'clock in the evenin' and dance until one or something in the morning. And you could go and talk to different girls, and it was pretty neat. And then when I came to America, I really missed that because the American system was completely different—where you—'twas all goin' to bars, you know. It was very seldom—just now and then, there'd be a nightclub or something that you go in, but there wasn't—there was a few places in New York, like Irish clubs or German dance halls. There was some of them. But they were fadin' out at that time.

[02:11:01] SL: Okay. Anything else about the farm life and growin' up?

JM: [*Clears throat*] Well, like the old saying goes, you can take the man out of the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the man.

You know, you—I think that's where I got my love for the cattle and the animals and all that. And I always had that. It never left me, you know. That's why I have a cattle ranch today.

SL: And you still can't swim.

JM: And I still can't swim. [*Laughter*] I've been swimmin' upstream ever since. Not really. I've been fortunate.

[02:11:41] SL: Yeah. Okay, so you move to Dublin, and you're not gonna become a policeman. You move in with your cousin, and you're gonna get your secondary education. And you're now thinking in terms of running—being a runner, and you have a inspiration in Mr. Delany . . .

JM: Delany, yes.

SL: . . . who ended up winning a gold . . .

JM: In 1956.

SL: . . . in 1956.

JM: In Melbourne. Yeah.

SL: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. Gosh, you didn't—were you very much aware of the London Olympics?

JM: No.

SL: That was [19]48, right?

JM: That was [19]48, yeah.

SL: But you weren't . . .

JM: No.

SL: . . . aware of that. M'kay. So describe the new place that you're living in in Dublin. I mean—well, first of all, you talked about getting to the city, and if there'd been a bus, you would've headed right back [*JM laughs*] 'cause your cousin was forty minutes late. So you're in a—there's tall buildings, and it's totally different than a farm. But what was it like when you got to your cousin's place? What—tell me about that place.

JM: Well, it was a—you know, a two-bedroom place that he was livin' in, and I had one room, and he had one. And it was—you know, it was still built—a nice part of the city. It was a nice part, I found out later, but at the time, it didn't matter to me. It was just houses. I was [*sneezes*—excuse me. [*Sneezes*] Excuse me.

SL: That's okay. So it was an apartment?

JM: It—well, it was—first, when I went there, he had an apartment. And then shortly after that, he bought a big, old house. But he [*clears throat*—we lived in that, and he . . .

SL: It's okay.

JM: [*Sneezes*] Excuse me. I'm allergic to somebody.

SL: Okay. [*Laughs*]

[02:13:55] JM: So it was a nice place, and then I had to get used

to, like—I—well, first of all, what he did for me—he was very good—this cousin of mine [*sniffs*]*—*this Frank Lynn. He brought me out to an athletic club and got me signed up with this athletic club, and I got a coach, who is still alive, Don Appleby, to help me. And then from there, he got me set up, you know, to go to the Tutorial Institute in the evenin' and got me a job and all that type of stuff. So after I got those things goin' and the running—the running helped, 'cause I was where I wanted to be now, you know. I wanted—I had this dream in my mind now that I was goin' to be—I was gonna go to America, you know. And so he gave me a—well, he gave me that opportunity to pursue my dream and to—you know, of course, the running took care of itself, you know. At first I thought—the first time I—that Don Appleby brought me to a meet—a race—I'll never forget this. There was a military guy in it—in the race—and oh, he was good. [*Laughs*] And he was so far—'twas a four-mile, cross-country race—he was so far ahead—I looked across, and he was—must be a half-mile ahead of me. And I said, "Man, I'm not a runner. And this is"—and I was so down and out, and this Don Appleby and another guy in the car named Larry O'Byrne said to me—they were in the club. They were members of the club and said, "Hey, John, you can win this race next year, you know. You're

just not trained. You have no trainin'. You have no conditioning whatsoever, you know. You're a novice, you know." And I just felt like they were just makin' me feel good. "I'm never gonna make it." And exactly one year to the day, their prediction came true. I won it by two hundred meters. [*SL laughs*] I was two hundred meters ahead of the first guy—the second-place guy. So that was when I started, then, believin' in people. You know, that if somebody tells you something and you can trust them, do it, you know. But anyways . . .

[02:16:42] SL: Now, your cousin's name was Frank Lynn.

JM: Lynn. *L-Y-N-N*. Yeah. [*Clears throat and sniffs*]

SL: And so I'm assuming he was Catholic.

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: And in this city environment, I'm going to guess that roads are paved.

JM: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: You're seeing automobiles.

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: You're seeing trains. You're hearing radio probably nearly everywhere you go.

JM: Oh yeah, yeah. [*Clears throat*]

SL: What about societywise? Were you still—it sounds like you were

kinda livin' with a business guy, which is probably, you know, more toward the dime than the nickel, I would guess.

JM: Yeah.

SL: So did you continue to go to church on Sunday?

JM: Oh yes, I did. And the church was as close as I've ever been to one. It was about a block from where we lived—the church. And we always—oh, he always went to church on Sunday, too, you know.

[02:17:44] SL: Were there functions during the week that the church drew you . . .

JM: No.

SL: . . . into at all?

JM: I—no, I never went . . .

SL: No.

JM: . . . durin' the week. Just on Sundays.

SL: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. And [*JM sniffs*] what about—you're now—there's probably pubs galore [*JM laughs*], I would guess. Lots of bars. You've probably—are you hearing—had you heard music on the radio before you got to Dublin?

JM: Oh yes.

SL: And were you developing a taste for music? Any . . .

JM: Not . . .

SL: . . . type of music that you liked?

JM: [*Clears throat*] The only—the music I liked was country and western singing. I liked that—you know, like Jim Reeves.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, I loved him. It's—and country and western was big in Ireland. Still is.

SL: So you were getting American music.

JM: Oh yeah, American—oh yeah.

SL: Just like you were getting American fights. You . . .

JM: Exactly. It was American music and still is. America has a great influence in Ireland, you know.

[02:18:56] SL: Were you able to hear anything from the Grand Ole Opry—Nashville?

JM: Probably, but I didn't know where I could . . .

SL: You didn't know it.

JM: I didn't know. But . . .

SL: Minnie Pearl or . . .

JM: Yeah. Oh yeah, all those people we used to get over there.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: Yeah. Sure did.

SL: What about some of the comedy shows, like *Lum and Abner*, and did you . . .

JM: They had—all the shows were American. They really were.

[*Clears throat*] The—for years—and still, even today, there's a lot of shows in Ireland that's American.

[02:19:32] SL: So that was probably reinforcing this idea of going to America.

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: 'Cause you were getting bombarded, at least through the radio, with American culture . . .

JM: American stuff, yeah.

SL: . . . and American movement.

JM: Yeah.

SL: The kinds of things that were . . .

JM: Yeah. And the—you know, the—it was—I don't know, it was kind of a—most people in Ireland—America was the place to go. England was the second place to go, you know. So if you could get to America, that was the place to go. And there was still not—at that time when I came out here, there were—there wasn't that many Irish comin' out on scholarships. There was about five or six, you know. And so it was kinda new, you know. So it didn't—the gates didn't open until [*clears throat*]*—the floodgates until maybe ten or fifteen years later when—maybe fifteen when, boy, they just—everybody was comin', you know,*

and comin' to America on track scholarships.

[02:20:39] SL: Well, and also, you know, when America entered the war in World War II, it made a big difference. I mean, it changed the complexion of . . .

JM: Oh, it did.

SL: . . . of the German empire that was being built.

JM: It did.

SL: All of a sudden . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . it kinda checked it.

JM: Checked it.

SL: And it kinda saved . . .

JM: Oh, it did.

SL: . . . England and Ireland, in a way . . .

JM: From speaking German.

SL: . . . from that invasion.

JM: [*Clears throat*] Yeah. Oh, it did, yeah.

SL: So America was kind of a vaulted . . .

JM: Oh yeah. Oh, Americans were—in Ireland, they're called—every person that came from America was a Yankee. Like here—I found out after I got here that—well, those people—Yankees from up North. [*Laughter*]

SL: That's right. [*Laughs*] Yeah. A whole different story over here.

JM: [*Laughs*] A whole different meaning.

SL: Yeah.

JM: But I said, "No, you could be from Louisiana, and you're a Yankee," you know. But oh yes, they had—the one thing—and still is in Ireland—they hold the Americans very high esteem, you know. They really do. American—and America was—and I think the reason is that they were so good to the Irish, and well, the Irish—and the Irish did good, you know. Maybe when they came first, it was tough, you know. Any nationality when they come at the beginnin', [*clears throat*] they—it's tougher to get the jobs and all that type of stuff. But as things moved on, it was—things changed, you know.

[02:22:14] SL: Right. Okay, so you're in Dublin. You're seeing a whole different culture now. You're seeing urban life.

JM: Yeah.

SL: City life. Was there—I guess what I'm looking for, were there—was there a point in time when you were in the city where you felt like, you know, maybe this is not a really good place to be, or did you—was there . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: Were there times when you were—when you felt like you could

stray or you were maybe—might be straying from your dream or your goals?

JM: It took me a long—to be honest with you, it took me a long time to really accept that type of life in the big city because I could've gone home in a heartbeat. But my pride wouldn't let me—I knew it was wrong. You know, if I went home, everybody'd say, "Oh, he couldn't cut it," you know. So—and maybe that's the way it is with everybody. But finally, I—it probably took two years to get used to livin' in the big city. And then I got used to it and . . .

[02:23:44] SL: So your cousin didn't really cook at all, did he?

JM: Not a lot. [*SL laughs*] We didn't do much cookin'. [*Laughs*] We ate out most of the time.

SL: Uh-huh. And tell me about the difference in the food that you were eating in the city and the food that you had at home.

JM: [*Laughs*] A little different. You know, it was—it definitely wasn't home cooking, but again, you got used to it. It was—you know, I used to eat—the worst thing you could eat, I guess, is fish and chips. Those fish and chips shops would—wrapped in—if you ever saw the newspaper. They'd have the chips, and you'd flip the newspaper with grease all over them and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . they tasted great, you know, but no wonder they did. They were soaked in grease, you know.

SL: Right.

JM: And chips were—big batter—about a quarter-inch thick around on 'em. [*Laughs*] Artery cloggers, but you know, that was the type of food I ate most the time, and you know, it—and until I—because, you know, even though I was running, diet wasn't—you were given some advice, but not on a—strict and say, "Don't"—"Stay away from this" and "Stay away from that."

SL: Well, they probably didn't know.

[02:25:08] JM: They didn't know. And you know, like, a lot of the Irish, you know, like to drink. And that club I was a member of [*clears throat*]*—when I'd be—I'd go up there for practice, and then I'd get the bus. They had public transportation in the big city. I'd hop on the bus—all the other guys were goin' to the pub—the guys that were drinkin'. I never drank alcohol, so they'd go in and have a few pints of beer or Guinness or whatever. So they weren't livin' a—they were athletes, but they were livin' a funny kinda—they weren't livin' like athletes, you know.*

SL: Yeah. Well, I don't—until later on, alcohol wasn't really—I mean, yeah, it slowed your senses, and it . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . I'm sure [*JM clears throat*]*—and I'm sure the guy—the athletes that got fully engaged with alcohol saw the consequences in their body and their performance.*

JM: Yeah.

SL: But it was such an accepted culture to . . .

JM: It was.

SL: . . . to drink, and there was something manly about it.

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[02:26:19] JM: If you didn't have a—I mean, like, I remember goin' on a trip one time to Czechoslovakia when I got pretty good [*clears throat*]*—had a—it was still under Communist rule at that time in 1960. And they were—I was the only guy that—there was three people from every country in the world they invited there to run this road race. And we had a team manager, and course, I was the only one that didn't drink—well, that famous beer—you know, Pilsen beer was [*clears throat*]*—it was very famous. And those interpreters thought that, you know, that, you know, they were goin' to the—make me drink in spite of myself, and those two—a girl and a guy was—spilt a beer—"Oh, come on, drink," and spilt the beer on my hand so that—on my**

face. So the—our team manager said, "No, no, no. Come on, he doesn't drink. Let's stop," you know. But they couldn't understand, you know. That was in—and most of Europe that everybody drank, you know.

[02:27:38] SL: So really, this not drinking thing goes back to the way you were brought up.

JM: Yeah.

SL: I mean—so your dad didn't drink or . . .

JM: My dad drank, but my mother didn't. And you know, she didn't like alcohol. She didn't like—and she preached, "Don't ever drink." Even though my dad—the only time he'd drink would be his—when he'd go to a town to sell cattle or somethin' like that. He'd drink and . . .

SL: So it didn't . . .

JM: No.

SL: . . . it didn't go on in the house.

JM: No, no, no. But he—'cause he couldn't hold alcohol. If he drank two beers, hell, he'd be tipsy [*laughter*]—'cause he—you know, he never drank.

SL: Well, that's a sign of somebody that doesn't drink . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . too. Yeah. What else about the city life? I mean, for—I

guess the hours of activity were extended. More night . . .

JM: It could—oh yeah, could be. And it took me a lot of time—a long time to really get in on the hang of the—you know, the different type of entertainment and goin' into bars or stuff like that if you wanted to meet girls, you know. And that was a big change, you know. But when I got really interested in the running, that sorta—I didn't—if I met somebody, I met somebody, but I was more concentratin' on gettin' . . .

SL: Training.

JM: . . . the running. Yeah.

SL: You'd—I bet after that one year between those races, and you got that—that whole training thing was affirmed for you . . .

JM: Oh, it was. Yeah.

SL: . . . that you were able to win that race.

JM: Yeah.

SL: That gave you really good faith in good training.

[02:29:23] JM: And then also [*clears throat*] this Don Appleby—he was—I wanted to please him because he was a great guy. He was really—he would show up on nights, you know, and it'd be freezin', and he'd stand there timin' me on workouts and stuff like that. And you know, a fella couldn't let him down 'cause . . .

SL: There you go.

JM: . . . that was time away from his family 'cause he had two little girls at the time. On the weekend—on Sunday or something, he'd bring them with him, you know, and they're playin', if we're workin' out on the track or somethin' like that. But in the wintertime, we'd work out on soccer pitches—you know, the—where the youth soccer used to practice, and there'd be—the ground'd be wet, and maybe there'd be a little bit of ice on the water. Shoot, I'll tell you that took dedication when I look back on it. And—but he'd be there 'cause the—he—'twas more dedication for him than it was for me 'cause he was standin' there freezin' to death, but I was runnin' at least—you know, keepin' warm. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, Coach, I'm sure he saw something in you.

JM: Yeah.

SL: He saw—I guess he saw that pride.

JM: Yeah. Oh yeah, he—[*clears throat*] I wasn't the greatest, but I was a tough guy in competition, you know. I didn't give in.

[02:30:46] SL: Mh-hmm. Was there anything else that he imparted to you that you still carry with you now?

JM: Well, he—yeah, there were several things that he used to say about [*clears throat*]"You can't—it's up to you. You can't

blame the coach, you know. The coach can get you ready, and then you've got to—you gotta do it, you know. You just—don't be blamin'." He said, "The worst thing in the world is makin' excuses." I didn't know about excuses until he was talkin' about it. I found out a lot about it later in life, but he said, "Nobody cares about your makin' excuses. Nobody." He said, "I do, but nobody else, you know, 'cause the competition definitely doesn't."

SL: Right.

JM: "So makin' an excuse just makes yourself—you know, people look at you. 'Oh, he's a loser, that guy.' The more excuses you make, the less competitive you'll look in the eyes of other people." And that's the things I've always remembered—you know, just to never—nobody cares about you as an indiv—especially your competition. They don't care what you do. They'd love to see you fall flat on your face, so don't be makin' excuses to them. They don't want to hear it.

[02:32:27] SL: So you're—not only are you training now and you're adjusting to city life, but you're also goin' to secondary—you're gettin' your . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . secondary education.

JM: Yeah.

SL: And what kind of school was that? I mean, where did you go and what . . .

JM: 'Twas right in Parnell Square, right in the center of Dublin. Yeah.

SL: Uh-huh. And were there classes that—I mean, did you meet every morning, or how did that work out? And you . . .

JM: Well, I . . .

SL: . . . were also working, too.

JM: I was for a while, and then I stopped the workin' to finish it off so I could—this Frank Lynn said that he'd—as much as I was makin', he said, "All you need to do is have money to eat, so you've got a place to stay and have a"—he—I met him more times for lunch and stuff like that that it didn't really matter. So I went full time to this institution and finished.

SL: And it took you three years to . . .

JM: Three, yeah.

SL: . . . to do that?

JM: Yeah.

[02:33:29] SL: Was there anything in there—any teachers—any subject matter that kinda . . .

JM: Well, the head guy that opened up the—that institution was—his

name was McGuire. And I remember he had long hair. He was bald in the front, but it went right down his shoulders back then. And he was—he had the most beautiful handwriting that I've ever seen. He could—his handwriting was exactly like a script. 'Twas like a script writing. And 'twas like it was out of a typewriter. Every letter was the same—exactly—you look across like this, and you say, "How is he doin' that?" And he's right over your shoulder if he was showin' you somethin'—if you made a mistake or something, and he'd just—he was—and this Frank Lynn that knew my cousin—that knew about this guy—and he said he was kind of a real smart man, but a radical. He wouldn't give in to the—some of the changes that the Trinity University was wantin' to do, you know. And he was—but didn't say much. He was—shake his head and, "Mh-hmm." [*Laughter*] And he wasn't—he was not a guy you'd crack a joke with, you know.

SL: His social skills were not great.

JM: No, no. He was . . .

SL: But he—there was something about him that . . .

JM: Yeah, and he looked like that typical, you know, brain, you know. You just . . .

SL: Professor.

JM: Oh, professor to the hilt, you know. He was—and oh, he had

more people there. 'Twas hard gettin' in—you know, into it 'cause he only took so many . . .

SL: And . . .

JM: . . . students.

[02:35:20] SL: . . . how was it that you were able to get into it?

Was your cousin instrumental . . .

JM: He knew . . .

SL: . . . in that?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Uh-huh. And he was also instrumental in getting you a job with the . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . electric company?

JM: Yeah.

SL: And he got you into the athletic club.

JM: Yeah. Well, yeah, he just brought me out there. I could've

[*clears throat*] joined that myself, I guess, but . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . he drove me out there. And I was lucky to meet this

Appleby and this guy named Byrne. They happened to be the

guys that I met first, and they were runners themselves at one

time, and now they were—help coach some young people. And

they were the ones I talked to. And it turned out that they were just great people.

[02:36:04] SL: And I think this is the first time you've mentioned Byrne now. What was it that he did?

JM: He—well, he was in the car the night that Appleby said that, "A year from now you're going to win."

SL: Okay.

JM: Yeah. He—it was his car—this Byrne. He was drivin'. [*Clears throat*] He—I know where—he worked for Guinness's brewery. [*SL laughs*] Now, he liked to have his pint.

SL: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause he—I remember a story—he said—I said, "Do you get free beer there if you work there?" He said, "I get a pint every day free for lunch."

SL: Oh, for lunch. [*Laughter*]

JM: Yeah. When you go down for lunch, if you wanted a pint of Guinness for free, you'd have—but not—that was it.

SL: Well, that's enough.

JM: In the brewery. Yeah, yeah.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

JM: You can imagine.

SL: Yeah.

JM: But . . .

[02:36:52] SL: Wow. Well, okay, so you're a pretty busy guy in Dublin. What was it that—how did it unfold that you were able—I mean, were you starting to travel out of Dublin for races—for running, or did you go to America and then start your traveling?

JM: No, I had traveled. I had—before I left Ireland, I'd made the 1960 Olympic team. But—and I won the trials, but they didn't send me 'cause a university student—he was, like, three years older than me—more experienced, and he had a little bit of a pull too. He was from the big city, and I was a country guy. And I didn't think anything of it at the time, but they sent him—only one guy. Even both of us had the qualifyin' time, they only sent one 'cause Ireland didn't have a lot of money back then. [Clears throat] And that was in Rome in 1960. And oh, everybody was tellin' me, "Oh, next time you'll make the team." Well, the next year I was hurt. The next Olympics I got hurt, so I never made it. So . . .

SL: So you qualified . . .

JM: And didn't get to go.

SL: . . . and didn't get to go.

JM: Yeah.

SL: 'Cause they only would send one guy.

JM: One guy. And then after that, I won—oh, I'd won several—I think I won two—my—these durin' imperial system that a mile—three miles and that type of stuff. I won the mile twice—Irish championship. I won the five thousand once, and I won the steeplechase three times. And that was championships.

SL: Tough race. That's a tough-guy race.

JM: That steeplechase—that's a tough sucker is right. [*Laughter*] So—and then I made the world cross-country team twice and won in—we ran in San Sebastián, Spain, and the other one in barce—in Manchester . . .

SL: And . . .

JM: . . . in England.

[02:39:15] SL: . . . this is all happening while you're in Dublin.

JM: Yeah.

SL: That's a pretty rapid rise.

JM: It was. I improved real quick. I did. I did a lot of improvement in two—in a year and a half, two years. Tremendous. And—but I owe that to the coaches. And I was [*unclear words*]. And then I got to—the greatest honor I had was in 1960—sometime in 1960, I know Delany was gettin' ready to run in the Olympics, and he—for the second time—but he had problems with injuries, you know. And I got to run a session of four hundreds with him.

Appleby, my coach, talked to him and said that—asked him what he was doin' for a workout, 'cause he was there on the track. And he said, "I'm runnin four hundreds." And he said, "Do you mind if John gets in with you?" And he said, "Sure." He said, "I'd love to have some company." So, gosh, that was almost like me competin' in the Olympics. I got to train with the Olympic champion. And of course, he was a nice guy. Kinda quiet, actually—didn't—he—you wouldn't know he was an Olympic champion. He didn't talk a lot. [*Clears throat*] So that made—as Clint Eastwood would say, "It made my day."

[02:40:44] SL: Well, yeah, ma—at that point, that was probably the pinnacle of your life.

JM: Oh, it was. Yeah, it was.

SL: You finally got to be . . .

JM: Meet . . .

SL: . . . next to your hero and actually . . .

JM: . . . my hero. Yeah.

SL: . . . running with him.

JM: And . . .

SL: How did you do running with him?

JM: Oh, I hung in as best I could. [*Laughs*] He had—he was pretty fast, you know. But . . .

SL: Was he?

JM: Yeah.

[02:41:00] SL: Now, what were some of the other personalities that you competed against?

JM: I competed against Peter Snell of aus—of New Zealand. He—I ran—we—he was in—that was in 1961 or something. New Zealand and Australia came over, and we ran a—they ran a four-mile relay in Dublin. And I was on that 'cause I was at—I ran 3:45—bout a 4:02 mile. And . . .

SL: Four oh two.

JM: Yeah, back then, and I was—and we had a pretty good team, and I happened to be on the anchor, and the guy that was anchorin' was Snell. [*Laughter*] Oh, that was a funny. But [*clears throat*] anyways—oh, I—yeah, and I ran against Gordon Pirie, the great English guy, and what's the guy's name from—the guy that won the—he was an African. He won the first marathon in his bare feet.

SL: Oh, I know who you're talkin' about.

JM: You know the guy.

SL: I can't think of . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . his name, but I remember that.

JM: Yeah, I ran against him in Czechoslovakia.

SL: What about the American—wasn't there an American miler?

JM: Oh, Jim Ryun.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Oh yeah. Well, I ran against him in this country after I came over here. I ran—that was a little bit later. That was in 1967. I beat him in a two-mile in Louisiana—Jim Ryun.

[02:42:41] SL: Okay. So in Dublin, you really [*laughs*] advance very quickly. You're gettin' very competitive, but then you get hurt while you were in Dublin, or did you get hurt when you came to the United . . .

JM: Dublin.

SL: . . . States? In Dublin.

JM: Mmm.

SL: Did you just—what happened? Did . . .

JM: Well, my Achilles was—it was just hurt at the wrong time.

That—you mean, [19]60 or [19]64?

SL: [Nineteen] sixty—well, yeah.

JM: No, [19]60 I didn't get hurt.

SL: Oh.

JM: That year they wouldn't send me 'cause I had . . .

SL: Oh, because you were younger and . . .

JM: Younger and [*unclear words*].

SL: . . . the guy was more experienced. But [19]64 kept you out of the Olympics.

JM: Yeah, yeah. I was the one—I was—I thought I had improved and everything, but my Achilles got hurt at the wrong time and blah, blah, blah, you know.

[02:43:25] SL: Yeah. So when did you actually leave Dublin for the United States?

JM: I left—the first time I left was in 1963. I came over for a little while and then came back in the—come over for—I was over for two months and just came over to visit New York and then came back, and right—the two days after President Kennedy was assassinated—the end of November—and then I stayed.

SL: So that first visit—was it kind of an eye-opener for you, or was it everything that you expected it to be, or did you . . .

JM: Oh, it was an eye-opener. It was—the heat was [*laughs*] an eye-opener. I remember I had a cousin that was in—she was the one that brought me out, you know, for the two months. And gosh, it was the hottest day—I got off that plane. I couldn't believe that any place on earth could be that hot, you know. And she was walkin' around and showin' me sights. And finally—you know, 'cause I had missed a night's sleep comin' over and

the—but finally, I said—she said, "Are you gettin' tired?"

[*Laughter*] I said, "As a matter of fact, I am." "Well, we can go to the Statue of Liberty tomorrow." I was never so happy. [*SL laughs*] She was showin' me all the sights my first day, you know. But the heat was the biggest surprise. My gosh. 'Cause those buildings and the sidewalks, and it's like—I don't know if it was a heat wave that they were havin' at that time, but it was hot.

SL: But in those two months, you saw enough, and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . you knew that you wanted to come back.

JM: I did. Yeah.

[02:45:32] SL: And so you went back to Dublin for how long?

JM: I went back for bout two or three months.

SL: And then straight back to . . .

JM: Back.

SL: . . . New York.

JM: Yeah.

SL: And did you end up staying with the same cousin when you got back to New York?

JM: I did, yeah. I stayed with him for that time and just told him that I was goin' to go back to America.

SL: Uh-huh. And who was the cousin in New York that you were staying with?

JM: Oh, in New York, I didn't stay with her. I stayed with another cousin in New Jersey—in Jersey City—when I came back. And so . . .

SL: This would be one of your uncle's children.

JM: Yeah. 'Twas my—actually, I'll tell you who it was—it was that daughter of that person that—where I threw the turf into the long grass. [*Laughter*]

[02:46:34] SL: Did that story precede you—your arrival?

JM: I don't think it did, thank goodness. [*Laughter*] So—oh, they knew nothing about it. But you know, Jersey City was, you know, different. It was very easy to get into New York, 'cause all you had to do was to take the subway.

SL: Sub . . .

JM: The Tubes, as they called 'em, underneath the Hudson. And it was—you didn't have the big-city atmosphere, you know.

SL: Right.

JM: So I sorta liked that—there's a place they call Jersey City—Journal Square in Jersey City. It was a kind of a big—it was where the courthouse was, and it was—it's as country as you could get, you know.

SL: Yeah, you know, it is kinda funny how—I mean, even in modern days, there's still parts of New Jersey that look like rural . . .

JM: It is. It's lovely.

SL: . . . you know.

JM: There's—there is parts of New Jersey that's real nice. And very close to the city.

[02:47:32] SL: So what did you do when you landed the second time in New York? I mean, what—did you get a job?

JM: I did. I got a job as a television cameraman.

SL: Television cameraman.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Well, that was a lowering of expectations, wasn't it?

JM: I'll tell you [*SL laughs*], I was lucky that the—I joined the New York Athletic Club, and they introduced me to a guy—I knew—this is funny—at the time, he was just a young, young fella—Roone Arledge. [*SL laughs*] He was a member of the track—of the club—the New York Athletic Club. And he was started—had just started *Wide World of Sports*, and I had a job with WOR-TV and worked on the eighty-fourth floor of the Empire State Building and did the—they owned—the people that owned WOR—they were O'Neals, but they owned the Mets baseball team. So I used to do the catcher. [*Laughs*] Didn't take a

genius to do that. So anyways, I worked for them for about eighteen months, and then I went back to college—got a school—I knew an English guy that went to school at lou—in Louisiana. Malcolm Robinson. I met him at a race. [*Clears throat*] And he said—I told him what I was doin', and he said, "You should go to college, you know." And I said, "Well, I—no school would take me, you know." And, "Oh," he said, "there's lots of schools that'd take you." You know, you don't know.

SL: Right.

[02:49:24] JM: But that was my goal, to check around, you know.

Most—I had checked some schools, but they were—they had no scholarships, and they didn't give scholarships. And I didn't know which school to check, you know. And [*clears throat*] so anyways, I got—his coach called me the next night and said—asked me what I had done. I told him what I had done, and he said, "Oh yeah, yeah, yeah." I said, "Do you have a scholarship?" He said, "Yeah, you damn right I got a scholarship." And I had let on at the time [*clears throat*]*—*I said, "Hell, I'm goin' for—I'm headin' for Louisiana." [*Laughs*]

SL: Big difference.

JM: Oh gosh! When I got off that plane [*clears throat*], I got—I was wonderin' what the coach would look like, and I—there was a—in

New Orleans, I got off the plane, and there was a—this guy is standin' with a big cowboy hat on and a kind of a—it wasn't a leather jacket, but one of those . . .

SL: Vests.

JM: . . . little things hangin' down—all the leather strips and . . .

SL: Uh-huh. Yeah, yeah.

JM: . . . and cowboy boots. [*SL laughs*] And I said, "That couldn't be him." It was. [*Laughter*] And he . . .

SL: So . . .

JM: . . . but he was a great guy.

SL: Yeah.

[02:50:40] JM: Oh, one of the best motivators I ever met. I learned everything I knew about motivatin' people from him. And he took me home—drivin', and we talked about this and that and the other. And he was—he said, "You like fish?" I said, "Yes, I love fish." "Well," he said, "the track boys are waitin', so when we get back to Lafayette," he said, [*clears throat*] "we're goin'—they're gonna take you to the crawfish capital of the world. Breaux Bridge, Louisiana." [*Laughter*] And I said, "Oh yeah?" And so we got to Breaux Bridge. The boys were waitin'. There was about six of them, and they took me out to Breaux Bridge, and they said, "You gonna have the crawfish?" And I said,

"Yeah, sounds good to me." Well, hell, I never knew—I didn't know what crawfish was. [*Laughter*] I just thought it was a fish. And they brought out all those things with heads and their tentacles cockin' up on a big, ol' tray about this size [uses two fingers to portray the crawfish's tentacles and uses hands to suggest size of plate]. And they started takin' them and breakin' them and eatin' them. And one of them said to me, "You're not goin' to eat?" I said, "No," I said, "I'm waitin' for the fish." [*Laughter*] And they started laughin'. And they said, "This is it, baby." I said, "I want a hamburger." [*Laughter*]

SL: Oh.

JM: I did. I got a hamburger. Those guys still—you know, we were down there last year, and they remember that story. So anyways . . .

[02:52:09] SL: Okay, so you know, we've kind of—you've—you survived the change to city life in Dublin. You go to New York for eighteen months, I guess.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Workin' in the Empire State Building, and now you're in Louisiana. What are the cultural differences that you are now experiencing in the—in this movement? I mean, you're now in America. There's a—there's probably still some—you know, I've

interviewed some Irish Catholics, and there were—early on, there were still some prejudice against Irish Catholics growin' up, and were you aware of the civil rights movement? I mean, if you came in right when Kennedy got shot, the whole civil rights thing really heats up . . .

JM: It did, yeah.

SL: . . . after that time. And so what are you seeing? What are you sensing when you . . .

[02:53:08] JM: Well, I really—Louisiana opened my eyes completely because we had the first—that coach—the same year as I—he was already—I came there in January of [19]64 and—no, [19]66. I went down there in January of [19]66. And he was the first black athlete that ever got a scholarship to a white university was in that—was there at that time at—in Lafayette, Louisiana—an 800-meter kid—Curtis James. And when we'd go on trips, he was always my roommate, you know, on the trips. But he was a—I thought, you know, that he was my roommate because he was a distance runner, and one of the sprinters, a guy named McCartney from Victoria, Texas, said to me one day—he said, "John," he said, "have you ever figured out why Curtis is always your roommate?" I said, "No." I said, "Distance runner." And then he said, "No." And I said, "What do you

mean?" I didn't get it, you know. And I—the last thing that I thought of—nobody else on the team wanted to room with him, you know. But anyways, he was a real nice guy, but that was only the touch of the iceberg. But we got kicked out of restaurant—wouldn't get in, you know. The coach'd go to the— with the bus and pull up by a restaurant and then come back out and said, "Let's go." And I remember once—the first time it happened, this Curtis James said—I mean, the coach said, "Oh, let's go—let's leave." And he said, "Coach, it's okay, I'll—you know, I'll—don't worry about me." He said, "Shut your mouth," the ol' coach said. He was kind of a—"Shut your mouth." And I said to the guy sittin' one side of me in the bus—I said, "What's all that about?" He said, "They wouldn't let Curtis in there." And then, also, when you'd walk on the sidewalks—and this is unbeliev—this really happened. If you are walkin' on the sidewalk in Lafayette and there was a black man comin' towards you, he'd get off the sidewalk. And that's a fact. I couldn't believe it. And that Curtis James kid—he used to always call me sir, and I said, *[laughs]* "Curtis, my name is John." "Yes, sir." And that was unbelievable. I mean, that the . . .

[02:55:49] SL: It was the culture he grew up in.

JM: Oh gosh, yeah. And another time we went to the—we used to

drive a bus sometimes—sometimes station wagons—if—to track meets if there was—if the team—if there was a two-day meet, we'd probably drive station wagons. We'd leave the day before. And I remember we went over to Mobile, Alabama, and he had a grad assistant that was drivin' our station wagon. Well, Curtis was in our station wagon, and when we stopped in this—we turn—just went into—crossed the line into Alabama, and we stopped at this hamburger joint to get a hamburger. 'Twas sorta the middle of the day. And we—everybody ordered hamburgers and whatever, and the—'twas a girl that took the order, but there was—at the back, there must be a man—a short, little dude, and he comes—I wasn't payin' much attention till I hear this bang. And I turned around, and we had a shot-putter, Craig Mayes—he was a big guy—he was, like, six five and a big ol' guy. He had taken the guy—he had caught him by the thing and threw him back against the—there was a freezer, like a—one of those—what do you call it?

SL: Deepfreeze.

JM: Deepfreeze. And I said—I—all of a sudden, one of the guys on the team—a kid from Louisiana said, "Let's get the hell out of here!" And then the guy—this Craig Mayes took all the hamburgers and threw them all on the floor like this, and we all

ran out. I still didn't know what had happened. Ran out, got into the station wagon, down the road at seventy or eighty miles an hour, and got back into Louisiana, across the ?gulf? from—that brought us back over the border, you know. There was two station wagons of us, and then pull over and stop. And he said, "What the hell were you doin' there? We could be thrown in jail for what you did!" And I said, "What happened?" He said, "He wouldn't serve the black kid. He wouldn't serve Curtis. He made"—he said, "Curtis, eat outside." And this big guy said, "He will like hell eat outside." And he almost—I thought he had broke the guy's back, you know, 'cause he landed against the freezer. So . . .

SL: Were there schools that would not compete because you-all were integrated?

JM: Oh, it was usual—you know, where they'd call—use an *N* word in racist—"Beat that nigger, you know."

SL: Yeah.

JM: 'Twas sad back then. 'Twas horrible, but that was the biggest culture shock I had comin' to America. Period.

SL: Was the black/white issue.

JM: Black/white issue, yeah.

[02:59:00] SL: You know, I forgot to ask you this when you were in

Dublin. Did you see TV when you were in Dublin?

JM: Yeah.

SL: So you were aware of TV . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: I mean, you didn't get that on the farm, right?

JM: No, no.

SL: So—and you said the owners of the TV station in New York were the O'Neals.

JM: Yeah.

SL: So there was some kind of . . .

JM: They probably were Irish. It was . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . Irish descent or something. Yeah.

SL: So you were probably seeing some of this black/white issue going on on television, too, at the time. [*JM exhales*] I mean, it was . . .

JM: Not too much.

SL: Not too much?

JM: No.

[02:59:44] SL: Did you ever compete in Mississippi when you were down in Louisiana?

JM: No, but I'll tell you where I competed—and this is—I'm glad I

did. When I had finished school, I had run a couple of years afterwards, and they invited me—they have a—Southern University is in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

SL: Yes.

[03:00:12] JM: It's an all-black school. And they had some great teams back then. They used to have two 1,600 relay teams that could beat any NCAA Division I school in the country. But they had the Pelican Relays, and they had a good kid—a California kid—a black kid that had run, like, 8:55 for two miles, and that was pretty good back then. And they invited me—if I'd run against him. And I did. And I was in good shape at the time. I was—just after graduatin', and I went over there, and there was—I'm not sure if Ellen came with me. I was sittin' in the stands. I don't know—I don't think she did. But it was—that was the first time I really got a feelin' of being alone. I was probably one of two white kids in the whole place. They were all-black schools. And I ran the two-mile against him, and with about—he was leadin'—the kid was leadin'. I sat behind him until about three laps to go, and then I took the lead. And I looked back with a lap to go, and I had quite a distance on him, you know. He was only a freshman. He wasn't that—you know, he was . . .

SL: Still . . .

JM: . . . still not great.

SL: . . . being developed. Yeah.

JM: He was developin'. And comin' on the straight—comin' into the straightaway at the finish—boy, the whole—the place was packed with fans. They just stood up and [*claps hands*] started screamin' and hollerin' and carryin' on. Boy, I looked back—I thought your man was comin' on me. I thought he had gain—made up some ground. And they were applaudin' me. And that was another great experience. It really was.

SL: It does sound like a good . . .

JM: They liked sports. They like competition, you know. So a lot—I learned a lot of valuable lessons in those few years there. But you know, there's—never saw anything really bad, you know.

SL: You mentioned that the . . .

TM: Scott, we need to change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[03:02:32] SL: Coach, we're on our fourth tape. [*JM laughs*] Four hours, and we're—we've gotten you in America, and we've gotten you down to Louisiana, and we've—you're—you've been tellin' me about some of the racial strife that you're witnessing and experiencing firsthand. What we passed over—and this is

entirely your fault and not mine—is how and where and when you met your better half, Ellen.

JM: Oh yeah, I better tell that story.

SL: Yes, you better. And first of all, I gotta know her maiden name and all that stuff, so . . .

JM: Yeah. [*Clears throat*] I met—her maiden name was Ellen Elias from Bayonne, New Jersey, and I met her at a nightclub in Bayonne. And 'twas a holiday in the fall. I'm not sure which of them it was, but I'll always remember—myself and another runner—he was from Bayonne, and he said, "Let's go to this nightclub. There's all these girls there," and blah, blah, blah. And [*SL laughs*] I don't know if I was goin' in and she was comin' out, or I was comin' out and she was goin' in. One or the other. But we met on the stairways, and we both turned around and went back. And I guess that was love at first sight, you know. Dated her for two dates, and then I went away for two races in a weekend back to back, and I think she thought I was—skipped town, but anyways, I didn't. And then, of course, I went back to school, and she came back a year later. When I came back, we got married.

[03:04:31] SL: Okay. So now, this bar that y'all met at—was this like a dance thing? Was there . . .

JM: It was a nightclub. It could've been the Knights of Columbus or something like that. It was some type of club. But I can't remember exactly the name now.

SL: Did they have a band playing there?

JM: They had a band, yeah.

SL: And was it country-western music?

JM: No. No, 'twas . . .

SL: It was . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . New York City, downtown.

JM: Downtown.

SL: Rock-and-roll stuff.

JM: Rock-and-roll-type stuff, yeah.

[03:05:04] SL: Uh-huh. And did—after you met on the stairwell, did you-all end up on the dance floor that night or . . .

JM: Yeah, well, I—we—I went up and—that's how I went up and had a dance with her, and one thing [*clears throat*] led to another, and we sat down and talked. And then we had set a date. And then the next time we met, she had a friend, and I brought a friend with me—another guy to—as a blind date, and we met her on a weekend. And I remember sometime in the afternoon, and went down to—I think we went down to Jersey Shore and came

back—didn't get back until two o'clock in the mornin' or somethin' like that. So that was how it all started off.

SL: So you kinda felt like you had—you could've met your soul mate on the New Jersey—on the Jersey Shore, then.

JM: Yeah, yeah. And so . . .

SL: Well, what was she doin' with her life at that point?

JM: She worked in—for AT&T in New York City. She took—she still lived in Jersey City, but she took the subway across under the Hudson.

[03:06:32] SL: And what were the—what do you think it was about her that you kinda knew this was gonna be the gal?

JM: Well, she was quiet and had—didn't—she sorta did everything that I was lookin' for. She didn't drink or smoke or do anything like that, you know. So . . .

SL: And that was unusual, wasn't it?

JM: It was, yeah. And she wasn't too bad lookin' at that [*SL laughs*—in that time.

SL: [*Laughter*] Or now! She's still gorgeous.

JM: So—and so, you know, we—the more—after goin' out five or six times, you know, I realized that there was something special about her, you know. She was not pushy or anything like that, you know, like—so—but—and she—when I told her I was goin' to

go back to college, she advised me to do it, which I thought was a good quality 'cause I was—I believed I was leavin' town, you know, and she said, "That's the best thing for you to do," you know. So I did. And then we—I came back for Christmas—or not Christmas, but I came back for some break, and I used to come back anytime I got a chance. I remember Delta Air Lines flew out of New Orleans. So they always had pretty cheap flights, you know. So I'd come back every now and then. And then we got married in 1967.

SL: Okay.

JM: June 17.

[03:08:25] SL: So [*clears throat*] were you old school about that?

Did you go meet—when did you meet her—were her parents still alive?

JM: Oh yeah, they were. Yeah, I already had met them. Yeah, yeah. Her parents were real nice, and her—yeah, her parents were still alive, and they were alive—her dad didn't die until nine—when was the Montreal Olympics? [Nineteen] eighty? No, [19]76 was the Montreal—her dad died, I think, in—oh, I'll be—four or five years later, I think.

SL: Yeah. So did you go to her father and ask for her hand or—I mean, that was kind of at a transition time in American culture,

you know.

JM: Culture.

SL: It used to be that . . .

JM: I—yeah.

SL: It used to be that you'd go to the father . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . and declare your intentions.

JM: Yeah, I didn't do that.

[03:09:28] SL: You didn't? [*Laughter*] Well, do you remember when and where you were when you asked her to marry you? Did you drop on a knee or . . .

JM: I think it was in—we were in Jersey City at a—went out to eat—a restaurant. And 'twas a kind of a favorite place of ours to go to eat. And that was when I asked her.

SL: Did you have the engagement ring ready or . . .

JM: Yeah, yeah. It wasn't the one I eventually gave her, but . . .

SL: It was at least a token.

JM: It was a—well, yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. So did she hesitate at all or . . .

JM: No.

SL: No.

JM: Yeah, she said—no hesitation.

SL: Well, that was kind of remarkable, wasn't it? [*Laughs*]

JM: It was, yeah. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, that's good.

JM: Yeah.

SL: So how long was the engagement before y'all got married?

JM: I don't know, a year or—about a year, I think. Yeah.

SL: And did you tell me you married in Jersey City?

JM: In Bayonne.

SL: In Bayonne.

JM: Bayonne, yeah.

[03:10:52] SL: Uh-huh. Well, good. Let's see, now, were your folks still alive at that time? I guess . . .

JM: They were, and my dad died a couple of months later.

SL: Uh-huh. Were they able to attend the . . .

JM: No, no, they weren't.

SL: No, they weren't?

JM: No.

SL: So did they never . . .

JM: At that time, my mother didn't want—wouldn't fly, you know, and my dad was sick, so he . . .

SL: Oh, that's too bad.

JM: That was too bad. But then my mother never did come to

America.

[03:11:30] SL: And so you went back to school and then came back and got married, and then she came down to the college to . . .

JM: Louisiana.

SL: . . . Louisiana. Before I—we get out of New York, I wanna ask you one—a couple of things about—I just kinda let it slide that you were a camera operator and you were covering the Mets. And you were saying that you—your job was to aim the camera at the catcher.

JM: Catcher.

SL: Does that mean you're out in center field and you're covering the plate that way, or where are you in the . . .

JM: Oh, I was on the side.

SL: On the side. And at that point in time, Andrew tells me that the Mets were probably the worst team . . .

JM: [*Laughs*] In baseball.

SL: . . . ever—in baseball—ever.

JM: They were.

SL: And . . .

JM: And the [*laughs*] . . .

SL: And he was just wondering if you think that might have had any influence on your inability to really appreciate baseball. [*JM*]

laughs] I mean . . .

JM: Well, it didn't help. [*SL laughs*] They were—I—the thing that I couldn't understand—we had a full house all the time, and I said, "How can people go and watch them people get beat every single game?" And—but I guess that they were loyal fans, you know, to—and there was a—I met, you know, some interesting guys, like Casey Stengel was there that time and Yogi Berra was back helpin' them—that little guy. And you'd have those after—postgame meeting with them, you know, and they were just characters, those guys, you know. [*SL laughs*] Didn't matter to them losin' a game, you know. I'm sure it did, but [*clears throat*] they—it wasn't long after that—they had some good players that time. I think Ron Swoboda was there.

SL: Yeah, I work with Ron from time to time now.

JM: Yeah. And he became a—he was a lot better later, you know, in his career. But he was there at that time. But I like that just like any other body—all those guys were—and then I got to know—well, the owner of the Yankees, Brennan—he was a big track fan, you know. He graduated—he ran track at Pennsylvania—at Penn State. No, University of Penn.

SL: Okay.

JM: And so did his son. They were both hurdlers. And he gives—

every year gives a lot of money to the Penn Relays. So he was a big ol'—but I sorta became a Yankee—I hate to say it, but I became a Yankee fan, you know.

SL: [*Laughs*] Well, that's probably understandable . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . game after game, havin' to work those, and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . they were always losin'.

JM: They were. They were terrible.

[03:14:50] SL: Yeah, yeah. Okay. So let's get you back down to Lafayette. And now you have your better half with you. Is that right?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SL: And you're—but you're still in school . . .

JM: Yes.

SL: . . . at this point in time. So when you graduate—you do graduate, and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . you get a degree? What was your degree in?

JM: Industrial education.

[03:15:16] SL: Okay. And so what did you do when you graduated?

JM: I went back to [*clears throat*—our plans was to go back east,

and I got a job up in New Providence, New Jersey, which was, like, twenty miles out of New York City. A real nice place. 'Twas right next to Summit, New Jersey, which—you ever hear of Mary Jo Kopechne?

SL: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, well, we were—we lived on the same street. That's my claim. And that was in Murray Hill, actually—Murray Hill, New Jersey, and New Providence ran in together. Bell Laboratories—that's where their headquarters was. They did all the research for NASA and all of that type of stuff. And they had, like, eight thousand scientists workin' there. So it was a very expensive place to live. You couldn't live there and be a teacher. So I was—got a job teachin' and coachin' at the high school. And I got the—first, when I got there in the fall, my first fall, I had to—I was a soccer coach 'cause I played soccer, and then they—and the track coach. And then the next year, I was gonna get the whole thing, but we had decided by that that one year was enough, 'cause I could never see myself ownin' a home there because, oh, my—we were rentin' a—an upstairs—the second floor of a nice, old-style home that—the woman that owned it—her husband used to be the superintendent of schools. So she wanted to have somebody that she could trust in there, and she

leased it real cheap to us. But as far as buyin' anything, forget it, you know.

SL: Yeah.

JM: There wasn't a teacher at that high school that lived within twenty miles of it. So I called up my old coach down in Louisiana one night and told him what I was plannin' to do, and I said, "Do you think you could get me—try and get me a job at the high school there in Lafayette, and I'll help you with the distance runners." And he said, "Oh, you darn right I will," you know. [*SL laughs*] Old Bob Cole, and—a great guy—and he had—he called me back in a—well, first of all, the superint—the principal at the high school happened to be the basketball coach some years before that at the high school, and I knew him. So he hired me [*snaps fingers*] like that, you know. So we started packin'. And the minute the school year was up in New Jersey, we packed and went down to Louisiana—took a \$4,000 cut in salary, and she took about three thousand, and went to Louisiana and bought our first home. That was the differ—and a nice brick home—three bedroom—not really a big one, but very nice, nice area, for \$21,000.

SL: Wow!

[03:18:35] JM: So, you know—and then [*clears throat*] things

changed quickly because at Lafayette that integration really had started, and they'd integrated the black schools into the—they'd done away with the black school. There was a—Paul Breaux High School in Lafayette was all black. They shut it down and spread all the students around to the other two or three high schools. And [*clears throat*] there were some problems 'cause, you know, it wasn't fun at all. And anyways, I had decided—I went for an interview with State Farm Insurance in Monroe, Louisiana, and I got job with them. I was gettin' out of teachin'—gettin' out of coachin'—teachin'. I was coachin' and teachin' at the high school. And I saw an ad in the—and the—or somebody told me that—my brother told me that Oklahoma—'cause he lived there—they were wantin' somebody to coach the distance runners. And then from—I don't know how I found out about Arkansas, but I found out that they were lookin' for a coach. So I came up to visit Oklahoma, and they were more lookin' for a recruiter to get kids from Ireland. I could feel that, you know. And so I came over here, and the head coach here was Ed Renfrow—real nice guy—and he said, "You"—and he said, "I'm here on my own. If you come here, I cannot pay you much, but you have the cross-country team," and that was the fall of [19]72. So I packed—we packed up and moved to

Arkansas. Arkansas [pronounced Ar-KANSAS].

[03:20:35] SL: So when you moved from New Jersey down to Louisiana, did you have your own car by then?

JM: We did, yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: What kind of car was it?

JM: You won't believe. You probably never saw one of them—a Rambler.

SL: Sure.

JM: You did?

SL: Yeah.

JM: Well, I'll be dang.

SL: Absolutely.

JM: That sucker was the biggest heap of junk. [*Laughter*] That thing was—when we were pullin' the U-Haul, which was probably three times too big for it in all fairness. Heated up. We drove from somewhere in Tennessee, and this is no lie. We stopped in so many places—'twas heatin' up, and of course, 'twas in the summer, and we finally—we got a blowin' out, and we got this done and that done, and we were robbed gettin' it fixed on the way down. And finally, when we got to Chattanooga, Tennessee, we said, "This is it. Roll down the windows." And I found out if I left the heater on—this is in the—ninety-something

degrees outside—it—the needle will go down. So we turned on the heater and drove from there to Lafayette with the flippin' heater on. *[SL laughs]* And ninety-somethin' degrees outside.

SL: *[Laughs]* That's great.

JM: Oh, geez.

SL: That's a great story. So—and did you have that same car when you moved up to Arkansas?

JM: No. *[Laughs]*

SL: No?

JM: We kept it awhile, and it continued havin' that problem, whatever was . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . wrong with it. We finally got rid of it. It wasn't an old car; it was just not a good car.

SL: Yeah. *[Laughs]*

JM: Ol' Rambler.

[03:22:25] SL: That's funny. Okay, so you get a bite from Oklahoma, but you're thinking they're really not lookin' for a coach—they're lookin' for somebody to bring talent in.

JM: Yes.

SL: And specifically, Irish.

JM: Yeah, 'cause he thought I could—they wanted to get some Irish

kids and some English kids. And the coach that was there—the young—the assistant couch—the cross-country coach—I knew he wasn't gonna go anywhere, and I didn't see where my job would be, you know.

SL: Yeah, that's somethin' to look at . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . when you're . . .

[03:23:01] JM: And then when I came here, Ed Renfrow was same age as me, and he was a hurdler—a high hurdler.

SL: That's correct.

JM: And he just flat told me—he said, "I know nothing about distance runnin', and I just don't have time. And if you could get me—if you could—they're yours." And he had a few—he had some decent kids. You know, he had kids that had run 1:52 and 3:48 1500s, and you know, they were all right.

SL: Al Zaccanti and—you know, now you're talkin' my turf . . .

JM: Is that right?

SL: . . . 'cause Coach Ed Renfrow was also workin' at Fayetteville High School. I don't know if he is—predates him going over to the university, but I remember . . .

JM: Is that right?

SL: Yeah, yeah, he was doin' track at Fayetteville High School when

I was there in [19]68 . . .

JM: Ah.

SL: . . . [19]69. I don't think he was there in [19]70. I think he was full time, maybe, at the college by then. But I remember him very well, and I remember we had some fast guys.

JM: Yeah, he was a great technician with the hurdles and stuff like that. But he had [*clears throat*]*—*he didn't like college coachin'*—* he just told me. He said he'd rather have gone—go back to high school. But he didn't. What he did was—when he quit here, he got his PhD. And went over to John Brown, and he taught at John Brown his whole career.

SL: Yeah, I kinda remember that. You know, he—I member he was part of our off-season—I was a football guy—and some of the regimen that we had in off-season, I think, was his. We . . .

JM: Oh.

SL: . . . we would run from Fayetteville High School over to the Razorback Stadium and run the bleachers and then run back. And we had to go through weights and all this stuff—a big extravaganza for [*JM laughs*] all day—all afternoon. [03:25:10] Anyway, so—but weren't you also—didn't you also have a job at Greenland . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . when you first got here?

JM: Yeah, when I got here, the job at the U of A only paid—that was in the fall of [19]72—twenty-five hundred—that was it—a year, not a month—a year. And so I said, "Well, I gotta get something else," you know. And so Ed Renfrow brought me out—he checked around with some schools. Before I came up, I had talked to him on the phone. And he got me—he said, "Well, Greenland, you know, would be a—it's—you might get a job out there." So I went out there—I remember—this was funny, but he said—the superintendent said, "Where are you comin' from?" And I said, "Louisiana." And he said, "Well now, we have"—and I was tellin' him some of the problems. "Well, we's got some tough kids here, too, you know, at Greenland." You know, there was some trouble, 'cause down there, they used to carry guns, and I had broke up a couple of fights—a couple of things with guns, and I knew I wanted to . . .

SL: That's a good reason to leave, Coach.

JM: Oh gosh, yeah. And I said to myself, "Do they have guns?" And he said, "Oh my God, no," he said—the superintendent at Greenland. He said, "There's no guns." And I said, "Well, if—I can handle anything else." [*Laughter*] And he said, "Oh, just kids that are just ornery, you know, and"—"Do they carry

knives?" "No." I said to myself, you know, "What is he kiddin'?"
you know. So the kids were great, you know, but . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: And I stayed there five years.

[03:26:57] SL: Now, there you were—what was your job at
Greenland?

JM: I taught electronics. Anything that had to do that I could—they
sorta made a job for me, you know. There was no exact job.
And I used to get off at—it was at my own expense, though—I'd
get an hour off every day in the afternoon, so I could get to the
practice. And that went on for—I wasn't makin' a lot of money,
but it went on for five years. And then [*clears throat*]*—*but then
comin' up to that last year, I had a chance to leave Arkansas,
and so I went in and I talked to Lon Farrell—Dr. Farrell.

SL: Sure.

JM: You remember him?

SL: Absolutely.

JM: A great guy.

SL: Great guy.

JM: And he told me, "Oh, don't leave." I'll tell you where I was
goin'—to Southwest Missouri in Springfield . . .

SL: Yep.

JM: . . . 'cause the guy that had—was there was a great coach who—
he had won two Division II NCAA cross-country titles, and he
was goin' to the navy—not the navy, but the army at West Point.
He was—he got the job there, and he called me. He said, "You
want this job here?" And course, Lon Farrell talked me out of it.
He said, "Don't do that, you know. You know, something'll break
for you here." I said, "Well, I'm tired of waitin', you know, and
I"—'cause I had won three conference titles in cross-country,
and I said, "It doesn't seem like anything's goin' to happen." So
anyways, he—I waited one more year, and the next year, I got
a—they gave me a full-time assistant. And six weeks later, they
made me head coach. Never—I never was an assistant. [SL
laughs] So I went from part-time to head coach, 'cause Ed quit.

[03:28:59] SL: Well, you know, of course, the legend is, is that
Coach Broyles saw you . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . leading the guys out the stadium for the run and . . .

JM: I'll tell you . . .

SL: . . . and he thought, you know, "Well, he'll—it's great he's leadin'
'em out there, but he won't be runnin' when he gets back." And
then he looks up when you're comin' back, and you're [*laughs*]
still leadin' the team back in. And he thought, "That's the guy

we want." Now, that's the legend.

JM: That could've happened maybe one time, but [*laughs*] that'd be about it.

SL: Yeah.

JM: I used to run back then because I was—oh, what age was I then? I was thirty-four—somethin' like that. But I couldn't run with—even those guys—I wasn't great, but the [*clears throat*—I couldn't—I could run—I did run eighteen miles with 'em once on a Sunday. And I could run slow stuff, but I wouldn't be—you know, I probably ran—did it a few times. He definitely saw me. I didn't know that he knew me—that was the thing. 'Cause he was all—he was the football coach until I—when he retired from football, that's when I got hired as the head coach.

SL: Yeah. I'm not sure that he did know you.

JM: I—oh, and I . . .

SL: I think he just saw that . . .

JM: Oh, hell no.

SL: . . . the coach was leading the . . .

[03:30:22] JM: There was no way—I'll tell you a funny—you remember Wilson Matthews?

SL: Absolutely.

JM: Well, Wilson was over—he was retired from football at this stage

when I got the job there, and I don't know, I mighta been there two years, I think, and the head coach got a car from different dealer. Well, I had a car from Moe Smith in Fort Smith, a big Chevy dealer, and [clears throat] [SL laughs] anyways, when Heather was born—I wanted a four-door. So I just called up Moe, and I was very polite, and I asked him—well, he was like a bear. He said, "Well, if you don't like the goddamn car, bring it back. Park it." I said, "No, I like the car, but I want a four-door. I've got a kid." And he said some other smart remark to me, and I said, "Okay, okay." So I didn't get mad 'cause I didn't know if I should have, and I went into Wilson Matthews. I found out that Wilson was in charge of the cars. This was a funny thing. Of course, I went in and Wilson was talkin' to somebody on the phone, and he said, "Take a seat." So [laughter] you knew him—you know, what type he was.

SL: Yeah.

[03:31:50] JM: So I sat down, and he finally got finished on the phone, and he said, "What can I do for you, Coach?" He definitely didn't know my name. And I told him the story about the car and what I wanted, and he said, "Okay." Turned around, got his black book, looked up the phone number of Moe Smith, dialed him. "Moe, this is Wilson." [SL laughs] I got the track

coach sittin' here in front of me. And what's this about the car?" And he talked on the other end—Moe was sayin' something, and he would say, "Yeah. Yep. Yep. Yep." And then it all came unglued at that stage. Wilson—I'll—and I'll never forget this ?firm?. He said, "Well, either you give him a four-door car or you'll get your so-and-so butt in the end zone." [*SL laughs*] And I said, "Oh my God, now I'm really done." So hung up the phone. Needless to say, that was the last car I ever got from Moe Smith. [*SL laughs*] But Wilson stood up for me.

SL: He was a—he—both he and Lon Farrell were quite . . .

JM: They were good people.

SL: They were good people in entirely different ways.

JM: Yeah, and for—yeah, in entirely different ways.

SL: Yeah.

[03:33:36] JM: Lon was a real gentle-type guy, and Wilson was—get on you, but by gosh, he wouldn't mistreat you, you know, as far as—if you're doin' a good job, he'd—and—'cause when he did that to that guy, I said, "I gotta go down to meet that guy now with the car." [*Laughter*] Course, he didn't meet me when I took the car back. He gave it for one more year or six months. I think 'twas six months at a time. I got it for six months, and then Wilson said, "We won't have that car anymore," and they

didn't. But I think there must have been something going on
beforehand or something . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . with them.

[03:34:14] SL: Yeah. Well, Coach, we're rapidly approaching my
part of this deal here. Is there anything that we—you know, we
haven't said anything about your kids. You have . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . two children. Is that right?

JM: Yes, I've two. Heather, who is a schoolteacher—an English
teacher in Round Rock, Texas, which is outside of Austin. And
then Sean is a mech—an engineer—a mechanical engineer, and
he works at Danaher Corporation here.

SL: In for—here or Fort Smith?

JM: No, here . . .

SL: Here.

JM: . . . in Fayetteville.

SL: Uh-huh. Any grandchildren?

JM: No.

SL: No grand—none.

JM: Neither one of 'em is married. Heather is thirty-one. She has a
boyfriend, but she has had several of them.

SL: Yeah.

JM: She's in no rush, it seems. [*Laughs*]

[03:35:08] SL: Anything that you want to—anything else you wanna say familywise or . . .

JM: Well—oh, I've been fortunate. I've had a lot of great people—from my parents—I think it all started with my parents—the ground rules that they laid—and then from people like—you know, all the great people I met at Arkansas. And my coach—the coaches I had—Don—startin' with Don Appleby that started me off in Ireland, and then Bob Cole, my coach at Louisiana. He was a great motivator. I mean, he could get guys to do unbelievable things. And then havin'—just to have coached at one university my whole life—you know, that was, I think, pretty special. Some people say, "You should've moved on," but what the heck.

SL: I think you [*laughs*] did pretty well right here.

JM: I did all right.

SL: Yeah.

JM: I did okay.

SL: In more ways than one.

JM: Yeah.

SL: I can see that.

JM: Yeah, and I enjoyed it, and I felt—it was a great place to live, you know—northwest Arkansas. I couldn't see—there was—I had opportunities to go here or there, and you know, I couldn't see myself comfortable there, you know.

[03:36:31] SL: Should we do the "proud to be an Arkansan" or "proud to be from Arkansas" thing?

TM: What was [*clears throat*]?—what—whatever it is—yeah, if you want to. I'm not sure of the exact wording.

SL: You know what? Actually, I'm—we do this thing where people look at the camera and not at me, and they say who they are, and they say, "I'm proud to be from Arkansas." Now, you're technically not from Arkansas, but . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . you've been here long enough where you—I think . . .

JM: All right.

SL: . . . we could get away with it. So if you don't mind doing that . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: I don't know that we'll ever use it, Coach, but . . .

JM: Okay.

SL: Okay.

JM: Just say my name and I'm proud to be from Arkansas?

SL: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

JM: This is John McDonnell, and I'm proud to be from Arkansas.

SL: Okay. [*Claps hands*] That's good.

TM: Sounds good.

[03:37:24] SL: Trey, anything else before we hand it off to Andrew?

TM: Well, one thing I was thinkin' of was any of the—over your years in the athletic department—just any changes there or any other stories about Lon Farrell or any—just any other stories down that line that might be of note.

SL: Do you want to cover that kind of stuff? You want . . .

Andrew Maloney: You can cover it now [*unclear words*].

SL: Go ahead and do it? You know, Lon Farrell was kind of the father figure, wasn't he, in that . . .

JM: He was.

SL: . . . athletic department?

JM: He was. He was.

SL: I mean, it was, like, that's where people went for counsel.

JM: Counsel, yeah.

SL: He knew how to—he knew who was hurt and who really wasn't hurt. He—in his own soft way, he had a kind of a tough love about him, whereas . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . Wilson Matthews was definitely . . .

JM: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: . . . a tough-love guy.

JM: He was.

SL: He was a physical guy.

JM: He was.

SL: He was something that the football players recognized as a physical presence. He could . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . he could be physical with them.

JM: Yeah.

[03:38:24] SL: But I've heard great stories about both of them. Is there—Lon Farrell—he was Catholic.

JM: He was, yeah.

SL: So you probably . . .

JM: He was from Kansas. Yeah. He did a lot of Frank's work, too.

You know, Frank'd come in at—on a Friday evenin' and give him a bunch of notes about two inches thick, and he had to decipher it for Monday 'cause Frank was goin' to a meeting. And Frank—you know, I just happened to be in Lon's office, and he had to—said, "Oh, dang." He said, "I was gonna go home to Kansas."

Now he had to read all this stuff, you know. So he did

everything.

SL: The job ended up kinda crushin' him, didn't it?

JM: Oh, I think it did. Yeah. Job got to him. He—and he did everything. He would even—I remember havin' a flood down—the water came down the stairs one time in a downpour, and he was down there with a squeegee and his pants folded up to his knees. And him, the assistant AD, and practically runnin' the show.

SL: Yeah.

[03:39:45] JM: And he was so loyal to Frank, you know. So was Wilson.

SL: Yeah.

JM: They were true—I could honestly say they were the best assistants he ever had.

SL: And he had a bunch of good assistants.

JM: He did. [*Unclear words*].

SL: And they were loyal to him.

JM: Oh gosh.

SL: Most all of 'em were. You know, I heard—I was interviewing Frank's kids one time, and I heard that whenever he got a raise, he would split it and divide it equally among his assistants.

JM: Frank?

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: Is that right?

SL: Yeah.

JM: Oh, he had plenty of money. He had—he was invested—oh, the Stephens made him rich. [*Clears throat*] Oh, Frank was—he was always fair to me. He—you know, he'd always say, "Just be conservative, you know. Just spend what you have to make a—keep the program goin' or [*SL laughs*] get them goin' at the beginnin'," and then he was—if you went in to ask for money, he'd never say the first time. He'd say, "Well, let me get back to you." Then you'd be barely back in your office—he'd call you and he'd just—'twas just his style, you know.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Second time, you know.

[03:41:13] SL: Mh-hmm. Yeah. Anything you wanna say about Wilson Matthews?

JM: Well, he was a—from the—he was type of guy that I liked, you know. Him—and like you said about him and Lon Farrell, they were—came from different ends of the spectrum, but both could end up in the middle, you know. And they were both good people. You had to under—once you understood—if you understand people, you'd have no problem gettin' on with either

one of them. I wouldn't.

SL: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause Wilson'd get on you in a [*snaps fingers*] heartbeat, you know. Anybody.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And then [*SL laughs*] the next time he'd see you, "You're the best"—hand on your shoulders and—good guy.

[03:41:59] SL: Well, it—you know, somehow or another if you survived it, it made you stronger . . .

JM: Oh yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . you know. And you always managed to survive . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . Wilson Matthews. It was . . .

JM: I think he—he told me—one time he—it was on a Saturday, the mornin' of a foot—home football game, we used to use the visitors' dressing room and did for years and years until I retired. They built a new one in the—because it was a nice, big one—seventy lockers, and we could fit everybody in there. But we'd have to get out the weekend of a home game.

SL: Sure.

JM: And I was goin' down to make some—on the Saturday, we were doin' a workout in cross-country, so I was goin' down to get the

Gatorade 'cause I'd told the manager—I said, "Don't—you don't bother comin'." I said, "I can make it myself." And so I pulled in—now, there was a young fella—he wouldn't let me into the parkin' lot. [*Laughter*] And I said, "Hey!" And course, he said, "I know who you are." But I said I'd be just down there for a minute, and I don't want to carry the Gatorade—you know, five gallons—whatever it was—all the way up to the road there. "Well," he said, "I'm supposed to let nobody in." He was a young kid.

SL: Yeah.

[03:43:22] JM: So I said, "Aw, forget about it." I just drove down. Well, I got my Gatorade and all, and the next day, Wilson [*SL laughs*—the next Monday, Wilson called me up, and he said, "McDonnell, what the hell are you doin' to—you don't realize, you know, that when somebody says no, it's no. Now, why didn't you drive around the other way and come in at the gate at the bottom?" I said, "I couldn't get in there." "Course you can get in there. You can get anywhere you want." "Well, I couldn't get in past that kid." He let me in, finally, and he chewed me out and said, "Oh, I just wanted to get it off my chest," you know. [*Laughter*]

SL: Yeah. Yeah, that sounds like him.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JM: He—but he let me know that I shouldn't—that the kids are—
and—which is true. The kids are told, "Don't let anybody in,"
and that's . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JM: . . . nobody, you know.

SL: He can't . . .

JM: And he'd say, "I mean, nobody," [*laughter*] you know.

SL: Yeah.

JM: That's ol' Wilson, you know.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And that could have happened to Frank Broyles too, probably,
with the kid. "Well, Wilson said you couldn't get in." [*Laughter*]

[03:44:28] SL: Well, okay, Coach. I'm . . .

JM: Okay.

SL: . . . gonna turn this gig over to Andrew. I really . . .

JM: I've got more?

AM: Oh yeah.

SL: Oh yeah, we're just gettin' started now. [*JM laughs*] This was
the easy part. [*Laughs*] Thank you.

JM: Okay.

SL: Thank you for spendin' . . .

JM: [*Unclear word*].

SL: . . . the time with me and . . .

JM: Enjoyed it.

SL: . . . we're . . .

JM: I hope you got something out of it.

SL: I'm gonna stick around. I'll—if I think of somethin' else . . .

JM: Okay.

SL: . . . at the end of the day, I'll get in here. But I bet we've—we're pretty good. And I bet Andrew will—he'll probably overlap some of this stuff, anyway.

JM: Okay, okay.

SL: All right. Thanks, Coach.

JM: Okay, Scott.

SL: All right, yeah.

[Tape stopped]

[03:45:03] AM: This is Andrew Maloney from Tulsa, Oklahoma. I'm a—spent five years as an assistant coach at the University of Tulsa and am gonna be working with the University of Arkansas Press on a biographical work of Coach John McDonnell.

JM: Do I introduce my . . .

TM: Pardon me?

JM: Do I introduce myself or . . .

TM: No, we're—I think we're okay . . .

JM: Okay.

TM: . . . on that. You already did earlier.

[03:45:32] AM: John, you became a—officially an American citizen in 1969. You know, how did that come about, and what was the significance of that moment for you?

JM: Well, the reason I did it at that time was that a lot of jobs—and especially in high schools, teachin' or coachin'—you needed to be a citizen to get the—you know, to get a job. So . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: And plus, my wife was American, and so I decided, you know, if you're gonna live here, you might as well become a citizen.

AM: Yeah. Yeah. So there was more of a practical element to it for you? There was nothing emotional about—I mean, did you still see yourself as Irish or Irish American or just American?

JM: Oh, just—I've—now I've got dual citizenship. At that time, I had to give up the Irish citizenship . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and since that, they've changed the rules, and we—now, I've got an American passport and an Irish passport. So it was a—I didn't think 'twas more either way—you know, it was just—I

thought something that was necessary to do if you're goin' to, you know, make your livin' here, you gotta live by the laws, you know, and if you're eligible to become a citizen, you could do worse, you know, than . . .

[03:46:59] AM: Yeah. What were your first impressions of Fayetteville upon arriving here in 1972—the town and . . .

JM: Well, you know, it was—the thing that—it reminded me of a place that—with the hills and everything like that and kinda very country compared to what it is now, if you can imagine. It was a great place for distance running, you know, I thought. And plus, the coach that was here, Ed Renfrow, gave me—was givin' me the distance runners to—you know, and some scholarships. So I thought, "Well, gosh, this'd be a great chance," 'cause I knew everything about the Southwest Conference, and I thought, "You know, a year or two here, I could win. I could beat those Southwest Conference schools." So that was the other thing.

AM: What were your first impressions of Coach Renfrow?

JM: A real nice, very knowledgeable, technical coach—fantastic—and—but he didn't like the—it wasn't his coaching that drove him out of the sport; it was the—they were trouble—those were the years, in [19]72, [19]73, [19]74—those years—when everything started with the long hair and all that type of stuff. Kind of a

rebellion goin' on at that time with young people [*clears throat*], and I don't think he wanted to fight it, 'cause he told me one time before he stepped down about six months that he'd rather work with high school kids. And then he went—he gave up the—resigned, and he got his PhD—finished his PhD and went—he never went back to coachin' at all.

AM: Yeah. That was the era of civil disobedience and civil unrest and racial tensions, I mean, but did any of that every spill out on campus, or did you—not even spill out, but even under the surface—I mean, was it something that you . . .

JM: Yeah, there was a little bit of it. You know, in the late [19]70s, I had a kid or two that was kind of a—you know, flexin' their muscles a little bit, but I was—I guess I was old-fashioned and got away with it.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Either they would dance to our music—my music—or they didn't dance at all.

[03:49:27] AM: Mh-hmm. What were the facilities like when you got here, both for track and for the rest of the athletic department?

JM: Well, the football stadium was pretty good, and there was a track inside that was cinders—cinder track. A good cinder track, you know. And at that time, that wasn't too bad, but it only

lasted a year—the first year I was here—and then the next year, they took it out. And then we were out of a track for two years and were trainin' at the high school track, and so it was—that was pretty tough.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then they built—where the track is now, the present new track—they built a track there, and we had that until a few years ago.

[03:50:20] AM: Was there anything other than the football stadium at the time? Was there—did—Barnhill Arena was . . .

JM: Barnhill was here, and you know, when you look at it now and think about what you—they were pretty shabby—you know, the facilities, because Barnhill was—accommodated everybody. Part of it you—we threw the shot in there and did some starts, and you know, they had—basketball was played there. Football did their indoor work there. So there was a lot of activity in there, and it was—half the floor was dirt. [*Laughs*] So . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . then Bud Walton was the first one that was really what you call a really nice building that was built. And then, course, Coach Broyles did a fantastic job of raisin' money and gettin' the whole athletic department up to topnotch.

[03:51:24] AM: What was your first impression of Frank, having arrived at campus? He had won the national title eight years earlier in football . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . although it was split with Alabama and—you know, he was—what was your first impression of him?

JM: Well, he was always the type of guy, which—he wasn't a small-talk type of guy, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He—none of that—if you went in and talked to him, 'twas all about business. And he was fair, 'cause I remember when I talked to him about what he wanted, and he said, "If you finish in the top five hundred of the SWC"—in the conference—he'd be happy. "Or," I said, "what about a national championship?" "Well," he said, "if we won one every fifteen years, I'd be happy," so I'm sure he was happy. So *[laughter]* . . .

AM: Yeah. When was the first time—'cause you came in as a cross-country coach.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And assistant track coach, and you know, he was the football coach for a while. When was the last time—first time you really had a—you know, you got to know him really well, beyond a—

you know, saying hello at a meeting?

JM: I think the first time I ever—that he—I'm sure he may know who I was, but . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . he—is when I talked at—sat down and spoke to him about the—what did he want from me as a head coach, you know, and . . .

AM: When you became the head track coach?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Okay.

JM: Yeah. When I was an assistant, Dr. Farrell was more over the spring sports than anybody, and Frank was still the head football coach and athletic director. But then in [19]78, he gave up the football coachin' job and became the athletic director.

[03:53:14] AM: Yeah. Now, you arrive on the camp—now, when did you arrive in Fayetteville in [19]72?

JM: In Aug—the end of August.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I think August 24, [19]72.

AM: So you arrive there, and school starts shortly thereafter.

JM: Shortly thereafter.

AM: And you go to your first cross-country meeting or [*laughter*]

practice . . .

JM: I knew you were goin' to ask that one. [*Laughter*]

AM: . . . and what did you find there?

[03:53:39] JM: Oh my gosh! [*Laughter*] I never saw people's eyes get so big 'cause I started tellin' 'em what we were going to do, 'cause I didn't know what they had done.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I had set up workouts, you know, for one day that probably they did in a week . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know, and—'cause they told me later—you know, I could look back at them, you know, and there was one kid that came with me from Louisiana—Randy Melancon, and course, he wasn't eligible for the first year, but he—all their eyes were just [*makes whistling sound*] when I was talkin' about—back then, we still ran, like, 110, 120 mile a week. The mileage was on still back in those days. So those guys were runnin' [*laughs*] about fifty miles a week or something, you know, because they were doin' it on their own, and I'd heard stories that they'd go out and just run out to a basketball [*clears throat*] rim and start shootin' baskets and then come back with a sweat, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So anyways, they turned out not bad. They—you know, that cross-country team. We added district cross-country for the first time . . .

AM: Okay.

JM: . . . and we won it and qualified.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So they were the happiest . . .

AM: For the NCAA meet.

JM: For the NCAA meet.

AM: Wow.

JM: So they got—all those kids got to run in the NCAA their last year. They were almost all seniors, and so they were happy, you know, that—oh, they said to me, "Oh, I wish you were here sooner that you could've helped us." You know, 'cause I made them lose their weight and all. They were all overweight and all that type of stuff.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Which was interesting.

[03:55:23] AM: Yeah. Now, the district—I know how the districts are now, but back then, did it encompass kinda the same . . .

JM: They did. Did.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Basically the same thing.

AM: So you would have . . .

JM: Never changed.

AM: If you had won that district, you woulda had to have beaten team—now, did you—how'd you do at the Southwest Conference that first year?

JM: Were second.

AM: Second.

JM: And we should've won 'cause we had beaten Texas the week before.

AM: Okay.

JM: And I had a kid that didn't do what he was told. He tried to win the individual title, and [*clears throat*] he—anyways . . .

[03:55:53] AM: Yeah. And you know, how was your typical day back then? You were working as a shop teacher at—is it—what was the name of the high school?

JM: Greenland.

AM: Greenland?

JM: Yeah.

AM: And so you'd be there most of the morning.

JM: Yes, I'd get off at a little after three . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and then I'd come to practice.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I used to have to—I'd tell the kids what to run in the morning—
what miles to do.

AM: Mh-hmm. Now, we've heard the legend that Frank likes to tell
about you running with the . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

AM: Did that happen very often?

JM: It may've happened, but I don't think very often.

[03:56:32] AM: Yeah. What was the dynamic with you and Coach
Renfrow at that—for—in those first few years?

JM: He was one of the best technical coaches, but he just didn't like
the college. He didn't get on with college-age students at all,
and he told me that. He said he'd like to go back to high school
because he was in high school coachin' . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . 'cause he said—I used to go campin' with him on weekends
and . . .

AM: Sure.

JM: . . . that type of stuff.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So then a year later or [*clears throat*] six months, I forget, he

stepped down and contin—stayed here as the women's coach for a year . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . or two and got his—finished his PhD.

[03:57:23] AM: Yeah, yeah. Now, that first year—or that second year—you had brought in Niall O'Shaughnessy and some Irish. I mean, how was that process? Did you know the coach? Did you know them?

JM: No, I just went over there. I knew—in Ireland, I knew the guy, a guy named Ronnie Long, that was the public relations officer for the BLE or the—their athletic association at that time.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he was—told me that—I went after another guy, and his name was Mike O'Shea, and he had run, like, 3:47 and 1:51. And back then, that was pretty good. And he said he'd come if I'd take O'Shaughnessy. So I was takin' Niall anyways, but Niall had run, like, 1:53, and he ended up runnin' 1:51-something as a senior. But O'Shea didn't come. He went to Providence, and you know, he never beat O'Shaughnessy . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . in the mile.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause I moved Niall up—after a year, I moved him up to the 1500.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And you know, he was a ball of fire.

[03:58:43] AM: Yeah. It sounded like you guys had some fairly quick success in cross-country—makin' the NCAAs your third month here.

JM: Yeah, we did. Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: That was more luck than anything else, you know. The—well, there were kids that ?may need not? luck, but they had worked hard, and they realized 'twas the end of the road for them 'cause they were seniors, and they went out with a vengeance to get something, and they got it done.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I've never in my—well, I have, but they were the happiest campers you ever saw . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . 'cause they finally had done something, and they had tears in their eyes because they were goin' to the national championship.

AM: How had the track and cross-country teams done prior—you

know, the year or two prior to you arriving?

JM: They weren't very good. I think the year before I arrived—in the conference meet, they scored one point in Austin.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And so . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . we turned that around a bit.

[03:59:51] AM: Now, that second fall, who were the kids that came in? Randy, you'd mentioned, had sat out for a year.

JM: Yes.

AM: And Niall [pronounced NEE-ull].

JM: Niall [pronounced NI-all].

AM: Niall.

JM: And Tom Aspel.

AM: Tom Aspel.

JM: And a kid named—another Irish kid named Derek Reilly.

AM: Yeah. And then, you know, so there seems to be a lot more talent out, but you still get second at the Southwest Conference meet. And you . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: And you—I think you qualified again . . .

JM: Oh.

AM: And that—you seemed to say that really disappointed you—the [19]73 one, right?

JM: Yeah, well, I'll tell you, I had another kid—I had an English kid, too—Steve Bauer.

AM: Yep.

JM: And Steve was the guy that—he was a good distance runner.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he thought he could win it and went out like a scalded dog. And after about a mile, he had a fifty-yard lead and—oh, I said, "What the world is he doin'?" He just . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . blew up and cost us the title, you know. He blew up and finished. Instead of bein' in the top three or four . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . he finished seventeenth or eighteenth.

[04:00:52] AM: Who were the big influences on you at that juncture in time in the early mid-[19]70s for—as coaches that you looked up to and tried to learn from?

JM: Ted Banks at UTEP.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was one of them. And course, for a few years until the pass—at that time, 'twas Jumbo Elliott from Villanova.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was a big influence. And of course, I've read everything about [*clears throat*] Bill Bowerman, too.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I looked at Kansas—Bob Timmons.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I looked at those schools as kinda models—tried to study why did they all win, and they all had one thing very in common, and that was they had the same type of athletes—the same type of jumpers, throwers, distance runners. So that's what I patterned myself—I said, "If 'twas good enough for them, it's good enough for me."

[04:01:54] AM: Was there anything they did as coaches?

JM: Well, I think they were all good coaches, you know . . .

AM: Yeah. Yeah.

JM: . . . too. And you know, everybody—like Ted Banks at El Paso—everybody said, "Well, you know, he has all those foreigners and all that," but that doesn't matter. I've seen other schools with foreigners, and they didn't—they couldn't coach them.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he could. He could handle them and get them to the startin' line ready to go, and that's the important thing, you know,

whether he's a foreign kid or not, if you cannot get him to the startin' line healthy . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and ready to go, it doesn't matter.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I think Banks was very good at that.

[04:02:33] AM: Yeah. Now, what training literature was out at the time that influenced you?

JM: Well, I was a Lydiard fan.

AM: Lydiard?

JM: I liked Arthur Lydiard.

AM: Yeah.

JM: That was—I liked the background. I liked that base type of strength and to stay away from injuries, and you know, we had great luck stayin' away from injuries. We hardly ever had a guy hurt. [*Clears throat*] Now, in later years, I had—we had more injuries than anything, I think. And I don't know if that's related to shoes or what it is, you know.

AM: When you say later years, you mean . . .

JM: The last—you know, in the—since 2000, you know.

AM: Okay, yeah, yeah. Was Bob Timmons a training influence, or was it more about how he constructed his program and . . .

JM: Constructed his program, yeah.

[04:03:20] AM: Yeah. Tell us a little bit about the first Southwest Conference title in [19]74 and then [19]75.

JM: Well, that was—you know, when I look back on it, that was sweet, you know, to win your first—you know, 'cause you—I never won a conference, and it slipped away from us the year before. And to win it was—it was fantastic. It really was. It was as good as—people'd say, "Well, what about a national championship?" Well, champ—national championship, of course, is good, too, but you don't realize—the first one of any of them is real important.

AM: Yeah. And where was that first one that you guys won?

JM: It was in Houston.

AM: Houston. How'd you guys get down there?

JM: Oh, drove. [*Laughs*]

AM: You drove?

JM: You bet.

AM: Yeah. On the van?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah. [*JM laughs*] Okay. Do you—what was—I guess at that time—you know, football has always been king, and really, did you see a lot of parallels coming over to the US that the interest

in football compared to, say, European soccer and the passion and—I mean, what differences and what similarities did you see?

JM: Well, there was more passion here at that time than—for football than there was for soccer in Europe, because that European soccer craze is just in the last ten years or fifteen years. That has gone crazy, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And so many countries have good teams now. I think soccer has done a fantastic job.

[04:05:00] AM: Yeah. Now, within the framework, though, of Fayetteville in the mid-[19]70s, what was, I guess, the level of exposure and interest and publicity in track and cross-country at that particular point in time?

JM: Well, you—the first few years, we had a guy here named Butch Henry. He was our sports information guy. And he was good.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He really got it out. He loved—he liked track, and that was a—that's the only knock I'd have against what happened down the years was that we didn't get the press that we should've got.

AM: Yeah. Yeah, I understand. What did Butch do that was over and above [*JM clears throat*] other . . .

JM: Well, he . . .

AM: . . . SIDs?

JM: . . . he was involved. He loved to go to a track meet.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he understood track.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And you know, I think if you—it's no good havin' a sports information person that covers a sport if he doesn't understand it. It's hard—it's very hard for him to cover it.

[04:05:59] AM: Yeah, yeah. Now, as the cross-country program progressed, you know, you didn't necessarily have as total control with track; you were an assistant with Ed.

JM: Yeah.

AM: How did the track team start to progress in the Southwest Conference from going one point the year before?

JM: It started—we started gettin'—scorin' some points, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: The distance runners—you know, we'd win the distance medley and, you know, with O'Shaughnessy, and we had some people that—you know, we were close 'cause Ed got out in [19]77, I think. Then in [19]78—and we won in [19]79, so we're on our way up there.

AM: Yeah. Who were the other coaching personalities in the

Southwest Conference at the time?

JM: Well, there was Cleburne Price of Texas. He was a pretty good coach. And Jim Parr at SMU, and Clyde Hart, of course, was at Baylor.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And Tom Tellez wasn't at Houston yet.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Texas A&M had—he was a good coach. I forget his—he retired some years ago. Gosh, I can't think of his name—real gentleman-type guy.

AM: Yeah.

JM: At A&M. And Texas Tech had—it wasn't Corky Oglesby—'twas another guy—an older man.

AM: Yeah.

JM: They didn't do much.

[04:07:40] AM: Yeah. Everybody get along at the coaches' meetings?

JM: Back then, yes . . .

AM: Did they?

JM: . . . actually. Yeah.

AM: Really? Okay.

JM: Back then it was better.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Then 'twas the later years, and things started—you know, guys come in—like, they had ideas and sought their own—for what was good for them, not for what was good for the sport.

[04:08:05] AM: Yeah. What kind of travel budget did you guys have for the track and cross-country team back then? You'd said you drove vans to the Southwest Conference meet in Houston.

JM: We did. You know, when Ed was head coach, I didn't know—but I know that he didn't spend all his money. He used to turn back some of it . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know. And so I think that—I'm not sure, but when I took over, it was hard to—I told Coach Broyles, "You know, I don't know what I'm going to spend because, you know, we haven't a great team right now, but as our team gets better, I'll spend whatever it takes to go to the meets that we need to go to—like you said a little while ago—and then we—as we get better, we need to go to better meets." And he said, "I can—I understand that." He said, "That's great. That's what I—I don't want you spendin'"—I made some examples to him about schools that'd go out and buy—to spend their budgets. I heard—you heard the stories about them buying twenty vaulting

poles and twenty javelins just to spend the money, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Well, that—I said, "I'm not gonna do that 'cause that's foolishness." And he said, "Oh, absolutely." So that was the type of budget I had, and that's the way it went all the way till I retired.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I never—we didn't spend a lot money.

AM: Yeah.

JM: We spent what it took.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I didn't fly to California every weekend or anything like that, even though I could have.

[04:09:38] AM: Did anybody fly to California back then?

JM: Yeah, in the last—oh, in that time—that . . .

AM: I'm—at that point.

JM: . . . back when I started . . .

AM: At that point.

JM: . . . no.

AM: Yeah.

JM: No. No.

AM: Okay.

JM: No.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But in the last fifteen, twenty years, Stanford has got very popular.

AM: Yeah. Those first few years, how many scholarships did you have to work with? You said that was a major motivating factor for you to come to Arkansas.

JM: They had—well, Ed would give me—if I could get good guys, he'd give me whatever scholarships—if he—Ed Renfrow—if he didn't get good kids, he'd say, "Well, let's get them out." He was very fair, you know. He wanted to win, and he didn't care what—which sport it was.

[04:10:23] AM: How many did he have to work with at that point? Do you have any idea?

JM: I think that at one time—at the very beginning, I think there was twenty-eight scholarships, but we didn't . . .

AM: Twenty-eight?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Wow.

JM: But we didn't have the twenty-eight.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I think we had bout twenty or something, and then it . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . of course, then that came down to fourteen . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . pretty quick, and then quicker than that, they came down to twelve and a half—twelve point six.

[04:10:47] AM: Yeah. Yeah. In those early days, Kansas Relays was very, very big.

JM: It was.

AM: And you know, any stories that stick out to mind—major successes early on at Kansas Relays?

JM: Yes, I remember beatin' Kansas State. They had great relay teams back then—Kansas State.

AM: Yeah.

JM: DeLoss Dodds, who's a AD at . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was the coach.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And they had a couple of kids named—Jeff Schemmel was one of them—that were sub-four-minute milers, but I had O'Shaughnessy, and we used to beat them, and they didn't like it. But they got used to it.

AM: Yeah. Yeah.

JM: [*Laughs*] And so we went there for years to Kansas Relays. The weather started gettin' bad . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know. And got worse and worse, and then they started bringing in this qualifyin' stuff, you know.

AM: What do you mean?

JM: Times. You'd have to chase times to get into the 5,000 and 10,000, so . . .

AM: Oh, I see. Yeah.

JM: So that sorta ended, you know, Kansas and those type of relays, because runnin' too many relays and no open events, you know.

[04:12:06] AM: Yeah. Yeah, I understand. Why did it get colder? Was it moved earlier and earlier in the calendar, or is it just kinda the [*unclear word*] . . .

JM: Well, in Kansas you could get—I remember runnin' at Kansas Relays and a shower of hail right before the 4x1,500.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: So that type of weather. And I remember runnin' in real nice weather, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Oh, Kansas was great 'cause it's close to us, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: We used to drive everywhere, and we used to go to Drake that time. Texas, Kansas, and Drake.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Didn't start goin' to Penn until [19]81.

[04:12:40] AM: Mh-hmm. Now, those first few years you're here, there's a cinder track. They take the track away from you, and you're training on a high school track. You know, Fayetteville—I'm not sure what—you'd described it was a little bit smaller than it is now.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And you know, you had brought over some good Irish kids. What was it like—what was recruiting like here . . .

JM: Well . . .

AM: . . . when you were the cross-country coach?

JM: [*Clears throat*] At the beginnin', it was tough.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I remember talkin' to a kid from New Jersey, and I remember he had run 9:10 in two-mile.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I would've loved to have given him a scholarship back then. And he said to me, "Where are you from?" I said, "Arkansas." He said, "I never heard of it." [*Laughs*]

AM: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

JM: And I felt like saying, "Well, you don't know your geography very good," but I didn't. [*AM laughs*] I said, "Well, you know, it's—we're not great right now and—but you know, someday we will." And he said, "Well, I'm thinkin' about walkin' on at Oregon." And he did—walked on—he wouldn't take a scholarship here. But he never did anything at Oregon because they used to get so many kids, you know, back then.

[04:13:52] AM: Yeah, yeah. Was there—sorry to go back to Kansas Relays—was there a particular year or moment that you said, "You know, I'm through with this meet"? Was there a specific reason? And where did you guys end up going after that?

JM: Well, I'll tell you one thing that—we got disqualified a couple of times . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . that I'd thought we shouldn't have . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . in relays.

AM: Sure.

JM: And I thought they were really bad calls, and that had a little bit to do with it, too. I said, "There's no use goin' up"—and it was goin' downhill. We were winnin' the relays real easy, and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . some little bumpin' early in the 4xMile or four—distance medley and they'd disqualify you, and I said, "We don't need that."

[04:14:41] AM: Do you think that was based on the officials just being quick to disqualify, or was there some kind of home cookin' goin' on?

JM: It wasn't for—Kansas wasn't the winners. The . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: I don't know if it just officials that [*clears throat*] wasn't doin' their job or . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: I—you can never know, but . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . I said, "We're not gonna go back anymore."

AM: Yeah.

JM: The last time that we—was—you know, we—it was some real obvious thing that nothing had happened . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and we got disqualified.

AM: Yeah. So you know, you'd been here four or five years, and you had mentioned a job at Southwest Missouri, which is—is it—are

we talkin' about Missouri State?

JM: Yeah.

AM: In Springfield?

JM: Springfield.

AM: Comes open. Who was the coach that was there?

JM: He was a young guy. Gosh, I never thought I'd forget his name.

AM: How long—well, how long was he at army for?

JM: Pardon?

AM: Well, was he in army until recently?

JM: No, he'd made a—he didn't coach all the time. He was at the army, and he went to . . .

AM: Okay.

JM: He made—he moved up the ranks and . . .

AM: I gotcha.

JM: Yeah, he got out of coachin' . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . eventually.

[04:16:00] AM: So that job comes open . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . and I mean, what attracted you about that? It's a smaller conference—smaller school?

JM: Yeah, but he had—he was in Division II, and he had won the

national championship twice in cross-country. And we . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . used to—they used to have a meet up there—God, his name—I can picture the guy, too—but he did—he had a great cross-country course, he was very organized, and he was gettin' good kids in there, you know. And he—when he made that—it didn't pay a lot, but it was payin' better than what I had, you know. So I thought about it, and like I said, there was—Dr. Farrell advised me not to do it. You know, he said, "You have done something. You have won three conference titles here already, and you know, don't make a move like that," you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I guess I'm glad I didn't. [*Laughs*]

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: 'Cause they wouldn't have had the finances, you know.

AM: At Southwest Missouri?

JM: No.

[04:17:12] AM: Yeah, yeah. Now, at that time, there was no indoor track on campus. There weren't a lot of . . .

JM: No.

AM: . . . indoor tracks in this region. Where were the big indoor tracks at that point in time?

JM: Missouri and Champaign, Illinois. We used to have to . . .

AM: Oh, you guys went all the way up there?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Drove.

AM: Drove.

JM: In the wintertime.

AM: In vans, or would you take a bus for the track team?

JM: Vans.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: Oh, I'll tell you, they were—when I think on it—and come home—we'd come home after the meet—stupid, but . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . that's the way it was.

[04:17:47] AM: You had mentioned a story about Niall

O'Shaughnessy. [*Laughter*]

JM: We were comin'—that was from a cross-country meet over in Oklahoma . . .

AM: Okay.

JM: . . . and we were comin' through—came through on Interstate 40 . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and came up through Sallisaw and Stilwell, and we're comin' in through Lincoln that way.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I was gettin' pretty close home . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and he said—he was—I could see him lookin' at me, and the next thing he said, "Are you tired? You know, you're not fallin' asleep." And I said, "Oh," I said, "nah, that's okay, it's just my right eye. I've been—I rest my right eye and"—"You what?"
[*Laughter*] He almost jumped out of the van.

[04:18:32] AM: Yeah. Now, was there a—did te—who used to go up to Kansas Relays? Did Texas and Minnesota come to that, and was it a pretty big meet?

JM: Yeah, it was.

AM: Yeah, there's a picture I saw with O'Shaughnessy out kicking Paul Craig, who's a famous Canadian . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . and—of Texas—and Steve Plasencia, who's now the head coach at University of Minnesota.

JM: Yeah, Steve, yeah.

AM: Well, how did that race . . .

JM: That coulda . . .

AM: Do you remember . . .

JM: Was that Kansas or Drake?

AM: It coulda been—I—you know what, I could be wrong.

JM: I—that could . . .

AM: It may've been Drake.

JM: That could be Drake, I think.

[04:19:06] AM: Did Texas used to go all the way up there?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Okay.

JM: Oh, we had some real battles with those Craigs—John and Paul were good friends of Niall's.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And Paul was the best of them.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But we had some good battles with them and, course, Steve Plasencia, too, and the boys—Jeff Schemmel, and I forget the other boy from Kansas State, but they were native Kansans. You know, they were from Kansas. That DeLoss Dodds—he was a good track coach.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Did a good job.

AM: How long was he at Kansas State till?

JM: Oh, he was there for years until . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . until he left and went to the Big Eight office. [*Clears throat*]

He left Kansas State and went to the Big Eight office and went from there to Texas.

AM: To Texas as the AD, not in a track capacity.

JM: Yeah.

[04:19:58] AM: Okay. Now, Dr. Farrell—you had mentioned—is it Lon was his first name?

JM: Yeah, Dr. Lon.

AM: He had convinced you to stay in Fayetteville, and so you did. And when did you first get an inkling beyond that from Ed that he was gonna imminently probably move on to another field?

JM: It was, oh, about six or eight months before that. He had a—I remember him bein' down on the track, and he told the guys to warm down, you know, and they didn't and . . .

AM: The sprinters?

JM: Sprinters.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he got ticked off at it and just walked off, and I walked after him and talked to him, and he said, "I'm just tired of dealin' with guys like that, you know." And 'twas unfortunate because he

[*clears throat*] was—they were just guys that were no good, you know.

[04:20:53] AM: Yeah, yeah. Were there a lot of discipline problems early on those first few years with kids acting up and . . .

JM: I'll tell you, back in those—in the [19]70s, you—some—a lot of those kids—I had an Irish kid—he had—the very first year I got here, I got a kid named Desi O'Connor, and I kicked him off after a year.

AM: What did he do?

JM: Well, he had long hair and wouldn't cut it, and he was—a lot of . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . other things.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was a good runner, but a—you know.

AM: Yeah, yeah, I understand. So Ed decides to move on. And so how does the athletic department react to that? I mean . . .

JM: Oh, track was so minute that it—you know, 'twas no big deal. I don't think . . .

AM: I mean, did they post it nationally? Did they interview people, or did they just say, "John, you're the guy"?

JM: I heard—at the time, I didn't know.

AM: Okay.

JM: But later, I found out that, you know, that the coach from Arkansas State wanted the job and blah, blah, blah, and he didn't get it. So I guess Frank had a feelin' that I could—he might've watched me run a few times [*laughter*]*—that I could do the job, 'cause . . .*

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . I came in, and in quick work, you know, got second and then . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . [*snaps fingers*] first. So . . .

[04:22:21] AM: Yeah. And what was it as far as pay and responsibility? How was the transition to head coach from . . .

JM: [*Laughs*] It wasn't much.

AM: You'd been part time . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . and you'd been a head . . .

JM: Well, he had been puttin' it up a little bit by . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . the time, I think, I got—at the end of five years, I got maybe to seven thousand or something part time, but . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . the head coach and—the full-time assistant was fourteen thousand, and the head coach was sixteen.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So there wasn't much in the differ, you know, so . . .

AM: Yeah. Yeah, I hear you.

JM: But I was—you know, that's what I wanted to do, and I was happy to get it.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And sixteen thousand back then wasn't bad.

[04:23:01] AM: Mh-hmm. Now, Niall really, really progressed. He came in having run 1:52 . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . for the 800, and he had probably not a good mile time to his name.

JM: No.

AM: And you know, in a fairly short period of time, he had become a 3:56 miler . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: Still hold—or maybe faster—I know he holds the Columbia—the Missouri record indoors.

JM: Three fifty-five.

AM: Three fifty-five.

JM: Four. Yeah. And he ran that solo.

[04:23:30] AM: Who was second place—or, no, what—do you . . .

JM: Tom Aspel.

AM: Tom. [*Laughs*] And what'd he run?

JM: Four ten.

AM: Four ten. Do you remember what they went out in, John?

JM: They went out in, I think, 1:57.

AM: Okay. And Tom was with 'em . . .

JM: Was with 'em.

AM: . . . at 1:57.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Okay.

JM: And Niall just—and then Niall came back the next week—went up again, and he ran a thousand yards—not meters—a thousand yards and ran 2:05.4.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Which is pretty good.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And that was close to the world record at that time, too.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was a—it didn't care with Niall. He'd lead or—and he was even better at followin' 'cause he had nice top-end speed.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he'd take it if he had to, you know.

[04:24:13] AM: Yeah. So Arkansas had not sent, if I'm not mistaken, a track athlete to the Olympics since Clyde Scott, and he was a—I think he was a football player who also . . .

JM: He was. Yeah.

AM: Yeah, who sprinted. Niall's selected by Ireland for the 1976 Olympics.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And when did you—you know, when did you get the first inkling that he was gonna be an Olympian, and how did he end up doin' in Montreal?

JM: He got—I'll tell you, he did fantastic. He got to the semifinal, and he got knocked out in the semifinal by the gold, silver, and bronze. He was fourth.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I mean, there wasn't a—you could throw a blanket over them.

AM: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah, I understand.

JM: He was tough little rascal.

AM: Yeah. You had brought in some other Irish athletes. Derek Carroll.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Reilly. Steve Baker.

JM: Steve Baker was English.

AM: English, yeah.

JM: He's at—he went and—he coached for a good few years at Oklahoma State and Oklahoma and Texas and McNeese.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He got out of coachin'.

[04:25:24] AM: Yeah, but what were they like as athletes—all those three?

JM: Reilly was one of those guys I ran off. Him and I didn't get on too good, and he—and Aspel was a good . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . guy, you know. He ran 4:06 as a freshman and then sorta—I don't know—Niall overshadowed him a little bit and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . because he was a better miler. He used to be the high school—he ran 3:52, I think, in high school. And he was supposed to be the stud miler, and I don't know . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: ?The air left?—you know how that happens. And then Steve Baker was a kid—just a good, solid five in steeplechase and cross-country, you know. Always ran a good race, you know.

AM: Yeah. Did you have an inkling that any of those guys—Steve ended up becoming a coach, and Tom ended up coaching as well.

JM: Coaching, yeah.

AM: Did you have an inkling that they'd make good coaches or that they'd eventually get into that?

JM: I never thought either one of them'd have done that.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But you know, Tom has, you know, just—at Arkansas Tech doesn't have much money or anything like that.

[04:26:50] AM: Sure. Now, you brought in another young man—I'm not sure if he was from Ireland or England—named Malcolm East. Is that . . .

JM: Oh, England.

AM: England.

JM: England.

AM: And he was, from what I've heard, supremely talented.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Academically undisciplined. I'm not sure. I mean . . .

JM: Yeah, you heard.

AM: . . . maybe you could tell us more about . . .

JM: You heard right.

AM: . . . about Malcolm and how his—how things happened with him
and . . .

JM: Well . . .

AM: . . . how good he was coming in.

[04:27:20] JM: He was good.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was, like—he had run 8:07 for . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . 3,000. And just talented and—but I remember up in
Missouri where I had a meet, and he starts wavin' to the crowd
with a lap to go and got beat. [*Laughter*] Oh gosh! He was a
nice guy but, you know, had no sense at all, you know. Just
doin' . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . stupid things and wouldn't—he was bright enough. You
know, his grades . . .

AM: Sure.

JM: . . . were good, but he was one of those kids that I think he was
kinda shadowed at home, and he found out when he came to

America there was girls and wouldn't—you know, just—can't—it's hard to keep him on the straight and narrow, you know. And then he wouldn't go to class, and he failed out, and then he—I got him back into a junior college that I used to get guys up in Pennsylvania, and he was supposed to come back, but he never got out of there.

AM: Yeah. Yeah.

JM: He was a big loss. He was a good one.

[04:28:32] AM: Mh-hmm. Now, you've had—with all these UK athletes and Irish athletes, were there—I mean, were you recruitin' against other schools—Providence, Villanova?

JM: Oh yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah. And I mean, how were you able to get 'em down here—what—having not had the history that those schools had?

JM: Well, O'Shaughnessy really helped.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I forgot O'Shaughnessy.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause quickly [*snaps fingers*], you know, he was contending with—I remember he ran Filbert Bayi at—down to—in New

York—Madison Square Garden or almost beat him—shoulda beat him. Bayi caught him by the arm . . .

AM: Who did he . . .

JM: Filbert Bayi. He was a world record holder from Tanzania.

AM: We better stop.

TM: Yeah. Okay, let's stop.

[Tape stopped]

[04:29:23] AM: So Niall's running against whom at Madison Square Garden?

JM: Filbert Bayi.

AM: Okay.

JM: He was the world record holder in the 1,500.

AM: Okay.

JM: And Niall had him . . .

AM: Was he at another college, or was he . . .

JM: No, he—well, he came to Oklahoma for one year, but . . .

AM: Okay.

JM: . . . he—this was before he came to Oklahoma.

AM: Okay.

JM: I don't know how Oklahoma [*laughs*] thought they'd keep that—get that guy eligible. But he was—he had run 3:33 or something back then, and he come around the last turn and wasn't much—

far to go. I saw him. He just caught Niall like that [grabs his right forearm near the elbow] with his arm and just flipped him back, you know. And got away with it. They wouldn't disqualify him.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And just nipped Niall. That was the year Niall had run the second-fastest mile.

AM: Yeah.

JM: [*Clears throat*] So that sorta—him and Mike Conley sorta laid the groundwork for Arkansas, you know. But you know, like, Niall and Conley were super-nice people, too, you know. The—they'd be real—always nice to a young kid and all that. And when you bring in kids visiting, they'd say, "Wow, those are really nice guys." So that doesn't help—doesn't hurt, you know.

[04:30:47] AM: Yeah. Now, Niall—when he was done eligibilitywise, he stayed on and coached and competed, or what'd he do?

JM: Well, he worked on his master's—got his master's here.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then 1980 Olympics came along, and of course, the US didn't go to the [19]80 Olympics. And he came in one mornin', and he had just got married to an American girl. And he said—Niall was—you loved when you talked to him. He's very sincere,

and he was that way since he was seventeen years old—and said, "Well, I've made a decision, and I know you're very persuasive, and you're not gonna change my mind." [*Laughter*]

I said, "What the hell is he talkin' about?"

AM: Yeah.

JM: The next thing, he said, "I'm not goin' to the Olympics."

AM: Yeah. And he had qualified.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And was picked for the Irish team. I said, "And why aren't you goin' there?" And he said, "Well," he said, "I'm going to live in America. I wanna work here, and I'm gonna obey the American—what they're doin', I'll do."

AM: Yeah.

JM: "Well," I said, "that's" . . .

AM: Even though the Irish were goin'.

JM: The Irish were goin', yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I said, "I'll tell you, Niall, I think it'll turn out, but I'm not gonna try to change your mind that it's a mistake," because you don't mix politics and—you know, this—it should never have happened, you know. So—but anyways, he didn't . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: Never ran another step.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause he had—he started havin' a problem with his stomach where he'd get, like, a—into maybe the third lap or goin' into the last lap of the 1,500, he'd get—kinda dry heave, you know . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . in his stomach. And he got medication—Gaviscon or—'twas a—'twas—and he took that for a while. And I think it was good that he gave it up, but he was—hell, he was only twenty-three years old.

AM: Mh-hmm. When he retired?

JM: Mh-hmm.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he was a—he had a good degree, and [*clears throat*] he lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

[04:33:02] AM: Mh-hmm. Now, when you first became the head coach, you know, obviously, one of your first decisions would be hiring assistants. And you had a few guys in there. You had Shifton Baker, Vaughn Murray, Doc King, Doug Williamson . . .

JM: Well, Doug Williamson was a full-time.

AM: Full time.

JM: But the other guys were grad assistants.

[04:33:24] AM: Sure. And then what made Dick Booth, 'cause he was a quarter-miler. What made . . .

JM: No, no, he . . .

AM: Well, when he . . .

JM: Oh yeah, he was. [*Laughs*]

AM: When he ran—when he . . .

JM: Yeah, yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: What made him kinda stick out, and you know, how did that process come of hiring him?

JM: Well, he was at Overland Park in Kansas—high school. He had some great high school throwers, you know, like . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . sixty-nine-foot shot-putters and 210-foot discus throwers.

And then one of them that I had him—he had transferred here—Mark Sutherland—you know, Sutherland Lumber Company.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He had gone to Colorado first and didn't like it, and he called me on the phone and said, "I'm gonna transfer to Arkansas." And he said, "Do you know who I am?" I said, "I know who you are."

[Laughs] Got him for free. He paid his own way, of course.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then I—he told me a little about Booth.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was the guy that told me, and he says, "You should look at him." So I brought Booth down, and the rest is . . .

AM: You interviewed him?

JM: Yeah.

[04:34:35] AM: Yeah. What was your first impression?

JM: Oh, he was a talker.

AM: Yeah, 'cause you didn't know him when you brought him back.

JM: I didn't know him from . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . Adam.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he—I couldn't get a word in edgeway, you know, with him.

[Laughter]

AM: Yeah.

JM: But I said—I knew his record was fantastic, but not just one thrower. And he had a junior that was gonna come out the next year that didn't live up there, but he threw 210' in the discus.

He went to Kansas. [Clears throat]

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he brought a guy with him that year—Scott Lofquist. He was
a . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . sixty-six-foot shot-putter.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then we had—I got an Irish guy that year that was six eight
and three twenty, and we had four of the biggest damn guys
[laughs] you ever saw.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: Shot-putters. They were all throwin'—they were all clean, but
they were all throwin' sixty-six, sixty-seven feet and gettin'
fourth, fifth, and sixth over the other guys on drugs.

AM: At the national meet? What do you mean, fourth, fifth, and sixth
at where? At the . . .

JM: In the nationals.

AM: The national, yeah.

JM: And you know, 'cause a lot of them were dirty back then.

[04:35:39] AM: Yeah. Yeah, what kind of—you know, what were the
performance-enhancing substances that were more common
back then among . . .

JM: Dianabol.

AM: Are you talkin' bout throwers?

JM: Dianabol and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . was one of them.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: You could get anything that time because they weren't—you know, in the NCAA there was no ruling—it wasn't against the rules.

AM: Yeah.

JM: No.

AM: When . . .

JM: You never got drug tested.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I know you're gonna ask me when did it change, but it changed, I think . . .

[04:36:08] AM: Did the rules change at the same time they instituted drug testing, or were . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . there rules?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah, okay. Yeah.

JM: 'Cause that's when it changed.

AM: Was it perv—as pervasive in distance running and sprinting?

JM: Nah, I don't think so.

AM: Yeah. Yeah. Had—now, Dick—you had mentioned Coach Booth had had so much success with the throwers. Had he coached long jumpers too, or was it just the . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Long jumpers, too.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Oh, he was—he had more luck with them. You know, we've had eleven national champions in the triple jump.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: He was a great, great fielding coach.

[04:36:44] AM: Yeah. Now, how did bringing him on board change the dynamic of your track team as it evolved from—you know, initially, you had had all this cross-country success, and it became more of a multidimensional deal.

JM: Yeah, that was the general idea. I was lookin' for a field event guy, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But I was in no hurry tryin' to get—I wanted hurdlers and field events—you know, horizontal jumpers, mostly, and throwers.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And so . . .

AM: How'd you arrive at that?

JM: That was the study I did with those other schools.

AM: Yeah. So you're leavin' out vertical jumps and short sprints for the most part.

JM: I was, and then . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . the vertical jumps became very good because . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . we ended up with 7'10" and 7'9" and 6' . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know, those guys.

[04:37:46] AM: Yeah. Now, you won your first Southwest Conference title on the track in 1979.

JM: Yeah, indoors.

AM: Yeah, and how—I mean, how did that come about, and what was—you know, how did that feel and . . .

JM: Oh gee, that was fantastic 'cause, you know, the—Baylor and—well, Baylor was never a contender for a team title. They were always . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . he always had bout twenty 400-meter runners. But you know, Texas—they thought that they owned the track, you know. And once we started winnin', then they sorta went kaput. It took us—we didn't win the outdoor that year, but we—it wasn't long after that until we won the outdoor. We—then we started winnin' all three of them.

[04:38:38] AM: So you—where were you scorin' your points in that early—that first indoor? Was it the throws and distance or where?

JM: Throws and distance.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Jumpers, actually. And throwers and distance 'cause we—you know, indoors they had—in the conference that time, you had a 600 and a hundred, the 200—I mean, the sixty to 200, the 600, the 800, distance medley. They had a two-mile relay, too. Man, that [*unclear word*] us to the ground. We had all those distance runners.

AM: Yeah.

JM: We racked up some points.

AM: Yeah. Well . . .

JM: Just like the Big 12 now have. They have a lot of those events, too.

[04:39:21] AM: Yeah. When you—John, when you recruited an athlete, how did you approach them, and what were you—what was your general approach, and what were you looking for?

JM: Well, I'll tell you the thing, Andrew, that I was lookin' for was—the first thing I tried to check with the coach was—what was his character like. Was he a—would he be a dependable kid? Was he a hell-raiser? And if he was [clears *throat*]—'cause early in my career, I had one guy like that, and I said that's—he caused a lot of problems. And then—not so much if he was a winner as if—was he tough? Did he run consistently tough? You know, he might be gettin' second and third and second and third, and I didn't want a kid that ran—won and then blew up and won and blew up. I said, "I don't want that guy." So that's what I was after, and I made a livin' on kids that were second and thirds in their state meet because they knew how to lose. And the kids that won all the time—they came in, and they thought they owned the world, and they didn't know how to lose. The minute they lost, the world fell out from under them, you know. And you couldn't get through to them, you know. Some of them you could. I used to—in 1979, I started usin' a sports psychologist.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And that really helped. That would really helped.

AM: With everybody or with particular kids?

JM: Yeah, that's a good question. Particular kids. Not everybody bought into it, because a guy tellin' me, "Coach, you're wastin' your money. He's locked tighter than Fort Knox." [*Laughter*]

AM: Yeah.

JM: And they wouldn't talk anymore about it, but [*clears throat*] the kid didn't want to give in that he had a problem.

[04:41:24] AM: Yeah. How long have you known—now that you mention sports psych—how long have you known Rick McGuire?

JM: Oh, a long time.

AM: Yeah. Did you ever have any discussions with him about sports psychology?

JM: No.

AM: No? [*Laughter*] Okay.

JM: Rick . . .

AM: No. Now, with the approach that you said with recruiting, looking for guys that come second or third that know how to lose, that's—you know, most people look for kids that know how to win. That's their emphasis. They look for kids . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . that win. I mean, how would you teach kids that were used to getting second or third how to win?

[04:42:00] JM: It's a—I think the first thing is to get the kid in great physical condition. That's the first thing because—and don't let him into a race—you know, like a kid'll come up to you—say, an 800-meter runner's come up and say, "Hey, Coach, could I—I want on the 1,500," you know. And I'd say, "Well, you're not ready yet." "No, I want to try it out." I said, "No." Don't let him try it out until you know from his workouts that when he runs it, he's goin' to like it. And the same thing with the kid that doesn't know how to win—you gotta watch his—you know, his strong point. Like, if—say, for example, if he's—if his strong point is 90 percent of what he does—you'd hear people sayin' all the time, "Coach, have you any cure for this kid that—boy, he can run all day" . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . "but he has no kick. You know, he can't—he cannot finish off the race." [*Clears throat*] Well, that type of kid, you gotta find—I don't mind workin' with that type of kid because it's easier to develop 90 percent. You get a lot more if you can improve that 90 percent instead of tryin' to improve the 10 percent. So sometimes by tryin' to improve the 10 percent, it goes—it backfires because if the kid doesn't have fast twitch fibers, doin' speed work is not gonna help him. So workin' on

the strong point of the kid—1 or 2 percent improvement in 90 percent is a lot. But 1 or 2 percent in 10 percent is nothing.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And that's why if you get a kid that's strong and doesn't have a kick, you'd make him go from—I'd have a guy go from 1,200 meters out, run, like, a sixty-second lap, and then back off for 200 and relax a little bit and hit another one and—run it his way, and you can break people. You know, and we used to do it—even when I had good guys, like Falcon. He had a good kick, but I'd still have him go from different distances. You know, he'd go from 600 out, 500 out.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And people never knew what to expect from him. But I said, "Always save your best weapon for the most important meet. Don't show your hand in races that's not important. Keep it for the big one, so" . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . "so you surprised 'em."

AM: Yeah.

[04:44:46] JM: 'Cause you know, like, when the British boys, Steve Ovet and Sebastian Coe and Eamonn Coghlan, were runnin' great—the Irish guy—Coghlan was a great miler, too, but he

couldn't beat those English guys. And the reason was he never learned how to go far out 'cause the British guys'd take him 300 out, and all Eamonn would do was up the straightaway all the time. If you ever saw him run, he'd stay and light up the straightaway. Well, hell, you cannot light it up if you're ten to fifteen meters back. [*Voices in background*] But those English guys found his weakness.

TM: [*Unclear words*]*—*we need to change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[04:45:30] AM: John, you had talked about individualizing training and you know, had that—is that something you did throughout your career? I mean, you talked about doing something for a guy that can't kick, or . . .

JM: Yes.

AM: . . . is that somethin' you kinda learned as you . . .

JM: I learned that—you know, back in the—early in my career, I had a runner from Tulsa—Pat Vaughn . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . a good 10,000 meter—he held—the guy—he held the record for—good for years—our 10,000-meter record. And every time we'd start doin' speed work, he'd want to do—when he'd run good, he'd wanna do speed work. And then his last lap, it'd get

worse. So I did some checkin' around with different people, and this one guy that I talked to—a coach over in Europe—and he told me—he said that—well, he mentioned, like, "Americans spend too much time—Americans make too much time workin' on the weak point instead of the strong point." I said, "Could you explain that to me?" You know, and he did. And that's what he'd—he said, like, 2 percent of 90 percent improvement is a lot better than 2 percent of 10 percent improvement.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he said, "If the guy's strong point is 90 percent, develop the 90 percent." And then switch pat—go on to doin' the long intervals at a fast pace and got faster and faster and faster—the pace, where you could handle a real fast pace and break people. And his last two years were really—was really good.

[04:47:10] AM: Yeah. At that time—you know, what did Frank Broyles mean for the athletic department, you know, as he became an AD—when you really got there? Cross all sports.

JM: Oh, he meant—he lifted up sports, and he—I'll tell you what he did, he did a lot for track and field—period—in this country, because we built a—an indoor facility when they had—we got kicked out of Indianapolis—we couldn't go back there anymore. And I talked to him about gettin' the indoor, and I went to Tyson

and got the—I had already got the money to build 3,500 seats, and I said, "If we get 6,000 seats"—Sam Seemes helped me on that, and so he went and called—I called the NCAA and got hooked up with Frank, and within two days, Frank was sold on it. He said, "Let's hold the NCAA meet here." So you know, that's—thing—that was good for track and field. And then we built that outdoor stadium.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So he has done his share for every sport—basketball and all—so he's been what I'd call a real athletic director. He developed every sport that we had.

[04:48:35] AM: Now, he brought in Lou Holtz . . .

JM: He did.

AM: . . . who won a national title at Notre Dame. [*JM clears throat*]
And Nolan Richardson, who eventually won a national title . . .

JM: Title.

AM: . . . in basketball. What was your relationship with—well, he'd brought in Eddie Sutton first . . .

JM: First.

AM: . . . before Nolan.

JM: Eddie was first, yeah.

AM: I totally forgot about him. What was your relationship with Lou

and Eddie—you know, them being in different sports than you?

JM: Eddie Sutton was fantastic. He—himself and his wife came up me one time and to talk to Frank Broyles about how we should get more publicity for the track program. So he . . .

[04:49:12] AM: Were you getting much publicity at the time? You had won the Southwest Conference, and you were . . .

JM: Yeah, and we weren't—hadn't won that many, but . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . we were winnin'.

AM: Yeah.

JM: We were only con—we were winnin' titles that nobody else was.

[*Clears throat*] So he was a real advocate of givin' a coach credit for—didn't matter what the sport was—if he wins at a national level, he deserves credit. Which I agree with, no matter what the sport is.

AM: Sure.

JM: And then Lou was good for the visibility of the school, you know. He was—I didn't have much come up at him, you know, as far as—we'd—sometimes we had our—we didn't have an indoor track when he was here, and we used to have our pole vault runways set up downstairs in the prac—in the football practice area, and there were some conflicts, but we got over them.

AM: Well, did he give you any football players to come sprint for you?

JM: Yes, yes.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, we had football players that—I remember we had Gary Anderson one time, and he said, "Now, I don't want him pullin' a hamstring." I said, "I cannot guarantee that." [*Laughs*] I said, "If you—if I have to guarantee you that, you better not let him come out 'cause," I said, "in track" . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . "anything can happen."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he said, "Oh, it'll be all right."

[04:50:31] AM: Yeah. Anybody worthwhile from the basketball team come out for track?

JM: No, because they were—basketball and track were always in the same . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: The early fall and all through the spring and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . by the time that basketball season's over, it's too late to come out for . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: You know, they're tired, and there'd be a few—there was a few high jumpers that we helped sign, but they never did it.

AM: Yeah. Was Mike Conley originally . . .

JM: He was out for—yeah, his first year.

AM: Yeah.

JM: For a semester, he did basketball.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then he talked to Eddie Sutton and said—Eddie said, "Well, you'd need another year before you'd be a starter." And he said, "Well, I'm goin' back to track."

[04:51:17] AM: Mh-hmm. You know, you brought in Frank O'Mara and Tom Moloney and a lot of these guys. Why do you think so many young Irish kids back then were wanting to come to the US from so far away to run in colleges here?

JM: Well, I think most of the Irish athletes that did well on the international level had all come to the United States. And you know, they didn't have the—the weather was against 'em in Ireland, and they didn't have the—they didn't support them enough as far as financially. So the kid was gettin' a free education, and it bridged that gap. I always told 'em to—it bridges the gap between junior and international, so by the time you finish college, you're ready to enter the international field.

And . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . that—that's even gettin' tougher now, too—or gettin' wider.

[04:52:17] AM: Mh-hmm. Throughout the latter part of the—well, throughout the entire [19]70s, you know, you guys had definitely made a jump up in cross-country at the national level, but you'd never broken in the top ten until 1980. I mean, what did you change starting in the early [19]80s? Or did you change anything to make that jump into the second or third place for a few years?

JM: Well, I'll tell you, Andrew—it's—I think it's like a—an imaginary fence there. You know, once you kick that door down, then it was open all the time.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And before that, I think we couldn't find the knob on the door. You know, it was—we were good, but always somebody slipped up and didn't do what they were supposed to do. And once we got it done, it just seemed like it just steamrolled. The guys got the confidence that they—you know, "We've done it once. We can do it again."

AM: Yeah. Tell us a little bit about Frank O'Mara. I know he came over highly touted, and he struggled a little bit. There's a

legendary rowboat story. [JM laughs] What can you tell us about Frank's first few years and . . .

[04:53:41] JM: Well . . .

AM: . . . how he became the runner he is?

JM: . . . he came over here when he was seventeen . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know. And I ended up redshirtin' him his freshman year because, oh, he couldn't—he only ran, like, eighteen or twenty miles a week, you know, back home.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he ended up, runnin', though, that—before he went home, he ran—we ran an open race, and he ran a 4:08 mile or somethin' like that. And then that summer, you know, with all the base work and everything like that—he ran 3:43 back home.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So he had sorta made the breakthrough. And then from there on—he had an injury—one injury—but from there on, he had great—ran great races, but it was not consistent. You know, he'd run a great race, and he'd run a bad race and a good race and a bad race. And he doesn't mind me tellin' this, but he was one of the guys that used the sports—he went to sports psychologist, and you know, that was unfortunately his senior

year. And he won the NCAA that year. He beat Earl Jones in the 1,500 and then went on to win two world 3,000-meter championships after that when he got . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . everything goin'.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then he became just unbelievable.

[04:55:07] AM: You think it was all psychological . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . just unlocking it?

JM: Unlockin' it.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Absolutely.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause he was one of those guys—and you've probably had them—just in fantastic shape and always found a way in his early career to screw it up, you know, or—whether it was a tactical mistake or "I felt bad" or "I got bombed tonight." This, and you know, and everything in the world went wrong.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then once he got his head straight and nothing changed in the trainin'. He got older, of course. Stronger. But boy, he

started poppin' off some times.

[04:55:47] AM: Yeah, he had told a story when he was—his first year or two, he had had a bad race at the Southwest Conference.

JM: Oh yeah. [*Laughs*]

AM: And he—I guess he had come fifth or sixth, and prior to the relay, apparently, you went up to him and said, "Frank, if you don't hand it off in first place, you can row yourself back to Ireland."

JM: I told him, actually, "I'll send you back to Ireland in a rowboat."
[*Laughter*] And—is that what he told you?

AM: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JM: That's a true story, 'cause—and I had forgot all about it.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause he had run—in the 800, he'd run, like, 2:06, and he was a 1:53 guy, you know—1:52, 1:53. He had run . . .

AM: Two oh six?

JM: Two oh six, 800. That's how bad he ran. And I said . . .

AM: Wow!

JM: . . . "Frank"—that's when I said, "You let us down on that two-mile relay, and you're goin' back to Ireland in a rowboat." And he ran 1:52 leg. That was the same day—that evenin'. So his condition really improved, but anyways [*laughter*], he—you

know, he still didn't get it right until . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: But the good thing is if a guy wants to explore every avenue, you can correct things like that.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he did. He wanted to be good real bad, but you know, if you have psychological problems, it's like havin' a cramp—you treat it. People think, "I'm a head case." Even a guy a couple of years ago said to me, "You think I'm a head case now?" I said, "No, no." I said, "If you had a hamstring problem, wouldn't you go to the trainer?" "Oh, it's a differ, you know." But not a bit.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Not a bit. And it's been—like, gettin' educated and understandin' that, hey, if there's a problem, whether it's psychological or physical that's causin' you—get it taken care of.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And the smart kids will.

[04:57:52] AM: Yeah. What's your philosophy on motivation? Do you find a lot of the kids that you have are very self-motivated? Do you find they still need motivation from time—or do you find that fear is a element of motivatin' or . . .

JM: No.

AM: . . . in certain instances?

JM: I don't like fear.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Like that thing with Frank, and like I've told many people, many times gotta send 'em back in the boat.

AM: Yeah.

JM: You know, it's not—fear is not a good motivation factor.

AM: Yeah.

JM: You've got to—it's got to be positive. You know, it's gotta be positive because—I'll tell you one thing, and this happened with a jumper. I had a jumper come in one time—I won't say who he was, but he was good one, and he said, "Well, I've had it. I have had it. I'm workin' too hard and blah, blah, blah." And I said, "What's the problem?" And he said, "Well, I've got to do this and I've gotta do that and I gotta do the other thing, and I'm always compared to Mike Conley and blah, blah"—so on and so forth. And I said, "Well, that's kinda funny. Coach had been in here, and he said that you were the greatest—we'd forget who Mike Conley was. You're gonna be that good." And he said, "He said that about me?" I said, "Yeah, he said that about you." And I said, "'Cause he thinks you got more speed, more strength. You can run a four—forty-five seconds for a 400."

And woah, that's different, you know. He left—after I was through talkin' to him, he walked out of that room on a cloud. Never a problem [*snaps fingers*] after that. He would jump—he ended up jumpin' 28'6" that year . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . in the long jump. So you know, that positive—let him know that, hey, his coach was—hey, he was doin' the right thing, and he'll leave—"You're gonna be great," and everybody likes to hear that, you know.

AM: Sure.

JM: But negative stuff on a—I found out—you know, that was early in my career that you cannot use that too much, you know. Because . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . as you know, it's . . .

AM: Yeah, yeah. Is it somethin' that you did use early in your career, and you kinda learned that it wasn't . . .

JM: It wasn't workin'.

[05:00:18] AM: Yeah. Yeah, I understand. Now, you know, you talked about a guy, you know, having him on a cloud leaving your office. Do you have anybody whose head is in the clouds when they entered your office and you grounded them? I mean,

how important is it to ground athletes as well?

JM: Oh yeah. If—you have to—I think—each person is individual.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Is an individual. And you got to find out what makes 'em tick, and the best way is let the kid talk. Say, "Hey, talk. Tell me what you want or what's wrong or what do you think should be okay." And after you find out everything that he's—he spills his guts to you, then you know what his problem is. So you can tell—feed him back and say, "Hey, I think this is your problem. What do you think?" You know, and you can feed in a lot of—"Just about 90 percent of what you're tellin' me is exactly what I think, you know." And make him think that it's his idea.

AM: Yeah.

[05:01:18] JM: It's real important, 'cause if you pull the seat out from under a kid that has a high school coach—I never ran down their high school coach or any coach from—I'd say, "Look it, you did a fantastic job, you guys together, and we're gonna incorporate some of that stuff. I want to hear it all from you. Write it down." And I'd get three weeks of cross-country and three weeks of track from them. Workouts. And I'd say, "Some great ideas here." But I said, "You know, we could tweak it a little bit and do this, this"—"Yeah, that'd be great. That'd be

great." Well, they're still ridin' on the confidence of their high school coach.

AM: Yeah. Yeah.

JM: But if you say, "Well, you're in college now. To hell with what you did in high school." Oh, you—a lot of times, you're gonna lose that kid, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: If he likes his high school coach.

[05:02:08] AM: Yeah. How did your—you know, having been coaching at college for, you know, nine, ten years now—how did your training philosophy change? You know, you had told me once . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . that you were more ?high mileage? you became . . .

JM: I was, yeah.

AM: And I—I'd—I heard a comment from Rueben, and I asked him about it—Reina, who ended up runnin' for you.

JM: Yeah.

AM: That if he had run in the [19]70s, he wouldn't've made it as an athlete because he just woulda been so run down. I mean, how did you—I mean, what were your influences that made you change . . .

JM: Well, it changed all over . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know. People—I felt that some of the miles that we were doin' were junk miles. You know, 'cause people ran a long run on Sunday and twelve miles, and some of it was so slow. So what I did was we maxed out at about eighty-five mile a week. And run between seventy-five and eighty-five and picked up the tempo of the runs, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Run some steady states and did—made quality miles instead of quantity and stayed off roads where you didn't have any—'cause the impact was greater the fast—as you know, the faster you run. So I tried—we stayed—we have lots of grass to run on and . . .

AM: Oh, you did?

JM: Oh, we do.

AM: Such as where?

JM: We had . . .

AM: Like, I know the one trail, but . . .

[05:03:32] JM: Well, the cross-country course, the trail, and the golf course—Razorback Golf Course. We can use that one.

AM: Oh yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Okay.

JM: That's a real nice place.

[05:03:40] AM: Yeah. Tell us a little bit about Mike Conley, and I know he had played a season for Eddie Sutton . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . and he was a—he was obviously a good long jumper in high school. What was his impact on the—what was he like? What was his impact on the team?

JM: He was a—he was to Arkansas's team as Michael Jordan was to the Chicago Bulls, you know. He was absolutely special. He was a great athlete, but he was even a better person. And that says it. That puts it in a nutshell. He—you know, he was talented, smart, could do exactly what he wanted to do when he wanted to do. You know, he should've been a double Olympic champion, you know, in Los Angeles, when the wind changed after the first flight, and he had to jump into the wind on the second flight. And that's how we lost that. And he still almost won the gold. And—but he was—he could go out, and you'd think he was—I remember in—at Texas in the NCAA championships, he had a cramp in his calf, and he had it in the steeplechase jump to keep—tryin' to keep it cool. And he—a Tennessee kid went a 56'

on it—went past him in the triple jump.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he came over, and he said, "Well"—I said, "Oh, Mike"—I said, "Mike, second would be okay. I—we—I—we're gonna win it. Don't take a chance." "Huh!" He said, "That sucker's not gonna win it." And jumped 58'2". [*Laughs*] You know, and the thing was, he was wearin' David Swain's shoes. He forgot his jump shoes.

AM: Oh man.

JM: [*Unclear words*].

[05:05:44] AM: Was he forgetful like that sometimes?

JM: Oh, careless.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, forgetful.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was—it never bothered him. He said, "Has anybody—I forgot my jump shoes." "Well," I said, "it's too far to go back." And he said, "Who's got shoes my size?" And I said, "Well, Swain'd be the closest one." And he bursts 'em.

AM: Yeah.

JM: They were [*makes whistling sound*]. [*AM laughs*] But—and then he will come in to me . . .

AM: He jumped 58' in David Swain's shoes.

JM: Yeah, in distance zooms.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Distance zooms. That'll tell you, you know, that nothing would—you know, nothing was too much or too little for him. Whatever it took and how, he'd make it happen, you know. He—I'll tell you one story, and then we'll move on from him. But he used to come in—after his sophomore year, he'd come in with his—I always made up the number of points we had for each event and whatever—down the line until—"This is what you get. If there's three guys in there, you have to get six points. I don't care how you get them—you gotta come out with six." He came in one time, and he said, "How many did you get?" And I said, "Ninety-two." He said, "I got ninety-four." He said, "Let's go down the list." So I went down, and we got to the 1,600 relay 'cause that's where we differed big, 'cause I had a little points down. "Oh," he said, "I'm going to anchor it." [*Laughs*] I said, "You are like hell going to anchor it." I said, "You're doin' the 4x100, the 200, the long jump, and the triple jump. You're not doin' nothing." But that was the type of team man he was.

[05:07:25] AM: Yeah. Tell us about coming close so many times.

You had said about kicking a door down.

JM: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

AM: And that was get into the top ten. But now you're in the top ten in the early [19]80s, and you get second or third—I could be wrong—but five or six times between . . .

JM: We did.

AM: . . . indoor and cross-country. Tell us about some of the close calls.

JM: Well, I'll tell you, Andrew, I really thought—you hear those say—things about people—they cannot win the big one, and I thought I was one of those guys, 'cause five times we had got second or third, and I just thought I was jinxed. You know, I really did, and I was gettin' paranoid about it. And then fina—we won that first meet, and 'twas like we won it in indoors. And then we followed that fall with cross-country.

AM: Yeah.

[05:08:17] JM: And then the triple crown the next year, and just felt like, "Hey, it's our—this is our world," you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I really believe it's—you know, winnin' is a habit.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So is losin'.

AM: Yeah. You—after not having an indoor facility, you moved into

the tennis facility.

JM: Yes.

AM: And how did that come about, and what was the impact of that tennis facility on your program—training and recruiting?

JM: Tremendous. And I owe that to Tom Pucci, the—he was the tennis coach. He was instrumental in buildin' that tennis facility, and then I got after him when I found about it—found out about it and said, "Would you mind if we had a track around it?" He said, "No problem. Let's go back, and we might get some more money, you know." So I went to the AD, and he said, "Yeah, let's make it twenty feet wider" or something—whatever it was. So that's how we got the track in that building. But that was a great—'cause, man, we used to have to be shovelin' snow off the outdoor track, and 'twas pretty rough.

[05:09:21] AM: Yeah. Yeah. Did it help to attract athletes as well?

JM: Oh, it did because you—now, you could recruit kids from Texas and down south 'cause they'd always knock us for our weather—especially sprinters or quarter-milers or jumpers. "Hey, we've got controlled temperature in here—seventy-two degrees, you know, so don't worry about the weather. You got a place to practice."

AM: Yeah. So you know, after coming second or third, you're

knocking on the door. What do you think it was? Who—which— if you could name one or two athletes that really put you guys over the top to win that first indoor NCAA championship in 1984, who would it be?

[05:10:06] JM: Well [*clears throat*], of course . . .

AM: And to win several thereafter.

JM: . . . Conley and Roddie Haley and those . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . guys.

AM: Yeah.

JM: They were key people. But you know, you can learn from your athletes, too, from mistakes you make as a coach. And after we had finished—in [19]83, we shoulda won—we shoulda beaten SMU indoors. And Conley, I think, was a sophomore, and O'Mara should've won the 1,500. But anyways, they finished, I think, sixth and sixth or some—sixth or seventh, you know. And they came by and talked to me one day . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and said, "You know, if you—you know, when you"—Frank said, "When you said, 'Ten points for O'Mara,' well, that's first, you know. Geez," he said, "my legs are bendin' under me." And Conley [*unclear words*] he said, "You know, it's a lot of pressure

when you"—at that time I used to name the athlete. And then I said, "Okay." So I thought about it, and I said, "Well, I appreciate you guys tellin' me that 'cause that's—if—'cause if you guys did—had your usual meet, we'd have won." So the next—from there on, I'd say, "Okay, John, Joe, and Michael is in the 1,500. We want eight points. I don't care, guys, how you get it."

AM: Yeah.

[05:11:49] JM: And that was the way to get it across. "This is what we need, and we have [*claps hands*] to have that if we're gonna win." So it—instead of just sayin', "Hey, Andrew, ten points."

AM: Yeah.

JM: "Oh, you—he's expectin' me to win, you know."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And it puts a pre—it puts pressure.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: And I didn't see it that way, but it . . .

AM: But they did, and they . . .

JM: They did.

AM: . . . came to you.

JM: And they came to me.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And that's—so you can—'cause I have always told my athletes, "Hey, if you have an idea, I want to hear about it." "'Cause," I said, "you—all of you have come from good coaches and have good ideas of your own. Let me—come in and talk sometime."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And guys used to, but not that often, but in this particular case, I think that turned out—my philosophy of a—my approach to championships, and I think that was maybe not the total key, but I thought it was part of it.

[05:12:50] AM: Mh-hmm. Yeah. What was the process like recruiting Joe Falcon? Was he a pretty high-profile recruit?

JM: He was, and you know, it was at the—'twas really easy in a way because Missouri never contacted him until it was in the paper that he was signin' with Arkansas. [*Laughs*] That's a fact.

AM: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

JM: And then they said, "What do you mean, you're goin' to Arkansas?" You know . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: So . . .

AM: Yeah. Now, going into that first—that 1984 indoor NCAA championship, it's in Syracuse—the Carrier Dome.

JM: Yeah.

AM: You know, I don't know who was favored. I know Washington State, you know, had a great team.

JM: They did.

AM: And what had to happen for you guys to beat them?

JM: Well, we had a—we didn't have a great meet; we had a good meet. And of course, Iowa State was a problem at the end. They were the ones that got second to us, but we basically had a decent meet. But in—on the 1,600 relay, a whole bunch of teams got disqualified.

AM: Yeah, I read this. Yeah.

JM: Oh, geez. And Iowa State—that—so-and-so's disqualified. Iowa State moved up. And we were winnin' by, I think, six points, and then there was another disqualification. So-and-so is disqualified. Iowa State moves up, 'cause they were, like, seventh or something. And, "Geez," I said, "Circus. [AM laughs] If they move up another one, they'll tie us" . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . "and they're liable to beat us."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And thank goodness we—that was the longest night.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And we won by two points.

AM: Yeah.

JM: God dang.

[05:14:31] AM: That was great. So that was the first undisputed . . .

JM: Undisputed.

AM: . . . NCAA championship in school history.

JM: It was.

AM: And what kind of reception and publicity did you guys get after that?

JM: That was pretty good. [*Clears throat*] That one.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But then there became kind of a humdrum kinda attitude about winnin'. You know, we just—well, the first two or three was . . .

AM: Among who?

JM: . . . exciting.

AM: Among who did it . . .

JM: Well . . .

AM: . . . become humdrum?

JM: The school itself, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I don't think the athletes got the recognition that they should've got.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah, I understand.

JM: And not for me. That wasn't important for me, but when kids train as hard—track is a tough sport. And they train that hard and study, and it's tough when you're tired, and they did it well, you know. We always had good academics. So . . .

[05:15:31] AM: Yeah. How did you—John, how did you keep the kids, though, from having that sense of entitlement and that, you know, "It's our right to win"? How do you balance tradition and expecting to win but not expecting to have it handed to you?

JM: Well, a lot of it was the kids over the years after they were in the program—a lot of it is handed down, you know, that—you know, we had some disqualifications and stuff like that where our—and bumpin' and—you know, when you're good—like, in races a lot of times, they'd always expect us to lead in the distance races, and I said, "Well, by gosh, if they're—if we're gonna lead, we're gonna lead with a purpose. We're gonna make them hurt, you know." And we had the—I had the type of people that could do that, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So it was . . .

AM: You mean physically or mentally?

JM: Physically.

AM: Physically.

JM: Mh-hmm.

AM: Yeah.

[05:16:31] JM: They were good athletes, and it was—you know, 'twas kind of a dif—every comp—every meet was different, but—like, I remember I had a jumper one time, Robert Howard, and he—before the national meet, I was walkin' into the—'twas an indoor meet, and I was walkin' into the locker room—what—I see who's comin' in, and I said, "Robert," I said, "would you mind if I"—'cause he was a real rah-rah type of guy. [*Clears throat*] "Would you mind if I said twenty points for Robert Howard?" "I'd love it! Say it, Coach! Say it at the meetin'." So when I got down to Robert, "Well," I said, "I am gonna sort this guy out, 'cause I think he's this good. Twenty points for Robert Howard." And he jumped up and went round this room—like, "Yes! Yes! Yes!" [*Raises arms above head*] You know, like that. We had won the national championship right there before we left the room—before we . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . left the campus.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause everybody else started goin' crazy and all, like—and it—that's the type of leadership—you know, you need some, you know, guy that—and he had the great mind, you know. Nobody intimidated him.

[05:18:00] AM: Yeah. And of course, when you win that many conference championships in a row, the omission becomes more noticeable than the victory. So there is—in 1986 or [19]87, you guys lost by five points, the Southwest Conference championship, to Texas, which . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . you had beaten them every year, and there was a—I think—well, I mean, one of the things that happened among many was the pole-vaulter who ended up winning the NCAA title—no-height. [*JM laughs*] But do you think that was—I mean, other than that, I mean, what do you think—attitudewise or otherwise—lost you that meet, and do you think it was ultimately positive in gettin' your kids back grounded?

JM: I'll tell you what it was at that particular meet—it wasn't the pole-vaulter. Pascoe was his name. He—of course, he had a no-height there, but Joe Falcon did nothing either. He had been hurt a little bit, and he could have done a lot more, you know, but didn't. And 'twas kind of a—you know, lackluster here and

there, and we didn't—the fire was kind of—it didn't go out, but it was like the flame was dull, you know. It wasn't ragin', you know. And that's what happened. That was my fault. I hadn't—I think we were so good that I thought we were gonna walk through it, you know. And . . .

[05:19:19] AM: Did Texas have a good meet, too?

JM: They had a great meet.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And you know, we had [*laughs*], well, definitely subpar meet.

AM: Yeah.

JM: We gave it to them, you know, really. And so—but then we bounced back in the nationals. And we always—if we had a—we were fortunate enough at times—a lot of times we won with subpar performance. And I said—you know, and then I'd go over it and say, "Look, we won, but we should've lost. And we got the—if you think that this is gonna continue, we gotta change our attitudes, 'cause it's not." So I'd point out all the things that they did wrong after winnin'. And, oh, a lot of the guys thought, "God dang, that guy is never satisfied. We won, you know. Forget about the mistakes." I said, "No. You gotta realize that you made mistakes."

AM: Yeah.

JM: So that when the next competition comes, it may be a little bit better. And that mistake is gonna cost you.

AM: Yeah.

[05:20:22] JM: And that's what I always did. I remember I had a kid named Ryan Wilson, and he ran thirteen—sophomore year, he ran 13:28—thirty—twenty-eight or twenty-seven out of [unclear words] and beat Rueben and Godfrey. We had five guys up in the—that won one, two, three, four, five—but they were better than him, and he stayed with them. And he was from California and kicked them down. And he was hangin' on for dear life—I could see he was. And he improved from 13:52 to 13:27. And I said—when he came back, I said, "How'd you feel?" "Well, I—at 600, boy, I almost let go. And then at 400, man, I was hangin'. And then at 200, I knew I was—I said, 'Man, I got a chance.' I was hurtin' real bad." I said, "Well, let me now explain to you. It might be two years before you equal that. 'Cause you ran a way above your head for your standard training." And it was two years before he ran 13:19.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So—but he had all—he said, "Well, how do you say"—"Well," I said, "you were tellin' me, like, three times you almost let go. So you had the most absolutely perfect race you could have.

And they don't come—'cause you improve so much, it's going to take a while for your body to catch up to that type of conditionin' to that type of mental effort you had—you had a mental effort, not a physical one."

AM: Yeah.

JM: "Your body wasn't ready to run that fast, but your mind handled it because you were runnin' on your home course and blah, blah—home track and all that." And he eventually, you know, senior year, he ran 13:19. The year after he got out of—well, his senior year—the summer of his . . .

AM: Senior year.

JM: . . . [*unclear words*]. Yeah.

[05:22:24] AM: Yeah, yeah. So you won the first NCAA title. It would be your second team won in—later in [19]84, in the fall, and then you won the indoor and outdoor. Was the first triple crown that had been won by an NCAA program?

JM: No, El Paso won three.

AM: El Paso won three.

JM: And . . .

AM: How did you finally knock off El Paso, 'cause they were so dominant?

JM: Well, I'll tell you why we knocked them off. Banks quit.

AM: Did he?

JM: Yeah

AM: Yeah.

JM: He retired and—well, his guys—he must've known he was gettin' out because Suleiman Nyambui was there, and those guys—and I remember Nyambui—he came up to me at the last NCAA meet we had and said—put his hand on my shoulder—he said, "Coach, it's now going to be Arkansas. Bui is gone." So Bui was like a coach, they say. He called himself Bui, and he—I saw him in NCAA meets goin'—at LSU in the 10,000, goin' all the way back to the back of the pack and helped turn one of his teammates to get up to the front and then ran back up to the front again. He was that good, you know. And he was a great team man. And of course, Ted Banks was a good coach, but Ted got out and that group sorta caved in, and that was the end of them.

[05:23:51] AM: Yeah. Tell us a little about your rivalry with Dartmouth. They had a—it wasn't common for an Ivy League team to . . .

JM: It wasn't.

AM: . . . contr . . .

JM: Vin was there. Vin Lananna.

AM: Vin Lananna.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And tell us a little bit about that rivalry.

JM: That was—they gave us fits, I'll tell you.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And they—he had a good team there. He really did. And you know, Dartmouth—he had a nice program there. He put it all into distance runners. And of course, a lot of distance runners are pretty good students, so you got a lot of good kids in there.

[05:24:22] AM: Mh-hmm. Was there one occasion—I've talked to Doug Consiglio that you thought they might've . . .

JM: Oh yeah. [*Laughter*] If Doug . . .

AM: . . . they might've beaten you?

JM: We had a—if it wasn't for Doug, they'd have beaten us.

AM: Yeah, he had a good race.

JM: He had a race. Doug was really our seventh man . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . because he—I used to make him run cross-country just for strength, 'cause he didn't like ?that shit? [*laughs*] . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . at all. But he—I had two other kids that were really good. One was an 8:32 steeplechaser—the sucker, and he ran like a dog that day. And the other kid was a 3:57 miler and was better

than—you know, he was good, you know, but them two guys ran—whew—and I told ol'—Doug was my fifth man, and he was comin' about a thousand meters from the finish.

AM: Yeah.

[05:25:13] JM: I said, "Doug, you have got to get about ten places from here in. You've gotta get in. You're the collegiate record holder in the 1,000 meters. Go after it now!" And I—man, I was out of wind. I was—I ran across, and I was lookin', and I missed him. I couldn't see him. He ran so goddamn fast. [Laughs] You know. Not only—he caught more than ten.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he had finished. Thank goodness he had gone by. I walked up and said, "Shit, he must've been back there in the pack."

AM: You didn't see him come in?

JM: I didn't see him come in.

AM: So you—what'd you—just . . .

JM: My thought is, "We're done."

AM: Yeah. [Laughs]

JM: And he comes up with the numbers. He says, "Is that good enough?" I said, "What?" I was givin' him [laughter]—I said, "How the hell—big, tall guy—you went by, and I never saw you." He said, "I saw you. You were delirious." [Laughter]

[05:26:08] AM: Oh, that's great. Tell us a little bit about—well, you—Ed had had you guys go to Drake. I'm not sure how long Arkansas had gone to Drake, but the transition—I mean, any—are there any good stories, racingwise, at Drake, and then, ultimately . . .

JM: Oh, we had some . . .

AM: . . . what led the move?

JM: . . . we had some great meets at Drake against Kansas State and Western Kentucky. Nick Rose was there, that English . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . guy, and Tony Staynings and all that crowd. [*Clears throat*] And then Penn was after us for years and years to go up there, and they offered to pay our way, you know. So we went up there—the first year we went up there, we got beat by Villanova, and then we beat them the next year. And of course, after you go to Penn—you've been to Penn, haven't you?

AM: Several times.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: It's, aside from the Olympics, probably the best meet I've ever been at, you know. It—the fans are knowledgeable, and the crowd is great, you know. So—and it's a great experience for

kids.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Drake is a good meet—don't get me wrong—but . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . it's no Penn.

[05:27:20] AM: Yeah. Do you recall any of the particularly good battles? It seemed like the world record would—in the DMR, would change hands every year between you or Mount St. Mary's or Villanova . . .

JM: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

AM: . . . or . . .

JM: It did.

AM: . . . Georgetown was very good back then.

JM: They were good, yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: We had some real battles with Villanova for a while and Georgetown. And Mount St. Mary's—they had all those Kenyan kids, and when we beat them—set the world record, we—that's who we beat was Mount St. Mary's. Oh, we had some bad—the big—the funniest ones was the ones with the—you know, against, like, Georgetown. I had a niece goin' to Georgetown [*clears throat*], and she ran track for them. And they would

always pull out the American flag and run, 'cause they're all American kids from the—if they won. And that—the year they were down a little bit, and we had a kid—big kid, Eric Henry. Six-foot-eight—six-foot-four guy, a hundred and eighty-two pounds, and he was anchorin' for me, and John Trautmann was anchorin' for Georgetown. And Henry was takin'—had the lead, and I said, "If you have the lead, he's goin' to sit on you. Keep pressuring him." So he came by in 2:55, and their man was right on his shoulder—wasn't—was right—well, not on his shoulder, but a little bit behind him—draftin' off him—you know, a big guy like that. And comin' into the top of the straightaway, he moved out, and this Garrison kid that went to Georgetown was takin' the flag out of the bag.

AM: Yeah.

[05:29:05] JM: You know, ready to [*laughs*] hand it to them, so they could run around with it. And Henry—the ki—Trautmann tried to pass, and Henry came—I said, "Man, he's goin' to get it. He's gonna hand—he's goin' to hold him off." 'Cause you know the old sayin': a good, big man is better than a good, small one when it gets down to the end.

AM: Yeah.

JM: That physical strength . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . pays off. And at—right at the finish line, Henry went across straight and ol' Trautmann fell flat on his face across the line. Didn't make it. And we won it. Henry ran 3:55 flat for his anchor.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And that was one of the most fantastic.

AM: How many people were in the stands?

JM: Oh, 'twas packed.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Twas packed. That was about—that day, I think there were fifty-two thousand on Saturday.

AM: Mh-hmm. Now, after your initial—a few national championships, Doug moves on, goes to Virginia and Alabama—Williamson. And Dick takes a job down at Louisiana-Lafayette.

JM: Yeah.

[05:30:19] AM: What—I mean, what kind of—'cause Dick was—had been with you for a while or—and was with you later.

JM: Yeah.

AM: What made him—did he want to be a head coach? Was he . . .

JM: He wanted to be a head coach, yeah.

AM: Yeah. Yeah. But it didn't seem like you missed a beat. I mean,

how did, I guess, Stanley coached for you, and Mike.

JM: Stanley and Mike and Ted King.

[05:30:36] AM: Yeah. What did Ted coach—Ted King?

JM: Jumps.

AM: Jumps.

JM: Jumps. Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Ted was a great, great technical coach.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was an English guy.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Great—and he was at SMU, and that's how I got to know him.

AM: Okay.

JM: He had Keith Connors—that great British jumper. And—but he wouldn't recruit a lick. You know, just wouldn't recruit and just went down and down and down. And then he got an English jumper. We had an English jumper, Femi Abejidi. He was of Nigerian descent, and shit, he was a 54'8" height, you know, as a junior. And he changed 'em completely, and he never did nothing.

AM: Changed his technique.

JM: Technique.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was—he had a technique, you know, that . . .

AM: That got him there, yeah.

JM: Yeah, and that was it. But you can't—the same technique—the same shoe doesn't fit everybody, and that's my philosophy. You know, I can—you could wear a eleven shoe and I wear eleven.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Well, my eleven won't fit you, and your eleven won't fit me.

AM: Yeah.

JM: [*Clears throat*] Ted tried to force that. And I'll tell you a guy that did the same thing was Tom Tellez at Houston. Set his jumpers—they all had to jump like Carl Lewis. That's why he got—Dick Booth had more good jumpers than Tom Tellez.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Because you had to coach 'em—each guy is an individual, you know.

[05:32:04] AM: Well, let me ask you that, John. On that note, you know, I know you weren't a technical coach, but you—I mean, you coached enough and you've seen enough—do you—even in distance running and sprinting or anything, do you believe in the concept of taking a step back to take a leap forward? And how do you manage that when a kid's having to go away from what

may got him to, you know, where he was . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . coming into your school?

[05:32:30] JM: Well, the thing—like, in the technical—you got to—
it's like people used to say to me one time, "You know, because
that guy does something a certain way, that doesn't mean that
he's not relaxed doin' it that way. It may be that the curvature
of different parts of his shoulders and"—like, I had a—an 800-
meter guy one time, and he had a real short neck. His head
seemed to sit—and he always [*unclear word*] used to say to me,
"Boy, if that guy ever relaxed, Coach, he'd be awesome." He
ran 1:46 flat, and I said, "He's relaxed as a goose." I said, "His
neck is about this long." [Uses hands to suggest length]

AM: Yeah.

JM: And his neck—his head sat on his shoulders, so you know, he
looked tight, you know, 'cause he had no way to—he had no
use—it was like his—the part of his head just [*claps hands*]—
plop it right down on his shoulders with no neck. And that's
what you gotta be able to look at and say, "Hey, he's relaxed for
him. He's not relaxed—he isn't as relaxed as that guy, but I
guarantee he'll beat that guy, and he wouldn't beat him if he
wasn't relaxed, you know."

AM: Yeah.

JM: So you have to take each guy as they are and the same thing with jumpin'—you cannot change people just to—for the sake of changin' 'em. If a kid as a junior jumps 54'8", he's gotta be doing something right, you know. And you can maybe improve on it a little bit, but don't pull the whole chair out from under him and leave him flat on his back, and then he's gotta get up without any hands or feet . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . to help him.

[05:34:11] AM: Yeah. You know, as that decade came to—came towards the end, you know, you had started, you know, in your coaching career with a lot of Irish kids, a lot of English kids, a few Canadians. It seemed like towards the end of that decade, I mean, you—at one point, I think Edrick Floreal may've been the for—only foreign athlete on your team.

JM: Mh-hmm.

AM: Was that deliberate, or did it just kinda happen like that?

JM: No, it just happened that way. [*Clears throat*]

AM: Yeah.

JM: I never—Andrew . . .

AM: Were you gettin' better American kids that wanted to come to

Fayetteville?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I got a lot more a lot cheaper . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And as you know, with twelve and a half scholarships . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: And the foreign kid—you know, unless—I never found too many of them that wanted to pay some of their way. You hear some people talkin' about it, but most of them that I ran into needed a scholarship.

AM: Mh-hmm. So did that coincide with the reduction in scholarships in the sport?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Well, it did. Yeah.

[05:35:15] AM: Yeah. Now, you know, you had mentioned Ted Banks was somebody you had looked up to. You know, he retires, and UTEP's lookin' for a new coach. And did they approach you at that point?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Banks called me and asked me if I'd be interested in it, and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and they were goin' to [*clears throat*]*—*they had a track club downtown that supported the track team and all that type of stuff, but that would be, you know, kind of a lateral move more than anything, you know. But I thanked him, you know, for doing all that, but . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know, it was—not that UTEP wouldn't be a good job.

AM: Yeah. No, I understand that.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

[05:36:07] AM: Well, I mean—well, the reason I ask is five years later, Louisiana State's lookin' for a coach, and a few years after that, Florida's lookin' for a coach. And each time, you've stayed. I mean, what was it that . . .

JM: [*Clears throat*] Well . . .

AM: . . . made you stay, and were you able to extract anything? Or was . . .

JM: I was.

AM: Did the athletic director step up [*JM laughs*] in any way . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . salary or facilitywise? Let's talk about . . .

JM: Both.

AM: . . . each one.

JM: Both.

AM: Okay.

[05:36:32] JM: They—the—I got—I'd never bargained too much on
the facilities . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . because, you know, the—you're talkin' about big, big, big
bucks.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But you know, if you can get—they can give you twenty
thousand or thirty thousand and—drop in the bucket, you know,
to them.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But if you're talkin' about spendin' six or eight million—'cause
that happened to—and he told me himself—Stan Huntsman that
used to be at Tennessee, and he went to Texas.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he gave Texas—Tennessee an ultimatum. UCLA had offered
him the job, like, four or five years before that, and he wouldn't

take it. He told me this himself. And Tennessee said they'd build him a—an indoor track.

AM: Yeah.

[05:37:19] JM: And so when this job came at Texas, he said, "Either build me the indoor track or I'm gone," and they said, "Go ahead."

AM: Yeah.

JM: He said—and he regretted that. He told me.

AM: Did he?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He said, "Boy," he said, "don't ever give an ultimatum."

[Laughs]

AM: Don't ever give an ultimatum?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Which is right, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause, boy, when you—'cause you don't know what—who's there that doesn't like you in the department, and it may not be the AD. But if you—if you're—if you have a job that you like, you can bargain without sayin', "I'm leavin'," you know.

[05:38:00] AM: Mh-hmm. Yeah. Tell us a little bit about the Southwest Conference towards the end of the [19]80s. SMU's been put on probation for football, not track. You know, first off, the coaching personalities in that conference at the time—you know, Corky Oglesby was at Texas Tech. I mean, what was your—what can you tell us about Corky?

JM: [*Laughter*] He's a great guy.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He really is. And he used to have pretty good athletes.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he . . .

AM: Was there animosity in the conference? I don't mean with Corky; I mean with . . .

JM: No.

AM: What do you think? No?

JM: Well, in that conference, there wasn't. The only one really was, you know, Clyde Hart, and I like Clyde.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he was always kinda nosy. He wanted to know what every— if somebody had—he was always after A&M for havin' too many

athletes. A&M used to get a lot of athletes out . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . for track.

[05:39:02] AM: What do you mean . . .

JM: Big numbers.

AM: . . . too many athletes out? What—how would he be after them?

JM: Well, we had a number. We had a limit, you know.

AM: Oh, okay.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: In the SWC.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I said—he said, "Did you count them at Oklahoma City?" one night. I said, "Clyde [*laughter*], I hardly have a hard time knowin' how many mor—how many athletes I have myself. No, I haven't counted A&M's." 'Cause you know, two-day meet, kids come and go and—you know, unless you took the flippin' number down, how in the hell would you count them?

AM: Yeah.

JM: But they must know the kids by face. Well, I didn't, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I wasn't—'cause—and they had all sprinters and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . jumpers, and I knew the distance runners, but I didn't know all the other guys. [*Laughs*]

[05:39:43] AM: Yeah. My impression, you know, reading up on Southwest Conference history, is for a long time—well, Arkansas was the only non-Texas school.

JM: Yes.

AM: And for a long time, until the [19]60s or [19]70s, it was the athletics stepchild of the conference. And by the late [19]80s, I think they had won—I think Arkansas as an athletic department had won eight or nine out of the possible ten men's sports.

Did . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: I mean, I—how can you describe the Southwest Conference in the last few years you were there? And did the move to the SEC kinda catch you off guard?

JM: It did, 'cause you know, I never knew what Frank Broyles was thinkin'.

AM: Yeah. He didn't share it with you? [*JM laughs*] He didn't bounce ideas off you? No?

JM: I wish—no, I probably was happier that he didn't, but . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . he was a pretty sharp cookie.

AM: Yeah.

JM: It was amazing that—maybe because he was in the TV—color man on TV that he knew that this was—that TV was going to be the big breadwinner and not the gates. The gates was nothing compared to TV. So he must have some insight.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause he [*snaps fingers*] jumped like that, you know.

AM: Yeah. You know, as you started to, you know, establish a record of winning at the NCAA level, you had won, you know, probably two out of every three cross-country titles, and you won about—I think it was thirteen, if I'm not mistaken—indoors in a row.

JM: Mmm.

AM: There is a—at the outdoor meet, there was a few years where—you know, that the team had gone without, you know, winning the actual national championship.

JM: Yeah.

[05:41:26] AM: Was that by—I mean, not—obviously, not losing it would be by design. That's the wrong thing. But was there more of an emphasis placed on indoors—the fact that you won thirteen in a row and . . .

JM: Well . . .

AM: . . . you had that facility?

JM: . . . sometimes when you have a good indoors, you'll probably have a good cross-country team, too.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then tryin' to—a lot of times tryin' to spread the three was tough.

AM: Yeah.

JM: We did it five times.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But it was—that was done with superathletes.

AM: Yeah.

[05:41:53] JM: We had some superathletes on the team, and that did—you know, even our distance runners did good indoors—cross-country, indoors, and outdoors. And that's tough to demand that much of them, but I started backin' off the number of races they ran. [*Clears throat*] What I always—I never overraced guys, but you know, some people'd run more meets in indoor and outdoor than we ran in the three seasons, 'cause we just—even with cross-country, a lot of times I wouldn't run guys with four meets, you know, for the year. And, well, 'cause I had depth, you know . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . I could do that.

[05:42:36] AM: Yeah, yeah. How tough is it coaching in a three sport—I guess a three-season sport where you got cross, indoor, outdoor and tryin' to peak three times, and you got some kids goin' off to Europe and racing in the summer?

JM: I'll tell you, it's—for a coach, it's tough because if you wanna do it right—you know, when we were winnin' from 1984 to around 2000 . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . I never took a holiday, and that was a mistake.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Oh, I'd—if I had to do that over—you know, 'cause that was hard on my family—you know, the kids and everything like that, you know. Not—I was so—it was—I'd win at cross-country, then I had to win indoors. And then win indoors, and we gotta get outdoors. And outdoors was over—well, heck, June was out and then July and August, and then you had a full month of July, and then August, the guys are comin' back.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And it just was like this—it was like I got into a wind tunnel and couldn't get out. And I'll tell you how I—when I realized it—when I went home in 2001 to Ireland, I hadn't been home in

fifteen years.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And everybody that I knew was old. [*Laughs*]

AM: They'd aged a lot . . .

JM: And—they'd aged.

AM: . . . since you'd—yeah.

JM: And that was an eye-opener.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I mean, that sort of shocked me. My God.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I'm an old guy now.

AM: Yeah.

[05:44:17] JM: If I'd gone back one year at a time, and you know—
and I don't regret it. You know, I went down—Mike Huckabee
asked me down to—before I retired to—for a dinner. He used to
be the governor here in Arkansas. And he asked Frank O'Mara
and Lincoln and a few of the guys that lived in the area. And I
told 'em that story about how I regretted that, you know, and he
said, "You know, you shouldn't do that because," he said, "you—
everybody is hopin' for what you did. That's everybody's
ambition to do—to be sort of almost perfect like that with
winnin'." And, well, I said, "Yeah, but hey"—'cause in 2001, I

had to have a stent put in . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . in my heart. And I said, "When I was layin' in that bed lookin' up at the ceilin', them championships didn't mean that much."

AM: Yeah.

JM: Because I pushed it.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I did, because I had nothing wrong with my blood pressure or cholesterol or anything. It was just stress.

[05:45:22] AM: Did you get to see a lot of your kids growin' up?

JM: I did, but you know, Ellen took them to the—Sean did motorcycle—motocross. She drove him to Houston, and he was pretty good at it and all over the place. I couldn't go.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And Heather played tennis. She was a double state champion in tennis, and never seen either one of them.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So you—that's the type of stuff, you know, that you regret later because you cannot turn back the clock. It's over. It's gone.

AM: Mh-hmm. There's a lot of divorced track coaches out there.

JM: I bet there is. [*Laughs*]

AM: And how did . . .

JM: I was lucky I got a good woman.

AM: . . . how did you two find that balance?

JM: Oh, Ellen was great. You know, she raised the kids. I mean, she was—Sean—well, Heather played tennis all the time, but Sean played baseball, football, ran a little bit of track. He didn't like—he wouldn't want—he was—him and Wallace Jr. was—went to school together.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he could beat Wallace in the short sprints, and that's a fact. And Wallace still says that, "You shouldn't've given it up." But he didn't want to run because I was the track coach.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I didn't try to get him. But—and he—his best sport was then—was motocross. He was doin' that since he was bout ten years old. But you know, that was something that—you know, for havin' a regret that was, you know, from a family standpoint.

TM: Andrew, we need to change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[05:47:14] AM: So, John, after a few years away down in Lafayette, Dick Booth comes back. How did that happen?

JM: He—the job was—Ted King was—well, he was goin' up to

Canada, and he heard about the—came up to me and said, "You know, I might be interested in comin' back." Just like that.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I said, "Really?"

AM: Yeah.

JM: He said, "Ah," he said, "I just—I don't have the money down there, blah, blah, blah." So . . .

AM: Yeah. So he came back.

JM: He came back.

[05:47:53] AM: Edrick Floreal. He had said that Mike Conley was a big influence in, you know, bringing him on campus. I know he went to Nebraska for a year.

JM: He did.

AM: What can you tell us about him? He was a [19]88 Olympian for Canada as well.

JM: Yeah. Edrick was—when he came from can—from Nebraska, he was disappointed up there. But Mike Conley really helped him, you know, like as far as—he was, you know, a good influence to be around.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And of course, Edrick turned out to be a tremendous team man, you know. At the beginnin', I think he was kind of an individual,

but he became a great leader.

AM: Edrick [pronounced EED-rick]—or Edrick [pronounced ED-rick]?

JM: Edrick [pronounced ED-rick], yeah.

[05:48:41] AM: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Tell us a little bit about Arkansas in the early [19]90s—you know, I think—and the late [19]80s. I know Coach Hatfield was there, and then Danny Ford came in. What were your relationships with those two?

JM: Good. The—with—Hatfield was outstanding. He was a very . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . nice guy.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then when Danny Ford came in [*clears throat*], he—I know there was a little bit of problem with—we had a note in our—an e-mail that he had closed the—we used to jog in the morning on the foot—practice football field and the football field.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I went over to the AD and said, "What is this?" "Well," he said, "the women are down there, and he got mad that they were just out practicin' on the field, and blah, blah, blah." So I said, "Oh, we—you know, we have no place to jog in the morning, you know." So—and he said—I said, "Would you mind if I went and talked to Danny?" And he—well, this was before I

cut the lock off it.

AM: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

JM: I . . .

AM: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I brought my bolt cutters from my shop and just cut the lock
[*laughs*] goin' onto the practice field.

[05:50:10] AM: Did you talk to Danny first?

JM: No.

AM: No, you didn't.

JM: No. 'Twasn't him—he just told them to lock it, and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . so I cut it because we—guys couldn't get in, 'cause I—we
had to get to—our locker room was there, too, so we couldn't
get to our locker room.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I said, "I'm cuttin' this." I didn't cut it because of the
practice. I said . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . "We're cuttin' this lock because my locker room is up there.
We're not goin' to crawl over a fence."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And course, they never said nothin' to me about it. But I went and talked to Danny and said, "What's the story about lockin' the gate 'cause, Danny, we—our locker room is up there?" And he said, "Oh!" He said, "I was just—the women were practicin'—they were actually practicin' out on my field, you know, and blah, blah, blah." I said, "Well, you can—if you don't want us joggin' out there, that's fine, but you know, we have to come up to our"—"Oh," he said, "don't worry about it. You can—the guys can jog out there." 'Cause he used to—he had a cattle ranch in—back in South Carolina, and he used to come with me on the weekends over to mine to look at the cattle and buy animals and send them back to his ranch and stuff like that. So I was very good friends with him, you know. So it ended up being nothing, you know.

AM: Yeah, it wasn't adversarial.

JM: No, no.

[05:51:32] AM: Nolan Richardson had come in from Tulsa and won a national championship in [19]94. And what was the reaction on campus to that, and what was your relationship with Nolan?

JM: Good, good.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Nolan's—I—my—Nolan's office, of course, was in Bud Walton, and mine was right next to it, so . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . he'd—we had many the chat. He was a class guy and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . 'twas unfortunate what happened at the end . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know.

[05:51:59] AM: Yeah. Two years prior to that, you know, Bill Clinton had won the presidency, and you know, he had strong Arkansas ties. He was a professor, governor. He was from Hope, Arkansas. What was your earliest remembrance of meeting Bill either before he was president or after, or what was your . . .

JM: I met him before and after.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he was really as average a type of guy as you could meet.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He'd be a guy that you'd, you know, meet down the street—you know, the—and the—and he had no airs about himself at all. And you know, was—you know, we got invited to the White House when we won the thirteen in a row—set the record—thirteen indoor nationals in a row. So it was nice to know him

and his wife and—when we got there, you know, 'cause they made it a little special.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

[05:53:04] AM: Yeah. Now, moving into the SEC, you know, you had obviously [*laughs*] won several NCAA championships in a row and had won several SWC championships in a row. What were your expectations going into the SEC, and what were SEC coaches saying about, not you specifically, but the program?

JM: Program.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Well, a few of them said, "Oh, this is the SEC. We'll see now what they'll do, you know" . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . "in the SEC." And the first one was the cross-country, and we put [*laughs*]*—*you could run nine guys in that conference. We used to only run eight—or seven.

AM: Yeah.

JM: [*Clears throat*] And we put all nine in the top eleven . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and took the top six places. And then . . .

AM: Perfect score.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So then ol' Doug Brown—at that time, he was at Tennessee, and John Webb was at Florida. And he . . .

AM: John who?

JM: Webb.

AM: Webb. Okay.

JM: Yeah. And he said, "Well, we'll wait. We'll wait till we get indoors and outdoors." Well, indoors was the same thing, and then outdoors—after the indoors, I remember Doug Brown said, "Well, when we get outdoors, we got those javelin throwers." They had a couple—two or three good javelin throwers. And he—we have a guy that's—he's always on the Internet—John Schiefer. He's from out there, and he was from Salt Lake City.

AM: Yeah.

[05:54:34] JM: He was a—like, a four-minute miler.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Well, him and Doug Brown had talked 'cause he was sayin' to Doug, "After the indoors, you know, what's—we'll"—Doug said to him, "Hey, John, we'll see you outdoors, and we'll have those javelin throwers." Well [*laughs*], after the meet was over—the outdoor meet—I saw John and him—John over by him doin' this.

[Makes a throwing motion with his arm] Because the javelin thrower—we beat the hell out of them outdoors, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And John—you say, "Where's your javelin throwers, Coach? Where is your javelin throwers?" They had a—it was kind of a friendly thing. They knew one another from somewhere.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I said, "John, let's go. Don't be doin' that crap," you know.

[05:55:23] AM: Yeah. What was the—what were the cast of characters coaching in the SEC? Was it a big change from the Southwest Conference coaching—coaches?

JM: Eh, it . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: You know, not a lot.

AM: Yeah.

JM: You know, it was the same after the first year, and they found out that Arkansas—I don't know why they didn't think we were good because we used to—we were winnin' the national title, you know, but the—started talkin' . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . stuff—trash, you know, and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause we had—we went in at the best possible time. We had a good team goin' in there.

[05:55:56] AM: Yeah. Frank O'Mara had told a story—one of the early SEC outdoor meets. It may've been here. You guys won. You set a meet record of points—two hundred and however many—twenty—and I guess there had been a call that had gone against you that Tennessee had protested. And the next day, he claims he was up runnin' and went by your office—I'm not sure if there was a window—he saw the light was on, or he saw that you were in the office when he went by, and it was seven thirty or eight thirty the next morning—or eight a.m.—callin' East Coast recruits tryin' to beat Tennessee by more next time. [*JM laughs*] Was it a friendly rivalry, or was it—was there—I mean, did they—did coaches do things . . .

JM: Oh, they were not friend—Doug was—would protest anybody, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was one of those coaches. If there was a protest put in, you could say, "Tennessee."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And there's coaches like that, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: For some reason, they're always interferin' in other people's business, you know.

[05:56:55] AM: Yeah. Tell us a little—some good recruiting stories.

I mean, you'd said, you know, some coaches are better recruiters than others. Dick Booth was obviously a good recruiter.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Mike Conley.

JM: Excellent.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Do you have any stories about him?

JM: Yeah, he [*laughs*—I'll tell you a funny one about him [*clears throat*—excuse me. He—when he was jumpin'—you know, when he was the coach here, he was still jumpin' in competition. And he had met this guy over in Europe, Tyrus Jefferson, and he was from—he was goin' to a junior college in California, but he had graduated, but he had—he was takin' three hours. He had three hours left. And he was livin' in El Paso, Texas. So Mike talked to him, and he was a good—I mean, a real good long jump—26'8" in junior college. And told Mike he was comin' to Arkansas. So anyways, everything was goin' good, and it was—

he was comin' in, like, in the spring, you know, second semester.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So Mike goes down there and [*clears throat*]*—*excuse me*—*and he had to—eight o'clock was the deadline. You couldn't get into his house before eight o'clock in the morning. But who was there but Steve Silvey.

AM: Who coached for . . .

JM: Who coached for Texas A&M [*laughs*] at the time. And I didn't tell you—did I tell you this?

AM: Yes, yes, you did. I am just—yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

[05:58:36] JM: And then Steve—they walked up the stairs together and knocked and . . .

AM: And neither of them expects the other, obviously.

JM: No.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And [*AM laughs*] opened the door. Tyrus said, "Oh, shit!" You know, when he saw the two guys. And so they walk in and said, "Well, we got a problem."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he said, "Oh!" You know, and Mike said, "Well, your mother told me you were signin' with me"—you know, blah, blah, blah. So Mike said, "Well, I"—said, "I'll tell you what we should do. Why don't you call your mother, and"—'cause she lived in Tyler, Texas—his mother did—"and we'll come back at noon."

AM: Yeah.

[05:59:19] JM: And anyways, Mike went downstairs, and ol' Steve said, "I'm goin' up to"—what's the name of the—"Denny's." So he—Mike said, "Well, I'll—I might"—he made some excuse about doing something—"and I'll meet you up there." But all he did was go around the block and come upstairs and said . . .

AM: He said he had to call you, didn't he?

JM: Yeah, or somethin' . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . like that.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And told Tyrus, "What the hell are you doin'?" He was [*AM laughs*—oh, and Tyrus said, "Oh boy, I'm sure glad you came back." Signed the paper, and he put them in his bag and went to Denny's and had breakfast with Steve. And Steve said, "Well, it's gettin' close to time to get back." And he said, "Well, we better not go back there together, so you go first and I'll follow

you," [AM laughs] or somethin' like that. Mike went for the airport, and Steve went back. [Laughter] Every time you'd say that in front of Steve Silvey, his face gets so red.

[06:00:34] AM: Yeah. [Laughs] He had had him. Yeah. Those [19]92 Olympics, Rueben went. And did you see Rueben being an Olympian when he came on campus? I know—his older brothers, Roland and Randy, had . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . run all for you.

JM: I really did, 'cause he was a talented kid.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, he was.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And ran some great races, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And you know, big guys like a lot of those Kenyans—and especially indoors, he was really good.

AM: Yeah. Graham Hood arrived. Undertrained. A lot like—you know, you had described—the way you described Frank O'Mara—a low-mileage 800 guy, and he became a . . .

JM: Oh, a great . . .

AM: . . . a great cross-country runner.

JM: Oh yeah.

AM: An Olympian—Olympic finalist in the fifteen while he was at . . .

JM: Twice.

[06:01:22] AM: You know, how did—I mean, how—can you explain that process and, you know, some of the disbelief among members of your team that it was ever gonna happen?

JM: Yeah, some of the members of the team thought that he would never make the cross-country team.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But I'll tell you, Graham Hood was—he was tough, tough mentally.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Really. That was his biggest—that was a big weapon he had.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And confident. He had no fears of anything. And he—the cross-country to me was really a shocker 'cause . . .

AM: To you it was?

JM: Yeah

AM: Yeah.

JM: Because he was kinda heavy. He ran kinda heavy—not a heavy person, but he ran heavy on his feet, and I thought cross-country bein'—it just gonna kill him. But by gosh, he got

seventh. [*Clears throat*]

[06:02:10] AM: Yeah. Yeah. And you know, had the—I think you had told a story coming back from the NCAA outdoors the year before. The team had talked . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

AM: . . . about who was gonna be in the—on the lineup.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And they neglected to mention him. What was his reaction?

JM: Oh, he was—said, "I didn't hear my name being mentioned."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I said, "Oh, you're just a half-miler, you know."

AM: Yeah.

JM: "You're not gonna make the team." "Okay, okay," he said, "who wants to bet here?"

AM: Yeah.

JM: And they started—I don't know what the numbers came up to, but they . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . started bettin'. And by gosh, he was—Graham was the type of guy that—he had a great—absolutely great race head, you know. You could tell him exactly what to do, and it wouldn't bother him, and it might—it'd be a plan to win, and he'd carry it

out to the T. Yeah.

[06:03:07] AM: Yeah. What was the reaction to Mike Conley? I mean, you had sent so many kids to the Olympics, and you know, some had done very well, but it's ultimately hard to come away with a gold medal. And he won in [19]92, and you know, he had come close eight years earlier.

JM: He did.

AM: Yeah. Was there a lot of publicity and reaction to that?

JM: Oh yeah, and he got . . .

AM: And he was still in Fayetteville training . . .

JM: Yeah, he was.

AM: . . . when he did it?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: They had a special day for him down on the camp—on the—in the town. And the mayor and everybody gave him a great welcome, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: It was nice.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He passed the gold medal around, and Mike didn't care and—but the policeman was just followin' it around everywhere. [*Laughs*]

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was afraid somebody'd steal it, you know.

AM: Yeah. Yeah. How did you—you know, it seems like a lot of places—postcollegiate athletes are forgotten about, and they struggle to make ends meet.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Even the kids that are NCAA All-Americans, and you know, if they were playing football, they'd be probably drafted to a team. How did you get so many of them to stay around after?

JM: Well, I had a saying, Andrew.

[06:04:27] AM: And how did you manage coaching postcollegiates and collegiates?

AM: Yeah.

JM: I made time, and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and I always said, "Once a Razorback, always a Razorback. You have a place to stay. You're welcome to stay here after your collegiate career is over if you want to—if you choose to."

AM: Yeah.

JM: "There'll be no charge. You can use the weight room and the training room and all that." And basically, every one of them stayed. A few, you know, got that—went with agents that had

training centers somewhere else, like Graham.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He used to go down to Australia, and that was fine. And there was an odd one, you know, that'd do stuff like that or go to train with somebody else. And I said, "That's no problem, but you still can come back here, you know." And so it felt like home. Even Graham, at the end of his days, would love to come back here and spend a couple of weeks runnin' indoors before he gave it up completely.

[06:05:33] AM: Mh-hmm. Yeah. What can you tell us about some of the Canadians that you had here? You had a whole group come in around the same—Jason Bunston, Sean Kaley, Murray Link, Matt Kerr . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: [*Unclear words*].

JM: Well, I'll tell you one thing about—and it's not because you're Canadian—everybody said, "Oh, a lot of the Canadians don't make it down here." I had fantastic luck with them, startin' with Consiglio and Jason Bunston and Graham and Murray Link and then Matt Kerr. I mean, I was almost—well, I—as far as I was concerned, I was 100 percent. Oh, there was one kid—Castellano. He . . .

AM: Thirteen fifty guy.

JM: Thirteen fifty guy. And the reason he—'twas between us and Oregon, and everybody said—my friends that I knew up there in Canada said, "Oh, that kid—he's kinda spoiled. He'll drop out of a race if he's not winnin' it." And he'd have come in the—he came in the same year as Joe Falcon. And he—I told him—he didn't sign with me until July. I said, "If you're not sure, I don't want you comin', John, if you're not goin' to stay, 'cause I heard rumors that you may not stay," you know, and all that. And that's what I—"We're both losers if you come down." Well, he calls me in July and said, "Well, how would you like me to be a Razorback?" And I said, "I'd love to." "Well," he said, "send me the papers." So he stayed six weeks and went home.

[06:07:18] AM: Was it—did it catch you by surprise? Obviously, you'd heard . . .

JM: It sorta did.

AM: . . . when it actually happened. Yeah.

JM: It did. What he did was—he was—he said to me—there was a—we had a cross-country meet somewhere, and he said, "I'll—would it be okay if I can skip that one and go home?" He went home to a wedding, and who knows why he went home.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he came back, and Frank O'Mara called me—Frank was trainin' here at the time—and said, "Hey, did you hear that Castellano's leavin'?" I said, "He's back." [*Laughs*] "No, he said he's leavin'. He's back, and he's leavin'." And that's how I found out about it. So I talked to him. He came by, and I talked to him and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you couldn't talk sense into him. But he was a talented kid. One of the things that really threw him for a loop was he never heard of Joe Falcon. Joe had run—he ran 8:55 or something for two miles and 4:08 for a mile, which is good . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . up in Missouri.

AM: Yeah.

[06:08:25] JM: Well, the first cross-country meet, Joe beat him. Well, Joe went on to finish in the top twenty-four in the NCAA, you know. So he thought, "Well, I can't understand how he beat me." I said, "You ran a great race."

AM: Did he think he was gonna come in and be your best runner?

JM: He did. And I . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . I told him that. I said—and Joe wasn't my best runner,

'cause I had Paul Donovan at that time and David Swain . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and who else? I had some pretty good runners up front. I said, "You're not gonna be my best runner." But you know, he—that was some of the stuff I had heard, that he thinks he's better than he is.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he just went [*snaps fingers*] home after six weeks.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But that was the only one that was a—I had great luck with 'em.

[06:09:10] AM: Yeah, yeah. You had talked about Steve Silvey.

He'd been in A&M, and you know, that was a great story. He'd had some success at the junior college level, and you know, the mid-[19]90s, I think Stanley Redwine left for Tulsa, and what made you—I mean, what made you hire Steve, and what was his impact and his strengths and his weaknesses as a coach?

JM: Well, actually, Coach Booth knew him better than I did . . .

AM: Okay.

JM: . . . 'cause Coach used to go down there—Coach Booth used to go down recruiting to Blinn. [*Clears throat*] And he said, "Boy, he'll be a great get," and blah, blah, blah. And I hadn't thought about him, to be honest with you, until then. And so we brought

him up for a visit, and he turned out, anyways, to be—he had lots of pluses. I mean, he was a great recruiter, a great coach, and his only flaw in my books was he was very aggressive, you know, around administration and stuff like that. He'd—he was—if he didn't get something—"I need a—you know, I need a stopwatch." And he'd call up at noon. "Is it in yet?"

AM: Yeah.

JM: "Why isn't it here?" "Steve, you just ordered it at eight o'clock."

[*AM laughs*] You know, that's—I'm exaggerating.

AM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[06:10:42] JM: But that was—and boy, that . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . sorta rubbed the administra—and I used to tell him, "Steve, cool it."

AM: Yeah.

JM: "We're just track" . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . "you know. This is not football."

AM: Yeah.

JM: He said, "Well, if it was damn football, they'd get it." You know, some . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . coaches don't get it.

AM: I understand.

JM: And in this country, if you don't realize how important football is, you're not very smart.

[06:11:04] AM: Yeah. Now, you had told us earlier that, you know, the way you had originally envisioned constructing a program was obviously based around distance running and with good field events. And Steve was your sprint coach, which was an area you traditionally hadn't put a lot of money into.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And you'd had a lot of good sprinters in the late [19]90s and . . .

JM: I did.

AM: . . . and early part—and how was he able to, you know, just with the minimum amount of scholarships he had, to make that happen?

JM: I'll tell you why: because that sucker—like, if the—if athletes grew on trees, he'd have shook every tree in Oklahoma.

[*Laughter*] I'm not kiddin' you. He was absolutely tireless. You know, you'd have to say, "Steve, you know, take a week off."

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was on the road. He was possessed. I thought I was, you know, an aggressive coach and trainer and recruiter. He made

me look like I was in the penny place, you know. And that was it. He just outworked you.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And a great hurdle coach, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: That was his—I think, his strongest point.

[06:12:22] AM: Yeah. Towards the end of the—oh, I may not get there yet—you'd had that rivalry with Vin Lananna when he was at Dartmouth.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And sometime in—after that, he took the job at Stanford, and you know, there became a good rivalry there in cross-country . . .

JM: Yeah [*laughs*].

AM: . . . with him. There was three or four years in a row where you guys were one/two in some . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . function or the other.

JM: ?Often?. Yeah.

AM: Do you recall any of those battles? I mean, there was—from what I've read on it, you guys always got out hard, and they, you know, they—I guess they're a little more conservative.

JM: Yeah.

AM: I mean, did they have to change their strategy to . . .

JM: They did.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And it backfired at times, and it backfired on us at times. You know, you had to take a chance.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah. We—they beat us at Furman one year when they shouldn't have beaten us. And then the next year, they were loaded, and we beat them at Kansas. Beat them bad. So you know, which goes to show—and I've always said this—there's never a sure thing, you know. Like, Schumacher used to always redshirt guys at Wisconsin and do that and then lose the title. You know, I never redshirted a good guy.

[06:13:45] AM: That was ready to perform.

JM: That was ready to perform.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Let him go because, you know, you might have seven, and they may—seven may not be enough. Like, I remember—you know, I had six many times, and then I'd still have to go back a lot of times to my seventh man to . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . win the championship.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So . . .

AM: Like with Doug Consiglio.

JM: Like the Doug . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . Consiglio year. And there was several of those years . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . that we had to go to a man that we didn't expect.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And so I always said, "If there's a national championship to be won, and you have almost a 95 percent chance before you go in there, go for it."

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause the following year, it—there's no guarantee.

[06:14:28] AM: Yeah. How was he able—I mean, what is it about Vin that—and we've seen him do it multiple times—Dartmouth, Stanford, and then Oregon the last few years. What is it about him—not just in cross-country, outdoor track—that he's able to just—I mean, they were really neck and neck with you guys for a few years there a lot.

JM: Oh yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah. Oh, he does a great job. He works hard at it, too.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He really does.

AM: Yeah.

JM: That's all it is. I—you know, everybody—the old saying goes, everybody has the Xs and Os, and then you have to work and recruit and don't—and shake every tree and try and get as many good guys in as you can. And of course, at Stanford, you had the advantage of a very highly academic school that every good kid that had grades would want to go. And then Oregon—well, you got the Nike Swoosh floatin' around in the airs out there, you know. So that's—he's landed on his feet, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I'm not takin' nothing away from him [*unclear words*].

AM: Sure.

JM: You know, and he'll be successful. He was—wanted that athletic director job, but that guy quit now, I guess, at Oregon. But . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . Vin has had some health problems. So I don't know if he'll get that AD job or not.

[06:15:52] AM: Yeah. I mean, Oregon—you—you're right, it is the—

one of the standard, 'bearer-type', track-and-field programs in the NCAA Division I. Towards the latter part of the [19]90s, for whatever reason, you know, the program had kinda fallen—I don't know if disarray is the word, but . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . had definitely fallen off of its perch. And longtime coach there, Bill Dellinger, I think, retired. And they're lookin' for a coach, and they're lookin' for a coach that can rebuild it to what it once was in the [19]70s and early part of the [19]80s. You know, how did they approach you, and what was your reaction? How did that all go down?

[06:16:35] JM: Well, it was mostly Alberto Salazar.

AM: Yeah.

JM: You know, and I was interested for a long time—or not a long time, but a few weeks. And thought about it. It was a tough decision not to go out there and really take a good look at it, but I just decided—at that time, to be honest with you, I was—that was two—[19]99, I think it was.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I was—I wasn't feelin' real good, and 'twas a year and a half later that I had the heart attack.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So that I couldn't see my—I wanted to do it, but my body was tellin' me, "You've had enough." And then I—you know, if I had gone out there, who knows what would have happened?

[06:17:29] AM: Yeah. Did they offer you a big pay raise?

JM: Oh, it never got down to that. It was . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . kinda . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: He wanted me to—he said, "Everybody wants you," you know. The whole twelve guys on the committee, and "Come on out, and if everyone's [*unclear word*], you know" . . .

AM: Was Nike involved?

JM: . . . "wants to talk to you."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: Oh, they were in on it, too.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But I said—I called 'em and told 'em, finally, that I just—I had led 'em on a little bit, you know. [*Laughs*] But—and it wasn't on purpose. I really—you know, I really . . .

AM: You were interested.

JM: Oh yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I thought about it, but you know, I was not—like I told my wife, I wasn't feelin' good, you know.

AM: Was it just that, or was there somethin' here?

JM: Well, that and here—a combination. But they would've made it, I think, kind of enticing enough, you know, that it'd be hard—it'd be almost impossible to turn it down. But . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . I didn't—I just told Alberto—I said, "I know you're"—he—him and I had been—were friends for years, and I just said, "It's nothing that gotta do with money or nothing, you know. It's just I don't feel like I want to do it." He said, "I can understand."

[06:19:01] AM: Yeah. Now, around that same time, the Randal Tyson indoor facility was constructed. Was there any connection between the two of them? I mean, you had said you don't like to make ultimatums, but [*JM laughs*] was there . . .

JM: Well, no, that . . .

AM: . . . was there at least a connection?

JM: [*Coughs*] The—I had raised the money for that. I had got . . .

AM: Sure.

JM: . . . the money from Tyson—from Don Tyson. But—and I'll tell

you who—the NCAA meet was very instrumental in gettin' that enlarged because . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . they'd had no place to go, and I had talked to Sam Seemes. And Sam was the one that told me about what was happenin'. And I went to Frank Broyles . . .

[06:19:43] AM: Was he with the coaches' association at that time?

JM: He was.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Okay.

JM: And he knew that, and he gave me a—I can't think of his name now—he was a real nice guy. But the NCAA said, "Call this guy. He'd love to talk to Frank Broyles about it." So I talked to Frank and had him—got the two of them together. And Frank called back the next morning and said, "We're gonna do it."

AM: Yeah.

JM: "We're gonna go for it."

AM: Yeah.

JM: So it really had nothin' to do with Oregon.

AM: Yeah. What was the impact of that facility? I know getting an indoor facility nineteen years earlier had allowed you to train

indoors without being in the snow.

JM: Yes.

AM: This was kind of a new level. Now you're able to hold a national championship on campus.

JM: Yes.

[06:20:32] AM: And what was the impact of that on the whole program and the city and the exposure and publicity of track here?

JM: That was like winnin' my first national championship again because . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . now we could—and that's what I told Don Tyson. We have won national championships, but they have all been on foreign soil.

AM: Yeah.

JM: We cannot win the championship at home 'cause we don't have a facility to host it.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he liked what we had done as a—winnin' and all that, and he said, "Well, I think we are gonna cure that." So that's how we got that built, and it was—it made—it brought a new type of interest to track in northwest Arkansas because people that

never went to a track meet came. And then we had those—that Tyson Invitation where the meet was small and not many athletes in each event, and the meet was over in two and a half hours. And then we got it down to two hours. And people loved that.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: So that was big.

[06:21:42] AM: Yeah. Tell us a little bit about—you had mentioned Robert Howard—what a great team guy he was.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And what a great leader and jumper. And I think he was a two- or three-time Olympian.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: It was two, anyways.

AM: You know, when, you know, kids like that that are so successful and—you know, do you—when they ended up—he ended up having a—you know, a tragic ending that ended his life.

JM: Yeah.

AM: How do you take that? And I'm sure that's not the first time it's happened.

JM: It was—it's hard . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . because, you know, he was—when you knew him, he was such a quality-type person and a good student, and you know, to do what he did was—I couldn't believe my ears when that—the head of the medical center called me and told me.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then called back about an hour later, and he said, "Coach, it's worse." He said, "He killed his wife, too." So . . .

AM: Oh, so what was the first thing you had found out—that he was just—had passed . . .

JM: He had jumped.

AM: He had jumped. Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

[06:22:56] AM: Yeah. What had been the last time you had seen or spoken to him?

JM: Oh, he was up here. He was still comin' up and prac—and he [*unclear word*]. He loved jumpin'.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He used to come up and practice with the guys when he had time off. And that was—he was a high-strung guy but, you know, a—but had a cool head, you know, 'cause I remember at Auburn one year in the long jump, a kid from Florida went by

him—I don't know if it's Florida or Auburn—in the long jump, and there was—he had one jump left, and the kid came by and did that [makes intimidating gesture] into his face and, "Okay, Howard!" You know, and actin' like a clown. And Robert just took off his shirt and didn't even recognize that the kid was there.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I said—Booth and I were standin'—leanin' on the fence watchin' it, and I said, "That's all we needed right there." And Dick said, "You damn right." [*Siren in background*]

AM: Yeah.

JM: He jumped 27'7" on his next jump.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then walked over and gave the guy a hug that had taunted him. [*Laughs*] I said, "Is that a class" . . .

AM: He gave him a hug? [*Laughs*]

JM: Gave him a hug.

AM: [*Laughter*] Oh man. That's the worst.

[06:24:16] JM: And the—yeah. But that's what he was. He was—you know, I said, "Is that a classic act."

AM: Yeah.

JM: Didn't get into the . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . jivin' with him.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then to turn around and do what he did was . . .

AM: Do you think it was—my understanding is that it all happened during the opening ceremonies of the Olympics.

JM: Well, it did.

AM: Do you think that's just a coincidence or . . .

JM: I think it was a coincidence.

AM: Okay.

JM: They say that they had been in a restaurant with two other people. She was a doctor, too—the wife—and they were discussing some type of medicine—I forget what it was. And something that was going on at the time, and they were disagreein' on it, anyways.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And who knows?

[06:25:09] AM: Yeah. Towards the latter part of that—when we had talked about Clinton's success in [19]92 and what a great moment that was for the state. And then two years later, Nolan, you know, wins the basketball . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . NCAA championship, which you know, Frank had—you know, that made Coach Broyles proud. He'd had the only football . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . and Nolan had the only basketball. You know, towards the, I guess, the end of the decade, or at the end of the decade, things had really kinda soured. I mean, what was . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . what was it that—for both individuals, really—you know, how did that come about, and how did that—what was the effect on campus morale?

JM: That wasn't good.

AM: Yeah.

JM: No.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Twas a shame that, you know—cannot point a finger at anybody, but I think if cooler heads had prevailed, you know.

AM: With—you're talkin' bout Nolan?

JM: Nolan.

AM: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[06:26:08] JM: It's another example of don't give ultimatums.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: 'Cause he made a statement, "If they can't pay me my seven

million, then I'm out of here."

AM: Yeah.

JM: Well, they did.

AM: Yeah. Was Frank a—you know, you had been—said he was really good to you. Was he a hard guy for other people to work for?

JM: He was very—I'll tell you what he was like. He was a business person.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Like, he wasn't—you wouldn't go in and have a chitchat with him, but when you went in and talked business, he might mention something—say, "How is the wife?" or something. But that'd be as far as it went.

[06:26:52] AM: Yeah. So you had talked about how you're—you know, Oregon approaches you, and it's about the end of the decade—2000—and your body doesn't feel great. When did it actually give out and . . .

JM: Two thousand one.

AM: Two thousand one. Where . . .

JM: January.

AM: Yeah. Where were you at when it . . .

JM: I was—'twas on a Sunday morning. I got up at, like, six o'clock.

I had this, like, heartburn, you know.

AM: Yeah.

[06:27:20] JM: And my top of my stomach was burnin' and gettin'—I told my wife, Ellen—I said—I took Alka-Seltzer. Alka-Seltzer was one of my things I used to take, and god, it made it worse. And I was sittin' on the end of the bed, and all of a sudden, I felt cold, you know. I was cold. And the next thing, I felt like something was runnin' on my face. There was somethin' runnin' on my face, and I put my hand up and it was pourin' sweat, but I was freezin'. And I said to Ellen, "I gotta"—she was still layin' in bed 'cause it was early. I said, "I gotta get to the hospital." She said, "What?"

AM: Yeah.

JM: I said, "Man, I'm feelin' bad." And . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . boy, she jumped up, and I had just put on a jacket, and 'twas cold. It was January 14.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And walked out and got in the car, and she goes out, and on the way in, she called the 911 and the hospital. People were there waitin' for me, and when I got there, the—to check me—and I heard—said, "Are you hurtin'?" I said, "I'm hurtin' pretty bad."

So they gave me morphine. I didn't know what they gave me, but anyways, it helped. And next thing I heard—and it didn't register with me—"Well, he has no movement of blood in the lower part of his heart," you know. So that's the last I remember. And then in about an hour and a half or two hours later, I woke up, and I said . . .

[06:29:06] AM: They had knocked you out?

JM: Yeah, knocked . . .

AM: Yeah, morphine. Yeah.

JM: Morphine.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then I—about two hours later, I woke up in the bed, and Ellen told me—I said, "What happened?" She said, "You had a heart attack."

AM: Yeah.

JM: I was havin' it—I had it when I got to the hospital.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So . . .

AM: How long . . .

JM: But I was fortunate.

AM: . . . how long were you in there? How do you feel you were fortunate by that happening?

JM: Well, I could be somewhere . . .

AM: Somewhere else.

JM: . . . on my ranch where I . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . had no way to get to a hospital.

[06:29:38] AM: Yeah, yeah. How did that change how you approached your life—in your personal life and your working life?

JM: Yeah. Oh, it—my—it made me realize that there's more to life than just winnin'. And—even though I ended up winnin' some more national championships, but I just—well, I got a—I was kind of a—I had got kinda nervous, you know, with meets and stuff like that, and I got on medication to keep calm—keep me calm, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And that helped a lot.

AM: Yeah. Just a general topic—you know, throughout the years, a lot of your kids had come into the national—and the NCAA meet is so competitive that the—there's inches in the long jump events and milliseconds in sprint events and tenths of seconds in . . .

JM: Oh yeah.

AM: . . . other events, the difference between first and—you know, as

you said, you could throw a blanket over the guys sometimes.

JM: Yeah.

AM: The first five runners. But a lot of your kids, you know, traditionally, ran above what they were ranked coming into the meet, and the sum total of that would be a—you know, pointwise, it'd be a national championship.

JM: Yeah.

[06:31:01] AM: You know, what was your—I mean, how were you able to do that? What was your philosophy on peaking?

JM: Well, my philosophy on peaking was I always told the guys that every other meet was just a preparation for the nationals and not to worry. Work on technique—like, they could take shorter strides as they approach—you know, instead of takin' eight steps, you take six and all that type of stuff. So they were never—they were winnin' without takin' the full approach, you know. And then they had something special left for the national meet.

AM: Yeah, yeah. With your distance runners that—were you able to—I mean, did you try and get qualifying times early, before the regionals?

JM: Yes.

AM: And then just train the rest of the time?

JM: Train.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah. Get the qualifyin' and then just train and not even race much.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Just run them on relays.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Let them relax, in other words.

[06:31:56] AM: Yeah. Okay. You know, throughout the course of, you know, your career, there was a lot of really talented kids—some that were less talented than others, some more talented—but that came in here and—you know, these are eighteen-year-old, nineteen-year-old kids and, you know, boys, really, and you know, they ended up becoming champions and men and . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . in some cases, Olympians. And some of them weren't very mature . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: You know, you had mentioned about Frank O'Mara and . . .

JM: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

AM: . . . and Matt Kerr and Mike Power. I mean, when did you see the need to sit them down and say, "Look"—I mean, how did

you . . .

JM: I'd always give them, like—I always felt that if I could get two good years out of a—if a kid ran his junior and senior year at NCAA level . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you should be happy.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So I never pushed a kid as a freshman. I said, "This is your learning year."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And that sorta helped kids to—maybe sometimes kids'd use it and abuse it, but on the average, it worked. [*Clears throat*]

AM: Yeah.

JM: I gotta go to . . .

[Tape stopped]

[06:33:09] AM: John, as we entered this past decade, tell me a little bit about the bright, young coaches that you came across that—you know, and you started gettin' challenged by Colorado and Wisconsin—well, a new coach at Wisconsin.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And what was their—what was your first impressions of both those individuals?

JM: I think that they're good.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Good, young coaches, yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: They really are.

[06:33:31] AM: Yeah. Was their philosophy from what you saw any different than yours or . . .

JM: Oh, I don't think so.

AM: Yeah.

JM: You know, the—they're—I think they studied it pretty good and were—you know, Jerry Schumacher, you know, before he left was—there were—the thing he was doin' a great job was gettin' the kids in there. He got so many good kids into Wisconsin, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And when—numbers helps. There's no doubt about that.

AM: Sure. Colorado had run almost the polar opposite race strategy to yours, and maybe that was . . .

JM: Yeah. It is.

AM: . . . altitude driven. I'm not sure what was the motivation behind it.

JM: Yeah.

AM: How did that play out in a couple national meets?

JM: Well, it didn't work—it worked for one meet, but we beat 'em up in Iowa State the last year it was at Iowa State.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he had a better team than we did that year.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But . . .

AM: They just never caught up to you?

JM: They didn't catch up, yeah.

[06:34:32] AM: Yeah. Your impression of—you had hired Lance Brauman after Doug had come back for a couple years. You know, what had made you—you know, what had tipped you off that Lance—what had he done and, you know, what really went right with him and what went wrong?

JM: Well [*coughs*], he had done a good job at Barton County, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And maybe it was—they had all those work-study programs that weren't—that got him in trouble where they got as many kids on scholarship as they had, so . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: But he was a—besides all that, he was a good coach. He was

a . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, he really—he was a worker.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he took no nonsense from the guys, you know. They had to toe the line.

AM: Yeah. A good recruiter?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was.

AM: Yeah. You had not won any cross-country nationals after [*clock chimes*] 2000.

JM: Yeah.

AM: You won a significant amount of—I'll just wait.

[Tape stopped]

[06:35:45] AM: Okay. Tell us a little bit about the process of Alistair Cragg coming to Fayetteville and running for you at Arkansas.

JM: He had . . .

AM: And then Daniel Lincoln.

JM: Alistair had been at SMU for a year, and then his brother met a tragic—had a tragic accident and was killed or died, and he went back home and took it really, really hard.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And SMU wanted him to come back immediately, or they'd take his scholarship away.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he said, "No." And his brother, of course, had gone to—Duncan had gone to SMU, so he called me and said would I be interested in him, and I said, "Of course," you know. So he—I said, "Is he still in South Africa?" "No," he said, "he's back here now." So the two of them drove up here, and that was it.

AM: Yeah.

[06:36:46] JM: And then Daniel Lincoln—that was kind of almost the same way—a walk-in—he was—he went to high school down in Hot Springs. It was math and science.

AM: Yeah.

JM: An accelerated program. But he was from Fayetteville, and the coach at Fayetteville told me that he was goin' to an Ivy League school.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was very bright. And so I didn't recruit him. He had run 4:16-something in the . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . 1,600. And, like, in the end of June or beginning of July,

himself and his mother came into my office one day and said, "I'm Daniel Lincoln." I said, "I know who you are." And I said, "Take a seat." And he said, "Would it be okay if I walk on?" That's how I got him.

[06:37:38] AM: Yeah. When did you—I mean, at four—there's a lot of 4:16 milers. When did you see him becoming the NCAA champion that he—multiple time—and Olympian?

JM: Well, I can say it after the fact, but one thing that really convinced me that he was one tough sucker when—I'll tell you what he did. His freshman year, [*unclear words*] were goin' for a run on a Sunday morning.

AM: Yeah.

JM: [*Clears throat*] And there was no trainer there, and he—all the guys were ready to go on this fourteen-mile run.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I said, "Daniel, come on." And I said, "Where is he?" And they said, "He's in in the trainin' room bandaging up his foot. There's something wrong with his foot." So I went in there, and I figured I'd help him, you know, 'cause the trainer wasn't there.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he was sittin' up on the table, and on the left foot, the whole ball of it—the skin was gone. I mean, gone completely. 'Twas

raw. And I said, "What the heck happened to your foot?" "Oh," he said, "I—the last run we had, I wore shoes that were too tight and it pulled it all off." I said, "Who cut it off?" "Well, it was loose, so I just cut it off myself." The skin was all loose. I mean, 'twas just raw. "You're not gonna run with that, are you?" And he said, "Oh yeah, yeah. Oh, I'm puttin' Vaseline on it." And so I said, "All right, just lean back." So I said, "I can bandage it better than you could." So we put Vaseline all over it and bandaged it, and I said, "I'd still not advise you to run on it."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he ran fourteen miles.

AM: That's unbelievable.

[06:39:21] JM: And I said to myself, "That sucker has no pain threshold at all."

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: And I was right from there. [*Laughs*] He was something else.

AM: What are your memories of the Cowboy Jamboree? You guys went there for so long.

JM: Oh, we loved it.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I loved it, because that is a challenging course. You know, if somebody thinks they can play around on that one, they're

kiddin' themselves. Now, if you're in great shape, you can run it good, but it's a tough course.

AM: Yeah.

JM: It prepares you for any type of course . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . in my books. Yeah.

[06:39:57] AM: Now let me ask you this. You had won seventeen Southwest Conference cross-country titles, and you win ten or eleven in the SEC. And you go up to Stillwater in—I forget what year—[20]02, [20]03, [20]04—and Georgia beats you.

JM: Oh yeah. [*Laughter*] I know.

AM: Straight up. And I don't know who you were runnin', but you know, how—I mean, how did that—what were you guys thinkin' . . .

JM: Wake up. [*Laughs*]

AM: . . . goin' into the SEC meet? Was it a wake-up call?

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah. Did you run all your guys, or were you banged up earlier?

JM: No, we had some guys that we didn't run.

AM: Yeah, okay.

JM: But we should've—we still should've won it.

AM: Yeah. [*JM laughs*] Yeah. What was your relationship with

Houston Nutt. He was here the last . . .

JM: Very good.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was really easy to work with, and we had the most athletes—football athletes out for track than ever before. You know, we had seven guys that—football players—that went out for track.

AM: Mh-hmm. And one of your distance runners, Danny Green, you know, eventually ended up, you know, working with . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . the coaching staff. What did he—I mean, what did he bring to the table as someone who had been there on so many national championship teams?

JM: Yeah. [*Laughs*] He—he's been around awhile, yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He's a good guy, and he used to do all the knickknack stuff and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . anything you wanted him to do, Danny did it.

[06:41:26] AM: Yeah, yeah. Did you—you know, I had mentioned after, oh—2000, you hadn't won any more cross-country titles, but you were in the top five and—but you had continued winning indoor NCAAs pretty consistently.

JM: Yeah.

AM: You know, did it become a lot harder to keep it on that perch . . .

JM: Well, it did.

AM: . . . after you had to slow down a little bit?

JM: The thing that I did is I put a little bit more money into sprinters.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And you know, if I was like Colorado or Wisconsin or places like that where I kept the money and just—I always went wherever there was points that could win national meet.

[06:42:10] AM: So you shifted the balance.

JM: I did.

AM: The distribution . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . of your . . .

JM: Oh yeah. I have good dis—I'd have a bunch of good distance runners if I could get them. And if I couldn't get them, we'd get somebody else, you know, like Tyson Gay and Wallace Spearmon, you know. So points are points.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Like . . .

AM: Tyson and Wallace both were, you know, Olympians and

medalists and—you know, tell me a little bit about—you know, after running—you know, after all that success, forty-two at one point—forty-four or forty-three NCAA titles—what was it like going through an NCAA investigation, and how did that go down from your perspective?

JM: Well, that was a real bummer . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . because of the fact that the seriousness in what happened was—one—it was like—almost like some of the disqualifications that we had on the track. It was, like, "We got you!" You know, because three hundred and sixty-one dollars and forty cents' worth of travel—he rode with Brauman's wife up to Barton County . . .

[06:43:34] AM: Tyson Gay had rode with Lance Brauman's . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . wife? Yeah.

JM: Yeah, because she was from there.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And then he—the other thing was she gave him a ride a couple of times to a shopping mall where he—somebody picked him up—a painter picked him up . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . to work. And the other thing was he—we had a hurdler, Michael Thomas, and—see, Tyson had money. His parents had money. They were well-off.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So when he came into town, he stayed with Michael Thomas and—for eleven days—and bought the food. And Michael Thomas wouldn't take any money, even though Lance told him to pay Michael Thomas 'cause Michael was not on the team anymore, but he was—he had graduated.

AM: Sure.

JM: So that was whatever amount of money that would be for the room, which was—it was, like, ninety-something dollars.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And those were the violations. No academic fraud. No nothing. We had penalized ourselves three scholarships, no recruiting of junior college guys for three years, and put ourselves on three years' probation. And after all that, they took two national championships on top of that.

AM: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

JM: And that was . . .

[06:45:12] AM: How long did the investigation last?

JM: Bout a year and a half.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I mean, you talk about—it was to me unconscionable that the—but 'twas like we were—'twas the—it was the third violation that Arkansas had in ten years. There was football, basketball, and then track. And in the third year, you know, they were—third event happened to be us, and they just, you know . . .

AM: They dropped the hammer.

[06:45:47] JM: They did because we're visible and they can—we didn't cost the university a flippin' dime. If—who cares if the—we didn't—you know, it wasn't on TV and missin' a million dollars or anything like that. They just said, "This is a great opportunity."

AM: "What's the difference between forty-two and forty-four?"

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But 'twas the kids. And as far as I'm concerned with the NCAA, they're just a bunch of flippin'—like the IRS. [AM laughs] They can do whatever the hell they want.

AM: Yeah.

JM: 'Cause there was no—they had no grounds for doin' what they did—you know, football players'd take money and—like, in Oklahoma or places like that [*slaps wrist*], slap on their wrist and

let them go.

AM: Yeah.

JM: That's all that should've been.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Just a slap on the wrist.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But it was just unbelievable.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And I—you know, Lance should've known better than give those rides of the wife, but she was goin' up there, you know.

AM: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. Yeah. How hard was it . . .

TM: Excuse me, Andrew. We need to change tapes.

AM: Kay.

[Tape stopped]

[06:46:59] AM: You had—John, you had mentioned you guys self-penalized yourselves.

JM: Yes.

AM: And—three scholarships—and I think that started in [20]05 or [20]06. I'm not sure when it started, but . . .

JM: [Two thousand] oh six, probably. Yeah.

AM: Yeah. And [20]06 was your last NCAA title. You know, how hard is it to compete at the national level when you only have

twelve point six and you're takin' three of them away?

JM: I know. It was tough. And what it did was . . .

[06:47:26] AM: And what'd you have to change?

JM: Well, we had just—we had to turn down good guys. One was that Peter Kosgei—not Peter Kosgei, but Kosgei that went to Oklahoma. He ended up at Oklahoma State. He went to . . .

AM: John Kosgei.

JM: John Kosgei. And the other kid from—where was he goin'? He was goin' to junior college. He went to Alabama.

AM: Tyson David.

JM: Tyson David. Both those guys wanted to come to Arkansas. That was national championships [*snaps fingers*] just like that.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But—and you know, to penalize yourself like that, which I didn't want to do—I said, "Why don't we just go ahead and let them throw the—throw it out on us?" All they'd have taken, I think, was the national championships.

AM: Yeah.

JM: They don't care about track.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Could care less. They just wanted to set an example.

AM: Yeah. You'd had a—another—you had a lot of good recruiting

classes. Your last big one was [20]05—your—J-Mee Samuels came to campus and . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . Alain Bailey from jamai—a jumper—and Scott MacPherson, Chris Barnicle, Colin Costello, the McClary brothers. I think they transferred.

JM: They did, yeah.

[06:48:49] AM: Now, how did a lot of those guys, you know, pan out? I know you weren't here for their entire careers, but . . .

JM: No. They did good. They—the only one that didn't was Costello.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was a little bit like John Castellano.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: Academics wasn't high on his agenda.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Very—I'll tell you, he was one of the—as talented a kid as I ever had on this campus. He ran a 4:01 mile [*laughs*], and he was about 80 percent fit. Indoors.

AM: Four oh one, here? Yeah.

JM: Yeah, as a freshman.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And he was tough, but he got himself a girlfriend the minute he

arrived here, and oh, just one thing after another. Wouldn't go to class and lied like a trooper, you know. Not—I shouldn't say a liar, but was very dishonest. You know, just—he—I remember one time he left my office goin' to take a test—had ten minutes to be there—went home, went to bed.

AM: Yeah

JM: So it was just impossible.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But talented, and a nice guy. He'd say, "Oh"—I said, "Why'd you go home?" [*Laughs*] He'd have some lame-duck excuse, you know, about it.

[06:50:20] AM: Mh-hmm. Kyle White—you hired him after Lance left and . . .

JM: Yeah.

AM: . . . and [*JM clears throat*] how did he—I mean, what was the—I know he was a former jumper and sprinter here.

JM: Mh-hmm.

AM: And what did you see in him as a coach?

JM: Well, you know, he had done a pretty good job down at UT Arlington and was always a die-hard Razorback guy. And you know, he had done a very good job with the 400 relay and a couple of hurdlers and . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . took a chance on him. And I think he's gonna make a good coach down the road. I only had him a couple years.

[06:51:00] AM: Yeah. When did you—when did it generally—when did you—okay, two questions. When did the first thoughts of retirement enter your mind—just thoughts? And then when did—when was the moment when you said [*laughs*] . . .

JM: I—it had entered my mind two years before I retired.

AM: Okay.

JM: I had—if it wasn't for the Tyson Gay incident, I would have gone out before that. I didn't want to leave with the Tyson Gay thing not settled, you know.

AM: I see what you're sayin'. Yeah.

JM: Yeah, because I wasn't gonna run away from something. It wasn't—even though there was nothing I had to do with it, but I was still the head coach. And I figured I'd wait until that was finished. Decided.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I had—I always said when I stopped, you know, enjoyin' it—and I was—stop—I wouldn't mind with the guys, but the paperwork and the rigmarole that you have to go through, you know. It was gettin' worse and worse. And more rules by the NCAA, and

I decided 'twas time to move on.

[06:52:24] AM: Yeah. What was the effect of the retirement of Frank Broyles and them bringing in—I think Jeff Long was at Pittsburgh previously.

JM: Yeah.

AM: And they brought him. How did that change the dynamic of operations in this athletic department?

JM: [*Clears throat*] Well, you know, I think that Jeff Long is a different type of leader than Frank Broyles is. He's more of a CEO type, you know.

AM: Yeah. You said Frank was very business-oriented too, though.

JM: He was, but in definitely a different way, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was—you know, you could—Frank was the AD, and you could walk right into his office, you know.

AM: Yeah. Was there a specific moment that—when you decided to retire, or did you know months in ahead before you announced it?

JM: I knew a few months.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I was—the decision on the Tyson Gay thing was handed down right before Christmas, and I almost stepped down at Christmas, but I'd thought then that wouldn't be fair to the athletes. So I finished the last semester.

[06:53:39] AM: Yeah. Looking back on your thirty-six years, what was your greatest moment? What's the moment that you—the particular moment that you enjoyed the most and savored the most?

JM: Gosh, there's been some—I think—I know winnin' the national championship was fantastic, but the last indoor title we won, when they disqualified the distance medley against Michigan here, which I think was a bum rap, too.

AM: Yeah.

JM: But them kids . . .

AM: And Tyson was hurt, too, wasn't he?

JM: He was.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And the kids comin' back the next day and just ran out of their mind. That was awesome because we had a kid on the team and on the distance medley—Harun. He was a refugee kid from Somalia, and he was from way of Virginia. And he was an American citizen and all that and the nicest kid. But he ran

forty—1:49.3 on that distance medley, and he—that was the best race he ever ran in his life, you know.

[06:54:55] AM: What was his name?

JM: Harun.

AM: Okay.

JM: And he was a—he'd run 1:51 all day, you know. And—but I remember tellin' the team the next—on Saturday mornin' 'cause—because of the disqualification and all—and I said, "That kid—he's never go"—'cause he was a senior. "All you other guys have got a national championship ring, but he'll never get one. Never." And they loved him. Everybody loved Harun. He was a funny kid and all that. And I said, "Unless you guys wanna go out there and change it." And our 400-meter runner—you saw what he did.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He was ranked seventh and ran the second fastest time ever indoors. Got second. Hatch in the 800s ran out of his mind. He was capable of doin' it—finally, you know, ran a gutsy race, but he did it—got second. Three thousand—Kosgei was ranked thirteenth. Got third. And there was one other one, and the . . .

AM: Triple jumper did well.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: And won it. And that was so great, 'cause we just pushed it down their throats and said, "Hey, you can disqualify us, but we'll still find a way to win."

[06:56:16] AM: Yeah. What was the atmosphere like in the indoor track when—on that day?

JM: Oh, it was fantastic.

AM: Yeah.

JM: They went—people just went wild—our fans—because that was such an unbelievable—it was just—even coaches that, you know, would never—would say—never say too much to me, said, "Coach, that's your best right there. That has to be the best performance you've ever had." 'Cause they were all personal bests and just outstanding—just one thing after another, you know.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I think we had four athletes goin' that afternoon, and they all scored some big points.

AM: Yeah. What's the worst particular moment that you had, specifically?

JM: [*Clears throat*] Well, the worst moment was, you know, that Tyson Gay thing at the end of my career. Because we had run—

I felt I had run a good, clean program, and I thought I knew everything that went on around my guys and all, but might be another example I stayed too long.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: You know, and you trust people. I had great people workin' for me, and then to—right at the end of my career—right when I was ready to retire, somethin' like that happens.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Right—and a lot of it had to do, too, with the compliance guy. He should've talked to Tyson when he was on campus, and he didn't—when he came on campus.

AM: Yeah.

JM: That was his flippin' job.

AM: Yeah.

JM: He dropped the ball.

AM: Mh-hmm.

JM: So—but again, fellow might—I was the head coach.

[06:58:03] AM: Yeah. What's the thing you take most pride in, generally speaking, over the course of those four decades?

JM: Well, I think the friendships that I've made with the guys . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . on the team, because I love to get a call or a card—and I've

got letters from kids that I really didn't think I did a lot for . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . and they said, "You have no idea what you meant to me—what you—the hard work and that ethic—you know, the work ethic that you instilled in me. It's—it has been invaluable."

AM: Yeah.

JM: And that makes me feel good, you know, 'cause it—let's face it, there's life after track, and if you—if the kids don't—haven't got something and walked away with something . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know, what the heck?

[06:59:08] AM: Yeah. What's probably your biggest regret over those same time period?

JM: Not takin' some more time off in between [19]84 and 2000.

AM: Mh-hmm. Yeah. How are you enjoying retirement now, John?

JM: Good, good.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I've got the cattle ranch in Oklahoma, but—and what we're in the process of doin' right now is sellin' out the cattle that we used to keep over the wintertime and—from—after this year, we'll never—the only time we'll have cattle is from April through end of August. And then there'll be nothing in the wintertime at

all.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Just keep the place—well, in case my son—you know, my son or daughter and—she doesn't want it, but my son might want to . . .

AM: Yeah.

JM: . . . someday.

[07:00:09] AM: How long have you had it—the ranch?

JM: Oh, we've had it twenty-five years.

AM: Yeah. How important was that to have that?

JM: That was my—that was very important because, I'll tell you, like, your 401(k)s is not—this—the ranch is a lot better than it, so investment is important, I think, for . . .

AM: Oh, financially it's better than . . .

JM: It is.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah. I meant—I mean, was it a retreat at all for you? I actually wasn't thinking . . .

JM: Oh yeah. Oh, it was.

AM: . . . I wasn't thinking of it as a financial thing, but—yeah.

JM: Oh, okay. It was.

AM: Yeah.

[07:00:41] JM: It was like therapy.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I'd go over there and, you know—and those guys that worked for me—you know, like, one guy—the guy that I have workin' right now. It was a long time before he knew what the hell I did.

[*Laughter*] He knew I . . .

AM: He just knew . . .

JM: . . . worked at the university.

AM: He knew you—yeah. He just knew you . . .

JM: And then he said . . .

AM: . . . worked here, that's it?

JM: Yeah, and then they came over there to do a documentary, and he said—talked to the guy, and he said, "Jesus," he said, "why didn't you tell me what you did, you know, or what—how you won so much and all that?" He didn't know much about sports.

AM: Yeah.

JM: I said, "Hey, that's what I—I don't like to talk about it. You know, when I get away from track, I come over here and I enjoy talkin' to guys about something else, you know."

AM: Yeah.

JM: They'd talk about their horses and all that type of stuff, you

know.

AM: Yeah. Well, John, I really—we appreciate your time.

JM: Yeah. No problem.

AM: And . . .

JM: We appreciate your time. You guys have worked hard. And you know, we'll be talkin' again.

AM: Oh yeah, yeah.

JM: Yeah.

AM: Yeah.

JM: So just give me a holler anytime.

AM: Thanks, guys.

JM: And now get the hell out of here. [*Laughter*]

[07:01:54 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]