

**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

Ernie Everett Cate

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford and Eric Johnson

April 21, 2010

Springdale, 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 Web site 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 Eric Johnson interviewed Ernie Everett Cate
on April 21, 2010, in Springdale, Arkansas.**

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: All right. Um—Ernie, it's a great honour to be sittin' across from you today.

Ernie Everett Cate: Thank you.

SL: Um—the Pryor Center is here at—at yours and Linda's home in Springdale, Arkansas. The day's date is the twenty-first of April, 2010.

EEC: Mh-hmm.

SL: And—uh—my name is Scott Lunsford, and yours is Ernest Everett Cate.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Uh—half of the infamous Cate Brothers.

EEC: Mh-hmm.

SL: Um—we interviewed your brother a couple of days ago, and that was great, out at your dad's house that he built.

EEC: Mh-hmm.

SL: Out in Sonora.

EEC: Right.

SL: Um—we had a great time, but let me tell you what—what we're—what we're tryin' to achieve here. Uh—we're gonna

record this interview in high-definition video and high-resolution audio, and that record is gonna reside in the Special Collections Department at the University of Arkansas, Mullins Library. And it's also gonna be a part of the Pryor Center archive. And we'll have probably a couple different places that we store our stuff, whatever's . . .

EEC: Mmm.

SL: . . . safest and . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . appropriate. Um—the material will be used for educational purposes, research, documentarians. Um—we intend to put this on the web. Now, what we will put on the web will be an electronic version of the transcript—um—all the images that we scan will be like a slideshow on the web.

EEC: Mh-hmm.

[00:01:27] SL: And we will—uh—have all the audio of the entire
[*camera clicks*] interview. And then we'll have highlights . . .

EEC: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . video highlights of the interview. We'll go through and try take a fair representation of—of our interview . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . of our conversation here. And we'll post that on the web.

As well as providing you and your family—uh—DVDs of all the raw footage, of everything that we scan, and printed transcript . . .

EEC: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . of this—of this interview. So, we kind of embrace the both—the best of both worlds, modern technology and old . . .

EEC: Mm-hmm.

SL: . . . oral—and oral history—uh—templates.

EEC: Right.

SL: Now, if all of that's okay with you, [*EEC laughs*] you need to tell me it's okay. And if it's not, you need to tell me that it's not okay.

EEC: It's okay.

SL: Okay. That's a good answer.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: Good answer. [00:02:17] Okay. Ernie—um—now, I'm gonna [*sound of chair moving*] spell your name. It's *E-R-N-E-S-T*.

EEC: Right.

SL: For a long time, I kept puttin' the *A* in there. It's . . .

EEC: Ah. Everybody does.

SL: Everybody does?

EEC: Yeah. It doesn't matter.

SL: So it's not just me.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Okay. And then the middle name is Everett and Cate. And—uh—you were born—uh—on what day in 1942?

EEC: Uh—twenty-sixth day of December, 1942.

[00:02:41] SL: Day after Christmas?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Wow.

EEC: In Marshall, Arkansas.

SL: In Marshall. And—uh—Marshall is over close to the Buffalo River.

EEC: Yeah. East, yeah, east of there a little bit, yeah.

SL: Um—now, it's my understanding that Earl is a little bit older than you are.

EC: Yeah. Eight minutes.

SL: Eight minutes?

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah. Well, that's kind of a good story. I wanna tell it.

SL: Okay.

EEC: Fact, my mother, she gave birth to Earl, and it was just in a house. It wasn't in a hospital or anything. My—it was my grandmother's house. She gave birth to Earl, and doctor

packed up his—all of his equipment and started to leave, and
Mama says, "I—somethin's wrong. I don't know. You know,
somethin's not right. I think there's another one," [*laughs*] you
know. And he came back in, and sure enough, it was me, so
[*laughs*] eight minutes transpired, I guess, or whatever,
so . . .

SL: So you kinda held things up to begin with?

EEC: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] I was kind of the runt, I guess.

SL: The runt. [*Laughter*]

EEC: Matter fact, they claim they put me in an oven overnight 'cause
they didn't think I was gonna make it [*laughs*] so . . .

SL: Is that right?

EEC: Yeah. But I don't know.

[00:03:44] SL: So you were a little underweight and . . .

EEC: Yeah. Yeah. Had a heart murmur or somethin'. I don't know.
It was weird but . . .

SL: Huh.

EEC: Yeah.

[00:03:50] SL: But you made it through . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: No—uh . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . complications or . . .

EEC: Yeah. That just—I'm just goin' what they told me [*laughs*]
happened, you know.

[00:03:58] SL: Now, so it was your mom and your grandmother on
your mother's side that were . . .

EEC: Yes. Yeah.

SL: . . . there with the doctor.

EEC: Yeah. That's where my—my mom's mother lived in Marshall,
so my father was in the service, so mom went down to stay
with her when she was gettin' ready to have—have his boys.

SL: You don't remember—did you ever spend any time at all in that
house—uh . . .

EEC: Not a whole lot.

SL: . . . through the years? But . . .

EEC: Not a whole lot. We'd just visit . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: . . . periodically but not—maybe once a year, we'd get down
there to see 'em.

[00:04:27] SL: Were they—uh—were your—uh—grandparents
farmers? Your—on your mom's side of the family?

EEC: No, my—actually, my grandfather was a barber. Called Barber
Brown in Marshall, Arkansas. I don't—my—uh—and just a

housewife, his wife was. She—she died at a pretty early age, you know.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: But yeah, he was just a barber.

SL: Uh—there in Marshall.

EEC: Yeah. Well-known barber. Yeah.

[00:04:51] SL: Did you ever get a chance to go to his shop?

EEC: Oh yeah. Every time we'd go down to visit 'em, we'd g—first thing we'd do is run to go down to his shop 'cause he'd be workin'. Get to see him in there.

SL: How many chairs did he have?

EEC: Oh, maybe three. I can't remember for sure.

SL: Uh-huh. Do you . . .

EEC: Been a long time, so. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . do you kinda remember that shop at all? Do you . . .

EEC: Yeah. A little bit.

SL: Can you describe a little bit of it?

EEC: Oh, it's just your old—the old days, you know. They had their barber pole out front, and you just went in—always that same smell or whatever. [*Laughs*] I don't know what they did, you know. It was—it was—it was different.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: You don't see that much anymore.

SL: Well—um—uh—so you—you just visited as you were growing up?

EEC: Yeah. 'Cause . . .

SL: Kay.

EEC: . . . we lived up in this area in Northwest Arkansas, so we just visited them maybe, you know, once or twice a year.

[00:05:39] SL: Uh-huh. And what was your mother's maiden name?

EEC: Brown.

SL: Brown.

EEC: Yeah. Florence Almeda Brown. Yeah.

SL: Almeda. That's a great . . .

EEC: Yeah. Yeah. That's her middle name.

SL: . . . great name. Is that *A-L-* . . .

EEC: I can't remember how you spell.

SL: . . . *M-E-D-A*?

EEC: I think *A-L-M-E*—I think that's right. Yeah.

[00:05:56] SL: Okay. Um—well, do you remember—uh—much about the town of Marshall when you'd go visit?

EEC: Well, they had a square and a movie theatre. It was a pretty neat little place then. Course, it's like all the little towns.

Seems like it just kinda—generally, they fall apart later, but it

was a pretty interesting little town.

SL: Did it have a train goin' through it? A—a railroad track, I wonder?

EEC: I don't think it did. I can't remember . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: . . . for sure. Well, it had to. I'm sure it had to.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: Yeah.

[00:06:25] SL: When you would visit your—uh—mom's—uh—folks—um—did they have running water or electricity at that house?

EEC: Mmm. I believe they did. I th—gosh, I can't remember.

SL: Well, that's okay.

EEC: I think they—I think they did. I believe they did.

SL: And was it actually in the town or outside the town?

EEC: Just—well, kinda outside of town.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: Just a little bit up on a hill. It was just kinda outside of town.

[00:06:53] SL: Did your—um—mom do any gardening? Did they have a vegetable garden or . . .

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, they did.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: My grandmother did. Yeah. She had a garden.

SL: Um—[EEC laughs] what about—do you remember having any meals there at that house?

EEC: I don't remember. I know I did, but I can't remember.

[Laughs]

SL: Can't remember.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You were pretty young.

EEC: Yeah.

[00:07:13] SL: But so, your father—um—was in the armed services . . .

ECC: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . and was he in Fort Worth or Dallas?

EEC: He was in—um—San Marcos, Texas.

SL: San Marcos.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And—um—he was—uh—I believe—um—Earl told me he was an airplane mechanic.

EEC: Yeah. Airplane mechanic. Yeah.

[00:07:32] SL: Uh-huh. Do you member much about that time?

EEC: I don't remember anything about it.

SL: You don't?

EEC: Not at all. No. 'Cause we were just born, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And I think he's only in it a couple of years after that . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: . . . you know, so . . .

SL: Did he ever—uh—talk much about his—his job in the army?
Was it the air force or army air force?

EEC: Well, it was kind of—they didn't really have a air force then. It
was kind of a division was the . . .

SL: Army air corps?

EEC: Air—yeah, somethin' like that. He didn't talk a whole lot about
it, you know. Somethin' he had to do, you know.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: In fact, I think maybe they had sent his—you know, they were
gonna draft him. I think maybe he knew that was gonna
happen, and he went and enlisted or somethin' so he could get
what he wanted. You know, air force. Seems like that's what
happened.

[00:08:13] SL: Um. Well, let's talk about your—uh—your—uh—
mom's parents just a little bit. Do you remember—um—did
you ever know your mother's mom, your grandmother?

EEC: Barely.

SL: Just barely.

EEC: Yeah. We weren't very old when she passed away.

SL: Mh-hmm.

EEC: So, we didn't probably—gosh, I can't even remember what—we weren't very old.

SL: Do—do you remember what she passed away from?

EEC: I don't. I think it's some type—some kind of cancer, I think.

SL: Really?

EEC: But I don't remember for sure.

SL: Uh-huh. So—um—you don't remember any conversation that you may have had with her or any—did she ever read to you or . . .

EEC: Hm-mm. No. Not really.

SL: Okay.

EEC: You know, like I say, I was very young . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: . . . when we'd go visit her, and I just remember seeing her, but that's about it, you know.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: ?I don't know? much about that.

[00:08:58] SL: And what about your grandfather on your mother's side? Do you—did you have any experiences with him? Did he—did you ever get—just hang out in the barbershop?

EEC: Not that much, really. We—usually limited—limited time when we went down there, but yeah, we'd hang out some. But he—he remarried later . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: . . . to another lady for—you know, that was his last wife.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: Her name was Mary, I think. I've forgotten but . . .

SL: Uh-huh. So—uh—gosh—uh—barbershop was kind of a—it wasn't quite the—uh—coffee shop, but it was—uh . . .

EEC: It was a place where everybody gathered at.

SL: . . . gathered. And you heard . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you know, and . . .

EEC: All the latest, I'm sure.

SL: . . . I'm—I'm just wondering . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: . . . do you remember any of the stories or any of the guys talkin' a . . .

EEC: Well, I'd always hear 'em talkin' about things. Of course, I's—we're from up here, and they were down there, so we didn't know what they were talkin' about a lot of times.

SL: Talkin' about. Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. They was always discussing things.

[00:09:53] SL: So that would probably be late [19]40s that you kind of were . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . remembering that.

EEC: [Nineteen] forties. Yeah.

[00:10:00] SL: Um—okay. So really, your set of memories really start up here in Sonora and . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . Northwest Arkansas.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And really, your—uh—father's side of the family . . .

EEC: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . um—was all over Sonora. I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: . . . they had a lotta property out there, and—and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . everybody was farming, weren't they?

EEC: Yeah. Pretty much it, yeah.

[00:10:27] SL: Well, let's—let's talk about your—your grandfather on—on—uh—your daddy's side. And his name was?

EEC: Stewart.

SL: Stewart.

EEC: Mh-hmm.

SL: Um—and he was a farmer.

EEC: Yeah. Just a farmer, the best I remember, that's what he was, a farmer.

SL: Did you—uh—did he ever—uh—take you fishin' or . . .

EEC: No. I don't remember that, you know, 'cause he died pretty early—pretty young, too. But I remember him—all I can remember most is he and his wife takin' us to Sunday school in Rogers, which is kinda weird. They had a Christian Science—they—they were the Christian Science—uh—religion or whatever, and there wasn't a church in Springdale. I remember ridin' with 'em up on a Sunday mornin' to Rogers to—to church. That's the [*laughs*] memories I have of them, you know. And then he died a pretty young age, actually.

[00:11:16] SL: So—um—did you go with them in lieu of going to the local Baptist church or . . .

EEC: Nah. Just, you know, they—I don't know. For some reason they kept Earl ov—Earl and I overnight or somethin' and, you know . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: Nah. It wasn't like a regular thing. It was j—when we would

spend time with 'em, they'd take us up there, so wasn't like a
every Sunday thing . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

EEC: . . . though.

[00:11:37] SL: Uh—okay. Well, let's talk about those nights that
you spent the nights with 'em [*EEC laughs*], those Saturday
nights.

EEC: I don't—I don't remember much about that.

SL: You don't remember?

EEC: Uh-uh.

SL: Do you remember—did they—did you sleep out on the porch?

EEC: I—I can't remember that.

SL: Can't remember that, either.

EEC: Been so long.

SL: Well, I'm just asking all kinds of unfair questions . . .

EEC: Yeah, well . . .

SL: . . . aren't I?

EEC: I wish I knew. Been a while. [*Laughs*]

[00:11:57] SL: Do you remember what the house—uh—looked like?

EEC: Yeah. It's a fra—a frame, you know, a white frame house.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: Pretty good size. Regular old farmhouse.

SL: Was it two stories?

EEC: No.

SL: No.

EEC: Don't think it was, no.

[00:12:11] SL: Um—and—uh—your grandfather, did he—uh—do
cattle or horses or . . .

EEC: Yeah. Yeah. A little bit of cattle, and you know . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: . . . I can't remember what else. Kind of a hilly—wasn't much
room for crops, you know.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: I don't remember exactly what he did do, you know . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: . . . except farm, you know. All I remember.

[00:12:36] SL: What about—uh—um—I assume you went to Rogers
in a car?

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: And—and was it a dirt road?

EEC: Yeah. I think it was, most of it.

SL: Pretty much?

EEC: Yeah. We'd ride in it—had one of those one-seater with a little
jump seat kind of in the back.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: You know, real small area back of the front seat, but I
can't . . .

SL: So was it a Model A Ford?

EEC: Well, it was something like that. It's, you know, [*laughs*]
[*unclear words*]. It was one of those earlier ones. I know that.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Almost—uh—buggy-like, you'd say? Was it more . . .

EEC: Well, nah, it wasn't that old but . . .

SL: Did it have a hardtop . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . or—hardtop.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Mh-hmm.

EEC: Yeah, it was a hardtop, but it's—but it was an older, you
know—can't remem—I can't remember what it was, actually.

[00:13:21] SL: Um—did their property border the White River?

EEC: Pretty close.

SL: Pretty close to it.

EEC: Not right on it but . . .

SL: But they were up on the hill probably . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . bluffs and stuff.

EEC: Pretty close, though. I mean, from now—now out there, the same place, you can pretty much see the lake if you . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . walk back to the back part of it.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: You can see the White River. Well, it's river—Beaver Lake now.

SL: Um—so—uh—you don't remember much about the—the Saturdays you spent there. [00:13:47] Is there anything that you—uh—would do when you went to see your grandparents that was different than when you were at home?

EEC: Uh—not really. I remember him, you know, butcherin' hogs [laughs] every year—uh—every year . . .

SL: Okay . . .

EEC: . . . [unclear words] . . .

SL: . . . now, we can talk about butcherin' hogs . . .

EEC: . . . to have meat, and he had a . . .

SL: . . . 'cause that's a . . .

EEC: . . . he had a house, a little shed, down there that he kept it in. You know, they'd—they just put salt on it and cure it. He—and I remember there was a shed down by the house that he kept

the—the pork sides or whatever. I remember that. That's one of the few things I remember about it, but I do remember that.

SL: Do you remember him scalding the hogs or . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. [*Laughs*] That whole business. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Yeah?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Uh . . .

EEC: Hang 'em up in a tree and . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And would neighbors come around, and—and—uh—I mean, it . . .

EEC: Yeah, generally, you'd have. . .

SL: . . . was kind of a gathering, wasn't it?

EEC: . . . generally, yeah, generally you'd have—they'd have that where'd be neighbors come and help, and in turn they'd go help them when they got ready—ready to do that so . . .

[00:14:41] SL: Did they do that hog stuff when there was a chill in the air, when it was gettin' ready for winter?

EEC: Yeah. Usually the fall when it's—yeah. You didn't want to do it in the summertime, for sure.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: It was usually in the fall, I believe, if I remember right.

SL: Um—so, they would slaughter that hog, and they would use every inch of it, wouldn't they?

EEC: Just about, yeah. [*Laughs*] Yeah. Just about.

SL: Um—so you ne—did you ever have to be physically a part of—uh—those hog days?

EEC: Not really, no. Got to watch. [*Laughs*]

SL: You got to watch.

EEC: Little bit too young. Yeah.

SL: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

EEC: But I remember watchin' it, you know.

[00:15:17] SL: Well, now, were there cousins your age—um—that—uh . . .

EEC: Not really.

SL: . . . that you and Earl . . .

EEC: Didn't really have any—well, some live in town of Springdale, you know . . .

SL: Mm-hmm.

EEC: . . . my uncle's boys. But none of 'em out—none lived out there.

SL: Mh-hmm.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So you didn't really get to play with them much or . . .

EEC: Well, yeah, in town if I—we could visit 'em, yeah.

SL: Mh-hmm.

EEC: Yeah. But not—they didn't live out there so . . .

[00:15:45] SL: Okay. So, do you remember anything that your grandfather may have talked to you about or [*EEC laughs*]—um—was there any music in their house?

EEC: Well, nah, he wasn't very—that musical. I don't remember. Don't think he was, but my—my grandfather was a—a really good—uh—good friend of my—my wife, now, her parents, her mother, her grandmother.

SL: Scuse me.

EEC: He was really good friends with them. He'd go down and help them at their farm there in Sonora. I remember that he did that, but I don't know. All I remember about it really.

[00:16:20] SL: Now, what was Linda's maiden name?

EEC: Cloer.

SL: Cloer?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: How you spell that?

EEC: *C-L-O-E-R*. Yeah.

SL: That's a . . .

EEC: Yeah, her dad was state senator for several years.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: You know, for Arkansas. Pretty well-known attorney in town so . . .

SL: Um . . .

EEC: Our—our families are kinda—we always knew each other 'cause we're in the community, you know.

[00:16:44] SL: Uh—well, we're gonna get to . . .

EEC: Get to that later. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . to you and Linda here a little bit later, but—um—do you remember Linda when you were growing up as a kid?

EEC: Not really until—'cause she lived a little closer into town.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: I don't really remember until rode the bus from Sonora to—to Springdale schools 'cause we went to—Earl and I went to the sixth grade in Sonora, the two-room country school.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: And after sixth grade, caught the bus in Springdale, so—and then we'd pick her up, Linda, there at her house. She was about eleven or twelve years old, I guess.

SL: So you were—you fell in love early with her, then.

EEC: [*Laughs*] I guess so, yeah. [*Laughter*] I spotted her pretty

early.

[00:17:22] SL: Yeah. Well—um—so—um—let's get back to your granddad. I'm—you know, I'm always looking for the oldest story . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that you can—that you can muster. Did he ever talk about any—uh—any of his life, or do you remember him—any nuggets of wisdom or . . .

EEC: I don't—I sure don't remember much about it, you know, 'cause, I mean, we were so young when he passed away, it wasn't a lot of time to get to know that and get—don't feel like I really even got to know him that well.

SL: So you were what? Only five or six, seven . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . maybe, when . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . when he passed away.

EEC: Yeah. So I don't really remember n—know him that well.

SL: And do you have any idea what he died of as?

EEC: I can't remember.

SL: Okay.

EEC: I can't remember.

[00:18:07] SL: All right. Well, let's talk about your grandmother then on—on your dad's side. And her name was?

EEC: Elizabeth.

SL: Elizabeth—uh—Cate. What—do you remember what her maiden name was?

EEC: Fink.

SL: Fink.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And where was she from? Was she from . . .

EEC: She was from around here.

SL: She was?

EEC: Yeah. There was some—yeah, there—a lot of people are kin, like, I think the Harps are some kin to 'em. I can't remember exactly.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: But yeah, she's from around here.

SL: So—um—she was pretty much a homemaker for . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . for your granddad.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Um . . .

EEC: We had more memories of my grandmother 'cause she moved

into town, to Springdale. We both spent a lot—used to spend a lot of time with her. Spend the night with her, and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

EEC: . . . I remember a lot about her, you know. The—she had a long time after he passed away. She . . .

SL: Oh.

EEC: . . . never remarried.

[00:18:56] SL: How—did—so how long did she stay at the farm? Or did she?

EEC: Well, not too much longer after that, after he . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: . . . passed away.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: No.

SL: Do you remember her doing laundry?

EEC: [*Laughs*] I should, and I don't, really.

SL: Yeah. What about any of her cookin'? Do you remember her . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. It was really good. Yeah.

SL: Is that out there at the farm, or in town is when you're . . .

EEC: More in—more in town. I remember that . . .

SL: More in town.

EEC: . . . 'cause Earl and I used to spend the night with her a lot,
yeah.

SL: Uh-huh. [00:19:23] Um—well, let's talk about later on when
she's in town, then. Um—I assume it was a regular kind of a
[19]50s house. Was it a new house that . . .

EEC: Just a little house.

SL: Little house.

EEC: Two—you know, probably kitchen, bedroom, livin' room. That
was about it.

SL: Uh-huh.

EEC: Yeah. Small, little house.

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

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah.

SL: . . . and gas and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . was it a paved street that she lived on?

EEC: I think it was then. I believe it was.

SL: That's pretty—that's pretty good.

EEC: It's over off of Crutcher Street there in town. I think it was
probably paved.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:04] SL: Well, surely can you remember some conversations

you had with her?

EEC: Oh, just your normal things, you know.

SL: Just the normal things. [*EEC laughs*] Did she ever talk about her mom and dad at all?

EEC: No. She didn't that much. I don't remember, no.

SL: What about her—did she have sisters and brothers and . . .

EEC: Yeah. She had a couple of sisters. I think, yeah, yeah, she did, one, at least one. I remember. Esther was her sister. But I can't remember the other.

SL: So you didn't really see them . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . just heard about them?

EEC: Well, we—yeah, we saw 'em. They lived in town.

SL: Oh, they did?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: They were in Springdale, too.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:20:41] SL: Well, let's see. So would you all spend the night with her, or would you . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Give me a routine. What—so on—I would assume that you went there on a Friday or Saturday . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . night when school wasn't happening.

EEC: Right.

SL: You'd get there early evening?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Would you . . .

EEC: Depends on when mom and dad brought 'em . . .

SL: . . . would she have something ready to . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . ready for you to eat?

EEC: Oh, usually, yeah. Always somethin'.

SL: Always. Now, see, that's . . .

EEC: And she—you know, folks would drop us off, and yeah, you usually eat. It wasn't a whole lot to do back then, you know what I mean?

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I can't remember what we did, actually. Probably sit around and listen to radio or somethin'.

SL: Okay.

EEC: No TV.

SL: Well, now, there probably wasn't a TV when . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . she first moved in there, right?

EEC: Oh no.

[00:21:26] SL: But radio is big-time technology in the [*EEC laughs*]
early days.

EEC: Yeah. It was.

SL: I know you probably had some radio time at home, too.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: But on the weekends, do you remember—have any idea what—
were they the same programs that you listened to at home?

EEC: Yeah. The *Grand Ole Opry*.

SL: *Grand Ole Opry*.

EEC: That was—that's Saturday night, usually. Yeah.

SL: And she loved that, too?

EEC: Oh yeah. She liked that, too.

SL: So was there anyone that you really liked during those early
Opry broadcasts? [*EEC laughs*] Was there a favorite . . .

EEC: I . . .

SL: . . . personality or band . . .

EEC: . . . oh, I . . .

SL: . . . or . . .

EEC: . . . I don't know. I just—they were all those—Ernest Tubb and
all those—June Carter and just all those—Roy Acuff and all

those original ones, you know, were on there. I really didn't have a favorite.

SL: Now, I'm thinkin' that you're probably, what? Eight or nine years old when—seven, eight, nine when you start visitin' your grandma in town?

EEC: Yeah. I'd say so. Around that.

SL: Do you remember any of the comedy shows or any other [*EEC laughs*] shows that were on the radio?

EEC: Nah, I can't, really. [*Laughs*]

SL: It was mostly music that y'all . . .

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: . . . tuned into.

EEC: Yeah. She mighta listened to some comedy shows. I can't remember. I'm sure she did.

[00:22:52] SL: And when your mom and your grandma were doin' laundry, that stuff got hung out on the line, didn't it?

EEC: Oh yeah. Always. Yeah. Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: See, it's hard for people to imagine not having a washer and a dryer . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . you know, or a stove that you can just turn on.

EEC: Right.

[00:23:14] SL: You know, I would assume that your grandparents probably had wood-burning stoves [*unclear word*].

EEC: Oh yeah. Sure.

SL: The oven that you got placed in in Marshall, I'm just wondering was that really a . . .

EEC: It wasn't electric, I'm sure

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I don't know what it was for sure.

SL: Yeah. It probably was not gas either.

EEC: No. [*Laughs*]

[00:23:33] SL: But so, did your grandmother have a car?

EEC: She never drove.

SL: She never drove?

EEC: No.

SL: So if she needed to go somewhere, was it your mom that took her?

EEC: Well, usually her—she had her—another son—well, my dad's brother lived there in town. My—actually, couple three blocks from her, so they pretty much took her when she needed to go somewhere.

SL: And was that Leo?

EEC: Yeah—no, that's Lawrence.

SL: Lawrence.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Okay.

EEC: He lived not too far from her.

SL: Do you remember what Lawrence did for a livin'?

EEC: He worked in a grocery store most of the time. Just—he had some rent houses, but mainly he just worked as a checker at a grocery store. That's what he did.

[00:24:21] SL: So, Springdale at that time in the early—late [19]40s, early [19]50s, was not a big town. It was relatively big in the way of considering country towns.

EEC: Right.

SL: It was bigger than Marshall, I'm sure.

EEC: Yeah. Well, maybe. It's about the same.

SL: About the same?

EEC: Yeah.

[00:24:44] SL: Your school, the two-room school, now, I believe Earl told me that one side was first through third and the other one was fourth through sixth.

EEC: Right. Right.

SL: And you had two different teachers.

EEC: Right. They were sisters. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: They were sisters?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Well, do you remember their names?

EEC: Gosh, well, Kilgore was their last name, but I can't remember their first name.

SL: Oh, that's right. Okay.

EEC: Yeah, I can't remember, but Earl might remember the first name. I do know Kilgore was her last name. They drove from Fayetteville to teach every day.

SL: I have a feeling I knew them.

EEC: Probably did.

SL: Or one of them.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I think I may have dated one of their daughters.

EEC: Really?

SL: Yeah. I think so.

EEC: Possibility.

[00:25:32] SL: Possibility. So, take me through a typical day at school growin' up. First of all, how did you get there? And how far away was it from y'all's home?

SL: About mile and a half, I guess, two miles. Maybe not quite two miles. Not far at all. Right there where the Sonora Baptist

Church is. That's where it was, right there at that—right there, so it's not that far. We used to walk some of the time, and sometimes our dad would let us out, but sometimes we walked. Usually, we walked home after school, just about every day 'cause it wasn't that far. It wasn't like a big road then so . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Pretty safe.

SL: Your mom would pack you a lunch?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Okay.

EEC: Yeah, there wasn't any [*laughs*] cafeteria. That's for sure. Had no money.

[00:26:21] SL: How many kids were in that school?

EEC: I don't remember. There wasn't that many. I think our—when we graduated in the sixth grade, I think there, maybe, there was six [*laughs*] kids, maybe, you know, total.

SL: So maybe a total of thirty kids in that building?

EEC: Yeah. I would think so, yeah. Probably somethin' like thirty or forty. Yeah.

SL: Well, what time did school start? What time did you have to be there by?

EEC: I don't remember. Probably . . .

SL: It was early though, wasn't it?

EEC: Yeah. Probably eight, I'm sure—I imagine. I'm not sure.
Probably eight.

SL: And so, you'd probably do lessons for a couple of hours and then get a recess, or how'd that work?

EEC: Yeah. Usually had a recess and then a lunch hour. But the—yeah, the teacher had to take turns with the grades. She'd start with the first grade, and then she'd move to the second grade and then the third grade, like one at a time, so it wasn't, like, constant. And while she was teachin' the other grade, you'd be workin' on your—she'd give you somethin' to do, you know.

SL: On your assignment.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And it was the basic stuff? Reading, writing . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . arithmetic . . .

EEC: Basic stuff.

SL: Was there a blackboard?

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah. [*Laughs*]

[00:27:35] SL: And what about the heating in the building?

EEC: It was a woodstove, far as I know. Believe it was. Pretty sure.

SL: Did the boys ever have to bring in wood or . . .

EEC: I don't remember that, if they did or not. I really don't. I don't remember much about that as far as the wintertime what all we got by with [*unclear words*]. I don't know or remember.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: It mighta been these radiator things. I can't remember for sure. You know those radiators that—what do you call 'em? I can't . . .

SL: The steam radiators?

EEC: Yeah. It mighta been that. I don't remember for sure.

SL: Have a boiler down . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . in the basement?

EEC: I haven't thought . . .

SL: Did the school—did the building have a basement?

EEC: No. I don't think it did.

SL: Yeah. It probably didn't have . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . a boiler, then.

EEC: No. I don't think it did. It was probably wood.

SL: Had—but it had electricity.

EEC: Yeah.

[00:28:19] SL: That's good. And as a first grader, you would
actually get to hear second and third grade being . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . taught on your side of the . . .

EEC: You know, and you knew what was . . .

SL: . . . wall.

EEC: . . . comin' up, yeah, next . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . year 'cause you pretty much hear all of it.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Same way, fourth, fifth, sixth.

[00:28:38] SL: What about the other kids in the school? Did you
get—did you have good relationships with the . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. They're all friends, you know. Yeah.

SL: Was there—what'd y'all do for recess?

EEC: Oh, usually go out and play tag or whatever. One [*laughs*] one
time at lunch hour, we decided—we'd heard there was
alligators down the road, about two miles down the road, that
there was a bunch of alligators down there in a creek. So we,
about six or seven of us, took off down there during lunch
hour. Course, we didn't realize what time it was. We didn't
have watches. End up, we were late comin' back, and we got

in big trouble. There wasn't any alligators, but it was funny.

[*SL laughs*] [00:29:22] They had—in school we had a lot—we had plays that we did, you know. Fact, Earl and I, the first time we were ever on stage, we were dressed with blackface, singin' a Negro minstrel. What it was called at the time. It was called Negro minstrel. It was interesting. Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Couldn't get away with that now.

EEC: No. No. We had black stuff on our face and sang "Shortnin' Bread," you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: It was funny. Nah, nah. They wouldn't let you do that now for anything.

[00:29:51] SL: But you were comfortable doin'—you were comfortable being on the stage and singin'.

EEC: Yeah, but not really the first time. [*EEC laughs*] I was scared.

SL: Not really, yeah?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: But everyone did that, though.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: All the classmates had different roles . . .

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: . . . and different . . .

EEC: 'Cause they wasn't that many of 'em so . . .

SL: Right.

EEC: Amazin' now to think back that they were able to put on a show with that—just that many kids.

[00:30:13] SL: So y'all would put a show together. The classes would put a show together, and then would you perform them there at the school?

EEC: Yeah. They'd have it at night.

SL: And all the parents . . .

EEC: Yeah. The parents come and see it . . .

SL: . . . and families would come in.

EEC: Yeah. That's what it was, yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: Was it kind of a potluck, or did they . . .

EEC: I don't remember about that . . .

SL: . . . bring pies or any of that . . .

EEC: I don't remember about that.

SL: . . . kinda stuff.

EEC: They might have. I don't remember. Probably did.

[00:30:40] SL: Any other shows that you remember doin' in that building?

EEC: Not really. Not in that building. The Grange Hall down there, you know, used to be called the Grange? Was this community

organization. They used to have a lot of things, and we'd sing for them a few times.

SL: As grade-schoolers?

EEC: Yeah, or—yeah, maybe a little later than that.

[00:31:01] SL: Well, let's talk about the Grange. You said that was a—was that a local farming . . .

EEC: Yeah. Most . . .

SL: . . . organization?

EEC: . . . a lot of the communities like Sonora, they had 'em back then. I don't even know what their purpose was, but they used to have just kind of a—what do you call it? I don't even know what you'd call it now. But just an organization where people got together and meet, and farmers talk about things, and they'd have people come and show 'em demonstrations about farming and things and—just a community to, you know—somethin' for people to do.

[00:31:33] SL: So now, that's interesting to me. Have people come in and show 'em some stuff. That—I wonder if that was part of the Extension Service.

EEC: Yeah. It was a lot. Fact, they had—used to have like a dairy extension service where dairy would come and show films of a—they'd bring chocolate milk and cheese and crackers, and

they'd show films of dairy cattle and how to—you know, newest things were happening, you know, far as feeding 'em, takin' care of 'em, whatever. It was through the Farmer's Extension Service or the co-op or whatever.

SL: Those were very, very popular, weren't they?

EEC: Yeah, they were. Really popular back then.

SL: I mean, everybody . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . showed up.

EEC: Yeah. Usually had a good crowd. Back then you didn't have as much TV, and you know, you need things to do.

SL: Well, you didn't have any until . . .

EEC: You didn't have any, and there just wasn't that many things to do, so this is . . .

SL: So . . .

EEC: . . . a way to entertainment, you know.

[00:32:22] SL: So they'd bring a film reel?

EEC: Oh yeah. The old-time film reel.

SL: That's so great.

EEC: Yeah, usually—sometimes they'd show a cartoon before it, course, for all the kids, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: That was something different.

SL: So that was really a big . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . a big deal.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: A big event.

EEC: Yeah, it was.

[00:32:43] SL: [*Exhales*] Did the school have a piano in it?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, it did.

SL: And both the teachers played or . . .

EEC: I think that one of 'em did. I can't remember if both of 'em did or not. I think one of 'em did. I can't remember for sure.

SL: So part of your grade school education was music, too. I mean, did they . . .

EEC: They didn't . . .

SL: . . . set aside some time to . . .

EEC: . . . they didn't really teach music that I remember. There just were those programs we did. I don't—I can't remember if they really taught music or not.

[00:33:09] SL: So you didn't set aside some time to learn how to sing, other than for the shows?

EEC: No. We had to do that on our own. Well, we learned that from

kinda—just by ear, [*laughs*] you know what I mean. Or dad takin' us to square dances around the neighborhoods, all these square dances, and we'd go set—watch the guys playin' for the dan—square dancers. There's real, live music, you know, guitar and fiddle. We'd watch them. And banjo players, we'd watch them. There was some guys around the neighborhood who played, and we'd go watch 'em. Try to pick up somethin'.

SL: Baker Brothers?

EEC: Yeah. I remember them. They were part of it, yeah.

SL: Any other names you can remember of the players?

EEC: Yeah. I can't think of this one guy. I can't remember his name now. Played banjo. I can't remember his name. That'd be a thing we'd do at some Saturday night or Friday night, you know.

[00:33:57] SL: So that was—I mean, was your mom as interested in goin' out and doin' the square dancing, too? I mean, was it a . . .

EEC: Yeah, my mom and dad, they both did. I mean, that's why they went, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: Yeah. And so, they . . .

EEC: They—the players were probably the babysitters for us, you know what I mean, 'cause they could let us sit there and watch

those guys play, and they'd get up and square dance.

SL: Was there any particular musician that you [*knocking sound*] really liked to watch?

EEC: Not that much really, you know. There weren't any really hot players, but they played enough, you know, that—you know, for a square dance, it didn't take that much but . . .

SL: Do you remember who called the dances?

EEC: No. I can't. [*Laughs*]

SL: 'Cause that's a big deal with . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . square dancing.

EEC: It was a big deal. I can't remember who did that.

SL: The cadence and the . . .

EEC: Yeah. The whole deal. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I don't remember that. But you go to somebody's house.

They'd take all the furniture out. You'd have one room. That's what they—where you square dance.

[00:34:47] SL: So you actually did the dance in the home.

EEC: I didn't dance. They did.

SL: But, they did, yeah.

EEC: Yeah. Oh yeah. It always at someone's house. Yeah.

SL: How much of a turnout did they have as far as dancers?

EEC: Pretty good. It was pretty good, if I remember right.

SL: Twenty?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah?

EEC: Yeah. Sometimes more than others, but I can remember that, about, I'd say that.

SL: I'm tryin' to think. So this would probably happen at dusk or so? You'd . . .

EEC: Yeah. Sometimes it . . .

SL: Or you said you'd get there while there was daylight, and you'd . . .

EEC: Yeah, usually, usually. I don't—I remember it being at nighttime though.

SL: By the time they fired up . . .

EEC: You know, sometimes it'd end up by midnight [*laughs*] by the time they got through.

SL: Did they make it a potluck, as well? Do you remember your mom bringin' . . .

EEC: I think they probably . . .

SL: . . . bowls of food or any . . .

EEC: . . . I think they probably did. I don't remember sure.

[00:35:35] SL: So, your recollection is is that radiowise, you were
listenin' to *Grand Ole Opry* . . .

EEC: Mm-hmm. Only thing we knew about.

SL: . . . as a kid.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And then live musicwise, it was square dancing and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and the shows that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you put together in the two-room schoolhouse.

EEC: Right. And of course, when you got in high school, you had
your talent contest and things, you know, or different venues
to—things that, you know, that you did but . . .

SL: Well, I'm trying to keep you in grade school here as much as
possible.

EEC: Yeah. That's about it in grade school, you know, the square
dancin' and, yeah. That was it.

[00:36:14] Eric Johnson: Is there a time—do you remember not
bein' interested in music?

EEC: No. [*Laughter*] Well . . .

SL: Did it . . .

EEC: . . . before five years—I don't know how old we were, ten or

twelve. We'd—my dad had traded a walnut log or somethin' for an old guitar, and it only had two strings on top, and Earl and I were fightin' over who could play it. And we would actually pick out a little bit of the—so he got strings for it. And that—he knew then that we were interested in that, so he ended up [*unclear word*] buyin' a banjo, and anyway, from there, that's when we started. Just picked it up mainly by ear just—or watchin' other guys.

SL: Well, now, you all also had a piano in the house, didn't you?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Now, I gotta tell you, Ernie, that's kind of unusual . . .

EEC: Is it?

SL: . . . in a farmhouse to . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . to have a piano.

EEC: It was an old one, you know, but it was—it wasn't a great one, but it was okay.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: It wasn't the best but . . .

[00:37:07] SL: And no one in the house really was a piano player.

EEC: No.

SL: So, did either you or Earl ever have any piano lessons?

EEC: I started to one time, and I can't remember if I did it or not, but [*laughs*] ?I can't—I don't know?.

SL: You got—you flunked out of piano school.

EEC: I think I did. [*SL laughs*] I don't remember if I even took—I can't remember now if I took lessons or not. Actually, I didn't play piano till we started our little combos in high school 'cause I always played guitar. It was rhythm guitar, and we decided we would make it a little—sound a little different, less, you know—so I just started playin' piano. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Well, it's a great instrument.

EEC: Yeah.

[00:37:50] SL: So, did you—did you all mess with the piano before junior high or high school when you were . . .

EEC: Not that much, really.

SL: . . . goin' to grade school. It just kinda sat there.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean. Did anyone ever . . .

EEC: It wasn't there in grade school. I think she mighta gotten it later on, you know. We didn't have one in grade school.

SL: Oh, you didn't?

EEC: No.

SL: Okay.

EEC: No, we didn't. We didn't even have a guitar hardly then
but . . .

[00:38:14] SL: When did you all—when did your dad get that guitar?

EEC: I bet we were about ten years old is my guess, but I'm not
sure.

SL: So that puts you in fifth grade, probably.

EEC: Yeah. I think somethin' like that, yeah. It was after the
minstrel thing.

SL: Yeah. And let's see. At ten, you're in 1952, so what kind of
music—is it still just *Grand Ole Opry* that you're still listening to
in . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . [Nineteen] fifty-two?

EEC: Yeah.

[00:38:44] SL: Were you aware of any kind of other kind of music
that was going on besides the *Opry*? What about big band or
classical music or . . .

EEC: It wasn't part of our [*laughs*] lifestyle.

SL: It wasn't in . . .

EEC: It just wasn't, no.

SL: . . . it wasn't on the palette, huh?

EEC: Nah, it wasn't. In the country, I mean, that's all you heard.
Really was.

SL: Well, that probably had a lot to do with the power of the radio
station . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that was broadcasting it.

EEC: Well, that too, I guess. Yeah.

[00:39:11] SL: Describe the radio that you were listening to.
What'd it look like?

EEC: It was one of those big, bout so high, you know, huge, huge
radio.

SL: So, it had good bass. It sounded good.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah. It sounded good. Yeah.

SL: Did it have a record player in it, too?

EEC: Nah, this one didn't, that we had. Didn't have one.

SL: Do you remember, did the family get a record player?

EEC: Yeah. We finally did. I can't remember when that was.

SL: Back . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . when you were going to . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Springdale schools, probably.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah. Then, and then Earl and I would get some ourselves, whatever.

[00:39:48] SL: Let's talk a little bit about life at home then, growin' up. I'm still keepin' you in grade school. Okay?

EEC: Right.

SL: So, were you given chores that you had to do around the house? What was your contribution to keepin' the household going?

EEC: Well, not much at—that much at that young age, you know. Later on we had to—course, we had cows and horses and sheep and just everything, animals, to take care of. Used to have to do that, you know. My dad would work, and he'd tell us to go out and pick up rocks or [*laughs*] whatever on the farm, whatever, when we were a little older. But far as in grade school, I don't remember doing much far as chores, remember much about that.

SL: So you guys were kinda spared . . .

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: . . . work around the house.

EEC: Yeah. It wasn't really—nah.

[00:40:39] SL: Now, the kitchen in that house, did it have—was it a

gas stove?

EEC: Yeah. I believe it was gas, yeah.

[00:40:48] SL: And you had a refrigerator?

EEC: Mh-hmm.

SL: It wasn't an icebox?

EEC: Right—frigerator.

SL: Now, I bet your grandparents' refrigerator was prob—used to be an icebox . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . if they had one.

EEC: Right. I don't remember much about that. I'm sure it was.

SL: Well, now, let me think about that for a second. You know, getting ice out in the country was probably a big deal.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: So it may—they may not have had one at all.

EEC: May not've had one. Probably didn't. You're right.

[00:41:14] SL: Maybe kept the stuff cool in the well? Do you remember a well?

EEC: Well, they had the shed I was talkin' about where he kept the pork thing was kinda pretty cool. It was kinda down in a hillside. Pretty cool. Yeah, they had that type things like that, well houses, that were cool. I remember that.

SL: Did they have a pump, or did they have a bucket with a rope that they got the water with?

EEC: It was a pump.

SL: Pump?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So the—it was an actual little house that the . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . protected the water there.

EEC: Yeah.

[00:41:47] SL: Well, when you were—before you were given duties around the house, I would assume that you would have homework to do?

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: Maybe.

EEC: Sure. [*Laughs*]

SL: In grade school . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . did you have homework?

EEC: Yep.

SL: And was that something that you had to take care of when you got home?

EEC: Yeah. Usually. It's just pretty automatic you do that.

SL: Was there—your mom or dad—did anyone help you with your homework? Did . . .

EEC: I'm sure they did, [*laughs*] yeah.

SL: You don't—do you remember any particularly . . .

EEC: Not that much, but ?yeah?.

SL: . . . difficult . . .

EEC: Not . . .

SL: . . . schooling that you had?

EEC: . . . not from that time, I don't really, no.

SL: Okay.

EEC: Probably should—probably was. I just can't remember it.

[00:42:30] SL: Let me ask you this. When you'd get up in the morning, did you make your own bed?

EEC: [*Laughs*] I don't know.

SL: You don't remember?

EEC: I don't think so.

SL: Probably not . . .

EEC: I don't really . . .

SL: . . . if you don't remember . . .

EEC: . . . I really not . . .

SL: . . . 'cause you would remember.

EEC: I would. I really doubt we did.

SL: So your mom . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . did that.

EEC: Oh yeah.

[00:42:46] SL: And let's see, now. Did y'all have a sister?

EEC: Uh-huh.

SL: Now, how old was she?

EEC: She was about five years younger than us, I guess. Yeah.

SL: Do you remember her getting engaged with the home stuff earlier? I mean, did anyone help your mom run that house?

EEC: I'm sure she did when she got older. I know she did, my sister, when she got older, but not, you know, 'cause she was five years behind us so . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. She helped her.

SL: I mean, most of what I hear, you know, is pretty—guys did guy things, and girls did girl things . . .

EEC: That's it.

SL: . . . in the house.

EEC: That's right. [*Laughs*]

SL: Runnin' the house was pretty much up to the women.

EEC: Exactly.

SL: And doin' the wood and plowin' and takin' care of the . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . livestock, all that heavier-lifting stuff . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . was done by the guys.

EEC: Yeah, unless they didn't have a guy, you know.

SL: Right.

EEC: Sometimes that happened. But that, yeah, that's true.

[00:43:48] SL: Do you [*exhales*—did your dad ever do any plowing, or was that—was the garden that big?

EEC: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: What kind of plow did he have?

EEC: Just a regular plow.

SL: Was it . . .

EEC: It hooked behind a horse and . . .

SL: Okay.

EEC: . . . pull it. Yeah.

SL: Now, see, there's . . .

EEC: He didn't have a tractor for years, you know.

SL: So, you remember seeing your dad . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: Did you take water to him, or did you enga—did y'all engage at

all?

EEC: Oh yeah. We was usually around there when he did it. Fact, he'd let us try a little bit once in a while to plow, get behind the plow. [*Laughs*] Yeah. Harder than it looks.

SL: Yeah. What's . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the hardest part about it?

EEC: Just keepin' it straight, you know.

SL: Keepin' it straight.

EEC: Keepin' it straight. And not lettin' it go too deep, you know. Keep doin' the right deal. Yeah, he used to always do that.

SL: He did, or you all did?

EEC: He did.

SL: He did.

EEC: Yeah. Sometimes we'd—he'd get us—let us help a little bit.

[00:44:47] SL: Uh-huh. Okay. So you get home from school, and you get your homework done, and then what do you do?

EEC: Well, we would play outside, ride horses, or you know, just things like that that you like to do.

SL: So there were at least a couple of horses?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And . . .

EEC: Or we'd play music, you know, whatever, once we had our instruments.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Play music.

SL: But that didn't really happen till you were in the Springdale schools, right?

EEC: Yeah. Actually, that's true.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Junior high.

[00:45:24] SL: So in grade school, y'all could saddle up and ride the horses?

EEC: Well, no, not—no, we were too young then. I'm gettin' ahead of myself, [*laughs*] you know. When we were that young, no, he wouldn't let us do that.

[00:45:36] SL: What about—I mean, you're pretty close to the river, certainly within walking distance. Did you spend much time down on the river as a kid?

EEC: Not by ourself, no. They wouldn't let us do that. Actually, it was—then the river's farther than that, actually. You could walk there, but it was quite a ways. Now . . .

SL: I guess since they dammed it up, it kinda backed up . . .

EEC: Yeah, now with the new road and the way they dammed it up,

it's close to the—where we were.

[00:46:08] SL: Let me think, now. So, I'm just tryin' to figure out exactly what y'all were doin' . . .

EEC: In grade school?

SL: . . . in grade school. I mean, [*EEC laughs*] were there any organizations, any rural organizations . . .

EEC: Not for little—that young, no.

SL: Not that young?

EEC: No.

SL: And what about sports? Did you have any interest in sports growin' up in grade school?

EEC: Well . . .

SL: Did you . . .

EEC: . . . well, once in a while they'd play baseball, once in a while in grade school. Little bit of baseball. That's about it at that age, you know.

SL: Did you all have your own mitts and . . .

EEC: Nah, I don't remember havin' any. [*Laughs*]

SL: You didn't have any then?

EEC: I did later, but not in grade school.

SL: Yeah. [00:47:01] Well, let's talk a little bit about your dad then as you—and your first—do—what is the earliest memory

of—you have of your father?

EEC: Gosh, that's hard to remember, for sure.

SL: Well, just remember there's not a wrong answer here.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: If you think of an earlier memory later on, you can tell me,
so . . .

EEC: Yeah. I remember that we were with—built the house that Earl lives in now. I can remember him—before that, we lived in a little house next to it, a little bitty, tiny house. I remember that, and I do remember where—the other place we came from. I just have faint memories of it. And I don't remember much about what he did, what he was doin' the daytime or anything. But he was a carpenter, and you know, so I don't know. Most of my memories are after we moved up to where Earl's place was, from six years old on, but . . .

SL: Okay.

EEC: . . . I can't remember exactly. Just all the common things, you know. He'd go to work, come back, or he'd be plowin', or he'd be takin' care of the cows or whatever. I just remember all that stuff.

[00:48:14] SL: Do you remember him ever talkin' about his day at the table? I mean, you know . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . a lot of times that dinner, breakfast and dinner, were kind of the family times to let everyone know what everyone's doin' . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . or how everyone's doin' or what they've heard and the, you know, the family news and the neighborhood news and what was goin' on. Do you remember any discussions around the breakfast or dinner table?

EEC: Not that much. I know they did but the—when he would work for the insurance company, you know, do adjusting of things after a storm or something, he'd have to go see a damage, and he'd come back talking about that, you know, but you know, before that I don't remember that much, you know.

SL: It sou—you know, it sounds like to me that y'all were pretty well watched after as youngsters. [*EEC laughs*]

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: I mean, not being able to go down the river, you know . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . by yourselves is one indicator.

EEC: Oh yeah, there was rules. You know, we had to—you had to mind. You know, you had to be . . .

[00:49:14] SL: Well, now, did you ever get in any trouble?

EEC: Not that much, you know. ?One? alligator thing we did, that wasn't our parents.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: No, I don't—not that much, you know. I'm sure, you know, like any other kids, you know, if you did something you wasn't supposed to do but . . .

[00:49:28] SL: Any—do you remember any dramatic things happening when you were in Sonora as far as accidents or any kinda tragedies, not necessarily within your family but in the community? Do you remember any kinda news that kinda got you?

EEC: I'm tryin' to think about that. I'm not sure about that.

SL: You know, I just had a thought. It kinda reminds me of, oh, what's the song where they're—it's got Billie Joe McAllister, and they're . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah.

SL: . . . you know, "pass the black-eyed peas" and the . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . all that, you know, so I'm imagining . . .

EEC: Talkin' about scandals or something?

SL: Yeah. Or just whatever was going on in the community.

EEC: I just don't remember much about that, really, that there was anything. Pretty common, everyday life, you know.

[00:50:29] SL: Did y'all have chairs or bench seats around your table?

EEC: Chairs.

SL: Chairs. Kay. [*EEC laughs*] Well, I mean, you know . . .

EEC: Yeah, I ?agree?.

SL: . . . there's a lot of folks that I interview, and they sat on benches . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . mainly . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . 'cause there were a lot of kids . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. That's right.

SL: . . . and it was easier.

EEC: Right. Well, best I remember it was chairs, but I could be wrong.

[00:50:54] SL: Did you do your homework at the dining table?

EEC: I don't even remember that, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: Man.

EEC: You're talkin' to somebody old here. [*Laughter*] Can't remember that far back. I probably did. There was a table.

That's probably what we did, dining room table. I'm sure it was.

SL: Was there any subject that you had a hard time with, or was there any subject in school that you really liked?

EEC: Not any particular. Not necessarily, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Grade school was just your, like you say, you know, readin', writing, and arithmetic.

SL Arithmetic. Uh-huh.

EEC: I didn't really have any favorite.

[00:51:39] SL: Let's talk a little bit about the church stuff then. Y'all would ordinarily go to the local Baptist church . . .

EEC: Usually, yeah.

SL: . . . there at Sonora. But you were talkin' about a Christian Scientist church that your . . .

EEC: That's my grandmother's.

SL: Grandmother's.

EEC: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Okay, now, can you remember a difference between those two churches?

EEC: Nah, I was too young to know the difference. I really didn't know. Now the—you do know a difference now, but I didn't

know what it was.

SL: So, what service would you go to? The noon or the early or the morning service at Baptist?

EEC: We'd usually go to the Sunday school and the regular service but night—very seldom went to the night service.

SL: And on Sunday afternoons after church, what did y'all do?

EEC: What age? [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, give me your earliest memory and anything else that . . .

EEC: Oh, just play with kids and stuff. Play outside.

SL: Would you—would the families gather around the church after service and have . . .

EEC: Well, once, maybe once in while they . . .

SL: . . . meals?

EEC: . . . once in a while they did. Every, maybe, couple of months, every couple of months, they would have a—some kind of a meal or somethin'.

SL: Social?

EEC: Yeah, they would do that but—not—wasn't a regular thing.

SL: Did y'all ever have the preacher over for dinner?

EEC: I don't remember it . . .

SL: Don't remember?

EEC: . . . if we did, you know.

[00:53:05] SL: And what about revivals? Do you . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . do you remember revivals?

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: And were they done at the church, or would they . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . set up at . . .

EEC: Well, they would—some—once in a while, there'd be people set up tents, you know, out there, but we hardly ev—we didn't go to those. But usually at the church.

SL: But you didn't—did you ever attend any of the revivals at the . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . church?

EEC: Few of 'em, we did.

SL: Were they different than a regular church service?

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: How were they different?

EEC: Well, I would say different maybe—some ways different because, you know, try and attract people in and get new people and stuff, you know, different preacher and different—so, in that sense it was different.

[00:53:47] SL: Do you remember any of the preachers, growin' up?

EEC: Yeah, I member a Taylor and a—I kinda remember their faces. I don't remember much about 'em, you know. Fact, the Jim Blair, you know, is from—you know who Jim Blair?

SL: Yes.

EEC: He was a preacher at one time. And he come out at Sonora and preach for a while. I remember that distinctively. We were a lot . . .

SL: How'd he do?

EEC: We're—good. We were a little older then, though. I—that's—that wasn't grade school. It was a little older.

[00:54:19] SL: Yeah. Well, I mean, let's just go ahead and open it up then, as far as the church stuff goes. Was there more music involved in the revivals? Was there more entertainment?

EEC: ?Oh, depending? on who came and not necessarily, you know—generally, you had—sometimes these guys'd bring somebody with 'em that did the music. But most the times just an ordinary person that played, usually that played the—usually on Sunday mornin'. Usually they played piano or whatever.

SL: Did either one of you all, you or Earl, ever [*knocking sound*] play music at the church?

EEC: No. Oh yeah, I have in church but not that young age.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Later on I did, yeah, but not that age.

SL: You've got someone at the door. We can go ahead and stop.

[Tape stopped]

[00:55:09] SL: Okay, Ernie.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: We are on our second tape, so you've survived the first hour.

[EEC laughs] All right, let's see, now. Refresh my memory.

Where were we before we took our break? Do you remember,

Trey, what we were talkin' about?

Trey Marley: Well, we were talking about the school and . . .

Joy Endicott: Preachers, Jim Blair.

[00:55:31] TM: . . . preachers. You know, we mentioned Jim Blair.

Was there anything else about Jim Blair [*unclear words*] . . .

SL: Oh yeah, let's talk a little bit about Jim Blair and his preachin'.

You know, now that's—I vaguely remember him say—we've interviewed Jim.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And actually spent two days with him, and I vaguely remember him saying something about that, about preachin' at one point.

EEC: Yeah, he wasn't like the regular. He's just a substitute, but I

remember him comin' quite a few times out there.

SL: I bet he was great.

EEC: Yeah, he was good.

SL: I mean, that guy . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . can tell a story, and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . he can talk . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and he's comfortable with . . .

EEC: Yeah, yeah, he was good.

SL: . . . with that. He's also off-the-scale brilliant so . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] I guess so.

SL: Smart guy.

EEC: Yeah.

[00:56:13] SL: So that's interesting. He would go to the Sonora

Baptist Church. And how big is—was that church back then?

EEC: It's still there.

SL: Still [*EEC laughs*] the same size?

EEC: Well, part of it. I mean, they got—they added on the side of it.

SL: Maybe hold a hundred people?

EEC: It's just a one-room—yeah, at the most. A hundred people.

Yeah, you'd be packin' a hundred people in, I bet.

SL: Yeah. And . . .

EEC: The rock part out there is still the old church.

SL: So was it pews? Did the church have pews, or . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . or did it have chairs . . .

EEC: Pews.

SL: . . . folding chairs?

EEC: It was pews.

SL: And was there—I'm sure there was a piano in that church.

EEC: Yeah. No organ. Just a piano.

SL: No organ. A piano.

EEC: Yeah.

[00:56:52] SL: Uh-huh. And there's probably a choir?

EEC: No.

SL: No choir?

EEC: [*Laughs*] No. Not then.

SL: Did the preacher—was he kinda the—also the music director? I mean, would you hear the preacher singin' . . .

EEC: I can't . . .

SL: . . . right along with the . . .

EEC: . . . I can't . . .

SL: . . . with the congregation?

EEC: . . . remember now for sure. Some, you know, some of 'em did. Some didn't, but seems like that there was just a music—the director of music, whatever you call it, would get up and say "We're gonna do this song," or whatever. But that's all I remember about it.

[00:57:26] SL: So did you and Earl sing right along with the rest of the congregation or . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: You did?

EEC: We—oh yeah.

SL: Did you have favorite hymns?

EEC: Well, all the good ones. You know "Amazing Grace" and all those, you know, the pretty much the traditional gos—you know, gospel songs.

SL: "In the Garden" and . . .

EEC: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

[00:57:54] SL: So do you remember anything about Jim Blair's preachin' other than he was good or . . .

EEC: Nah, I just don't member that much about it. I just . . .

SL: Did he ever—was there ever any fire-and-brimstone kinda stuff?

EEC: Yeah, he wasn't really that type of preacher, you know, 'cause he's pretty—real intelligent, I mean, but he was good.

SL: And was your—do you remember the regular preacher's name?

EEC: Well, was one Jack Taylor at one time. I'm tryin' to think of the others. It's hard to think right now about it, what his . . .

SL: Was Jack closer to a fire-and-brimstone guy or . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . or did that mostly happen with the visiting . . .

EEC: Usually revivals that . . .

SL: . . . revivalists?

EEC: Yeah, that'd be more of that. That's right. Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: Did it ever get you riled up? Did you—did the . . .

EEC: No.

SL: No?

EEC: [*Laughs*] No.

[00:58:43] SL: Okay, well, let's talk a little bit about your baptism.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Did you—were you baptized in the church or down at the river?

EEC: Sonora'd be a—I guess the river. Actually been baptized twice, you know what I mean. [*Laughs*]

SL: First one didn't take?

EEC: I don't know about that. [*Laughter*] I guess it did, but anyway, just later on in life when Linda and I went to church in Springdale, we baptized there so—but I was at an earlier age. I think it mighta been the river. I was really young, so I don't remember whether it was.

SL: Do you remember goin' to the river baptisms later when you were . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . older?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Talk to me about that a little bit. How'd that—how'd—what were the logistics on that [*unclear words*]? [*EEC laughs*] Well, first of all, do you remember the hole that you went to? Where it . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was usually down there at the White River at Head's Ford or used to be called Head's Ford. It was a area there where's fairly shallow, but you could wade out in it a little deeper. Seem like it was—that's what it was called then was Head's Ford. Well, it's not there now 'cause of the lake but—and they'd gather so many people. It usually wasn't that many. But they'd usually be four or five people get baptized, maybe less than that sometimes.

SL: Uh-huh. Did they sing at those baptisms?

EEC: Ah, I can't remember if they did or not. I can't remember that.
I guess they did. I can't remember that part of it.

[01:00:10] SL: Let me think about this. So did everyone just drive down there, or did they meet at the church and—I mean, how close was the church to the river? Did . . .

EEC: Well, when the—yeah, Sonora wasn't that far, you know. I guess they just set a certain time, and then people'd drive down there.

SL: Drive down there and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . just show up and do it.

EEC: It'd be, usually, afternoon, after church or whatever.

Sometimes it'd be other things goin' on. Picnic—people down there havin' picnics and things [*laughs*] and still—they'd still go through with it, you know, have—do the baptism.

SL: Oh, I see. The swimmin' hole or the place would be . . .

EEC: Yeah, it's a open place, yeah.

SL: . . . in use. It's a public place . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and there'd be other events goin' on . . .

EEC: Yeah, right.

SL: . . . but the—it didn't slow the . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . the church down at all.

EEC: Right.

SL: They went ahead and did their stuff. [01:00:59] So what about Wednesdays? Did y'all ever do anything churchwise on Wednesdays 'cause . . .

EEC: Not that much . . .

SL: . . . I know . . .

EEC: . . . out there.

SL: . . . Baptists were pretty . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . religious about . . .

EEC: They didn't—sometimes they had—didn't have 'em out there. You know, you—most of the time, it was just Sunday or Sunday night, maybe.

[01:01:17] SL: Did you all belong to a youth group, a church youth group?

EEC: Not out there at Sonora, no. Just had the Sunday school for younger kids but not really a group.

SL: Who taught your Sunday school?

EEC: [*Laughs*] I can't remember.

SL: Can't?

EEC: I could probably think of ?it here? one, but I can't right off think of it.

[01:01:38] SL: Well, what I'm getting is is that y'all went to church on Sundays and whatever church activities may have been coinciding on those Sundays. And then—but back home, the church and religion and all that stuff really wasn't—y'all really weren't concerned with . . .

EEC: Probably not. Probably not much as some people are, you know.

SL: Was your mom or dad more involved than the other with church?

EEC: My mother, probably. Yeah, probably. Just those things you did in the community, you know. Yeah, she was more involved than he was.

[01:02:26] SL: Did y'all—were y'all ever at the dinner table, breakfast table? Did—was grace always said before a meal?

EEC: Not—well, when I was a kid, not that often, to be honest with you, you know. No.

[01:02:40] SL: Okay. Were there ever—do you remember any religious programs on the radio that you all would turn to?

EEC: Nope.

SL: So really, I mean, y'all were practicing—I mean, you showed up on Sundays but . . .

EEC: Right, that's [*laughs*] . . .

SL: . . . it was pretty much a done deal on Sundays, and the rest of the week you were goin' about your business.

EEC: Yeah. Right. But you didn't ge—always forget about what you heard on Sunday, you know what I mean?

SL: Right.

EEC: Go through the week, you know.

[01:03:14] SL: We talked a little bit about not gettin' into any trouble, any big trouble, or anything growin' up. Who in the household was the disciplinarian? Was it [*EEC laughs*] both your mom and dad?

EEC: Ah, my dad, mainly.

SL: Your dad?

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*] Yeah. You didn't wanna mess with my dad. Nah—he's—he was.

SL: Well, let's talk about that a little bit.

EEC: Oh, mom would punish us, too, but dad was the mainly—she'd probably wait till he got home to say, "They did this and that." And he'd have to take care of it, you know. Yeah.

SL: Well, was that discipline in the form of a whippin' or . . .

EEC: Yeah, usually a belt. [*Laughs*]

SL: Belt? Uh-huh.

EEC: Yeah. Ah, it wasn't that many times, honestly. Not that many times.

SL: Do you remember the worst thing that you got in trouble over?

EEC: [*Laughs*] Nah, I . . .

SL: It's okay. Confession's okay here.

EEC: No, I really can't remember, though.

SL: You can't?

EEC: Really can't, no.

SL: That's interesting.

EEC: I think one time—what? Yeah, one time I—some—one of the neighbors come drivin' by. I said some wisecrack about him, and my dad heard me say it. And he let me have it. [*Laughs*]

I can't remember what I said now. Wasn't the right thing to say, you know.

SL: Right.

EEC: So he let me know that you don't talk about people like that or—it's just a story I didn't know of everything involved with whatever it was, you know, but I got in trouble over it.

[01:04:41] SL: Were—was there much difference between you and Earl as far gettin' in trouble or . . .

EEC: No, pretty close to the same.

SL: Pretty much [*EEC laughs*] the same.

EEC: Yeah, we're real close, so I mean . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I don't think so, no.

SL: Did y'all ever get in trouble together?

EEC: 'Cept the alligator deal, I guess.

SL: Alligator deal, yeah?

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's a great little story.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:05:06] SL: Now, so your mom would just pretty much kinda
turn you guys in . . .

EEC: Yeah. Well, she . . .

SL: I remember my mom would have a switch, you know.

EEC: Yeah, well, she'd do that, too. [*Laughs*]

SL: She'd do that, too?

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: Hit the back of the legs?

EEC: But Dad, his belt was his—what [*laughs*] do you call it? Which
hurts, you know, but it wasn't that often.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I—if she had to, she'd correct us, but generally it was him.

[01:05:30] SL: Uh-huh. Well, you know, just my personal experiences with both you and Earl, I would say if there's one of the words to describe both of you, it would be really polite. And I mean, I can't remember ever seein' you guys mad or upset with anyone. I know you're probably just as human as everyone else, but you know, I'm lookin' for that stuff that happened in the home that kind of set the tone for y'all. The—you know, I like to believe that we're given pretty much our basic foundations . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . early on, almost before we can remember.

EEC: Well, yeah, you are. Yeah.

SL: But the role models that you all grew up with . . .

EEC: Right. Well, yeah, you grow up with parents that teach you right from wrong. You just know 'cause they teach you. That's what it's all about. And goin' to church on Sunday. Not that we went every Sunday, but that helps, too, you know. But your parents, they—yeah. They have their role models. We had—didn't—luckily, we didn't have parents that were out of kilter, you know what I mean? The truth of the matter.

[01:06:45] SL: Well, I'm also lookin'—I mean, it sounds like you had

great, attentive parents . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . growin' up . . .

EEC: We did.

SL: . . . that they didn't let you guys just run wild, and they corrected you when felt like you'd stepped off the path.

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: And it sounds like they encouraged the discipline for school, that you got your homework done.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:07:15] SL: Were there any rewards growing up that your parents might use to reward you guys [*EEC laughs*] with good—being good or gettin' something done or—like maybe ice cream or . . .

EEC: Yeah, ?once? . . .

SL: . . . watermelon or . . .

EEC: Yeah, all that but you know, usually some kind of musical instrument. We want a gui—new guitar or somethin', you know. "Y'all be good, and we'll see if we can do that." You know what I mean. But yeah, all of that, actually.

[01:07:54] SL: Well, I guess we oughta start talkin' about music then. So I'm hearing that the music stuff didn't really start

happening until you were probably finishing up school at Sonora.

EEC: Yeah, right. Yeah, gettin' into junior high school and high school when they had their talent contests for the FFA, and actually before that we were in some contests. What was that—was one—some radio station in Nashville came through and had a talent contest, and Earl and I was in it, but I can't remember what age we were then. 4-H Club, different, you know, talent contests we'd enter.

SL: Did you always win?

EEC: Not always. Few times, yeah.

SL: Few times?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Okay, so the fir—now, it's my understanding, the first instrument that you guys were handed was a guitar with two strings. And you probably actually were able to make some sounds with it and do some things with it, and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . so your dad went out and got you a set of strings.

EEC: Yeah, and they bought another guitar that—a better guitar, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: Better guitar.

EEC: Because it wasn't a really good one.

SL: Yeah. Well, but so was there just one instrument to share with Earl? Is that . . .

EEC: Yeah, pretty much. Well, they had the old one and a little better one. Then he got a banjo, and Earl played more of the banjo at that time. I didn't do much banjo playin'.

[01:09:27] SL: So you guys were playin' probably what you heard on the *Opry* and maybe—did you ever do the square dance stuff, or . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . did you just borrow some licks from the . . .

EEC: We'd just play around with it, play the chords, and yeah, we did try to do some of those songs. Fact, got to a point where they'd let us bring our guitar and kinda play along with 'em, you know, at the square dances. Kinda learnin' that [*laughs*] way, you know.

SL: Okay, now, that's huge, though.

EEC: Just chording, you know. Not really . . .

SL: So . . .

EEC: . . . not . . .

SL: . . . you're probably . . .

EEC: Tryin' to stay out of the way but . . .

SL: . . . twelve years old, thirteen?

EEC: Yeah, imagine somethin' like that or a little older, maybe.

[01:10:05] SL: So, you guys would take both those guitars and go
to the square dances . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and as far as what I'm hearing, this is probably the first
time that you guys are actually playing . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . in a band . . .

EEC: Yeah, I . . .

SL: . . . kind of, I mean, it was. . .

EEC: . . . I didn't think of it that way, but yeah, I guess so . . .

SL: . . . I mean . . .

EEC: . . . and we'd . . .

SL: . . . it was an ensemble of players.

EEC: It was us and neighbor guys around, too, that we'd go their
house and kind of play with 'em, jam a little bit with 'em, so to
speak.

[01:10:37] SL: Now, is that something that you and Earl did on your
own, or is that something your . . .

EEC: No, we . . .

SL: . . . father would . . .

EEC: . . . we weren't drivin' yet. So had to—they'd take us, you know.

SL: Both your mom and dad . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . would take you over to the houses . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . wherever the music was happening.

EEC: Yeah, that was kinda a thing to do is let's set down and play and sing, you know. That's your entertainment, with no TV or anything. That's the way you entertain yourself.

SL: So your parents loved that?

EEC: Yeah, they did.

SL: They must've have loved that.

EEC: Yeah, my dad was always kind of a frustrated—he'd try to play, but he never could quite grasp it, you know. He'd always wanted to. So yeah, they pretty much encouraged it.

SL: Now, we're talkin' banjo.

EEC: Well, guitar or banjo, yeah.

SL: Your dad also . . .

EEC: He liked the banjo with—but the—yeah, anything like that, he liked it.

SL: So did he ever play with the square dance groups?

EEC: No. [*Laughs*]

SL: He just never felt confident enough . . .

EEC: Nah, he didn't. Nah, he didn't.

SL: He—but you guys kinda took to it like fish to water? Is that . . .

EEC: Yeah, we just kinda—what—that's what we were interested in, bout the only thing we was interested in . . .

SL: Really?

EEC: . . . aside from ridin' horses and ridin' steers and, you know . . .

[01:11:45] SL: Ridin' steers?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Now, what are you doin' ridin' a steer?

EEC: Well, we used to have 'em—steers at home we'd—'cause we always liked the rodeo and that kinda deal, you know. So we had little chutes, and we'd ride the steers. It was fun. Didn't ever get in on the serious bull ridin' but steers. It was fun.

SL: So you ever get hurt doing that?

EEC: Nah, I one—ber—one time I's—I don't remember how old I was. We had a batch of new calves or somethin' and had this plowed field down there, and daddy took us boys, some of us boys down there. He said, "We're gonna ride these." He roped

one. He put me on it, and it jumped. I went I don't know how high and landed on my back and knocked the wind out of me—out completely out of me. I couldn't breathe. Scared the heck out of me, but [*laughs*]*—they were laughin', of course but—[SL laughs]**—it was fun though.*

SL: And you've mentioned several times horseback riding.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:12:40] SL: So you all always had horses, as long as you can remember.

EEC: Yeah, we always did. My dad loved horses. He always liked that.

SL: How soon did you get on a horse?

EEC: Oh, I was probably eight or nine, I imagine. Somethin' like that.

SL: And you'd just ride on the—around the farm?

EEC: Yeah. Once in a while we'd ride . . .

SL: You keep it inside the fence?

EEC: Yeah, got a little older, we'd ride in the parade, Rodeo of the Ozarks Parade or somethin'. Yeah.

[01:13:06] SL: And y'all went to rodeos growin' up?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Even in grade school, you remember going to rodeos?

EEC: Yeah, we, fact, we were at the first one they ever had here because we were a year old, but yeah. They took us to it. Yeah. Yeah, my dad was in—he liked that, so.

SL: Did it—were there any family members that actually rodeoed?

EEC: No.

SL: You just liked the entertainment, the show.

EEC: Yeah, he liked the entertainment of it. I used to think I wanted to, but then, [*laughs*] you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: It was either music or doing that, but you know, end up music.

SL: Well, I can understand that but the—so I guess the rodeos were once a year thing?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: But it was big doin's, I mean . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah, it used to be [*laughs*] the deal of the year to go to the rodeo.

SL: Now, rodeos, do they go more than one day? Would they go a week or . . .

EEC: Yeah, usually four days.

SL: And you all—you guys'd try to be there every day or . . .

EEC: Ah, not every day, but later on we did go a lot, but at first we didn't go every day.

[01:14:12] SL: So was ropin' the thing that y'all liked to watch the
most or . . .

EEC: Ah, bull ridin', usually.

SL: Bull ridin'.

EEC: Yeah, that—still do.

SL: Yeah, it is—it is exciting.

EEC: Yep.

SL: Dangerous. So did you ever ride a bull?

EEC: No. Steers, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: [*Laughs*] Just steers.

EEC: A bull steer. No. [*SL laughs*] Just steers.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Did you ever try your—try ropin'?

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah, bein' on a farm, you always try to rope. Not in
a rodeo or anything but, yeah.

SL: Did you get to where you could do it?

EEC: Ah, fairly good. Not real good. Pretty good.

SL: So, let me see. I guess there was Will Rogers . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . when you were growin' up.

EEC: Yeah, he was one of the heroes. Gene Autry, Roy Rogers.

That was the main ones back then. Used to have their movies that'd come to the theatre. To come and see 'em—Springdale. It was fun.

[01:15:11] SL: Do you remember the name of theatre in Springdale?

EEC: The Concord.

SL: The Concord. How much did it cost to get you in?

EEC: Dime or a nickel, I can't remember which.

SL: And . . .

EEC: I think it was a dime on Saturday afternoon.

SL: And there was more than just one film, right?

EEC: Yeah, usually. Usually could see a couple. Yeah. Quite a deal.

SL: So this is early [19]50s . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that you're doing that?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And you're in Springdale schools?

EEC: Yeah.

[01:15:43] SL: [*Tapping sound*] So, let's see, now. Now, I said Will Rogers. Is there . . .

EEC: Roy Rogers.

SL: Roy Rogers.

EEC: Yeah, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.

SL: And Dale Evans.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Did they ever come to the rodeo here?

EEC: Huh-uh.

SL: They never did?

EEC: No. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, they were quite the couple though.

EEC: Yeah, they were the big stars.

SL: And singin', too.

EEC: Yeah, big stars, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:16:10] SL: Hmm. So, Springdale schools. Tell me about your—

I mean, you're comin' from a two-room schoolhouse with maybe forty kids total in it, or fifty, most. What was it like moving from that to taking a bus into town and going to Springdale Public Schools? What was the big difference?

EEC: Well, we started in junior high, which is right next to the high school there, but it wasn't a whole lot different. I mean, you had your individual classes then. It wasn't like—you know, that was the difference. You didn't have one room where

teacher's teachin' three class. You had each individual class that you went to.

SL: Mh-hmm. A lot more kids.

EEC: Oh yeah. A lot more kids.

[01:17:05] SL: And were you still bringing your lunch then?

EEC: No, no, they had a . . .

SL: So you ate in the cafete . . .

EEC: . . . lunchroom, yeah.

SL: They had a lunchroom.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:17:08] SL: And there wasn't any air-conditioning?

EEC: No, heck no. [*Laughs*] Nah.

SL: So it was hot in the . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was hot.

SL: . . . in the spring and early fall.

EEC: Yeah, yeah, it was.

[01:17:19] SL: And what about the recess periods? I mean, was there a difference in—I mean, did they have dodgeball and hopscotch and four. . .

EEC: Well, no, not there. Used to—kids used to just walk around the building [*laughs*] every recess.

SL: Really?

EEC: Just walk around. I don't know what the deal with that. But
[laughs] yeah, I used to do that.

SL: That's what y'all did?

EEC: Yeah. Just . . .

[01:17:44] SL: So did any of the kids that you went to school with
at Sonora go to school with you at Springdale?

EEC: Yeah, just about every one did.

SL: Just about every one of 'em.

EEC: Yeah. Well, they did, yeah. Everyone.

SL: And . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So did you develop any lasting relationships with those kids?

EEC: Oh yeah. I still know 'em, most of 'em. Yeah.

SL: So you'd walk around the school [EEC laughs] with your
friends . . .

EEC: Just . . .

SL: . . . kinda like circling the Vic Mon in your car or something.

EEC: That's it. Exactly. Same thing.

SL: That's . . .

EEC: Weird. [Laughs]

SL: That's weird, isn't it?

EEC: I don't know why.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Look back [*unclear word*] what the heck are you doing?

[*Laughs*]

[01:18:25] SL: What about—so now you're probably much more aware of athletics, now that you're in the . . .

EEC: Yeah. You had . . .

SL: . . . Springdale Public Schools.

EEC: . . . yeah, you had a PE, intramural sports.

SL: Did you and Earl do anything with intramural sports?

EEC: Yeah, usually intramural. Not the teams, as far as the high school teams or—but intramural, we did.

SL: Baseball?

EEC: Basketball. Basketball, mainly.

SL: How'd you like basketball?

EEC: I liked it, yeah.

SL: Forward? Did you play forward?

EEC: Yeah, I think I was—I can't remember what I played. I don't remember. Probably was that. Yeah, I used to like it. Fact, they tried to get Earl and I to go out for the basketball team, but our folks didn't want—and football, but folks didn't wanna have to drive us in every day and have to worry about that, so we didn't do it.

SL: Do you know that is—that was a big deal . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was.

SL: . . . for . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . rural kids.

EEC: A lot of kids who're on teams actually the ones that lived in town, you know, 'cause they could just walk home or whatever.

SL: Yeah. But the coaches liked the rural kids 'cause . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . they were probably a little tougher.

EEC: Yeah, could be. Yeah.

[01:19:35] SL: So what about any other organizations in the school itself? Did—is that when FFA . . .

EEC: Yeah, we got involved with the FFA, bein' from a farm, you know. Got involved with that, and then we started—'cause of our musical thing, they asked us represent 'em in talent contests and got into that pretty heavily.

[01:19:58] SL: So by the time that you hit junior high school, are you guys really playing?

EEC: Playin' for assemblies and things at school.

SL: Already?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . straight out of grade school?

EEC: Well, probably not the seventh grade. Maybe the eighth or . . .

SL: Eighth grade?

EEC: . . . ninth grade, we were, maybe. Yeah. We're startin' to really get into the—I think that was about the time the Everly Brothers started gettin' big. I can't remember what year that was. Anyway, we were really into the Everly Brothers, and we knew every song they ever did, you know. *[Laughs]*

[01:20:30] SL: What was it about them that you think attracted you guys?

EEC: Well, they were brothers, and their harmonies, and I like . . .

SL: A dual act?

EEC: Yeah, the dual act. And I liked somethin' that we could do that really—you know, we could pretty much imitate 'em.

SL: Yeah. And you guys were both playing guitar at that time.

EEC: Yeah, right.

[01:20:48] SL: And you know, as far as the technology and PA systems and stuff, it was—did you just share a mic that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . picked up both your vocals and your . . .

EEC: Whatever they had in the . . .

SL: It was . . .

EEC: . . . room, yeah.

SL: Yeah, I remember the earliest PAs I dealt with were actually from the square dancing. They'd . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you know, activity at the school. They'd play a record, and the teacher would [*EEC laughs*] do the talk, and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . it was, I don't know, maybe a Bogen PA . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . or . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . maybe . . .

EEC: I don't even know if—think this was that, even. I don't even know where . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . wherever they had speakers in the ceiling or whatever. Whatever they had, we'd use it.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Later on, of course, we used a little better things but, yeah.

[01:21:36] SL: Go ahead. [*Clanking and beeping sounds*] We—so

eighth grade, you're in FFA, and FFA's asking you to represent them in different shows.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:21:50] SL: And you guys are heavily into the Everly Brothers.

Was there anyone else that you started with—I mean, Everly Brothers are not country-western. They're . . .

EEC: No.

SL: It's real—it has very little . . .

EEC: No, we were actually do—I guess when we first started playin' a little bit, we did more country stuff, you know, but we gradually went into the more Everly Brothers and then more into the rock and roll, you know, Elvis and rock-and-roll stuff.

SL: So . . .

EEC: We kinda gradually went over that direction.

SL: Well, let's see. In seventh grade, that's [19]56, I guess.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: [Nineteen] fifty-five, [19]56?

EEC: I think that's right.

SL: That kinda sounds . . .

EEC: [*Unclear words*] [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, twelve years would put it [19]54. So [19]55, [19]56.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:22:47] SL: Great cars are happening . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . then. Cars become more of a rod kind of thing, I guess, then.

EEC: Yeah, they did. We did—we never did have a car till we . . .

SL: You never did have a car?

EEC: Huh-uh.

SL: So . . .

EEC: Not until, gosh, not even in high school. Round la—I guess around senior—we didn't really get one till we got outta school—outta high school, actually.

[01:23:09] SL: So the bus that would take you to Springdale, did it come right by the house, or did you have to . . .

EEC: Well, the intersection's real close.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Right there where Earl lives right there . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So it was—that was the no-brainer.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And then getting back, you took the bus back home.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Unless there was some kind of thing that made y'all stay late . . .

EEC: Right, unless there's . . .

SL: . . . then your parents would come get you.

EEC: . . . something to do, yeah.

[01:23:35] SL: So I'm tryin' to [*beeping sound*]*—oh, here's Eric.*
Come on in, Eric.

[Tape stopped]

[01:23:43] SL: Do you remember the first show you did as a duo? I mean, I know that you guys were kinda jammin' with the square dance thing out in the country . . .

EEC: It probably wasn't in high school. It was probably out at the Grange Hall or somethin' like that, probably, or some—you know, it wasn't at the school. It wasn't in high school or junior high.

SL: So it was while you were still in Sonora going to school out there that you . . .

EEC: Yeah. I think, or it . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . mighta been—we might have performed the first couple years of junior high. Mighta been in ninth grade or somethin'.
I can't remember for sure. Seems more like it.

SL: Were—did y'all pretty much split up the singing even, or were you doin' more of the singing? I guess the Everly Brothers, it was kind of . . .

EEC: Yeah, kinda shared it. Yeah, I think so. Later on I did more—most all of it but, yeah.

SL: And you were figuring out the guitar chords all by yourselves?

EEC: Yeah, we could buy books that showed you . . .

SL: *E, G, A, and D* . . .

EEC: Yeah, the . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . basic things. That's pretty much what we did. Yeah.

SL: And did the Everly Brothers have music books where their song—were they doing that yet . . .

EEC: No, no. We . . .

SL: I mean, I know that happened later.

EEC: No, we just bought their 45s and listened to their records and figured it out. [*Laughs*] No, we didn't always get it right but we [*SL laughs*—most of the time we did.

SL: Yeah. So you kinda stood with the Everly Brothers for maybe a year or two, is that . . .

EEC: Yeah. A couple, three years, yeah.

SL: Really.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:25:12] SL: Okay, now what about the girls? I mean, at this point in time, did—when you were playing, you know, the kids—of course, there were kids that always liked music, liked bands, liked to go to shows and stuff. But were the—how did your music playing affect you guys socially?

EEC: Oh, I don't know. I guess made us kinda popular in a way, but you know, I don't know, really. Couldn't say, from my side.

[01:25:41] SL: You were makin' some money, though, early on.

EEC: No, not really.

SL: Just awards.

EEC: Yeah. Nah . . .

SL: Ribbons and . . .

EEC: . . . we wouldn't make any money at talent contests. Just . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . recognition, mainly. We'd play once in a while at the youth center or somethin' and pass the hat and make a little bit of money, but that was later.

[01:25:59] SL: So really this whole music thing, in the beginning, like most careers, starts out as just an interest and then . . .

EEC: Fun deal.

SL: . . . kind of a passion . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . for it.

EEC: Right.

SL: And you guys were bound and determined to get it right . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . I guess.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Learn the chords right.

EEC: Right.

SL: Learn the melodies right.

EEC: Right.

SL: Learn the harmonies right. Workin' off 45 rpm records.

EEC: Right. Yep.

[01:26:32] SL: So when did you start adding to your repertoire past the Everly Brothers, or was there—did you—were you aware of a time when the Everly Brothers material started fading and more rock and roll stuff started comin' in?

EEC: Yeah, I can't member exactly when that was, but it was kind of a slow progression, you know, getting' away from that, and we did talent shows where we'd need to do somethin' different than just the Everly Brothers because then we got a drummer playin' with us and another guitar player, which sang different

kinda songs, you know. Come—became a combo kinda, more or less. So we got away from the duo thing a little bit more.

SL: In high school?

EEC: Yeah. Last of—last year of high school. Had a combo. Course, after we left high school, we started playin' clubs, you know.

We weren't even old enough, but then you had to have a repertoire. You had to have more than just Everly Brothers. You had to have a wide range of songs.

[01:27:29] SL: Uh-huh. Well, and by the time you're leavin'—by the time you're in high school and leaving high school, I guess that's . . .

EEC: [Nineteen] sixty.

SL: [Nineteen] sixty. Grad—you all graduated in [19]60? That's the same year my brother Gary graduated.

EEC: Yeah, we're havin' our fiftieth this Saturday. [*Laughs*]

SL: Is that right?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: I may have to crash that.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

SL: Get some real stories . . .

EEC: Some of the people [*unclear word*] . . .

SL: . . . about the Cate Brothers.

EEC: Yeah, get some real stories, that's for sure.

SL: Yeah. Yeah. [01:28:00] I guess, so just—well, we'll, actually, we'll talk about Linda a little bit later. But she's in the picture now, is that right?

EEC: Well . . .

SL: In high school?

EEC: In high school—actually, we didn't start goin' together till—was I a senior? Yeah, I was a senior in high school. I mean, I knew her, but I didn't—'cause I wasn't—I didn't go out with anybody. I mean, just—I knew her, but then seniors—finally, I asked her to go to the senior play, I guess it was, with me. Wasn't that right? Yeah. Senior play, I asked her to go with me.

SL: And she said yes.

EEC: Said yes. That was the end of it, [*laughs*] I mean.

SL: Did you know to act at the time [*laughs*] when she . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . said yes? Were you expecting her to say . . .

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

SL: Yeah. You were counting on it, huh?

EEC: I was countin' on it. [*SL laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Do you remember the play you went to see?

EEC: She don't even remember it, either. I don't remember it. She doesn't remember it. [*Laughs*]

SL: So the play wasn't the thing?

EEC: No, no.

SL: The thing was the date.

EEC: Just the date, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: That's right.

SL: Well, that's kinda the way it was for everybody.

EEC: And that's pretty much from then on, that was it. [*Laughs*]
You know what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: That's good.

EEC: Yep.

SL: That's strong.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:29:07] SL: Okay, so let's talk about in high school, you now—is it your senior year that you had a drummer?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And you had another guitar player or bass player probably?

EEC: It kind of varied. We didn't really get the bass till we got outta

high school.

SL: Yeah, you know, I—we—our band was late adding a bass player for some reason.

EEC: Yeah, we—that was the last thing we did, but boy, it sure sounded good when you did. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah, yeah. Well, I remember we thought the organ or the keyboard could do the bass.

EEC: Yeah, right. It could . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . a lot of times.

SL: Yeah. [01:29:39] So, okay. So you're adding—you add a guitar player, then. Does that move you to piano?

EEC: Yeah, well, that was after—actually, after we got out of high school before I moved to piano. We got the—started playing with Ken Owens, the guy I showed a picture of.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Combo. Started playin' clubs and stuff, and Ken played guitar, and they—then Earl and I finally decided maybe I should play keyboards. That's [*unclear words*] pretty much—I didn't all the time, but most of the time I was playin' keyboards then.

SL: So had you been pickin' at the keyboard . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . through junior high and high school?

EEC: A little bit. A little bit at home. You know, just messin' around with it.

SL: So, man, that's kind of a steep curve, isn't it? To all of a sudden . . .

EEC: Oh yeah, it was.

SL: . . . be playin' keyboard.

EEC: Yeah, it was. I—weird, too. [*Laughter*] Yeah, but I got used to it pretty quick, though. I got to sit down, you know what I mean. [*Laughs*]

SL: There is that. That's true.

EEC: That—there was that.

SL: That guitar can get kinda heavy.

EEC: But, yeah.

SL: Epecially on a long gig.

EEC: Yeah. I kinda [*unclear word*]-I'm just tryin' to fill the holes and ended up playin' keyboards. You know, kinda make a bigger sound, different sound.

SL: Well, no doubt about it. [01:30:43] Now, so in [19]59, [19]60, [19]61, rock-and-roll systems, sound systems, were just really startin' to be a . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . a factor. I mean . . .

EEC: Startin' to have the column speakers and the—yeah.

SL: Probably didn't have any stage monitors?

EEC: The Bogan thing you're talkin' about. No, no, we didn't have stage monitors till way late . . .

SL: Right.

EEC: . . . you know.

[01:31:09] SL: Right, right. But so you had—was the bass an electric bass, or was it an upright . . .

EEC: Electric.

SL: . . . bass?

EEC: Electric.

SL: It was electric.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Probably a Fender.

EEC: Yeah. Actually, I think our bass player borrowed some kind of bass. It wasn't a Fender at first. He borrowed it from somebody. It was a pretty beat-up thing. But we liked the way it sound. Anyway, he got a loan, went, and bought a Fender, so you know.

SL: Yeah. Yeah. And so the bass player had his own amplifier then?

EEC: Yeah.

[01:31:43] SL: And then what happened with the guitars? Did they—did the guitars become electric, or were they miked acoustics?

EEC: Yeah, oh, they was always electric.

SL: They were ah . . .

EEC: Little, small amps but, yeah.

SL: Well, they weren't always electric.

EEC: No, when Earl and I did the Everly Brothers thing . . .

SL: It was acoustic.

EEC: . . . it was pretty—it was acoustic, yeah . . .

SL: Just in front of a single mic, probably.

EEC: Yeah. Well, yeah.

[01:31:59] SL: So what was Ken's name? Ken?

EEC: Owens.

SL: Owens. Let's talk about Ken just for a little bit.

EEC: He's a . . .

SL: He was older than you guys, wasn't he?

EEC: Yeah, older. He was kind of a front-man-type singer. Stood up and sing, you know. Kind of a front man, you call it, but he'd been with some group. They'd travel to Canada and everything, and he came back and wanted to get a group

together, and we let him come join us for a while.

SL: That's unusual. That's serendipitous that he was from Canada or had been in Canada.

EEC: He wasn't from Canada. He went up with—he had toured Canada with a group. The Trebles, it was called. He went with them to Canada. He came back home and decided he wanted to keep playin' and hooked up with us.

SL: Well, was he a Springdale guy?

EEC: From Huntsville. From Huntsville.

SL: Huntsville.

EEC: Yeah, he—yeah, his family from all from over there. Yeah, he's not—I mean, he just wasn't that great, I mean. [*Laughs*] Shouldn't say, but.

[01:32:56] SL: Okay, now, you guys weren't the only guys in town moving this direction, right?

EEC: Probably not.

SL: I mean, who was—who else was playin' around at this time in [19]60 when you guys are startin' to put your combo together?

EEC: Well, I really didn't keep up with doin'—wasn't that many, honestly. You know you had your McClelland brothers from—they became the Emcees . . .

SL: Tommy McClelland . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and what was Tommy's brother's name?

EEC: Leon.

SL: Leon.

EEC: And then there's Melvin, the younger drummer. They formed a band that they ended up tourin' all over Canada. Them and . . .

[01:33:32] SL: They were the Emcees, right?

EEC: Emcees. Then the other group, the Trebles. Course, in high—when we were in college, Bill Lafferty had his group. You know, Bill Lafferty and the Jokers.

SL: Let me hear about them. What was their instrumentation like?

EEC: He was a front man, Bill Lafferty was. Front man, singer, and he had a guitar player—oh, can't—what's his name, now. Well, I forgot his name. Anyway, you know, they was mainly a college—drew the college crowd, fraternities and stuff.

[01:34:04] Course, then we started playin' the Rockwood Club, which, you know, in bout [19]61 I guess, somethin' like that. We weren't old enough to be in there. We started playin' there.

SL: You guys were all of seventeen years old.

[01:34:15] EEC: Yeah. Started playin' there, and that's when we—we

finally met—well, Ken Owens actually introduced us to Ronnie Hawkins. They would come in off, you know, off tour or somethin', and if they were playin'—gonna play at the Rockwood Club. And we'd—Ken took us by the house one time. They were stayin' at some little house down at Fayetteville near the school. Ken took us by and introduced us to 'em. That's the first time we met Levon and Robbie and all of 'em. We got to be real good friends of 'em, of those guys, but.

SL: That house was on Maple Street.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Do you remember where on Maple it was?

EEC: I don't remember. Little white house.

SL: Little white house.

EEC: Yeah. We met them, and then that's who we'd see comin' through. That's how we got started, really, is goin' listenin' to them.

SL: So Ken were frien—was friends with Ronnie. I mean . . .

EEC: He knew him, yeah. He wasn't personally friends, but he knew him. Yeah.

SL: But they were both from Huntsville, really.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, Ronnie . . .

EEC: Right. Yeah.

SL: . . . came out of Huntsville . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and then kinda migrated to Fayetteville.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:35:14] SL: So now you're in—Bill Lafferty—I'm tryin' to remember. Who did Jerry Yount play with? Do you remember Jerry Yount?

EEC: He played with the Emcees.

SL: Emcees, okay.

EEC: Actually the Trebles, too. He played with Ken's group for a while. But he was with the Emcees later, yeah. Jerry Yount.

SL: Is he still alive? Is he still . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Is he here?

EEC: Somewhere around. Seem like in Rogers or somewhere.

SL: I wonder whatever happened with him?

EEC: They have an old-timers thing every year. I hardly ever go, but—and they get together about once a year, and he's usually shows up, Jerry Yount does.

SL: I wonder if he's in the phone book.

EEC: I . . .

SL: I remember him coming to my parents' house.

EEC: Really?

SL: Yeah. But he's prob—he's your age, isn't he?

EEC: Just a little older.

SL: A little older.

EEC: Not much.

SL: Yeah. [*Exhales*] [01:36:08] So all those guys, I mean, were they all kinda rockabilly players?

EEC: Yeah. At the start they were, kinda. Yeah. I wouldn't say Bill Lafferty was, though. I don't remember what they did [*laughs*] for sure. They did whatever's popular on the radio at the time. But Hawkins, yeah, he was rockabilly at first.

[01:36:30] SL: Uh-huh. And what about John Tolleson? Do you remember him at all?

EEC: Rock and roll. Oh yeah. He used to play Mhoon's Club, and that's one that I should have mentioned that was around when we got out of high school, started college. He was the big, big thing on campus, John Tolleson was.

SL: Yeah, you know, John Ware told me he used to drive from Tulsa to come see John Tolleson.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah, really?

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Wow. Yeah, three piece: piano, drums, and guitar. That's all they had. Yeah. He would do it, though.

SL: Yeah, he could belt.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: He had a big—he had a big rock-and-roll voice.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:37:09] SL: Let's see. He—I'm tryin' to remember some of the songs that were pretty big for him.

EEC: "Tennessee Stud."

SL: "Tennessee Stud."

EEC: Yeah, the college kids.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Oh, there's another one, but I can't remember it. Yeah. Used to play that happy hour out at Mhoon's on Friday afternoon, Mhoon's Club.

[01:37:28] SL: Okay, now, where was Mhoon's?

EEC: That's where Motel 6 is now there on College. Right across from the theat—used to be a drive-in theatre.

SL: 71 Drive-In.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But it—yeah, it was the Shamrock Club before that, though. Mighta been the Sham—he played there mainly when it was the Shamrock Club. And it changed to Mhoon's in [19]71 [*unclear word*]. He played there mostly when it was Shamrock Club, though.

[01:37:52] SL: So where would you hear these guys play? I mean, you were too young to get in the bars.

EEC: We'd have to go and stand outside. Listen through the back. At the Rockwood had this huge fan, you know, that you could see the . . .

SL: Get all the smoke out . . .

EEC: . . . you could see the back of the players' heads.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Get the smoke out, but of course, it made the music go [*imitates the sound of fan*]. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. So you—you're learnin' your music through a Leslie.

EEC: Sound like it had a Leslie . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

EEC: . . . a Leslie cabinet on the vocals, [*laughs*] but we'd listen to 'em. Stand out in back and listen to 'em. Finally, we got kinda—after we played there—when we were old enough, we would play there a few times, and they'd let us come in and

listen sometimes. We did that. [*Laughs*]

[01:38:29] SL: So but the Rockwood Club was—it was pretty much the happening place, wasn't it?

[01:38:34] EEC: Yeah.

SL: It was the place to go.

EEC: Between it and the Shamrock, yeah, that was it, pretty much.

[01:38:38] SL: Now, how big was the Shamrock?

EEC: Oh gosh.

SL: It wasn't as big as the Rockwood though, was it?

EEC: Well, it might be a totalwise. Rockwood's kinda two levels.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: So and Shamrock's more a long building.

SL: Okay.

EEC: I don't know what sizewise . . .

SL: Bout the same . . .

EEC: Bout the same, I guess.

SL: . . . capacity.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So you work your way in to the Rockwood Club as a venue for you guys.

EEC: Yeah. Yep.

[01:39:09] SL: And you met Levon and Ronnie, and let's see. Was

Danko already in the group when . . .

EEC: He came later. The first time we met Ronnie, he had the—I can't think of the name. Bass player, different bass player. And he had Stan Szelest on piano. That was the original really rockin' group with Levon when he'd twirl the sticks and all this stuff, you know. It was great. Then later he expanded and got Garth. You know, it was the first time I heard Garth. It was wild on the organ. And then [*unclear word*] Danko joined 'em.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But Robbie was with 'em when I was talkin' about when Stan Szelest—Robbie was with 'em then. We met, in fact . . .

[01:39:55] SL: Now, was Fred Carter with 'em?

EEC: He played, yeah, he played before that, yeah. Before that.

SL: Did . . .

EEC: But that was just—that mighta been same time we met 'em when Fred Carter was with 'em then, I think.

[01:40:07] SL: And I mean, wasn't—I mean, the story I heard was that Robbie was actually initially gonna play bass.

EEC: Right.

SL: And he was much younger, wasn't he? I mean, he . . .

EEC: Oh yeah, when we met . . .

SL: . . . he was . . .

EEC: . . . him, I thought he was just some kid hangin' around there.

SL: Well, originally I think he was . . .

EEC: He was. Yeah, he was real young.

SL: . . . just a kid hangin' around, but . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . it—wasn't it Fred that kinda set him on the path?

EEC: I think so.

SL: On the guitar?

EEC: Yeah, I think he did. Yeah.

SL: And course, Levon could play guitar . . .

EEC: Yeah. Mandolin . . .

SL: . . . back then, too.

EEC: . . . guitar. Oh yeah, yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yep.

[01:40:46] SL: And what about Richard Manuel? When did they get "The Beak"?

EEC: He came about the same—after Szelest left, then he brought in Richard. In fact, that summer, Richard Manuel was down here playin' the Rockwood with a couple kids called the Revols from Canada. And they came and played the Rockwood. They

stayed here for about a month. Played every weekend. And Richard Manuel's in that group. Ended up that Szelest was gettin' drunk or somethin'. I forgot what happened but . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Ronnie finally fired him, and he grabbed Richard Manuel 'cause he could—good singer. Knew all of Ray Charles's stuff, and I remember when he did it.

[01:41:25] SL: That gave 'em that Ray Charles . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . capability, didn't it?

EEC: Yeah, they changed a lot. I mean, when we'd see 'em and then we'd come in the next time, they'd always have a little different thing. Then they finally got to that point where they were doin', gosh, the Ray Charles. They were really—it was hot stuff, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. It really was.

EJ: I wanted to ask about Ray Charles in terms of you guys listenin'. Was—I understand he was big for you, from what I've read.

EEC: Oh yeah. [*Laughs*] Yeah. He used to be the "it" for me, you know, for sure, far as singers, yeah. Yeah.

[01:42:00] EJ: Did you—he—sometime in the early [19]60s, he played on campus at the U of A. Did you go see him?

EEC: I don't remember if I did or not. I don't think I saw him till actually later.

SL: At Tyson's birthday party.

EEC: That was B.B. King.

SL: Well, now, Ray Charles came in . . .

EEC: Did he play, too? I didn't go to that one.

SL: . . . at one of those. Yeah, in fact, the first gig I did at CCU was Ray Charles.

EEC: I don't think we were there. I remember the B.B. King show . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . we did. Yeah. Yeah, I didn't realize that.

SL: Yeah. It was the very first one they had at CCU . . .

EEC: Wow.

SL: . . . was with Ray Charles. Well, so, you know, Ray Charles is quite a story in and of himself. I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . he's one of the first guys that actually had control . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . over the recording process . . .

EEC: Oh yeah, genius.

SL: . . . and the material . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and content. I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . he was able to make it happen.

EEC: Right. And after we started listenin' to that st—all that kinda music with Ray Charles and the R&B and that—we were sold, and that's what we wanted to do, you know what I mean?

SL: Yeah.

EEC: 'Cause it just had so much heart to it and so much, you know. Really love that stuff.

[01:43:12] SL: But so this is happening, though, very early. I mean, you're . . .

EEC: Yeah, [19]63 . . .

SL: . . . you're talkin' . . .

EEC: . . . [nineteen] sixty-two, [19]63.

SL: . . . this is before you're twenty years old, probably.

EEC: Yeah, [19]62 or [19]63, along in there.

SL: Yeah. [*Conversation in background*]

EEC: Yeah.

[01:43:25] SL: So I wanna talk a little bit about your times with

Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks here in Fayetteville. You know, they—Ronnie was pretty athletic, right?

EEC: Yeah, I didn't really know him that well then. Actually, I didn't know him when he was in school, college. I didn't know him. Actually, didn't meet him till, like I say, that time we met down at the house. First time I met him. So that's a little before our time.

SL: What was your first impression when you met him?

EEC: Crazy guy. [*Laughs*] Ronnie Hawkins, crazy guy.

SL: He could al—he already had the banter, didn't he?

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: He couldn't turn it off.

EEC: No. He was a great showman though. Really was.

SL: Yeah, now, I heard that he could do backflips . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . on stage.

EEC: Oh yeah. Did the—first one I seen do the moonwalk, too.

SL: Yeah, he called it the camel walk, right?

EEC: Yeah, right. [*Laughter*] Yeah, yeah, I remember that. Nah, he could entertain a crowd. What he lacked in vocal, he could really do—make up for in the other.

SL: Yeah, he would say . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that he was not the greatest . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . musician, but he was always able to get great musicians around him.

[01:44:35] EEC: Oh, he knew how to pick musicians. He did. Gosh. Amazing. Weird. One time Earl and I—well, we were in college, and Levon and them were in, and Levon and Robbie wanted to meet Earl and I for lunch. We went down Dickson Street somewhere to eat. Anyway, they actually wanted Earl and I to join 'em. Go on the group. And course, we couldn't. Our parents wouldn't let us, [*laughs*] you know, at the time. They wouldn't let us go on the road or anything. We woulda been—we'd been gone, but you know, that would happen, but they actually did offer that to Earl and I both at one time.

SL: And this is when you were both in college?

EEC: Yeah.

[01:45:12] SL: You all did the college thing for couple years?

EEC: Yeah, didn't finish. A year and a half or so.

SL: So they asked you two to join.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

[01:45:24] SL: And—but what—is that before—that's after they had

Manuel and Garth . . .

EEC: That was before, before they got . . .

SL: Before Manuel . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and Garth?

EEC: Right. Yeah.

[01:45:34] SL: And so they were looking for a replacement . . .

EEC: Yeah, they were kind . . .

SL: . . . for Stan

EEC: . . . they were kinda wantin' to shake it up.

SL: . . . and Fred Carter was . . .

EEC: Right. Yeah, it was kinda changin' . . .

SL: . . . leavin' . . .

EEC: . . . personnel at the time. Yeah.

[01:45:47] SL: Well, what did you think—so was that when you met

Ronnie and them and Le—was that the first time you also met

Levon?

EEC: Yeah. First time.

SL: What was your first impression there?

EEC: I didn't really get to talk to him much, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Later on, got to know him, you know, really well but—'cause

his parents lived close to where we lived. And every time he'd come in town, he'd come to see us play. You know, where we were playing, he'd come and see us.

SL: Yeah. Well, he knew what was good. [*EEC laughs*] He had that ability, too.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:46:19] SL: You know wha—here's a name that I hadn't brought up before. What about Herman Tuck?

EEC: He was in . . .

SL: He was a drummer.

EEC: Yeah, he was a little bit—he went way back in the old days with Ronnie. I—that was before our time also, you know. Yeah, he played with him sometime or another.

SL: He was with Ronnie, too?

EEC: Sometime or another. I think, you know, locally. It wasn't—I don't think he really went on the road with him or anything.

SL: High school stuff.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Before Ronnie went off to become a star.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, it wasn't—it was mostly local stuff.

SL: Uh-huh. [*Laughs*] He's a character, too.

EEC: Yeah, he is. I know.

SL: Did you ever get to hear Ronnie and he—probably never heard Ronnie and Herman play, did you?

EEC: No. Never did. No. [*Laughs*]

EJ: Nope.

EEC: Sure didn't.

[01:47:03] SL: What about Buddy Hayes? Did you ever run across Buddy Hayes?

EEC: Just met him. You know, I didn't really . . .

SL: You never got to hear him play?

EEC: Not that much, no. In fact, I probably heard him play once, maybe, but I can't remember when it was.

SL: Now, he was—seems like he had a horn in his band and . . .

EEC: Yeah, I think he did.

SL: . . . and let's see. Did he play—who played piano? Did he play . . .

EEC: I don't remember.

SL: I don't remember, either. I mean, I . . .

EEC: I don't remember.

SL: I don't know that. [01:47:39] Okay, so you got the Rockwood Club. You got the Shamrock, later became Mhoon's. What about any other venues around town that—around here?

EEC: That was about all there was at the time, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Really was.

SL: Did you ever play any of the armories? Do you . . .

EEC: Yeah, oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah, special events or private parties and things.

SL: And then there was a group called Couplers.

EEC: Couplers.

SL: You remember Couplers?

EEC: Yeah, we used to play them on Thursday nights, once a month.

SL: At the top of the UARK Bowl?

EEC: Right. Yeah.

SL: And is that where—isn't that also where the Emcees played?

That was one of their . . .

EEC: I think so.

SL: . . . strongholds?

EEC: Yeah, I think it was. Yeah, we—they'd use to play there several ti—months in a row, you know, they'd have us.

SL: Uh-huh. Well . . .

[01:48:26] EJ: How bout the Victory Theatre in Rogers.

EEC: Really, well, [*laughs*] yeah. The only one instance—two instances, we played. [01:48:36] One, Jerry Lee Lewis was coming to town to the Victory Theatre. And he was late. He'd

crossed the ferry over there somewhere, and he was late getting there. And Earl and I just happened to be in the audience. And the guy that owned the music store knew who we were and all that. And he went across the street and got some—two guitars, and had Earl and I get up there and play before Jerry [*laughs*] Lewis got there. And he was all mad when he got there. But we did that, and then we had—we played another show. I think, Ferlin Husky or somebody, we opened for.

SL: Well, now, is the Victory Theatre really a movie theatre?

EEC: Yeah, originally was. They kinda made it into a venue.

[01:49:13] Conway Twitty played there two or three—several times.

SL: Now, did you get to know him?

EEC: No. Met him but didn't really get . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . to know him that well.

SL: And Jerry Lee Lewis was a little upset that . . .

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . that you guys went on before . . .

EEC: I don't know if it was about us—he was mad about something.

SL: I mean, how—he was an hour or late so, wasn't he?

EEC: Oh yeah. It was—I don't know if he was mad at us—he wasn't mad at us, but he just mad, I guess.

SL: Yeah. But he put on a show, didn't he?

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah, he did. [*Laughter*] Threw the piano stool off stage. It was amazing.

[01:49:47] SL: Did that—what—I mean, what was it like seeing that in comparison to what you and Earl were doin'?

EEC: I don't know. I didn't think much of it. [*Laughs*]

SL: You didn't?

EEC: It didn't matter. Yeah.

SL: That kind of show didn't really . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: It wasn't your cup of tea?

EEC: Not really, no. [*EEC laughs*]

SL: It was awfully high energy though, wasn't it?

EEC: Yeah. Oh, it was good. He's good.

SL: And the crowd . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . he'd get the crowd goin'.

EEC: They actually kinda gave him a hard time at first 'cause he was late.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. I think that's what he got mad about. The crowd give him a hard time. Didn't blame 'em, really.

SL: Yeah. Well, I'm sure he was mad enough . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that he got held up . . .

EEC: We saw . . .

SL: . . . at the ferry.

EEC: . . . Conway Twitty. He was really good there. We saw him a couple times. Real good show.

[01:50:27] SL: And what'd Conway have playin' with him? What kind of instrumentation did he have?

EEC: I think it was just a bass, guitar, and drums. He didn't have . . .

SL: Three-piece.

EEC: . . . a keyboard player, I don't remember. I don't think he did.

SL: That's strong.

EEC: Just—yeah. Who was playin' guitar? A good guitar player, I can't remember who it was. Can't remember now. Good show, though.

[01:50:53] SL: So let's get back to your first combo, then. You've got Ken as your front man.

EEC: It wasn't really the first. First was in high school with—we had

a buddy in high school who played drums. [*Laughs*] Scott Cool was his name. We graduated with him, and he couldn't really play that well, but we did—he wanted to play, so we let him play with us. That wasn't really—we never played any professional jobs that way. Mainly just talent contests. And a few other different guys we'd have join us. But yeah, actually, when you talk about Ken Owens, that was probably the first professional type, goin' out and playin' and earnin' some money.

[01:51:31] SL: You know, it's so interesting to me that he was from Huntsville and Ronnie came out of Huntsville.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And Ken had just gotten back from Canada. And Ronnie ends up in Canada. You guys end up going through Canada.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, what's the deal with Canada? I mean, why—how did that—do you know the lineage on that, how American music ended up in—especially Southern . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . . American music?

[01:51:57] EEC: Evidently, you know, from what everybody told us that went up and played and came back, said they just loved

the American music up there. They loved the groups that came up and played. And Ronnie, they loved him so much that he just stayed, you know what I mean . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . ended up just stayin' there 'cause he could make so much money drawin' huge crowds, and he decided to stay up there and play. But they just—they like American music.

SL: Mh-hmm. Was it—well, we can talk about Canada a little bit later, but it sounds like to me that that road to Canada probably gave everybody, you know, the—made everybody a little tougher and a little more experienced, and I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was [*unclear word*] . . .

SL: . . . but I mean, any time [*EEC clears throat*] you leave home . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and you start gettin' on that road, and you're goin' places where you've never been, nobody knows you . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . it's . . .

[01:52:49] EEC: And up there, you played—there was no dancing.

You had to entertain. They just set right at the stage. You—there was no dancing, so you had to pretty much entertain—

keep 'em entertained, you know. That's what was different about it. From down here, people used to—always people dancin'.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: It was against the law for some reason. I don't know what the deal was. They wouldn't let 'em.

SL: Oh really?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Even in the evenings?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, I know I've heard Ronnie talk about, you know, the afternoon shows where kids could come to it, but in the . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . evenings, kids couldn't come . . .

EEC: Right, yeah.

SL: . . . and maybe do a little bit different show in the evenings.

EEC: It may have changed now. They may let 'em dance now. I don't know.

SL: Yeah. That's interesting.

EEC: Yeah. So you felt like you're—you know, they're here to see us play instead of just to dance, you know.

SL: Right.

EEC: It's kinda difference. It is a good experience, I guess, but . . .

SL: Kinda like a Beatles concert or somethin'.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah. Yeah.

SL: I guess. I . . .

EEC: I guess.

SL: Yeah. That's interesting. [01:53:47] Okay, so you're movin' away from the Everly Brothers. You're adding more players. What kind of stuff are you startin' to play now?

EEC: Well, whatever's on the radio, I guess. [*Laughs*] You learn the songs that was on the radio. I can't even remember what they were now.

SL: Y'all were just doin' covers?

EEC: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Had you even thought about writin' your own material?

EEC: Oh yeah. We'd already written some songs.

SL: What had you written by [*EEC laughs*] the time you started addin' the folks?

EEC: Well, let me think a minute.

[01:54:14] SL: I mean, were you writing when you were doing the Everly Brothers stuff, too?

EEC: Yeah. Not that much, but little bit. First song I wrote was called "Mary Jane." [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah?

EEC: [*Singing*] "Mary Jane, Mary Jane." It's real simple deal.

That's one of the first ones. And we just did little ditties we'd write along. I don't know. Once in a while we'd do—we'd throw it in the set, but very seldom, you know.

SL: Yeah?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You think you could still play some of those old ones?

EEC: I don't know, really. [*SL laughs*] Forgotten 'em, really.

[01:54:45] SL: Do you ever pick up a guitar anymore?

EEC: Yeah, once in a while.

SL: And play a little bit?

EEC: I got one just recently from my uncle, but I haven't been playin' it much.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I don't know much about it, just chords.

SL: Yeah. [01:54:58] It's just amazing to me that you just were moved to piano and started, you know . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that position, having no training, having no lessons, just all by ear . . .

EEC: I need some training. I still—still tryin' to learn, you know.

[*Laughter*] Yeah. 'Cause, yeah, I just—I don't know.

[*Laughs*]

SL: Well, at first I would guess it was just mostly chords. You were just . . .

EEC: That's bout what it is now. [*Laughter*] Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: No, I mean, I guess I've got a little better, but you know, do my part.

SL: [*Laughs*] Yeah. I'd say so.

EEC: Yeah.

TM: Scott, we need to change tapes or take a break for a sec.

[Tape stopped]

[01:55:37] SL: Okay, man. We're on our third tape here.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You're still with [*EEC laughs*] me.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I appreciate that. We're still in your younger years. We've gone through the Sonora school. We've been to Springdale High School. Haven't really talked much about the high school.

[01:55:58] You got involved with FFA. Did you do anything else besides play—represent FFA at shows?

EEC: Yeah. [*Clears throat*] We, Earl and I, did the Meat-Judging

Contest. [*Laughs*]

SL: Meat judging?

EEC: Meat judging.

SL: Well, what's involved . . .

EEC: Like, meat. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . with that?

EEC: I know it sounds funny. Nah, you judge meat. Like, cuts of meat, like sirloin, T-bone steaks, roasts. And we did—we went to the state—went to the National Meat Judging contests, actually, through the FFA.

[01:56:34] SL: Were you all known as diabolical judges? I mean . . .

EEC: I don't know. [*Laughter*]

SL: The twins comin' to judge the . . .

EEC: But we had fun. [01:56:40] We got to go to Kansas City with the National Meat Judgin', and so happened right across the street from the auditorium was *Dick Clark Show*. [*Laughs*]

SL: Neat.

EEC: With—had Fabian and Rob—Jimmy Clanton. I forgot how many groups. They all—when they all traveled together, and we got to see that show. That was kind of mix of the music and the other, you know when I mean, gettin' to go see that show.

[01:57:05] SL: Yeah. Well, I want to talk about that show, but I also want to talk about this meat-judging stuff. Was it just cuts of raw meat?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And you just looked at it?

EEC: You look at it had to identify it. Course, we learned it all from the classes they'd—they have the slides that show you the different cuts, what—how to identify. You—they'd show that—"What is this?" You know, you have to identify it, you know. Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: And so, but you guys were judges? Is that . . .

EEC: Yeah, judge—you actually—the team, like it was three guys on the team, Earl and I and one other guy. That's that team judged, and they—I don't remember how many you got right or whatever.

SL: Oh, I see.

EEC: Yeah.

[01:57:42] SL: You guys were actually—it was more of a . . .

EEC: It was a contest.

SL: . . . contest that you guys . . .

EEC: Contest between . . .

SL: . . . were in.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Rather than judging someone's entry, you were . . .

EEC: No. And it was a judge—it was a contest to judge—to find out, you know, [*laughs*] what's the best team . . .

SL: And you all did pretty . . .

EEC: Yeah, we did—we won the state, and we went to the national. We didn't win the national, but yeah, it was kinda fun to do. Like I say . . .

[01:58:03] SL: Well, I know some FFA projects, like, were, raising a chicken or . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . raisin' a cow. I mean, did you ever do that kinda stuff with it?

EEC: Well, yeah, you had to. You had to raise—we had raise steers, I believe it was. Well, no, I think it was sheep. I can't remember what it was. We raised somethin', far as our project—no, pigs is what it was—hogs. We had a—each our own—I had a—each had a female hog and raised the pigs and sold 'em. Made a little money. But yeah, we had to do—you had to have a project. With FFA you did.

SL: So you all did the hog . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . hog thing, then, for the . . .

EEC: That was our project, yeah [*unclear word*].

SL: Well, did you enjoy that, doin' the . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the FFA stuff and . . .

EEC: Yeah. Enjoyed it.

SL: So were there meetings, monthly meetings, with FFA? Was it a school . . .

EEC: It's part of the school.

SL: A school thing.

EEC: Fact, one of your cla . . .

SL: Once a week?

EEC: Yeah, one of your classes—no, every day . . .

SL: Every day?

EEC: Just—may have been three days a week. I can't remember, but we—it's one of the classes you'd go to. Yeah.

[01:59:06] SL: Okay, now. You're older now, and you're in high school, and you're in FFA. Now, surely you've got chores around the house.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: What did you do? Let's say you—what time did you get up in the mornings?

EEC: [*Laughs*] I don't remember to get to school what time it was.
Pretty early.

SL: I mean, did you have stuff you had to do around the home
before you went to school?

EEC: Generally not before we went to school, no.

SL: Okay.

EEC: After school sometime we have to have—milk the cow or
whatever for milk for the house, you know what I mean.

SL: Uh-huh. Yeah.

EEC: Do that if they're—feed some hay to the cattle. They need to
be fed, you know. Dependin' what time my dad's gonna get
home from work but do that. [*Unclear words*] things.

SL: So rea—it was more of a livestock stuff . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that you . . .

EEC: Right. Mainly, yeah.

SL: . . . were takin' care of the animals.

EEC: Yeah, right. That was mainly it.

SL: Well . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that's a big deal.

EEC: Yeah. It is.

SL: So would your mom make cream out of the milk . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . as well?

EEC: Yeah. Yes, she did. Yep.

[02:00:10] SL: So what about the—did you ever—did y'all start plowin' or anything around then?

EEC: Not that . . .

SL: Did you have to do any of that?

EEC: Not that much, no. They'd—once a year, daddy'd plow for a garden, you know, but . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And he'd, sometimes, he'd—at that point, I think, he'd borrow somebody's tractor or somethin' if he wanted to plant one of the—part of the acreage, he would plant some kind of grass, he would borrow somebody's tractor or have somebody come and do it. But that's before he bought a tractor. But by that time, he wasn't doing it by hand with a horse that much.

[02:00:42] SL: Mh-hmm. And what about—you mentioned sheep. Did y'all have sheep, too?

EEC: Yeah, at one time we had quite a few. Yeah. He just used to have to shear 'em, you know. In fact, he and his brother had a business goin' around the neighbors that had sheep to shear

their sheep, you know . . .

SL: A shearing business.

EEC: . . . 'cause they sold the wool. That used to be—for a while he did that.

SL: And chickens?

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*] We didn't—nothin' compared to what they do now, but we had just a small house that we raised broilers. Fact, the first time we met Don Tyson, he came out to our house. He was workin' for his dad [*laughs*] chicken business. He come out to check our chickens.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah, remember that.

[02:01:25] SL: So did you raise for Tyson?

EEC: Yeah. At that time we did. Yeah.

SL: That's early in Tyson history.

EEC: Oh yeah. Way back there, yeah.

SL: I mean, that's back when he was—when his dad, John, was probably actually drivin' the stuff up to Chicago, maybe.

EEC: Could be. I don't know.

SL: I mean, that's early.

EEC: Might be a little later than that. I'm not sure.

SL: Yeah. Hmm. Small world.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

[02:01:49] SL: It is. Did—was Don aware of you all's playin' around, doin' . . .

EEC: I don't . . .

SL: . . . gigs at the time?

EEC: . . . I don't know if he was or not, you know. He was pretty young then.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I don't think he was that aware of it.

[02:02:02] SL: What about—you know, here's another name, and did y'all ever come across Frankie Kelly and the Kelly family?

EEC: I met—yeah, I've met him. I didn't really know him that well. But I've met him and know who he is.

SL: But you don't remember ever seein' him play or . . .

EEC: Yeah, I've seen him play. Some—I forgotten . . .

SL: But . . .

EEC: . . . where it was. Yeah.

SL: . . . but not when you . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . when you were a kid.

EEC: No.

SL: But later on.

EEC: Right, yeah.

SL: Yeah. [02:02:31] Okay, so mainly it was a livestock responsibility around the house.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Anything else?

EEC: Or if a yard needed to be mowed or whatever, [*laughs*] you know.

[02:02:39] SL: Uh-huh. Now, I do remember, and you mentioned this, pickin' up rocks.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: If there's—you've got nothin' else to do, you can go out in that field . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . and get rocks outta the field.

EEC: Yeah, a lot of times he did that. Dad'd go off to work and, [*laughs*] "I want you boy"—he just didn't want—he didn't want us just sittin' around all day, you know. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

EEC: "I want you boys to get down there and pick up rocks," which there's a lot of 'em.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Pretty rocky, you know.

SL: And you'd just pile 'em on the edge of the field?

EEC: Yeah. Well, certain pile, yeah, you put 'em all in one pile.
[Laughs] Yeah. I hated that, you know what I mean?
[Laughs]

SL: Well, I think—really, the tone that you mention it and the way Earl mentioned it . . .

EEC: [Laughs] Yeah. Oh, did he mention it, too?

SL: . . . it was not your favorite thing to do.

EEC: Yeah, did he mention that, too?

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. [Laughs]

[02:03:26] SL: [Laughs] Well, so in high school, didn't have a car. You still had horses, though. Did you—did your range increase as you got older with the horses?

EEC: Well, [coughs] not a whole lot. We'd—sometimes the rural roads, we'd ride down a ways, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But yeah. No, that's about it. Wasn't any reason to ride too far.

SL: Yeah. Let me think for just a moment here. [02:04:08] Your sister, five years younger than you all, how—were y'all very close with your sister, or was the . . .

EEC: Well, yeah.

SL: . . . age difference enough to . . .

EEC: Well, pretty close, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: We're protective of her, for sure. Yeah.

SL: Big brothers?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Did you ever feel like you had to step in to [*EEC laughs*]
protect her?

EEC: Not that much, actually.

SL: Not that much.

EEC: No. We were there if we needed to be, though.

SL: Yeah. [02:04:38] Was there ever—I mean, you know, we
were talkin' with Jim Blair, and we got off on the subject of
fighting, actual fighting. And he kinda—he said, you know,
back then, people fought. I mean, they—and they kinda [*EEC*
laughs] liked it, for some reason.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, you know, they kinda mixed it up, and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you'd be fightin' with the guy, and then, you know, and when it was over, you'd be havin' a beer with 'em, or you'd be best buds, you know. It's not . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: It was kinda entertainment . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . in a way. Did y'all ever—ever any kind of violence or . . .

EEC: No. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . stuff that y'all had to engage in to . . .

EEC: Nah, I never—I don't remember ever [*laughs*] havin' any. Nah, I really don't. I've heard of—and you heard of it, you know, but . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . never cared much for that part.

[02:05:29] SL: You guys were pretty quiet, weren't you?

EEC: Oh yeah, yeah.

SL: All along?

EEC: Oh yeah. Yep.

SL: I just—was your mother quiet? Was your father kinda quiet? Were they both quiet people, or was—it sounds like to me your father may have been a little bit more gregarious.

EEC: He was. I mean, he wasn't either one. He was kinda a mix,

you know. He wasn't overly, you know, but he wasn't overly quiet either, you know. I don't know. I don't know. [Laughs]

SL: I wonder—I just wonder how it is that you guys got so darn quiet [EEC clears throat] and . . .

EEC: I don't know. I never [laughs] figured that out. [SL laughs] I never figured that out.

SL: Could've been when you got bucked off that cow [EEC laughs] and got . . .

EEC: Could be.

SL: . . . changed your life forever.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: I don't know.

EEC: I don't know.

[02:06:25] SL: So, let's see. I guess we can get you back to high school. Oh, I know. Let's talk about [EEC clears throat] segregation and race relations, you know. Springdale, frankly, doesn't have the greatest reputation for race relations during the [19]50s . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . and [19]60s and even the [19]70s.

EEC: No, it didn't.

SL: Do you remember any segregation issues when you were in

Springdale?

EEC: There really wasn't any in Springdale that I remember at all.

SL: 'Cause they'd—there was just not a black . . .

EEC: There wasn't any.

SL: . . . community.

EEC: No. Fact, you'd have to go to Fayetteville, and maybe you'd see one or two black people, you know. But you know, I never thought much either way about it. You know, I didn't think much of it, really. My parents would kinda, you know, point out that a person was, you know, African American, but you know, I wouldn't—you know, I didn't really—us bein' in Springdale, we never did think about it much.

SL: You didn't—there were no relationships . . .

EEC: No, no.

SL: . . . in Springdale, were there?

EEC: No.

[02:07:32] SL: And there weren't any—there wasn't any black community outside of—in the rural areas . . .

EEC: Oh no, not at all.

SL: . . . back then?

EEC: No, not at all. But . . .

SL: It's interesting how Northwest Arkansas was like that.

EEC: Yeah, it's a whole lot different than the eastern . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . southern part. Totally different.

SL: Yeah, sure. Blacks and whites lived . . .

EEC: I don't know how that happened but . . .

SL: . . . next door to each other.

EEC: . . . I don't know how that happened that way but . . .

SL: Well, it was probably cotton.

EEC: But you know you—well, yeah, cotton, the main thing.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Plus, some of your great music came out of that though, over there, you know.

SL: That's right.

EEC: Really did.

[02:08:10] EJ: When you all were in Fayetteville did—and Fayetteville had that little black community south of town. Did you all spend any time down there . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . later when you were playin' . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] No. We was always told not to . . .

EJ: Told not to?

EEC: . . . for some strange reason. Now it seems so silly for

anybody to even say that, you know, that you don't want to go down there, you know. Why? You know, I don't understand it. You know, I really don't. Just the way people are, I guess, you know.

[02:08:36] SL: Yeah, you know, I never got to set foot in Sherman's.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*] [*Unclear words*]

SL: Did you ever—did you . . .

EEC: No . . .

SL: . . . ever get to see Sherman's?

EEC: No. Heck no.

SL: I didn't ever, either. My brother Porter used to . . .

EEC: Really?

SL: . . . go to Sherman's. [*EEC laughs*] Now, you know, my brother Porter was bouncing for Ronnie . . .

EEC: Really?

SL: . . . back then. I don't—you probably—I don't guess you ever knew Porter.

EEC: I bet—yeah, I probably did. I mean, I don't know.

SL: Pretty big guy.

EEC: Yeah.

[02:09:03] SL: Well, let's ta—let's get back to the Rockwood Club

then 'cause I have a feelin' that the Rockwood was kind of the,
I don't know, maybe the proving ground . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . for the music that was going on back then. If you played
the Rockwood Club, first of all, you had an audience.

EEC: Right.

SL: And it was mostly college, right?

EEC: Yeah. On the weekend.

SL: On the weekend.

EEC: If you're a band that nobody'd heard of, they might let you
play on a Wednesday night just to see what you sound like,
you know [*laughs*] what I mean . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . but you didn't have much crowds on Wednesday.

SL: Right.

EEC: You play on Wednesday night, and if the owner liked you and
people seemed to like it, then they might give you a weekend
night or somethin', you know, on the weekend but . . .

[02:09:44] SL: Was that pretty much true of all the clubs?

EEC: I don't know if that's true. There wasn't that many to
compare . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . with at that time, but yeah, it was true. Kinda was, I guess.

SL: A little audition . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . on the off night.

EEC: Yeah. We—I think we actually went down there to audition one night. Didn't—it wasn't even on a Wednesday night. I can't remember what night it was but—we got—yeah, he did decide to use us for a Wednesday, you know, at first.

SL: Yeah. [02:10:11] So do you remember Don Tyson bein' the doorman there?

EEC: No. But I remember him comin' to see us, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . several times. Yeah.

SL: Well, Ronnie claims he was the best doorman he ever had.

EEC: I don't remember him being a doorman. He may have been.

SL: Well, apparently he would pay for the girls.

EEC: That's probably right. [*SL laughs*] That's probably true.

SL: Yeah, yeah. I also heard that about the only competition the Rockwood Club had was in the fall during the county fair.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: The guys would take all the girls out to the fair and . . .

EEC: Could be.

SL: . . . win 'em teddy a bear . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . instead of goin' to the Rockwood Club.

EEC: Yeah, could be. Very possible. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. Strange at the time that was the only place, I guess.

[02:10:58] SL: So what time of day—what time of night did things
fire up out at the Rockwood Club?

EEC: Oh, usually eight thirty, nine, if I remember right. Yeah,
somethin' like that. I believe so.

SL: And it would go until?

EEC: I can't remember. I don't think they stayed real late. I can't
remember what the law was then.

SL: If there was one.

EEC: Huh?

SL: I wonder if there was one?

EEC: They may not've been. I don't know. They mighta . . .

SL: You know, it kinda . . .

EEC: . . . been in there all night if there's enough crowd. I don't
know. I can't remember playin' real late there, though.

SL: Well, back then that was at the edge of town . . .

EEC: Yeah. It's true.

SL: . . . really.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, I can't remember about that, how late we played.
I don't remember.

[02:11:43] SL: So was there any nights in particular that come back
to you about playing at the Rockwood Club?

EEC: Oh, I don't know. [*Coughs*] I remember nights when Don
Tyson showed [*laughs*] up but, you know, but—well, one
particular weekend we had Jimmy Clanton. You remember
him? He was a rock-and-roll singer.

SL: I do remember that name.

EEC: He was in the service somewhere—he's in army. He was up in
Missouri, somewhere—the fort—somewhere up there. Anyway,
he came down for the weekend and played, and we backed him
up. You know, he sang. We backed him up. Came down
[*clears throat*] and rehearsed a little bit that afternoon and
played that night. I remember that. Somethin' I remember.
Seem like there was one other artist did the same thing. We
backed 'em one time. I can't remember who it was. That was
interesting. I remember one night Conway Twitty comin' in
with his band, listenin' to us. This is like on a Wednesday night
or somethin'. It wasn't anybody in there hardly. I'm tryin' to

think of what else, but can't member now. It was interesting, though.

[02:12:54] SL: So who all was in your [*EEC clears throat*] band when you started playing at the Rockwood Club?

EEC: It would have been Earl and I—gosh, I can't remember who played drums then. I can't even remember. Lonnie Watson on bass. I can't remember who was playin' drums, for sure.

EJ: Would that've been Randy Favorite?

EEC: Yeah, he was with us. It mighta been Randy. Yeah, coulda been Randy. Yeah, 'cause we went on the road in [19]65, and Lonnie was in school. He didn't go, so Gerald Golden did it. Yeah, I think—guess that was it. [*Laughs*] I don't know.

[02:13:39] SL: So you all ended up playing on Friday and Saturdays?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: [*Clears throat*] What was your usual take on a weekend?

EEC: [*Clears throat*] Gosh, I can't remember. Probably \$300. I don't know.

SL: Really?

EEC: That's just a wild guess. I mean, I don't know. I forgot. It's been so long.

SL: Split among four of you?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: It wasn't a whole lot but. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well.

EEC: I think Mhoon's Club—we came back off the road in [19]66. He offered us to play three nights. I forgot what we were gettin'. Wasn't much, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Fifty dollars apiece for three nights or somethin'.

SL: Wow.

EEC: I don't remember for sure.

[02:14:24] EJ: At the time that you got this combo workin', are you doin' any other kinds of jobs?

EEC: Part of the time, I was. Yeah, I started workin' at Springdale Farms as an inventory clerk. And Earl was runnin' Ben Jack's Guitar Center. So—but not all the time. There for bout three or four years, then we got a—course, [*unclear word*] gettin' ahead of myself now [*laughs*] so, yeah.

SL: That's okay.

EEC: Yeah.

[02:14:49] SL: We can go back and forth. So inventory clerk at Springdale Farms? What was Springdale Farms?

EEC: They pro—chicken processing. They had a processing plant there, and they also had—sold products through the freezer store. They froze chickens and then sold 'em to different companies all over the country. I just had to keep track of how many they had, you know what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah, how many they had in the freezer, the sale and all that. They had a route that took—sold chicken, french fries and stuff to restaurants, and they kept track of that, too. Actually, Bill Wright, our bass player, had worked there, and he quit and started teachin' guitar at Ben Jack's, so I took over Bill's job so . . .

SL: Wow.

EEC: I got about three years, I guess, at the Springdale Farms.

SL: That's pretty serendipitous.

EEC: Yeah, I know. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, so that was a day job? [*Thumping sound*]

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And then you guys would play at night whenever you had a . . .

EEC: Yeah, we . . .

SL: . . . a gig.

EEC: . . . could, yeah.

[02:15:49] SL: Yeah. So when did you start to branch out of Fayetteville? I mean, branch out of this area? You had a pretty good gig in Joplin for a while, right?

EEC: That was back in [19]62, [19]63, I guess. Yeah, it was like a just summertime deal. Six nights a week, I believe, in summertime.

SL: Well, was that somethin' that Ken originally set up or . . .

EEC: That's—he did that, yeah. But it was pretty decent money, you know, to play all summer.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: That's about as far as we went. But during the school year, we might go to Norman to play a fraternity thing or something.

[02:16:31] SL: Out at—did—was it Dayton that had a . . .

EEC: Yeah, he had the Sundown Club over there. Also, we'd play there once in a while, his club over there, Sundown Club. Or there might be a fraternity gig, but we didn't really go that far away. Once in a while.

[02:16:49] SL: So what did you th—I mean, how did the gigs compare to being back here? I mean, you're kind of on—you're pretty much on the road when you go to Joplin . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and when you go to Norman.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And so you're goin' over there, and you're spending the nights . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . away from home, and . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . and you're doin' the travel thing. Were the crowds just as supportive of you out there as . . .

EEC: Yeah, were . . .

SL: . . . they were . . .

EEC: It seemed like they were, yeah.

SL: Yeah?

EEC: Yeah, it did.

[02:17:23] SL: And so in these early [19]60s, what kind of stuff were you all playin'?

EEC: Well, we're still doin'—we're doin' some Ray Charles, startin' to do that. And when Ken Owens is with us, course he had some things he did, rock-and-roll stuff. I'm tryin' to think what exactly we were doin'. All kinds of stuff. We might do "Summertime Blues" and, you know, I don't know, just different songs. Some Chuck Berry. Just a little—a different

variety of things.

SL: So you all are gettin' to be better musicians?

EEC: Yeah, you're learnin' by playin' a lot. Yeah, I guess.

[02:18:00] SL: Did—was the—playin' the bars. Were they all bars
that you—I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah, pretty—that's about . . .

SL: . . . in Joplin it was a bar . . .

EEC: . . . bout the only place there was to play, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . in those days.

SL: So you guys were, you know, kids out of Sonora, and you're
thrust into the . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the bar scene.

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: So now, that's a different life. I mean, that's . . .

EEC: Oh, definitely.

SL: . . . a different thing.

EEC: I member the first [*vocalization*] gig deal we did like that was
with Ken Owens, and I think it was on a Sunday afternoon of
all things, you know. Was somewhere up in Missouri at some
little old beer joint or somethin' out, you know, somewhere.

And we had to set up and play for that afternoon. And I still remember walkin' in and smellin' the beer, you know. It was—it's just—I didn't like it, you know, to be honest with you.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: You know, it was just total different experience. We ended up playin' for three or four hours and comin' home.

SL: Is that Noel, maybe?

EEC: No, it wasn't Noel. I forgot where it was, but that wasn't Noel.

[02:19:01] SL: M'kay. So yeah, I mean, it's totally—it had to be foreign to you guys.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, it's not . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was, [*laughs*] yeah.

SL: . . . anything that you had seen or . . .

EEC: No,. . .

SL: . . . done before because . . .

EEC: . . . no, it wasn't.

SL: Well, I mean, you had been hangin' out the back doors . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . of different places but you . . .

EEC: But yeah, we're there for the music. I mean, we're not there for the other part of it so we—that's the only way we looked at

it, you know what I mean. That's what we're there about.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Just play the music. And try to learn.

[02:19:29] SL: So that's really kind of a remarkable fortitude that you guys had.

EEC: Yeah, I guess so.

SL: 'Cause a lot of people, that stuff gets right on top of 'em . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . and it ends careers, and it . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . complicates life and . . .

EEC: Believe me. Seen it happen a lotta times before.

SL: Well, I know you have.

EEC: Yeah. Yep.

SL: I know you have. And there's really not a whole lot that you can do about it 'cause you can't tell people what to do . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . how to be.

EEC: Yep.

[02:20:01] SL: So was there ever a time when you thought, "Man, we just can't keep doin' this," or did that just not happen until, [EEC laughs] you know, the past couple years? [Laughs]

EEC: Oh, it's been a lotta times, I'm sure.

SL: Really? There was a lot of times when you thought . . .

EEC: Well yeah, you just get—I don't know. You don't really get burnt out. You just get to that point, "I don't want to be here."

SL: Yeah.

EEC: That's what it comes down to, you know. It's all just, you know, "I don't wanna be here. I'd rather be somebody else." Not—nothin' about the music 'cause you like to do it and you like to play it, but the atmosphere and just the whole noise and the—I guess you get older, you don't, just don't, you know don't wanna . . .

SL: It's not exciting anymore.

EEC: Not exciting, no.

[02:20:45] SL: So early on you must be getting a glimpse of what this is gonna be like. You're workin' up songs. You're kinda playin' the same songs over and over again.

EEC: Hmm. Yeah, right.

SL: You're going into another dark room that smells like beer on the floor and . . .

EEC: Right. [*Laughs*] Yeah, there's another . . .

SL: . . . the bathroom is awful and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the women are crazy . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and the guys are dangerous and . . .

EEC: Right, yeah.

SL: . . . all the downside of it. You're startin' to get a glimpse of that. [02:21:16] Did you think, you know, maybe we don't wanna do this music thing?

EEC: Oh, that crosses your mind, of course, you know what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But like I say, then you're just thinkin' about the music, or you're thinkin' about a goal that you have in mind. Well, I want to keep writin'; I wanna get a record deal; I wanna—you know, you have kinda got that in your mind more than you are thinkin' about this is how we get to that point. You know, from here, we go—maybe we won't have to do these clubs anymore. Maybe we could do concerts. Maybe we can—you know, that's kinda where you're thinking as you go along. You always don't think about that's the end of it all. If that's all there is, you probably wouldn't. Just say, "Heck with it," you know.

[02:21:49] SL: Yeah. So you forged—you—by hookin' up with the Rockwood Club, you've kinda forged a relationship that you had probably no idea would last all your life.

EEC: Oh yeah. Definitely, I never expected it.

SL: You know, you've got Hawkins, and you've got Levon, and you've got all those guys in the—that became The Band that are playin' . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and you've also getting exposed, and other people, other players, are seeing you. And . . .

EEC: Mh-hmm. Oh yeah.

SL: This is, you know—now it's the old days, back then. Then, it was everybody's just—it was kind of a new thing. This whole rock-and-roll deal was . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . was new.

EEC: Right. Yeah, it was.

[02:22:41] SL: So there was—there were paths that were being blazed back then, and y'all kinda got stuck in the development of rockabilly, really. I mean, that's what was . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . drivin' the crowds back around . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . here back then and—so when you start gettin' out on the road and stuff, do you—are you still staying in touch with these

guys that are doin' the same thing that you're doing, I mean,
or do you just kinda cross paths whenever . . .

EEC: Yeah . . .

SL: . . . you're at the same place?

EEC: . . . basically, cross paths, you know, what it comes down to.

[02:23:19] SL: Now, there was that transition period with Ronnie's
band where Stan's leaving, and you got an invite from Levon
and who else?

EEC: Robbie.

SL: Robbie?

EEC: Yeah. They [*unclear word*] . . .

SL: To take y'all out to lunch.

EEC: Yeah, well, yeah, and they wanted to see if we'd be interested
in goin' on the road with 'em, you know, which woulda been a
great experience because I just coulda learned real [*laughs*]
fast, I'm sure . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . playing with Ronnie and all that, but course, we were
young and just didn't—our parents didn't want us to, and we
really didn't want to either, actually. Just too young. Too
soon.

SL: Well, now, Robbie was very young. He was . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . younger than you guys.

EEC: He was about the same age.

SL: He was?

EEC: Yeah, yeah.

SL: And Levon isn't a whole lot older. I mean . . .

EEC: Bout three—two or three years older. He'll be seventy this year, I think.

SL: So, I mean, you were all basically young.

EEC: Oh yeah, we were all young.

SL: Two or three years difference . . .

EEC: But they'd already been . . .

SL: . . . back then was . . .

EEC: . . . but they'd already been through it. I mean [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . they were from up there, and they'd been playin'. They knew the ropes. And we'd never done that. It just too big a step, you know.

SL: Both of you all were in school . . .

EEC: In school, yeah . . .

SL: . . . at the time, right? Goin' . . .

EEC: . . . at the University . . .

SL: . . . to the University of Arkansas.

EEC: Yeah, right.

[02:24:31] SL: And your parents—I mean, did you even ask your parents, or did you tell your parents?

EEC: We mentioned it to 'em. Course, we knew it wasn't any reason to, but we did. Course, they wouldn't hear of it, you know what I mean.

SL: Right.

EEC: But I had other reasons, too. She's in the other room but [*laughs*].

[02:24:43] SL: You had—were you married at the time, or you just . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you were—you had already married?

EEC: No, wait a minute. That's [19]60—no, I wasn't married yet. I'm sorry. [*Unclear words*]

SL: But you all were . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you knew that was . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . gonna happen.

EEC: She was still in high school. But I was out. Yeah.

[02:25:01] SL: Well you know, that's another thing about the music business and being on the road and playing the circuits. It's almost impossible to have a . . .

EEC: Yeah, it's a tough life.

SL: . . . a healthy relationship with your . . .

EEC: It's a tough life. It really is.

SL: . . . with a family.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, it's just—you're just not . . .

EEC: That's why we never did really get—we get—we did get out and do quite a bit of heavy touring back when we had our records out. Then some with Levon, too, but we've never done it like a lot of acts that—like a Jimmy Thackery or somewhere just on the road these blues clubs just week after week . . .

SL: Nonstop, yeah.

EEC: . . . year after year. Just didn't ever want to be a part of that. I mean, it's good because you build up a fan base all over the country, but you also lose other things, too, so.

SL: Nothing's free.

EEC: Right, exactly. But we chose not to do [*laughs*] that, you know.

SL: Well, and you know, that's pretty strong, actually.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: 'Cause it would have been tempting.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: 'Cause you may not have realized it at the time, but had you done that, your careers probably would have been advanced much more quickly.

EEC: Oh yeah. I know that. [*Laughs*] Yeah. No doubt.

[02:26:16] SL: I can't imagine you and Robbie being on the same stage day—night after night.

EEC: No [*laughter*]. [*Unclear words*], no.

SL: You know, or . . .

EEC: Or Ronnie or . . .

SL: . . . or you and Richard or you . . .

EEC: . . . or Ronnie or—yeah, I know.

SL: Yeah, or . . .

EEC: But we did get to spend—well, not with Robbie, but the rest of The Band, we were a part of that for a while, you know.

SL: Yeah, I do know.

EEC: Saw what that was like, yeah.

[02:26:37] SL: So let's—you talk about what touring you did, you know, of course, supporting records and stuff like that, but I want to talk about your first recording experiences. Now, there

was a guy named Phillip Eagle in Fayetteville.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Right? And he had a little place at the back of a house on Maple Street . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . in Fayetteville. Tell me, when you walked into that space, tell me what it looked like.

EEC: I can't even remember that much about it. Earl probably remembers more than I do. I don't remember—it wasn't a very elaborate deal, you know. I can't even remember how many tracks he had. Maybe just two-track thing. I don't remember what it was.

SL: At best it would have been . . .

EEC: Well . . .

SL: . . . two tracks.

EEC: . . . all of us got out there and played and sang the same time. It wasn't like overdubs and . . .

SL: It was live.

EEC: Yeah. Just live, pretty much, the best I remember about it. Tryin' to think we did some more somewhere else. I can't remember. Well, when we started going down Fort Worth to record some things, that was a real studio, you know. That

was in [19]68 or [19]69. Started doin' some of our original stuff. That's what led to our first record deal.

[02:27:51] SL: But Phillip's recording was, I mean, was . . .

EEC: Eagle.

SL: . . . Eagle's recording was mid-[19]60s?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Early [19]60s?

EEC: Well, it had to been early [19]60s 'cause Ken, I think, [19]63, he left. Yeah.

SL: So it was after Ken left that y'all . . .

EEC: No, it was before he left.

SL: Before he left.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So . . .

EEC: So it'd been early [19]60s.

SL: And was it just one session there with Eagle or . . .

EEC: I think we did a couple. I can't remember for sure. Seems like.

SL: And was he recording straight to disk? Do you remember?

EEC: I don't remember. I [*laughs*] really don't. Can't remember how he did that.

SL: Do you remember if he was in a separate room?

EEC: Yeah, he was in a separate room. I remember that.

SL: Kay.

EEC: Yeah. Don't remember a whole lot about it, really.

SL: Yeah. Well, it's just really, of course, interesting to me.

EEC: Yeah.

[02:28:48] SL: But as far as I know, his was the first and only studio
in Fayetteville for a . . .

EEC: It was.

SL: . . . a long time . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was. Yeah.

SL: . . . until maybe the [19]70s, even. I don't remember. I
guess, [*EEC clears throat*] yeah, I don't remember anyone else
having a studio until [19]70 . . .

EEC: Yeah, there just weren't any around here.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: There really weren't.

SL: Yeah. [02:29:13] So what about Ben Jack? Did y'all ever
record down in his studio?

EEC: Yeah, we did. Yeah.

SL: Was that before the Fort Worth recording?

EEC: It was afterwards.

SL: Afterwards.

EEC: Yeah. [02:29:25] Actually, the guy that was doing the things in Fort Worth, Mickey Moody, he eventually moved up here and took over down at Ben Jack's studio, took it over and kinda ran it for a while. We did some stuff down there. Recorded some things.

SL: So you kinda followed Mickey into . . .

EEC: Yeah, for a little while because he was the only real connection we had far as gettin' ready to go record somewhere. He liked our original songs, so we did that. That led to that Metromedia deal.

[02:29:51] SL: So how did you get hooked up with Mickey? I mean, if he's all the way in Fort Worth . . .

EEC: Well, he was friends with some bands that played from Norman who used to come over and play, college bands and stuff, and they had talked about—told him he ought to go listen to us or somethin', one of the other bands did. He came and heard us at Mhoon's Club, I guess it was. He heard us play and offered us to come down there and record some stuff, just on spec, you know. So we ended up doin' that, and we worked.

[Laughs] We dro—go down on the weekend and have to drive back home to get to work on Monday mornings. We didn't have a lotta time to do it, maybe one, couple days, or maybe

even one day.

SL: Well . . .

EEC: We actually had time to record so . . .

SL: Yeah, back in those days . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . if you spent more than a couple days on a record, you'd spent too much money . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and too much time.

EEC: And that wasn't even the whole record. It was—we cut several tracks, you know, in a row. [02:30:40] And then, course, he, somehow or another, but he had knew this Mickey—Huey Meaux guy that—big producer, produced Bruce Channel and some people. In Houston he knew Huey Meaux, and he heard our stuff, and he liked it. "Well, I wanna see if I can get those guys a record deal." He put some girl singers on there and horns, overdubbed 'em and stuff, and [*clears throat*] took it to Metromedia. And they took it, and we didn't amount to anything but. [*Laughs*] They came and listened to us play live and signed us up.

[02:31:11] SL: So are any of those recordings anywhere? I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah. Eric has a couple of 'em.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. *The Cates Gang* is the first one, and then *Come Back Home* is the second one. Just kind of outtakes and stuff we didn't do in the first album.

EJ: I don't know if you wanna [SL clears throat] [unclear words] . .

SL: Oh yeah.

EEC: But the time, you know, with Bobby Sherman, and he was a main guy on Metromedia Records, but they didn't really do much promotion or anything. But we didn't care. We [laughs] signed one of those deals where we shouldn't've signed, you know. You know, signed away our publishing . . .

SL: Well, really, I mean, it . . .

EEC: . . . you know, signed away, you know . . .

SL: Signed away the rights . . .

EEC: We just wanted to be able to do it . . .

SL: . . . intellectual property went to them, as well . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . and all that.

EEC: Yep.

SL: By the way, you hold on to the intellectual property of anything we do that's in . . .

EEC: Well, I know.

SL: It's not in there but . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] That's right. Yeah.

SL: It's—yeah, we won't take that away.

EEC: Yeah.

[02:32:06] TM: Scott, while we're on that, can we talk a little bit more about the record industry in just a little bit more detail about how that worked in—at that time?

SL: Sure. Yeah, I mean, we can certainly get the artist's perspective from that. You know, the ide—I guess the idea was that this guy traveled up to Norman, looked at you, offered a . . .

EEC: Well, he ca—that's the band that's from out of Norman. Heard—told Mickey Moody he knew those guys. They'd been recording down there.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I can't remember the name of the group now, but they told Mickey Moody about us. So he came to Fayetteville to listen to us.

SL: Fayetteville.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Looking for you.

EEC: Yeah. And then offered a chance to come down and do some recording. So that's what that all ended up. But the deal—record deal was just a matter of, you know, we were anxious to sign a record [*laughs*] deal, you know.

SL: Sure. I mean, that's part of the . . .

EEC: Like anybody is—yeah.

SL: That's what you believe is gonna happen.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You make a record, and you've ma—and it goes, and you've made it.

EEC: Their big—their New York executive guys came down and listened to us play live, and then they flew us to New York and did the album cover. Just to do the album cover, flew us to New York to do that. Put the record out, but I don't know. Nothin' ever happened with it, you know.

[02:33:15] EJ: So the recordings that ended up on those Metromedia albums were the ones that you were going down to Fort Worth to do?

EEC: Right. Yeah.

EJ: Initially, you're just going down to [*unclear words*] . . .

EEC: All the ones we did on there was one in Fort Worth. Yeah.

EJ: And those were all original songs . . .

EEC: Yeah . . .

EJ: . . . that came out of those records?

EEC: Well, most of 'em were. There mighta been a couple a covers in there, but most of 'em original.

[02:33:32] EJ: What's on the records are all originals, but I think y'all maybe cut some covers that . . .

EEC: Yeah, one of our . . .

EJ: . . . came out later.

EEC: . . . rereleases, they had of me singin' "Let It Be" and . . .

EJ: Yeah.

EEC: . . . I know that, but not very many.

SL: So from the record company or the recording studio, whoever, their point of view is is that we'll give you all of our time but—and in return we're gonna sell this stuff, and when we get our money back . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . and then some . . .

EEC: Exactly.

SL: . . . then you start getting money.

EEC: Right. That's the way it's supposed to work, yeah.

SL: Yeah. And if you happen to write the songs, then maybe, if you don't sign that away, you get . . .

EEC: Yeah, well . . .

SL: . . . some residuals on that.

EEC: . . . the writing, typically, you get the writing anyway, but publishingwise, you know, the writer gets half of it. The publisher gets half. But if you got your own publishing company, you get all of it, but they got the publishing. But we still get writing things for writing songs but—a little bit.

[02:34:38] EJ: One of those songs, while we're on this, one of those songs, "We All Got to Help Each Other," ends up being covered by Kenny Rogers and First Edition.

EEC: Kenny Rogers and the First Edition, yeah. Yeah, they ended up that—off of that Cate's Gang album, one song I wrote, Kenny Rogers and the First Edition did it, and it's still sellin' a few records, I guess, that long ago.

SL: 'Cause you still get a few checks every once in a while.

EEC: Yeah, not much but a little bit. Mainly foreign.

EJ: How did that song get to him? Do you know?

EEC: I don't know. I don't know how it got to him. Somebody heard it. You know, I don't know. Billy Davis and Marilyn McCoo did one, too. "Can't Change My Heart."

EJ: They did two of 'em.

EEC: Yeah. Two of 'em. Yeah.

[02:35:21] SL: So that's a gratifying side of writing, though, is . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . when other artists pick up your stuff . . .

EEC: Yeah. It'd be nice . . .

SL: . . . and do their . . .

EEC: . . . if a lot of 'em would, yeah.

SL: Yeah, but I mean, that's also kind of a—an acknowledgment of your skill . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . and of your craft that . . .

EEC: Well, yeah.

SL: . . . someone sees value in it and . . .

EEC: Right. Exactly.

SL: . . . repurposes it . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . for themselves, yeah.

EEC: Right.

[02:35:45] SL: This studio in Fort Worth compared to Eagle's studio in Fayetteville, [*EEC laughs*] you said the one in Forth Worth was a real recording studio.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So I'm assuming that it was a nice room.

EEC: Yeah. They had a good . . .

SL: Did . . .

EEC: . . . nice room to record in, and it's—and the control room is—it wasn't very many tracks. I can't remember.

SL: Well, in early [19]60s . . .

EEC: It wasn't . . .

SL: . . . it could—it wasn't much more than two, I don't think.

EEC: It was. It was two-track.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But it sounded good. I mean, they knew what they were doing, you know.

SL: Were you still doing live stuff, or would they start, you know . . .

EEC: I can't . . .

SL: . . . remixing and . . .

EEC: Generally . . .

SL: . . . doing the different generations and . . .

EEC: It was pretty much live. Most of that was pretty much live. I mighta overdubbed some stuff. He'd mix it down to a—and then he'd be able to overdub some—we did a little bit of overdubbing.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Not a whole lot.

SL: Well, that's kinda the way it was . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . back then. [02:36:34] So were—was the trap set in the same room with the rest of the . . .

EEC: Yeah. If I remember right, it was.

SL: 'Cause that happens later.

EEC: Think it had barriers around it, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah, it was in the same room.

SL: And did you ever have to—I guess they just added backup vocals. You couldn't really replace a vocal.

EEC: No. We usually—yeah. Like I say, they'd mix it down as they were—we'll mix it down, so we got two tracks so we can do that and then do backup vocals or add somethin', key—horns or keyboard or . . .

SL: Right.

[02:37:10] EEC: But I think Huey Meaux mighta taken it down to—someway he figured out he could do more than that with it. I don't know what he did, but yeah. [*Laughs*] When it actually came on the record, it had backup singers and horns, which we didn't have [*unclear words*]*—*weren't even there.

[02:37:24] SL: So did you get to know Huey Moore much at all?

EEC: Eh, not that—Huey Meaux.

SL: Meaux. Yeah.

EEC: He was a prankster, I [*laughs*] tell you.

SL: He was what?

EEC: He was quite a guy. Anyway, we did not know him real well. We just met him a couple times. He come to see us play once we signed the deal. He went with us when we had our album cover done. He flew with us to New York but—he had a lot of fingers in a lot of music, though.

[02:37:50] SL: So did the—did your combo all go to Fort Worth and record, or did he bring in . . .

EEC: We had . . .

SL: . . . different musicians?

EEC: . . . at the time we had a different drummer. He used a different drummer but same bass player did. He did use a drummer he liked that he wanted to use. That's the only difference.

SL: Did that create any hard feelings with the . . .

EEC: I don't . . .

SL: . . . drummer that you had?

EEC: I don't think so. I don't think so. I hope not, you know.

SL: Yeah. Well, I know that it can, that can happen.

EEC: Yeah, it can, I know.

SL: That can break hearts.

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: Yeah.

[02:38:27] EJ: I had a question I wanted to ask about a song and about songwriting in general that's on these records. There's a song on one of these records called "Love Your Neighbor," and one of the lines I remember is, "Got my education in a two-room country school," which I was thinkin' of earlier when you were talking about the two-room . . .

EEC: That's where it came from, yeah.

EJ: . . . school in Sonora.

EEC: That's where it came from. Yeah. [*Laughs*]

EJ: That's what I was thinkin' earlier. And then there's another song, "Livin' On a Country Side," where you're talkin' about the joys of . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . country livin' . . .

EEC: Right.

EJ: . . . and rural livin'.

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: But these aren't your usual song topics, I think, for
1969–1970.

EEC: No, no, they aren't. [*Laughs*] I know.

[02:39:05] EJ: So was that a conscious decision to try to write
songs like that, or was it just what was . . .

EEC: It just happened.

EJ: . . . comin' out of you?

EEC: Just what came in your mind. It just happened. So I don't
know.

SL: Well, you know, most every—any advice I've ever read from
writers is that you should write what you know.

EEC: Yeah. That's basically it, yeah. That's what it come from.
Yep. It is. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, I mean, that usually resonates.

EEC: Right. It does.

SL: 'Cause you hit on stuff that everyone else knows, too . . .

EEC: Yeah. Right.

SL: . . . or can identify with.

EEC: Right.

SL: You're not makin' somethin' up.

EEC: Right.

SL: So it rings true.

EEC: You don't have to live the song, but you just still need to know,
[laughs] you know what I mean?

SL: Mh-hmm.

EEC: You know what I mean? Sometimes it is—like those particular
songs, it came because we were from the country and all that
stuff, you know.

[02:39:56] SL: Y'all never really were a country band, though . . .

EEC: Oh no.

SL: . . . ever.

EEC: When we first started when Lonnie Watson and his cousin
Junior Watson, he was a real country—I mean, we did quite a
bit of country then. We first started playin' an actual little bit
of a band, you know. Wasn't really our cup of tea, but we did
it, you know.

SL: Well, it's probably also what you knew . . .

EEC: That's what—and it is . . .

SL: . . . because you'd grown up with it.

EEC: Yeah, it is what we knew. Yeah.

SL: And it's . . .

EEC: But there's just so many kinds of music [zipping sound] out
there, we just tended to [laughs] grab on to this and then this
and, "Oh, I like that," you know. Kinda what happened.

[02:40:34] SL: But it sounds like to me when you started listening to Ray Charles, it kinda . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . flipped a switch for you.

EEC: Oh yeah. I'd sit listenin' to WLAC in Nashville, Tennessee.

They played all the Howlin' Wolf and all those R&B that you'd never hear over here. We listened to that late at night, you know, at home, you know, Earl and I. And we'd—and course, you couldn't even get the records here, you know . . .

SL: Right.

EEC: . . . couldn't, you know. And course, then Ronnie comin' and playin' a lot of that stuff . . .

SL: Right.

EEC: . . . really turned us on to that.

[02:41:08] SL: So late at night would you guys sit there with your two old guitars and [*EEC laughs*] try to figure out what was goin' on with that stuff?

EEC: We didn't have a chance to 'cause we couldn't replay it, you know I mean? We would just listen to it on the radio, mainly just that kinda . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: You just kinda get a feelin' for that kinda stuff, that that's what

you wanna do. I don't know.

EJ: Did you have . . .

EEC: It rubs off on you. Put it that way.

[02:41:29] EJ: Did you have your own radio by then?

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: Back in your room?

EEC: Yeah, yeah. We did.

SL: That's anoth—that's a question. Did you and Earl have one room that you stayed in or . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . you had your own . . .

EEC: We slept in the same bed for—till we's [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah?

EEC: . . . believe it or not till we were sixteen, seventeen years old. We just had one bedroom for, you know, two—well, my sister in one bedroom, Earl and I in the other, and my folks so it wasn't a . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . you know?

SL: Yeah, it was the same way at my . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . house, too. Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. So we shared the same record player, you know.

SL: Uh-huh. Well, it's just a—it's so fortuitous that both of you embraced this whole music idea of being passionate about music early on.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

[02:42:12] SL: And really—I have to believe that, you know, goin' around to those square dances early on and seeing the excitement that the music could generate and the—how the audience was actually participating with the music . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you know, it's—it was a real . . .

EEC: And seeing how music made people happy and made 'em feel good, you know. Definitely. Has a lot to do with it, you know. *[Laughs]* A lot of the reason you do it, you know. If it didn't you probably wouldn't be doin' it. See the look on people's faces when you play a song, and you see 'em smile or, you know, whatever. You just—that makes it worth it. It really does.

[02:42:59] SL: Okay. So you're—you cut a record. You cut a ta—or you record a tape. They cut a record. They don't promote it. So that's a little bit deflating, isn't it? I mean, you . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . probably worked really hard.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You had to travel to Fort Worth. They flew you to New York.
You thought, "Man, this is it."

EEC: Yeah.

SL: "I can't believe they're doin' this." And then they don't
promote it, and . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . it doesn't do much of anything.

EEC: Right.

SL: Couple of other folks pick up some cuts off of it and do
something with it, which has gotta be . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the best thing about that.

EEC: But it didn't take us where we wanted to go. You know what I
mean? [*Laughs*]

SL: Right. Right.

[02:43:37] EEC: It's like a couple years after that, then, course,
Levon, being a friend of ours coming in all the time, took a tape
of ours to LA. That was [19]74, I guess, [19]73 or [19]74.

SL: That's a—that's quite a bit—that's quite a bit later. That's . . .

EEC: Well, the [19]70s when the Metromedia things . . .

SL: Okay.

EEC: . . . come out.

SL: Okay. Okay. All right.

EEC: Six—[19]70. Anyway, we were still contractually with the guy, Huey Meaux. Locked up, couldn't get out of the contract, you know. But Levon had taken our tape out to California, and they were gettin' ready to—they'd just done the Dylan *Planet Waves*, and they'd met David Geffen and Elliot Roberts, which manages Joni Mitchell.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And Levon—well, actually, Levon took the tape or had Elliot—Elliot took the tape over to Elektra/Asylum Records and just threw it on the desk of Chuck Plotkin, who was the A&R man with the—later he produced, you know, produced Bruce Springsteen. But anyway, Chuck Plotkin's his name. He just threw the tape on his desk. Had my phone number on it. Well, Chuck, for some reason, just picked it up and listened to it. And he called me. He says, "Hey, who is this? I like—I love this tape. What is—who is this?" I said, "Well, that's us," you know. Course, everything started then. Then he came and listened to us. So the—in other words, we had a chance to go Elektra/Asylum, a really good label, you know what I mean?

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But we were locked up with Huey Meaux. They—it took like a year for them to finally negotiate somethin' to get us out from under it.

[02:45:01] SL: So what tape was it that Levon took?

EEC: It was just a bunch of stuff we'd done with Huey and them, actually.

SL: Really?

EEC: You know, some of the songs. Yeah we . . .

SL: In Fort Worth?

EEC: We had some newer songs that weren't done yet, but a lot of the same songs, actually. And actually, some of 'em ended up on the first record with Elektra/Asylum.

[02:45:22] SL: So took a year or more to bust out of the Huey Meaux thing.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You have any idea what he settled for?

EEC: No. I don't know. Points of some kind. That's all I know.

SL: Points?

EEC: Yeah, points on the record. Probably didn't amount to anything, but yeah.

SL: So . . .

EEC: Course, he still had the publishing.

SL: He still does?

EEC: The songs. Yeah.

SL: Wow.

EEC: And still does, yeah.

SL: Wow.

EEC: Yeah.

[02:45:45] SL: Okay, so this next time around with Elektra/Asylum, you guys were a little more savvy.

EEC: Well, yeah. I mean, we probably didn't sign—we probably didn't get a good deal as we should have with them, but it was okay, you know.

SL: It was . . .

EEC: Average, average deal, you know.

SL: Yeah, but you had learned a little bit.

EEC: Yeah, but we got to get a chance to work good producer and, you know, the whole bit, you know, the real big-time deal.

[02:46:04] SL: Who was producing?

EEC: Well, it started off with John Simon, who produced The Band, you know, but . . .

SL: Yes.

EEC: It didn't—we went up to New York and recorded for about a

month. Well, maybe not quite a month. Stayed up there at his place and recorded. Went down the city and recorded. We had our—Terry and Bill Wright playin' bass. Ended up it wasn't strong enough. The record company didn't think it was strong enough. So they had to do somethin', so they hired Steve Cropper. So we went to LA with Steve Cropper, and he hired the studio musicians to play bass and drums. And it was easy as pie. Just went by real quick, you know. And that's what happened so . . .

SL: Bass and drums?

EEC: Yeah. And they hired some extra—David Foster played some keyboard stuff on it and—but Cropper was little—really more down our alley of what we do, you know, bein' for the R&B.

[02:46:53] SL: Okay, well, let's talk about the difference between Steve Cropper and John Simon 'cause I have all the respect in the world for both, of course.

EEC: Oh, I do too, yeah.

SL: And Simon is—isn't it—I mean, for some reason I think of him and horns, but that's probably not right, is it?

EEC: Yeah, somewhat. He's a good arranger and . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . and a good music mind, but he's so laid back and, [*laughs*]

you know, just a different—comes from a different place than we do, you know, whereas Cropper's, you know, from Memphis, and it's different. Just a lot more what we like to do. Well, I think we were thinkin' more in terms of, "Hey, we," 'cause we love The Band, what they did. "Well, we'll go and see John Simon. Yeah. Be great." You don't realize that when—maybe we're not quite what—the same thing as they are, you know.

SL: Right.

EEC: So—but that was learning experience, and it worked out okay 'cause the first record was good, I thought . . .

SL: Oh yeah.

EEC: . . . with Elektra/Asylum.

[02:47:52] SL: So how long did you get to work with Steve Cropper?

EEC: We did the first two records. Yeah, first the *Cate Brothers* and then the *In One Eye and Out the Other*. Two albums. Then they—the company sent—gave us Jim Mason to do the third album, which first time we really used the whole group, ?with the bass?, Ron and Terry.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And then the new one with Tom Dowd on the forth one 'cause we owed Elektra/Asylum so much money they [*laughs*]*—we*

wouldn't ever've made any money if we'd've, you know . . .

[02:48:23] SL: So Steve Cropper. And your sessions that you—well, first of all, tell me about recording—where did you do the first recordings with Simon? What place?

EEC: It was like—I can't remember the name of the studio in downtown New York City. I'm tryin' to think of the name of that. I can't remember now. It was one of the better-known studios.

SL: Now, by that time there was at least four tracks . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . hanging around, right?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Maybe eight?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And how would Simon—he would sit in the control room . . .

EEC: Hmm, yeah.

SL: . . . with the engineer.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You guys were on the other side of the glass.

EEC: We'd get out there—I think we recorded about four songs. And we had kinda got 'em where we wanted 'em and mixed 'em and everything. Sent 'em to LA, and they said, "Well, it's not

quite strong enough," you know. So they're the boss.

[02:49:16] SL: Do you remember what four songs they were?

EEC: Well, one was called "Live and Learn," but it actually became "I Just Wanna Sing," which is on the first album. It was called "Live and Learn," then. Was a little different arrangement. It was kinda, well, almost a different song. I can't remember the other three, for sure what we cut.

[02:49:35] SL: So in this studio in New York, was the trap set in the same room with you, just barriers around it, or did they—were they starting to isolate everything back then?

EEC: I think it was isolated. I mean, if I remember right, I think it was. I really don't know for sure. I think it was.

[02:49:51] SL: So were the vocals done—they did a scratch vocal . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . track . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and then . . .

EEC: And then overdub . . .

SL: . . . replaced it . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . in the vocal booth or with everyone else gone?

EEC: Yeah. Right. Yeah, did that.

[02:50:01] SL: And—but the—I wonder if I—I would guess the bass was probably running direct, but you could still hear it in the room?

EEC: Yeah. Right.

SL: Guitar and the keyboard—were you playin' electric keyboard?

EEC: Yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: So that was running direct, but there was some . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . kind of monitor in the room?

EEC: Yeah. Well, you had your phones.

SL: You had the earphones?

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: They didn't have the foldback monitors.

EEC: Yeah, they had a good system for our headphones.

SL: Yeah, that sounds . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . good. So that was different than what you did in Fort Worth and certainly different than what you did in Fayetteville.

EEC: Yeah, a little step up. Yeah, a step up, yeah.

SL: Yeah. That had to be exciting.

EEC: Yeah, it was. It was. [*Laughs*]

[02:50:39] SL: Was anyone else with John? Did Levon—was Levon
ever involved . . .

EEC: No, he did . . .

SL: . . . with any of the sessions?

EEC: . . . they were off doing somethin'. I don't—I—he wasn't
ever—we went over and visited him one day, but nah, he was—
I—they were doin' somethin'. I can't remember what it was.
Can't remember . . .

SL: Okay.

EEC: . . . if he was recording or doin' somethin'.

SL: Okay, so the record company decided that it needed more.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And so now you go to LA?

EEC: Mh-hmm.

[02:51:03] SL: And you're hookin' up with Steve Cropper. How did
you land—how did Steve Cropper end up with you guys?

EEC: They played him our tape and [*unclear word*].

SL: And he said, "Yeah," . . .

EEC: Yeah

SL: . . . "I wanna do this."

EEC: And he said, "Yeah," you know. He liked it. He really did.

SL: That in itself, I mean, I can . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . if I got that far, I'd say, "I'm done." [*Laughter*]

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, I know. Yeah, he liked it. He knew just what to do. He came out to the house we were staying at and kind of rehearsed with the guys, you know, and he had to break the news to 'em that he had to use the studio guys, you know, but [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . but he came out there and worked on arrangements.

[02:51:34] In fact, we worked—"Union Man," that's where we put it together is out there at that house before we ever record—went to the studio. 'Cause Earl and I had these lyrics for the song, and Steve said, "Well, you know, this disco's doin' real good, and I've got this little riff [*sings*] dun de-dun."

[*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And that's where it started, you know. And we had our lyrics, and we put it all together, but anyway, it was cool to work with him, though. He's good.

SL: So he sent . . .

EEC: He actually wanted to do more than—he wanted to do backup singers and all this stuff that we actually kinda had to fight him

on that we didn't really want a bunch of extra, you know what I mean. Too much, anyway. Overproduced.

SL: You didn't want that wall of sound.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I mean, some of it's—he did—he ended up doin' quite a bit of it, but. And it's okay.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Fact, I kinda like it now, you know what I mean.

[02:52:21] SL: So how long were you out there with him?

EEC: Oh, I can't remember. Took a couple of months, I guess, to really get it all done.

SL: So you had some laughs with him . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . surely?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: He had a good sense of humor and . . .

[02:52:36] EEC: Yeah, he was—it was fun 'cause he brought in different players that we—like Klaus Voormann . . .

SL: Wow.

EEC: . . . on one song. Levon played in the same—"Stand on the Mountaintop" that we wrote that . . .

SL: Yeah?

EEC: . . . Levon played drums on, and Klaus Voormann played the bass.

SL: What was he like? What was Klaus Voorman like?

EEC: He's a nice guy . . .

SL: He was a pretty famous guy.

EEC: . . . a quiet guy. Nils Lofgren played the drums on several cuts. Ed Greene, really great drummer, he played on "Union Man" and a couple of others, but I can't remember the exact ones, but that was a good experience.

SL: Well, yeah, I mean, it seems like you were in a—you had entered a different league.

EEC: Definitely. [*Laughs*] No doubt about it. Yeah, I know. It was.

[02:53:20] SL: And I assume that was probably hard for some of the—for the bass player and drummer in the band at the time.

EEC: Yeah, Terry was real cool with it, though. I mean, he really understood. Bill was the one hurt by it but—the bass player. But Terry was pretty cool with it. Actually, he broke his arm around that time seems like, too.

SL: Terry did?

EEC: Yeah, so he couldn't really play, so it was kinda . . .

SL: Yeah . . .

EEC: . . . you know . . .

SL: . . . so did Terry stick with y'all out there while you were doin' it?

EEC: I think, yeah, I think he stayed out there most of the time.
Yeah, he did. Bill left. He took off, you know, but . . .

SL: Yeah, he was upset.

EEC: Yeah, but, I mean, nothin' you can do, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Comes time to do it, you gotta do it.

SL: Business.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: But . . .

[02:53:56] EJ: Did anybody else from back here go out there with you? Did—was anyone working with y'all in terms of, I don't know, band organization, road manager, helpin' carry stuff.

EEC: No. Not—well, let's see. No, not really at that time. I think we—our roadie guys we got later when we went on tour. I can't—think they were yet. I don't believe they were.

EJ: No other locals came out with you?

EEC: What's that?

EJ: No other locals came out . . .

EEC: No . . .

EJ: . . . with you?

EEC: . . . no.

[02:54:28] SL: So let's see. This is after—is this after Dayton had died?

EEC: Yeah. It's [19]75. Dayton was [19]74, wasn't it?

SL: That kinda sounds right.

EEC: I think that's right. Yeah, it was after it, yeah. Yeah.

SL: And Randy really hadn't strapped on the . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . promoter . . .

EEC: No, not really.

SL: . . . badge yet. He . . .

[02:54:49] EEC: Yeah, we had the management there. The Lookout Management managed Joni and all those people. They actually took over management for us.

SL: The same people that were doin' Joni Mitchell and . . .

EEC: Yeah. Elliot Roberts.

SL: Elliot Roberts.

EEC: Ron Stone. They did our management for three years there—four years, actually.

SL: How—did you like Elliot Roberts?

EEC: Oh yeah. Great guy. [*Laughs*]

SL: What's so funny?

EEC: He'd go, and he'd come out to see us play on tour somewhere, and all he'd bring is toothbrush, you know what I mean?

[*Laughter*] Yeah.

SL: You'd see the toothbrush . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . in his pocket?

EEC: That's all he brought. Yeah. [*Laughter*] He's this really cool guy, laid back. A really good guy. But Ron Stone handled most of the businesses. Worked with Elliot. I think they're the ones that lined up all the opening act things for us that we did when we had the records out. Tried to get us some kinda tours together.

SL: Okay, so now . . .

TM: Hey, let's change tapes.

SL: Oh, okay. Good.

[Tape stopped]

[02:55:45] SL: Okay, so we're—this is tape four? Is that right?

TM: Yes, it is.

SL: I think so. Eric, while we were off—while we were changin' tape, Eric brought up a question about when you guys started playing your own music exclusively or in a set. And your

response was, "Well, not until our record came out." And you were about to tell a story about comin' back to Fayetteville, and it was the first time that you had ever played . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . out in public with just your own material.

EEC: Right. Yeah, all along we'd always throw in a couple songs during the set, you know, but this particular time we just had our record finished. We were gettin' ready to go out on tour for Elektra/Asylum, that first record. So our manager came in and said—wanted to listen to our set—how we were—how the set was put together, the sequence, and all that. [02:56:42] So that's the first time we really played a whole set of original music.

SL: And who was your manager at that time?

EEC: Well, it's Lookout Management, Ron Stone . . .

SL: Ron Stone?

EEC: . . . and Elliot Roberts. But Ron Stone's the one that came in.

SL: But he was with Elliot . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . Roberts.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And you were playing where?

EEC: Brer Frans. [*Laughs*]

SL: And about what year is this, you think?

EEC: [Nineteen] seventy-five.

SL: [Nineteen] seventy-five. You remember that?

EEC: Yeah.

[02:57:07] SL: And so what did the audience do?

EEC: Oh, they enjoyed it, but they kinda looked at us kinda funny 'cause that's not what they're used to hearin', you know. They were used to hearin' our other songs that we do or did at the time. But somethin' we felt like we had to do to—if you can't do it, I mean—you gotta do it sometime, so.

[02:57:26] SL: Well, okay, here's what I was—actually, this a great question by Eric, and it was leading me. I was about to hit on the reality now that you all were facing. Up until this point, your venues were the bars . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and what people wanted to hear was what they knew.

EEC: Exactly.

SL: And they wanted to hear what was popular and what . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . they liked and what they could dance to . . .

EEC: Yes.

SL: . . . and what they could slow dance to and, you know, what they could socialize with and . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . identify with. And so now you've gone to Fort Worth. You've gone to New York. You've gone to LA. You're talkin' with all these big dogs that manage and have produced major hits . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and major artists. And you're on planes now. You're not . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . pulling a trailer full of gear . . .

EEC: Exactly.

SL: . . . and so you're in a different league now.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And the music business is now different at this point in time for you guys.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

[02:58:29] SL: You're thinking in different terms. You're startin' to feel like you've got a product that some people are excited about, and you're actually gonna go out and do it, so how is this affecting the dynamics of the band? I mean, you come

back—do you still—who is playing bass now?

EEC: We started out that—actually, Bill quit. Albert Singleton played bass with us.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: When Bill left we had to pick up somebody, so Albert started playing with us.

[02:29:01] SL: Albert was a . . .

EEC: Ba—he played bass.

SL: African American . . .

EEC: Yes. Yeah.

SL: . . . right? First time you've had an African American in the band?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Okay.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And then drumming is?

EEC: Terry.

SL: Terry's well and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . ready to go?

EEC: Yeah. Terry is playin'.

SL: Okay.

EEC: And it was exciting for them, too, because, like I say, we're gettin' to fly everywhere. We don't have to drive. And we're playing—we're getting to meet all the—the radio people would come to the events. It wasn't all—some of 'em was clubs, like the Exit/In in Nashville, places like that that would showcase clubs. Because it had a new record out, they'd always advertise ahead, and all the radio people'd come out and meet us and get to know us, and course, they'd give away free tickets. People come to see us, so it's a whole new educating for us—well, us and the people 'cause they were learnin' who we were so—but it was exciting 'cause it was somethin' new, different to do.

[02:59:54] SL: And you guys were healthy and—I mean, at this point in time, a lot of bands fall apart.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: A lot of people pick up personal problems.

EEC: No, luckily, we were—yeah . . .

SL: Excess becomes a problem . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . 'cause you're in that environment where you're expected to be . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . kinda crazy and free—wild and . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . and all that stuff, but you guys are pretty much level headed and all . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . business about it, weren't you?

EEC: Well, yeah, 'cause we were—knew what we had to do, [*laughs*] you know what I mean. It was quite a deal, I tell you.

[03:00:29] The first stop—I think Earl probably told this story about the first—well, the main—major tour we did with Queen. Did he tell you about that [*unclear words*]?

SL: Well, he talked a little bit. I wanna hear it. I wanna hear you talk about it.

EEC: The first—well, we'd played several venues like Exit/In, places like that in Atlanta and different—until that January or February of [19]76, I guess it was. And so they—Elektra/Asylum had Queen on their—which they had *Night of the Opera's* coming out, a big—they knew it was going to be a big deal. They said, "Well, I want"—this is a weird combination. "Well, we're gonna get you guys on that tour because it'll get you in front of a lot of people. The radio station guys will get to meet you." And so we did that. Anyway, our first gig was in Waterbury,

Connecticut, at a theater thing. It was all sixteen-year-old boys. And before we ever hit a note, they said, "You suck," [*laughter*] you know, before we ever hit a single note, you know what I mean. And then we [*unclear words*], and we only got to play, like, twenty-five minutes, I think. Had to fly all the way up there, and it's over in twenty-five min—and they weren't a bit interested in listenin' to what we wanted to play. That was quite a shock, you know. You wanted to pack it up right then.

SL: Well, sure.

[03:01:32] EEC: But we didn't, I mean, 'cause all the rest of the tour was—went really well, you know. Played some huge venues, Santa Monica Civic Auditorium and Cincinnati at the huge pl—arena there and all—lot of different places, you know, with a lot of people, so. And it actually helped us get a hit record because all the record company met us, and they liked us, and they liked our record, and it ended up—you know, it was able to get some air play. But that was quite a shock to go out [*laughs*] there and have that happen, you know.

SL: Yeah, you know, that's—that had to be a huge disappointment and kind of a scare for you.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, it was.

SL: 'Cause, you know, you had all this—all these people puttin' out for you, and you'd done [*EEC laughs*] everything that they'd ask of you, and you had . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: You'd left town. You were on your way, and the very first gig, "You suck," before [*laughter*] you play a note.

EEC: Exactly.

SL: And that attitude continues through that whole twenty-five minutes, that . . .

EEC: I know.

SL: . . . opening twenty-five minutes.

EEC: Yeah, you start to think, "Is it really worth it to do [*laughs*] all this?"

SL: Or do I really suck? [*Laughs*]

EEC: Do I really want—yeah, there is that, too.

SL: Yeah. Well, you know, I guess one of the things I hear sometimes now is, you know, the most successful salesmen are the ones that have been told no the most . . .

EEC: Could be. [*Laughter*]

SL: . . . you know.

EEC: Yeah, I guess.

[03:02:51] SL: Eventually, you get the right yeses. So after that

gig, where did you go next? You went . . .

EEC: I can't remember what the next city. We did Philadelphia. We did the whole tour. We went all across the country.

SL: How many dates?

EEC: I don't remember. It was from New York to Chicago to, you know, the—what's that theater in New York? Can't remember. Anyway, it was all over. Cincinnati. Just everywhere. Saint Louis.

SL: And the crowds were much more accommodating?

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah, they were. There wasn't any problem in most of 'em. Just in the East Coast, you know, New York and up there at Waterbury was the only two that I can remember that was kinda hostile, you know. [*Laughs*]

[03:03:29] SL: Yeah. So you know, warm-up bands usually get saddled with the fine-tuning of the sound system. I mean . . .

EEC: If you even get to fine-tune. [*Laughs*]

SL: If you even get—you just come in. But you guys are so straightforward in your . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . playing. I mean, you don't do anything that's crazy.

EEC: Yeah, we weren't hard to do.

SL: You don't have flaming guitars . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and . . .

EEC: Most of the guys that . . .

SL: . . . throwin' stuff off the stage.

EEC: . . . mixed us really liked it 'cause they said, you know, "You guys are really easy," you know.

SL: Yeah. Even.

EEC: And we seldom got really good sound checks, so, at that time.

[03:04:05] EJ: I have a question [*unclear word*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

EJ: . . . that relates to that in some ways, which is you talked about switchin' over to keyboards early on, so you're probably really—back then you're probably playin' what? Piano and organ live or just organ?

EEC: Piano.

EJ: Through the [19]60s, piano . . .

EEC: I think I had all three [*laughs*] stacked on . . .

EJ: All three.

EEC: . . . top of each other, yeah.

EJ: But then by that—those two albums with Steve Cropper, there's all kinds of keyboard sounds on there. There's . . .

EEC: Yeah, I had a . . .

EJ: . . . piano, organ, and synthesizers.

EEC: Yeah, I had a—let's see. I had a piano, an organ sound—I had a—called a Elka String thing.

EJ: And you took that on tour?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, I usually had a stack of three of 'em. But Cropper used like—David Foster played on some tracks, some different sounds, and he used synthesizer things that, you know, for then was a real new deal.

EJ: Yeah. Did you take those out live? Any of that out live . . .

EEC: No.

EJ: . . . and try to cover those parts?

EEC: No. Much as I could but, yeah.

EJ: Yeah.

[03:05:05] SL: Technology's quite a bit different than it was in 1960 . . .

EEC: Oh gosh.

SL: . . . by then?

EEC: Yeah, you, nowadays, you have one keyboard just about do it all, you know.

SL: Yeah. But eve—but, you know, as compared to what you were working with in 1960 . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] Oh yeah.

SL: . . . and what you were working . . .

EEC: A Wurlitzer piano [*laughs*] . . .

SL: . . . with by the time you're . . .

EEC: . . . what I had.

SL: . . . you were with Queen.

EEC: Yeah. Oh yeah. A lot of difference.

SL: Lot different.

EEC: Yeah. It's changed since Queen. It's a lot of difference.

[03:05:26] SL: Well, let's talk a little bit about Queen. Did you get to know those guys at all?

EEC: Yeah, we played with 'em so many dates, I mean. Yeah, they're pretty good guys. Got to meet—you know, they have a couple times they've had little things afterwards, you know. Get to meet 'em, you know. But they're nice guys. Freddie was a little weird, but you know, [*laughs*] [*unclear words*]. He wasn't as friendly as the rest of 'em. I'll put it that way.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But they were nice guys. Seemed to like what we did.

[03:05:54] SL: So do you remember what the last date was?

EEC: Think it was Santa Monica Civic Center.

SL: Santa Monica Civic Center.

EEC: With Queen, yeah.

SL: I've been there.

EEC: I believe it was. Two shows, or I think it was. I believe that was it.

[03:06:08] SL: So was the pay decent?

EEC: Well, we were just gettin' a salary from record companies sendin' money home to us 'cause they paid all the plane tickets, hotels, everything . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . was paid. We basically just got money sent every month to live on. That's how it was all the time. We had our . . .

SL: Kind of a per diem thing.

EEC: . . . whole time we had our deals was the way it was, so it wasn't ?a?, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I think the most money we ever got for a gig, we didn't even play. [*Laughs*] It was cancelled. [*Laughter*] [03:06:38] It was in El Paso. I think it was with Mountain and some other group. Supposed . . .

SL: Leslie West and Mountain?

EEC: Yeah, supposed to been a big show, and they didn't sell enough tickets, and they's—and we were gonna to get our five grand or somethin'. For that time was pretty good money. [*SL laughs*]

But—and we got the money, but we [*laughs*] didn't play.

SL: Yeah, well, not your fault.

EEC: No, it's not our fault.

[03:07:03] SL: So you had a taste of the big time, then?

EEC: I guess. [*Laughs*] I don't know.

SL: You did. I mean, not everybody . . .

EEC: Well, it was fun. It's like, you know, when you're a kid growin' up and you watch *American Bandstand* and, you know, kinda think, well, someday might be on there. Sure enough, we were on there, you know. And it's just surreal to be there, actually, once you're on the other side of the camera and Dick Clark's talkin' to you, and you must be dreamin' or somethin'. It's just a weird feeling, you know. But that's one—you know, you can say you did that, I guess.

SL: So did that happen while you were on this tour?

EEC: Actually, in [19]76. After "Union Man" became a, you know—hit the charts pretty good . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . they had us on there.

SL: And . . .

EEC: We filmed it. Like, it was June [19]76, I think.

[03:07:48] SL: So how was Dick Clark?

EEC: Nice guy. He knew Earl. He knew which one—he knew us apart [*laughs*], you know. [*SL laughs*] He did.

SL: Yeah. That's good.

EEC: He got "Ernie, Earl." Yeah, he knew. Aretha Franklin was on the show we did, too.

SL: Ah!

EEC: Yeah.

SL: That wa—did you get to talk with her any?

EEC: No, she was in—puttin' on her makeup. She was in the same room dress up. But I didn't really get to talk to her. 'Cause they go right through the show just like it's—they rehearse it once. Then they go through it, just like you see it.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Just like you see it.

SL: So was the studio that they did it in—was it surprising to you how small it was? Was it smaller . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . than you thought it was gonna be?

EEC: Not really, no.

SL: Not really?

EEC: It just, you know—it looks different than you think—than you imagine, though, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So do y'all still—do you have a recording of that show?

EEC: No. I'd like to have one, though. I think it's available somewhere.

SL: Well, I'll see if I can't find that.

EEC: I'd like to find it. [03:08:45] When we did the *Midnight Special*, which was ten o'clock in the morning, [*laughs*] you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . when we did it. Yeah. Had to go in there at ten o'clock in the morning and sing "Union Man," and it wasn't anybody out in the audience. It was just . . .

[03:08:57] SL: Now . . .

EEC: . . . the cameramen.

SL: . . . where was the *Midnight Special* done?

EEC: It's NBC Burbank Studios.

SL: In Burbank.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And no audience.

EEC: No. They do film a segment with the audience, but for our particular segment, they didn't. Yeah, it's a weird feelin'.

[Laughs]

SL: And . . .

EEC: And you look at it that night, and you think there was a crowd there 'cause they show it, and it looks like there is.

SL: [Laughs] That's funny.

EJ: It was hosted by the—the show you—the episode you guys did was hosted by Ray Charles, right?

EEC: Yeah, Ray Charles introduced us, yeah.

SL: Wow.

EEC: That was amazing. He said, "Now, these boys may be a little bit nervous but, you know, [*unclear word*]." [Laughs]

SL: Yeah.

EEC: That's what he said.

SL: Well, so, gosh, that had to be somethin' else . . .

EEC: And he wasn't even there, though, I mean . . .

SL: Oh, he wasn't?

EEC: He wasn't there when we did our part, [*laughs*] no.

SL: So you didn't get to meet him or anything?

EEC: No. [Laughs] No.

SL: Oh! That's too bad.

EEC: I wish we had've, but—I know.

SL: He probably has no idea what he meant to you guys.

EEC: Yeah, it's true. Very true. Never got a chance to tell him, yeah.

SL: Huh. That's interesting. [03:10:02] Okay, so you get off the road with Queen, and you come home.

EEC: Yep.

SL: What happens when you get back home?

EEC: Well, we do a few other little dates around, you know, minor tours or a show here and there. And then we started workin' on our second album that summer of [19]76. Started workin' on *In One Eye and Out the Other* that summer. Then we went to Europe in the fall. Played London and Belgium and Amsterdam.

SL: Now, that was another Steve Cropper-produced . . .

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: . . . A&R guy.

EEC: So we went over there to Europe and played those dates.

[03:10:35] SL: Now, how did Europe compare to America?

EEC: It was good.

SL: I mean, did you—were there parts of it that you liked better than playing in America? Were the crowds . . .

EEC: It was nice. We played the . . .

SL: . . . more responsive or . . .

EEC: . . . the New Vic—the Vic Theatre there in London and sold out the whole theatre. It was amazing. I couldn't believe it. You know, we weren't—it was real good, you know. Played Amsterdam. Did a TV show, I believe it was and then—no, played some show, concert, there. I forgot where it was at. Belgium, we did a TV show, kinda like *American Bandstand* but in Belgium. Did that. Played a show in Germany with Poco. It was kind of army-base-type thing. So it was fun to do that. Somethin'—quite an experience, you know.

SL: Yeah, I would think playing at an army base was a little bit more emotional than . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . your typical crowd.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, you got guys out there . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you know, on the line, really.

EEC: Yeah. There wasn't anything that much going on then, but you know, if I remember right. I don't know. [03:11:47] Yeah, we did a record and finished that record and—I can't remember. We played a lot of different shows after we did the second album.

SL: Your all's sales were good in Europe, though.

EEC: Pretty good.

SL: Didn't—you're in—"Union Man," didn't it do better in England than anywhere else? It seemed like . . .

EEC: I don't think so. I don't really know.

SL: You don't think so?

EEC: I don't really know.

SL: Seems like someone told me that at one point but . . .

EEC: Could be. I don't know.

SL: I don't know how reliable that information was.

EEC: I don't either.

[03:12:17] SL: So do you feel like that the—did the first record do better than the second?

EEC: No.

SL: The second one did better or about the same?

EEC: No, the first one did better.

SL: Oh, the first one . . .

EEC: Second one—nothin' really caught on on the second one. Didn't, you know, didn't do it.

[03:12:34] SL: Yeah. Well, did you have an American tour for this . . .

EEC: Yeah. We played a lot of different—like, we'd open with this

act and that—Lynyrd Skynyrd, and we'd do Little Feat. We'd do different acts. You know, open up for 'em. Lot of different ones.

[03:12:51] SL: Were there any favorite musicians that you opened for or that you got to know while you were doin' the tour stuff that you still are in touch with or . . .

EEC: Well, Elvin Bishop would—you know, he's been our friend for quite a while. And Charlie Daniels, did a few shows with him. He's not a personal friend. Elvin was closer to, you know—tryin' to think about that a minute. Quite a few of 'em, you know. Course, we got to meet Bonnie Raitt in [19]82. Got to know her. That was after all our record stuff, mainly.

SL: Yeah. So Elvin Bishop?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You're still fr—good friends with Elvin?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: What's he like?

EEC: He's a funny guy, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: Is he?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Does he like to go fishin', too?

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: Yeah?

EEC: Likes to work in his garden, you know.

SL: Yeah. Uh-huh.

EEC: Yeah. Last time we played out in California—it's a couple a years ago. May have been three years ago. I don't know. He had us come over to his house and had to show us his garden. Right out—it was just all these beans and all this stuff he had planted. It was quite a deal.

SL: Yeah?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Well, it's a good, healthy thing to do.

EEC: Yeah, it is. He knows that it is.

SL: And it's a smart thing to do.

EEC: Yeah, it is.

SL: I was interviewing a ninety-year-old guy in Camden that had a club on the chitlin circuit . . .

EEC: Really?

SL: . . . down there in Camden.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Ferguson, Randall Ferguson. And he does a big garden. I mean, that thing is on a quarter acre probably.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And I'm sure that's what's keepin' him alive.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Keepin' him—his health up 'cause he gets out there and does it.

[03:14:35] EEC: Yeah, Dan Penn's another guy we worked with, not as a record, but we've written songs with him and, you know, recorded a little bit with him. He's a friend that—he does that gardening, you know.

SL: Okay, now who is Dan Penn?

EEC: He wrote go "Do Right Woman." Produced the Box Tops, "The Letter." He produced it.

SL: Wow.

EEC: He lives in Nashville. But we've been a—we've known him a little while. We wrote this "Blue Motel." It's one—record that's on—it's on one of our records . . .

EJ: "Struck a Vein."

EEC: . . . "Blue Motel." Wrote that with him. I wrote most of it and he—we just kinda finished it with him. And wrote a couple of other songs, but still like to do somethin' with him. We may try to do that someday. He wants to.

[03:15:16] SL: This would be a good time for you guys to be writing.

EEC: Yeah. I've been doin' a little bit, yeah.

SL: 'Cause your play schedule is . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . is off by design, and . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . and you've got tons of material to work with.

EEC: [*Laughs*] I don't need new material, yeah.

EJ: I think it's great—probably a pretty good time to be doin' music that's rooted in American roots music.

EEC: Yeah, I agree.

EJ: You know, Levon's last two albums showed that people . . .

EEC: Exactly. That's the reason—there's a reason that everybody—it done well.

EJ: Interested in that.

EEC: 'Cause people are kinda tired of the [*laughs*] artificial stuff.

SL: It's a return.

EEC: Yeah. I'm glad to see that.

SL: Me, too. There's somethin' honest about it.

EEC: Yeah, I know. That's right.

[03:15:57] SL: You know, if you think back, you know, this Band thing runs through all of our stories here locally, but at the time that *Music From Big Pink* came out, I believe *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* was [*EEC laughs*] on the air.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And so if you compare "Tears of Rage" as a first cut on an album with . . .

EEC: How . . .

SL: . . . what was playing on the radio in the way of *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . it—Big Pink in itself was a return to . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . reason and a . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . return to storytelling and . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was. It really—unique record. I mean, a lotta people didn't like it that member the Hawks like they were, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: "Well, that don't sound like them," you know what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But it was a really good record.

SL: Oh, I still . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . I carry it with me everywhere I go.

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: Yeah. I still listen to it.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I still get chills whenever. . .

EEC: I know.

SL: . . . I hear it.

EEC: Amazing.

SL: It is amazing. Well, that's kinda good news that you're thinkin' about doin' some more writing. I hope you get into that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that you do that. And I know you'll tell—maybe you'll start remembering some stories.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah. [*SL Laughs*] Might be, yeah.

SL: And I, you know, I would encourage you to try to remember stuff that your granddad told you . . .

EEC: Boy, that's just so long . . .

SL: . . . and your grandma and . . .

EEC: . . . just so long ago, it's . . .

SL: . . . your mom and your dad . . .

EEC: . . . it's hard . . .

SL: . . . 'cause that stuff will resonate through time. It . . .

EEC: Yeah. Well, it might, yeah.

[03:17:26] SL: So here I am [*EEC laughs*] giving you advice on

writin' music but the—okay, so we gotta—I wanna go back. I wanna take a little break from the music business. We're gonna get back to where we leave—left off. But I think now would be a good time for us to talk about you and Linda. You know, this is not just about the Cate Brothers Band, and it's even not just about Ernie Cate. It's about life here in Arkansas . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . and what makes you guys tick. And there's no question in my mind that Linda is as much an influence in your life and the path that you've chosen as anything that I've heard about so far.

EEC: Well, yeah.

[03:18:17] SL: So you kinda knew Linda out at Sonora when you started takin' the bus to Springdale . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . schools.

EEC: Yeah. Well . . .

SL: And your mom and dad were friends with her mom and dad. Is that the . . .

EEC: Well, actually—well, yeah, they were friends. But actually, her first cousin lived in Sonora, too, the Cloers, her dad's brother,

so that's part of the community. But her dad—yeah, my folks knew their folks. But the first connection, like I said earlier, was her—was my granddad going down to help her grandmother when her husband died. He used to go help her all the time on the farm there in Sonora. That was the first connection. But yeah, when Linda—we picked—our bus'd come by and pick her up every day on the way in to school, so yeah.

SL: So you had an eye on her early.

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah. Definitely. Yeah. [*SL laughs*] In fact, she was goin' with someone else when I asked her to go out on that senior—she was already going with somebody else, but fortunately, she came with [*laughs*] me.

SL: She broke the date?

EEC: Yeah. Well, no, she—I don't think they had a date for that, but she was datin' him on a regular basis.

SL: Uh-huh. That's not uncommon, by the way . . .

EEC: It's not?

SL: . . . that couples that end up staying together forever, they were actually bound with someone else . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and it kinda had to—that had to be worked out and . . .

EEC: Yeah. I don't know how she—much she was bound, but

[*laughs*] might not have been too much, so.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But I'm lucky because if it hadn't been for her, I'd've probably taken a whole different path, you know what I mean.

SL: Well, I understand that.

EEC: I'm just one of those lucky guys. That's all I can say, you know.

[03:19:54] SL: So school bus, junior high school, and you're sayin' that she was dating someone else at the time of the . . .

EEC: Through most of high school, yeah . . .

SL: Through most of high school.

EEC: . . . until our senior year. I first asked out her during my senior year. Yeah.

[03:20:13] SL: And so I guess you took her to the prom, or were you playin' the prom?

EEC: No, it was a senior play, [*laughs*] yeah.

SL: It was a play, yeah.

EEC: Senior play.

SL: Yeah. And what else did you guys do? I mean, you didn't have a car?

EEC: Had to borrow my dad's truck. He had a . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . big ol' [19]50 Dodge pickup, yeah. She still remembers that and talks [*laughs*] about it. How dark it was, you know. I had to borrow a truck. He didn't care 'cause he knew their family and everything, you know. Had to ask him. Get up enough nerve to ask him, "I've got a date with John Cloer's daughter." [*Laughs*] Yeah, and course he knew who she was.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And that was it. No, I didn't have a car.

SL: I can just imagine the parents talking, your parents and her parents talkin' about . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you two goin' out and . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: . . . and hookin' up. And you know, it says something about Linda that she was willin' to go on a date with you in a truck, in a [*EEC laughs*] pickup truck. [*Laughter*]

EEC: I know. She's used to say 'cause in school I used to wear white bucks and the red socks and the pompadour. And she said, "I didn't care what you look like. I just care about you," you know.

SL: Okay, now, wait a minute.

EEC: You know what I mean?

SL: You were wearing white bucks . . .

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . red socks . . .

EEC: Yeah.

[03:21:31] SL: Okay, now, I heard a story Monday, the first day of school you went to in Springdale, you guys wore overalls. Is that . . .

EEC: Probably did. [*Laughs*] I wouldn't doubt it.

SL: And you kinda got laughed at . . .

EEC: Probably so.

SL: . . . and y'all never did that again. So you graduated to white bucks, red socks . . .

EEC: Yeah. The rock-and-roll deal, yeah.

SL: Rock-and-roll deal.

EEC: Yeah. That I always [*unclear word*]. [*Laughs*] Yeah. But she said . . .

SL: The pompadour . . .

EEC: "That's not what drew me to you." You know, was—that's good, I guess, you know.

[03:21:57] SL: Well, would she come see you play wherever you were playin'?

EEC: No.

SL: No?

EEC: No. I don't remember ever in high school. Well, school assemblies, course.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: You know, school assemblies, but far as the others, she didn't, no.

SL: So she—it wasn't like she was a fan of the music . . .

EEC: No.

SL: . . . side of you at all?

EEC: Oh no, not at all. No. Ask her that, but I know that's what she'd say. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, I'm wondering what she saw in you. [*Laughter*]

EEC: Me, too. [*Laughter*] I always wondered that.

[03:22:31] SL: Well, so how long did y'all—so did she go to college when you were in college?

EEC: No.

SL: No?

EEC: No, she didn't go to college. I went to college, and she got out of high school, and we got married. [*Laughs*] That was it, you know what I mean. That's it. We've been together ever since.

SL: Just out of high school.

EEC: Yeah. Yep.

[03:22:52] SL: Wow. [EEC laughs] We're talkin' about you. [Linda Cate laughs] So where did you all get married?

EEC: Huntsville, Arkansas.

SL: In Huntsville.

EEC: [Laughs] Yeah.

EEC: Now, why Huntsville?

EEC: 'Cause we wanted to get married right quick. [EEC laughs]
Yeah.

SL: Really?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Who was the pastor?

EEC: I have no idea.

LC: Woodrow . . .

EEC: What?

LC: Woodrow Woods. Woodrow Woods.

EEC: Woodrow Woods. That's right.

LC: At the . . .

SL: Woodrow Woods.

EEC: Woodrow Woods.

LC: . . . at the Methodist church.

EEC: The Methodist church.

SL: At the Methodist church?

EEC: Yeah.

[03:23:21] SL: Now, was Linda Methodist or . . .

EEC: No. [*Laughs*]

SL: Were you both Baptists or . . .

EEC: She were—you weren't Baptist, were you?

LC: I was First Christian.

EEC: First Christian. I was Baptist.

SL: First Christian. Baptist. Married by a Methodist preacher in
Huntsville.

EEC: Yeah. [*LC laughs*] Back—you gotta think back—way back then
was like.

SL: And so where'd y'all go for your honeymoon?

EEC: I had to play that night [*laughs*], you know what I mean.

[*Laughs*]

[03:23:44] SL: You got married and then had a gig?

EEC: Yeah. I did.

SL: And did she go to the gig with you?

EEC: No. [*SL laughs*] [*Slapping sound*] Stayed in the motel. [*EEC
laughs*]

SL: You guys are somethin' else.

EEC: Until the mo—till I got through that night. Then after that—
that was at Joplin where we were playing. Then after—I think

that was the last night I played, just the last night. And then we took off to Oklahoma City or Tulsa or somewhere. Yeah, that's it. [*Laughter*]

SL: Those are simple times, huh?

EEC: Oh yeah, real simple. Yep.

[03:24:14] SL: So you continued with the music stuff and eventually a day job . . .

EEC: Yeah . . .

SL: . . . as well.

EEC: . . . off-and-on day jobs, you know.

SL: Off and on.

EEC: Yeah.

[03:24:25] SL: And what did Linda do? Was she—did she work? Have a job?

EEC: Nope. 'Cause she was a housewife.

SL: Housewife?

EEC: Most of the—fact, you worked part of the time. When was it you started workin'? When was it?

LC: Oh, you mean Dillard's?

EEC: Yeah.

LC: [Nineteen] eighty-one.

EEC: Oh, it wasn't till [19]81 she started workin'.

[03:24:47] SL: Until [19]81. And so when did y'all start havin' a family?

EEC: Right away, [*laughs*] you know what I mean.

SL: Right away.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You figured that out early, huh?

EEC: Yes, really quick. Yeah. [*Laughter*] That's why she had to stay home.

SL: Yeah. [03:25:02] And so your firstborn was?

EEC: Ernest.

SL: Ernest.

EEC: Brian.

SL: Brian.

EEC: The one you met earlier, yeah.

SL: Now, I knew him as Ernest, I think, for some reason.

EEC: Everybody does, yeah.

SL: Yeah, okay.

EEC: Yeah.

[03:25:14] SL: And then you had other . . .

EEC: Kim . . .

SL: . . . children, too?

EEC: Kim. Just one daughter.

SL: Kim?

EEC: Kim, after Brian, yeah.

SL: Okay. And how—so Ernest was right away, and how much later was Kim?

EEC: A year later. [*Laughs*]

SL: A year later.

EEC: Yeah. Right? Yeah, real close together.

SL: Now, I'd be doin' the same thing.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I'd be goin', "Right? Is that right?"

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So—and both kids are healthy and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . happy and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Any music interest at all?

EEC: Well, Brian used to try to play the guitar a little bit, but he gave it up, [*laughs*] you know. He's smart.

SL: Yeah. Uh-huh. And Kim?

EEC: No, she got—doesn't play music.

[03:25:52] SL: And what about grandchildren? Have you all got any grandchildren?

EEC: One.

SL: One.

EEC: Daughter, Hayley. She's Brian's—or, Ernest's daughter.

SL: And her name is?

EEC: Hayley.

SL: Hayley.

EEC: She'll be—she's fourteen now. Yeah.

SL: And have you done your job in spoiling her right and all that?

EEC: Oh, definitely. All the way.

SL: Good.

EEC: She's—fact, she goes to school right over here.

SL: Excellent.

EEC: The school behind us, yeah.

SL: Excellent.

EEC: She likes music. Fact—she—last week she went to Tulsa. Her mother took her to see Thirty Seconds to Mars. [*Laughs*]

SL: Don't know anything about that.

EEC: No, they're one of those new groups.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Took her over to see them. So yeah, she's really into music, too. She doesn't play, but she likes to listen to music, her iPod.

SL: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. Well, I hope that she gets to come to the show Thursday.

EEC: She's plannin' on it.

SL: That'd be great.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: It's gonna be a good show.

EEC: Yeah, she's plannin' on comin'.

[03:26:48] SL: Okay. So now, is there anything that you want to say about—other than the path that you ended up on because of Linda. Is there anything else you want to say about you and Linda? I mean, I—I'm just—I mean, this is a—basically, kind of a childhood sweetheart kinda. . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . thing that . . .

EEC: Like I said . . .

SL: . . . has stayed all these years, I mean . . .

EEC: . . . like I say, I'm lucky. I'm very lucky, and it's all good.

[03:27:18] SL: So how many years is that now that you all've been together?

EEC: We've been married forty-eight . . .

LC: In August . . .

EEC: In August we'll be married forty-eight years.

SL: Well, you know, that's a tremendous anomaly in the music business.

EEC: Well, I know that. I know it is. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's a great blessing . . .

EEC: Yeah, it is.

SL: . . . for you guys.

EEC: Like I say, we're lucky.

SL: Yeah, well . . .

EEC: And we're at a place right now where we even happier than ever, you know what I mean.

SL: Well, I know that's it's not just luck.

EEC: No.

SL: It's . . .

EEC: You gotta work at it, that's for sure. [*Laughs*]

SL: You gotta work at it, and you gotta . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you gotta feel like . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . . it's worth it . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . .to keep goin'.

EEC: That's right.

SL: So that's good. [03:27:54] Okay, if something comes up that you want to add about your family and Linda and your life, I want you to—it doesn't matter what we're talkin' about, you can come back . . .

EEC: Okay.

SL: . . . to that any time.

EEC: Okay.

SL: And that's true with anything that we've talked about.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: If you think of somethin'—I mean, we try to do this in a chronological fashion, but it really doesn't matter.

EEC: Right.

SL: I mean, it's really, basically, your story and the way it fits with the history . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . of things that gone on around you.

EEC: Right.

SL: So anytime you wanna bring up anything . . .

EEC: Okay.

SL: . . . that we've talked about, just feel free to jump. [03:28:27]
So we were talkin' about—we've—you guys have gone from 4-H gigs, Grange gigs, bar gigs. You've met some of the most

amazing people that happen to come through Fayetteville Arkansas, the Rockwood Club. You've gotten a huge ally in Levon Helm and all those guys in The Band. They've hooked you up with world-class producers and technicians and managers and gotten you in front of hundreds of thousands of people.

EEC: Yep.

SL: And you've put out two records, and you've even been to Europe, and now you come back to Fayetteville.

EEC: Yeah. Oh yeah. You're talkin' bout after that, yeah.

[03:29:19] SL: Yeah. And so what year are we talking about now after the European tour?

EEC: [Nineteen] seventy-six.

SL: [Nineteen] seventy-six.

EEC: Yeah. [Unclear words] . . .

SL: See, that's still twenty—thirty . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that's still a long time ago.

EEC: Yeah. And then we did—[19]77 did another record.

SL: Okay.

EEC: [Nineteen] seventy-eight, did another record.

[03:29:39] SL: Okay, now, [EEC laughs] what was the record in

[19]77?

EEC: It's called the *Cate Brothers Band*.

SL: Okay.

EEC: That's the one we had all—Ron and Terry played on. First time we used the whole group.

SL: And there's somethin' about that album that's great, isn't it?

EEC: It's different.

SL: Because it is . . .

EEC: It's real and . . .

SL: . . . it is the guys. It's you all.

EEC: . . . kinda organic, the real deal. Yeah.

SL: It's really honest . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . straight-up stuff.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, not a lot of extra stuff goin' on there.

SL: Right. Right.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: It's refreshing when there's the spaces . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and the air.

EEC: Right.

SL: It kinda emphasizes . . .

EEC: Yeah, I agree.

SL: . . . what's goin' on.

EEC: And then after that one, they picked Tommy Dowd to do the last one, which, you know, was all right. You know [*laughs*] what I mean?

[03:30:18] SL: Well, okay. I mean, before we get to Tommy Dowd, where did you record the *Cate Brothers*?

EEC: LA.

SL: In LA?

EEC: Yeah, different studio than the other records, but it was a nice studio.

SL: And who was . . .

EEC: Jim Mason.

SL: . . . the A&R . . .

EEC: Jim Mason. He had produced Poco and a few other people. Firefall.

SL: And workin' with him was great because, number one, the guys that you brought with you . . .

EEC: Yeah. And Jim was just a real laid-back, loose, nice guy. I mean, just—you know, he wouldn't pressure it at all. He just let us get out there and do—just play, do what we do, you know? So he was good to work with.

[03:30:58] SL: How long were you out there cuttin' that?

EEC: Oh, a couple of months, I guess. I can't remember.

SL: Really? A couple of months?

EEC: Yeah, probably.

SL: Now, see, isn't that interesting that, you know, that Fort Worth . . .

EEC: I'm talking about completely through, yeah.

SL: . . . that Fort Worth recording happens [*snaps fingers*] in a day . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . maybe [*snaps fingers*] two.

EEC: Right.

SL: And now this recording process is stretched out . . .

EEC: Yeah, well . . .

SL: . . . to a month or two.

EEC: . . . probably took a break in there during that time. That'd probably count mixing and everything, you know, but.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

[03:31:25] SL: And by now the technology is everything's isolated, or . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . did y'all go back to a . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. It's great.

SL: . . . live thing?

EEC: No, it's great. Everything was isolated. [*Laughs*] Yeah. And overdub as many things as you want to.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And we didn't, but you can, you know.

SL: Well, that's what I was gonna ask you.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You probably didn't need to do a bunch of overdubbing . . .

EEC: Not a whole lot, no.

SL: . . . 'cause the moment you go down that road, it's a different product now.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: It's not . . .

EEC: Yeah, it is.

SL: . . . what was happening in the room.

EEC: It's hard to reproduce it, too, on stage without havin' extra players.

SL: Right.

EEC: That's a lot of it.

SL: Yep.

[03:31:59] EJ: I had a question about that record, about the material on that album. The first two albums, there are songs that are also on the Metromedia album. I assume some of those you probably had around for a while. What about the songs on that third record?

EEC: That was fresh songs.

EJ: Were they?

EEC: Record company—we get through a tour, they said, "We want 'em to do another record." So we take off a couple of months to come home. Sit down and try to write. You know, sometimes that's good; sometimes it's not, but that's what—most of it came up just from comin' home and writing. I think about every one of us did—thought songs were that way.

[03:32:34] EJ: Did you feel like that was a productive writing session? Like those were songs . . .

EEC: That was, yeah.

EJ: . . . you were really proud of?

EEC: I thought it was. That particular record, I thought it was. The last one, I thought we were kinda rushed. You know, the one we did with Atlantic. We were kinda rushed to get enough good material for that one, I thought, but. It's hard. They say, "Okay, well, you got enough songs for a record? Let's go

cut," you know. When actually you should be able to pick from about fifty, and you gotta pick from about twelve, you know. It's not as good a—don't come out as good.

EJ: I certainly love that third record.

EEC: Yeah, I liked it.

SL: Yeah.

EJ: I like all your records.

EEC: Yeah.

[03:33:16] SL: Hmm. Well, so Jim Mason . . .

EEC: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . was his name? Do you still hear—ever hear from him or . . .

EEC: I got a . . .

SL: . . . Cropper or any of these guys?

EEC: We've seen—we've run into Cropper a couple of times.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Course, after we did the record, we did the RCO All-Stars Japan Tour with Levon, Cropper, and Duck Dunn, and *Saturday Night Live*, you know, horn players. That whole deal. So we ran into Cropper. And we've—couple times in Memphis, we've ran into him.

[03:33:48] SL: Now, I guess we ought to talk about the RCO All-

Stars a little bit . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . 'cause you all were in the thick of it.

EEC: Yeah, for a little bit. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Did that kind of—that kinda got put together in The Barn, didn't it?

EEC: All of it, yeah. Yeah. Pretty much all of it.

SL: Those—I think that first RCO All-Star album is pretty remarkable.

EEC: Yeah. It's pretty good. I like it.

SL: I mean, there's a lot of . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . great players.

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: And you can actually—they're actually themselves. I mean, there's—there is an honesty about . . .

EEC: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . that first RCO . . .

EEC: I know.

SL: . . . All-Star, and the live recordings of that stuff . . .

EEC: Yeah, I've heard of them.

SL: . . . is pretty phenomenal, too.

EEC: Yeah, they are.

SL: I mean, you really can't go wrong when you got so many . . .

EEC: Oh, I know.

SL: . . . incredible musicians that are . . .

EEC: They didn't do that many shows but that . . .

SL: Right.

EEC: . . . it's good, yeah.

[03:34:45] SL: There's—I forget which live album it is that I've got that was so great. But what were those guys like playing—I mean, touring with? I mean, you've got . . .

EEC: Well, the . . .

SL: . . . fir—I guess, Duck Dunn. Let's talk about Duck Dunn.

EEC: Oh, great guy. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Funny?

EEC: Yeah, funny, great guy. See when—it was—kinda surprised Earl and I that some—for some reason Dr. John couldn't go or didn't want to go. And somebody else didn't want to go.

SL: Did Paul Butterfield go?

EEC: No.

SL: I don't think he did.

EEC: He didn't go. Fred Carter—I can't remember if he didn't go or did go. I can't remember. Anyway, Levon called Earl and I,

said "Do you wanna go with us on Japan tour?" So we—Earl and I flew up to The Barn and rehearsed with the guys a couple of days. Took off on the plane to Japan. But it was fun to be with 'em. Great, you know, being with Cropper again, gettin' to play. It was fun, a lotta fun.

[03:35:50] SL: Do you think Levon enjoyed the tour?

EEC: Seemed like he did.

SL: Kay.

EEC: Yeah, I think he enjoyed it better than he did the one we did [19]83 with The Band. I think Levon enjoyed the RCO more, myself. Seemed like he did.

SL: Well, there wasn't a whole lot of baggage there.

EEC: Exactly.

SL: And . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . they had kind of gathered around him, and that had to be gratify—I mean that . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . had to be personally . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . mean a lot to him that . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . those guys would gravitate and . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . stick with him and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and that—and you could tell that everyone was making great music.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So it had to be kind of a rebirth and . . .

[03:36:27] EEC: I felt really, ?well, sort of? intimidated just havin' to be on stage with those [*laughs*] guys, you know what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But it was fun. Yeah.

SL: Well, I mean, for a kid that never had a piano lesson and . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah, really.

SL: . . . just kind of shifted to keyboards because we thought it might . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . be better, you know. And there you are with some of the world's greatest players.

EEC: Yeah, I know. Gosh, you just sit there and watch 'em and have to play. [*Laughter*] Nah, it was fun, though. Really was.

[03:36:57] SL: Well, now, Ernie, we really—there's an instrument

that we haven't talked about yet, and that's your voice.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: I mean, I know that you guys are kind of utilitarian in that, you know, you do what you—you add what you—you bring what you have to the table. But there's no question that you're the major voice of the Cate Brothers as far as the melodies and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and most of all the songs go.

EEC: Right.

[03:37:31] SL: And so—and as near as I can tell, you've pretty much sounded the way you started. I mean, you are who you are, and there's no real pretention about that. Is there . . .

EEC: Yeah, I always tried to be that way, I mean, wanted to be that way. Just wanted to do what—try to stay to myself, you know, and not try to copy. Just . . .

SL: Yes.

EEC: . . . you know what I mean—somebody else, you know . . .

SL: And I think you've succeeded that . . .

EEC: And I have a lot of influences. I mean, there was a time when I wanted every note to be Ray Charles, but [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Well . . .

EEC: . . . I finally realized you can't do that, you know.

SL: There aren't many singers that don't wish they were Ray Charles.

EEC: Right. Exactly. I mean, everybody but . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And you can't ever accomplish that . . .

SL: Right.

EEC: . . . so you just have to do what you can do. They—those influences will—may help, but you know, still, you just gotta do what you can do, the way you do it, you know what I mean.

[Laughs]

[03:38:17] SL: I always thought—now, this may sound crazy to you. But I always thought that your voice was the silk that runs through all of y'all's music.

EEC: Probably so. [Laughs]

SL: That there's something about your voice . . .

EEC: Yeah, it is . . .

SL: . . . that's . . .

EEC: . . . probably.

SL: . . . there's a soothing quality about it, and it's—I don't know. It's—I've never found it to be abrasive at all. I mean, there's—you understand what I'm saying?

EEC: I guess.

SL: There's a silkiness to it that kinda evens it all out in some way.
I mean, you've got great players around you.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Course, your brother's undoubtedly one of the greatest guitar
players . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . ever.

EEC: Yep.

SL: And I've always admired Terry's work. And all your drummers,
actually.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You've done pretty well with drummers.

EEC: Yeah . . .

SL: Pork . . .

EEC: . . . we were lucky there.

SL: I thought Porky was great.

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: And I think the world of Ron Eoff.

EEC: Oh yeah. We do, too.

SL: You know, and I grew up listening to Bill, but . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . but Ron is . . .

EEC: Yeah, he's special.

SL: . . . I get a Danko thing off of Ron for some reason.

EEC: He's special, a really special guy and player.

SL: Yeah. But there's a . . .

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: . . . I don't know. There's an energy about Ron that . . .

EEC: I know. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . reminds me of Rick for some reason.

EEC: Yeah, there is.

SL: I don't know what . . .

EEC: He's got that little somethin'. Yeah, I know what you're talkin' about.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: He always makes you feel good when you're playin'.

SL: Yeah, he does.

EEC: And just to be around him makes you feel good.

SL: Yes, yes.

EEC: Yeah.

[03:39:40] SL: He's a very good—he's a gentleman. And then the sax. Renko.

EEC: Yeah. Great.

SL: Now, here's a guy that is—I think I started hearin' about him when he was like maybe fourteen years old . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . something. He was kind of a prodigy back then and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . then—and the story on him is is that he just kinda . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] He showed up.

SL: . . . started playin' with you guys for nothin'.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Is that right?

EEC: He sat in a couple of times. Next thing, he'd sit in another time. Next thing you know, "Can I come to this gig?" And he'd come to that gig, and next thing you know, he started gettin' better at it, you know, fittin' in more—you know, blendin' better with us, so we was, "Shoot, can't miss, you know. I gotta have him in the band."

[03:40:21] SL: Well, don't you think that—it seems to me that he was—that those early days, he was listening to Earl. That he was . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . cuein' off Earl . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . quite a bit. And that's kind of unusual . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . for the sax . . .

EEC: He still does it . . .

SL: . . . isn't it?

EEC: . . . he still does it, yeah. Yeah.

SL: It's exciting, but it's also unusual. I just always thought . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that was . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . a little unusual. But it works.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: It works, and it's fun to hear . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the chops goin' back and forth like that . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . and in unison, and . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . . doesn't seem like there's anything too difficult for him
to . . .

EEC: Nah, he can . . .

SL: . . . to do with it.

EEC: . . . pick it up pretty quick. He really can.

[03:41:00] SL: Yeah. Yeah. Now, did his dad set him—send him your all's way?

EEC: I don't know. We—I think the first time he set in, and I can't remember if it's Winfest or Fort Smith town—Old Town. I can't remember.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: One of those other places. He was only thirteen, I think. [*SL laughs*] I done heard people talkin' about him, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But he blew his head off when he got up there, [*SL laughs*] you know. He, you know—I've always been impressed with his playin'.

[03:41:31] SL: Well, I just kinda feel like you have a—I mean, it's always—it's probably always been kinda that way with you guys, that there was more to you than just being a band. It was—there was really kind of a—everyone liked everyone.

EEC: Oh yeah. Never any . . .

SL: I mean, you could tell that . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. We always got along. Definitely, [*laughs*] yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. It was great. We've been lucky there. Earl and I've

been real lucky. We've never—I can't remember ever havin' a band—guys that just didn't get along, you know, that had an ego trip or somethin'. I just don't think it's ever happened. I can't remember it happenin' in our group.

SL: Well, I think you're too—oh, I don't know. You're too humble to admit to this, but surely you can see that you and Earl are role models in the way . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . people can relate to each other and how to respect each other, and I know that both of you guys have certainly treated me . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . very well.

EEC: Well, we're easy to work with. I mean . . .

SL: You are easy to work with.

EEC: . . . that's what it is, I guess, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: I can't remember ever hearing a no from either one of you.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I just don't—you know. I might hear "I guess," but [*laughter*] . . .

EEC: Yeah. Maybe.

SL: . . . but I don't think I've . . .

EEC: I know.

SL: . . . ever heard a no, you know.

[03:42:44] EJ: I'd say the same thing as someone who's worked
sound crew for you and for any number . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . of musicians around here is that you're very
well-respected . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . among people who do that kind of work around here,
and . . .

EEC: That's good.

EJ: . . . people are always very glad to work with you.

EEC: Yeah, well, great compliment. We played the—Helena—well,
it's not King Biscuit. It's now the . . .

SL: The blues thing over . . .

EEC: Yeah, whatever . . .

SL: . . . in Helena.

EEC: . . . we played it last year. And out of the blue, I got a email
from the sound guy, and I didn't even member ever talkin' to
him. I got a email really braggin' about how great it was to be
able to mix us, you know, and how much better stage
volume—everything about it, you know, says it's great, you

know. Just out of the blue, I got the email from him. It surprised me.

[03:43:24] SL: Well, you get the impression that you guys are playin' together.

EEC: Yeah, that's what he said.

SL: That you're paying attention to what everyone is doin'.

EEC: That's basically what he said, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Instead of just crankin' up loud as you can play and takin' off, you know.

[03:43:37] SL: Well, I can tell you that the recording that we got out of you there at George's that night is tremendous.

EEC: Really?

SL: And it's really fun. I can isolate any one track and be satisfied with just listening to that one instrument.

EEC: Wow.

SL: It's really, really, really good.

EEC: Really?

SL: And I can't wait to finally crank that out for you guys but . . .

EEC: I'd like to hear it.

SL: Yeah, well, it's all a part of this—[EEC laughs] what we're doing here but . . .

EEC: Oh, really? Yeah.

SL: Yeah, sure. Yeah, it's in the Pryor Center.

EEC: Good.

SL: So—and I think you signed a release to let me . . .

EEC: Yeah, I think so, [laughs] yeah.

SL: . . . to let me archive it so . . .

EEC: I know.

SL: Yeah, it's in there.

EEC: That's okay.

SL: And we'll preserve it forever, by the way. It will never go away.

EEC: Well, that's somethin' you can leave, [laughs] you know what I mean.

SL: Yeah. There you go. You've got that. And it is the Cate Brothers live. I mean, it is what people . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . see and experience.

EEC: That's good.

SL: It's pretty great. [03:44:26] Okay, so now, I'm tryin' to think where we were in the chronology.

EEC: RCO All-Stars. [*Laughs*] It was with RCO.

SL: We . . .

EJ: What year is that?

SL: RCO All-Stars, yeah. Do what, now?

EJ: What year is that? Was that [19]78?

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: That's between the third album and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . the fourth album?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, it was [19]78 when we went over there.

SL: Do you know—go ahead.

EEC: We had to come back and finish the record, I think, the fourth album. Levon—we actually came back and worked a little bit on—Levon had a record comin' out. Duck was producing it, and Earl and I sing background on it. Can't remember which one that was.

[03:45:03] EJ: Was that the one where he covered . . .

EEC: "Mountaintop."

EJ: . . . "Standin' on a Mountaintop"?

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: That's a beautiful song.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: It is a beautiful song.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You know, another thing that's amazing about the RCO All-Stars is that every one of those guys is a star in his own right.

EEC: I know. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: And they're all up there . . .

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: . . . playin' together. I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . they're careful with each other and . . .

EEC: Yeah, it wasn't—there wasn't any ego problems in that deal either.

SL: And that . . .

EEC: There really wasn't.

SL: . . . how does that happen in this kind . . .

EEC: I don't know.

SL: . . . in this day and age, you know?

EEC: I don't know. I—It's somethin' else.

[03:45:39] SL: You also—you mention Bonnie Raitt. And you got to meet her in . . .

EEC: Nineteen eighty-two, I guess it was.

SL: [Nineteen] eighty-two.

EEC: Yeah, we'd—Stratton actually had, Randy Stratton, had somehow—Rob Fraboni was livin' with her at the time. He . . .

SL: Oh, okay.

EEC: . . . he was her producer. And he wanted us to go out and cut some—'cause Rob had kinda liked our stuff and gave us a chance to ?come in to? . . .

SL: So that's another Levon connection, isn't it? Rob Fraboni?

EEC: Yeah, he worked with The Band.

SL: He worked with The Band.

EEC: Yeah. Now—what . . .

SL: Yeah, he did The Band mixes.

EEC: Which one of their record he—yeah, he mixed several of their records.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But he offered us to come out. Another one of those spec deals. We'll come out and record a few things out at Countryside or Country—what's it called? I can't remember. It's that studio out there in LA, north LA. So we went out and stayed for, I guess, three week—two or three weeks. *[Laughs]* Went out there and played a couple of gigs and recorded. Didn't anything ever happen with it, but. But she was hangin' around a lot. Played on some of it.

[03:46:39] SL: So who actually owns that stuff?

EEC: I—I guess he has it. I don't know. Rob does. Or Larry Samuels. I think—tryin' to think of what songs we did, but I don't think it's any we've ever put on a record. I think right away what we did. Anyway, nothin' ever happened with it.

SL: So—but Bonnie came by and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and added some stuff to it or . . .

EEC: Yeah, she'd hang out with us and play guitar on a couple of tracks and, you know, come to our gig when we played. She's a nice lady.

SL: Well, she's a great story . . .

EEC: Yeah, she is.

SL: . . . in and of herself 'cause she had her own demons and . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . to deal with, and I never will forget watchin' the *Grammy Awards* when she picked up—what was it? Five for . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . *Nick of Time*?

EEC: Yeah, I know. Yep. [*Laughs*]

SL: I still—it still moves me when I think of the expression on her face after about the third award she got. You know . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you could just tell it was beyond anything that she thought . . .

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: . . . possible. And she . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . ended up with five that night.

EEC: Gosh, amazing.

SL: It is.

EEC: She deserved it, though.

SL: It's a big, huge . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . turnaround for her and talks to the idea that if you do right, good things happen, and yeah, I was really proud of her.

EEC: Yep.

SL: So—and she's just kind of a normal—she's just a down-to-earth person, isn't she?

EEC: Oh yeah. She was around us. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yep.

[03:48:15] SL: Okay, so we didn't talk about Dowd. [*Laughs*]

EEC: Nah, he, bless his heart, he passed away last year? The year

before?

SL: Is that right?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So . . .

EEC: He's a big-time producer. I mean, you know, he knew—he's done everybody, but.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: [*Unclear words*] . . .

SL: What album was it that he . . .

EEC: The last album, *Fire on the Tracks*.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: That—it was kinda different experience bein' with him. I'm not sayin' terrible, but he was so busy, you know what I mean. You couldn't get through cuttin' one track without havin' the phone ring, and he's on the phone.

SL: Oh, I see.

EEC: You just felt like you didn't have his attention the whole time. He just there to collect his money for doin' it, you know.

SL: Oh.

EEC: So I was kinda disappointed in that, you know, that experience. I mean, it was all right but coulda been a better deal, you know.

SL: You just didn't feel like you had the focus . . .

EEC: No, no. I didn't at all. No.

SL: . . . that the other guys had given you.

EEC: No, no, not at all, you know.

[03:49:08] SL: So who set that deal up for you?

EEC: Our management, you know, actually.

SL: Lookout . . .

EEC: Yeah, Lookout . . .

SL: . . . Management did?

EEC: . . . Management. Yeah.

SL: So are you guys still with them?

EEC: No, no.

SL: No?

EEC: We don't have any management, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: You don't have any management anymore?

EEC: No. None at all.

SL: Well, that's too bad . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . 'cause it didn't have to be that way.

EEC: No, it didn't.

[03:49:34] EJ: I was curious about the arrangements on that album

'cause that's another one—you know, y'all's albums—you've

got the Cropper . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . the Cropper albums have a sound, and then the third album has its own sound. And then that one is different, too.

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: There's a lot of horns on that record.

EEC: That's Tommy Dowd doin'. . .

EJ: Did he write . . .

EEC: . . . that, yeah.

EJ: . . . those charts?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, he did that, yeah.

[03:49:54] EJ: Was that somethin' you all were happy with at the time?

EEC: Not necessarily, [*laughs*] you know what I mean.

EJ: Not necessarily?

EEC: Yeah, we just kinda let him—he was supposed to know more than we do, so we let him do it. Kinda gotta come to the point you just gotta trust a guy to do it. That's what we did.

[Tape stopped]

[03:50:11] SL: Ernie, this is tape five. We shorted the tape four just a little bit to do our little medical emergency here.

EEC: Yep.

SL: But you look a little bit more comfortable now. The house [*EEC laughs*] is cooled down; we have the air. Had some coffee, so I'm hyped up [*EEC laughs*] pretty good. I think we were talking about Tom Dowd and the last album. And it—what was the name of that album?

EEC: *Fire on the Tracks.*

SL: *Fire on the Tracks.* And your impression was that you didn't have his full attention.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And there wasn't much that you could do about it or you felt like you [*conversation in background*] should . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . do about it. You—I guess you were . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . going on faith that he would pull it off, but all in all you just weren't that . . .

EEC: Not my favorite. [*Laughs*]

SL: Not your favorite.

EEC: No.

[03:50:59] SL: But is all the material on that album—is that all your stuff?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Your and Earl's stuff?

EEC: Yes, it is.

SL: Is there anything—any redeeming quality about that album that you do like?

EEC: I haven't listened to it in a long time [*laughs*], so . . .

SL: You haven't?

EEC: . . . I couldn't tell you. Yeah.

SL: Well, that says somethin'.

EEC: There might be a couple tunes that are pretty good, but I can't . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: As a whole I don't care about listenin' to it. [*Laughs*]

EJ: The . . .

SL: Go ahead.

EJ: There is one song on that album that I've always said should've been a massive hit, and that's "Time Is a Thief" that y'all redid on . . .

EEC: Well, yeah, that is one—that is my favorite. Yeah, I like that song a lot. Yeah, that's probably the [*laughs*] only one.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I can't even remember what the other songs were, but yeah, that one—that stands out as—yeah.

SL: Well, that's—and that's also a favorite live, too.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: People love that song.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Now, that's somethin' that has happened over time is that folks have gotten familiar with your all's work. Your own work.

EEC: Yeah, it's true.

SL: Your original work, and . . .

EEC: They have.

SL: . . . and I've—I know. I've been in audiences where y'all start up a song, and you get a big, huge surge from the audience . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . 'cause they love that song, so that's different . . .

EEC: Yeah, it is.

SL: . . . than playing the 4-H stuff.

EEC: Yeah, a lot different. [*Laughter*] Yeah.

SL: There is—I mean, over all these years, y'all have quite a body of work . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . really.

EEC: Not as much as we coulda had, but some, yeah.

[03:52:27] SL: Uh-huh. Well, is there anything else you want to say about your time with—where was that cut?

EEC: Miami, Florida.

SL: Mia . . .

EEC: Criterion Studio. Actually, the same time the Bee Gees were cutting the same time in the same studio. They were in another—two—different room we were, but it's a well-known studio, Criterion. Yeah.

SL: And what were the Bee Gees cutting?

EEC: That one, "never get too much heaven anymore." I can't remember the name of that album, but we heard that over and over and over again [*laughter*] every day.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: They worked so hard just to get the one little word right, you know. They, you know, they get it right.

[03:53:09] SL: So did any promotion happen whatsoever with that album?

EEC: Not that much. We got to play a little bit, you know, a few little things, but that—it's pretty much over by then [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Okay.

EEC: . . . far as our major record deals. After that, Atlantic dropped

us. We didn't have a deal anymore.

SL: Uh-huh. So this is [19]80 . . .

EEC: [Nineteen] seventy-nine.

SL: [Nineteen] seventy-nine?

EEC: About [19]79, I think it was, came out.

[03:53:38] SL: Uh-huh. [*EEC clears throat*] So what happened next after that?

EEC: Well, just came back home, playin' local gigs. Seemed like every time that happened, somethin' would come up.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Next thing you know, Levon calls. He just got through doing his acting—he'd already done *Coal Miner's Daughter*, which we got to go out and do the premiere for it in LA. And he did another movie, and he just wanted do some playin', so we went to Canada and started playin' with him. That was in [19]80. So the next couple years there, we played with him a whole lot, just our band and Levon, all over everywhere. [*Clears throat*] And then that's kinda what led up to The Band res—gettin' back together.

[03:54:23] SL: So when you were doin'—[*EEC clears throat*] working with Levon those years, was that a dual trap set situation?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Two drums?

EEC: Usually was, yeah.

SL: So that's pretty unusual.

EEC: Yeah. But Levon'd get up play mandolin and—yeah, but we used two trap—two sets.

[03:54:41] SL: And was Terry with you then?

EEC: Yeah, Ron and Terry. And Earl and I, yeah.

SL: Sounds pretty good.

EEC: Yeah, it was fun. Yeah.

[03:54:50] SL: So how long did that go on?

EEC: See, [19]80, [19]81 pretty much. Then it took a break.

[Nineteen] eighty-two, he did a record somewhere, I forgot—Muscle Shoals. He did another record. Levon did. We mighta done a little bit of somethin' on it. I can't remember. In [19]83 they decided to put The Band together. And then he—Levon knew he'd been playin' with us, so he felt comfortable with—he could have us all there playin', [*laughs*] so he called us about that.

[03:55:16] SL: And so, now you're adding the rest of the band . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . minus Robbie.

EEC: We're four guys takin' the place of one [*laughs*]. Yeah,

basically, yeah. Yeah.

[03:55:27] SL: So on that tour did you play—what kind of stuff did you all play?

EEC: The Band.

SL: You just did The Band stuff.

EEC: Yeah, well, yeah, mostly. I mean, we did "Milk Cow Boogie" or some of Levon's RCO, couple of things. But a lot of The Band. 'Cause you had Richard and Rick, and we could do just about any of it. And Garth, you know.

[03:55:48] SL: So I guess we ought to go down the list of names here [*EEC clears throat*] that you're playing with with Levon. I wanna start with Richard Manuel. Here's a guy that I know if I close my eyes, I hear Ray Charles just . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . all over the place.

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: I mean . . .

EEC: Definitely.

SL: It's really almost spooky. The voice has such a range . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . . that it's just hard to fathom that one human can do that.

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: And I liked his piano playing, myself.

EEC: I do, too.

SL: I think some of the licks that came out of him were just signature licks for The Band.

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: And I know the few times that I got to be with him, he was always a fun guy and . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . full of good stories, funny stories and . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . . and just an overall guy—how was it playing with him? I mean . . .

EEC: It was fun, yeah.

[03:56:50] SL: Did you guys rehearse much?

EEC: Not a whole lot [*unclear word*].

SL: Didn't have to.

EEC: Well, 'cause we kinda knew the songs, but we did do a little bit of rehearsing at The Barn, Levon's place.

SL: So . . .

EEC: Hard to get Levon down there to do it, but we did it, you know what I mean [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah, but . . .

EEC: . . . with Garth and everybody.

[03:57:08] SL: So now there's really three keyboards.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Really, more than that if you . . .

EEC: Yeah. More than they needed, yeah.

SL: . . . count the stacks.

EEC: Yeah, right. [*Laughter*]

SL: So there—you and Richard, I mean, how did you guys work back and forth? I . . .

EEC: I just kinda . . .

SL: . . . I'm gonna keep Garth out of it for now, but.

EEC: Well, I just tried to stay out of the way, [*laughs*] you know what I mean? There was some little parts I'd do, you know, but you know, course, Richard got up and played drums on a few songs, so I could go move over to the piano. And Garth, he's all over. He'd get up and might play saxophone or somethin', but basically just tryin' to fit in where I needed to be and stay out of the way when I didn't need to be.

SL: Well, I can understand that attitude, but I'm quite certain that your licks probably added . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] I don't know.

SL: . . . to the sound, too.

EEC: I don't know about that.

[03:57:56] SL: I'm pretty sure that they probably did. You know, was Richard pretty reliable on stage?

EEC: Yeah, I mean sometimes he'd—you'd hold your breath 'cause you're ready to start the set. "Where's Richard?" You know, you'd look around, and [*snaps fingers*] he'd show up just like that. He'd come walkin' on, you know.

SL: And ready to go.

EEC: But he—I mean, so he's reliable. It's just that he's his own little world sometimes.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

[03:58:25] SL: Uh-huh. Did you ever find that—I mean, was his playing ever lacking? I mean, did you ever feel like he wasn't always there?

EEC: There may have been—there were a couple nights I've—that I can remember that he seemed like he was—might a little bit—just a little bit out of time, but most of the time, it was great, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: There was a little bit of tension there every once in a while between him and Levon 'cause Levon wanted Richard to do

good, you know what I mean. He wanted him to . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . you know, "Don't mess up," you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But overall it's really good.

SL: Well, I can testify that there were some times when I saw Richard play that I just couldn't understand how he could possibly be playing.

EEC: I know. [*Laughs*]

SL: You know, but he really had it in his bones, I think.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I—it really was . . .

EEC: Well, he, at this point, he was clean, and you know. He was, so. I thought he did a good job, myself.

[03:59:19] SL: Okay, so we should talk about the other keyboard player, Garth.

EEC: Yeah, the wizard, [*laughs*] yeah.

SL: He is a wizard, and there is something wizard about his look. Just the way that he is—you know, you see the top of his head, [*EEC laughs*] and yeah, there's all this . . .

EEC: He can play more with his left hand than I can play with two, you know. It's amazing.

SL: There is a . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . mad scientist quality . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . about his playing and about his persona on . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . stage.

EEC: Yeah, he would go down to the—some places we played, he'd go down in the afternoon and just figure out what he wanted to do on this song tonight that maybe was a little bit different. He'd figure it out all afternoon, work on it, you know, what he wanted to do. [*Laughs*] Just little sound he wanted to put in, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't.

SL: Right. Well, you know, the first description that comes to my mind is Anglican for some reason.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: There's a heavy church kind of thing . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . to it.

EEC: Well, he's a . . .

SL: Maybe it's just because organs got so popular in churches . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . but there is something about it that is studied . . .

EEC: It is.

SL: . . . I guess.

EEC: He's a serious—it wasn't Juilliard, but it's one of those schools of music. He's went through it. I mean, he knows it, [*laughs*] you know what I mean.

[04:00:35] SL: Yeah, I think it's—it may have been in Ronnie Hawkins's book or Levon—I can't remember which book it was, but they talk about when Ronnie was convincing Garth's parents and Garth to come on board with the Hawks . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . 'cause he was gonna pay him extra to [*EEC laughs*] teach the guys how to play music.

EEC: Yeah . . .

SL: Is that . . .

EEC: . . . he did, yeah.

SL: And he did, didn't he?

EEC: Yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: He really brought something . . .

EEC: Yeah, he did.

SL: . . . elevated . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the sophistication of what they were tryin' to do.

EEC: Yeah, he did.

SL: I always thought that his stuff sounded like the wind to me.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: It—there was a atmosphere that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . he created that—and I don't how it's . . .

EEC: Course, the first time I heard him was at the Rockwood Club, and it blew me away. It sounded like—I never heard anything that sounded that way. It was like a wild. I mean, it was a screamin' . . .

SL: It is wild.

EEC: . . . organ. I'd never heard it quite that, you know. Somethin' else.

[04:01:32] EJ: Was he playin' that Lowrey organ . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . then at the Rockwood?

EEC: Yeah. Lowrey, yeah. He never played anything but a Lowrey, far as I know. Yeah.

SL: Well, I mean, what—most rock and rollers were familiar with

what? "Green Onions"?

EEC: Hammond B3.

SL: Yeah, "Green Onions" and a . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . Hammond B3 . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . is kinda what the . . .

EEC: Yeah. That's signature . . .

SL: . . . organ part . . .

EEC: . . . organ sound, yeah.

SL: But his was—it was not . . .

EEC: It was difference, yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: It was totally not that.

EEC: No, no.

[04:01:58] SL: Yeah, yeah. Also, I can say that, you know, he'd get up and play the—what horn was it that he would play? The . . .

EEC: Soprano sax or . . .

SL: . . . there was two, I think. He played two different horns.

EEC: Soprano sax.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And I can't remember if he played tenor or not. Can't remember.

SL: I think tenor. I think he . . .

EEC: Might be, yeah.

SL: . . . did tenor and soprano.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I can remember when he would get up from behind the organ, that there would be a pause in the audience.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: You know, and then all of a sudden he'd be out front . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and the crowd would go nuts because his solos were always impeccable out front.

EEC: Oh, I know. Yeah.

SL: And it really—it just really made the music . . .

EEC: I know. When we played with him, he was always—'cause he's so slow, and we'd—[*SL laughs*] it'd be time for—he—and he'd make it, right up—he—'cause he'd walk around with the keyboards and come up for the microphone, and we'd think, is he gonna make it in time to play a solo? He made it, [*laughs*] though.

SL: He does. He knows, yeah. It was crazy. Yeah, what . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . a treat.

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: I mean, just those two guys alone . . .

EEC: I know.

SL: . . . would be enough to pay to go see.

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: I mean, if there was no drums, if there was no guitars, if there . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . was no singer . . .

EEC: Definitely.

SL: Just those two guys and what they . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . . did with those keys.

EEC: Oh, definitely.

SL: It was something else.

EEC: Definitely a treat for us to get to do that, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: It really was.

[04:03:17] SL: So I can't imagine havin' to try to fit in between or with Garth Hudson on one end and Richard Manuel on the other.

EEC: It's hard to do, [*laughs*] you know what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: It probably turn me off most of the time, *[laughs]* you know.

SL: No, I don't think so, but I mean really that is . . .

EEC: There's not that much you need to do.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Kinda cover the bases when they're doin' somethin' different, you know, but like I say, Richard playin' drums or somethin'.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Kinda coverin' his part, but yeah.

[04:03:46] SL: So you'd actually get up and go to the acoustic piano?

EEC: Yeah. Sometimes I would.

SL: That was a treat, wasn't it?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, nice.

SL: 'Cause that kinda gets down to the . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . where the rubber . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . meets the road.

EEC: I used to like to do that, you know.

[04:03:57] SL: Yeah. So greatest respect in the world for Richard and for Garth. Now, what about the bass? You've got Rick

Danko on bass.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So now, Rick played a fretless bass, which was unusual for rock and roll . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . 'cause I remember ?right?. I think it was the first fretless bass . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . rock and rollwise that I'd ever . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . seen played.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I guess I didn't even think that there would be an electric fretless . . .

EEC: He's . . .

SL: . . . bass.

EEC: . . . he's the first one I saw play a six-string bass, too. First guy—that's when he came down with Hawkins playin' a six string. That was different.

SL: I did not know that.

EEC: Yeah.

[04:04:43] EJ: When was that? Would that have been . . .

EEC: [Nineteen] sixty . . .

EJ: [Nineteen] sixties.

EEC: . . . four or five. I can't remember whenever they . . .

EJ: Wow.

EEC: Yeah, yeah. He's playin' a six string.

EJ: That's really unusual.

EEC: Yeah, it was. Back then, really unusual.

SL: Well, you know, of course, the thing about not having the
frets . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You know, you're . . .

EEC: I know.

SL: . . . off a eighth [*EEC laughs*] of an inch or . . .

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: . . . or a sixteenth of an inch, and you gotta bring that note in
somehow. I mean, if you don't . . .

[04:05:13] EEC: Yeah, Rick's a totally different kind of bass player.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: You know, great, really different, but I mean, not your typical.
I mean, he does things different than a lot of people do.

SL: Well, I get this stepping thing with . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . him.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: There's something about a wa—it's not a walking bass.

EEC: It's . . .

SL: It was a lot . . .

EEC: . . . somethin' between . . .

SL: . . . funkier than a walking . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . bass.

EEC: Right.

SL: It was like a—I don't know.

EJ: Like a tuba?

SL: Maybe like a tuba. It—maybe there . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . was a tuba quality . . .

EEC: I kinda feel that feel . . .

SL: . . . a bom, bom, bom . . .

EEC: Yeah. [*Thumping sound*] Yeah.

SL: . . . quality to it.

EEC: Kinda that feel, yeah.

[04:05:46] SL: Yeah. And then—course we didn't say anyth—a
whole lot about Richard's singing, but Rick had an o—his own

voice.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*] Definitely.

SL: And it seemed like he ended up singing most of the ballads, didn't he? I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah, he did.

SL: . . . or would do the lead.

EEC: Well, Richard did, too, though.

[04:06:05] SL: Richard did some great ballads.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Some of the best . . .

EEC: Yeah, he did.

SL: . . . ever . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . in history, but . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . but Rick had on his shoulders the ballad . . .

EEC: Yeah, "Make" . . .

SL: . . . stuff, too.

EEC: Yeah. "Makes No Difference" and . . .

SL: "Makes No Difference."

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: "Unfaithful Servant."

EEC: Yep.

SL: Gah!

EEC: Yeah.

SL: [*Unclear words*] chills when I . . .

EEC: "Stage Fright."

SL: . . . think about that stuff. "Stage Fright."

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. [04:06:29] So he—and you know, of course, Richard and Rick had their own characters to their voices. Well, they were distinctively different.

EEC: Different people, too.

SL: They were . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . people.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You could—there was a quality about them that—there was a human, almost brother quality about it. It was like you're listening . . .

EEC: Being Canadians, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . you know, that's a lot of it, too. Yeah.

SL: So I guess we go to Levon.

[04:07:09] EJ: Can I—one more thing I might want to sa—ask about
in terms of Rick is that, as I understand it, Rick came from a
rural background in Canada.

EEC: I think he did.

EJ: More so than the other guys or . . .

EEC: I think he did.

SL: I think that's right.

EJ: Was that something that you all felt in common with him?

EEC: Not really . . .

EJ: Not really?

EEC: We never did think about that, really.

EJ: No?

EEC: No.

SL: We probably would've made you think about that if we'd . . .

EEC: Yeah. [*SL laughs*]

SL: . . . been there. [*Laughter*]

EEC: Yeah. Great guy, golly.

SL: Yeah, he was a great guy. Great spirit. There was always . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . something about him that was positive.

EEC: Yeah, I know. [*Laughs*] I never seen him down hardly ever.

SL: Seems like he used the word brother a lot, too.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah, yeah.

SL: You know?

EEC: [*Whispers*] You got a minute, brother? [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

EEC: Yeah, he was always up, though. Never, hardly ever see him down any way . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . at all. Yep. Lotta fun to be around.

SL: He got so overweight toward the end. I was really—he got so heavy.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And I . . .

EEC: Yeah. He had a hard time.

SL: . . . was worried about him when I . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . last saw him. Anything else on Richard or Rick? Is there anything else you want to say about Richard or Rick?

EEC: No, I don't guess, no.

[04:08:18] SL: And then there—and okay, so now we should get back to Levon. What a storyteller . . .

EEC: Yeah, really.

SL: . . . he is.

EEC: Really. [*Laughs*]

SL: You know?

EEC: Total, unique talent. I mean, original, yeah. I don't know of anybody that sounds like him or plays like him or, you know, sings like him. Amazing.

SL: I know when we were talking to his band members a couple years ago, they were mostly jazz players, and a couple of 'em mentioned *The Last Waltz*, and they had never really paid attention to The Band, but they saw the movie and they all—these jazz players always went to the drummer. They were going, "Now, that is somebody I wanna find out about. That's somebody I wanna play with."

EEC: Oh yeah. Yep.

[04:09:14] SL: What is it about his drums? I mean . . .

EEC: He . . .

SL: . . . what does he do?

EEC: He keeps it simple, and he keeps it right in the groove. It's always—feels right, you know what I mean. He's always in the right groove, you know, and we never hear him play somethin' weird, you know, or try to play too much or try to—it's just always right, you know. That's all I can say. It's always right.

SL: Is it just a little bit behind?

EEC: Yeah . . .

SL: Does he play . . .

EEC: . . . it's a little bit . . .

SL: . . . a little bit behind?

EEC: It's a little bit behind, but it's not in a wrong way. [*Laughs*]

It's in a . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . good way, you know. Really is.

SL: Somehow it emphasizes . . .

EEC: Yeah. Take a long—all the time you need to hit those lick, you know what I mean, and make it count, you know. It's not how fast you play or, you know, how fancy. It's just a matter of what it feels like.

[04:09:58] SL: And is there a shuffle quality about his style?

EEC: He can do that, too. Yeah, he can.

SL: I mean, it seems like I hear that kind of slipped . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . in every once in a while.

EEC: Sometimes it'll get that little—yeah . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah, he does. I . . .

SL: And then—and—[*vocalized sound*] it seems like he really sets

everyone up, too.

EEC: Oh yeah. It's so much fun to play with him, you know, 'cause it's . . .

SL: He knows what's about to happen or . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . somethin' or . . .

EEC: And he makes—I mean, when you play with him, he makes you play different. You just play better. He just makes you—somethin' about it. I don't understand. You don't feel like you have to do anything extra to make it sound right. You just feel like it's there, you know. You just play, you know. He makes you want to play. Yeah, it is neat, really neat.

SL: You know, some think that he's the best.

EEC: [*Unclear words*] I'd find hard, you know—they might be better technically, you know, if you want to talk in those terms, but far as feel, I can't think of anybody that is better. I really can't. Not a soul. I can't.

SL: And then there's his voice.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: And so you got Richard, and you've got Rick, and then you got Levon, and those are three totally . . .

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: . . . different sounds . . .

EEC: Yep. [*Clears throat*]

SL: . . . that are happening.

EEC: Yep.

[04:11:23] SL: And I've always wondered are most of those stories that came out of The Band—it seems like most of those stories are based on kinda Southern characters and Southern life. There's that Delta thing. There's that blues thing, but there's also—there's a—there's kind of a hill thing, too. There's just something that's honest as the day is long about those stories, and it was amazing to me how they would divide that stuff up among themselves so that it was like a conversation . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . or a guy—you were sit—standing around, and everyone's contributing to a story.

EEC: Right.

SL: They've all been a part of it, and they . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . all . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . know what happens next, and it's . . .

EEC: But I got a feelin' a lot of the stories started with Levon.

SL: I do, too.

EEC: You know, started there, and then they, you know what I mean. I don't know why. I just think that, but I believe they did.

[04:12:22] SL: Well, now, when you were touring with them, did you sing, as well?

EEC: Not during their set. We always did an opening set ourself.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Now, in the RCO thing, I did some, but not during their stuff—there wasn't any reason. [*Laughs*] You got . . .

SL: Well . . .

EEC: . . . you got four great singers. You don't . . .

SL: Well, I . . .

EEC: . . . need another singer.

SL: . . . I know. [04:12:41] I mean, I'm just wondering what the—how the heck do we add you in that mix.

EEC: Just background. I didn't sing any lead.

SL: I know, but you know, you have your own voice, too.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, it would've been another character . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . in that array because yours is totally different than any . . .

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: . . . of those guys, too.

EEC: Yep. But it wasn't needed most [*laughs*] of the time, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: So, yeah.

[04:13:05] SL: Okay, well, so now, when you guy—was Levon the leader on the tour?

EEC: Yeah, he had—between he and Rick, yeah, I'd say so, yeah.
Yeah.

SL: Do you think Rick kind of helped with that, or do you think it was pretty much a that's just the way it was?

EEC: I think it's—yeah, the two of 'em kind of—I think—'cause they'd play quite a bit, just the duo with Levon and Rick. They played a lot up in New York area, so yeah, I kinda—to me it appeared that it was the two of them together kinda leadin' it.

SL: So they were really, I mean, technically, musicwise, they had a good set of ears. In this case, two sets of ears were better than one.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Is that the way you think it . . .

EEC: I guess, yeah.

SL: . . . was. I mean, [*EEC laughs*] sometimes people say two

heads are better than one only if the two heads are different.

EEC: Right.

SL: But—and maybe that's the way it was. They—between the two of them . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . they could—they knew what they wanted and how to go about gettin' it.

EEC: I think so.

SL: So was it basically fun?

EEC: Yes, it was. A lot of fun. It really was.

[04:14:16] SL: What do you take away from it? I mean, what did Ernie Cate take away from that?

EEC: I took away from that I got to be on stage and be a part of a, you know, legendary band, you know, really, and just—and good guys and historic band, far as I'm concerned. They were, you know—meant a lot, you know, to be able to—even the fact they'd even asked us to do it, you know, it meant a lot, but the fact we got to do it for a while was amazing. It really was.

[04:14:48] SL: How bout any particular performance that—or venue that you really . . .

EEC: I don't know. We did so many [*laughs*] of 'em. I can't remember now right off. We did a New Year's Eve one time.

They called the last minute. We were supposed to play the Library Club on New Year's Eve. They called about. . . .

SL: Kinda remember that.

EEC: . . . two days before.

SL: I kinda remember that.

EEC: Can you come to Bill Graham and do the New Year's Eve at the Winterland in San Francisco? And they flew us out there, and we did it, you know. But that was quite an experience. That's after we'd already played a lot of tours and things. We weren't doin' that much then, but they decided they wanted to—I guess they offered 'em some money—a lot of money or somethin'. But they did that, I remember. That's one memorable one because Bill Graham was there and . . .

[04:15:30] SL: How did he come on stage?

EEC: I think he flew through the air across the stage. [*SL laughs*] Fa—he was Father Time, you know. Whatever, anyway. That was interesting. [04:15:39] And we played the Carrier Dome in Syracuse, New York, for—I think it was thirty-five thousand people in there, but that was it—with the Grateful Dead.

SL: Now, what was that like?

EEC: [*Laughs*] You know, it was amazing, yeah. I couldn't—I never have quite understood it, but it was good, you know. They

sure draw a crowd.

SL: So what was it that you couldn't understand? What . . .

EEC: Oh, I don't know. I just—I mean, I always liked The Band a lot better. You know, I'll put it that way, [*laughs*] you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . myself. Musically, I like The Band a lot better. I respect the Dead for what they do, but I always, you know, liked The Band better. But they have a heck of a following. Yeah, we played quite a few shows with 'em, actually, with the Dead. Some with just Levon and us and then with The Band, too.

[04:16:26] SL: Uh-huh. So did you ever get to hang with any of the guys in the . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . Grateful Dead any?

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: And was there someone that you . . .

EEC: Yeah, but I probably shouldn't tell it on TV.

SL: Huh?

EEC: I probably shouldn't tell it on tape, you know, with Jerry Garcia, you know.

SL: Yeah?

EEC: Watchin' him do his thing. I mean, what're you gonna do, you

know what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: His drugs and all that stuff, it wasn't very good sight.

SL: Oh, it wasn't?

EEC: Yeah. So you might not want to put this in there, but.

SL: Well, I mean, you know, and it's pretty well documented, anyway.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, everyone . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . it's all common knowledge, but seems like Earl thought that each one of those guys had their own dressing room.

EEC: They did . . .

SL: And . . .

EEC: . . . pretty much.

SL: . . . it was like whatever they wanted in that dressing room . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . is what went on and so . . .

[04:17:11] EEC: Kinda the same way as Crosby, Stillls and Nash.

Kinda the same way. Had their own—each one had a bus and each one [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Is that right?

EEC: Yeah. Yeah. Yep.

SL: So you got to hang with those guys a little bit . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . too?

EEC: Yeah, we did quite a bit of stuff with them . . .

SL: Really? I . . .

EEC: . . . with The Band, yeah, and Crosby, Stills and Nash.

SL: So how was that?

EEC: It was great. They draw a huge crowd.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah, got to do a lot of the amphitheater-type places, you know, it's outdoors. In the summertime, they'd do that about every summer. That's probably my favorite place—things to play is those type things.

[04:17:45] SL: So was David Crosby as crazy as sometimes he's made out to be?

EEC: You don't really get to hang out with him.

SL: You didn't?

EEC: He comes on stage and goes back on his bus . . .

SL: Goes back.

EEC: . . . and—*[laughs]* yeah.

[04:17:55] SL: And Stephen Stills the same way? Were they all . . .

EEC: Same way.

SL: . . . that way.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Now, that's interesting. You . . .

EEC: Probably Graham's probably the most friendly, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . of all of 'em. Course, we knew the keyboard player.

What's his name? Heck. Can't think of his name right off. I should know it. Anyway, he'd—we'd known him, anyway, but you know, it was fun, though, 'cause, like I say, they'd draw a big crowd, so we were able to play in front a lot of people. Like the Red Rocks in—out there in Colorado. Got to do that with 'em and a bunch of venues.

[04:18:28] SL: So how long did this go on?

EEC: Well, that was [19]85. We did a lot of their shows in [19]85.

SL: Mh-hmm. So here you are on the road doing this stuff. Are you goin' by bus everywhere or . . .

EEC: Yeah, we had a bus on that tour, yeah. Yeah.

SL: So that was—the downside is you're not at home.

EEC: Yeah, that's right. Yep.

SL: I mean, was it constant, or would you go . . .

EEC: No, it . . .

SL: . . . a few weeks and then off a week or . . .

EEC: Yeah, it wasn't constant. Like that Crosby, Stills and Nash thing went—I forgot—three or four—three weeks, maybe, we did that. Then The Band decided to do it by theirself. We all came home, [*laughs*] you know what I mean. Well, their manager decided they needed to do it by theirself. He made 'em do it by theirself without us, so they did that. After that, the rest of that tour with Crosby Stills. But I guess probably three weeks. It wasn't a constant thing. It was on—off and on.

[04:19:28] EJ: So how did they—after you guys left that tour, did they just hire another guitar player?

EEC: They just brought in Jimmy Weider from Woodstock.

SL: Jimmy Weider.

EEC: He'd play with 'em some up there. They'd played two or three things, just them, and the guy, a manager guy, at the time was sayin', "We gotta cut back on the money. We gotta do this and that. You guys are gonna have to do it on your own. If you gonna do it, you gotta do"—which I don't blame 'em. That's what they should be doin', but anyway, they did it, so.

EJ: Yeah.

SL: And Jimmy Weider's a hell of a guitar player.

EEC: He's real good, yeah.

SL: He's a great guitar player.

EEC: Yeah, he is.

[04:19:59] SL: Where did I see him last? I saw him not too long ago.

EEC: He came and did the show we did with Levon back in—last year. The Arts Center.

SL: I saw him in Tulsa.

EEC: Did you? Yeah.

SL: Yeah, he came in Tulsa. He . . .

EEC: Did you go to that show?

SL: Yeah, I went to that show in Tulsa.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I didn't go to the one here.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I was out of town.

EEC: Yeah, he was with 'em on those shows. I don't know if he's coming this—tomorrow or not.

[04:20:18] SL: Huh. That'd be interesting. I'd . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . I'd forgotten all about him, but . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . I think I saw him first when they were playin' a little party out at Tyson's. He came in with 'em early . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . like a long, long time ago.

EEC: Right. Yeah.

SL: And I thought he was pretty good then, but . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . this last time I saw him, I was really . . .

EEC: Oh yeah, he's good. Really good.

SL: Yeah, he's gotten good.

EEC: Yep.

[04:20:44] EJ: He had a that—when you were workin' with The Band, one thing that strike—that's—you've talked about the individual singers, but the video that I've seen of those performances, one of the things that struck me was when everybody sang . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . backups.

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: Because it's you—it's the guys in—the three singers in The Band and you and Earl and Ron.

EEC: Right.

EJ: And was Terry singin', also? Did he have a mike?

EEC: I think so, yeah.

EJ: He was? It's a really thick vocal blend.

EEC: Yeah, I mean, everybody sang on some things, yeah.

EJ: I figured that must've been somethin' to be part of a . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

EJ: . . . singin' group like that. I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was fun.

[04:21:17] EJ: Did y'all work out the parts? Was that part of the rehearsal, working out vocal parts, or did you just . . .

EEC: No. [*Laughs*]. Just fell in, I guess.

EJ: Wow.

EEC: No, I don't remember ever rehearsin' it.

EJ: Well, it sure sounds like it's somewhat—it—some time . . .

EEC: Really?

EJ: . . . was spent workin' [*EEC laughs*] it out, so that's . . .

SL: Well, everyone, I'm sure, everyone was really familiar with the . . .

EJ: Familiar with all of it.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . material.

EJ: Yeah.

SL: They all knew the material.

EEC: Just try to sing the tonic note if you have to, you know what I mean, to make it thicker.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: That's what I always did. I'd didn't try to sing the harmony. Just sang unison. [*Laughter in background*]

[04:22:04] SL: Well, okay, so where does this put us?

EEC: [Nineteen] eighty-five.

SL: Hmm?

EEC: [Nineteen] eighty-five.

SL: [Nineteen] eighty-five? What happens in [19]85?

EEC: Not much. Just come home and started playin'. Bookin' jobs. Didn't hardly miss a weekend. [*Laughs*]

SL: Really?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You started doin' the clubs again and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And was there somethin' kind of relieving about that? I mean . . .

EEC: Well, yeah . . .

SL: . . . at this point in time, you guys have done so much that you kind of—you've probably kinda risen above the clubs in some

way. I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah, but what're you gonna do? You gotta make a livin',
[laughs] you know what I mean?

SL: Yeah. There is that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . there is that job side . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . of the thing, but also, I just get the feeling you guys
maybe were—had gotten an immunity to what the club life and
the club circuit could do.

EEC: I certainly did, you know. [Laughs] I . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . I can't speak for anybody else, you know, but . . .

SL: Mh-hmm. Now . . .

EEC: . . . but, you know, you gotta do it. Keep a band goin'.

[04:23:14] EJ: But a lot of bands at that point where they go from
being a famous band that's been on a record label that's done
massive tours—a lotta bands when they go back home from
that point aren't able to get back into a local group . . .

EEC: Yeah, I know.

EJ: . . . aren't able to start . . .

EEC: That's true.

EJ: . . . playing again.

EEC: Yeah, we're lucky we were able to, you know. Mainly a four-state area, but we could stay busy every weekend. But after a while, that gets old, too. You know, playin' the same crowds, same songs, over and over, you know.

SL: Well, sure.

EEC: So—but in the meantime, we're still tryin' to write and maybe try to get another deal, you know.

[04:23:50] SL: Now, where—when did—see now, John Ware didn't come in until the [19]90s, did he?

EEC: I can't remember what year that was. It mighta been [19]90.

SL: I think it was [19]90 . . .

EJ: That singles cassette?

SL: [Nineteen] ninety-one, [19]92?

EEC: Yeah, singles.

EJ: Well, I remember it bein' earlier. I might not be . . .

EEC: I think it was earlier 'cause Terry left and Porky came in . . .

SL: Yes.

EEC: . . . about [19]88 or in [19]89.

SL: So it was probably [19]89, then.

EEC: It was before Terry left . . .

SL: [Nineteen] eighty-eight . . .

EEC: . . . we did it.

SL: . . . or [19]89.

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: Before Terry left?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Oh . . .

EJ: [*Unclear word*] . . .

SL: . . . it was?

EEC: 'Cause Ron left . . .

EJ: I think it was a little . . .

EEC: . . . Ron left and went to Nashville with Jo-El Sonnier.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And then Terry left, so.

EJ: Is Ron on that cassette?

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: He is?

EEC: It's the four of us . . .

EJ: Okay.

EEC: . . . on the singles thing. Yeah. So, yeah, Ron left. Then Terry left. Then we got Porky to come in, and he was with us twelve years.

[04:24:46] SL: And who . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . took Ron's place?

EEC: We had two or three different players. Lee Haitt . . .

SL: Oh yeah. Okay.

EEC: . . . and then we got John Davies.

SL: Yeah. Okay.

EEC: He was about—gosh, maybe ten years, maybe, John Davies played. And then we got a chance to get Ron back, and we jumped at that. Fortunately, he did that. He decided to do it, so.

SL: Mh-hmm. I still can't believe he's commuting.

EEC: I know. [*Laughs*] I can't believe it either. [*Laughter*] I hope he's on his way right now.

SL: Yeah, really.

EEC: He talks all the time about movin' back, and Jennifer, his wife, wants to, but.

SL: Well, why doesn't he?

EEC: He just—he's got his house . . .

SL: He doesn't want to gather all his stuff up?

EEC: He's got his house that's paid for, and he—all these instruments in this place he keeps 'em, you know, all kinds of 'em, and I mean, I know he wants to 'cause his folks live here.

Not that much goin' on down there far as playing jobs . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . you know. To pick up things once in a while so—but I think he may be just be hopin' that that, you know, primo thing will come along, and somebody'll, you know, pick him up and take him out, but I don't know. I wish he'd move back.

SL: Be easier on him, I bet.

EEC: Yeah, would be a lot. I used to worry about him 'cause he'd . . .

SL: I know.

EEC: . . . make that trip every week.

SL: Yeah, it's not . . .

EEC: Come in, get here three or four o'clock in the mornin' and [*laughs*] sleep a little while, and then we'd play that weekend, and Sunday head right back over there.

SL: That's a big drive, eleven hours.

EEC: Yeah, it is. He'd drive at night, too, like—said it's the best time, not as much traffic and . . .

SL: Wow.

EEC: I don't know. I couldn't do it.

SL: Oh, that's not good. I'm gonna have to sit him down.

EEC: Yeah, I know.

[04:26:28] SL: So we're at [19]85. You guys just start doin' the gigs again. You got Porky. So we oughta talk about Porky a little bit. A very, very good, accomplished drummer.

EEC: Oh yeah. Really good.

SL: Different . . .

EEC: Different, but good.

SL: . . . than Terry.

EEC: Yeah. Right.

SL: But he had his own . . .

EEC: Yeah. Right.

SL: . . . set of great strengths.

EEC: Strong, really strong. Yeah.

SL: And he was with you for how long?

EEC: I guess it was twelve years, I think.

SL: Twelve years.

EEC: I believe so.

[04:27:05] SL: And . . .

EEC: ?About, yeah?

SL: . . . how did you go about getting him? How'd that happen?

EEC: Well, he was just around here playin' with Paul Hughes. Kinda playin' pick up. Whiplash Gumbo with Randy Keck, and Ron played with 'em sometimes. But he was just around here, and

he'd heard us play, and all at once, you know, Terry left. It was automatically, he said, "Oh yeah, I'd like to," you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And you know, came right in and started doin' it. Didn't really need even much rehearsals at all so—'cause [*SL laughs*] he's so good.

SL: Yeah. So he—let's see—now, he was married, too, wasn't he?

EEC: No.

SL: He wasn't?

EEC: No. He'd been married twice before, but he lived with . . .

SL: Okay, that's . . .

EEC: . . . he lived with a gal there that he had some kids with, but.

SL: Okay. Maybe that's what I'm . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So it's kind of a tragic story for him, though.

EEC: Yeah.

[04:28:10] SL: I believe Earl said he was—started feelin' bad and not . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . feelin' right and kept talkin' about it, and nothing was gettin' done about it, and finally he went—he was a veteran, right?

EEC: Yeah. He went to the VA, yeah.

SL: He—Vietnam veteran?

EEC: No, I don't know if he went to Vietnam or not. He might have. Mighta been.

SL: And he went to the VA and got misdiagnosed.

EEC: Yeah. They gave him—started givin' him these cortisone shots or somethin', and it was interferin' with what he had. Just made it like pourin' water, you know . . .

SL: Gasoline on a fire.

EEC: . . . gasoline on a flame, you know. It just—and course, they discovered it when he finally—they sent him to Little Rock. When he got down there, they found out what it was. They said, "Oh, you'll be all right in two or three days. We know what it is now." Didn't make it, though. Too late.

SL: Too late.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah, it was quite a shock.

SL: It's a blow.

EEC: Yep.

[04:29:11] SL: So there's a song or two about him, isn't there?

EEC: Yeah. Earl and I wrote the one, "This Side of Heaven." [*Clears throat*] We wrote it actually about Earl's wife and Porky both 'cause they both died just a couple of months apart that week

in 2000. So we wrote a song about it. Put it on the *Play By the Rules* CD. Actually, we had the song and played with Jimmy Thackery when he used to live in Eureka. We took it over, just—because he kinda wanted to do somethin' with us. We played it for him. He just [*laughs*] fell apart. He said, "We gotta do this song," you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: So, anyway.

[04:29:53] SL: So was that the first time that you'd been back in the recording studio when you did that CD?

EEC: No, we had done a few things. Oh, we'd done *Radioland* before that 'cause . . .

SL: Okay.

EEC: . . . Porky played on *Radioland* and *Struck a Vein*.

SL: Oh yeah.

EEC: And then we did the live CD, too, with Darren. So that's three albums that Porky played on. So that came before that, before Porky passed away.

[04:30:17] SL: Now, who produced *Struck a Vein*?

EEC: Jay Sheffield in Memphis.

SL: And what was he like?

EEC: He was a good guy. He owns a restaurant down there called

Huey's. It's real—well, he's got a couple of restaurants that are in Memphis, but he's a music guy, and he's pretty good to work with.

EJ: Did he produce *Radioland*, also?

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah, he and Rusty McFarland, the engineer. He kind of helped him, but yeah. Before that we'd done a few little things, like the John Ware thing, and then we'd done Nashville where Earl and I went down and cut a few things with a guy down there. Didn't anything ever happen with it. You know, always tryin' to keep busy with it, but.

SL: Yeah.

[04:31:03] EJ: Were you tryin' to write country songs in Nashville?

EEC: No.

EJ: No?

EEC: No.

EJ: Just doin' the same [*EEC laughs*] thing you do.

EEC: Yeah.

[04:31:11] SL: So were the Memphis sessions pretty fast?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean . . .

EEC: 'Cause Porky was so good at, you know, doin' it. He—it went real well, yeah.

SL: So was everything isolated, or did you guys set up in one room?

EEC: Oh no. It was great studios. One was—with the second, *Struck a Vein*, we did in Ardent, in the Ardent Studios, but the first one, *Radioland*, I can't remember the name of the—Crosstown, I think it is, Studios in Memphis. It was a good studio, though.

SL: So what I mean—I mean, did you do it—was the trap set in its own room, or was it, I mean, you know . . .

EEC: I can't remember now.

SL: . . . at one point in time, there was a movement . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . away from all the isolated, direct tracks and tryin' to get—and there was a movement recording industrywise . . .

EEC: Seems like it—seemed like it was in the same room, but it was blocked off with . . .

SL: With baffles?

EEC: Yeah, I believe—I—Earl might remember, but I can't remember for sure.

SL: Okay.

EEC: Yeah. It seems like it was. I think that's right.

[04:32:11] EJ: I had wanted to ask about the writing on those records because through the albums in the [19]70s, except for the one, the Bobby Bland cover, it's all you and Earl's songs. But I started lookin' at the writing credits on those two records, and there's someone else that you're writing with?

EEC: Yeah, LeRoy Preston.

EJ: Now, who is that?

EEC: He lives in Nashville. He used to be with Asleep at the Wheel years ago. And he's a song writer with Bug Music, who does our—'ministers our publishing in Nashville. He was wri—a writer for them, and Bug Music sent us some demos. I don't know how—I can't remember how that came about. They sent us demos of this guy—wanted Earl and I to do demos for his songs. And none of these songs was in a record, so they really liked what we did and then—so they—"We want you to write with Leroy." So he'd drive over from Nashville, and he'd have a lot of lyrics that he'd written, like "There Goes the Neighborhood." Actually, we wrote that in a hotel in Memphis—no, Nashville. We just wrote that in a hotel with him, but he had some other lyrics, like "Sometimes It Jumps" and several of those that he just had some individual lyrics that

he had part of it done, and so we'd just set down and start workin' with it. He came over here several times, and once we got enough material—like *Radioland*, he had kind of an idea for that and pretty much wrote 'em together. He'd come over from Nashville, so that's where that came from.

[04:33:38] EJ: I wanted . . .

EEC: He . . .

EJ: . . . to ask about the song "Recovered Soul" on that record.

EEC: That was one of his deals, yeah.

EJ: Was that one of his that he . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . [*unclear words*] was his?

EEC: He started with a—that lyric, yeah. Earl and I would have to come up with the progression and the—chord progression and the melody and the—and sometimes we'd change the words if it wasn't fitting—what he had written wouldn't fit. We'd do that, but he was real good at comin' up with ideas. Really was.

[04:34:07] EJ: Then maybe—one of the other songs I wanted to ask about from this period that I was—I've been very curious about is on *Struck a Vein*. It's "Rocket City Bar."

EEC: Yeah, that was a LeRoy idea. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

EJ: Was that a LeRoy idea? I wondered because most all of your

songs are from a first-person perspective.

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: There isn't just a character . . .

EEC: Right.

EJ: . . . that someone . . .

EEC: Right.

EJ: . . . talks about.

EEC: Right.

EJ: But that song, the narrator never . . .

EEC: Nah.

EJ: . . . reveals himself. It's . . .

EEC: Right. Yeah. Yeah, he came up with that. He was actually—forgot where he said that he saw that—sign or somethin' somewhere gave him that idea. Rocket City where—kinda like from Houston or somewhere they do the—fly the space shuttles or somethin'. I don't know where he got the idea, for sure, but. [*Laughs*] It was a lot of fun for—to do that, write with him.

[04:34:59] EJ: And then you worked some with David Egan on those records . . .

EEC: Yeah . . .

EJ: . . . I think.

EEC: . . . not really. Just a—usually a song. We did a lot . . .

EJ: Oh.

EEC: . . . some demos for him.

EJ: I thought that there was a co-write with him somewhere on there, but I couldn't find . . .

EEC: Yeah, "After This Time."

EJ: Oh.

EEC: Buddy Flett and—yeah, we wrote that with them in a hotel room in Nashville. Yeah. Yeah, that's when we did—that's the one—there's another we did—"Play by the Rules," we wrote with them, too, and what's his name from England did it.

EJ: John Mayall.

EEC: Yeah, John Mayall. Yeah. He recorded it, yeah. Yep.

SL: That's pretty hefty.

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: Yeah.

[04:35:41] SL: So I wanna talk about the process of writing these songs. You say you wrote this song in a hotel room . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . in Nashville or wherever.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So, what is happening? You've got the guy that's got the

lyrics. You all are helpin' him with the lyrics if it . . .

EEC: Well, or he may have one line. You know, he had—they start with one line.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And Earl's got a guitar, and Buddy's got a guitar, and I got a little keyboard, and Egan plays the keyboard, too, but just start talkin' about it. He'll sing a line, and we'll, "Well, will this work and that work?" And finally, it just all goes around enough time that it becomes a song. You know, that's [*laughs*] basically what it is. It's fun to do that.

SL: It sounds like a gas to . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . do that.

EEC: Yeah, it is.

SL: So how long can you go? I mean, in a session when you're writing a song as it—I mean, does—hours?

EEC: Yeah, it could be.

SL: Three or four hours, maybe?

EEC: Not usually that long, but it could be, you know what I mean?

SL: Yeah, I mean, and when you take a break, do you leave the hotel room and then come . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . back, or is—you just, like, tackle one piece, and you're done with that piece, and you're kinda done for the day?

EEC: I think that case was just that one song. We just had time to get together for that one song for that one. I mean, LeRoy'd come over here. He'd stay for two or three days. So we'd go out to Earl's, and we'd work every day. But that case I'm talkin' about far as Egan, that was just a one-day deal. Just settin' down for two or three hours—hotel room. 'Cause they had other things they had to do and things.

[04:37:17] SL: Well, is that as much fun as playin'?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I ca—I mean, I can imagine how that . . .

EEC: It's alm . . .

SL: . . . in a . . .

EEC: . . . it's sometimes . . .

SL: . . . in some ways is more fun.

EEC: Some ways is more fun, yeah.

SL: Yeah. You don't have all the noise and the clutter and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . all the bull that's . . .

EEC: Yeah

SL: . . . goin' on . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . with the audience and the venue and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . load in and load out. You're just . . .

EEC: Yeah, it is . . .

SL: . . . you're tryin' . . .

EEC: . . . fun.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yep. It is fun. That's one part I like, one of the best parts.
Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Well, I have a feeling Earl probably likes that, too.

EEC: Yeah, he does. Yeah, he does.

[04:37:53] SL: Man, you guys have a lot to write about.

EEC: [*Laughs*] I know.

SL: You know it?

EEC: [*Laughs*] We do.

SL: Really.

EEC: I didn't realize it actually till you started talkin' about it.

SL: Yeah, you really do.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah, it'd be a crime if you guys don't get on the stick and get
some stuff done. [*Laughter*]

EEC: About music?

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: Yeah, I think I'm gonna be callin' you about twice a week now
and . . .

EEC: Yeah, we need to.

SL: . . . ask what you've come up with.

EEC: Yeah, I need to. [*SL laughs*] I've been writin' a little bit, you
know, myself, but yeah. I need to.

SL: Well, you guys are just good at it, you know?

EEC: Yeah. I think we are.

SL: And if you enjoy it . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you know, my gosh.

EEC: Oh, I know.

SL: Yeah. Just do it.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Just have fun.

EEC: 'Bout right.

[04:38:33] EJ: While we're still near talkin' about writin' with other
folks, I wanted to ask you about Dan Penn while the tape is
rollin' and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . workin' with him 'cause he's a legendary figure.

EEC: Yes, he is. Yeah, he still wants to do a record with us, and we just can't seem to get it together to get [*laughs*] down there.

EJ: Oh man.

EEC: He's a great—I met—that's really somethin' I want to do really bad.

SL: Where is he?

EEC: In Nashville. He's got a studio in his house and just this laid-back guy that wears his overalls, and he's just—I don't know. That's one of the best guys I've ever met in my life. You know, he's just a great guy. And he likes what we do. He, in fact, he gets it more than some other people do, [*laughs*] you know what I mean?

SL: Yeah.

EEC: You know, he can play our demo to somebody, to the record people down there. He'll say, "Well, they just didn't get it." He said, "But I get it," [*laughs*] you know what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. But it's just weird, you know.

EJ: Yeah.

EEC: But he's—he'd be great to work with 'cause he's a great writer

and arranger and everything. We'd—he played in Conway last year for the fall, I guess it was. Played down there. Played a concert. Earl and I went down and saw him. Yeah, what was the—what's that college there? The two colleges in Conway?

EJ: Hendrix is one of 'em.

EEC: Hendrix.

SL: Hendrix . . .

EEC: Yeah . . .

SL: . . . and UC . . .

EEC: . . . he was at Hendrix. A little, small room there.

EJ: Yeah.

EC: So we got—that's the last time I saw him, but.

SL: Golly.

EEC: He even mentioned then that, "Boys, we need to do a record," you know. So I hope we can sometime.

[04:39:59] SL: So what does he do in his concerts? What's the instrumentation?

EEC: He plays guitar.

SL: And it's just him?

EEC: Yeah. Well, he had a keyboard—we can't think of the guy's name that played keyboard who came with him. That was all—it was just two of 'em. But he sings all these old songs he

wrote, "Do Right Woman," and he used several of 'em he wrote, lotta songs he wrote. Spooner Oldham, he wrote a lot of songs with him, too.

EJ: "Dark End of the Street."

EEC: "Dark End of the Street," yeah. We met Wayne Carson, which wrote "The Letter." He—we wrote the—well, that one song, "Strip Search (for Love)," Wayne wrote that, and we did the demo on it. And then we ended up puttin' it on our record, but he's a friend of Dan Penn's, too. He's a pretty good guy.

EJ: He's from Missouri, right?

EEC: Yeah, originally, yeah.

EJ: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah, he and Dan came here one time. It happened to be during a football game, so they couldn't get a hotel room for *[laughs]* one night, so they ended up stayin' at our house with Linda and I. They had to sleep *[laughs]* together in the bed, *[laughter]* and it was so funny. But Dan Penn would get up in the mornin' and come walk in the kitchen with his bag of carrots. He was, like, really into, you know, that type of fresh fruit and vegetables, you know, and stuff like that. He come in and carryin' his bag of carrots. *[Laughter]* It was funny, yeah.

SL: That's great.

EEC: But he'd be a good one—the guy to work with.

EJ: Yeah.

EEC: Really would.

EJ: He's someone who would get what you guys do . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

EJ: . . . and maybe . . .

EEC: Exactly.

EJ: . . . try to get . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . it onto the recording medium . . .

EEC: Yep.

EJ: . . . in a good way.

EEC: Yeah, he knows how to cut records, too.

[04:41:35] SL: So has he got a studio there in Nashville?

EEC: Yeah. He could do it at his studio, but he's got one in his house. I mean, in his basement of his house, he has enough—you can do a record right there but . . .

SL: Well, yeah, anymore you can do . . .

EEC: We hadn't actually cut anything there in his studio. We've done little demos there with our little machines, but since we've done that, he's got some regular recording equipment, so. He can do it there.

SL: Sounds like a little road trip to me.

EEC: Yep. Yep. [*Laughs*]

EJ: You make that record, I'll buy it.

EEC: Yeah. [*SL laughs*]

EJ: I'll help . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . sell it.

EEC: Yeah. [*Unclear words*]

SL: We'll shoot it.

EEC: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] Shoot, yeah.

SL: Well, okay, any more on those albums?

[04:42:24] EJ: The only thing I'd want to know is it seems like there's a long stretch where y'all don't make a record for a while . . .

EEC: You're right [*laughs*] . . .

EJ: . . . you know . . .

EEC: . . . there is.

EJ: . . . before *Radioland* comes out. What's involved in the decision to start doin' that again? Were you lookin' for another deal and then decided to do . . .

EEC: We didn't have a deal . . .

EJ: . . . one in Memphis or . . .

EEC: . . . we didn't have a deal until, finally, we played the club Huey's down in Memphis and Jay Sheffield—course, he's a big fan, and he said, "Hey, I'd like to do a record, you know." He kinda wanted to start his little label. So he was able to get Interscope to help—well, not Interscope. What is it? Part of Interscope to help distribute it, too.

EJ: Right.

EEC: So that's how we got started doin' it again. Somebody come in and offered us a chance to do it, and we did it, but—and that—not many offerin' it right now, [*laughs*] you know, 'cept Dan Penn, so.

[04:43:17] EJ: So—and then there's those two records, and then in 2004 the one with Jimmy Thackery.

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: And that—well, and then there's the live album.

EEC: Right.

EJ: Right.

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: Is—for me, I mean, I tend to think of y'all's career in terms of stages. I mean . . .

EEC: Right.

EJ: . . . as a fan, so I think of the . . .

EEC: Right.

EJ: . . . the *Cate's Gang* as a phase and then the Elektra albums and then the stuff from the [19]90s . . .

EEC: Kinda. That's . . .

EJ: . . . and it has a very . . .

EEC: . . . that's pretty much it, yeah.

EJ: . . . distinct identity.

EEC: Yeah, the other times there was a space there is because we were playin' with Levon and we were on the road for a long period there from [19]80 to [19]85, I guess. Pretty much a lot of playin.' I—wasn't really a lot of time to write or do anything, so that's part of the reason for that. Then we did get back home and started writin again, and it wasn't anybody offerin' anything, [*laughs*] you know. Anyway, but nowadays the way that recording thing is, you can pretty much make a record in your house yourself with all these new tools they got, but sometimes that's good; sometimes it's not, but you can.

SL: Sure, you can.

EEC: Yep. Come up with the songs.

[04:44:25] SL: Well, I have to say one of my favorite albums is the *Live* one.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, there's just—it sounds like the Cates that I grew up with to me.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, it just—there's just somethin' about it that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and I think the mix on it is great.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I think the playing on it is great. And there's—I really count it as a—as much as a document . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . as a record. I mean, it . . .

EEC: Yeah, it's kind of a—what do you call it? Yeah, a document, I guess. Snapshot of what we do.

SL: Yeah, and you know, it's as—it's honest. You know, there's no . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . trickery going on. I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . it is what it is, and . . .

EEC: That's true.

SL: . . . I love that. I . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . look for that. I long for that.

EEC: Oh, I know.

SL: In any . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . album, that honesty factor that . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . cuts through everything.

EEC: That's right.

[04:45:21] SL: So you know, I'd be satisfied just you and Earl playing [*EEC laughs*] what you've written, you know, but all by yourselves.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: It—you know, you add all these oth—the other guys in, and it just—it's just icing on the cake, as far as I'm concerned.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, they're all—you know, you've got great players around you now, and I know you've got great material. I hope that you get around to it, and I don't know . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . how Dan figures in on it or what's next for y'all.

EEC: It's a matter of gettin' enough good songs written, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Or we may have to get some somewhere else, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . not—if we can't write 'em.

SL: Well, I think you've got a lot of good songs, and some of 'em, you know, just never got the play or just never . . .

EEC: Well, yeah.

SL: . . . got the push. I mean, you can . . .

EEC: I feel that way, too, yeah.

SL: . . . you can pick and choose. I mean, you've got a whole career of . . .

EEC: That's true.

SL: . . . of excellent material.

EEC: I never think about it [*laughs*] that way.

SL: Well . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . I mean, you know.

EEC: Yeah. True.

[04:46:16] EJ: Is there any song that you feel like you didn't get down right the first time that you'd wanna . . .

EEC: There's probably a lot [*laughs*] of 'em, yeah.

EJ: . . . take another crack at?

EEC: There's probably a bunch of 'em. I don't know. I'd have to

listen to it again. Yeah. I don't know, when you do it—go in the studio you get that shot at it, you know, you put it down. Course, it can be done again, you know, I'm sure, but once you walk out of there and they print it, it's done, that performance. It's just that performance, what it is.

SL: Well, and y'all play so well together, I really think you could pull it off in a—even in the studio, as a live recording.

EEC: Pretty much, yeah.

SL: I mean, just . . .

EEC: Pretty much, yeah. Just play [*unclear words*] . . .

SL: I mean, that thing—the sound guy sending you that note about the pleasure mixing you guys is because you guys are playin' together.

EEC: Well, yeah. He recognized that. Yeah.

SL: Mh-hmm. So you know, I think that happens in almost any room that you're in.

EEC: I hope so. I don't know.

SL: I think it pretty much does.

EEC: I don't know.

SL: I mean, it certainly communicates that way to the audience.

EEC: That's good. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[04:47:23] EJ: Is there any song that, I don't know, any particular songs that you can think of that you guys have stuck with that stick out to you as songs you really enjoy playing, that you don't really get tired of, or maybe even just one that right now you're feelin' a lot. Enthusiastic.

EEC: Well, one—"Radioland"'s a song we haven't been playin' a lot, but I really like to play it.

EJ: Right.

EEC: You know, I think we might play it tomorrow night. But we haven't been playin' it, and people have been askin' for it, but that's one I love—I like to play. Well, there's a lot of 'em, I guess. "Can't Change My Heart," I love to play that song.

SL: Yeah.

EJ: That's a great . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . song.

EEC: And "Neighborhood" and "Recovered Soul." "Union Man" I can do without. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah, I can understand that.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, how many times have you played it?

EEC: Oh, a lot, too many.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I mean, it's still—it's fun to play, but better ones I'd rather do.

SL: Any of the covers that you like? You're fond of?

EEC: I like that we do "Makes No Difference" once in a while. I love to sing that song.

SL: Yep.

EEC: And—I don't know. That's the one I think of right off. We don't do a huge amount of covers, but. I don't know.

SL: What you thinkin'?

EEC: Tryin' to think of a song. *[SL laughs]* *[EEC laughs]* I don't know.

[04:49:06] SL: Well, okay, so we get—you lose Porky. Big blow. What happens next?

EEC: Well, Ron's little brother played with us for several years there.

SL: Whose little brother?

EEC: Mickey.

SL: Oh!

EEC: Mickey.

SL: Yeah, yeah. Mick . . .

EEC: Since 2000 to last year or year before. I can't remember.

He—actually, we decided to—well, I decided, you know, I didn't want to do it much anymore far as live things. And so that

kinda—the whole band just kinda went, you know, apart. And so Earl started playin' his deal, and he used Terry, which we'd played a couple of things with Terry sittin' in or somethin' and really liked the way it felt to have him back playin'.

SL: Sure.

EEC: And Earl really liked it, so when we started to do some more Cate Brother gigs, well, I said, "Well, shoot, yeah, Terry." You know, he was right there ready, you know. So we're enjoyin' that.

SL: Yeah. In fact, that farewell performance at George's, Mickey and Terry . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . split that . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . that gig.

EEC: And that's when I realized that, hey, I really like what he's doin', and you know, . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . and Terry's enjoyin' it, too, so it feels good to have the old guys back. Feels real good. They're really enjoyin' it, too. Seem like they are.

[04:50:30] SL: One thing we hadn't talked about that I suspect . . .

TM: Hey, Scott, let's change tapes. Excuse me.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[04:50:35] SL: Okay, Trey, this is tape six?

TM: Yes.

SL: Is that right? Okay, buddy. [EEC laughs] You're rockin' right along here.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: The—so I guess we were talking about what last?

EEC: Recording.

SL: Recording. [Laughs] Yeah, and we were talking about how—and writing and getting the stuff out that . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . . either didn't get the proper attention—I mean, I'm thinking of that Dowd stuff that you felt like wasn't really focused, you know. I mean, if it didn't get the attention, maybe it's due, you know. I . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . I wouldn't be afraid to pull stuff out of the hat that you've already got, as . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . well, that you could make right. [04:51:25] You know,

and I have a feeling, also, you guys are at a place now in your lives where you don't necessarily have to settle for anything.

EEC: Right.

SL: You can do what you wanna do and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . how you want it done, and you can kinda have say over it.

EEC: Mh-hmm. That's true to . . .

SL: And . . .

EEC: . . . a certain extent, yeah.

SL: . . . I think that, in the rush for and the dream of having success, you trust people and you let them and their experience kind of overshadow your judgments . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and you know, I think all that's—I don't think you have to put up with that anymore. You're . . .

EEC: No, I don't either. I agree.

SL: So I'm expecting great things out of you. [*Laughter*] Your work's not done.

EEC: I don't know.

[04:52:12] SL: Just when you thought you could relax. [*Laughter*]
Crack the whip here. Well, okay, so where are we in our chronology? We're in the mid-[19]90s, I guess, early [19]90s?

EEC: [Nineteen] ninety—*Radioland*—those records came out—see [19]98 was the *Live* record. Yeah, [19]98. Then Thackery's thing came out in 2004 . . .

SL: Okay.

EEC: . . . *Play By the Rules*. That's the last one we did, 2004.

[04:52:40] SL: You know, [*EEC clears throat*] before we go any further, I do wanna talk a little bit about John Ware and the stuff that you all did with him and your time with him. You know, I got to do some work on some of those projects myself.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And it was always fun with John. I don't . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . I don't know why, but somehow or another, he's able to take stuff and make something out of it . . .

EEC: Yeah, he's a pretty. . .

SL: . . . that is special . . .

EEC: . . . creative guy.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: He is.

SL: Yeah. And actually, he'll be here tomorrow . . .

EEC: Yeah, I . . .

SL: . . . for the show.

EEC: . . . think Neal said he was . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . comin'.

SL: Yeah. I'm lookin' forward to that. So tell me how it was working with John and . . .

EEC: Oh, it was fun, you [*laughs*] know.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

EEC: He's got a whole different thing about pickin' records than we—kinda different from the other guys, but it was fun.

SL: What was it that . . .

EEC: It was kind . . .

SL: . . . was different about it?

EEC: . . . of a spur of the moment, last—kind of a last-minute thing. We decided we was gonna do it, you know? I don't know. He's just got his ear, the way he hears things, you know. Yeah, his own way of doin' things. He's crea—like I say, he's a real creative guy.

SL: Well, you know, he's got some pretty good credentials.

EEC: Oh yeah, he does. Yep.

[04:54:56] SL: How many albums with Emmylou? Seven?

Eight . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . albums?

EEC: Quite a few. Yeah.

SL: All gold ones, I think.

EEC: Yep.

SL: Did his own—did management for her, as well.

EEC: Right. Yep.

SL: Did the "All My Rowdy Friends" with Hank Williams Jr. . . .

EEC: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

SL: . . . what went on to become the . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . . signature piece for *Monday Night Football*.

EEC: Oh I know. Yep.

SL: I mean, he's certainly [EEC laughs] has a pretty good history, you know . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . of doing stuff. And I think it's easy—I mean, you know, of course, we all see the Cates as, you know, the guys around here, and he steps in, and he gets it. I think he gets it.

EEC: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yep. [Laughs]

SL: Yeah, so anyway, I just thought you might wanna say something about John.

EEC: Yeah, I think that he's real creative, and it was a fun thing to

do. Fast thing to do, you know I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Got in there and done it and got it done. Put it out. Fact, I'd never heard of single—a cut—when you do that—called singles, what it's called. It was four songs was all it was.

SL: EP?

EEC: First time we'd ever heard of a EP, you know.

SL: Extended play.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Mh-hmm. Yep.

EEC: I like some of the tunes on there all right.

[04:55:13] SL: Yeah, now, let's see. That was done locally here at . . .

EEC: Yeah, what was the guy's name? John? Down there by Joyce Street?

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I can't remember the name of the studio.

SL: Gaddy.

EEC: Yeah. That's right. I don't . . .

SL: And it was . . .

EEC: . . . know what he's doing now.

SL: I forget what the name of the studio was, but . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . it was . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I forget his first name even.

EEC: John, I think.

SL: John Gaddy? [EJ edit: John Ware]

EEC: I think it was.

SL: Yeah. I kinda remember that.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And I remember doing some video work in the old ice plant down on West Street. Do you kinda remember that?

EEC: Oh yeah. The commercial.

[04:55:48] SL: Was that a commercial?

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah. That was for Car-Mart, wasn't it, or . . .

SL: It probably was for Car-Mart.

EEC: I think it was.

EJ: It was for Car-Mart.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: I remember running the Nagra recorder for that and making . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: . . . makin' sure we got the sound of the match being struck,

you know.

EEC: I remember that now.

SL: Yeah.

[04:56:06] EJ: What songs were on that singles cassette?

EEC: "Hang Tough"—or was it or—wait a minute. No, I think it was some little thing that John wrote. I can't remember what it is now. It was instrumental, wasn't it?

EJ: I don't know. I haven't . . .

EEC: I can't remember.

EJ: It's the one I haven't been able to find.

EEC: I don't know. I can't remember what it is now.

SL: We'll see if we can't dig that up.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Get that out of John while he's here.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah. It was kinda—we did "Hang Tough" on the single, but it's kind of a take off on that song, seems like. But we didn't really sing it or somethin'. I can't remember what it was. I don't know.

EJ: And the other three songs, do you remember what . . .

EEC: "Lifeline," "Get Up," "Suspicious Heart."

SL: I can . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I remember that, yeah.

EEC: Yeah. "Suspicious Heart," "Lifeline," "Get Up," and "Hang Tough." Four songs. Yeah.

SL: Well, what was great about that, it was done here.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: And what was great about the *Live* recording is that it was done here.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: So I really love that. I love that good things can happen here at home, too.

EEC: Yep. That's right.

[04:57:20] SL: Okay, so one thing that we have—I know what we were rolling around to that we haven't talked about, and I have a feeling it has something to do with the desire not to play as much as you used to. And that's the night you guys were comin' back from Eureka Springs. And you're driving the van, right?

EEC: Yep.

SL: So let's talk about that a little bit. You'd played at Eureka, just a regular gig or . . .

EEC: Yeah, we'd gone over on Friday night and played our regular Friday night. Gonna—we had the whole weekend booked

there. Comin' back home on Friday night, a drunk driver, wrong lane, hit us head on bout three miles from 45, I guess, or before you get up to the main road, yeah. Yeah. I didn't think there was much wrong with me at first, you know. I just couldn't move my leg, you know, 'cause I was stuck in there. And finally, I managed to get myself out from under the wheel, and the ambulance came and put me on the stretcher. I think, well—I said, "Well, I think I may just—feels like my hip's out of place. If I can just pop it back in, it'll be okay." [*Laughs*] And then they put me in the ambulance, and I remember lookin' at that blood pressure thing and all that stuff, and I couldn't believe it, what was showin', you know. It scared the heck out of me. But anyway, took the doctor in—to the hospital here, and they let me go. They kinda checked me out, and what was it, later that night? Later that night, they called back. Said, "Somethin' don't look right about this X-ray. We need you to come back down and do another X-ray." So we did. Sure enough, my hip was cra—fractured, you know. And had to get on crutches then. But the bad part out of that was I developed a blood clot in my leg because of it. And my leg swelled up about this big around and had to go to the hospital for about ten days, a week to ten days. And that was real hard, you

know. Plus, I already have a heart condition, anyway. I'd found that out in 2000. A blockage in my heart. So I have to take heart medicine. [*Clears throat*] But anyway, that's nothing to do with that but the—had to take all this medicine to dissolve the blood clots, so it was pretty [*laughs*] rough.

[04:59:20] So I had to take some time off there from playin' for a while. And then just after that, it was just hard to get it goin' just to play every weekend. I mean, I did it for a couple years. [*Unclear words*]. Got to the point I just thought, "I just can't keep doin' this," you know what I mean. Every weekend, week in, week out. Just couldn't do it, so that's finally when I decided there's no use in—you know, life's too short. You can't just keep doin' that, you know. So for health reasons, that's the one of main reasons I did it. Just felt like I needed to slow down. Now, we do play now every once in a while. I like—we play happy hour or a concert, and we probably play a few club things but not much, so. Just gotta keep it at a minimum, if I can, for health reasons.

[05:00:04] SL: So did the clot dissolve?

EEC: Far as I know. [*Laughs*]

SL: 'Cause that's not a good thing to have.

EEC: Nah, it's still—every once in a while my leg gets real tight,

kinda swells a little bit, but I have to watch it. Be careful, you know.

SL: So have you ever thought about doin' angioplasty on your—for your heart?

EEC: Nah, he didn't—I made my own bypass around it.

SL: Yeah, now, what's the story with that? That's kind of totally . . .

EEC: Well, we, for years, we ran, like jog, running, Linda and I, for years we did that. And I think that's what did it. It helped it build it up. 'Cause he did the thing where they go up the leg and goes in your heart and shows a picture of it. And he says, "Ernie, I," he says, "I think I can treat you with medicine." Said, "God did a better job than I can." [*Unclear words*] Made those little collateral things around the blockage. So, so far it's been okay. Been about ten years.

SL: That's great.

EEC: Yeah, it has been exactly—well, ten years in March, so.

SL: Well, congratulations. That's a . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . big . . .

EEC: So I made it that far, and long as I take it easy and not try to do too much and, you know. I do get tired easy, you know,

more . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . than some people, probably, but long as I do that and, you know, be careful and try to watch what you eat. No doughnuts and, [*laughs*] you know what I mean, stuff like that. But you know, I mean, really, you have—I don't do as good as I should, but you're supposed to, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . try to do that.

SL: Red meat, you gotta . . .

EEC: Yeah, try to avoid . . .

SL: . . . watch that stuff.

EEC: . . . that as much as possible.

SL: Lot—eat lots of veggies and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Well, so . . .

EEC: But that slowed me down. There's no doubt [*laughs*] about it.

SL: Yeah. Well . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and there's no reason for it not to. I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . it's a miracle.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, that was a head-on deal.

EEC: Oh yeah.

[05:01:45] SL: I guess Earl was in the passenger seat?

EEC: Yeah, he—I don't think he even had his seat belt on. [*Laughs*]

He hit his head, but luckily it didn't hurt him, you know. I got the brunt of it 'cause it hit right on that side, you know.

SL: And . . .

EEC: I don't really wanna go through it again.

SL: . . . Ron was in the backseat?

EEC: Yeah, Ron and Mickey were . . .

SL: Did he . . .

EEC: . . . in the back.

SL: . . . did they get hurt at all?

EEC: No. Mickey kinda banged his knee up a little bit, but they didn't, really.

SL: And what about the driver? Did it . . .

EEC: It tore him up real bad. Yeah, they didn't think he was gonna live. In fact, you know, but he did. But it tore him up pretty bad. I think he broke his back, and I don't know how many . . .

SL: Oh gosh.

EEC: . . . what happened, but was a bunch of stuff, yeah. I don't know exactly what all it was. But he didn't have any insurance and didn't, you know.

SL: It's spooky how that stuff can just happen.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And it's not really any of your doin'.

EEC: Nah. It's just drivin' along and . . .

SL: Just wrong place at the wrong time.

EEC: . . . and we saw him comin' aroun—kinda of a slight curve. We saw him comin' around there, and I said, "Is he gonna get over?" And before I knew it, it was just, man.

SL: Too late.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I don't want to go through that again ever. Boy.

[05:02:52] SL: So how long were you in the hospital? Ten days?

EEC: Yeah, about ten. I had to—had other problems after that with the kid—not—yeah, kidney—what was it? Kidney—what was it called? Can't remember. Anyway, it was a bad deal, you know. Bad blood and lots of bad stuff. Had to go back in the hospital with that, you know, which affected me [*unclear word*] even now, still, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: So there's a lot of effects from it but—more than you realize, I guess. You know, he said it looked like a hand grenade had gone off in my kidney—in my bladder, he said. Like a hand grenade had gone off. It was somethin' to do with that accident, though, had caused it to . . .

SL: So it just . . .

EEC: Didn't [*unclear word*] show up till later, couple of months later.

SL: So it just really jarred it and probably . . .

EEC: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . internal bruising and . . .

EEC: Right. Yep.

SL: Yeah. Man.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Got lucky.

[05:03:45] SL: Well, I tell you, it says something that you survived it.

EEC: Yeah, I guess.

SL: No, it does, really.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: For as much complication that came afterwards.

EEC: Then doin' all that, and then we'd go off and played, and Linda sittin' here at home, and you know, I just kept tellin' myself,

"Do I really wanna be here?" you know. I'd rather be there, you know what I mean, and that's what it come down to.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. Not that I didn't like to play. I just, you know, after all those years of every weekend, you're away from home, and you know, got a beautiful house. Why don't I wanna be home . . .

SL: Right. Yeah.

EEC: . . . you know? I wanna be home.

SL: Yeah. Got a granddaughter.

EEC: Yeah, granddaughter and the whole deal, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: So that's life, [*laughs*] you know what I mean.

SL: Yeah, well, that's also life-changing . . .

EEC: Life-changing, exactly.

SL: . . . something like that. It's a wake-up . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . call . . .

EEC: Exactly.

SL: . . . isn't it?

EEC: I think so, too.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yep.

SL: And kinda gets your priorities set.

EEC: Yep, that's right.

[05:04:46] SL: Well, I can tell you still have a hankerin', though,
[EEC laughs] to write some stuff and . . .

EEC: Oh yeah, I like this . . .

SL: . . . do somethin' like—I mean . . .

EEC: It's fun.

SL: . . . you—there is—it is important that you do what you wanna
do and that you . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . like what you do.

EEC: Yeah. I agree.

SL: I mean, there's probably only so much sittin' around that you
can stand to do. That's not healthy, either.

EEC: No. Huh-uh. No, you like to just try to be in a position that—
where you don't have to do it. You do it when you wanna do it.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: That's kinda the way it is now, so.

[05:05:15] SL: Yeah. Well, do you have an exercise routine that
you do now or . . .

EEC: Oh, we walk every day.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Thirty-five or forty minutes, forty-five minutes a day . . .

SL: That's . . .

EEC: . . . we walk, and that's about it. Yep.

SL: Well, that's a good story. I mean, that's a good story.

[05:05:35] So where are we in our chronology? We're—we've got you past 2000, and you've been—so when was it—it was two years ago, three years ago that it was kind of a formal farewell?

EEC: Would be two years, I guess, this fall. I guess. I've lost track of when it was.

SL: Is that right?

EEC: I don't know.

SL: Seems like it's been longer than that.

EEC: It may have been. [*Laughs*] I don't know. When was it when I—when we decided to cut it off, slow down?

LC: [Two thousand] six, wasn't it?

EEC: Two thousand six. I guess it'd be four years this . . .

SL: Yeah, see . . .

EEC: . . . fall.

SL: That's how far behind . . .

EEC: This coming fall.

SL: . . . that's how far behind we are at the Pryor Center 'cause we, you know, we recorded that . . .

EEC: That's right.

SL: . . . that gig at George's.

EEC: Yeah, 2006 New Year's Eve was the last thing we played. I went back and played another year, somewhere, [*laughs*] you know.

SL: Well, yeah, you did another—you did a thing in Eureka the next night, I think . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . an official New Year's Eve.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I think it was the thirtieth.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

[05:06:33] SL: So it's only been really [*EEC clears throat*] three . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . three years, I guess.

EEC: Yeah, three, about three.

SL: Two-and-a-half, three years. Well, I can't thank you enough for lettin' us be a part of that last show at George's. It was really a good . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was.

SL: . . . it was a great gathering, wasn't it?

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean . . .

EEC: It was. It really was.

SL: . . . it was different than your typical gig.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, everyone really turned out. There was a line down the street.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You know, you have these camera guys runnin' around everywhere.

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Had J. T. and Darren out in the van and . . .

[05:07:06] EEC: Yeah, they kinda, the paper or someone, they kinda got it wrong. I mean, I said that I was slowin' down. I didn't really say I was completely quittin', but everybody kinda got the idea that's the last time we'll ever see 'em, [*laughs*] you know what I mean.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But you know, it's okay.

SL: Well, it's a good, again, it's a good document . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . at the time. It's a good . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . snapshot of . . .

EEC: Oh yeah. It is.

SL: And it was kinda the return of Terry . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . with you guys.

EEC: Right.

SL: And it was pretty glorious. I mean, you . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . guys sounded really, really good that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . night, as always, but . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . it was good havin' him back on the stage, too.

EEC: Oh yeah. I know. We're enjoyin' that.

[05:07:40] SL: Yeah. So you're gettin' ready to play a show
tomorrow night?

EEC: Yep.

SL: Levon's comin' to town. He's bringing his whole group with
him.

EEC: Yep. Twelve . . .

SL: Horn section and all.

EEC: . . . twelve, eleven- or twelve-piece group, I guess.

SL: Yeah. And is he playin' the Ryman tonight, or is that . . .

EEC: Yeah. He's playin' there . . .

SL: So that's . . .

EEC: . . . tonight.

SL: . . . that's pretty great.

EEC: They'll be jumpin' on the bus and ridin' all night, I guess.
Probably.

SL: Yeah, you know, I heard when Levon first started talkin' about goin' out that those guys just really wanted to ride on the bus with him.

EEC: Really?

SL: Yeah, I mean, they were lookin' forward to the bus ride. [*EEC laughs*] I think the first time they came down here, they—the bus broke down or something.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: They got stuck for, like, five hours someplace, and they still loved it.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: [*Laughter*] Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: You know, they were hangin' out with Levon and . . .

EEC: It's always fun to see him. It really . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . is.

SL: Yeah. I—we hadn't—Trey and I hadn't really talked about finalizing—I don't think I'm gonna be in any shape to run camera tomorrow, but . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . we might want to show up and get some candid stuff of you guys doin' sound check and . . .

EEC: Sure, that's fine.

SL: . . . you know, a camera in your face every once in a while and . . .

EEC: That's fine.

SL: Okay, I appreciate . . .

EEC: Sure.

SL: . . . that.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Is there anything that we've kinda glanced over that we shouldn't've—that we should spend a little more time on?

EEC: I don't think so. I wish I'd've been able to think of some of those funny stories. [*Laughs*] [*Unclear words*] but I couldn't

think of 'em, you know. I really couldn't.

[05:09:17] SL: Well, I—okay, I can help you with that, I bet. [EEC
laughs] I bet you've got a funny story about each guy in the
band.

EEC: No.

SL: In your band. Not The Band but—there's probably something
with Ron that cracks you up, and I mean . . .

EEC: [*Laughs*] I don't know.

SL: . . . he's so—he's a funny guy, anyway, I mean . . .

EEC: Well, yeah, when he first came back to play with us out at
Earl's place—we were gonna rehearse—he got out of his car,
and he had these Billy Bob teeth in, stickin' out all the way [*SL*
laughs] and these eyeball things that stick out. I'm ready to
come play, boys," [*laughter*] you know what I mean. That was
funny, you know.

SL: Yeah, that sounds good.

EEC: I can't think of anything funny about Terry, but I don't know.
[*Laughs*]

[05:09:57] SL: Well, you know, now, Terry's a kind of a blessed
story, too.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: He had some health issues. What was it that . . .

EEC: He had a heart attack.

SL: He had a heart attack.

EEC: A real heart attack, yeah.

SL: And how old is he?

EEC: Oh, let me think. How old is he? I can't remember. He's a little younger than Ron. He started with us when he was fifteen and he—that was 1968 or [19]69. Can't figure it out in my head that quick, but he's in his forties.

SL: So let's say he's fifteen in [19]70 and—or sixteen in [19]70, so forty years later, he's fifty-five, fifty-six.

EEC: He's not fifty-five. Is he that old? I guess he is. Yeah, I guess so. Yeah. Yep.

SL: And he had his heart attack how many years ago?

EEC: About two . . .

SL: Ten?

EEC: . . . or three years ago.

SL: Oh, is that all?

EEC: Maybe it was longer than that. I can't remember. [05:10:49]
It was a serious one, though, you know.

SL: So were they afraid that there was gonna be brain damage and all that?

EEC: Nah, it wasn't that—got—they got him to the hospital. He got

stents put in.

SL: He got stents.

EEC: Yeah, stents put in. But I worry about him. First time he played with us—'cause we play—sometimes get to goin' pretty hard, and I, "Terry, you all right?" He don't bother him. Seems like he's better if he's playin', you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: He and Earl play a lot, you know. So he seems to be doin' all right with it. I know he takes medication for it, but seems to be doin' all right with it.

SL: Blood thinner, maybe, or . . .

EEC: I don't know about that, but.

[05:11:25] SL: Uh-huh. So there's not one funny story about Terry?

EEC: I can't think of any. [*Laughs*] I just—I really can't.

SL: So let's talk about the first time that he came on board. How'd that happen?

EEC: Oh. Yeah, well, Levon was playin' with us at the time. He was stayin' around here [*clears throat*] kinda—he'd been on the road with Dylan, and he didn't like it.

SL: He didn't like that 'cause he was getting . . .

EEC: Didn't like, yeah.

SL: . . . they were gettin' booed.

EEC: Yeah, he didn't like the—all that.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: He came back here and was hangin' out. I guess a couple of months he played with us. We weren't doin' that much. Goin' over to Norman and playin', but playin' Red Lion or—once in a while we played. Anyway, they called him—guess Robbie or one of 'em called and said, "Hey, we got a deal with Capitol Records. Get—you need to get back up here." And that's when they went to do *Big Pink*.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: And so he—and Levon said, "I got a little cousin. I think he could do it. He's fifteen years old." And I—we had never met Terry. He brought him over to my house in the garage and had him start playin', so that weekend we played a job with [laughs] him that weekend, you know. Fifteen years old.

[05:12:23] SL: Well, that's about how old Levon was when . . .

EEC: Yeah, when he started, yeah.

SL: . . . Ronnie went to recruit him . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the first time.

EEC: I think so, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Think it was.

SL: That's interesting.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Now, just in this story you mentioned the Red Lion.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: We hadn't talked about the Red Lion and Charlie Smoot.

EEC: I kinda forgot about that place. [*Laughs*] Yeah. Oh boy.

[05:12:42] SL: Can you [*EEC laughs*] remember anything about Charlie Smoot?

EEC: Yeah, he was a character. You always wondered about that, you know. Were you gonna get paid at the end of the night. He was weird. We never did have that big of crowds in there, actually. We actually didn't play there that many times. I guess we probably played five or six times altogether. Not that many times.

SL: So you never knew if you were gonna get paid, huh?

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*] It was funny.

SL: Now, did he have a cane?

EEC: I think so, yeah. I think he did.

SL: Yeah.

[05:13:16] EEC: I remember Terry Don Phillips comin' in there where we were playin'. He played football then.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. I remember him comin' into the Red Lion one night.
Yeah, I think he was playin' football, but guess they didn't mind
or somethin'.

SL: No, back . . .

EEC: Back then ?and here?.

SL: Back then. Now was it Terry Don or Loyd?

EEC: Loyd, I'm sorry. Loyd.

SL: Yeah, it was Loyd.

EEC: It was Loyd, not—it was Loyd. Yeah.

SL: Yeah, we're talkin' Loyd Phillips, Dick Cunningham.

EEC: Right.

SL: George McKinney.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Even Lance Alworth . . .

EEC: Yeah. Right.

SL: . . . was . . .

EEC: Yeah, it was that era.

SL: . . . about to graduate then and . . .

EEC: Yeah, that was that era, yeah.

SL: Yeah, there's no tell . . .

EEC: Yeah, Loyd was the one. That was—I got 'em mixed up. Yeah.

SL: Boy, he was a hoss.

EEC: Yeah, I know.

SL: You know, and it's so strange to—you know, when I saw him later, you know, like [*EEC laughs*] maybe ten years ago, he was so thin.

EEC: He look little now.

SL: He was little.

EEC: And then he's like . . .

SL: But back then he was like . . .

EEC: Seemed like a giant or something.

SL: He was a giant.

EEC: I know.

SL: I don't know how that happened, but he really . . .

EEC: I don't either. I know.

SL: . . . got himself toned back down.

EEC: Yep. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's funny.

EEC: Yeah, it is.

[05:14:16] SL: Okay, so now, we've heard a little bit about Ron, and we've heard [*sound of airplane*] a little bit about Terry, how you got Terry. We should talk a little bit about David Renko. [*EEC laughs*] We know that he was—that he just kinda showed

up, but . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . is there any funny things about David . . .

EEC: Well [*laughs*] . . .

SL: . . . other than just . . .

EEC: [*Unclear word*] . . .

SL: . . . every gig? [*Laughs*]

EEC: All kinds of things.

LC: I'm glad I'm not the only one laughin'.

EEC: He probably added ten years to our career 'cause he attracted all the young girls comin' to hear him play, you know what I mean. You know, they come to see him when they might not even come to see it otherwise. So he probably helped in that situation. Yeah, he's funny. I'm tryin' to think of some funny things. I don't know. [*Laughs*] He doesn't try to be funny, usually, you know. [*Laughter*] I don't know.

[05:15:15] EJ: That does bring up to me that there's multiple generations of Cate Brothers fans in this area.

EEC: Yeah, it's true. [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh yeah. There is, definitely.

EEC: I found that out, yeah.

EJ: Just in this room. I mean, there's a gener—couple generations

younger than me. I'm forty-five.

EEC: Yeah. And I've had . . .

EJ: But . . .

EEC: . . . kids come up and say, "My mom and dad says we need to come hear you play." [*Laughs*] You know what I mean. Yeah.

SL: My mom and dad . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . danced to you all at Couplers.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughs*] That's amazing. That is amazing.

[05:15:45] SL: Did we talk much about the other bands that were around when you guys were gettin' started? I mean, there was . . .

EEC: Yeah, we did. We talked some about [*clears throat*] the Emcees and . . .

SL: There was Johnny Roberts. Did we talk about Johnny Roberts . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . at all?

EEC: We didn't say anything about him. But yeah, I remember Johnny Roberts. John Tolleson, Johnny Roberts, Bill Lafferty, Emcees. They had more of a road group, though. Tryin' to think of who else. There wasn't that many, really.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Few college bands, you know. Well, John Roberts was actually that. He was fraternity-type band.

SL: A little later on, there was—I remember a band called the Rebel Rousers.

EEC: Yeah.

[05:16:28] SL: Chuck Stanfield played guitar.

EEC: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Did Dan Kerlin play drums for them originally?

EEC: He might have. And there's that group that Ron was with [*unclear words*].

SL: Well, there was River City.

EEC: River City, yeah, that's the one I wanted to think of. Yeah, River City. That was a little later than Tollesen, of course.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: River City. And what was that one Ron was with—playing with?

LC: Paper Kid?

EEC: No, that's John Davies was Paper Kid. That's a little later.

SL: Was it the same group that Tim Alexander played with?

EEC: Yeah. What was that group? Yeah, Tim played with 'em, too. Oh heck, I can't think of that.

SL: Man, I can't think of it either. It's on the . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . tip of my tongue, though.

EEC: Yeah, I know. They played the Rink quite a bit.

SL: Yes.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Maybe we'll think of it in a minute. [*EEC clears throat*]
[05:17:26] We hadn't mentioned Rodeo and . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . Zorro and the Blue Footballs.

EEC: Yeah, there you go. Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: Now, there's a force to be reckoned with . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . don't you think?

EEC: Rodeo—Billy Jett, was he in Rodeo, wasn't he?

SL: Billy Jett.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And actually I was in Rodeo for a while.

EEC: You were?

SL: Yeah, but . . .

EEC: I didn't know that. Really?

SL: Yeah, I left to [*EEC laughs*—went to Yellowstone.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Came back, and they'd gotten a whole lot better than I ever would . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . be so . . .

EEC: Yeah. Yeah. I'd forgotten about them.

SL: Yeah. But they kinda—that ended up being Zorro and the Blue Footballs. Windy and . . .

EEC: Right. Yeah.

SL: . . . Billy continued . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that on.

EEC: Right. [*Laughs*]

SL: Jim Mhoon.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Remember we used to call him Test-Tube Baby.

[05:18:08] EEC: Yeah. [*Laughter*] Yeah. Yeah, we didn't mention much about the Rink either. That was kind of at one time . . .

SL: Let's talk about the Rink.

EEC: . . . at one—Randy'd like for us to talk about that, you know.

SL: We ought talk a little bit about . . .

EEC: Yeah . . .

SL: . . . Randy.

EEC: . . . 'cause . . .

SL: I mean, you know . . .

EEC: . . . that was . . .

SL: . . . we talked about Dayton a lot with . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . Earl. Have—did we talk a lot about Dayton with you yet?

EEC: No.

SL: I mean, Dayton was definitely a force to be reckoned with.

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: You know, my standard thing is—my understanding, he had no fear.

EEC: Nope. [*Laughs*]

SL: Didn't matter how big the guy was.

EEC: Nope.

SL: He was ready.

EEC: I saw . . .

SL: He . . .

EEC: . . . him—did Earl tell you bout a story at the Rockwood one night? He—this guy had run out of the club, and the guy got in his car. And Dayton was on the running board of the car, you know . . .

SL: Punching him out.

EEC: Yeah, punching him out. [*Laughs*] Yeah. Yeah, he wasn't afraid of anybody, you know.

SL: Yeah, I would say that if Dayton was comin' at you, you'd better straighten up and do exactly . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . what he tells you to do or . . .

EEC: What he did out at the Rink, he did try to bring in some groups and do some things. He really did. They did pretty good there, you know. Used to be a good place to play. You had a lot of people in there.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Really did.

[05:19:14] SL: Well, and then when Ronnie moved to Canada, didn't Dayton—I mean, were Ronnie and Dayton partners? At the Rockwood Club?

EEC: I don't know if Dayton had a piece of it or not, but he was runnin' it.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But I don't know if he really had a piece of it or not.

SL: An interest in it?

EEC: I don't member. I can't remember what—and then Donnie Stone came in and bought part of it.

SL: Mh-hmm. Now, there's . . .

EEC: He's a foot . . .

SL: . . . another football player.

EEC: Yeah, football player. Now, I can't remember—after all that—I don't really know what all happened to it all after that.

SL: Well, you know, the first Rink was where City Lumber is now on—there was a—that was actually a roller rink . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . right there, and . . .

EEC: Really?

SL: . . . I think—oh, what's Randy's mother's name?

EEC: Lois.

LC: Lois.

EEC: Lois.

SL: Lois, yeah. She ran that . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . pretty well. And then was it—did Dayton build the Rink out on . . .

EEC: He . . .

SL: . . . 62?

EEC: He built it pretty much himself, yeah. [*Laughter*] Bare hands, his own bare hands, pretty much.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah, he did.

SL: I didn't know that.

EEC: Yeah. He did. Yeah, he built that and built it up to, you know, a pretty good place for people to go.

[05:20:24] EJ: After—I wanted to ask about this. You guys, after you went out with The Band, you guys came back and played with The Band at the Rink . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . in 1985.

EEC: Yeah, we did. Randy did that show, yeah. Yeah. We did.

EJ: How did it feel to come back home and play with those guys at home?

EEC: It was fun. Yeah. Yeah, it was. We, actually, after we had our records out, too, we came back and did a show on our own, too, there, at one time.

SL: Yeah. You played Brer Frans, but sometime around that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . same period . . .

EEC: Later on after that.

SL: . . . you played the Rink, too.

EEC: Sometime later on. Yeah.

[05:20:59] SL: So Dayton, he did bring some music into town . . .

EEC: Yeah, he did.

SL: . . . didn't he?

EEC: Right. He used to tell us that, "I don't care if they play a washboard or whatever they play. If they draw a crowd, I'll hire 'em." You know what I mean? [*Laughter*] He didn't care, you know.

SL: Yeah, he was a bottom . . .

EEC: 'Cause he didn't really. . .

SL: . . . line kind of guy.

EEC: Yeah, that kinda guy.

[05:21:21] SL: Well, we oughta say a little bit about Randy, too.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, he certainly wanted to . . .

EEC: He'd pick up where his dad had left . . .

SL: Pick up where . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . his daddy left off.

EEC: Yeah, yeah. That's true.

SL: And he has been around . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . a while, and he has done some things.

EEC: Yeah, he has. Yep.

SL: I know he's been around in some sessions out in California, I guess.

EEC: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

SL: Was he around when you all were out there recording ever?

EEC: Well, when we did the thing with Bonnie Raitt, he was out there with us. He kinda helped get that set up with Rob Fraboni. Yeah, he was out there with us that whole time.

[05:21:57] SL: Now, Rob Fraboni did sev—a couple of The Band albums, right?

EEC: Yeah, yeah. I can't remember which . . .

SL: Really some great . . .

EEC: . . . ones it was, but yeah.

SL: . . . great mixes.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And so that's probably where Randy kinda got hooked up with Bonnie, then, I guess . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . 'cause she played the Rink, as well.

EEC: Yeah, she did. I don't know if that was—I think it—?maybe it was? before that or after that. It was before that.

SL: It was?

EEC: Yeah, it was before that. I'm pretty sure. Yeah, she played the Rink. Yeah, I'm tryin' to—he had quite a few different acts come through.

SL: Yeah. Yeah, actually, I think he's done pretty well.

EEC: Yeah.

[05:22:35] SL: So is there anyone else? I wish I could—I knew a little bit more about Phil Eagle. But . . .

EEC: I don't remember much about it. I don't really remember . . .

SL: You don't remember much about him?

EEC: No, I don't. Been so long.

SL: This is kind of a personal thing 'cause . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the recording studio business and stuff.

EEC: Yeah, right.

[05:22:57] EJ: Was Chance Records his label—the label that the—that Ken Owens . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . [*unclear words*] 45 came out.

EEC: Yeah, that was his label. Yeah.

SL: That's a great label name, isn't it?

EEC: [*Laughs*] Yeah, it was his . . .

SL: Chance.

EEC: . . . record label.

[05:23:07] EJ: Was there anything else on Chance? Did he do any other records?

EEC: I don't know.

EJ: Do you not? No.

EEC: I'm sure he did.

SL: Yeah, probably just whoever was local.

EEC: I don't member who, though. I don't know. I can't even remember what he looked like, Phil Eagle. Really can't. Been so long.

SL: M'kay, let me think, now. I don't want to let you go without—go ahead.

[05:23:36] TM: What about [*clears throat*] just havin' a twin and bein' a twin in that world? Any stories down that line?

EEC: No stories, except, you know, there's somethin' to that of bein' twins, bein' able to communicate on stage, you know. And we're different people. I mean, we always have been, but far as playing music, there's somethin' about that that you can communicate. Voices blend together. Plus, you can communicate. I'll know when he—I can pretty much tell when he's gettin' ready to end it or whatever, you know. There's somethin' to that. Plus, growin' up with a brother, and you got

somebody to play with, guitars, you know, or anything.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: That's nice. It's good . . .

SL: And probably look out for each other.

EEC: Well, yeah, sure. That's right.

SL: There's also probably just daily stuff . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . that twins . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . have among them . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . between them that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the rest of us don't. I . . .

EEC: Right.

EEC: . . . I hear about that all the time.

EEC: I imagine so.

SL: You can kinda tell when some—one of you's in trouble, or . . .

EEC: Well, I don't know about that. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . something's goin' on or . . .

EEC: I don't know about that, but yeah.

SL: Yeah. I wonder if he had any sympathy pains during that

wreck or anything.

EEC: I don't think so. I don't think so.

SL: I didn't ask him about that.

EEC: I don't know. I don't know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I never asked him.

[05:24:57] SL: You guys have always gotten along.

EEC: Yeah. I don't remember very many arguments we've had, actually, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: I really can't. I mean, once in a while you have a little disagreement about certain things that . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . you know, just part of a song or that but not—nothin' really I can remember ever havin' serious trouble at all.

SL: You know, that's a blessing 'cause that's not . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . always true with brothers.

EEC: Yeah, I know. It's true.

SL: I don't know about twins, but you know, sometimes families just don't get along.

EEC: Yeah, I know. Well, I know we never . . .

SL: So you guys have that.

EEC: . . . never [*laughs*] had that problem.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Nope.

[05:25:36] SL: Yeah, it sounds like to me that you guys had good folks for parents, good relatives around you, good support . . .

EEC: Yep.

SL: . . . family, across the family, and lord knows since you guys have grown, and the whole community knows and admires, has respect for you guys, I mean . . .

EEC: Really?

SL: You know, there is this. I don't know if you ever think about this or not, but you guys have really influenced all music here in Northwest Arkansas and this region. [*EEC clears throat*]
There's a . . .

EEC: Really?

SL: Yeah, as role models.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: I mean, as people that play good music, that work hard, and for a long time. I mean, I don't know anybody that wouldn't love to jam with you guys or play with you guys. I mean, not just locally but . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you know, across the country, people come in and wanna play with y'all or come see you, you know. I mean, I think Earl was talking about some guys from England that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . came in to see you all some place in . . .

EEC: Topeka, Kansas, last fall, yeah.

SL: Topeka, Kansas, yeah.

EEC: Topeka, Kansas, yeah. That was . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . I couldn't believe that, you know.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. I think they'd like to take you home.

EEC: Yeah, they would. [*Laughter*] I know that. Yeah. I wouldn't want to be there right now. You might not get home, you know what I mean.

[05:27:03] SL: But you know, there is something about your all's influence in the area. Now, you know, you look at the kind—what music is doing now and the trends now, but there's something that—about your all's sound that is kind of home. I mean, people . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . eventually return . . .

EEC: I guess so.

SL: . . . to the stuff, to the real stuff, and it . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . and it's not endless rides, and it's not, you know, no melody and . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . no story and all that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . stuff. Eventually, it all kind of rolls back to the—to what you guys have crafted here. I mean, do you—I mean, can you kind of relate to that? [05:27:51] I mean, for a whi—I know [*EEC laughs*] when I was growin' up and tryin' to play music that you guys were the standard by which everyone else was judged.

EEC: Really?

SL: Yeah. Without question.

EEC: I didn't know that.

SL: Yeah, I mean, there was in every way a balance, the formulas . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the abilities and the demeanor. The . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . the way—just the way you guys are. I mean, there's just somethin', I don't know, righteous about it, you know.

EEC: Well, I don't know. I hope so. [*Laughter*] I don't know.

[05:28:26] EJ: I'd say—just to throw in from my part from—in the music scene that I was in, we tried to take care of each other . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

EJ: . . . in a lotta ways. And a lot . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . of that had to do with the fact that the people that we respected locally who had been successful playing music, we could see they had that same method.

EEC: Mh-hmm. That's true.

EJ: It wasn't . . .

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: . . . just about cuttin' hits and . . .

EEC: Right.

EJ: . . . [*unclear words*].

EEC: No. [*Laughs*] That's the truth. Well, you know, you just kinda go back to the way you were raised and the way you were

taught about things, you know. Respect other people. How do you—they won't respect you unless you respect them, you know. Things like that, you know. Treat other people like you want to be treated. You know, it's kinda what it's about, too.

[05:29:20] SL: Well, there's one of the guys I interviewed, Tommy May, would say it's the "do right rule."

EEC: That's it, yeah.

SL: You know . . .

EEC: Yeah. Try to do what's right.

SL: . . . you know what's right.

EEC: Yeah. Try to do what's . . .

SL: And you just do right.

EEC: That's what you try to do, yeah. Yep.

[05:29:39] SL: Is there anything else you wanna say about your kids?

EEC: Yeah. We're real proud of 'em, you know. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: Yeah. Our son's a deputy city attorney, and our daughter lives in Dallas. She works from out of her home, but we, you know, good kids. Good kids.

SL: Well, you know, workin' outta your home is gonna pretty much end up the way it's gonna be anyway.

EEC: Yeah, I know. Right.

SL: I mean . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . everybody—it's all movin' that way. Why . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . why build a big office building . . .

EEC: I know.

SL: . . . and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . pay all those bills and . . .

EEC: Exactly.

SL: . . . all that parking and all that tran—I mean, it's all—you can do that—you can . . .

EEC: It's all goin' that way.

SL: . . . do that—I mean, you were saying earlier, you know, you can record your own . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . CD now at home.

EEC: You can. Yeah, you can.

SL: And you can.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: And it can be great.

EEC: Yep.

SL: There was somethin' else. I—gosh, I can't—I was gonna—I thought of it while you were—when I asked the question about the kids. Oh, I know. [05:30:42] If you had—well, first of all, in your career, if you had it to do over again, is there anything that you would change?

EEC: Probably not, you know what I mean. I mean, I missed a lot of things when my kids were growin' up and graduatin' from high school, I was gone on the road a lot. I wished I didn't have to—wouldn't've had to miss that, but you know, things like that, but otherwise, I wouldn't, you know. I'd like to have been able to have a couple more hit records, but [*laughs*] you know.

SL: Well, yeah.

EEC: Everybody would like that, but nah, I don't think so. It's all experience, you know, that you couldn't trade for anything, actually. Places you got to go and see, you know, experiences.

SL: You have had a great career . . .

EEC: Yeah. Right.

SL: . . . in a lotta . . .

EEC: I know.

SL: . . . ways, and I have to tell you about missin' some of the kids'

stuff. I don't know a daddy that has told me any different.

EEC: I imagine so, yeah.

SL: I mean, everyone that's worked hard and . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . you know, the American ethic is to . . .

EEC: Right.

SL: . . . provide a better life for your kids.

EEC: Yeah. Right.

SL: And it takes hard work and takes bein' away.

EEC: Yeah, it does. Yeah.

SL: You know, I know I wish I had spent more time with my kids. I don't know a daddy that . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . doesn't feel that way.

EEC: It's true.

[05:31:55] SL: Okay, well, let me ask you this. If I was, you know, fourteen, fifteen years old and felt like I wanted to do the music business, what would you tell me?

EEC: If that's what you wanna do in your heart, do it, you know. What you really feel like you wanna do. You know, learn as much as you can about it, you know, ahead of time so you won't make the mistakes that a lot of people make. But I don't

know. That's the only thing I would say. I—it's so changed so much since we've been in it, you know. Nowadays, it's a totally different business, so it's hard to give anybody advice except for that. Just if that's what you really wanna do, you know, go all out and do it. We had a point in our career where we had to decide if we were gonna do it or not do it. You know, we're tryin' to work regular jobs and tryin' to do this. We decided we're gonna do it, you know. And we did, you know. But who knows? It mighta been better off to get a good college education than, you know, doin'—probably better off, but I don't know. Great experience.

[05:33:02] EJ: If there was—if you wanted to look at the different records you—that you all made over the years and if you had to pick one of 'em to say—to give to someone as an example of the Cate Brothers album. Someone from Mars comes down and [*SL laughs*] [*unclear words*] the Cate Brothers . . .

EEC: What's that?

SL: Someone from Mars comes down.

EJ: And they wanna hear the Cate Brothers, which—and they—you can only give 'em one album. Which album is it gonna be?

EEC: I don't know. I'd have cuts on each one that I'd like to have on one record. [*Laughs*]

EJ: Oh, there you go.

EEC: Like *Struck a Vein*, there's some really good songs in there. There's some good song—I mean, all the albums have some songs that I really like, but it'd be hard to pick on one album.

EJ: You'd rather make a compilation of . . .

EEC: Yeah, I think I would. I like, I mean, like the first album 'cause it was so new doing all that—you know, it was—I liked some of the things on that, but yeah, I don't know. It'd have to be a compilation.

EJ: Yeah.

SL: Well, there you go. That could . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . be your next project. [*EEC laughs*] Make a . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . compilation.

EEC: Yeah.

EJ: The essential Cate Brothers.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Box set.

[05:34:11] LC: Ernie, why don't you mention somethin' about the influence that Daddy's had on your life 'cause he's had a big influence.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Who's this?

EEC: Linda's dad.

SL: Okay. Let's talk about him.

EEC: He was a lawyer here in town, but he had a great influence on me, too, you know, just as a person she knows that does right. Does what's right. And I don't know, he had a big influence. Plus, he gave me her, you know what I mean. But yeah, he was a good influence on me. Really was. Because my father passed away in [19]80, 1980. So you know, so he was my dad, more or less, after that. So yeah, he was a big influence.

SL: Well, I'm sure he saw something worthy . . .

EEC: Yeah. I don't know what he . . .

SL: . . . in you to . . .

EEC: . . . I don't know what he thought of the music we were playin', but . . .

[05:35:02] SL: Did you . . .

EEC: . . . yeah.

SL: . . . did you ask him for Linda's hand?

EEC: No. [*Laughs*]

SL: You didn't?

EEC: Not really. No. It was obvious, you know what I mean.

SL: It was obvious?

EEC: I was hangin' around and worked for him in his farm and all kinds of things, so you know.

SL: You did?

EEC: Yeah, we were already goin' together for how many—I don't know how long, but you know. So I didn't really ask him, did I? [*Laughs*]

LC: I think you went upstairs and asked him.

EEC: I might have. I can't remember. I guess I did.

SL: We're gonna have to get Linda in here to get the truth here.

EEC: That's the truth. [*SL laughs*] Heck of a lot smarter than I am.

[05:35:36] SL: So what is his—what is his name?

EEC: John Cloer.

SL: John Cloer.

EEC: Yeah, he was a attorney downtown here, and just, like I said, a state senator and, you know, well-known attorney in town. He really helped a lot of people. If they couldn't pay for—he didn't worry about it. He helped 'em, you know what I mean. He was good about that. He wasn't like a ambulance chaser tryin' to get out there and, you know what I mean, tryin' to earn money that way. I had a lot of respect for him.

SL: So you did some work for him on his farm?

EEC: Yeah, they had a big farm. They raised peaches and apples.

Actually, it's . . .

SL: Orchids—orchards?

EEC: Orchards, yeah. It used to be Hash's Orchard out here. It's not now. They built all those houses back of it but, yeah, he—course, as a sideline he raised fruit, and he had a fruit stand, and Linda worked in it and her mother, and I used to go pick fruit for 'em, you know what I mean. One reason, I'd get to see her, but you know what I mean.

SL: Well, of course, that's . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . I'm sure that's the main reason.

EEC: Yep.

SL: No question . . .

EEC: 'Cause it paid . . .

SL: . . . about that, but.

EEC: . . . dollar a day, I think, [*laughs*] you know, so . . .

SL: Yeah. Dollar a day, and you get to see her, too.

EEC: Well, not—yeah. Right.

SL: And you probably had your fill of peaches.

EEC: Yeah. [*Laughter*] Yeah, and apples.

SL: And apples.

EEC: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

EEC: But it . . .

SL: Well, you know, apple business used to be the business here
in . . .

EEC: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . Northwest Arkansas.

EEC: And he had one of the main ones that people liked to go.
Yeah.

[05:37:09] SL: Well, that's good. Is there anything that you
wanna—anything else you want to say about him?

EEC: No, just . . .

SL: Other than thanks and . . .

EEC: That's kinda it, yeah.

SL: Yeah. Well, that's good. I'm glad we got that in. I'm . . .

EEC: Yeah.

SL: . . . glad 'cause we hadn't really talked about that.

EEC: Yeah.

[05:37:32] SL: Did you know Linda's mom?

EEC: Yeah, we—yeah, that—she died in 2000.

SL: Oh, okay.

EEC: In fact, her dad died in 2001, six months later, you know, so.

But pretty close together. She was—had Alzheimer's, and
Linda helped take care of her for . . .

SL: That's hard.

EEC: . . . quite a while.

SL: That's hard.

EEC: Yeah, real hard. And work a job and . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: So yeah, we were real connected there.

SL: Second family for you.

EEC: Yeah. Exactly. Yep.

SL: That's good. So—and it's also remarkable that Linda's put up
with all this music business all these years.

EEC: Yes, it is. [*Laughter*] I'm really thankful for that . . .

SL: Yeah.

EEC: . . . that she's let me do what I like to do, you know.

SL: Well, you're good at it.

EEC: Well, I think she knows that, but I'm lucky that she . . .

SL: I'm sure she does.

EEC: A lotta people wouldn't put up with it. I mean, wouldn't . . .

SL: Well, of course.

EEC: . . . now, you can't be gone, and you can't be doin' this, and
you can't, you know.

SL: Right.

EEC: So I'm lucky, I guess. She does put up with me, [*laughs*] you know.

[05:38:39] SL: Okay, so now, is there anything else, Eric? Trey?

TM: Eric? I can't . . .

EJ: No, I don't think so. Nothin' is . . .

SL: Are we good?

EJ I already asked the Cate Brothers album to give to the guy from Mars. I'm [*laughter*] . . .

EEC: From here to Mars.

SL: Well, I can't tell you what an honor it is that you've given us all this time.

EEC: It's a honor for you even think about doin' it with me.

SL: Well, I—really, Ernie, it's a—it's been a great, great interview. And you've given us a lotta good stuff, and everybody's gonna benefit from it.

EEC: Well, good.

SL: It's . . .

EEC: God bless everybody. Thank you.

SL: That's right.

EEC: All right.

SL: That's right. Well, listen, thanks.

EEC: Thank you.

SL: Appreciate you.

EEC: All right. All right.

SL: Okay.

[05:39:28 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]