

**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

June Freeman

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford

June 3, 2009

Little Rock, 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.asp#citations>.

Scott Lunsford interviewed June Freeman on June 3, 2009, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Well, the first thing I have to do is say that—um—we are going to be interviewing you at your residence. This is—uh—my name is Scott Lunsford and—uh—we'll be talking with June Glory Biber Freeman today at her residence in—in [*June Freeman laughs*] Little Rock, Arkansas, right on the Arkansas River. Um—um—we are—uh—from Pryor Center, and June, these recordings—uh—will be archived in the Special Collections . . .

June Freeman: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . Department of the Mullins Library [*camera clicks in background*] at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville campus. And I have to ask you now—is it all right that we're making these videotapes and—and that we're gonna keep them there at the University of Arkansas?

JF: That's fine.

SL: All right. Thank you very much. Um—June—uh—we're gonna—I try to do this in a chronological fashion.

JF: Mh-hmm.

[00:00:54] SL: Um—I'm very—um—always very interested in—in the earliest memories that you have—uh—but I wanna first start with—um—when and where you were born.

JF: I was born in Newark, New Jersey, at the Beth Israel Hospital on July 10, 1928.

SL: In New Jersey?

JF: Mh-hmm.

[00:01:19] SL: And—um—what were your—uh—mother and father's names?

JF: My mother's name was Hilda Zuckerman Biber—*B-I-B-E-R*.
[Laughs]

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: My father's name was Irving Biber.

[00:01:33] SL: And—uh—what did your father do for a living?

JF: Uh—he started out at as a—well, he did various things . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . but—uh—he finally settled into—uh—going back to school after quitting school—high school. Went back. Got his equivalent degree—whatever it's called.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: And—uh—studied pharmacy. He was a pharmacist and—uh—there are various permutations of that [*laughs*]*—that he got*

involved in. But essentially, that's what he was trained to do.

[00:02:05] SL: Uh-huh. And—um—what about your mother? Did she—uh—how—how far did her education go?

JF: Her education—uh—uh—ended with high school, and that was due, unfortunately, to the death of her mother when she was sixteen years old, and—uh—she had planned to go to college, and that just didn't work out. And I think my grandfather, who was very distraught, of course, needed her help. And so she stayed at home and—uh—helped look after things there.

SL: Oh, my gosh.

JF: Mh-hmm.

[00:02:39] SL: Um—so—um—you, of course, didn't know your grandmother then.

JF: No, not that—not my maternal grandmother. Mh-hmm.

SL: Um—did you know your—uh—maternal grandfather?

JF: Oh, yes. Very well.

SL: Uh-huh.

JF: I certainly did. [*Laughs*]

[00:02:53] SL: And—uh—what did he do for a living?

JF: Uh—well, as I knew him as a child growing up, he was a carpenter and a builder.

SL: Uh-huh.

JF: And I think that—um—I—I didn't know a great deal about my grandfather because—uh—I came—my mother came from immigrant stock, and—um—we just never talked very much about the past. But I visited him regularly, and he was at our house regularly with his—uh—he'd married again.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: And this was my mother's stepmother . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . who was married to him for a number of years, and so, you know, we did visit. We did see one another.

[00:03:31] SL: So—uh—was your grandfather a—an immigrant or it was his father and mother?

JF: No, my grandfather was an immigrant, and my mother was too. She came with him from . . .

SL: And where did they immigrate from?

JF: . . . they came from a small town called Ciechanowiec in Poland . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . which was not too far from Warsaw.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: I don't know how long it took them to travel to Warsaw [*laughs*], but—um—we visited the town—Ed and I did—uh—several years

ago.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:04:01] JF: And visited some of the other towns that figured in that family history. But my mother was born there and came to this country when she was about four. My grandfather brought the whole family after spending, I think, a year or two earning enough money to pay for their passage.

[00:04:16] SL: So they came through Ellis Island?

JF: They did. Mh-hmm. Then . . .

SL: Did—um—do you recall any stories that your grandfather—uh—recounted as—as far as that . . .

JF: My grandfather talked very little about that. My mother just told me how hard it was, you know, traveling by—by ship. I'm not sure where they—uh—uh—from what port they left.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:04:40] JF: She was quite young, but—uh—I think it was just sort of amazing that—uh—they had family here, I think, that was already established, and so that was helpful.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: But I'm sure that it was just a very disruptive [*laughs*] experience for that whole crew.

[00:04:55] SL: So I wonder about when that was when they came?

JF: My mother was born, I think, in 1904, and I suspect that they must've come about 1908.

SL: Eight. Mh-hmm.

JF: I think that was the—the time . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . that they would've arrived or left or . . .

[00:05:11] SL: And then what about the—uh—the other set of other grandfolks on . . .



JF: The other side of grandparents—my father was born in Newark, New Jersey.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: And—uh—I think the other set of grandparents also came from Newark. They came from a town that was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which is now odess—not—I mean, the Ukraine. [*Laughs*] And the name of the town was—was Brody.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:05:35] JF: And I don't know very much about Brody.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: But my grandparents—uh—came as older teenagers—uh—and they met here in the United States and—and married. And—uh—I knew them well and—but they never talked very much about what went on—uh—in the past. People wanted to be

assimilated—wanted to be Americanized—and I think their children—uh—just wanted to forget, if they could, their so-called origins. [*Laughs*]

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:06:06] JF: And they were. They were—were Americanized.

Nobody would ever know, you know, a few years later that—uh—these were immigrant children or that their parents were immigrant—except that my grandparents always spoke with an accent. And—um—they spoke—I think my grandfather spoke German and Yiddish, and I didn't understand either. And there was never an effort made to teach . . .

SL: To continue that.

JF: . . . kids. Right. Right.

SL: It was—the effort was more . . .

JF: Nowadays people—right—right . . .

SL: . . . to become American . . .

JF: . . . right.

SL: . . . and know English.

JF: You just ignored all of that, so there wasn't very much conversation. So I don't have a—a—a long heritage, you might say. [*Laughs*]

[00:06:42] SL: Well—um—were there any—uh—any stories that

either set of the grandparents would tell that—that kinda struck you as—uh—um—oh, I don't know—in—influential in some way or—um . . .




JF: Well, I think—uh—probably grown at the time—uh—but I—I remember—um—hearing a story about my grandfather's—uh—effort to leave Poland to cross the border. I'm not sure where he was headed. Again, everything is incomplete. But apparently, he came to the States or headed for the States—uh—with his two oldest children—uh—who were named Joseph and Mary. [Laughter] I thought that was sorta funny. [Laughter] I—I'm not sure what their names were in—in—in Europe, but—uh—he—um—the—and, of course, if you know something about the history of the period, there were a lot of pogroms, and this is why immigration seemed to be a solution for a lotta Jewish families at that time in . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:07:50] JF: . . . in Eastern Europe. And apparently, he—uh—took the two children and hired somebody to transport them across the border, and they were in a wagon covered with hay or something like that so they would not be detected onboard—when the guards, you know, saw this, they would not investigate too closely, and they would let them go through. But

unfortunately—uh—this is the way the story went—the guards had pitchforks and—uh—were about to probe—uh—into this—uh—vehicle to—uh—I guess it was a horse-drawn wagon. I—I don't think they had automobiles. [*Laughs*] And so he had to reveal himself and the two children, and, of course, they were sent back. But I don't know what other arrangements he made, but I guess not too long after that, he did succeed in leaving the country with two children. And they traveled to the States here, and—uh—he—I don't know who looked after the two oldest children—um—while he was working to—uh—earn enough money to bring his wife and the remaining three children to—to the States. So this may have been about—uh—1903 that—that this happened.

[00:09:12] SL: So there was already—um—um—you know, historically—um—the Jewish community was already feeling the oppression—uh—that would eventually . . .

 JF: They've always felt the oppression. I think this is something I always felt—uh—that—uh—Jews—um—this is interesting to me—uh—I'm married to somebody who—who is not Jewish.

SL: Uh-huh.

[00:09:39] JF: And we're not religious, but ethnically, I'm—I'm—I'm a Jew.

SL: Uh-huh.

JF: And that's how I identify myself. And my daughter, who—uh—now lives in Phoenix, talks about something and used a word which—um—I mean, I hadn't really thought about it, but it's—it's based on—on radar. She says she has "Jewdar." [*Laughter*] You've heard that expression. And, I think, growing up Jewish, I was raised to be aware that they were "them" and "us."

SL: Uh-huh.

[00:10:10] JF: Because at the time that I grew up—uh—in New Jersey, it was not unusual to see signs saying—um—"No Jews." You know, this is a restricted club or restricted housing. And—uh—I think you probably know about what it was during that period before the Second World War. So I think that all of us were primed to have Jewdar. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

[00:10:36] JF: Uh—because you just didn't know how people would react to you if they realized that. And I remember my father had a friend who was a salesman who not only changed his name but had plastic surgery to reduce [*laughs*] the size of his nose . . .

SL: Nose.

JF: . . . so that people wouldn't say "Jew"—you know, turn him

away. So there was a lot of that, I remember, going on. And there was a friend of my father's—uh—act—there were two brothers, and their name was Cohn. *C-O*—maybe it was *C-O-H-N*. Anyway, one of them, who was an attorney, changed his name to Coe—*C-O-E*. And the other brother was a physician, and he was still Cohn.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:11:19] JF: But I was aware of a lot of this growing up, and there was a lot of talk about neighborhoods. In other words, whether you would be welcome if you lived there—uh—or if, you know, people would—uh—be prejudiced against you in some way. So these—these were things that—uh—were in my childhood. I was an outsider. I was primed to be an outsider.

[00:11:41] SL: So you—I've read that—I've read your—uh—assessment of yourself as an outsider [*JF laughs*]*—uh—*in—in . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . almost every instance. But you think that that stems from that early—um—awareness—Jewish awareness and the oppression that the Jews had liv—you think that's where the outsider . . .

JF: Um . . .

SL: . . . um—uh—stigma or that's where you acquired . . .

JF: My perception of myself.

SL: . . . your outsider . . .

JF: I think that contributed to it, but there were other things as well.

Um—my—you know, I went to public schools, and I mixed and mingled with all kinds of kids. They were people in the neighborhood. Some were Jews; some were—I don't know what they were—Catholics.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:12:29] JF: Uh—they had different nationalities—uh—in terms of origin. Uh—and, you know, we—we played together there.

There wasn't that, but there was always this sense of "Beware. Be careful."

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: I think that—uh—you probably—you may have seen the article in the *New York Time* recently about the quotas . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . in schools—Ivy League schools and medical schools. And I certainly heard these stories growing up. And also, my—I would hear my parents sometimes talk to their parents or other members of the family—they didn't want me to understand—in Yiddish. I never, never [*laughs*] learned the language. But—

uh—in that sense, I was excluded. I mean, all these things impact—uh—upon a child's life.

SL: Sure.

[00:13:15] JF: So—um—that's—that's how it was. Uh—I probably didn't show this, and then I—I'd—I never really expressed this, but in looking back, I can see how these things distinguished me from other people.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Mh-hmm.

[00:13:30] SL: Well—um—let's talk about your—your—I'm always interested in—in the [*JF clears throat*]*—in the grandparents—um—and anything that they—they—they may have—uh—said or you witnessed that influenced you in the—in this . . .*

JF: Hmm.

SL: . . . slipping into the Yiddish language to talk with your parents. It's—it's interesting to me. Was there any—any—um—uh—remarkable conversations that you may've had with your grandparents—any of them that—um—kinda, I don't know, stuck with you, I guess?

[00:14:09] JF: Well, we used to—I remember with my paternal grandparents—um—Sarah and Leon Biber—uh—we sometimes used to go to the park, or we would have picnics. And—uh—

Sunday nights—uh—usually family would get together—not at my grandparents' house, but we would collect at, say, at my—my parents' house. And I really don't remember a lot of conversations. I do remember—uh—early memories being with my—uh—Grandmother Biber. That's what we called them, by their last names—Grandpa Biber, Grandma Biber. And—uh—she did things differently than my mother did. You know, I heard stories that she wasn't a very good cook, and she would—couldn't do this, and she couldn't do that. But I remember being with her when she made noodles. [*Laughs*] And, you know, was rolling out the dough and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:15:00] JF: . . . cutting it up and then putting the stuff into the pot. And I remember, too, that she—um—made—uh—or put in—made jars of pickles. She—she was very good at that. Uh—she also had a good sense of humor—uh—but a lot of the humor was transmitted in Yiddish. I didn't understand [*laughs*] what was going on. But there's one story—my grandfather—um—Leon Biber was apprenticed at the age of thirteen, I am told, as a trunk—to a trunk maker in Vienna and—so that he would learn a trade. And—uh—he was not as serious as some of the other members of his family. And at the age of—uh—eighteen, he was

shipped to this country—um—in—from Hamburg, and I guess that's where he departed from. And—uh—his brother, I think, was already here, and they thought that they didn't want him to be drafted into service.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:16:01] JF: And they made arrangements to send to the United States. He never talked about that to me, but—uh—I understand that he was the kind of guy—young guy—that was more interested in having a good time and—uh—not as serious as his brother, who was a [*audio interference from nearby cell phone*] a customer peddler. I mean, he sort of—do you know about customer peddlers? [*Laughs*]

SL: No.

JF: [*Laughs*] I think Barry Goldwater—water's father or grandfather was a customer peddler. They were usually young—uh—European immigrants who came to this country, and one thing they could do—somebody would outfit them with—uh—stuff to sell, and then they would go call on other immigrants—um—and sell them goods. In other words, they went to the houses, and they were called customer peddlers. [*Laughs*] And—uh—I don't think my grandfather was much interested in this, [*clears throat*] but he went, I guess, to work for a trunk maker here in this

country. But he was not a great businessman, and—uh—he couldn't establish his own business. And I think this was the sorta thing that a lot of Jews did. In other words, if you could set up your own business and have enough income, you could live well. You would've made it in the New World.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:17:18] JF: But I think he—again, this is just hearsay—that he became the superintendent of a trunk factory. It was called Rite Built or something like that, and . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JF: . . . trunks were important at that time.

SL: Well, yeah.

JF: You know, these big—um—trunks that opened up and had drawers and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . um—fancy suitcases and things of that sort. When people traveled long distances, they took a lot of stuff with them. Course, nowadays, we don't do that. We have lightweight—
[laughs] weight luggage.

SL: That's right.

[00:17:48] JF: But—uh—during the Depression, I think he lost his—
his job—his—his means of income, and I'm not sure how they

survived. They owned a three-family house, I remember, and maybe he did work for a time. But these things—you know, I was a young kid. I didn't know about . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . any travails that they might've had at—at this time. But what he did rescue, I remember, from the—the trunk factory were some bolts of blue taffeta, okay. Remember these del—I don't know if you know anything about this, but these often lined suitcases . . .

SL: Sure.

JF: . . . or trunks [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . in these kinds of—of materials, and—uh—it was pretty flashy, I think. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JF: But I guess that's almost a royal color, close to purple.

SL: It . . .

[00:18:34] JF: But I do remember that my grandmother, who had to make the most of their resources, [*laughs*] made petticoats out of blue taffeta, and I—I just had this memory, you know. "Why is this woman wearing a blue taffeta petticoat?" You know, they're just wrong [*laughs*—women don't do that

anymore. [*Laughs*] But—uh—this is how the world was impressed upon me in—in—in these material ways. And—uh—my father started his own business. I'm skipping now . . .

SL: That's all right.

[00:19:08] JF: . . . but this is all—all related 'cause it did involve my



grandfather later on. My father was a very entrepreneurial type of person, and—uh—the family depended upon him in some way, but they didn't always approve of what he did. They liked the ones—the—the members of the families that were more conventional, I guess. [*Laughs*]

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:19:27] JF: But—uh—while he was—he was the head pharmacist at Beth Israel Hospital in—um—Newark, New Jersey, and he started his own business. Uh—my parents owned a—uh—my mother's father, I think—uh—when—when she and my—my father got married, gave them some money, and they invested it in a four-family house. And, of course, this was about 1926 when everything looked wonderful.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:19:55] JF: And, of course, with the Depression, they lost the house. They continued to live there, but my father had taken over the gara—couple of garages in back of the house and

started his own tube-filling business. Um—they sta . . .

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:12] SL: Tooth?

JF: Tube.

SL: Oh, tube. [*JF laughs*] Okay.

JF: I think they started—he started working for physicians who had various kinds of potions and jellies and things that they needed to put into metal tubes at the time. And I heard stories that when they first started out, the tubes were just filled with a spoon. I don't know if you've seen [the empty tube]—the tube was open, so, inverted, and then you would just fill it. And then you had some sorta device to cramp it—close it up. And so he got started with this. And he acquired some machinery [*laughs*], and he had a business going [*clears throat*] in back of the—I'm sorry, I do have a picture of that, and I'm sorry, I don't have it. It shows a little bit of some of the equipment in back of the house in this garage. And he hired people to work for him back [*laughs*] there. And he called the company Day Chemical. He said he called it Day Chemical because he worked only at night at Day Chemical. [*Laughter*] And . . .

SL: That's so funny.

[00:21:18] JF: . . . it is—it—it's just incredible what he did. And

then he had a cousin—a first cousin—his mother's sister's child, with whom he had a relationship—I think they used to go—my father had a motorcycle, too, at that time—there's other things—*[laughs]* so he has written a lot of stories, and I can tell you about that as soon as I finish this. Anyway, Rudy was never very entrepreneurial, and he was known as "Poor" Rudy. My father *[laughs]* put him work in his *[empty]* store. He bought a machine that pressed out these moth cakes. You know, people used to have—not mothballs, but moth cakes.

SL: No, I didn't know that. This . . .

JF: They're about the size of a hamburger, I guess.

SL: Really?

[00:22:01] JF: And then they were sold wrapped in colored cellophanes. But the idea was you *[laughs]* sold these, and then, of course, the woman of the house could put them with the clothes that she put away to keep the moths at bay. *[Laughs]* Anyway, he told—this was Rudy's job. He was—this machine *[laughs]* was stamping these things out. *[Claps hands]* You know, they would put all the crystals, I guess, in a funnel and then with a pedal—*[claps hands]* I remember seeing the machinery. I was just four or five years old, I guess. And I think Rudy almost expired *[laughs]* from the fumes. So they

had to curtail that entrepreneurial effort. [*SL laughs*] But I think it—in 1944—[19]34 or [19]35—around that time—his after-hours employment came to a head, and they—I think that the people at the hospital—whoever his superior was—felt that he had to make a choice: either give up his business or give up the job. And he chose to give up the job, and of course, that was a pretty risky . . .

SL: That's . . .

JF: . . . thing to do.

SL: Yeah.

JF: But the business turned out to be a great success, and he sent, you know, all four of his children through college. And he—it was very fortunate.

[00:23:23] SL: So the business survived the Depression then?

JF: It grew during the Depression, and then, of course, when the war came along in [19]41, my entrepreneurial father looked for contracts with the government. And he did a few of those, and also he did a lot of work—there was a company—I don't know if they're still in business—called Mennen's. Does that mean anything to you?

SL: Mennen?

JF: Mennen. They made toothpaste, shaving cream . . .

SL: Yeah, sure. Absolutely.

[00:23:49] JF: Well, he did a lot of contract work for them, too. In other words, they were doing work for the armed forces, and he started providing services for Mennen. So all this helped—but he was a very restless person, and by the 1950s, he had sold this and gone on to something else. *[Laughs]* And this is a—I grew up with father who was a very warm, affectionate person, but I remember my mother was not somebody I could really confide in. I think that the loss of her own mother made it very difficult for her to have a close relationship with her kids. She was not an affectionate person. She was a dutiful person. She looked after us well, but she was not somebody that I ever really felt close to. My father, on the other hand, would listen, but he was very distractible. I mean, *[SL laughs]* I knew that when I told him something *[laughter]*, and he was supposedly listening, it went one—in one ear and may've gotten buried in his head. But he was all—he was . . .

SL: On to the next thing.

JF: . . . always on to something else. And I have some of this trait. I think this is where it comes from. There were four kids, and I think three of us were more like him. *[Laughs]* And the other one is like my mother was—personalities. I don't know. I'm

going on. You've just . . .

SL: Oh no, this is . . .

JF: . . . touched [*laughs*] . . .

SL: This—no, this is the way this is done. The fewer words that I can get in, the better.

JF: Well, you have a good ear. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, now what . . .

JF: You're patient.

[00:25:34] SL: . . . what about the other set of grandparents?

JF: Well, I told—the other . . .

SL: Now their last name was . . .

JF: Zuckerman.

SL: Zuckerman.

[00:25:43] JF: Well, I knew my grandfather, and my grandfather was incredible in his own way. He was a fairly taciturn man, and he, too, had a three—this was not unusual—a three-family house. He rented the up [upper floor apartment]—he lived in the midfloor. And, I guess, this is one way of generating some income, too. And he had a large workshop in his yard. It wasn't a huge yard. But I remember he had all sorts of wonderful tools there, but you know, this wasn't something that a little girl was invited to play with or explore. But I knew that he was, you

know, very skilled with his—with his hands and his tools, because he—I'll tell you another story in just—well, I can tell you right now. [*Laughs*] This was after my father made the decision to go into business for himself full time. I think that the rez—resources were pretty slim at that time, you know, and my grandmother happened to—his mother, who also had this three-family house, was about to lose her tenants on the first floor. And so my parents moved into that apartment. We did. I was about eight or nine years old at the time. Let's see, if I was eight—I was born in [19]28, so that would've been, what, about 1937? Something like—or [19]36, during that period. And so we lived there in that apartment for several years until my father had enough money, I guess, to [*laughs*—I'm skipping around like he does, but . . .

SL: No.

JF: I mean, the crazy the things that he did. I mean, my poor mother. I don't know how she survived this . . .

SL: Well . . .

JF: . . . relationship. [*Laughs*]

[00:27:37] SL: . . . let's talk about some of the crazy things that he did.

JF: Yeah.

SL: What . . .

JF: I'll get back to his—the other grandparents. But when we moved in there, my mother always was very good at customizing things. She just didn't accommodate to a space. Her father came in, and he built shelves. He enclosed an area in this—my grandmother's apartment [*laughs*] to build a closet. I think she opened a door between two rooms, and my grandfather would arrange to do all of this work. He would come—he had a wonderful truck, which [JF edit: with a sign] in gold, scrolly letters, said, "Samuel Zuckerman and Brother."

SL: [*Laughter*] And brother.

JF: Right. [*SL laughs*] This was a brother, Louie, and I don't think he thought too much of Louie, but he was willing to take Louie on and provide work for him. So he would, you know, come, and he would—and the next house we moved into—which was a one-family house—he also customized it. My mother took a great interest in how the house was decorated. And the house we lived in on—my grandmother's house—it always looked different from some of the other places. It—I don't know . . .

[00:28:59] SL: So the—she was a great remodeler.

JF: She was, but she had wonderful taste. I'm not sure where, you know, this all came from. She came from a little town. Her

mother was certainly—had come from—was an immigrant. But I understand that her mother very quickly learned English, and she realized the importance of it to her children. She stressed education. [00:29:27] And, of course, my Grandfather Zuckerman—this is my—you asked me about this family—and I started to tell you about the backyard. My grandfather—in a small area—I don't know how big it was—laid out a formal garden with a pattern—with bricks, with a circle at the center, and then it had, like, four—I don't know what you'd call them—I—if I said quadrants [*laughs*—and then, of course, a border. And I don't know anybody else that did anything like this. I mean, there were bricks that outlined this thing. And, of course, it was planted, and there was a pathway. It looked like [*cell phone rings*] something—it—that's Ed's cell phone.

SL: It is.

JF: [*Laughs*] I don't know if he hears it.

SL: Let's see . . .

JF: I'm sorry about that.

SL: That's all right. We'll take a break right here.

JF: Gonna take a break?

SL: Yeah.

JF: I'll go get it.

[Tape stopped]

[00:30:20] SL: That's okay.

JF: Was I talk—oh, about the formal garden.

SL: Yeah. Let's see now.

JF: I mean, I didn't know anybody else who had a garden like that.

Are we on again?

SL: So it was a flower garden. It . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . or it wasn't like a vegetable garden or . . .

JF: No, it was flowers. It was a . . .

SL: Just a beautiful . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . serene environment that he created in the back [of his house] . . .

JF: Well, it was geometric, and you know, I don't know how he came to build it or anything. But he supposedly was a—excellent—

[*chair makes creaking sound*] are you comfortable?

SL: Oh, I'm fine.

[00:30:54] JF: You're all right? He was a—his specialty was building stairs, so he probably had some—I mean, I don't know about his education, but he was interested in geometry. [*Laughs*] You know, and he was able to—I guess he may've had instructions,

but apparently that was a specialty, that there weren't, you know, too many people . . .

SL: That's right.

JF: . . . doing it that time. And he provided, you know, for his family, which was sort of wonderful, too. They—I think that—I remember going to his apartment and he [*laughs*—everything was very orderly in that household, and he was—he saved string. I don't know if you had—remember people used to do this—make a big string ball.

SL: Yes.

JF: And I was so impressed by all of that. And then we would go to his house for the Jewish holidays—for Passover—was a big time when family got together. And, of course, I only knew his second wife, who was my mother's stepmother. We used to call her Auntie Zuckerman. And she had children herself, who also sort of enlarged the family, and it was a very special time to—I looked forward to that. And my mother would always say that her stepmother didn't know how to cook, and you know, [*SL laughs*] they'd complain about it, that they—she was a better cook and [*laughter*] that sort of thing. And there was a lot of drinking of wine, and I remember myself having to be stretched out on the sofa [*laughs*] because I was given some wine. But he

would put on a hat, I remember, and he would conduct the service—the seder service. Never knew what the hell was going on. I mean, I didn't have any awareness of it. I don't think anybody else paid any attention and let him just do his thing.

SL: Right.

[00:33:00] JF: And then another thing about being an outsider was that during the religious holidays, it was not unusual for the grandparents [JF edit: grandfather] to go to a synagogue. And my parents didn't go, but we often—I remember as a child going there to visit my grandfather. He would come out, and we would say, you know—I don't know what we said, [*laughs*] but he—it was like honoring him in some way.

[00:33:28] SL: So the—he would be at the synagogue . . .

JF: Yeah, inside.

SL: . . . and y'all would to the synagogue on the outside . . .

JF: Right. See, we're outsiders.

SL: . . . and he would come out, and he would kind of have an audience with you.

JF: Right. Right. [*Laughs*]

SL: And then . . .

JF: Go right back.

SL: . . . go right back.

JF: So . . .

SL: So . . .



[00:33:43] JF: And then there was another—when I got to be—my parents weren't religious. They didn't belong to anything. And Roy said I had to tell you this—this is probably how I grew up to be what I called a gastronomic Jew. [*Laughter*] And culturally—traditionally, the foods were always important . . .

SL: Yes.

JF: . . . because they were part of family traditions, but we—religion wasn't really observed. But when I got to be, I guess, nine or ten, my parents decided that they would send me to temple and to be educated. So I went to school at a place called B'nai Jeshurun, and it was just a totally new experience for me. And they didn't even belong. And one of the most difficult things for me, I think, at that time was that—I don't know what arrangements my parents had made, but they really didn't ask me, you know, how this would work out. I was serious about being a good student. I had always been—took things very seriously, and I think I enjoyed going to Sunday school, and you know, I got dressed up, and I was suddenly with a group of children, many of whom came from very well-to-do, Jewish, suburban families. And I had not yet "arrived" [*laughs*] anyway.

And my mother would give me money to pay somebody who would come around and collect. I was the only child, I remember, that had to deal with the Sunday school experience this way, and I was just embarrassed . . .

SL: Mortified.

[00:35:36] JF: . . . as all hell. Why was I paying something like that when others, you know, never handled any money? So there, again, you know, they wanted me to be an insider, [laughs] but I was the outsider—that I was different from what I considered—I remember there was a girl—and it's interesting 'cause I named my—the name stuck with me, and my daughter's name is Gretchen. There was a girl by the name of Gretchen Eisner in my class. And she seemed to be perfection itself. She was dressed so beautifully all the time, the way that I would like to have been dressed. Her manners, her presence—it was just—and she was bright. There was another Gretchen in my experience later on, but for some reason, that name stuck with me as being an important name, or the person to whom it was attached was important in some way in my life.

[00:36:20] SL: So how many kids were in that school?

JF: Oh, in the Sunday school?

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: I think I was in a confirmation class, and this was a reformed synagogue. I think they were sixty in the confirmation class, which is huge. And . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . the ra—the Rabbi, Solomon Foster, I remember, supported Wendell Willkie. And at that time, I think, it was more typical for Jewish families to be Democrats and support Franklin Roosevelt. But I mean, I remember all the discussion about that. If you've read any of Philip Roth's books, there's a last one about it—Wendell Willkie and his parents and—did you—I can't think of the name of it. Anyway, he wrote—the things he wrote were familiar to me. They're sorta the story of some of the people in my family. But that's—that was my grandfather on my—we get back to that. He also did something else later on. After his wife died—second wife—he continued to live alone in this apartment, and I think it was finally decided that he no longer could live by himself. He came to live—he was probably in his eighties—with my parents. And by this time, they had a—you know, a fairly sizable house. And my sister got him interested in art. This is the man that did the garden and the stairs.

SL: Yes. Uh-huh.

JF: And he was very proud of what he did. He [*laughs*] became a—

an artist—a painter. We have a lot of his work—it—very folk—
and I can show some of it to you here. I mean, won—wonderful
stuff.

[00:38:22] SL: So you classify it as folk?

JF: Yeah, he had no training. And he started by copying things from
the *New York Times*. He copied girdle ads [*laughter*] with
women . . .

SL: Uh-huh. Well, I guess it's a figure study . . .

JF: My daughter, Gretchen, has . . .

SL: . . . is—isn't it?

JF: Yeah.

SL: It's a figure study.

[00:38:45] JF: Right. He did that, and then he did a series called
Famous Jews. Gretchen has these, and they include—oh,
Einstein would be one, but he also had Mahatma Gandhi. I
guess these were people that he looked upon with favor, and
Franklin Roosevelt was also in this series [*laughs*] of *Famous
Jews*. [*Laughter*] That's what he called them. I mean, they're
just so amazing that a man that—whose life—you know, he
was—he lived to be ninety-three, and he continued to work, I
guess, at his painting for a number of years. And Gretchen got a
master's in folk art and arts administration at NYU. And one of

the papers she wrote was about his work and the inspiration that he took from some of these strange resources. [*Laughs*]

SL: I just wanna—Ed, did you need—Ed, did you need to—or is he just moving on? I guess he's just moving on.

JF: Yeah.

SL: So . . .

JF: You're making me laugh as I recall these things. [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh, this is fun. I mean, this—I hope it's [*JF laughs*—you're enjoying this, aren't you? I mean, this is . . .

JF: Oh, yeah. I mean, I think it's fun to recall these things. Nobody else wants to listen. [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh, well . . .

JF: You know, you reach a certain age, and your grandchildren aren't interested in you. I think that—I remember my son, Andy, who was, I don't know, three years old—I'm not sure what he was—who met my Grandfather Zuckerman, who was living at that time with my parents—and he knew he was a very old man because I guess we had talked about that. That "there's some things Grandpa can't do." And he said to him, "Grandpa, do you remember dinosaurs?" [*Laughter*] But . . .

SL: Well . . .

[00:40:40] JF: . . . I think it's hard for kids to relate to older people,

particularly these days.

SL: Well, I think that's partially true. I think that they're—course, coming from my perspective . . .

JF: Uh-huh.

SL: . . . we feel like getting these stories recorded will be of great value to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

JF: They'll discover some things about us . . .

SL: Yes.

JF: . . . and . . .

SL: Yes.

JF: . . . other generations that they never thought of asking about.

[00:41:11] SL: Well, and I think they're—I think they'll be able to—there'll be a thread that runs through their lives, too.

JF: Yeah, I have one grandchild now in New York, Branch, and who is interested in me. I think another year or two—they become teenagers—forget about it. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yes, it becomes about boys and girls then.

JF: Right. And there's still . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . this feeling when I see him that makes me feel so good. There's an attachment even though we don't see one another often enough. But I care, and so there's some exchange of

e-mails and letters and things like that.

SL: Well, this—that's good. So let's talk a little . . .

JF: You feel like a friend already. [*Laughter*]

[00:41:59] SL: What about—let's talk a little bit about the house that you grew up in and what was it like?

JF: Well, I think my first memory was living in this fourplex—my parents' apartment—and we had a bird. [*Laughs*] I was the oldest child—the first child. And . . .

SL: How many children were there?

JF: Four.

SL: Four. Mh-hmm.

[00:42:25] JF: And my mother had—I mean, everything seemed—was fine. I spent a lot of time at home. I mean, we were a close, close family, and my mother—the other members of her family would visit us regularly, and we, of course, visited them, too. During this period, my mother was ill, and I think what she had was a tubal pregnancy. And it—you know, didn't know at the time, but apparently, there were some complications, and she had to go to a—what do they call it? Oh, I want to—something for rehab, but it wasn't called a rehab center. She had lost a lot of weight. She had had a terrible bout with diarrhea. I mean, I heard these things later on. And she was

probably gone for weeks, and I think my father looked after me, but he was not used to looking after a young kid. I may have been about three or four at the time—or maybe I was a little bit older. I guess I was closer to five. I may've been in kindergarten. And he didn't know how to get me dressed for school to—mainly, comb my hair. I used to have curls. The way kids had curls at that time. And I remember he had to take me to his sister-in-law's house to get me [*laughter*] . . .

SL: Spiffed up.

JF: . . . combed or to learn how to do that. But that probably was a hard time for me. I don't remember too much about it, but to have been . . .

SL: Yeah. So did . . .

JF: . . . separated from my mother for weeks, and I guess, everybody was so concerned about her welfare. But she did recover, and she had—my sister was born when I was six years old. That was the first child, and the next one came along—another girl—when I was nine, and then my brother came along, and I was thirteen, so there are four children—three daughters and a son.

SL: Oh, spread them out pretty evenly.

[00:44:29] JF: Yeah, I don't—I'm not sure—well, I was the oldest,

and there was quite a—you know, a gap. The younger ones were [*makes a clicking noise with tongue*] closer together.

SL: Oh, I see.

JF: Two—my sisters were two years apart, and then, I think, Michael came along three years later. So he was closer to them, too.

But I was always the oldest sister, and I had more responsibility, and my mother had more expectations of me in some way than she did of the others, so . . .

[00:44:59] SL: You know, it's interesting—you talk about the—being Jewish but not really practicing the Jewish . . .

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . religion.

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: Did that create any problems outside the family or, you know, relatives? I mean, were there relatives that were . . .

JF: Religious?

SL: . . . religious and—I mean, was there any strife . . .

JF: No.

SL: . . . between relatives . . .

JF: No.

SL: . . . about . . .



JF: My mother's sisters were not religious. I don't think they ever,

you know, even gave their children—well, I shouldn't say that. I had a cousin my age—a girl—who didn't have any religious education, but I think her brother—younger brother had a bar mitzvah, and my brother—well, by the time—after I had this experience [*laughs*], I think, as my parents—I want to say more—became more affluent—more comfortable financially, they did join a temple. B'nai Abraham. That was not where I was confirmed. My sisters were not confirmed, but they did go to Sunday school. And my brother had a bar mitzvah, so he was raised as a—you might say—religiously. And they [my parents] weren't religious still, but then when the state of Israel came along in 1948, that made a difference.

SL: How so?

[00:46:34] JF: Well, the Jewish community pulled together. They wanted to support Israel at this—well, actually it probably started before that—at this difficult time, because they [JF edit: Jews] had come through the Holocaust, and I didn't know any members of my family that were, you know, killed in its wake. But I know that my grandfather had family there, and I think that one of his daughters had been in touch with some of them, and that was the end. I mean, they never heard from them, and that was a very painful, difficult time for all Jewish families.

There was a lot of anti-Semitism in this country. "America First." There were still quotas on the number of Jews that could come into this country, and there was a lot of effort made to mobilize Jews and Jewish opinion to support [Israel]—there were a lot of immigrants that came to this country. I mean, I knew kids in my class who had come from Germany. And I don't remember any coming from any other countries at that time. But this was a mobilizing experience, and I think when Israel was declared in 1948, this was the beginning of something new for Jews all over the world. And there was an effort made to raise money. I don't know if you have any awareness of this, but there were bonds that were sold. They were called Israel Bonds. And those who could afford them were asked to buy them. And they were like savings bonds that we had during the Second World War. You know, you'd buy it for seventy-five bucks, and ten years later, you were to get a hundred dollars back. And I remember my parents going to dinners that the Jewish Federation had. I was never directly involved in any of this. And they either gave money outright, or they bought these bonds. And there was a lot of—they became social occasions, and people who gave lots of money were honored [*laughs*—the . . .

SL: Sure.

[00:48:48] JF: . . . you know, high prestige. And there was also a program—we just came across this—when we were married in 1950, people gave money to plant trees in Israel in our honor because the land was not particularly fertile at . . .

SL: Right.

JF: . . . at that time. So this is how, you know—was the involvement of Jews who may never have had any great sense of community upon—except for immediate family—to be part of a larger community. And this is where [at 13] I became an atheist. I mean, I was still Jewish, but I remember—people would say, "Pray that the war will be over," and this, that, and the other thing. And I just remember thinking to myself, "Well, there's a—my counterpart in Germany, who was praying [*laughs*] for the war to be over and their side the victors."

SL: Right.

JF: Just as I was praying. So this just didn't make any sense . . .

SL: Sense.

JF: . . . at all. I was just—you know, nobody told me this.

[00:49:52] SL: And how old were you then?

JF: Thirteen.

SL: Thirteen. Mh-hmm.

JF: And I was very pragmatic. This is—I mean—and I was never

actively involved in things that were religious. When I went off to school—University of Chicago—there were a number of Jewish students that I knew, but we just weren't—you know, we had to think twice about going to Hillel, which was the religious center. We were too self-conscious. You know, we didn't believe. We supported it. I met Marc Chagall there.

SL: Really?

JF: [*Laughs*] He came, and he only spoke Yiddish. And he was selling books that his wife had written. So for these special occasions, you know, we felt at home going to Hillel, the Jewish student center, but not to—well, Chicago was not a religious place.

SL: Right.

JF: I mean, people—so this was fine. But with grandparents that didn't talk about religion—were not observant really—I just . . .

[00:51:04] SL: How long were you in the Sunday school?

JF: Three years.

SL: Three years.



JF: And then there was a youth group that I joined. I was expected, you know, to participate.

SL: Sure.

[00:51:16] JF: But it had nothing [*laughs*] to do with religion. And

during this time—you won't believe it—you know, the—if people—there were young Communists, and the FBI was already searching for them. And we were called upon. I was called upon by an FBI agent who was looking into one of the young leaders of this group to find out what I knew about his politics. I mean, I was about fourteen or fifteen at the time.

SL: Wow.

[00:51:45] JF: And I remember his—I don't know how he—whether he called ahead of time—so, again, it was not a religious thing. It had—was—what it helped developing [JF edit: my developing] was a social consciousness. A caring about other people and the plight of other people, and this was part of my heritage—that you wanna make a difference—not through religion, but by . . .

SL: Action.

JF: . . . acting. Caring. So that—those were the values I think that I learned. But I . . .

[00:52:19] SL: Was there—were there anybody in your family that actually fought in the war—in World War II?

JF: Yes. I had a cousin—first cousin—Murray Friedman, who was very close to me as I was growing up. I think when I was seven he tried to teach me algebra. [*Laughs*] He was five years older than I was. [*Laughter*] But he spent—we spent a lot of—this is

my father's older sister's children, who had an influence on my life—meant a lot to me. He was a—entered the army—[while] he was a student at Penn State, and I guess he—I don't know if he was drafted or what happened. But he entered the air force, and he became a bombardier. And I remember when he went overseas, he had—he was not a very tall person. He had a long, white scarf, and I thought, "Oh, my God, this is so romantic." [Laughter] He trimmed it. He cut it. And I picked up that piece of white cloth, and I folded it carefully, and I put it in my—put it in a drawer, and I said, "I will not take it out until he comes home." And he survived, I think, thirty-five—at least thirty-five missions.

SL: That's extraordinary.

[00:53:36] JF: Yeah, he was the only—I think my father had a cousin that was in service, but he—my Cousin Murray was the only one, and he went back; became an accountant; moved to York, Pennsylvania; had three kids; had an affair with his secretary, and that sort of blew up the family. [Laughs] Married her; had another child. But it was interesting. One thing that I did—cousins played an important part in my life, and when Ed—you heard him talk about my seventieth birthday party?

SL: Yes.

JF: How this was on this boat. Well, I said, "I would like to invite my first cousins." Some of whom had never, of course, been to Arkansas. And with the exception of one, they came. It was amazing. And it gave all of us a chance to, you know, renew contact with one another.

SL: Absolutely.

[00:54:31] JF: And there were things that I shared with one of my cousins—my mother's older sister was estranged from the family. I don't know whether it was . . .

SL: Why is that?

JF: I don't know. I think it had something to do with the loss of their mother, the—my grandfather's first wife. This was the oldest child, and I don't know. I think it had something to do with money. I really do. Division of the—whatever estate there was.

SL: Right.

[00:55:05] JF: I could never figure it out. That was never talked about, so I can't tell you anything about that. But that, and the fact that the—my—this aunt had three children, and I think that my mother was close to these children when they were very young. And so they had a special relationship. And although their mother never came to see us—we never shared anything

with her—the two daughters would come to our house, and the older one when she was eighteen died of leukemia. And that just unhinged me. It really did. I was about nine at the time.

SL: And she was eighteen?

JF: Eighteen. And I did not know much about—I was already a hypochondriac, I think. [*SL laughs*] My father would wake us in the morning and kiss our heads to make sure we didn't have fever. He had lost a six—a sixteen-year-old, younger sister . . .

SL: To fever.

[00:56:04] JF: . . . not too long before I was born. And I think that he was always concerned about matters of health—making sure we were all right. And I was afraid that I might, you know, suddenly come down with a terrible fatal disease. I mean, I've carried that through the rest of my life. [*Laughter*] And it was a—anyway, this was a very upsetting thing to me, and it stayed with me. Their younger brother was a year older than I was, and he went to my high school. I avoided him. I didn't wanna have anything to do with him. And I never did, until he came to my birthday party, and I told him—I can cry [*sobs*] . . .

SL: Well . . .

JF: . . . what had happened and how I avoided him and why I avoided him, and that how much it meant to me for him to come



as a grown adult with three kids of his own and a wonderful wife. You know, but families do terrible things to kids. And there was another time—my father's sister took me to the fune—the cemetery where her younger sister was buried, and she said to me—God knows how old I was—I was really very young—and she said, "This is where Aunt Pearly lives." And I said, "Oh, does she live on the second floor [*laughs*] or the third floor?" There was a house in the distance. It never occurred to me that she was buried—that I was at a cemetery. And I mean, it was a terrible thing to do to a child. [00:57:50] And then I remember, too, that when we moved into this apartment in my grandmother's house when I was about nine, when my father started all of this [*laughs*] business stuff, the family that moved out—they were called the Rothbarts. They lost a child just before they moved—also, to leukemia. That was a—you know, people couldn't do anything about these illnesses at that time. And I worried about that. And the same aunt—Aunt Bertha, who lived in Hartford—after—I don't know how old I was—I was still a young kid, and I went up to visit her. And she took me to see a young woman who was hospitalized who was dying of a strep infection that she had gotten in—into her bloodstream. And she might live for a week or two. This is an eighteen-year-old girl.

And my aunt brought her a present or took a present to her—a book. I said, "Well, why are you taking a [*laughs*] book to this [JF edit: her]"—here I am, again, you know, figuring things out—"Why am I taking a book to this person when she—she's not gonna be around to read it or to keep it."

SL: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

JF: These things just bothered me, and I mean, they sound like piddling things now, but these are memorable experiences where adults don't understand the sensitivity of kids and how they interpret these kinds of things. So that period of my life, when I was already displaced as the favorite child [*laughs*—I had responsibilities and not the attention that I needed. I think I became more hypochondriacal. I really thought that I was going to have one of these terrible things happen to me. And then when I was eleven—you see, you just turned me on.

SL: That's good.

JF: Good? [*Laughs*]

SL: Excellent. Excellent.



[00:59:49] JF: When I was eleven, my mother was outfitting me with a wonderful—what they called a spring coat. You know, you would get new clothes in the spring. And she noticed something about me, that my back was not straight. And she soon realized

that I had scoliosis—had a curvature. And I was taken to the doctor, of course, and sent to a specialist. I don't think this happened all at once. But I immediately became aware that I was different again from other people. That I was not perfect the way other people were. And—but by the time I was—I don't know if I was thirteen at this time—something like that—maybe I was twelve—they took me to a Dr. Kessler, who was the big specialist at that time. And he recommended that I wear a brace.

SL: Another thing that sets you apart.

JF: But braces—the braces were not, you know, the way they make them today—lightweight plastic, whatever. This had—was metal, and it had leather pads, you know. I don't know—you don't remember that stuff.

SL: No, no, I understand. Mh-hmm.

[01:01:04] JF: But you know, kids with polio would wear this sort of thing.

SL: Yes. Mh-hmm.

JF: And they waited until the summer when I was out of school, and I had to lie down in bed for my mother to outfit me in this brace, which I did not relish wearing in the least.

SL: Well, of course not.

JF: And they had no sense of humor about it. And if I had a kid that had to wear a brace, we would be different. And they were just, "You have to do this." And I finally rebelled, and I think that was the first time that I ever did that. I said, "I'm not going to do that." There was a girl in my school, I remember, who was braced—who did wear a brace to school. And I just looked at her like she was a cripple. I didn't want to . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . have anything to do with her.

SL: Right.

JF: I mean, this was before [*laughs*] this happened to me. I didn't know how to relate to her. You know, what do you say to a person who obviously has some deformity?

SL: Right. Well, you can't ignore it.

JF: You can't.

SL: It . . .

[01:02:03] JF: And it's like you see somebody—kids—if they are allowed to stare and ask and understand why somebody is in a wheelchair or is scarred, you know, you do all right. But—so I refused to do that. And all my life, I have sort of tried to hide the fact that my back is . . .

SL: Curved.

JF: Yeah, you know, and you—I notice it much more than other people do. And, of course, it's gotten worse as you get older.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Mh-hmm.

Trey Marley: We need to change tapes. Excuse me.

JF: Yeah.

SL: Oh. Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[01:02:37] SL: Do you want to talk about how this split happened with your cousin?

JF: How it happened?

SL: Yeah, or . . .

JF: Yeah. It—well, I can.

SL: I mean, we can talk about that . . .

JF: It just—it happened because his mother—my mother didn't speak to his mother.

SL: Oh, I see.

JF: And, therefore, I shouldn't speak . . .

SL: I see.

JF: . . . to him.

SL: Okay. Okay.

JF: And I don't know him. I know he's my cousin, but—and he, too,

avoided me. I mean, I didn't ask him why, but he was a very shy person. But he was older, and he might've said, you know, "Hello." But there was nothing like that and his . . .

SL: So that was a—it was conspi—that was—that came about because of the two mothers then.

[01:03:19] JF: That is right, and the grandfather, too. My grandfather never had anything to do with those children.

SL: Oh, my gosh.

JF: So he was bizarre in his own way, too. He was estranged from his son—the older son. I don't know. So there were parts of the family that I just didn't know.

[01:03:37] SL: There are so many hidden histories that happen.

JF: Yeah. And I never asked.

SL: I mean, I know that's true in my family.

JF: Your family?

SL: Yeah.

JF: I never asked. You know, I just assumed that whatever they did was okay. We—I've talked about it with his sister, and, of course, she was always so unhappy because of the—are we on?

TM: Yes.

SL: Yes. Okay.

JF: Oh, I'm sorry.

SL: Yeah.

[01:04:05] JF: She—his older sister, who we, you know, saw from time to time, resented it, I think, but never really talked about that. She worked at her relationship with my mother and my mother's other sisters, who, you know, welcomed her and were comfortable about it. But there weren't very many questions asked about what happened 'cause some of them were so painful you didn't want anybody to [*laughs*] be upset . . .

SL: Right.

JF: . . . and try to answer these things.

SL: Or they may have felt like they were sparing—not burdening the next generation or something with . . .

[01:04:43] JF: Yeah, and they weren't too happy about it themselves. I mean, they didn't tell anybody. They just sorta put it aside. And there was a follow-up. My mother's—one of my mother's sister, who was—didn't have any children had been in contact with her brother's son—her nephew—none of us had been, but she managed to track him down, and I don't know what happened to his father. This was my mother's brother, who was estranged. And I remember going to a birthday party when I was very little—of this child. He was about a year younger than I was. And I think my uncle was a bootlegger. [*Laughs*] Maybe

that had something to do with it. But he obviously had plenty of money, and this would've been in the [19]30s. I don't know whether it was after Prohibition or whatever, but he—anyway, who knows what he was involved in? I mean, I didn't know. I didn't care. It was a great birthday party, and I remember this is the time I saw my Cousin Edwin, who was, I think, a year younger, and it was held at a department store, Bamberger's, which is a famous New Jersey department store. They're connected with Macy's. And so it was a very special gathering. And many years later, my aunt—his aunt traced him. [*Geese honking in background*] He was living in England. He had been in service. He had changed his name from Zuckerman to Lord. He didn't wanna have anything to do with the family. He didn't wanna come back to this country. She tried so hard to bring him into the family fold. She corresponded with him and he with her, but I think he finally died—and alone. I don't think he was married. He may've been married at one point, but, you know, families have these these strange stories, and you wonder about them, but you never really have enough information to understand. And I think for that reason I have always felt that it was very important to maintain a relationship with my siblings and . . .

SL: Sure it is.

JF: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

[01:06:59] SL: Well, let's talk about what you did get to do with your siblings and with your cousins. What kind of stuff did you do when y'all . . .

JF: Got together?

SL: . . . got together? I mean, what did you play? What did you play? What games did you play?

[01:07:14] JF: Oh, God. We played MONOPOLY. I remember that. And we played paper dolls, and my older cousin, who was nine years older than I am or was, was—my mother had a close relationship to her because she had a problem relating to her own parents. This was the same aunt that took me to the cemetery and took me to see this fatally ill girl. And they—her mother had expectations of her—you know, who she would go out with—this, that, and the other thing. And when we were living in my grandmother's first-floor apartment, she was living with my grandmother and going to school. She was in college at the time. She went to teachers' college. She was a bright kid and sort of liked to do her own thing. But she paid a lot of attention to me. She was just so wonderful, and I remember sitting on the back stairways and—with—playing paper dolls. We

made the paper dolls, and she found brightly patterned materials, and we made clothes for them. And we kept them in what was called a hosiery box at the time. And I just remember her well. And she died a few years ago in Florida. She, too, was a hypochondriac. [*Laughter*] But I had a lot of regard for her. And she never wanted me to come see her again. Her voice always sounded very young, but she aged and probably not well. And I think sometimes people feel—"I don't want you to see me" . . .

SL: Sure.

[01:08:48] JF: . . . "this way." But she, too, had some of that spirit, I think, that my father had. She was always doing something unusual. At sixty-five, she earned a Ph.D. [*laughs*] in child development. She had been a math teacher and had a master's in math. And then her husband developed Parkinson's, and she was totally devoted to him. But she was important in my life. And it was her brother who was in service—the one whose scarf remnant [*laughs*] I kept for all that time. But I used to go—when I was a small child, I would visit them, and I remember one night I stayed overnight at their house. They lived in Jersey City, and I—they had to call my parents in the middle of the night because I woke up, and I thought my Cousin Murray had

grown claws. [*Laughter*] And they came and retrieved me.

SL: Your parents had to come get you?

JF: That was a good way to get home. Yeah, yeah. I couldn't . . .

SL: You couldn't stay there.

JF: . . . stay there anymore. No. I was a . . .

SL: You'd had a nightmare.

JF: . . . I mean, a small child. Yeah.

[01:09:52] SL: How old do you think you were?

JF: Oh, I was probably three or four . . .

SL: Oh.

JF: . . . I would say. Pretty young. [*SL laughs*] And—'cause I remember being caught up in my father's arms, you know. He carried me out. I was so relieved. But I played—we played hopscotch. What did we do? We made things. My mother used to make us dough out of—like Play-Doh, but you had to make your own. And we made things. We modeled things. We did soap carving. I drew a lot. I had—discovered to have a talent for drawing as a small child, and one of my teachers suggested that my parents take me to the Newark Art Club—set up classes for me on Saturdays. But I drew a lot. I made things.

[01:10:47] SL: Mh-hmm. Did you go to the art club? Did you join?

JF: Yeah. On sat—Saturdays. Saturday mornings. I went by

myself by bus. [*Sighs*] God, I was eight or nine—eight years old—nine. I mean, nowadays, you'd never let a child out of your sight, but when I went to school, too—that was another thing. My—[*laughs*] father decided I would go to the new school. We were not in that district. It was closer than the school I was supposed to go to. But he made arrangements, and I had to cross a major street at that time. And I remember asking [*laughs*] people to help me across the street. I was told that this is what, you know, I should do. I was probably about eight years—I remember I went to kindergarten there. I don't think—I'm—I don't know if they walked me to school or not. I don't remember that. [01:11:40] Maybe they helped me, at that time, cross the major street. But I was left to be, you know, on my own a lot. And I played with, oh, some of the kids. I had a sandbox. We had lots of leftover cellophane from Poor Rudy's venture into the Vapette business. [*SL laughs*] You know, the vapor thing. We—[*laughs*] so I—I'd—I had a lot of art projects going. I loved that. And I continued with that, you know, for quite a time. And then when I was in fourth grade at a new school, my art teacher there took a liking to me because I had some special talent. And in 1939, we entered a contest at the world's fair, and I won first prize. I won a medal . . .

SL: Wow.

JF: . . . in my division for a poster. But, of course, he helped me with it. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well . . .

JF: But—no—but those—and I won medals in scholastic competitions, and I thought I was hot stuff, you know. I'd really . . .

SL: Well, it sounds like you probably were.

JF: 'Cause compared to other kids, [*TM coughs*] I did have some special talent. I could draw. And I continued, I guess, at art school for—on Saturdays—for a while.

[01:13:04] SL: Did they acquaint you with any of the—any art history at the art school?

JF: No, it was nothing like that.

SL: It was all lab.

JF: Painting.

SL: More lab . . .

JF: Painting. Yeah, you . . .

SL: . . . oriented. Uh-huh.

JF: . . . you drew. And I remember some friends—I got some of my friends to go, and we modeled. Somebody, you know, would pose as a model, and then there was another teacher who

worked—they had a sort of a formula for doing landscapes.

[*Laughs*] We never saw a real landscape, but we were city children.

SL: Everything was conceptual, huh?

[01:13:36] JF: Yeah. And there—I remember one time my father was so offended. There was an art show there, and there was a British woman who sort of ran the place. She was the manager or whatever of the club. And she said in her wonderful British accent to my father, "Do you have any talent? Do you draw?" It was something like that. [*SL laughs*] And they had brought my mother's sister and brother-in-law along, and my uncle, I guess, thought he was a great humorist. And he said—to the utter consternation and embarrassment of my father—"The only thing he can draw is the foam off the beard—the beer." [*SL laughs*] Which was not true at all. My father did have some talent. But that was just so inappropriate and said more about my uncle than anybody else.

SL: Right.

JF: 'Cause here was my father, you know, proud of me and . . .

SL: Oh.

JF: . . . trying to make conversation with this important person. [*SL laughs*] But my father was the salvation of all these men. He

gave—during—when he—his business was going well, he employed my mother's—this same brother-in-law, who needed work. And he employed my Aunt Bertha's husband, too, and he had terrible things to say about them. But, of course, the family—my grandmother thought that was wonderful that he was looking after family. I mean, he was, I guess, in his thirties at the time, you know. And he had great responsibility, but he did these things. I don't think he was ever appreciated. He was a very bright person—very creative person. And he used to draw a lot of cartoons. He was good at that. He also used to sing, and on Sunday nights sometimes when we would get together, his sister would play the piano. She played quite well. And he would draw the—we had drapes called portieres between the living room and the dining room. Do you—I don't know if you remember those things . . .

SL: Sure.

JF: . . . that people had. No, they weren't doors.

SL: Yeah. Uh-huh.

[01:15:49] JF: And he would, you know, open and close those things, and he would appear in a [high] hat, and he would be singing. He loved to do that. And you know, those were great Sunday nights. We all joined in.

[01:16:02] SL: Well, so [*JF laughs*] there was a piano there in your house then.

JF: Yeah, there was.

SL: And did your mother participate in any of that?

JF: Not seriously. She was sorta the provisioner. She would make sure that there was food available and that people were comfortable. But I don't ever remember her . . .

SL: So she kinda supported the events.

JF: Yeah, she did. She . . .

SL: And . . .

[01:16:22] JF: . . . she was there—I—[*laughs*] you know, I'm—it's such a potpourri of stuff that I'm throwing at you and . . .

SL: That's good.

JF: . . . all this is sort of coming up. But he was the one in my life, I think, that helped me with some things. She was overly serious. And I remember when I was in—you asked me what I did—I played a lot with the younger children. You know, I helped them make things and draw, and I remember wheeling my sister—I don't know—God, I don't know how old I was. I was just a little girl—in a baby carriage. I think I must've walked ten blocks [*laughs*] with her to go to a shopping area. Now, I mean—I don't think I had a lot of responsibilities at home, but these were

things that I sort of enjoyed doing. [01:17:18] And I was the "other mother," you might say, for these kids. But again, my mother was busy at home looking after things. She kept a very orderly household, and it was important that everything be in its place. I was never like that. [*Laughs*] I had a very hard time putting—hanging up a towel or, you know, just wrapping things [JF edit: putting things away]. But I have one memory that sorta comes to mind. When I was in high school, I was never what I would call a popular kid. I didn't have boyfriends. I had a crush on somebody when I was in grammar school, and I think he had a crush on me. It musta been about fourth grade. [*Airplane passes overhead*] Fifth grade. And I was aware, at that time, that he had—he was privileged, more so than I. He was going off to camp.

SL: Just a second. Just one moment.

JF: Yeah.

SL: This is really loud. Is that a plane?

JF: Yeah, it's a plane. They fly over here once in a while.

SL: Okay.

JF: That may be a four-motor bomber or something. They come from the air force base.

SL: C-130 or somethin'.

JF: I don't know what the . . .

SL: So—all right now.

JF: Anyway . . .

[01:18:29] SL: Let's get back to your crush—your fourth-grade crush.

JF: Yeah, and . . .

SL: And what—do you remember this guy's name?

JF: Oh, sure.

SL: This kid's name.

JF: His name was Andy Rouse, and I don't know why or—we never, you know, spent much time together. But he was going off to camp, and he said he was gonna write me. I lied and said that I was going to camp, too.

SL: Oh.

[01:18:55] JF: I know, but this is the same sort of thing of not feeling that you are an equal of somebody. You want—you admire that. You wanted to be like that. And that was the only time I think I ever really did anything like that, to pretend that I was at camp.

SL: At . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . of equal value.

JF: Yeah, that is right. That nobody ever knew about that. I mean, I never said anything to my parents. I hid things. I couldn't express myself. And my mother would say, "If my mother were alive, I would not treat her like that." And that's a pretty big thing to hit a kid with.

SL: Absolutely.

[01:19:42] JF: So I was not doing what I should've done. And then I don't think I ever had—I had a lot of friends who were boys, but I never had much [*laughs*] romance in my life. And when I was in high school, I remember being asked out by this boy whom I thought was really quite nice. And my mother said, "Don't act available if he asks you out." I don't remember what happened. "Don't go out with him the first time he asks you." Well, of course, he never asked me again. [*Laughs*]

SL: Again.

JF: And so this was the kind of woman she was. She was shy, and in a sense, she wanted me to do things that she had never done in her own life, I'm sure. So there were constraints put upon me that never shoulda been put upon me. That summer with the brace—how horrible that was. And then she never really encouraged me to be myself—to do things that would have been good for me—enhancing—to develop a sense of self-worth for

me. She liked me to do things that she felt ought to be done.

[Laughs] [01:20:51] One thing was I remember she had decorated a room for me—this is when we had moved to this one-family house—and bought furniture for me. I had nothing to do with it. And she decided that I need to—decorated a shelf that she had—I don't know whether she had purchased it or had decided I ought to have. [Laughs] And I didn't have one bit of interest in doing anything like this. But I had to—and—because I had some artistic ability. But this isn't—my artistry should've been developed in a different way.

SL: Well, don't you think that . . .

TM: Excuse me. You've got something that came down on your eyelid—or on your eyelash right there.

JF: Really?

TM: I believe it's . . .

JF: Is it a . . .

SL: That's one thing about the high-def camera. It . . .

JF: Am I okay?

TM: Yes, I believe so.

SL: Okay.

JF: I don't know what it was. Yeah.

[01:21:40] SL: Don't you think that because she lost her mother at

such an early age, and she kind of—that kind of truncated her youth, and then . . .

JF: It did.

SL: And it—now she was given a set of responsibilities and was taught how things ought to be.

JF: Right.

SL: And you know, I just wonder if she ever heard that line, "If her mother was . . .

JF: Maybe.

SL: . . . alive he—she wouldn't be acting that way." I mean, I just . . .

[01:22:11] JF: I don't know. You know, I never knew her mother, and I didn't know whether she was always trying to please her. I later asked my aunt—my mother's—one of her sisters, older sister—about their mother, and she saw her as a very happy, jolly person who was always doing things for other people and taught English [*laughs*] to immigrants.

SL: This is your mother or her—your mother's mother?

JF: This is my mother's mother. The one that died.

SL: Well . . .

JF: And so for my mother, you know, I never—she never really talked about her in that way. But my aunt just—and I recorded

that—gave me this image of this woman that was so different from what I thought she was like, judging from my mother's, you know, behaviors.

[01:22:58] SL: But now your mother lost her mother when she was about . . .

JF: Sixteen.

SL: . . . sixteen.

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: So—and that's kind of a . . .

JF: Oh, it was a terrible loss.

SL: That's a pivotal . . .

JF: Her whole life changed.

SL: Yes.

JF: She stayed home—I don't know why—she had an older sister who was working and a younger sister, I guess, who was still in school. But my grandfather—I don't know whether he did it or not—how that happened or whether my mother just fell into looking after him and the rest of the family. And she took on something she never should have taken on.

SL: Hmm. Do you know how her mother died?

[01:23:36] JF: Yes. I found out at some point. She had had a gallbladder problem, and she went in for surgery, and she was

expected to recover. But I don't know what it was, but something happened. Whether she bled or hemorrhaged or . . .

SL: [*Sighs*] Oh, boy.

JF: . . . and she died, and very suddenly and unexpectedly. And my aunt always blamed the doctor, and it must've been—may've been the doctor's fault. You know, people—hospitals didn't look after people [*laughs*] the way they do today, and . . .

SL: Well, they didn't know the things they know today either.

[01:24:17] JF: Yeah, this was in bout nineteen—oh, God, my mother was sixteen, so 1920s—early 1920s. Sometime around then. I had—I don't know, but you know, these are things that now I can't really find out about, and maybe I should've asked my mother, but I was sort of afraid to revive those memories. I was fearful. I didn't wanna see my mother cry. And my father didn't talk about it very much. He talked about his own—the loss of his own sister when she was just sixteen and how that impacted the family. So these were things that kids don't delve into.

SL: The new school . . .

TM: Can you check the corner right there.

JF: I got more?

TM: And at some point we might—after lunch we'll redo lipstick for

sure. But okay, great.

JF: Am I all right?

TM: Yes, you're fine.

JF: Okay. I don't have any lipstick on my hands, but
[laughs] . . .

SL: Oh, we've got a visitor here.

JF: What?

Edmond Freeman: I'm sorry.

SL: Go ahead.

EF: No, I'm just . . .

JF: What?

EF: Nothing.

JF: Oh, okay. [SL laughs]

EF: I'm just showing the happy group. [Laughter]

[01:25:25] SL: Well, let's talk about the new school that you were
at. Now was that a public school?

JF: Oh yeah, I went to public school all along. Okay. I know what
we're doing.

TM: Ed's—Edmond's not in the shot. I mean, you're fine to stand
there if you want.

JF: I'm self-conscious. I'll tell you later.

SL: Oh. [TM laughs]

JF: I didn't sit in on your—[*laughter*] I didn't bark up your tree.

EF: Fair enough.

JF: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] The new school was called Peshine Avenue School, and that's where I met my first really best friend. I had friends—you asked me what I did, growing up—I—we visited. I had one friend named Carol Sue Diamond, and I had playmates. We did that. But when I was nine and my parents moved to another school district, I skipped a grade, and we were on the—we didn't go a full year. You could go—there were two semesters, and they would promote you or skip one semester, so they put you out of whack. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

[01:26:30] JF: Yeah. So I became the February class. But I met a friend in fourth grade who was my best friend for years and who—with whom I'm still in contact now, although we have led very, very different lives. And anyway, so I spent time with her. We created libraries. I mean, we did all kinds of things. [*Laughs*]

[01:26:55] SL: Created libraries?

JF: Yeah, we set up a library. We wanted to be librarians. We had a lot of imaginary play. [*SL laughs*] You know, it was fourth grade, and I spent time at her house and she spent time at my

house, and I got her to go to art school, so she went for a while and . . .

[01:27:13] SL: Did you ever—with your relationships in school, did you ever run across any of the Jewish prejudices from the parents of any of the kids?

JF: No, no.

SL: No?

JF: We had a mixed group at Peshine Avenue School, and I wasn't aware of religion in kindergarten and grade school. Fourth grade—the teachers—we didn't have—we had one teacher who was Jewish. I wasn't really aware of it at that time. My best friend was Jewish. But I think that happened by accident. We never really talked about that. This is the friend that married an Arab. Raised a family of four kids. He was part of the—Arafat's cabinet. They both taught at Northwestern for a while, and she retired from The New School where she was a professor of sociology. But this relationship goes back to the fourth grade. She also went to the University of Chicago. But she decided to accelerate, and she graduated a half-year ahead of me from high school. I had to catch up once I got there. But she came from a different family. Different kind of family. She went to—I was aware of this—her grandparents were very religious—her

mother's parents. And they were so Orthodox that they could not open the refrigerator on the Sabbath [*laughs*] because the light went on, and so somebody had to unscrew the light bulb the day before, so the light wouldn't go on. I mean, the—that part of the family was very religious. And the—I think the families belonged—the next generation belonged to a temple. In other words, a synagogue was something that the old folks did, and then the next generation belonged to the temple, which socially, you know, was a step up in the community and—but she was sent to—I think it was called Heder—it was an after-school religious Jewish school where kids learned Hebrew and—I don't know what else they learned there. [*Laughs*] [01:29:41] And so even with this background, she was not religious. We didn't talk about that. It wasn't part of our lives. She didn't like to do what she did after school, and I don't think that lasted too long. But she was the one—her parents were both college graduates. The father, though, worked in the—he was in his family business, in which they were sh—they sold shoe findings to shoemakers.

SL: Shoe bind . . .

JF: Findings, they're called.

SL: Finding.

JF: In other words, they sold the rubber heels and the—I don't whether they sold the machinery, but they sold the soles, the leather goods, and the glue—ever—whatever was needed to repair shoes. And, of course, at that time, when you were a kid, you had two pairs of shoes. [*Laughs*] You either outgrew them or they were repaired regularly. Nowadays, you throw 'em away.

SL: That's right.

JF: You know, they can't repair these shoes.

SL: Yard sale, maybe.

[01:30:43] JF: And so he dealt a lot with shoemakers, who were usually immigrants of some sort or another. And I think the family got to feel that he started to talk like them, even though he'd been a graduate of, I think, Lafayette College and studied French. And they sort of looked down upon him, you know, they'd—because this is what his focus was. He was suddenly reduced to making a living. Now his wife had a mink coat, and so I was introduced to conspicuous consumption, you might say, at an early age. And they lived in a very nice, one-family house, where I—and they had a beautiful piano, and they had a Persian rug. [01:31:22] And I so admired her mother, who had time—I think she had gone to teachers' college—but the [her] mother

had time to belong to organizations, and my mother just didn't. She had children at home. Young children. And Tessie Lippman had a son who was a very talented pianist, and she practiced with him. I don't know what she did with my friend, Janet, but she belonged to this organization that worked to raise money for children who had various kinds of illnesses—heart disease; rheumatic fever, I think, being one of them. Which was fairly common at that time. And she was part of a group of women that decided they would introduce young children into charity work. And they started groups—I don't know if you heard this yesterday—I mentioned to somebody—there was a picture that I had—they started a group called the Cardiac Starlets.

[*Laughter*] It sounds so absurd.

SL: It is.

JF: And so the young kids . . .

SL: It makes you wonder if they create heart attacks or [*JF laughs*] if they [*laughs*] . . .

[01:32:36] JF: I mean, just—I couldn't—now looking back on that—but it was very important. And I when I heard that my friend, Janet, was a Cardiac Starlet, I said, "Can I join this group?" She said, "I'll ask my mother." So, of course, Mrs. Lippman said, "Yes, you can be a member of the Cardiac Starlets." So I joined,

and one of the pictures that I had that I had saved from the newspaper was a clipping of a puppet show—marionette show—that we put on in Janet's basement, and we charged, I guess, some small admission for it. And I found somebody—I don't know where I knew her from—who really was very good at working marionettes. I happened to have one, but I never really used it—you know, discovered the wonderful things I could've done with it. But there's a picture of [*laughs*] me with this other child manipulating these stringed puppets—the marionettes. And we have—her theater is there, and we are in the basement, and there are children—the other Cardiac Starlets [*laughs*] were watching this. [*Laughter*] But these—I guess I learned a lot. I wanted my mother to be like Janet's mother, and I think Janet wanted her mother to be more like me [*mine*—to be at home and to have things waiting for her after school. So there was this kind of exchange. [01:33:55] But Mrs. Lippman really made quite an impression . . .

SL: I'm just wondering.

JF: . . . on me at that age. Again, it was like the Sunday school experience—it came, I guess, a—about that time—it started with—there were other people, I discovered, that were not like my immediate family. But I don't think Janet was confirmed or

anything, and we were never—never really talked about religion. When she went off to school, her parents outfitted her with a nine-stripe beaver coat, which she was so embarrassed about that she spread it out on the floor for us to sit on like a rug. We didn't want to look, at that point, like people who were different. The well-to-do. We wanted to identify with [*laughs*] the disadvantaged or people who had social causes in mind. I mean, I—you can't get a complete picture of this, but it was the notion that these folks had more means, at that point, than my family did. And I learned about that in that way. But my mother, I guess, was aware of a lot of this because we moved—I gave you the first house. The second house was at my grandmother's apartment. The third house was a—an older house—one-family house. My father happened to be driving by one day and saw the "for sale" sign. He took the "for sale" sign with him; went to the real—[*laughs*] he didn't want anybody else to buy it. And I don't know whether my mother had any say at all in buying this house. [01:35:39] And I remember he wrote a poem about this house—doggerel—[*clears throat*] had something like, you know, "I saw a house for sale." I can't remember the—the exact lines—"Will sell to Jews." So already, you know, this, again, was—you couldn't move into just any neighborhood. And from



there, I went to a different school—a junior high school about that time. Went through that and then went on to high school. We were living there, I guess, until my parents bought a house in the suburbs, and we moved there. It was a—you know, a more spacious—more pretentious house. It was a very lovely house. The other one was fine, but it was not—well, how can I say it? Jews who made it moved to the suburbs out of Newark. This was called South Orange. And I was about to enter my senior year. I didn't wanna tell anybody that we were moving there. I wanted to stay . . .

SL: Where you were.

[01:36:46] JF: . . . where I was, and I did. I finished up high school in Newark, and I was so embarrassed about telling my friends that we were moving—that we had moved to South Orange because there were a lot of jokes cracked about Jews who moved "up the hill." Something like this—by Jews. You know, this is—*[laughs]*—I'm bringing you—have you ever heard people talk this way?

SL: No.

JF: No.

SL: No. Well, no, not . . .

JF: And . . .

SL: . . . specifically. No. Mh-hmm.

[01:37:17] JF: Yeah. And one—but this is an Eastern Jewish experience, and one time, I remember I was on my way home from high school. I rode—I had to take two buses to get home. I think sometimes my father would drop me off in the morning, so that cut me off from a lot of things I wanted to be a part of because my family was living—oh, I guess about—I wanna say almost a half-hour away. I mean, it was—it took something to get me there and get me back. [01:37:48] And it was a cold winter night, and I was waiting outside for the bus at this sort of bus nexus [*laughter*] where other people switched to another bus. I don't know what you call that—transfer station? And some guy who must—it was close to Christmastime—who must've been a little inebriated—I'm not sure what it was—and he was standing there talking to other people. And he said, "I'm goin' home to 'Kike's Peak.'" And, I mean, that really shook me up because this was not a Jewish person. And what happened at that time, I think, is when Jews move into a neighborhood, there were neighborhoods that became neighborhoods in transition—that the Gentiles—this is a class thing. This didn't happen in the other neighborhoods that I lived in. Everybody was on the same plane. But here, if Jews moved in, then the WASPs moved out

to another community. I mean, this was just the way it was. I think that—I have a good notion of this. So there—I was aware, you know, that we were doing something that would—in some ways, would provoke the disfavor of Jews and also expose us to things that I was not accustomed to. I think that was one of the first times that I ever had a direct experience of somebody making an anti-Semitic remark. But I did learn something—it was interesting. When I lived in my grandmother's house during those early years, there was a family living next door to us in a similar apartment. Houses were close together. They were called the Cusick family. And I suspect—I always had the feeling that the man had tuberculosis—the father. He sat around a lot, and the daughters worked and looked after him. And they were just wonderful people—maybe he'd been a coal miner. I have no idea where he came from. And at Christmastime, they would always put a present for me under the Christmas tree.

SL: Huh.

[01:39:57] JF: They were just so sweet and wonderful, and I mean, I only lived there for a few years. And I remember asking my mother—I re—saying, "I'd like to have a Christmas tree. Why can't I have a Christmas tree like that?" And she said, "You can't because you're Jewish." [*Laughs*] So this is how I knew

my identity. I think from that point on, I realized that I was different. I could not fully participate in things that I loved. Christmas tree is . . .

SL: That's . . .

JF: . . . so beautiful and positive. Yeah.

SL: It—well they are. They're fun. But—so even though your household wasn't . . .

JF: Real . . .

SL: . . . particularly religious, you still celebrated the relig—the Jewish religious holidays and not the Christian holidays. Is that the way . . .

JF: Well . . .

SL: . . . that went? I mean . . .

[01:40:45] JF: . . . it was, sort of. Later on, my mother had brought Christmas decorations into the house and—but we never had a tree. And many years later, as a grown woman with kids, as—I thought about having a tree, and, of course, Ed grew up with trees. And we did have a tree, but I always put it in the back of the house where nobody could see it, except it was a family thing.

SL: Right.

JF: And that was all right. But I didn't want people to say, "There

she is. You know, she's not one of us any longer." And [*laughs*]
we never hung anything on the front door.

SL: Right.

[01:41:30] JF: And many years later, when I worked for the Arts Center, and they used to have a Christmas celebration, I would say, "I don't think this is right. I think you ought to have a celebration of lights, that there—each group has its own festival about this time." And, by golly, we did that one year. We had a holiday celebration. Maybe that went on for a few years, and then the Christians won out again. [*Laughs*] And it became Christmas.

SL: Right.

JF: And there were Christmas trees. So this has always sorta figured in my life. I've taken on some of these things, but they're—they become very private. You don't . . .

SL: Sure.

JF: That would almost be a—something to contradict who you were. So there were three or four houses that you . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . lived in growing up. And when you say a four-family house . . .

JF: Oh.

SL: . . . are you saying that it—it's a house where—a normal house or is it a series of apartments or . . .

[01:42:37] JF: It's a four-family—like, you know, a fourplex there, where a central entrance—stairway. One apartment—two apartments on the first floor; one here and one there. [Gestures to the left and to the right] And then a staircase to the second-floor apartments above the lower ones. So they were separate apartments—in the city people lived that way. And my grandmother's house, which was older than that—they seemed to build three-family houses, each apartment stacked upon the other.

SL: I see.

JF: And there would be a lot of them in the neighborhood. Interspersed there would be some one-family houses or two-family houses. But they never seemed to go beyond three.

[01:43:14] SL: Were all the families that occupied those houses you grew up in—were they all Jewish? Were the families all Jewish or were—was there a mix?

JF: The neighborhood was mixed in my grandmother's neighborhood. And the neighborhood that my parents lived in, I think that our—the people that lived, as I remember—that I—the ones I remember were Jewish, so, yeah, they probably were.

But there were people in the neighborhood who were not, I remember, across the street. But generally—I mean, you know how these things happen. One group me—moves in. I'm very aware that they're not—there are a few—well, the Blasses were Jewish here. But I'm aware that there are very few Jews in this complex.

SL: Yes.

[01:44:09] JF: We now have couple more since I've moved in here. But every year, of course, they put the Christmas tree [*laughs*] decorations up. I mean, I just accommodate to that. It's not a big deal to me. I know who I am and what I am and . . .

SL: Right.

JF: . . . I don't care. But—and certainly, when I lived in Pine Bluff, I was part of a minority there, too. But each house that I—I've lived in, I guess—the first house was a new house when my parents were young. And then we moved to an old house, and on the socioeconomic scale, that went down. And the next move was to a one-family, which was a—okay.

SL: Yeah.

JF: We had improved. And then the other one [*laughs*] was to the suburbs.

SL: Out in the suburbs. Yeah.

[01:44:56] JF: Right. And my parents lived there for a number of years. My sisters and my brother grew up there. My brother was the only one, I think, that—I always tell him—he was—he had a silver spoon in his mouth when he [*laughs*] came along. So each one of us experienced our mother and our father in a different way. Yeah.

[01:45:16] SL: When you were going through the grade schools, was there anything other than art that particularly interested you?

JF: Yeah, I was a good student. I was serious about everything. Oh, we had a teacher who had missionary cousins in China about the time that the sin [JF edit: Sino-Japanese]—the war with Japan in the [19]30s. And you know, we kept abreast of that, and we had—you know, teachers were pretty good at that time, I think. Had a Southern teacher, Miss Armistead, who must've been from Virginia, who was just a wonderful teacher—made life interesting for us. I—you know, there were no other—I can't remember any one particular subject that stood out. It was all fun. I enjoyed school. I did. I didn't complain about going. [*Laughter*]

SL: You looked forward to it.

JF: Yeah, I was serious. We used to go in all kinds of weather. I

mean—I was a—one thing that I miss—I always a grade C gym student. We had gym at that time.

SL: Grade C, huh?

[01:46:27] JF: Yeah, there were A, B, and C's. [*Laughs*] And I think—but my parents, again, never took a particular interest. I probably could've developed some athletic ability if somebody had spent some time with me. I mean, I couldn't hit a baseball for—to save my life. [*Laughter*] Couldn't lift myself up on the rings. I mean, we were neglected in that way.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And they didn't—we had gym in school, but you were segregated at an early age according to your ability.

SL: You bet.

[01:47:02] JF: And some of kids had natural ability, and others didn't. But it coulda been cultivated.

SL: Yes.

JF: Nowadays they would.

SL: Yeah.

JF: They'd make you run around a lot.

SL: Yeah. Yeah. What about—were you aware of any other prejudices around you—against the blacks or the Irish or . . .

[01:47:25] JF: No. My parents—we had a black woman who worked for us part time. A maid. It's funny. My grandmother and her generation, who spoke Yiddish, used to call them by their—by the German word or the Yiddish word, *schvartze*, for "black," and a lotta people felt that was not respectful enough. I forget what these people were called. I mean, the help, [*laughs*] mostly.

SL: Yeah.

JF: But I had very little contact with black people. I think at the time there were a couple of black students in my school who were great athletes, I remember. They were the fastest runners. But I never had any social interaction with them, but I think I grew up to feel that the black people lacked privileges. Even in New Jersey, there was a black neighborhood, and I knew that a lotta people lived there were impoverished and were not educated. But I—my family never talked negatively about blacks. Uh-uh. And in high school—I don't think there were any blacks in my high school. I went to a high school that was not really segregated, but I'd say about 95 percent of the students were Jewish in that high school.

SL: Well, now how'd that happen? 'Cause it was out of the suburb.

JF: Neighborhoods. Because you—that—this was not a suburb.

SL: Oh.

[01:49:00] JF: This was in Newark. And I don't have it here, but I—
I'll show you some pictures of that high school now.

SL: Sure.

JF: It's totally black. In the [19]60s, after the Newark riots, a lot of
whites moved . . .

SL: Flight.

JF: . . . out of the community. Right. And there were still some
whites who lived in the neighborhood, but because you weren't
bused, the neighborhood changed. It became black, and the
school became totally black. And I just heard about a
documentary that somebody has made about a black principal
who took over at that time and made some effort to get rid of
the gangs that seem to be pervasive there. And the
documentary is called *Heart of Stone*. Stone is the name of the
man. I don't know it's a play on words. Now it's being shown,
but a group of students—white students at the high school—
Jewish students—decided that it would be a good idea to support
the school—to continue to provide support for it. And they have.
And they've formed an alumni association, to which I belong.
There's a newsletter that is circulated bout—mostly bout people's
memories. But there are fund-raisers held, and the money—
there are scholarship funds that have been set up for these black

students. There's this kind of feeling of responsibility for the disadvantaged that Jewish kids grew up with. You know, being—the sense of being an outsider yourself.

SL: Right.

[01:50:37] JF: Having come from very humble origins. You know, you [*laughs*] weren't up here. [Gestures above her head]
[*Laughter*]

SL: Right.

JF: You were here. [Gestures below shoulders] So that—that's a wonderful example of what happened. But it was neighborhood. You used to walk to school, I take it, or were you . . .

SL: Sure.

JF: . . . bu—you weren't bussed.

SL: No. Uh-um.

JF: No. You—and that's why neighborhoods in these larger communities where there was flight, or where Jews tended to—like, blacks do the same thing now.

SL: Sure.

[01:51:10] JF: And other groups. The Greeks live in a neighborhood. But here in Arkansas, you don't have that, because there are not enough minorities—you know, Greeks and Catholics and Jews. There are mostly, what, Baptists, and

[*laughs*] you look at the churches that are around.

SL: That's right.

JF: Yeah.

SL: That's right.

[01:51:28] JF: No, I don't feel that. I told you I had Jewdar, which carried with me . . .

SL: Yes. Uh-huh.

JF: . . . through life. And I don't know where my daughter came by it. I really don't. But I have—we have four children. This younger one's not married. The other three are married to Jews.

SL: Is that right?

JF: That's right. [*Laughs*] I shocked you.

SL: That's interesting.

JF: It is. And in a sense, our oldest son, Andy, wanted to go to school in the East. He was turned down. I think he applied to Harvard, and he did not get in, but he got into Tufts and Brandeis up there.

SL: Tufts, in Boston?

JF: Yeah. And he decided that at that time because Brandeis had a better SAT average or something . . .

SL: Right.

JF: . . . he would go to Brandeis. And I was surprised about this

'cause I would not have gone to Brandeis. [*Laughs*]

[01:52:21] SL: Now where is—is Brand . . .

JF: It's in Medford, Massachusetts.

SL: It is. Uh-huh.

JF: Or—is it Medford? It's near—it's in the—in Boston.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Greater Boston area. And so he went there and graduated from there. But he said when he was at Brandeis, he felt like a WASP, and when he was in Pine Bluff, he felt like a Jew. [*SL laughs*]
So again, it's the same outsider thing, I think, that carried over in his life, and he married a girl that he met there who was from New Hampshire. And then the second son, David—well, Gretchen came along. Gretchen had a boyfriend who was at—she went to Tufts. And he—it was Paul ?Kasow?, and Paul was raised as a Catholic, and I think they would've gotten married, but his family objected. They wanted him to marry a Catholic.

SL: Wow.

[01:53:19] JF: And he was a good enough son, so Gretchen was pushed outside. And several years later, she met somebody who was also from the South—grew up in—this is my son-in-law—a family that grew up in Florala, Alabama. They were the only Jewish family there. His father had a business that they

moved from the North. At that—I don't know if you know, but at that time there were a lot of businesses that moved South because there were no unions. There was cheaper labor.

SL: That's right. Absolutely.

[01:53:50] JF: And so Mel had brought a business, and before that, his brother-in-law had brought a business to this little town called Florala, Alabama. And Gretchen met Alan, and about a year later, they were married. And I think their Southern backgrounds were something that they had in common. And when he was thirteen, though, his parents moved to the North. They decided those kids either had to go to private school—boarding school, or they needed to be raised in a different kind of community. They moved to Philadelphia. But anyway, that's a part. And then the other one, David, [*laughs*] married somebody whom he calls a "stealth Jew."

SL: The stealth Jew. [*Laughter*] So you don't see them. You know . . .

JF: Oh, what he means is that she's not openly observant, but she, again, is aware and identifies in this way. And they're not religious. The only ones that—my oldest son, Andy, is not—is an atheist, but he—his wife wanted the kids raised in the Jewish tradition, so they had a bar mitzvah and a bat mitzvah. And the

others did not, because my daughter, too, is—and son-in-law are antireligious, and [*laughs*] so you can tell something about our family. You know.

SL: That's interesting.

JF: Yeah.

[01:55:21] SL: What about the Depression? How aware of the Depression were you growing up?

JF: I heard talking—people talking about it. I remember people talking [*bell rings*] about the banks failing. There happened to be a bank on the corner of the street where we lived, a house that my parents owned. This was Aldine Street in Newark, New Jersey. And I remember they're talking about the bank being closed, and I think I do remember that the bank was shut down. I don't know for how long. And again, my grandmother in her blue taffeta slips [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: My grandfather, who had been a builder, not building anymore houses or—I don't know whether he retired then or—I don't—he did work, but it was part time. It was—he no longer had a—you know, did construction. I remember—you know, that's just hearsay, but I was—hm-mm. Not old enough to really . . .

[01:56:29] SL: So you—in your neighborhood there wasn't soup

lines or . . .

JF: No, no. I saw pictures of that, but no, my father worked during that period. We always had plenty of food, and the family seemed to be okay. We had enough to live on. I never felt the—that we were disadvantaged in that way. Hm-mm.

[01:56:54] SL: What about—so there was a piano in the house.
Was there . . .

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . was there always a piano?

JF: This was after my mother decided I would take piano lessons. There had been a piano in her home. And she probably could have taken that, but she didn't wanna have an upright piano 'cause she wanted to have a . . .

SL: Baby grand.

JF: . . . a small baby grand. It was not a very good one, and she signed me up with a teacher who was horrible. [*SL laughs*] And I never grew to love music. I—it became a negative . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JF: . . . kind of experience, and she never really sat down and practiced with me. "You just go in there, and you do this."

SL: Yeah.

[01:57:34] JF: She didn't have time for me in that way. So we had

that piano. And then later on, it's interesting, the piano did figure in our family. When we moved to the house on South Thirteenth Street, which is the older one-family house. The first one-family house that we lived in—they bought a Steinway spinet. And when they moved to the other house, they had a very nice grand piano. So pianos—we moved—we were upward mobile, pianowise.

SL: Moved—pianowise. [*Laughter*]

[01:58:13] JF: And at one point, my mother—they sent me—they were ver—always very generous with us. I mean, they gave us [JF edit: Ed and me] our first television set, and my mother shipped the original Steinway spinet to me, and we had that. We used that. And then my son has it.

SL: So it—you've kept it in the family.

JF: Yes.

SL: That's neat.

[01:58:35] JF: And then I was without a piano [*laughs*] for a few years, and I—a few years ago I bought a piano, which I have in that backroom. I don't play.

SL: Yeah.

JF: But my sister was—they grew up in a different household. My younger sister, [*clears throat*], Carol, played the piano and was

talented—also played the cello. I did have some musical talent 'cause I now have a grandchild, Branch, who goes to a special school. It's in New York City, for kids who have a very special talent. It's run by Juilliard in connection with the public school system, and you know, you get in—you have to pass a certain exam. He's been there for about three years, and he has a lot of musical ability. He plays the piano.

SL: How old is he?

JF: He's the one that's turning twelve. [*SL laughs*] Really amazing, you know, to hear him.

SL: Yeah.

[01:59:31] JF: And there may be musical talent on the other side of the family. But my sister, Carol, and my brother's daughter is a professional cellist, so there is something that runs through the family. But the piano—somebody could write a story about the piano. [*Laughs*]

SL: So were there any other instruments in the house—any other . . .

JF: Later on, my sisters—my sister took violin—youngest [JF edit: younger] sister took violin lessons. My brother played the saxophone. But this is when I was so much older, in a sense, than they. And then, of course, I think school had something to

do with it. They had better teachers. My sister, Carol, is—was when she lived in New York City, was gifted the Steinway grand. She lived in a small apartment. And she always lived by the skin of her teeth. She did not marry. And my parents never gave her presents because she wasn't married, but they did give her the piano. And then when times got rough for her, she sold the piano. She needed the money. This was the sister whom I was very close to. She was nine years younger than I was, and she died at the age of forty-nine of a brain malignancy. She had a brain tumor.

SL: Oh.

[02:00:48] JF: Tragic, tragic, tragic. And—but she was just the most—to me, just my light on the—on—my window on the world. She lived in New York. She was never—she was—she taught for a while. She did a number of different things. And she finally decided to go back to school and got a Ph.D., too, in her late forties in neuropsychology. And then she fell madly in love by a guy who was afraid to get married, and when they died—when she died, short—before she died, he said he would marry her. He never signed—we found this out later—he never signed the marriage contract.

SL: Oh.

[02:01:34] JF: So she, too, was deceived. [*Laughs*] It was a deception. I mean, that was such a tragic thing. But she died thinking that she had finally gotten married to this guy. I—I've led you astray, but I've also led you there by virtue of the tour that the pianos . . .

SL: Well . . .

JF: . . . took in the family.

SL: . . . that's a good story, though. And—well, that's an interesting story. The—so the other deceptions that you're talking about were the—how you never knew what went on with the one cousin's family? There were—you said that she, too, was deceived. Was there something else that . . .

[02:02:20] JF: The other deception? You wanna hear . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . another deception?

SL: Yeah. Uh-huh.

JF: It involved me. After Ed and I decided that we would get married, he told his parents, and he said—in the course of telling them, he was not—Ed was never a person who was aware of who you were or what you were.

SL: Yeah.

[02:02:37] JF: This was not—he didn't have that sort of thing. But

he did find out that I was raised differently [*laughs*] than he was. I mean, I knew about him immediately 'cause I could tell who he was.

SL: Yeah.

[02:02:48] JF: But he told his parents that he was getting ready—he wanted to marry me and that I happened to be Jewish. And it was that point, he learned that his great-grandfathers happened to be Jewish. [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh.

JF: They never ever said anything about that to the kids, I guess. But the guy that founded the—he's already told Roy that the guy that founded the newspaper—*Commercial* . . .

SL: The col—the major.

JF: Major Newman was Jewish. He was not—I don't think he was observant, and the story—the family story goes that he was baptized when he was in a coma and about to die . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Oh, gosh.

[02:03:27] JF: . . . so that he could be properly buried. [*Laughter*]
But, I mean—but, again, you know, these are—they think that people are better off not knowing who they are. But when I first arrived in Pine Bluff, people would tell me, "Did you know that so-and-so was Jewish?" And, of course, I did at that point, but

the community knew who was who and what was what. But, you know, the family was very big on genealogy, and the grandmother had—Ed's grandmother—all the coats of arms hung from the English ancestors—the French, the German. And there was nothing for her father. [*Laughter*] I don't know. So these are funny stories.

SL: They are.

[02:04:15] JF: But he said when he heard this, he called me up, and he said, "I'm Jewish!" [*SL laughs*] And I said, "Well, what are you talking about?" You know, it didn't make any difference. [*Laughs*] But he had discovered that he wasn't what he thought he was. He was not totally Aryan. [*Laughs*] So there are stories. Some other families have these.

SL: Yeah. Well, sure.

[02:04:32] JF: It's like passing. If you're black—you have enough white blood . . .

SL: Yep. Mh-hmm.

JF: And you don't say anything about who you are or what you are. And I guess his family had decided that once old Major Newman was gone, they had made it. [*Laughter*]

SL: That's funny.

JF: So now you've heard about some of these things. [*Laughs*]

SL: Are we outta tape?

TM: We're outta tape.

SL: We're outta tape, and it's—I bet lunch is ready, maybe?

JF: Yeah.

[Tape stopped]

[02:05:03] SL: Music. Let's talk a little bit about music and what you grew up listening to.

JF: I never had a great—what I grew up listening to. I grew up listening to my father's old songs and the popular songs of the era that I think my aunt played. I never—we never had a record collection. I never knew much about classical music. That was not introduced into the family. Music really didn't figure very much. I was not into popular music of the time the way a lot of my friends were. I mean, they were a group that swooned over Frank Sinatra. I think I was too serious for that, but I liked the music, but it wasn't anything that really spoke to me.

[02:05:57] SL: Do you remember the songs that your dad used to sing?

JF: Yeah. [*Laughs*] We have rediscovered them, I think, online that somebody had found some of these early recordings. But he used to sing one song, "Since Rebecca came back from Mecca, she keeps smoking Turkish tobacco [pronounced tobacca]." And

then "The Sheik of Araby" and then the "Sheik of Avenue B." My father liked to sing, and I remember as a kid, sometimes when my parents traveled together, they sang together. And I guess that annoyed me, too. [*Laughs*] I don't know. I just—music did not figure in my life. I later on developed a fondness for opera, which I thought—[*clears throat*] as a child, I think my—one of my aunts used to listen to it on Sunday morning. And if I visited their home, I could not abide it. I was depressed by it. It hit me in some way, I guess. And I didn't quite understand why I felt the way I did. But later on, I just developed an interest—began to listen to music more. And met people who were interested in different kinds of music.

[02:07:10] SL: Was the—what about radio in the home? Did y'all ever . . .

JF: Oh, yeah.

SL: . . . gather around the radio for programming?

JF: We certainly did. There was Jack Benny and Fred Allen, the comedians. And then sometimes when I would come home for lunch, when I went to school—there was no lunch at school. We didn't take it. [*Clears throat*] Usually walked home, and while I ate lunch, I sometimes listened to a soap opera. Who was that? "Can there be romance after thirty-five?" [*SL laughs*] I can't

[*laughs*] remember who that was.

SL: No.

JF: *Helen Trent*.

SL: Okay.

[02:07:50] JF: Yeah, that was a daily program, I believe, and sometimes when I came home from school—and I would've been in about the fourth or fifth grade—I remember listening to *Helen Trent*. And my father would—they listened to—the news was very important, growing up during the war. And Wendell Willkie, whom is talked about in what's-his-name's—Philip Roth's book was something that we all listened to. Yeah. And my parents were—kept up with the news. And I think—oh, my father used to like to listen to *Superman* on the radio.

SL: Is that right? [*Laughs*]

JF: Sometimes if he—when he picked me up someplace—if that happened to be on—I don't remember the time, but there was a certain time slot. And he—[*laughs*] I don't know why. We never talked about it, but he . . .

[02:08:41] SL: What about boxing or baseball games or . . .

JF: My father was a boxing fan. And he used to go to the Monday night fights or something. But—and I think I—as—and when I was grown, I went to one of those, but he had also taken me to

a boxing camp where some of the people trained for the ring, called Madame Bey's or someplace in New Jersey. I remember visiting there one time, so mostly it was his interest. But no, we never went to baseball games, basketball—course, it wasn't popular like it is now. And I don't think Newark had a team, you know, that had fielded. I mean, I don't remember much of that at all.

[02:09:26] SL: I just remember growin' up listening to the boxing bouts and, you know, the bell ringing and, you know, the crowd and all that.

JF: We used to go to the movies . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . on Saturdays where they had two movie features and also—what was that called? The thing that went on and on and on every week.

SL: Newsreel.

JF: The newsreel, but also there'd be a series.

SL: Oh. Right.

JF: And—yeah. And I did that. That was some sort of Saturday entertainment when I was young. But I don't know. And my family took me to, you know, Radio City Music Hall, and we had a visit to the world's fair. My aunt took me to Atlantic City one

time to see part of the Miss America ceremony. I don't think—I don't even know if I saw it. I think I was just there to breathe in the same air. [*Laughter*] That was the time of the year that they were having it. Yeah, I think that's . . .

[02:10:31] SL: You mentioned going on trips. Did you all [*rustling sound of JF reaching for napkin*] drive to—did you go on vacations?

JF: We went to the seashore. We went to Bradley Beach. And I also went to summer camp later on. And Bradley Beach, I think, is about forty miles from Newark, but it was a place to go and spend most of the summer. [*Laughs*] People generally rented a place down there. And then—I mean, my parents—when I got older, they started traveling further distances. They—I remember going up to Cape Cod. I know my mother sorta liked that idea. I have some family pictures of that. I was about fifteen or sixteen, and I was just bored out of my skull. I didn't wanna be doing that. I mean, that wasn't what my friends were doing. You know, I was not in my element, I guess. I was just a kid in the family, and I had to be with the younger kids—my sisters and my brother. And then later on, when I was in college, they started going to Florida, and I never went with them there. Uh-uh. They subsequently moved when my father

retired to Sarasota and lived there for seventeen years. So . . .

SL: You'd go visit them when they were there.

[02:11:55] JF: Yeah. I would. And when I went off to school, I guess, to Chicago, I flew for the first time. And—but I don't think my family traveled a lot. My mother who—of course, who was born in Europe, got to go back. My parents took a six-week trip. My father bought a car, and they traveled around there. And I guess I was in my twenties by then. I was already married. But they never took us—any of us—to Europe. We did go off to camp, as I say. I went a few times, and then my sisters and my brother also went.

SL: Where—what camp was it?

JF: The first one I went to was a Girl Scout camp. And then I went to a camp in Pennsylvania that my parents picked out for me.

[02:12:51] SL: Mh-hmm. Were you—did you enjoy the Girl Scouts?

JF: Mh-hmm. I did.

SL: I don't know a whole lot about the Girl Scouts. I was a Boy Scout, but [*JF laughs*] I would assume they're parallel in many ways.

JF: Yeah. I don't think—[*SL clears throat*] I was a Girl Scout for a few years, and I don't think that there was—it was important in the scheme of things, growing up. I enjoyed some of the

projects that I was involved with. I can't remember a great deal about Girl Scouts and who was involved with me. I earned some badges, but it didn't continue. I don't think I had a lot of friends who were involved in that way. So maybe I got into that when I was in—went to Sunday school. It may've been that the temple or something connected with it.

SL: With the . . .

[02:13:43] JF: I mean, it was not a religious thing. I mean, there were all kinds of people, as I remember—and people I didn't know who were involved in this. So that was a good experience. But no, I didn't do much apart from my family, and in some ways, I think that was unfortunate. I did not have—nobody asked me what I wanted to do. [*Laughs*] It was sorta decided what I would do.

[02:14:07] SL: That seems to be a recurring theme . . .

JF: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . that those decisions were made for you.

JF: Yeah. You know, the right way to do it. And I didn't have the get-up-and-go and the gumption or whatever it was, and I think that there were many times when I cried silently. [*Laughs*] You know, you endure it. You know, you hang in there.

SL: Right.

[02:14:29] JF: Which is what my mother told me when I left for Arkansas. [*SL laughs*] She said, "You'll adjust."

SL: I remember reading that. Yeah.

JF: Mh-hmm. Hmm.

[02:14:38] SL: Well, let's see now. Let's get you in—do—when you got to junior high school, did you join any organizations—any student organizations? Did you . . .

JF: I don't think there were any at that time, that I can remember at all. I had—I did things with friends. You know, we visited mostly. You go to so-and-so's house, and so-and-so comes to your house. And maybe you go to a movie together. But nothing like, you know, my kids did. There were concerts to go to, and things were more organized [*laughs*] than they were in those days.

[02:15:17] SL: And that's [*doorbell rings*] the same way in high school? They . . .

JF: I don't think I belonged to—I worked on the annual, and there were certain clubs that you could join. But I don't think I—I don't remember ever being active. And I went to the—to a high school that had the only all-defeated football team in the city.

[*Laughs*]

SL: The only undefeated?

JF: All-defeated.

SL: All-defeated.

JF: Never won a game.

SL: Never won a game.

[02:15:45] JF: And so [*laughter*], you know, you were encouraged to go and cheer for them, but we were not cheerleader-types. There were cheerleaders. I mean, people who . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . who were cheerleaders. And—but that was not my thing. I can't remember very much about high school, except, you know, working in various courses, and that's sad. There's sort of a . . .

SL: Well, did you ever . . .

JF: Or maybe if you were a good analyst, you would get me.

[*Laughs*]

[02:16:14] SL: Well, did you ever get in any trouble or cause any trouble when you were in junior high or high school?

JF: Not that I know of. No.

SL: Oh, my gosh.

JF: No, never did. Never really learned how to rebel. Mh-hmm. That's sad.

[02:16:27] SL: So none of your—you didn't receive any peer pressure to kinda do somethin' that you shouldn't do or . . .

JF: No. I think I spent a lotta time at home. I thought about that when I looked through my annual, and there were some clubs that I might have joined or belonged to. But in a sense, I didn't live in the immediate neighborhood of the high school the way a lotta other kids did. And I had to take a bus to school. And other kids lived in the neighborhood and moved about more freely.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And now I realize that because I get this newsletter from this alumni association. And people reminisce about what they did after school. And *[laughs]* . . .

SL: And you were workin' your way on a couple of buses.

JF: No, I was home. I was on the bus. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[02:17:14] JF: And so I didn't get to do some of these things. And you know, it didn't occur to me as being unusual. It was just something that I had to deal with. So I really can't—I mean, I didn't go to these places to have a snack after school or hang out anyplace or—uh-um.

SL: What about dating? Did you go to dances or . . .

JF: Uh-um. Uh-um. I didn't. I had to invite somebody from outta town to go to the prom with me. *[Laughs]*

SL: Is that right?

JF: Yeah, I was not part of that group of girls who dated—had talked a lot about—who had boyfriends. Uh-uh. As I say, I had friends who were boys, but I did not have boyfriends. I was not romantic. I didn't read love magazines or [*laughs*] . . .

[02:18:06] SL: Well, what year did you graduate from high school then? You skipped a year.

JF: Oh no, I skipped half a year.

SL: Half a year.

JF: A term.

SL: Okay.

JF: January of [19]46.

SL: Okay.

JF: Mh-hmm. The end of the war.

SL: End of the war.

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: So . . .

JF: After the war was over. [*Laughs*]

[02:18:24] SL: Now earlier, we did know that some in your family did fight in the war. Is that right? Some of your relatives?

JF: Yeah, just one. One cousin. Mh-hmm.

SL: One cousin. And we mentioned how your folks paid attention to

the news and stuff.

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: And, of course, the war was the number one news item
for . . .

JF: And the Holocaust was . . .


SL: . . . and the Holocaust.

JF: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

[02:18:50] SL: So did you see much evidence of the war?

JF: Yeah.

SL: I mean, there—was there rationing . . .

 JF: There was rationing. We had bomb shelters. We were taught at school early on to get under your desk if there was an air raid alarm. We were issued asbestos tags. I don't know [*laughs*] what—like, the—that would preserve our identity. It was on a ribbon or something, so the ribbon would get burned off where . . .

SL: Burned off.

JF: . . . I'm not—I mean, it was ridiculous.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And [*SL laughs*—but that was—they were concerned about something might happen to us and . . .

SL: Right.

JF: There were a few occasions . . .

SL: Fewer . . .

JF: . . . that there was a sighting of a submarine offshore and [*drops hand to lap*] that we would probably would probably be sent home from school. And then we had this bomb shelter, and of course, every block had an air raid warden. And at night, there were certain—well, during that time, there were blackouts, so I remember that part. And, yeah, it was a frightening time in some way. But there were routines.

[02:20:03] SL: Do you remember the gas rationing or . . .

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: And didn't they collect medals?

JF: Is it raining?

SL: I don't know what that is.

Unknown Voice: Yeah, it's raining.

SL: Is it raining?

TM: Rain. [*Clears throat*]

JF: Oh, excuse me.


SL: Huh?

JF: It's a nice sound, but I [*laughs*] . . .

SL: It's a nice sound.

[02:20:25] JF: Yeah. You got—you had to have stamps.

SL: There were medals.

 [02:20:27] JF: You had stamps. And then I remember there was a restaurant called Horn & Hardart's, which is the automat in which it was very popular at time—you—there were little cubicles where food was placed, and you put money in a slot, and then you could open the door . . .

SL: Door.

JF: . . . and take out whatever you wanted. And that was a great treat. But there was a woman who sat in the middle of this place, sort of on a little elevated platform, and people could have sugar for their coffee, but they couldn't help themselves. They could have one teaspoon at a time. [*Laughs*] And she would portion it out.

SL: She would portion it out.

JF: Yeah. And so I remember gas rationing and tires—there were things that you couldn't buy. I remember hearing about the black market and women could not wear—you had stockings—silk things—any more. And you no longer wanted to buy anything that was made in Japan or Germany.

SL: Right.

JF: It was the start of the war. And, of course, there were people in the neighborhood that I saw who were in service, and their

families sometimes put a star in the window to indicate that there was a family member in service. And so I knew about this. And then a friend of my father's—a physician with whom he was close—who he was close to—was drafted to serve in the army. So I knew, you know, people from different parts of my life.

[02:21:59] SL: Mh-hmm. What about the day the war was over? Did—was there—do you remember a celebration at all or . . .

JF: Oh yeah, it was such—well, there were two. I mean, first was the war in Europe. And then, finally, the dropping of the atomic bomb, which I remember well and a second one at Nagasaki. Yeah, and the discussions after that—whether, you know, we should've done that or shouldn't have done that. But I think the immediate thing was, "Wow, now the war is over."

SL: Right.

[02:22:32] JF: Yeah. So that war was only, what, about five—less than five years long.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Seemed like a hell of a long time.

SL: It did.

JF: So yeah, I grew up with memories of that period.

[02:22:46] SL: So in 1946, the war's over. You're graduating. What was the high school you graduated from?

JF: Weequahic High School. Weequahic. *W-E-E-Q-U-A-H-I-C*. And it was called "the wigwam on the hill." [*SL laughs*] And it [*laughter*] was called that—it was—it—Weequahic—I guess they were a tribe of Indians who lived in that area, and that's how the school was named. I guess the school was fairly new when I went there—about ten years old. Something like that. And it was a very—you know, physically, a very imposing place, and there were some good teachers, too, at the time.

[02:23:29] SL: So how did you end up going to Chicago?

JF: Well, at that time, I really didn't visit colleges like people do today. [*SL takes a drink*] I mean, nowadays, you have to take my grandkids [*laughs*] . . .

SL: That's right.

JF: . . . have to travel to the East Coast and the West Coast.

SL: That's right.

JF: But I guess I had read about colleges, and we took SATs, and so you figured where you might want to go. And I picked out a few colleges, and Chicago at that time—well, my best friend had already gone to Chicago. And my father's—one of my father's cousins had received a doctorate there many years ago. And so that was on top his list. He knew—he was ready to send me out of town. He could afford to do that. [*SL takes a drink*] And so I

didn't look at any schools that were close to home, and I think I wanted to study art. But the attitude was you can never make a living.

SL: Yes.

[02:24:29] JF: You know. You can never support yourself, and you can't you can't afford to be an artist. And, I mean, I think, truly, that's what I really wanted to do. [*Laughs*] Or—you know, to do illustration—anything like that.

SL: Right. [*Takes a drink*]

JF: And my mother had a friend whom she remembered from way back who was—did illustrations—fashion illustrations for an advertiser. I'm not sure if—exactly what it was. So my mother, you know, took me out and invited this woman to lunch. She never did anything else like that before. And the woman told me, "Oh, you don't wanna do this." Everybody was discouraging. You know, in terms they spoke to you in terms of their own limited, narrow experiences. And I was discouraged. And I was encouraged because I could—you go to the school if you get in, and Chicago, at that time, was very selective and—so it was a feather in your cap to . . .

SL: Absolutely.

[02:25:32] JF: . . . to be sel—you know, included, and so my father

was pleased, and I don't know about my mother, but—and I went to school there. Chicago didn't even have an art department. *[Laughs]* They had an art history department, but for the first couple of years that I was there, we did a lot of focus on great books. It had a core curriculum. And I really wasn't prepared for that and . . .

SL: Uh-oh.

JF: . . . I don't think I was an academic type. I mean, I had—several people that I went to school with went on and had careers in research and whatever, and Chicago was a wonderful place for folks like that at that time.

[02:26:15] SL: But you were a good student in the public schools.

JF: Yeah, but this was very different.

SL: Yeah.

JF: You know, you're thrust into reading Aristotle and Plato and Herodotus and—without very much preparation.

SL: Yeah.

JF: You're just thrown into the great books. And they didn't give a hoot about students. Nowadays, people look after students. They have a vested interest in them. There, it's sink or swim. And being away from home was amazing. I mean, I suddenly realized that a lotta things—my family values were wrong.



Again, we were always on the other side. I told you about my friend and her nine-stripe beaver coat that was put on the floor.

SL: Yes.

JF: You denied your middle-class whatever it was.

SL: Right.

[02:27:04] JF: Values. And you were on to saving the whole world.

And [*laughs*] it was the end of the war. People were very idealistic. There were Trotskyites on campus who debated with the Stalinists and—I mean, it was an incredible campus. There were girls who were known as the dungaree-and-diaphragm set.

[*Laughter*] Do you know what I'm talking about?

SL: I can imagine. [*Laughs*]

JF: Yeah. I mean, they were liberated.

SL: Yeah.

JF: I mean . . .

SL: Yes.

JF: . . . and I was sheltered all of my [*laughs*] from all these things.

[02:27:31] SL: Uh-huh. But still that's pretty early in the mid—in the [19]40s. That's kinda . . .

JF: Oh, yeah. Well, Chicago, I think, always had that sort of reputation. But it was a very liberal school—politically liberal—and students were very outspoken, and there were some

amazing, you know, faculty members. And that was a place where the preliminary re—research for the atomic bomb—Fermi was there. They worked under the [stadium]—they had done away with football. No football. That was out. And somebody once asked the chancellor, Hutchins, did he ever have the urge to exercise. He said, "Sure, I have the urge." And they said, "Well, what do you do when you have the urge?" [*SL laughs*] He said, "I lie down." [*Laughter*] So we never exercised.

SL: Yeah.

[02:28:20] JF: You know, just mostly worked and met people from all over. It was a—an incredible place. And I really think that the experience I had at Chicago sustained me when I came to Arkansas.

SL: Really?

JF: Yeah. It was a—it was an entirely different world, and I had contacts with people with ideas—with experiences that . . .

SL: Well . . .

JF: . . . were out of the question.

SL: How long were you in Chicago?

JF: I was there—I finished the—I was there for six years altogether. I had two years of graduate work. And then I will tell you also that it was a hard time for women.

SL: Well, yeah.

[02:29:04] JF: Young women. They were not really encouraged to do the things that the guys were doing. And I'd continued with art school. I looked forward to that. I went to the art institute on—I took Saturday classes there.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And I had a—an instructor—I'll never forget this—by the name of John Fabian. It was a drawing class. And, you know, it was great. And he told me—he said, "You don't want to be an artist." He said, "You'll get married. Your husband will leave you. You'll have to support your kids. [*Laughter*] Forget about it." [*SL laughs*] I mean, that was the sort of thing that people . . .

SL: And all doom and gloom there.

JF: Yeah, people said that to you. "Don't try it. Don't." Yet there were—there was a young woman there whose name was Cheryl Diggs whom I met in one of these classes, and she was operating an elevator in order to pay her way through school, and I admired her so much, but I was afraid to get too involved with her because I was much too dependent upon other people. I didn't have any sense of independence. I was a kept child, you [*laughs*] might say. I never worked. I was supported all the way through school. And if I would ask for something, I would

get twice as much as I asked for. And that's not good either. I never really learned the value of a lot of things.

[02:30:25] SL: Hmm. You know, you've—it—you say you were a kept child, but at the same time, you were out there by yourself. I mean . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . you—it's not like [*JF laughs*—I mean, there's some strength in that. I mean, you're out there facin' the real world by yourself. Yeah, it's great that you've . . .

JF: Well, I . . .

SL: . . . got family that's totally supportive back home.

JF: Yeah.

[02:30:53] SL: But still, I mean, you still have to navigate your life.

JF: Well, you're very kind. Yeah, I learned, you know, to do certain things and certainly the business with the art institute was something I did, you know, totally on my own, and I made friends and . . .

[02:31:14] SL: You at least got to see some great art in Chicago.

JF: Yeah, the art institute was exceedingly important to me, and that was the time when Chicago art was—and artists were being recognized.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And it's funny because I was interested in art, but I knew nothing about the field of art history. Chicago had an art history department, but I was never introduced to any of these things. It's—you know, and I just never explored—I might've, you know, gotten involved with that. I don't know. It's a—if I went back to school, I'd act very differently. [*Laughs*]

[02:31:51] SL: I loved art history. It's really . . .

JF: I never had a course in art history.

SL: You'd love it. You should take it. You should take a course.

JF: Yeah, I have. And I listen to Teaching Company tapes on art history, and I've read, and it's—I mean, I know a little bit that I've picked up. But [*laughs*] that wasn't part of the core curriculum and . . .

[02:32:17] SL: Well, back then, there weren't a whole lotta choices for women, were there? I mean, basically, what . . .

JF: Teaching school.

SL: . . . secretarial or teachers or maybe nursing?

JF: Teaching. Nursing. Nursing was one. At the university—I mean, there were—when I entered the university at the end of the war—you mentioned something, how did the war impact on me? There were a lot of returning veterans, and [*SL takes a drink*] I had just come out of high school and a—I think there

was something like—there—it was a small class, but there were just about a dozen women and all these men that had gotten—you know, that they'd gone to Chicago. And there were barracks that had been erected for men who had families.

SL: It's the GI Bill.

[02:33:06] JF: That's right. And here were these older guys that I was at school with—some of them, you know, with beards.

[*Laughs*] I was fresh out of high school. Guys didn't seem to mature that rapidly. And that was also quite a challenge, you know, to position myself . . .

SL: Yes.

JF: . . . amongst these—these older men, so that there weren't too many guys my age. I don't really have a clear memory of that. One of the guys I remember whom I liked a lot—married and had, I think, a couple of kids by that time—Stanley Lange—had fought with the Spaniards in the civil war . . .

SL: Wow.

JF: . . . in Spain—the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. So, you know, I met people that had a lot of life experience. Including—well, they were all ex-GIs. [*SL sighs*] So it was a—trying to relate to these folks was a challenge, too.

[02:34:10] SL: So what was it that you were majoring in then

at . . .

JF: Well, the first part—the first two years, you didn't major in anything.

SL: Right.

JF: And then I think I decided that I was interested—I was torn, and the options—I didn't wanna leave there. It never occurred to me, you know, to branch off on my own. And I went into biological sciences and took—and also took anthropology, and I don't know if I got a—then I had a four-year degree, and I had a kinda boyfriend at the time who was a—decided that I really ought to apply to the psychology department for graduate work. So not knowing what I was gonna do or where I was [*laughs*] gonna go—that was always my thing. I'd said, "Okay, I'll apply," and . . .

SL: Got in.

JF: . . . my father was willing to spend whatever, you know, it took to continue with my education. I think he really wanted me to go to medical school. And I was not sold. I didn't know if I could do it, and I didn't know if I wanted to do it. It wasn't—you know, it was interesting . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . but it wasn't my thing.

SL: Right.

[02:35:21] JF: And so I opted and took the graduate entrance exams and was accepted in their psychology program, which was a doctoral program.

SL: There at Chicago.

JF: Yeah.

SL: You know, Chicago—I—I've read in a couple of different places that that curriculum and that template would—is really an ideal sit—and I know when I asked you about your major, I knew that they—you didn't declare a major at Chicago for a couple of years 'cause they . . .

JF: Oh . . .

SL: . . . they wanted you to have the broad experience.

JF: Beyond that. Right. Right.

SL: They didn't want you to start narrowing yourself . . .

JF: That is right.

SL: . . . before you had a chance to see what was out there.

JF: Mh-hmm.

[02:36:02] SL: And also when they decided to drop athletics, that was a—that was kinda news at the time.

JF: Yeah, that was way back. Before—when Hutchins came in, I guess in the [19]30s . . .

SL: Yes. Mh-hmm.

JF: That was before my time.

SL: Yeah, they . . .

JF: We looked down upon that.

SL: Yeah, it was looked down upon, but it was—you know, academically, it was a—I think it was a good decision, and it certainly seemed to elevate . . .

JF: Education.

SL: . . . education. Yeah.

JF: Yeah, they should do that at a few other places. [*Laughs*]

[02:36:30] SL: Yes. Yes. So, you know, I mean, did—you surely had a sense that you were in an institution that was pretty highly sought after by lots of people. I mean, and they were pretty selective.

[02:36:48] JF: Oh yeah, they were. And you know, people—I think it was—[*laughs*] people tended to peg you up here just because you went to school there, and it was difficult to get into. And with the psych program [*thunder in background*], I mean, I didn't know what I would do. I really—I think my—what I really would love to have done [*laughs*] is to be in the field of advertising. Doesn't that sound strange? But I always had a lot of ideas—a lot of enthusiasms and—but I never had a mentor. I

never had what I would call a mentor. And I—that—that's unfortunate. I think that every kid needs some one person or persons in their lives that can encourage them or bring them along and make them aware. Uh-um. So I kept on, and I did one year of graduate work, and that's when I met Ed.

SL: Exactly . . .

JF: Hmm?

SL: . . . how did you meet Ed?

JF: It was on a blind date and . . .

SL: Okay, now . . .

[02:37:56] JF: . . . there was a guy in my class who happened to be, I think, a roommate of his. He just by accident happened to room with him, and he told me that—this friend of mine said, "How bout going out on a double date? I'll take so-and-so, and I'll get you a date." And I [*SL laughs*] said, "Okay." I had—I think had been invited to dinner by some friends, and I said, "I can't go, you know, at dinnertime, but after dinner I'd be free to go." So I went. And, of course, Ed's life—his focus was very different. Girls were treated like girls, not like one of the boys, which I was very much used to. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

[02:38:42] JF: And, suddenly, I realized that there was, you know,

the possibility of romance in this life. [*Laughter*] And—you know what I'm talking about? Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JF: And I think that the light went on in my head, and [*rustling sounds*] I don't think he paid much attention to me, and I was very upset. I thought that, you know, somebody really was losing something—well, either of—either side. And I saw him several times after that, and then I began to see him more frequently. And I guess this was in my—I can't—I guess this—yeah, that was during my first year in graduate school.

[02:39:24] SL: So when you say you saw him a few more times, you mean you just kinda saw him on the campus or around, or did you actually continue to date . . .

JF: I dated him a few more times. And then he seemed to express some interest in a friend of mine, and that didn't—that made me more envious—you know, it made him more desirable, I guess. Like it was something—and I—oh, as I say, it was a different experience for me, and then, you know, he was just a real good-looking guy and attractive in a lot of ways, and it was special. And I don't know—when the school year was out or about to be out, that's when he wanted to know whether I would marry him. I had never been to Pine Bluff—hadn't any idea—never met any

of his family. Hell, I didn't know from one thing, and I didn't know what my life was gonna be like. I thought, "Well, you know, okay." I mean . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] You said, "Well, okay."

[02:40:25] JF: . . . no, I didn't say it exactly that way [*SL laughs*], but it was sorta that kind of experience. You know, they're—you—I hear about people and all of this romance and this exchange and—but I'm in some ways, I guess, [*thunder in background*] I'm not a romantic person. And we had developed friends in common while we were in Chicago, and he was studying—he was a graduate student in philosophy and had—we got married when I finished one year of graduate school, and he finished his year. He was not there for a degree. He said he wanted an education. And I think my studies suffered that first year, and I had taken a—oh—you take an exam [*birds chirping in background*] at the end of the first year, and I had passed it, but hadn't done very well by what was expected of me. So I had to take it again, which I did. But I don't think that I was in some ways this kind of serious student that [*laughs*] the department really wanted.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And they were harder on women, too, than they were on men. I

think they felt that women would get married, and you know, you couldn't depend upon them to be researchers and continue in the field.

SL: Right.

[02:41:42] JF: And then we went back—after ?be?—getting married, we went back to Chicago for a second year, and I continued in the program and got to the point where I finished my basic work. And the next step was writing a thesis—continuing that way. And he was—there were some problems with the newspaper business—union problems that they were having, and his father thought it would be a good idea, if he could, to come back and help. They needed somebody—an extra hand. And that's how I got to Pine Bluff at that time. School was over, and we moved to Pine Bluff.

[02:42:27] SL: Okay, now let me think. Didn't—did Ed go to Chicago, and then the navy called him back out?

JF: He was called back—after he got back to Pine Bluff . . .

SL: Oh, okay.

JF: . . . the Korean War. We were there. We came, I guess, during the summer, and then he was—around Thanksgiving, he got called back. And I worked at that time. The next thing for me to do was to have an internship—clinical internship. Well, there

was one that was arranged at the old state insane asylum, if that's what you—mental . . .

SL: Right. Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . used to be on Roosevelt [JF edit: Markham] Road.

SL: Yes. Mh-hmm.

[02:43:07] JF: And they had—there were so few psychologists [*thunder in background*] in the state. [*Laughs*] I mean, you can't believe it. They're probably—if there were a dozen throughout the state, that would've been a lot. Nobody was offering a advance degree in psychology. There was no place to work. Pine Bluff never heard of a clinic or anything to do with a psychologist, so I was in the remote territory. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JF: But he was called back to service right after Thanksgiving, and he—I thought that was the best time of my life. I got out of Arkansas. [*Laughs*] I was not too happy to be here.

[02:43:44] SL: So your first experience in Arkansas was not very . . .

JF: No, there was no . . .

SL: . . . comfortable.

JF: . . . no room for me. I mean, there was no—people looked upon me as—I probably had all the answers for people whose children

presented problems. [*Laughs*] I didn't know a thing about that. And, I mean, it was so different, you know. I had this vision that I would be coming to Arkansas, and I'd wear a blue turtleneck sweater, and I'd have a potter's wheel, and I would live this very Bohemian life.

SL: Yeah.

[02:44:18] JF: But it wasn't like that. I mean . . .

SL: Well . . .

JF: . . . here were all these young women my age going to teas and wearing white gloves and hats. [*Laughs*] I didn't know what to do. So, anyway . . .

SL: Sounds like Fayetteville to me.

JF: What?

SL: Oh, the potter's wheel and . . .

JF: Yeah. Well, I didn't know . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . what Arkansas was like.

SL: Yeah. Uh-huh. [*JF laughs*] Uh-huh.

[02:44:41] JF: And Fayetteville didn't have much going on then.

SL: It didn't.

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: It was probably a little more Bohemian than Pine Bluff, though.

JF: Yeah, there was different folks there.

SL: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

JF: And I understood that, but it was so far away from Pine Bluff.

SL: Yeah. Pine Bluff. Yeah.

JF: It was another part of the—remote part of the state.

[02:45:00] SL: So when—so you—let's see. Ed goes off to the Korean War. You go back to . . .

JF: What did I do? I think I went home to live in—with my pa—well, I lived with him. I—we had an apartment. We were in Boston for a long time. And then we—the ship changed ports, and we moved to Wickford, Rhode Island. And he—I think the ship was in dry dock or something for a good part of that time. So I did work a little bit in Boston. I helped some woman with a project she was working on. Did interviewing for her for—she was studying mothers, and I did that. And, let's see, what else did I do? I—Ed was very depressed about being back in the navy. That was a terrible thing that happened to him.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Is this sound all right?

SL: Yeah.

JF: It's just—sorta sounds menacing.

SL: I think it's okay.

JF: It—I don't mind it, but it's wonderful in a way.

SL: It is wonderful.

JF: Listening to the sound of the rain.

[02:46:13] SL: Is it a tin roof on top?

JF: It's not a tin roof, but this is—the fireplace probably has something that . . .

SL: Ah. I see.

JF: . . . we're sitting right here and . . .

SL: Kay.

JF: . . . we're hearing it.

SL: So Dwight's okay with that?

TM: Well, we haven't actually talked about it. We might—I was gonna say it changes so much, we couldn't even sample it and probably take it out.

SL: Right.

TM: But it's . . .

Dwight Chalmers: You definitely hear it.

SL: Do you wanna—should we . . .

JF: I don't mind it, but [*laughs*] . . .

SL: How much tape we got left on this . . .

TM: Twenty-one minutes.

SL: Let's just push on.

DC: Kay.

TM: Yeah.

DC: I mean, it's like air-conditioning level.

SL: Yeah.

DC: It'll blow over.

SL: Okay. Let's just push on.

JF: It's the way it sounds. It's the real world. [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh, yeah.

DC: Let me adjust, real quick.

TM: Yeah, go ahead and take the mic in a little bit. That'd be a good idea.

SL: I [*JF laughs*]*—it's sleeping sound for me, too. [TM laughs]*

JF: Oh, God! We gotta get him more coffee. [*Laughter*]

SL: We may—I may drink some more coffee here in a minute.

JF: Yeah. Yeah. [*Thunder in background*]

SL: Now we're gettin' some thunder. This is good.

[02:47:12] JF: I love that. We were talking about where I lived during the war.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Well, that was another experience I had. We had—Boston was great. I loved Boston. There was just—it was such an exciting place to be.

SL: Yes.

JF: And I guess we were there for about nine months, and then Wickford, Rhode Island. I can't remember the sequence of this, exactly. Maybe we lived at Wickford first. No, we lived in Boston first. There was a woman who rented us an apartment, and she owned the space. There were a lot of naval people, I guess, who came through there. [*Thunder in background*] Oh, what wonderful thunder. [*Laughs*] It won't last long. And she, I remember, invited me over for tea when Ed was gone one time, and she asked me what church I went to, so it started over again. I said, "I don't go to church. I'm Jewish." And she said to me, "You can't be!" [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh.

[02:48:19] JF: You know, so these are such strange things. She was a lovely woman, but from that point on, I—there was no basis for a relationship. [*Laughs*]

SL: Relationship. That's too sad.

JF: Well—but that's it. That was life in—at—in that way. But I thought Rhode Island was just a fascinating place. There was just so much to learn and to do. I was on my own a lot.

SL: So that particular exchange took place in Rhode Island—the . . .

JF: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

SL: Okay. Okay.

JF: And then in Boston, we lived in an—a house—an apartment on the third floor—[we rented from] a couple of Armenian sisters, [laughs] who were wonderful people. They just as nice as could be. So that was a great experience, being there.

SL: Yeah.

JF: I'm sorry it didn't last longer.

[02:49:06] SL: Were you there—I guess, nine—if you were there nine months, you probably saw some winter . . .

JF: Oh, yeah. It was bad at times, but—and Ed had to go back and forth. He had a hard time. He really did. And I felt for him because he was doing something that he did not enjoy at all.

SL: Yeah.

JF: That was difficult.

SL: Hmm.

JF: So . . .

[02:49:29] SL: So after [*thunder in background*]*—*how long was he . . .

JF: In the navy.

SL: . . . in the navy?

JF: Say, back for at least a year and a half to two years. I don't know exactly what it was. But it was a while. And during that

time, I became pregnant and had a baby and lost that child after about a week.

SL: Ooh.

JF: It was a shock. And I had gone back to—he—because he had gone to sea, and I was back living with my parents, and of course, everybody was so happy. This was gonna be a first grandchild and . . .

SL: Right.

[02:50:12] JF: . . . I was living at home. And I don't know exactly what happened, but there was some sort of blood problem. I don't know. Nobody knew exactly why, but there was some problem. It looked fine to begin with, and then ten days later, it was all over. And . . .

SL: Oh, gosh. That's hard.

JF: . . . it was hard on me because I think that—and hard on Ed, too, certainly. But it was as if I had to prevent other people from being unhappy. I took that responsibility upon myself. And I stayed home for a while. He went back. And then I didn't know what I was gonna do. I didn't wanna be there, so I went back to Chicago for a while and spent several months back at school. And then he got out of the navy. You know, my sequence is missed up—messed up. I think the Rhode Island

came after this experience. It was—I was still at Boston when I was pregnant and came home and had this terrible misfortune.


SL: Yes.

JF: And then tried to reclaim my life and . . .

SL: Then went back to . . .

[02:51:25] JF: . . . then—we lived in—at Wickford, Rhode Island, for a while, and it was there that he got out of the navy, and he—we went back. And I think, at that time, one thing I wanted more than anything else was a real baby [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . after having lost one. And I worried through, you know, the period of pregnancy—"Would this turn out all right?" And that—
 and I remember finding an obstetrician in Pine Bluff who was the obstetrician. Well, you have children, so you know about [*laughs*] this.

SL: Yes.

JF: He didn't want me. He said maybe his younger partner would take me on because I wanted what was called a natural childbirth.

SL: I see.

JF: [*Laughs*] So that was—nobody else did that. And—but that younger doctor, who happened to be from Mississippi, Calvin

Simmons, was great, and it worked out—the subsequent pregnancies, too.

[02:52:26] SL: So did you have a home birth then?

JF: No, no, natural childbirth—that time—I didn't want an anesthetic.

SL: Okay.

JF: I just believed strongly that this was not an illness.

SL: Yeah.

JF: That I wanted to participate. I had read some books.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And you know, it wasn't a radical idea. I mean . . .

SL: No.

[02:52:44] JF: . . . other people delivered that way. But in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Southern—nice Southern women not only were totally out of it, they stayed in the hospital for a long time. What else? They couldn't lift their babies. There was a book of instructions. You were not to lift your baby until after the baby is six weeks old.

SL: Oh, my gosh. [*JF laughs*] How is that possible? I don't think that makes any sense at all.

[02:53:11] JF: Well, this was Southern life because these women whom he dealt with came from homes where there were, you

know, the black nurses. You didn't lift your baby. You didn't—you know, [*thunder in background*] these were young women who were looked . . .

SL: Did all that for you.

JF: . . . looked after. [*Laughs*] And so I couldn't believe it.

SL: So, okay . . .

JF: Already I'm having trouble. [*Laughs*]

[02:53:38] SL: After the war, you guys are back in Pine Bluff.

JF: Yeah.

SL: And Ed's involvement in the paper is becoming—let's see, his father was still alive at that time. Is that . . .

JF: Oh, yeah. There was family there and . . .

SL: And was his brother in with him?

JF: His brother was there. And uncle was in the paper. He wasn't quite sure how he was gonna fit in. I don't think they gave him a desk until he was there for months. [*SL laughs*] I don't know. It was a strange, strange situation.

[02:54:17] SL: Well, how did the—well, there was a labor strike or . . .

JF: Yes, they had a union, I believe. I don't know the details, but there was a union, and the union was giving them some trouble and business was not so good, and they needed people—really,

just hands to turn out that paper.

SL: Right.

[02:54:39] JF: I don't know how long that lasted. I mean, it was finally settled. I don't know whether there was a suit—how that worked out. But it did work out. And as far as I know, the union didn't win. And [*laughs*], of course, in Chicago, everybody was pro-union.

SL: Is this early [19]50s?

JF: Yes. Mh-hmm. Yeah.

SL: So you've been dropped into a [*JF laughs*] white-glove Junior League kind of thing, and you felt completely out of place. How did you reconcile all that stuff?

JF: Well, I sort of looked for people whom I could relate to. And you know, you—you're there for a while and you—there were people at—young people at the paper with whom I had something in common. I was young then [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . and there were also people that I met that were living—had recently moved to Pine Bluff and, you know, different background.

SL: [*Yawns*] Were also in the culture shock.

JF: [*Laughs*] I'm gonna put you to sleep.

SL: No.

JF: You need another cup?

SL: I'm gonna [*JF laughs*] get another cup as soon as this tape is done.

[02:55:49] JF: Yeah. At Tues—this is not—and my time is okay.

Yeah, so I did meet other people, and then our son, Andy, was born within a year after we came back to Pine Bluff. And by that time, I had made a couple of friends.

SL: Now you did—you never did finish up your graduate degree?

JF: No. No.

SL: But you were into—you were doing a psychology . . .

JF: I—my degree woulda been in clinical psychology. And in 19—let's see, I came back in [19]53 or [19]50—the end of [19]53, and my son was born in [19]54, and then two years later, Gretchen came along. And that was in [19]56. In [19]57, my—our pediatrician said, "You got to do something about getting a license," because he needed help of a psychologist. And so I said, "Okay," and I thought, "I don't have the degree," and I never got a master's because I thought, "Well, one of these days, I'll finish up."

SL: Right.

[02:57:08] JF: Which I never did. But I took the licensing exam,

and they were willing to give me a license on the master's level even though I didn't have the degree in hand. I had the work.

SL: Yes.

JF: I had passed my prelims . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . and this, that, and the other thing. And they needed people, I guess. They weren't—there wasn't anybody in Pine Bluff that had a license. So they [*thunder in background*] licensed me as a psychological examiner. And I did work—I helped Dr. [Jimmy] Rhyne out from time to time with some of the kids that he had problems with.

[02:57:42] SL: So it wasn't a full-time . . .

JF: No.

SL: . . . position.

JF: No, because I had two young kids and no real help. I had this one woman whose picture you saw.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Geneva. I think she started out one half-day every other week. And then maybe she worked for me one day a week or something like that. So—or I had a babysitter that would come in and take over.

[02:58:05] SL: Where were y'all livin'?

JF: When Andy was born, we lived at Smithwick Apartments at Twenty-Fourth and—Twenty-Fifth and Cherry, I guess it is. And then we rented a house when Gretchen came along in a subdivision called Miramar. A small house. And we had been given a lot by Ed's parents, who divided up some property they had. And we didn't wanna build on that lot. We wanted to be by ourselves, so we sold the lot and bought another lot not too far from there in a new subdivision called Southern Pines.

SL: Kay.

JF: And we wanted to build a house, and so I worked on that—on getting the house built—helped . . .

SL: You kinda did the layout of the . . .

JF: Worked with an architect. That was where I really wanted Fay Jones. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yes.

JF: I knew about him. But that was—we couldn't afford that.

SL: Now how did you know about Fay Jones?

JF: Oh, God. Well, I guess I read about him someplace, and I was a great admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright's.

SL: Right.

JF: And I knew that he had been . . .

SL: Well . . .

JF: . . . a student of his at Taliesin.

SL: . . . Fay would've just been—he . . .

JF: He's a few years older than I was. And I had never met him, but I knew about him. I don't know how I heard about him.

[*Tapping sound*] I really don't. I first—you know, was aware of him—I hadn't really seen—I guess I had seen some pictures of his work and, as I say, Frank Lloyd Wright was still alive at that time. I don't know whether he'd visited Arkansas maybe.

SL: Yes, he did. He came and did a lecture in the Fine Arts auditorium.

JF: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

[02:59:53] JF: I heard him speak at the university in Chicago.

SL: Oh. Oh.

JF: A—fact—matter of fact, we—there was a newspaper picture taken, and I'm in the picture. [*Laughs*]

SL: Is that right?

JF: [*Laughs*] Yeah. He was incredible. And I had visited—Ed—after we were married, we went up to Taliesin in Wisconsin. I wanted to see that. So I knew something about the architecture of that era that I admired. But that didn't seem realistic in any way.

SL: Yeah.

[03:00:23] JF: So I found somebody in town, and we more or less

worked—you're losing something. [Points to microphone] [*SL repositions clipped on microphone.*]

SL: Oh my gosh. Okay. Good.

JF: We more or less worked together. And we built a house that we thought we could afford to build, and we cut back several [*laughs*] times.

SL: Well, that's [*JF laughs*] not untypical—not atypical.

JF: Yeah.

SL: You always want more than you can . . .

JF: Space.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Yeah.

[03:00:56] SL: But you were happy with the house . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . by the time you got done.

JF: Oh, yeah.

SL: And that occupied a bunch of your time.

JF: Oh, yeah. I—Ed was busy.

SL: But you're still kind of out there by yourself. I mean, you're working with an architect. You . . .

[03:01:10] JF: Well, I did something else. I started a great books group [*laughs*] mostly for Ed. I think that he really missed that

kind of dialogue and discussion. And that was the time when Mortimer Adler had published the—you know, the—remember the Great Books programs?

SL: Yeah.

JF: You could get a set of books and get a group of people together, and everybody would have a—you know, discuss these things. So we did that. And I got to learn—meet some people that way, and you know, we found people who would join us. What else did I do? And then in [19]57 was the year that I was asked to join the Junior Auxiliary in Pine Bluff by my two friends.

[03:01:58] SL: And what did the Junior Auxiliary do?

JF: Oh, they did—they were a charitable organization, and they helped, for the most part, people who are either handicapped or impoverished. They provided food. They provided clothing. But I think it was beginning to change. It was an affiliate of a national organization, and they probably told 'em to put more emphasis on cultural things. And about this time, they decided that it would be a good time to start an art class someplace 'cause art I don't think was taught in the schools. And I guess I joined—I don't know whether I told you this or not, or I told Roy this last night—I had mixed feelings about joining. I didn't care for the fact there were a lot of, you know, social aspects to this

thing. [*Thunder in background*] But my principle was when doors open, you go through. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

JF: So I did join, and they were beginning to work on this project, and I had been eyeing this fire station that was empty, and I thought this would be great for a nursery school. I didn't know what could be done with it, but then it . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . hit me. "This is it." So I proposed that it—you know, they look into it, and they did. And it was made available to the Junior Auxiliary. And the following year, I became chairman of that committee, and I immediately started to conceive [*laughs*] the notion of an arts center, not a class.

SL: Right.

[03:03:39] JF: And I worked at this and the next—within the next few years, we had joined the American Federation of the Arts; I had joined the American Association of [*laughs*] Museums to connect with other people and also spent time with folks at the Arts Center in Little Rock depending upon them in part for providing some instructors for classes, and they were helpful. That was a time when they had begun to do a four-years—a four-year bachelor's program—I don't know if you knew about

that—at the Arts Center. After the Rockefellers came in . . .

SL: Yeah.

[03:04:19] JF: . . . and they took that old museum—art museum and decided they would create an arts center there and that they would have a four-year bachelor's program for people who wanted to study the visual arts or the performing arts. Now this was an ambitious undertaking . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . 'cause nobody else down there was doing it.

SL: Right.

JF: It did not last long. I think that some of the big patrons didn't like the idea of these hippies [*laughter*] run—running around, you know, filling the galleries. And . . .

[03:04:47] SL: Well, now let's see—that's—what year is that?

JF: That would've been in the late [19]50s.

SL: Yeah. So you're in Pine Bluff when the [19]57 crisis . . .

JF: Mh-hmm.

TM: Scott, can we . . .

SL: . . . happened.

TM: You have two minutes left. Go ahead and break here for a second.

SL: Yeah.

TM: We're gonna change tapes now.

[Tape stopped]

[03:05:07] SL: We're kind of in this area where this New Jersey girl fresh outta Chicago gets transplanted to Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: Something that I'm sure you—and you had never even thought of . . .

JF: Uh-um.

SL: . . . until you met Ed.

JF: Uh-um. I didn't even think about it then. [*SL laughs*] I didn't think I was . . .


SL: You didn't realize what you were chewing . . .

JF: No, no.

SL: . . . biting into.

JF: Mh-hmm.

[03:05:36] SL: And we had just gotten to—I was startin' to ask you about the [19]57 crisis and what—how it affected you in Pine Bluff and what you thought about all of that. What—and, actually, what the Pine Bluff community—how the Pine Bluff community reacted to all that. Do you have any . . .

 JF: Well, I remember the [19]54 Supreme Court decision and how happy I was that—you know, the decision came through.

SL: *Brown versus Board of Education.*

[03:06:06] JF: Right. And by [19]57—course, that was the integration crisis in Little Rock. And the—we were certain—I mean, the paper was certainly involved in that. And I felt that [sighs] I didn't know what I could do about it. I certainly, you know, was mindful of it and had some connection with UAPB. Shortly after I arrived in Pine Bluff, that was one of the places that I explored—I was interested in that. Just in the fact that it was a college, to begin with.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And then, of course, it was an all-black school. I don't remember any details, but it was certainly a topic that was discussed, and I think that you had to be careful with whom you talked because most people were opposed to—or at least that I had experienced, had been opposed to integration. And I, you know, certainly was for it. I didn't know exactly what it mean, but I thought it was only fair and just that people be free to go to the school that was closest to them and that there'd be no barriers because of race, religion, or whatever. I remember there was a sit-in at a Woolworth's downtown in Pine Bluff, but that would've been after [19]57. It might've been about [19]59 [JF edit: 1958]. Things moved—you know, had already been

resolved to some degree in Little Rock. And I had Andy in tow [laughs], and I walked into the store—I did not know there was a sit-in—and I suddenly had a—two impulses: one, to get outta there because there might be trouble, and the other was to sit down with those people. But I had this small child, and I couldn't expose him, at that point, to anything. I never did join a sit-in. It was largely an all-black kind of thing. But I did do something. We belonged to the Committee on Racial Equality in the state. There were several groups that had formed, and we did have—did participate to some degree in that and knew some of these people. I'm trying to think of what the—what else went on. There really wasn't much that I could do, except be an observer at that point. And then I did something else. I invited—I knew about the Women's Emergency Committee in Little Rock.

SL: Now what was that?

JF: This was the—a group of women who organized a group that supported the reopening of the Little Rock schools after they were closed by Faubus under some legislation that he had rammed through the legislature.

SL: Yes.

[03:09:08] JF: And I thought that the schools in Little Rock needed

to be reopened, and I thought that perhaps we could support them in Pine Bluff, even though we were not involved in that particular situation. So Vivian Brewer, who was one of the principals at the time, came down, and I gathered a small group of people whom I thought were congenial or accepting of the idea of—actually, integration. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

[03:09:38] JF: And that wasn't what the organization was about. They were just committed to reopening all the schools. And I think we joined. We became members—out-of-town members for a dollar. [*Laughs*]

SL: For a dollar.

JF: But we did lend our support and—but we were not active here in Little Rock. And I don't know whether anybody else did that. In other words, whether they had any other out-of-town folks. They probably did. [*SL takes a drink*] But I wasn't aware of that.

SL: Well . . .

JF: So that went on—that was in about [19]57.

[03:10:12] SL: What—did you sense any tension at all in Pine Bluff?

JF: Yeah. The school board, you know, was debating these issues, and they had to come up with some sort of a plan to integrate

the schools. But that wasn't done until much later. It took a long time. And they—instead of beginning with the lower grades in Pine Bluff, they started with the high school. And my oldest son, Andy's, was the first integrated high school class. And we learned a lesson from that because we felt that, you know, that there'd be no distinction between blacks and whites. And Andy didn't have a car. [*Unidentified noise in background*] He rode a bicycle to school. We felt—you know, he—we weren't gonna [*laughs*] provide him with a car. Not at that point. And we understood that the black kids, you know—well, I shouldn't say—we didn't know what they did, but a lotta the white kids who had cars went out to eat, or they got hitched rides.

SL: Right.

[03:11:18] JF: And they did not eat in the school cafeteria. And we were not terribly aware of this, but we thought it was important that Andy stay at school and eat at the cafeteria. In other words, the assumption was everybody's gonna be eating at the cafeteria.

SL: Yes.

JF: Well, he finally let us know that there were just hardly any white students eating in the cafeteria. It was mostly black. So at that point, we relented and realized that we had to let our kids

experience things in their own way and not to inflict our beliefs . . .

SL: Yeah.

[03:11:48] JF: . . . upon them. So he went through school. At that time, they also integrated the teachers. In other words, the blacks and the whites.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And, certainly, not all the white teachers were terrific and the same was true of the blacks. But I remember some of the problems that he had with a science teacher who was so ill equipped. He happened to be black. But he [Andy] lived through those things, and in some ways, I think his education suffered. Not socially. He had the experience, certainly, of getting along with all kinds of people. But there was not much mixing socially after school at that time. And I remember David—when David came along—I guess they inte—I'm not sure. I guess integration actually started before—at the time Andy was a senior, but David was seven [JF edit: five] years younger. But I think his schools were integrated, too, at the same—you know, I can't remember some of these things.

SL: Yeah, they kind of . . .

[03:12:55] JF: But it seems to me—because he was in grade school

and he would come home and tell us stories about his teachers and the—who talked about the "billery, billery clouds," and he must've been in fifth or sixth grade at that time. And he knew more about stuff than she did. And she would turn over some parts of the discussion to David and probably some other kids because they knew what was going on in science, and she didn't.

[Laughs]

[03:13:23] SL: Well, now this—when you say billery, billery . . .

JF: Billery, but not—she meant billowy, billowy . . .

SL: Oh.

JF: . . . but she said "billery, billery."

SL: Oh.

JF: Her English—her language . . .

SL: Was . . .

JF: I mean, it's just sad. You felt for this woman. I mean, she was a sweet woman. But she did not have the academic background and, you know, to be able to deal with kids who spoke English properly. [Laughs] So . . .

[03:13:48] SL: Well, all of your kids went through the Pine Bluff schools.

JF: We felt strongly about public education. We wanted 'em to be in public schools. We thought that was connected with a

democratic form of government and . . .

SL: Yes.

[03:14:00] JF: So there were other people that we knew who helped start private schools.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And they picked—took their kids out of public schools, but we felt strongly about that. And you know, we taught our kids that this was something that is important to do for the good of society. And the ch—also many churches started schools, too. Church schools. No, there really wasn't—there were—there was a private academy, but we never would've supported that. Uh-um.

SL: Yeah.

JF: So we did our own thing. [*SL sighs*] Funny how you forget so quickly, but I guess—when they started integration, it was a year, and I remember the year, and so whatever grade you were in at that time, your school was integrated. And, course, Gretchen, too, went through all of this. They all did, but it was different by the time Eric came along.

SL: Yeah.

JF: It was more integrated. [*Laughs*]

[03:15:02] SL: Things had calmed down.

JF: Yeah, but there was still this—this is the white students—generally, you know, were better. They had more opportunities at home. They had—they traveled. They had books. You know, they had the families that supported [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yes.

JF: . . . education. Yeah.

[03:15:26] SL: So let's see. The Junior Auxiliary [*JF laughs*] led you to the . . .

JF: Arts Center business. The firehouse business—the Arts Center.

SL: Firehouse business, which ended up being a museum of sorts.

JF: The Arts and Science Centers. The Southeast . . .

[03:15:47] SL: Well, was—wasn't it a museum first and then . . .

JF: Well, no. The idea to me of the center—museum is a facility that has a collection. And our focus was on the here and now to have classes and to have exhibits, but we didn't have any collection. So that would be the museum part of it. And the Arts Center, too, of course, began a collection in Little Rock, but the idea was to call it a center. It was a more informal presentation.

SL: Yeah.

JF: People felt that they could come together. It was a gathering place. [*Unclear words*].

[03:16:28] SL: And so this was an old fire station that the city

owned.

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: And you spearheaded a group to get that thing set aside for the center . . .

JF: Oh, yeah. We . . .

SL: So they—the city had to decide to give you the space or at least let you occupy it. I don't . . .

JF: Well, they had already granted us this, but they—apparently, some of them did—were not aware—had never visited us—had never been over there. And they should have. They were giving us money because [*laughs*] one of the things we did was we'd needed a source of income, and we got money from the city, and we got money from the county and to help this thing move. But at some point, the Methodist church decided they wanted the land—they wanted to level everything on that block for a parking lot.

SL: Yes.

[03:17:23] JF: So they went to the city, and they said, "Sure, we'll sell it to you," like they were totally unaware [*laughs*] of an earlier commitment.

SL: Yeah.

JF: So some of us got together and organized, and we descended on

the city council and told them what they were doing. They didn't do it. So we saved it. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Yeah.

[03:17:45] SL: Now were there additional funds set aside to expand it or . . .

JF: Oh, it . . .

SL: It seems like there was a—another group that . . .

JF: Yeah, what happened was that the city didn't—never really knew what was going on [*laughter*] anyplace. And when they built the civic center, I think I mentioned that it was a woman who will remain nameless whose husband was head of the architect—no, excuse me—head of the library board, and there was to be a building set aside for the library, and she decided that the city needed an art museum. She knew perfectly well what was going on in the other place.

SL: Yeah.

[03:18:25] JF: But she had her eyes set on having a museum . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . with two galleries. And so that was done. It was incorporated into the library building, and she wanted to hire a director. And—but, of course, we had wind of this thing, and we

said to the city, "What are you doing?" "You—you're funding us an arts center, and then you're creating another facility over here?" So I think the only thing we could do was to get together and to try to combine the operations. And so the classes were held in one place, but the gallery was in another. And the city appointed the board. It became a city commission, and at that point, we agreed, you know, that the city would fund this thing. We'd have memberships, and it grew from there. And we named it the Arts and Science Center—Southeast Arkansas Arts and Science Center. And that—my notion was that we take in territory—that it not be a local thing at this time—that we think regionally. And that we also think in terms of arts and sciences, so nobody's gonna come along [*laughs*] and start another center—science center.

SL: Right.

JF: And that worked. It's still, you know, down there.

[03:19:52] SL: So were you actually running the thing?

JF: I ran it until 1960 [1966]—from 1958 until 1966. [*Makes a clicking sound with tongue*]

SL: Eight years.

JF: Yeah. That—I grew it during that time, yeah, and there were changes in it. We became—we left the Junior Auxiliary and

became a 501(c)(3) organization. Had another board. We called it the Pine Bluff Community Arts Center. We had a community board. We had a development committee who helped us get funds from the city and funds from the county. So I—you know, it wasn't a solo operation at that time, but I was still operating—running the thing—putting it together. And I had some—a couple of hired—I hired teachers, and they got paid. I mean, we charged for classes, and I mean, it was run like a business. We had a budget. And then in [19]66, when Eric was born, I just didn't think I thought it was ready for a full-time [laughs] person.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And . . .

SL: Now was your . . .

JF: . . . we hired somebody.

[03:21:03] SL: Was your work volunteer work or . . .

JF: Oh, yeah. I didn't get paid anything.

SL: You didn't get paid a dime.

JF: Not a thing.

SL: And so when you . . .

JF: I spent money, but I didn't [laughs] . . .

SL: When you stepped down, then they decided they needed to hire

somebody to run . . .

JF: Well, I told 'em they needed to have a full-time person, and I thought to myself, "Well, I'm not qualified to do this." Which was wrong. [*Laughs*] I was perfectly qualified to do that.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughter*] You were eight years qualified.

JF: Well, yeah, I was. I knew what it was about. I had the idea. But I had four kids, and I had a husband. I had responsibilities. And with the fourth child, that was different than having just three. And he turned out to be a kid that never slept for the first three months [*laughs*] of his life. [*SL laughs*] So all that was—I didn't know what I was gonna do, but I stayed on as a board member with this first—well, the first director was just with the little firehouse. And then after we merged with the other group, we hired a—another director to oversee the whole . . .

SL: Whole thing.

JF: . . . operation. Mh-hmm. I know it's confusing, but [*laughs*] . . .

[03:22:18] SL: Well, not really. But it still survives today.

JF: It survives as the sci—the Arts and Science Center for Southeast Arkansas, and it's having a hard time.

SL: It is?

JF: The demographics have changed so in the community. There's been white flight to White Hall. People have moved out of the

community. There are fewer people. Pine Bluff has lost about—I wanna say 10 percent or more of its popu—10 percent of its population—something like that. And, you know, economically it's suffered, too. Simmons Bank is still headquartered there. And "Tommy" May has been incredible in terms of what he's done. But the community itself—he's way out of the community. He's around the state. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JF: He's not just of Pine Bluff as, you know, they were many years ago. And so institutions that depend on public support or business support are having a hard time. But [*SL sighs*] the center keeps on going.

[03:23:20] SL: So they still—there's still some paid staff there and . . .

JF: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. There probably will be. But I don't think they have—you know, the future doesn't look great unless something changes down there.

[03:23:33] SL: So is there a possibility of partnership with the university there or . . .

JF: No. The university had sort of withdrawn more and more into itself, I think. And I can't tell you how it is just now, but I think that there was an effort upon the part of a lot of—well, I

shouldn't say a lot of people in the community—to really explore ways in which the university could become of more service to the community to bring it together.

[03:24:02] SL: A towns-and-gown . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . kind of thing.

JF: And as a matter of fact, that was another thing that I did. I was on a committee at the university when a new chancellor arrived. I'm not sure exactly what it was. And I offered to put on a conference called "The University and the Community." There were people in the white community that had never set foot in that place. And I organized this thing, and we had a huge turnout . . .

SL: Good.

JF: . . . of whites. Men. Lots of men. I mean, it was done in such a way that we had a good committee that brought people together and had some interesting speakers as far as credentials are concerned, but they weren't great speakers [*laughs*], which was unfortunate.

SL: Yeah.

[03:24:53] JF: But I think that the idea of thinking about the relationship of the university to the community and what it might

mean, one to the other was significant. But it worked for a while. I think that white enrollment got up to 17 percent. And then, at least this is my take, that there was a new chancellor that came in after that who withdrew. Who sort of sided with the "old guard."

SL: Uh-oh.

JF: And it became more of a black institution, and the number of whites enrolled decreased. And, of course, at that time, a lotta black students no longer went to that school. They were already up at UCA, or they went to . . .

SL: UA Fayetteville or . . .

JF: . . . in Fayetteville or Monticello, UALR. So all—Hend—even Hendrix. All that changed. And I'm not sure exactly, you know, what it's like now. I haven't been involved.

[03:25:55] SL: Well, after your—after you got the center going and established, did your—oh—did that activity bring you more folks of like mind around you? I mean, did you start to feel like you weren't just totally misplaced or just transplanted to Pine . . .

JF: Yeah, I had a place in the community. I still was an outsider, but I had a place. I knew who I was, and people had some regard for me. And as a matter of fact, the Junior Auxiliary used to have a charity ball every year. I was a—I was selected as

queen. [*Laughter*]

SL: Oh, well, there you have it.

JF: You've got a picture of it. [*Laughter*]

SL: Something we knew all along.

JF: I was un—it was unexpected.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And then it was done, I think, by vote—people who bought tickets could vote on who the queen should be. They were, you know, nominees. And I didn't know what was—what was about to happen. And people—I guess some people were surprised 'cause the favorites were not—you know, the favorite [*laughs*], [*I*] was not the one.

SL: Yeah.

[03:27:11] JF: I became the queen, and you know, people were delighted.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And so I was. It was fun. I had never, you know, gotten so dressed up in my life, and [*SL laughs*] you know, I had so much attention. But the next year, they decided not to have a democratic vote. [*Laughs*] They had a committee select the king and queen, and I think that had something to do [*laughs*] with—there goes the popular vote.

SL: Yeah.

JF: At least we joked about that. I don't know whether that was true or not. But yeah, I think I had some value to that community. That was not too long after the, you know, firehouse became—had merged with the other.

[03:27:49] SL: When did Artline start appearing in the paper?

JF: Oh, that was much later. That would've been—let's see. I moved up here in [19]95. I guess it was [19]95. And I had written it—I started it in 1985 or [19]86—someplace. Before the paper was sold, I started.

[03:28:11] SL: Mh-hmm. And tell me [*JF laughs*] what Artline was.

JF: [*Laughs*] Well, I just felt that there were things that went before that, that led up to it.

SL: Okay.

JF: Yeah.

SL: Well, let's get the things before, and then we'll get back to Art . . .

JF: Yeah, okay, just briefly. I'll do that.


SL: Okay. Okay.



[03:28:26] JF: After I had served on the board and was board president of the Arts Center—it looks like, you know, I'm finished. There's not much else I can do here. And I had—I still

did some other things. In 1973, I put on this conference called "Women in the Arts." A conference on creativity, and people from all over the state came—from Fayetteville—and it was an opportunity for women who considered themselves artists to gather. And a lot of them were concerned. You know, women didn't do anything like this. [*Laughs*] They didn't speak out. Well, it was beginning of the Women's Movement, and the same was true for women in the arts that women in the arts were beginning to notice that there were no women artists who were acclaimed and this, that, and the other thing. So that went on. And I think there were a few other conferences in between, like "The University and the Community," and I did one on major art—minority artists. There were—I enjoyed doing those things, and I could do them in my own time and my own speed. And, let's see, well, it took me a while. Well, then in the mid-[19]70s, I felt I wanted a job. I really wanted to work. And I went up to see Townsend Wolfe. And asked him if he knew of anything that was [*SL laughs*] going on, and he offered me the job of directing their state services program. And I mean, I wasn't looking for a job in Little Rock, but I came back and spoke with Ed about it, and I was moved [*to tears*]. And I took it, and I worked at it for five years.

[03:30:08] SL: What did art services do? [*JF laughs*] What was that about?

 JF: The idea of art services was like a peripatetic art center. It provided services. It shared the resources of the art center with communities throughout the state. It had a traveling artmobile. It had a—I was in charge of a traveling children's theater troupe. [*Laughs*]

SL: Neat.

[03:30:29] JF: There were traveling exhibits. What else did we do? We did a lot of everything that needed to be done. We needed to help people create spaces for the arts. I had a—I started a dance company. [*Laughs*] It just grew. But the idea was that the arts center was the Arkansas Arts Center, and part of its mission was to serve even faraway places like Fayetteville. And in the [19]70s, you know, there was no Walton Center. There were no arts centers.

SL: Right.

[03:31:04] JF: Pine Bluff had one and maybe—El Dorado may've had an arts center. But that was it. So I loved that. I mean, that was sort of my thing, to carry the arts to the people who didn't have any. [*Laughs*]

SL: And you did that for five years?

JF: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. And I left—I think that there were several things that went wrong. There was a new—a person who came in to take charge of education and found out that I was not there all five days a week—that I worked from home [*laughs*] a couple of days a week—not every time. And that—you know, she was not being treated fairly, and I think she complained that—they were also ready to give me a—something extra for my travels to accommodate me. But this caused a problem when this person complained to Townsend—I don't know how it happened. And then so it was either working there—being there committed to five days a week and trying to run [*laughs*] my household and do whatever else I needed to do. And it was a time, I think, when Ed felt that he needed some help, too, with just looking after family matters. And I decided, you know, with all this that was going on, that I couldn't continue. So that was it. And I loved it, but it was either all or . . .

SL: Nothing.

JF: . . . or nothing. Mh-hmm.

[03:32:41] SL: So you would've had to have moved to Little Rock essentially.

JF: I couldn't.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Yeah. I mean—and I couldn't go on. I—my—and that career didn't have a future because I would have to—would've had to have moved. You know, when you work at one place and you want a promotion and you don't have that opportunity, you can just go so far. You go to another place.

SL: Somewhere else.

JF: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[03:33:03] JF: So that was it, and—I mean, that was not the end of what I did, but [*laughs*] that was the end of my association. And then in [19]78, at my own expense, I went to a summer program at Harvard called the Harvard Program in Arts Administration. It was just a month long, but I took that and—yeah.

SL: That's pretty neat—a month in Harvard.

JF: It was a wonderful experience. I really enjoyed that.

SL: Did you live on campus?

[03:33:33] JF: Yeah. Mh-hmm. And met some wonderful people. And was with people who've—many of whom, you know, had worked for larger institutions and more experienced and people with futures. [*Laughs*] It turned out I didn't have much of a future in that field, but I enjoyed that. Then I came back and

worked at the Arts Center for another, you know, year or so. And, I don't know—Townsend did—was a strange—I shouldn't talk much about him—but he was a strange person to work for. I had a secretary—it [she] was called a secretary—an assistant at that point—and without ever speaking to me—this is—he just moved her to another department. I mean, things like that happened. There was not much consideration for people or—you know, you didn't hear them. I was free to do a lot of things that he didn't notice or didn't care about. As I say, if you asked permission of somebody . . .

SL: Right.

JF: . . . they say no.

SL: Right.

[03:34:34] JF: But—so he gave me an opportunity, I think, to do a lot of things that I wanted or felt that had to be done, and I appreciated that. But he also did things that were difficult to . . .

SL: Overcome.

JF: . . . to deal with.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Not open about things. But I admired him for a lot of the things that he did. He really built that arts center and . . .

SL: So I've kind of . . .

JF: You lost . . .

SL: . . . dropped the ball a little bit on the children now. What—how—when you're working at the arts center—I mean, for Townsend—what—where are the kids in their development? Where . . .

JF: Well, ele—Eric was eleven—whom you just met. And he would always say, "When are you gonna stop working?" [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JF: And David would've been—let's see—seven years older, so he woulda been just starting college.

SL: Uh-huh. And . . .

JF: And Gretchen woulda been in college, and Andy had either graduated or gone to medical school. But they were all out of the house. Eric was the only one there. And the others were very pleased that I was working. That made them feel okay.
[*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JF: Their mother—they were beginning to realize that women needed to have lives of their [*laughs*] own.

[03:35:57] SL: There is a—besides this involvement with art and the artistic community, now there's also—you had some interests in women causes, too.

JF: Yeah.

SL: How did those develop out of Pine Bluff? I mean . . .

JF: Well, I belonged to the League of Women Voters—
helped organize that.

[03:36:19] SL: Let's talk about the League of Women Voters . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . for just a moment. You mentioned the lady that started
that.

JF: Ethel Clark up in Fayetteville. And there were several women in
Fayetteville.

SL: Do you know Mary Alice Serafini?

JF: No.

SL: You don't? Okay. She . . .

JF: That name . . .

SL: . . . she has been with the league for quite some time.

[03:36:37] JF: Yeah, this would've been back in the early [19]50s.

SL: Uh-huh. I think Mary Alice is . . .

JF: Younger than that.

SL: . . . had her tenure at—but it . . .

JF: Uh-huh.

SL: . . . I think she did that for a number of years.

JF: I did—I just know some of the women who were involved in

spreading the word around the state.

[03:36:49] SL: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. And so the idea of the League of Women Voters was . . .

JF: To get people to participate—all people to participate in voting and to be informed about the issues. It was a nonpartisan group, and it supposedly studied legislation and problems that might lead to legislation. And the other was to encourage people to vote and to vote intelligently if they—in a—based upon, you know, an informed point of view.

[03:37:21] SL: Were their positions always neutral on issues?

JF: On issues? Yes. Well, no, I shouldn't say that. I think that after study, they took a vote of the members, and they would decide whether they would support an issue or work against it. So they were not neutral. They'd—neutral as far as candidates for office were concerned. They never supported any . . .

SL: One candidate.

JF: Right. Mh-hmm.

[03:37:47] SL: But when it came to issues, the league itself would have an internal poll and . . .

JF: Right. There'd be a process of study. They'd first think of adopting a topic for study, studying it, and then getting consensus, taking a position, and then working to promote it or

some way see that that was effected. That's . . .

SL: Now this was a—was this a national movement as . . .

JF: League of Women Vo—Voters was a national organization, and so there were chapters all over the country. And I probably never would've gotten involved, but this was an opportunity that came closest, you know, to what I thought was important. So—and I met people through that. I did. Because there, too, that was unusual. They were—it wasn't a real popular organization, but I met my friend, Pat Brown. I met a woman by the name of Jane Stern. I don't know if you know that name. Nancy Williamson. There were a number of women whom I had regard for—whom I met under those circumstances.

[03:39:01] SL: What about Diane Blair? Did you know Diane?

JF: I met her. Yeah. She did—she was head of Bumpers' Commission on the Status of Women. I was appointed to that, and it didn't last long [*laughs*], I don't think. But that's how I met her.

[03:39:16] SL: Were you there at the debate that she had with—what was the conservative lady's name?

JF: Oh . . .

SL: Schlafly or . . .

JF: Yeah, Phyllis Sch—is it Phyllis Schlafly or something like that?

SL: Yeah.

JF: No, I was not there. No, she was a force too—I mean, Diane was an incredible person. And . . .

SL: Yeah, she was.

JF: Mh-hmm.

[03:39:38] SL: She was. I knew Diane. So the lady in Fayetteville got one started in Fayetteville, and you kind of helped pick up the ball here in Pine Bluff and . . .

JF: Yeah, I was not the one who was contacted directly. When I first came to Pine Bluff, it was just getting started. And I learned about it, and I got involved. And then Ed was called back into service, and when I got back to Pine Bluff . . .

SL: Oh.

JF: . . . I picked up my relationship with the League of Women Voters.

[03:40:12] SL: Wow. So it went back that far.

JF: Yeah, into the early [19]50s. And to about [19]52, I guess, when all this started. And I picked up with some of the people that I had met, and you know, that was good. That was positive. So I did make some friends.

SL: Here—here's one . . .

JF: I'm not friendless. I mean, maybe it makes it sounds like I was

all by myself. That wasn't the case.

[03:40:39] SL: Well, no, but I am trying to paint a picture that you were not in a vacuum.

JF: No, and I was . . .

SL: That you did reach out. And you did—you were active.

JF: . . . I was—I had friends.

SL: And you were successful in implementing some things . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . that made a difference. The . . .

JF: It's—mh-hmm.

[03:40:54] SL: Here's—here an interesting question. What about music while you were in Pine Bluff? I mean, surely you were aware of a different culture of music once you got to Pine Bluff. I mean, you're a heartbeat away from Memphis and the Delta, and you've got rock and roll happening in the mid-late [19]50s.

JF: [*Laughs*] My kids loved it.

SL: There's the "Chitlin' Circuit" is developing.

JF: No.

SL: And now you've got like folks like B.B. King coming down . . .

JF: I didn't know these folks. I was not into that.

SL: So you were . . .

JF: I was more into classical music. And I—one of the things I did

with this firehouse thing—[*laughs*] I started a movie series.
Foreign movies. We had that.

SL: That's neat.

JF: And then the Arkansas Symphony was something that I thought was important, and we needed to do something in Pine Bluff, and I invited them to come to Pine Bluff [*laughs*] and sold tickets for this—for the firehouse at fifty cents apiece.

SL: Neat.

[03:42:00] JF: And we had to have it—I ca—can't remember exactly where they played, but Vasilios Priakos was the conductor at the time. Does that mean anything to you?

SL: Mh-mmm.

JF: His brother ran a Greek restaurant [*laughs*] in town.

SL: Oh no, what was the last name again?

JF: Va—Priakos.

SL: I do know that name.

JF: Yeah, this guy ran this restaurant on Poplar Street. He ran several kinds of places, but when I knew him, he was running that. And I guess Vasilios was the Greek name. I don't know what the English translation would be, [*laughs*] but I just thought that—I mean, I just acted off the top of my head.

SL: Uh-huh. So . . .

JF: So we had . . .

SL: . . . your kids were more aware of the . . .

JF: Yeah, and . . .

SL: . . . rock and roll thing than . . .

JF: Oh yeah, they were into it.

SL: I can't believe you couldn't dance to "Blue Suede Shoes" or . . .

JF: No, I had—my husband didn't dance.

SL: Oh.

JF: We didn't do that kind of thing.

SL: Okay.

[03:42:57] JF: No, we didn't. No, I was just too serious.

[*Laughter*] I'd sing with these serious things. [*SL laughs*] I didn't have any fun.

SL: Oh, come on.

JF: Not that way. I didn't. Uh-uh.

[03:43:10] SL: What [*JF laughs*] did you and Ed do for fun?

JF: Well, I learned how to go canoeing.

SL: All right. Well, let's talk about that.

JF: [*Laughs*] Ed got interested in the out-of-doors, and I'd never had an interest in [*laughter*] particularly, in the out-of-doors. And he started canoeing and getting, you know, his family interested in that. And so—but that came later. That came

when our kids were essentially teenagers—or some of them were. And we would have—we had family outings and before—a little before Eric was born, Ed just loved the area of the Buffalo River. And I said—we talked about having some land up there on the river. And so we started exploring for places where we might like to buy some land. And we did. We bought about two hundred and some-odd acres . . .

SL: Wow.

JF: . . . for sixteen thousand dollars. [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh, my gosh.

[03:44:12] JF: Don't say that again. [*Laughs*] This was back—it was about [19]65 or so. Nobody was, you know, up there, and oh, it was just so wonderful, and we so loved this. And we would, you know, just go up and look at *The Sound of Music* land. We didn't hear the music, but it [*laughs*] was just beautiful.

SL: It is beautiful. So do you . . .

JF: And we didn't build because the paper worked very hard for the preservation of the Buffalo River.

SL: Yeah.

[03:44:41] JF: And it was very committed to that, and we knew that if that succeeded, the land—you know, they'd take some of our

land away, probably. Which they did. They wouldn't let us keep one acre outta that whole tract of land. So . . .

SL: If they dammed the . . .

JF: No. I mean, after they decided not to dam the river.

SL: Oh.

JF: It became a national river. They took every acre of land away from us. They wouldn't let us keep one acre.

SL: Oh, my gosh.

JF: They bought it, but it was theirs. Anything. Any parcel of land.

TM: And where was it?

JF: This is on the Buffalo River. It was near Hasty. You know Hasty?

SL: Yeah. Sure.

[03:45:23] JF: [*Laughs*] It was in—just outside of Hasty. And we didn't build, but we had an Airstream trailer that we sometimes either brought up there or left up there for a while, and Ed contracted with somebody to build an outhouse [*laughter*] and bring electricity to the lot. And we spent, you know, time up there, and we enjoyed that, and we went canoeing, too. We belonged to the Ozark Society, and then there's the Ozark or the—there's a Waterways Club. And so we participated in that. And then, early on, I think we stayed pretty much close to home

before the—you know, Ed took up canoeing. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JF: We didn't do much. I mean, we just—if I had free time, sometimes I went to visit my family. You know, they were in New Jersey, or they came to visit us. So those were things that took time and some planning. But I'm not a person for [*laughs*] the—I never considered myself an out-of-doors person. I don't—I love to walk, but I don't really love to hike that much.

SL: Yeah.

JF: But I took that in stride and . . .

[03:46:41] SL: Well, did you like being in the canoe and floating down the river or . . .

JF: It was okay, but it was not my first choice. I think I would . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . rather have been [*laughs*] doing something else.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JF: But I was what you called a good sport and accommodating member of the family.

SL: Well, it is beautiful there.

JF: Yeah, and—yeah, it really was wonderful.

[03:47:01] SL: So anything else that y'all did for fun?

JF: Oh, we took a trip [*laughs*] in the Airstream trailer, after we

bought it, down to Florida. Ed had—it was a big one—thirty-three feet long.

SL: Wow.

JF: And it had enough—it could sleep six people.

SL: Oh.

JF: It was crowded, and he [*laughs*]*—we drove out in this trailer for this—we were gonna go visit my family living in Sarasota. And the first night out—I mean, it was such—I mean, to haul something [*laughs*] like that without, you know, going to school or something to become a truck driver. He couldn't back it up.*

SL: They couldn't back it up.

[03:47:42] JF: So we pulled into a gas station [*laughs*] and spent the night there.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JF: And you know, we went on and [*SL laughs*] by the time we got to Florida, the kids were so happy to be outta that trailer [*laughter*] that they just rejoiced. Ed enjoyed it. It was a—it was an interesting trip. We never tried anything like that again. It was—you know, their ages were such that—the teenagers had ideas of their own.

SL: Absolutely. There were other agendas of great importance.

JF: It was an imposition to be there. Right. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yes.

[03:48:12] JF: So we did a little bit of that, and then we just started traveling to other places. By that time, we had been to Europe one time on our own and—that was about [19]67. And then when Eric was eleven, we took him to Europe with us. How old was he then? That was in [19]77 or something like that. I don't know. We just began to do different things. Your kids get grown. But you're asking what we did during that period. I don't know. We just kept busy with one thing and another.

SL: Yeah.

[03:48:55] JF: We have a large family, and there was always something going on. Andy went away to school, and we certainly missed him. And then, two years later, Gretchen went off to school. She had been a cheerleader. She had a horse. That was another thing we did.

SL: A horse.

JF: A horse.

[03:49:17] SL: Tell me about the horse.

JF: There's a wonderful story about the horse.

SL: Kay.

JF: She had wanted a horse. She thought this was—make her life complete. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yes.

JF: She was about fourteen, I guess. Something like that. And we decided we'd find a horse. I don't think we ever felt as if we had any money to spare. I mean, we lived within our means.

SL: Yes.

JF: I mean, it may not seem that way to you, but that was certainly [*laughs*] true.

SL: Yeah.

JF: We were limited. And we—the high school principal kept horses for girls, and we asked him to find us a horse that could be—you know, that you [*she*] could ride that wouldn't [*laughs*] bankrupt us.

SL: Right.

[03:49:58] JF: So he found this horse, and he got us a second-hand saddle, so at Christmastime—on Christmas morning, we put out the saddle, and Gretchen was just beside herself. [*SL laughs*] And she said, "And I hope next year, I can get the horse." [*Laughter*] Little did she know that she—the horse was hers. But tho—those are such happy memories of, you know, of your kids and what they want and [*your*] being able to give it to them.

SL: Give it to them. Yeah.

JF: And she loved that horse. I think she named it Flicka.

And she—well, why not?

SL: Right.

JF: And the thing—another thing we did was that Eric was a little boy at that time and then put him on back of a bicycle, and we would ride out to the horse barn and visit and ride back again—stop at a country store. So we did a lot of things like that as a family, bicycling to a limited destination. It was just a few miles away. So that was for entertainment and the kids, what, would watch television by that time and—I don't know. My son, Andy, was always doing something in the backyard. I'm telling more about family and not about community.

SL: Well, that's okay, too. I mean, [*JF laughs*] the family story continues.

[03:51:23] JF: Well, this goes back in time. I was just very—my feeling with kids was you let 'em do what they wanna do and if it's not endangering them. Well, you don't know about [*laughs*] what they're doing. But he liked to dig holes from the time he was just a little kid, and he just dug deep, deep holes.

[*Laughter*] And . . .

SL: Well, [*JF laughs*] what was that about? [*Laughs*]

JF: He was—had a lot of energy. He was a kid that—he walked

when he was eight months old—just before he was eight months old. And he could walk under the lowest tables. [*Laughs*] He was just that way, and he was—I don't know what he was building. He built tunnels. He had me take him to the junkyard, and we bought a pulley—old, wooden pulley. And he created a tree house and—I mean, we'd forbid it. Finally, he would hoist his friends up into the top [*laughter*] of the tree. You had to be careful with these things. And there were parents who forbid their children to come into our yard because of the holes. And Ed stopped mowing—[*laughs*] mowing the [*laughter*] weeds because he was afraid he might fall into a tunnel or something. The kids are different. They have different personalities.

SL: Yeah.

[03:52:41] JF: And I don't know. It—he did—he was just that way. So, I mean, these are things that the kids kept busy with, and they played, you know, in different ways—different things with different kids. And at that time, we lived in a neighborhood that was pretty much apart from others. It hadn't built up all the way to that end of town, so we knew our neighbors and were friendly with them. And the kids could go back and forth.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And you knew the parents. That's not true . . .

SL: That's not true now. Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . not true these days. I—I'll tell you where else I—a few other projects that I worked on.

SL: Well, and we still have to get to Artline, too.

JF: Oh, you wanna get to that? Oh! [*Laughs*]

[03:53:25] SL: We still haven't talked about Artline.

JF: Oh, you asked me that a long time ago.

SL: Yeah.

[03:53:30] JF: I deci—I think I may've taken a course up at UALR at that time. I was interested in architecture, too. And there was a course on the Arkansas architecture that I took that I enjoyed.



And I started feeling that not enough was being written about the arts. There was just nothing in the newspapers of Arkansas that focused on art or artists. And I thought, "Maybe I can find somebody to start writing that way." So I spoke [*laughs*] to the people at the—what do you call it? Not the press department—journalism department. And I didn't mind telling what I thought they ought to do. [*Laughter*] I thought they ought to encourage arts writing—to start a program or to do workshops . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . so that people who were already interested in journalism might begin to focus on the arts. And, hopefully, at some point,

arts criticism. And then one day I just decided nobody else was doing anything about it, that maybe I would start writing, too.

[Laughs]

SL: Yeah.

JF: So I had already done a little bit of writing for various things. Nothing, you know, very big. And I said, "Hell, if nobody else is doing it, maybe I'll try it."

SL: Yeah.

[03:54:53] JF: So I went to the guy that was editing the newspaper, and it was sort of difficult, I felt. Didn't wanna put him in an embarrassing situation, but I said, "I would like to do this," and if he wanted—felt he could use 'em, and they had some worth, that would be fine. I didn't need to charge him anything [laughs] for it.

SL: Yeah.

[03:55:12] JF: He said, "Well, we'll try it, and we'll see, you know, how it does."

SL: How it goes.

JF: One . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . one a week. And so I started. And my sister said, "How can you write about the arts? What do you know?" [Laughter] That

was typical family response, you know. You're not prepared . . .

SL: Yeah, right.

JF: . . . ever to do anything.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And so [*laughs*] I started, and I continued it for nine years until I moved here.

[03:55:37] SL: Is that one a week for nine years?

JF: One a week for nine years, and . . .

SL: Wow.

JF: . . . finally, they decided they would pay—this was after Ed sold the paper—[*laughs*] that maybe they would pay me something. I said, "You know, I've been doing this now for a while, and it'd just make me—I don't care what you pay me, but I've won a few prizes, and I wanna consider myself a pro, and I can't do that unless I get paid for it." So . . .

SL: Right.

[03:56:05] JF: I can't remember [*laughter*] what it was, but I did get paid for it. And—but I enjoyed that and I . . .

SL: Well, that's a real responsibility. You gotta crank that out every week.

JF: Yeah, and think of things to write about.

SL: Well, yeah.

JF: There wasn't much art going on.

SL: That's four hundred and fifty articles. Is that right?

JF: Altogether?

SL: Yeah.

JF: I think—well, I've never multiplied them. [*Laughs*] But I . . .

SL: Something like that.

[03:56:30] JF: . . . I wrote about Little Rock. I wrote about Hot Springs—wherever I could. I ran [JF edit: I'd call] the state if there were an opportunity. Did it when I traveled, and somebody wrote a nasty letter to the editor. I think I criticized one exhibit that somebody was raising a—I don't remember how I put it—but it was meant to say that there are things you couldn't do in Pine Bluff. Not to be that critical. And he wrote this nasty letter, which they published in the paper [*laughs*], in which he said, "Well, it's easy for her to talk about these other places because she gets to travel." You know, like I'm privileged. Not that I had any value or no value to what I said—but anyways, criticizing me. But I surmounted that and just went on. I—it was—I enjoyed it. [*Thunder in background*]
So . . .

SL: Wow, that's a long time to write that . . .

JF: It's a long time ago. 'Cause they stopped in 1995. That was the

end of that. That was twelve years ago.

[03:57:40] SL: Well, what other things did you get involved in? [JF laughs] There was—it seems like there was something else.

JF: [Laughs] It must've been a . . .

[03:57:51] TM: I was curious—where did your love and appreciation for the arts really develop, and at what point did that really start takin' off?

JF: Oh, my whole life, visual arts—I'd started because I liked to draw and people noticed that I had some talent. And so I—that, I was rewarded in that way, and I just loved doing it. And I—that's how it came about. And I've always wanted to be involved in some way, I guess, with the arts and creativity, but I was not active in it myself—not a participant. I was always sort of on the periphery. [Laughs] A facilitator.

[03:58:36] SL: Well, are you revisiting your skills at all?

JF: With the writing?

SL: Well, writing or drawing or . . .

JF: Not enough. I haven't really worked with my hands. I've tried that a couple of summers ago out in Santa Fe. I took a workshop and—you'd like this—portrait sculpture.

SL: Yes.

JF: And I hadn't done it in I don't know how long. And I enjoyed it,

but it was so—I was so tense in terms of trying to get back with it. And I really thought I would pick it up here, and I sort of promised myself I'd get in touch with so-and-so and either join him at his sculpture studio, or I would get him to set something up for me here 'cause when I moved here, that back room where you've been sitting. You notice there's a floor in there that's very washable, and there's a sink close by that I would . . .

SL: Yeah.

[03:59:30] JF: . . . do whatever I wanna do there. But I got involved with—I got on the board of the Arts Center after I moved here and served on that for eight years and worked actively with that. And I went—I had belonged to the American Association of Museums, and I went to a couple of meetings as a trustee, trying to get others interested in going to this. And there wasn't much interest. You know, the board had—board members are not educated by directors. I mean, I think that's true of many places.

SL: Yeah.

JF: You have a few that you depend upon because they provide funding for you, which is all that you need . . .

SL: Right.

JF: . . . to do whatever you want. But I enjoyed my time at the Arts

Center. I mean, I was part of something that I really cared about, and I tried hard for—during the time I worked there and even as a board member, to work for its integration to have it, so that it served the whole community. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

[04:00:38] JF: Which was hard. [*Laughs*] But I also started—they put me—they named me chairman of the decorative arts committee. We sort of oversaw the Decorative Arts Museum. Do you remember that?

SL: I've . . .

JF: It was in the old Terry House.

SL: Oh, wait a minute. Maybe.

JF: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[04:00:57] JF: In the big, white house, there were decorative arts—there were exhibits there. And one of the problems was that they felt they never had enough people going over there, so I got started with something else there. I started a group called Friends of Contemporary Craft.

SL: Okay.

JF: And that's still going strong, and we started programs called Conversations with Craftsmen with that. And . . .

[04:01:22] SL: So y'all raised funds to . . .

JF: Didn't raise funds. We just got more people involved in craft. I don't know whether your sister's interested in that or not. We haven't gotten her engaged, but I suspect her interests are such . . .

SL: I'll bet.

JF: Well, she's been involved in political campaigns [*laughs*] and various other things in different parts of the world 'cause I know she was up in, what, Cambridge?

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: David, after he left office, was . . .

SL: Yep.

[04:01:50] JF: . . . was working there. I—I've given you just this whole chopped-up thing. Anyway, I did that and then another thing that went on—somebody put a bug in my bonnet—you probably know her—Sandy—hmm, what's Sandy's last name? Come to me in a minute. She's a videographer, and she's moved up to Fayetteville.

TM: Sandy?

JF: Yeah.

SL: Sandy?

JF: It'll come to me shortly. [*Laughs*] Sand . . .

SL: Okay.

JF: Anyway, she used to say that—she was involved in the—with the committee to reopen Little Rock Schools—Women's Emergency Committee. She was in high school at the time here. And a few years ago—several years ago—probably closer to ten years ago—she made a video on the Women's Emergency Committee. I don't know if you remember that or if you've come across it—talking about those women and what they did—the role they played in . . .

SL: Yeah.

[04:02:55] JF: . . . reopening the Little Rock schools. Hubbard.

Sandy Hubbard.

SL: Okay.

JF: She's living in Fayetteville now.

SL: Yeah. Now I know that name.

JF: Right. And I had been involved with the Women's Emergency Committee, as I told you early on. And I was invited by Irene Samuel, who had been very much involved with that here when they had the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the organization to join that committee, and I did, and I had always felt that it was important to pay attention to that house—not just as the Decorative Arts Museum but as the place where the

Women's Emergency Committee was launched, met, operated. It was Mrs. Terry who was the one who had convened the original group that . . .

SL: Yeah.

[04:03:45] JF: . . . led to this thing. So I was part of this fortieth anniversary celebration committee, and Irene Samuel, for some reason, pointed at me and said, "You take care of the art project. You get it done. We've gotta have something to commemorate this anniversary." So a light flashed on in my eyes—or my head—and this was after Maya Lin had put up that wall and names became so important. [04:04:14] And so this idea was not totally original, but I created a project for them called the naming project and put the names of every woman [telephone rings] who had participated in the organization. They were etched onto the windows of the Terry House, okay. So [laughs] if you go there today, you will see . . .

SL: You see . . .

JF: . . . all the names of every woman . . .

SL: That's beautiful.

JF: . . . who belonged. So it was a dedi—dedicated to [EF clears throat in background] everybody who had . . .

EF: [Answers telephone] Yeah.

JF: . . . had been involved in this thing.

EF: Hey, how are you?

JF: Do you wanna stop for a minute?

SL: Yeah.

TM: Sure.

JF: Yeah.

TM: Yeah, we better. We're bout to run outta tape anyway.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[04:04:51] SL: Okay. So where the heck were we? We were . . .

JF: Lost. [*Laughter*] Lost in space and time.

SL: Well, let's—first of all, let's just talk about the—how you fit and how you kinda felt lost at first in Pine Bluff when you first got there, but you ended up developing lots of relationships in Pine Bluff and gathered friends. And you actually built a constituency for your causes that you got involved with in Pine Bluff. Is that kind of a . . .

JF: Well, I might've helped build them, but I think they were there, and I was able to engage them. And I think that's—for me, that was important. I mean, there was already a constituency. For instance, the people in the League of Women Voters. We added to it. The Junior Auxiliary [*clears throat*], which later became

the Junior League, had a membership, part of which served as a constituency for some of the projects that I or other people did. So you develop your constituency, too. I mean, you—you've got 'em, but you gotta bring 'em along. [*Laughs*] And so the—those things were already there. In other words, there was only one organization, I guess, that I founded from scratch, [*laughs*] you might say, and that was the—at that time, was the Sister Cities. There was no existing constituency for that, but I already knew people and knew who to contact and who to bring into this thing, and I was known, too. I was not an unknown factor.

[04:06:38] SL: Mh-hmm. Well, what is the Sister Cities? Excuse me.

JF: What happened there? Well, that was—it usually turned out when there wasn't, you know, much to do—when one thing had sort of ended or quieted down, I thought about other things to get started with. [*Laughs*] And I had always been interested in Japan, and this all ties in, too, you know, with my interest in Fay Jones and his mentor . . .

SL: Frank Lloyd Wright.

JF: . . . Frank Lloyd Wright, who spent a lot of time in Japan.

[*Laughs*] Had a major collection of Japanese art, whose—who built in Japan—whatever—and was influenced by Japanese

design. So all of these things had some interest for me, and about this time, Pine Bluff was trying to develop commercially—industrially—and it was a port city. It—there was a wonderful man by the name of Wally Gieringer [pronounced GUY-ringer]—or maybe it was Gieringer [pronounced GARE-inger]. I'm not sure how he prefers to pronounce [*laughs*] his name. I think it's Gieringer [pronounced GARE-inger]—who now lives in Hot Springs, who was another incredible force, you might say, in the development of Pine Bluff through its port authority. [04:07:56] Little Rock had not yet developed its port when Pine Bluff's got underway. And this was built, really, to attract industry, and they attracted a number of plants that used the waterway in some way. One of them was Century Tube, which brought in tube [tubing] from other places on the river and then fabricated various things, including structures that we use in building cars and [*laughs*] fencing—things of that sort. And the community wasn't very close to this company, you might say. There were people who worked there, but I don't think that the people who ran the company had much involvement with the ordinary people of Pine Bluff. [04:08:42] Anyway, there was sort of a confluence of events. At one point, I had visited the [Boston] Children's Museum. I was still working, I think, in Little Rock,

and that woulda been before 1980, but had visited the—a—the Children's Museum there and discovered that they had been given, as a gift, a Japanese merchant's house—[*laughs*] the whole house. And I said, "How did you ever get this?" I mean, it was so incredible. And they said, "Well, it came as a gift from our sister city, Kyoto." And I thought, "What?" And I talked with this woman, and she said, "Do you know about the Sister Cities Program?" And I said, "Not really. I've heard of it, but I don't know much about it." [04:09:28] So when I got back home, I decided I would look into this, and I did. I learned about it, and I got them to send somebody down from headquarters in Washington to Pine Bluff to talk about the program—got a few people interested in it and then organized a group and told them, too, that I thought it'd be a great idea if we could engage Century Tube [the Japanese company] to work with us in some way. We did, and they volunteered through their Osaka office to help Pine Bluff find a suitable sister city [*laughs*] in Japan. [04:10:09] So I sort of got my wish that it would be a Japanese sister city, and that it would tie in in some way with Pine Bluff's effort to incorporate more industries of this sort. And it took 'em almost a year, but they found a city, which is about thirty-five miles northeast of Tokyo called Iwai, and

they said that they, too, were interested in reaching out internationally. So during this time, before we actually got the information about the city itself, I had already begun to bring people together, and I checked with the bankers [*laughs*] and the city government. I mean, people who were in a position to help, you know, us get organized in some way. And we found a lot of support for this, and we held meetings and got people psyched up about it. And then the choice of a sister city was announced. We already had an organization that had built—been built. And I [*laughs*] had the opportunity to go to Japan with Ed. There was a press meeting there, and he usually didn't go to meetings of that sort, but I urged him. [*Laughs*] I said, "This is an opportunity not just for you, but for me, too."

[04:11:33] So we went. The meeting was in Tokyo [*clears throat*], and somebody who worked for Century Tube, who was in Japan at the time, volunteered to take us to Iwai to see the city. So we went. We visited, and I already carried the message that, "Yes, Pine Bluff was definitely interested in having a relationship with you." [04:11:54] And we were warmly welcomed. That was my first trip to Japan. And when I got back, I carried a message saying, "Yes, the city was definitely interested in linking with Pine Bluff." And then it took couple of

years for everything to be formalized. But the program went on from there, and we developed a lot of interest—a lot of support. And the city, you know, was very enthusiastic about it. We had a membership, but the membership was open to everybody, and if you wanted to become, like, a friend and contribute money, you could. But the idea was to include everybody [*laughs*] as a member of this organization. And anyway, it went on from there. We got the firemen involved and the police involved—teachers, schools—it just, you know, grew that way. And we had exchange programs that came out of this.

[04:12:50] SL: And you mean exchange students or exchange . . .

JF: Exchange students.

SL: . . . families or what . . .

JF: We didn't do families. We did students that came to live with families and Pine Bluff students who went abroad. And there were several people that were helpful aside from people at Century Tube—Benny Scallion, who was a city commissioner at this time, I believe, was very interested in it. I went to the group called Fifty for the Future to borrow money. We didn't have any money to send the aldermen or the councilmen [*laughs*] from Pine Bluff to Iwai, and they said that they would lend us the money and that we were to pay it back. And we

went out, you know, over a period of time raised the money and repaid them but managed to send the councilmen overseas to the sister city. Well, I don't know. You know, there was a lot of enthusiasm and zeal at that time, but it isn't always easy to maintain the same level of zeal [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Right.

[04:13:54] JF: . . . you know. And my idea was that I wasn't gonna run this thing forever—that we would create an organization that others could run as well if not better. So at some point, I gave up the presidency of this thing and turned it over. And it continued well for a number of years. It really did. But it's having a hard time now. It's still in existence, but—and you have a sister city in Fayetteville, too—I think in Central or South America—or you did.

SL: I thought it was in Europe somewhere, but maybe it is . . .

JF: Or you may have another one. You probably have more than one.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Mh-hmm.

[04:14:35] SL: Well, do you think that's as much as the economic times, or do you just think that there's not a driving force to . . .

JF: Both.

SL: . . . keep it going down there?

JF: Both.

SL: Both?

JF: Both. Yeah. It takes somebody who's committed, like anything else. It doesn't run by itself. It's not where, you know, you come up for an election every [*laughs*] few years. I think times have changed. I think people have pulled away from some of these projects. You no longer can afford to fund them. There's a lot more competition for funding. People are busier. And then Pine Bluff—the demographics have changed. And this was largely—we had—certainly had minority members, but it was mostly a white effort. And now the community is largely black. And I think that community doesn't have the same tradition of giving—you know, involved in volunteer work in that way. So, you know, you can't say any one thing is the problem, but it is different and—but that's okay. Everything waxes and wanes and has its time. But I think that cities—and now—nowadays, of course, too, people are more interested in themselves rather [*laughs*] than what goes on overseas.

[04:15:56] SL: Yeah. Well, to set that up, you—did you have to have some kind of—was there approval processes involved with the federal government and with the state government and . . .

JF: No, no. Uh-uh. I—it was largely a city's decision to do this. We did involve the state to some degree 'cause I worked with the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission. You know, told them about it—try to get them involved in supporting this. And to a certain degree, they were helpful.

[04:16:35] SL: Uh-huh. Is that Bob Lamb?

JF: No, he wasn't . . .

SL: It wasn't . . .

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: It wasn't him?

JF: No. I can't remember who was the head at that time. Maria Haley was helpful.

SL: Okay.

JF: And she's back on the—she was in Washington for a while with Clinton, and she's back on the state scene. I'm not sure exactly what she does. But yeah, I met a lot of people at that time, and I guess I tried to be inclusive to, you know, draw the circle big enough to get different people involved, rather than just to work narrowly, city to city. And then I became the state coordinator for Sister Cities—that was another volunteer job—and [*TM clears throat*] tried to work with other cities that were interested in establishing sister city relationships. I don't know what's

happened to all of that.

[04:17:24] SL: How long were you the state . . .

JF: Coordinator?

SL: . . . coordinator?

JF: Oh, probably for about four years, and then I . . .

SL: That's pretty . . .

JF: . . . decided—I didn't have a budget, and then went to see Sharon Priest to see if she would take it over as secretary of state. And she did.

SL: Good.

JF: And she had a staff that ran the program.

SL: Good.

JF: But, of course, she left. And I'm not sure [*laughs*] what's happened to all of that.

[04:17:47] SL: Uh-huh. Well, did you see some progress when you were runnin' it? Did . . .

JF: Yeah. Things . . .

SL: . . . you helped some towns . . .

JF: Yeah, I think it grew. And, but then again, we had statewide meetings. We had a few of those. But I've been out of it, and I've—I just contacted the Sister Cities organization here. I have an ulterior motive [*laughs*] because . . .

SL: We'll talk about that in a minute, too, but . . .

JF: Yeah. Yeah. I don't mean them any harm, I mean—but they—I learned, too, that they're having trouble maintaining their Sister City programs. Why? I don't know. I don't know what the deal is, but . . .

[04:18:24] SL: Mh-hmm. One thing we didn't—we hadn't really talked much about is the women's center. What—tell me a little bit about . . .

JF: Hmm.

SL: . . . the women's center.

JF: Well, that was—had to do with my friend, Sandy Hubbard, who's a videographer. She's since moved to Fayetteville from Little Rock. But she just thought that there ought to be a women's center in the Terry House. I'm talking about the place that was formerly the home of the Decorative Arts Museum. It was closed when the new director came onboard for the Arkansas Arts Center. They didn't want to have two locations. They wanted to combine the two. So they closed down the Decorative Arts Museum and moved exhibits over to the Arts Center. So everything takes place there. And they—the city owns the Terry House.

SL: M'kay.

JF: But it was given by the Terry family for the use of the Arts Center as long as it wanted to use it. And the Arts Center may be willing to give it up if somebody's [*laughs*] willing to take on the responsibility, and it's a very—it's an antebellum home. Has a lot of maintenance issues.

SL: Yeah.

JF: Whatever. And anyway, with Sandy's talking to me over and over again, [*laughs*] I thought, "Well, this is worth trying." So I got together a few people, and we talked about it, and there was great enthusiasm. You know, like with a lotta things. [*Laughs*] "That's a great idea!" But I think we all had sort of tired blood.

SL: Yeah.

JF: We met first with a facilitator—about fifteen of us, and we were still gung ho. But it's just very hard to forge a new group when people are already involved in so many different things. So—although, I guess I worked on it for a while. I never felt as if we had the motive power to get it off the ground. And maybe someday, you know, it'll work.

[04:20:28] SL: Well, there's another "someday" [*JF laughs*] chore that you've taken on that maybe would—will eventually come to pass, and you're very interested in a piece of—a large-scale piece of art for [*JF laughs*] Little Rock to be identified with. Do

you wanna talk a little bit about the . . .

JF: Yeah . . .

SL: . . . the bridge idea that you have?

JF: . . . a little bit 'cause it's still—still here. I—what happened, I guess, was that I'm tired of people—and you've probably had this experience, maybe not so much anymore—but, "Oh, you're from Little Rock?" or "You're from Arkansas? [Nineteen] fifty-seven was terrible, you know. The crisis you had with your schools and that terrible governor that you had," and you have to say, "Well, you know, that's—things—good things have happened to Arkansas," but people don't understand that. When I was in Seville a number of years ago—in Spain—I saw a bridge that knocked my socks off. [*Laughs*] It was done by a guy by the name of Santiago Calatrava, who is a Spaniard who has created incredible bridges in many parts of the world. He's an architect and an engineer, and he did this wonderful bridge. You have to look it up on the web. [*Laughs*]

SL: Okay.

[04:21:45] JF: But it's—instead of being a suspension bridge with two supports, it's got one arm. It's at an angle. And the whole bridge is suspended by wires from that one arm. And I just thought, "How wonderful if Little Rock could have some icon

[*laughs*] to say, 'Look at that bridge, and that city is so forward-looking.'" You know, "It's got great vision—promise"—whatever. So I when I came back, I just started checking out Santiago Calatrava and bridges and started talking with people. And about that time, the talk about the Clinton center, and I thought, "How wonderful to have a great bridge." I wrote to the architect. I also wrote to Clinton. I didn't hear from him, but the architect said, "Clinton wants to keep the old railroad [*laughs*] bridge that's down there as a pedestrian bridge." And, of course, when you have a pedestrian bridge built upon an old railroad bridge, you've got to put an escalator or a stairway or an elevator in there for people who have to move bicycles or are handicapped. In other words, you just can't walk across it.

SL: Right.

JF: You've gotta go over a hump or two. So despite all that, the city had bought this old railroad bridge. Bought it from a railroad that didn't need it [*laughs*] anymore.

SL: Yeah.

[04:23:11] JF: That's like buying the buggy factory [*SL laughs*] or the buggy whip factory or whatever. And so they were gonna refurbish it, and that didn't work, so I talked about this and spoke with people, and they said, "Oh, that's pie in the sky."

And one person said, "Well, don't worry about it." He said, "When they take the rust off the bridge, there'll be no bridge there." [*Laughs*] And so, you know, we'll—it'll take care of itself.

SL: Yeah.

[04:23:39] JF: But I did—as I say—but, again, I never really found anybody that said, "Oh, let's work on that or get started with it." And I just—I've been thinking about getting somebody to talk about bridges [*thunder in background*] as part of this architectural lecture series and contacted a man last year who somebody recommended, and I didn't have the money to do it.

SL: Yeah.

JF: He wanted five thousand bucks plus his expenses. [*Laughs*] I didn't have much of a budget. And so I thought to myself, "This town has a sister city called Newcastle in England." And it has the Gateswood Millennium Bridge, and that is what it's noted for. It was built several years ago. It's famous all over the world. It's increased tourism. The town has developed economically, socially, you name it. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

[04:24:39] JF: And so I spoke with the chair of the Sister City board here and said, "I have something to talk about with you, and

that is Newcastle and the bridge and to take this idea and see if we can begin to talk about it here in Little Rock." And she liked the idea, so maybe if we can get another group or two interested in talking to Little Rock—I mean, I'm not gonna see it in my lifetime. It takes years to plan a bridge and raise money for it. But I think, at some point, when a new bridge is needed here, you might as well build a beautiful one.

SL: Yeah.

JF: So we'll see what happens from that. And as a result of that first bridge, I've just seen a lot of other wonderful bridges.

[04:25:29] SL: Well, it sounds like you've planted a seed.

JF: Well, I've [*laughs*] planted lots of seeds, but I have no crop. [*Laughter*] I mean, I don't have a sprout.

SL: Well, some of it takes a while to flower, I think.

JF: Yeah, that's all right.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And some people think of me now as the bridge woman, so [*laughter*] . . .

SL: "It's the bridge lady."

JF: Yeah, we'll do that, and—but, you know, I have interest, I guess, and see what happens.

SL: It seems that I had something else that I was gonna . . .

JF: I've led you astray. I've talked about so many different things in this. It sounds—my life, it seems so complicated. It's really not that. I live from day to day. [*Laughs*]

[04:26:09] SL: Well, let's talk a—just a little bit about your kids and their growing up in Pine Bluff. Do you feel like that they enjoyed Pine Bluff—that they—were there—were they active in the community in Pine Bluff? Did they belong to organizations and all of that? Do they—I mean, I know none of them are—I guess Eric is here in Little Rock . . .

JF: Yeah.

SL: . . . at the moment. But the rest are kinda scattered and have accomplished . . .

JF: Yeah.

[04:26:46] SL: . . . their own careers and are doing well. But I guess I just wanna kinda finish up on Pine Bluff and [*JF laughs*] because you spent so much of your life there.

JF: Well, I've carried that men—that mentality has developed. [*Laughs*] Well, I think that, you know, they're—each child is different. As we were talking about, you know, yesterday. And I think they all felt when they went off to school that the schools—that the situation they found themselves in was more congenial than Pine Bluff. I think their growing up in this

newspaper family, where often positions were taken that were not, you know, popular [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Right.

JF: . . . politically and things of that sort, that they often felt a kind of isolation. I sense this. Andy—I don't know why—as I said, I let him dig holes, and I also was perfectly willing to let him wear his hair—I don't—long. Did you see that picture of him? Yeah, where it's to [*gestures to mid-chest*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: And nobody else was doing that at the time. And it was all right with me . . .

SL: Yeah.

[04:28:04] JF: . . . but that—you know, it sort of marginalized him, too, and people thought he must be a drug dealer. Which he was not, but [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . but that went hand in hand. And I think he, in some—I don't know exactly what happened with Andy—why he felt the way he did. But I don't think high school was a great place for him. I don't think he enjoyed it that much. He was not part of any group. As I say, Pine Bluff was built upon church and country club. And this—I mean, I'm talkin' bout people who

lived in the neighborhood—our socioeconomic group. I mean, I don't mean we were here [gestures above her head], but you know, we were good, solid middle-class citizens. And—but when he got off to school, that was fine. I mean, he learned a lot. He was sorry that other people had more advantages in terms of the kinds of courses that they took—advanced courses, advanced placement—that he didn't have. That if he'd had that, you know, it might've been better for him once he got off to school. Gretchen was different. Gretchen was, as I say, a cheerleader. She had lots of friends. They prayed for her because she wasn't saved. [*Laughs*] Some of them did. But she was part of things. She was even elected homecoming queen.

SL: Neat.

[04:29:34] JF: See? Which is different, despite the fact that people used to ask her about this freak—this brother with the long hair. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JF: That was hard for her. But I think she was not a serious student like the others were. I should say Andy and David were more serious about their work. She was more willing to go out with the kids and have a good time. It was harder for me. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JF: But she went off to Tulane—Sophie Newcomb, thinking that this is where she wanted to go.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And after being there for a while, she realized that their—everybody was a homecoming queen or almost a [*laughs*] homecoming queen. And she thought she wanted to go someplace else.

SL: Yeah.

[04:30:23] JF: And so that's how she applied to Tufts and . . .

SL: Got it.

JF: . . . she got in and loved it.

SL: Yeah.

JF: She just thought it was a great place.

SL: It is.

JF: Yeah. You know the school?

SL: It's a good school. I do.

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: Mh-hmm. I had a friend that—[*JF clears throat*] a good friend that went there. It's an interesting school. He was there for the drama department. He was there at the same time William Hurt was there. And he also had a friend that was in quantum

physics—taking quantum physics there—is now a major researcher and theorist for parallel universes, so . . .

JF: My goodness.

SL: I mean, you know, [*laughs*] I've been . . .

JF: So you have this [*laughs*] impression of the school . . .

SL: . . . blogged to death from Tufts [*laughter*] folks. Yeah.

JF: Yeah.

SL: And I—and I've vis—and it's pretty. You know, I—I've . . .

JF: Uh-huh.

SL: . . . been to that campus. I—I'm familiar . . .

[04:31:15] JF: Well, Gretchen liked it, and then she stayed on an extra year there to work in the admissions department, and so she felt the school was a—played an important role in her life. And David—so she did all right. She didn't complain very much about high school although she said she shoulda been more serious, but that was okay. She—now she has a daughter whom she says is not serious. [*Laughs*]

SL: Hmm. It's funny how that kinda follows, isn't it? [*Laughter*]

JF: Yeah. She says she hopes that things will change. I said, "I'm sure they will." And then David was always a serious student. He was—[*laughs*] he would say, "Don't expect me to get good marks next year." This is the student who always got straight

A's. Came home from school. Never was told to do any homework. Got it outta the way. He said, "The work is gonna be harder next year, so don't expect [*laughs*] much from me." There was always every year this ritual.

SL: Yes.

JF: But he always did very well, and he wanted to go to an Ivy League school, and he went to Yale.

SL: Wow.

JF: And . . .

SL: That's a huge victory.

[04:32:27] JF: Well, it was lucky at the time. He talked two people into applying to Ivy League schools in his class, and they both got into Harvard.

SL: Oh. [*Laughs*]

JF: A black and a white. [*Laughs*]

SL: Wow.

JF: So I guess schools were reaching out at that time, too.

SL: Well—but . . .

JF: But . . .

SL: . . . still . . .

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . I don't know how many—was it—I don't know how many

how many thousands apply.

[04:32:49] JF: Yeah. Well, anyway, he . . .

SL: Yeah.

[02:32:49] JF: . . . he did fine. And—but when he finished, he, too, said that he wished that he had had a better education than Pine Bluff High School gave him. And he—when he finished, he said, "I don't wanna continue." [*Laughs*] "No more schooling for me." Which I thought was strange because of the—all of them, I thought he would definitely go on to get another degree. Gretchen did. He didn't. And then Eric had a miserable time in high school, in some ways. He had a couple of close friends. One of them was Daniel Greenberg, Paul Greenberg's son who, I think, had a hard time in school for a number of reasons, but Eric was his buddy. And James Hayes. I don't know if you known who James Hayes is—the glassblower. He's the guy that has learned how to blow glass, and his glass just sells incredibly well. I think it must be all over the state, but you probably don't go into gift shops. [*Laughs*]

SL: Okay.

[04:53:47] JF: Or places like that. And that—those were his friends. And there were a few others, but he had a hard time in school. He had a panic attack early on, and I'm not sure what

brought it on. Who knows? But this was a hard period for him.

SL: Yeah.

JF: And a—we had an exchange student at the time from Spain, and I think that had something to do with it.

SL: Yeah.

JF: I think that—I don't know what happened. The—there was a—this—I think this guy from Madrid—imagine coming from Madrid to Pine Bluff to go to high—an exchange student.

SL: Yeah.

[04:34:44] JF: Had dealt in marijuana, and there was some of this exchanged, and who knows what happened? But anyway, it was not a good experience all around for the exchange student or for Eric. And I don't think he thought very much about school, but he wound up, anyway, going to Oberlin. He was so happy when he got there. It was—he loved the people. He had friends. No problem at all. *[Laughs]*

SL: That's good.

JF: Whereas, at Pine Bluff, again, you know, there was not a lot of social—at least he felt that way. Whether that was true or not, I don't know. I mean, he seemed to have friends to me. So that was the crew, and he finished up, and then he wanted to be a rock musician. *[Laughs]* And he was for a while. And then that

ended. Anyway, that's another whole story.

SL: Yeah.

JF: But that's the crew.

[04:35:50] SL: Well, still there's—it seems to me you still have a very good relationship with all your kids and your family seems to be . . .

JF: And a husband. I've been married; I can't believe it . . .

SL: Your husband, yeah.

JF: . . . for all those years.

[04:36:01] SL: [*Laughter*] So you came to Little Rock in [19]95.

JF: Right.

SL: And since you've—I'm assuming that you love it here in Little Rock. You're enjoying your . . .

JF: I'm happy to be here.

SL: . . . your time here.

JF: I've made a number of friends and people with whom I think I have quite a bit in common, which is great. And I had another thing happen to me.

SL: Okay.

JF: [*Clears throat*] The year after I moved here, I had breast cancer.

SL: Okay. Let's talk about that.

[04:36:36] JF: Yeah. And that was a shock—an absolute shock, because I didn't seem to have any of the predisposing characteristics that supposedly were associated with . . .

SL: None of the flags were there.

JF: . . . with breast cancer. That is right. And I had been off to a spa. I'd never been to a spa, but I had bought, I think, a week at a spa at an au—at an auction, and I saved it and went with my daughter—got back feeling terrific, and three days later, I went to the—for a checkup and choo! [*Laughs*] That was it. And I had never really been confronted by a serious illness before, except that you knew I was a hypochondriac. [*Laughter*] I told you that, so I just wondered whether I would survive. I mean, it's like a death sentence when you hear something like that.

SL: Yes.

[04:37:26] JF: And I remember the doctor felt that—Dr. Westbrook—that I have a mastectomy—recommended that. We did a lot of search on the web, which you could do at that time, and—'cause one son was a physician, and the other one knew a lot about health issues—David—and they also did a lot of Web searches [*laughs*] for me to just think about various kinds of treatments or what type of protocol would be best. And I did

have a mastectomy, and I did not have any follow-up except tamoxifen. But my—that was a life-changing experience, and I'm sure it is for a lot of people when something like that happens. I think I've—had a friend—I think I mentioned her name—Pat Musick . . .

SL: I know that name.

[04:38:21] JF: . . . who lived up in—oh, outside of Huntsville. She was an artist whom I had met at a conference and just clicked like that with her. And she was married to Jerry Carr, the astronaut . . .

SL: Yes.

JF: . . . who lived up there.

SL: I've been to their fields.

JF: Do they—have you been out there?

SL: Yes. Uh-huh.

JF: Well, it's . . .

SL: On the Kings River.

JF: That is right.

SL: Yes.

[04:38:43] JF: She's a good buddy . . .

SL: Neat.

JF: . . . for a number of years while she was here. And she knew

about this, and she said, "You know, I'm gonna come down." Ed had—was planning to go on a trip to—I think it was to Indonesia at the time. He was going someplace that—it was a big trip for him. And I just felt that, you know, we oughta get on with our lives—that he should go. And Pat had said, "I'll come down and stay with you for several days," and she did. She said, "The thing you have to do is to plan ahead [*laughs*] because I may not be here." And I said, "Okay." And we decided we would go to St. Petersburg, Russia, with Jeane Hamilton, who did all the trips for the Arts Center. And we made plans, and I thought, "Well, maybe I'll get to go." It was a year away. And I did go, but Pat, at not quite the last minute, backed out. She couldn't go. Something had come up. But I went anyway. And I think that taught me something. One, the generosity—her sharing with me, helping me, and getting me to focus on the future . . .

SL: Yes.

[04:39:54] JF: . . . was a lifesaving [*laughs*] kind of thing. And so I did that. And I also—they were—I finally decided I was not gonna be an invalid. I had to get on with my life. And I found somebody who would—I went into therapy—psychotherapy—with Stephanie Simonton, who worked with cancer patients.

SL: I don't know . . .

[04:40:19] JF: Yeah, she's at UA. I had heard about her, and she came from some other place but married somebody here and settled here. And that was helpful, because she helped me look at my life and to make some changes—that I was the one that could make decisions for myself. She gave me a lot more confidence in terms of the kind of therapy that I had. And I decided there were two things to regain control of my life and time. I was gonna exercise on a regular basis, which I had not done before. And I was—become a vegetarian . . .

SL: I was gonna say . . .

JF: . . . because I had read that if you are a vegetarian, you are less likely to have a recurrence of cancer.

SL: Yeah.

JF: That alcohol is another factor. You don't want to—of course, I never—I didn't smoke, but—and so—I didn't drink. [*Laughs*] And I focused on being a vegetarian. So those things really just helped me make the transition, and well, that was . . .

SL: You are a survivor.

JF: I'm a survivor. You never know, you know, whether things are gonna happen again or not. But whatever happens, happens. I mean, you do . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . do the best that you can. And I'm fortunate—I really am—that I did—I have survived. So that was a life-changing experience, too. And I think that the physicians that I had were very good and the proximity to the med center, which is just, what, about a mile and a half away? [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

[04:42:01] JF: But I had good care. And I had a wonderful neighbor here. I guess I wouldn't have gone to the med center if it hadn't been for her—Betsy Blass. I don't know if you knew of Betsy. Betsy decided that her role in life was to raise money for things. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yes.

JF: And I think she raised about forty million dollars for that cancer center. She was involved in its building with Harry Ward, who was the chancellor for so many years.

SL: Yes, we've interviewed Harry.

JF: Did you do that?

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: That's—I didn't know that you got him.

SL: We did that.

[04:42:32] JF: Yeah, he was incredible. Anyway, she shoulda been interviewed. [*Laughs*] She—but she did that. She raised so

much of that money for them. And what did she die of? Colon cancer. [*SL makes smacking sound with mouth*] I could never understand that, that she, you know, neglected herself—avoided recognizing symptoms or what. But anyway, she died of couple of years ago. And they've got another incredible chancellor there who's about to retire. Do you know Dodd Wilson?

SL: I . . .

JF: I hope you interview him.

SL: Okay.

JF: He's from Minnesota—another outlander who [*laughs*] came here, and he's been here for twenty years, and that place has really expanded. And you've got a branch now . . .

SL: In Fayetteville.

JF: . . . in northwest Arkansas.

SL: That's right.

JF: Right. Of the med school under his aegis, so . . .

SL: Yep.

JF: I think that's wonderful. [*Laughs*]

SL: It is.

[04:43:25] JF: It—Arkansas—just one big community, so—yeah, and then the only other thing I'm doing now is that I serve on a—an advisory board for the—there's a new psychiatric research

institute, so that harks back to some of my earlier interests and addressing current need in this state. But that's not a full-time job. [*Laughs*] That's easy stuff. They just look at you. Another thing, too, that happens when you get to be an older woman. They don't . . .

SL: They just . . .

JF: . . . they don't want you. [*SL laughs*] They want your money. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, but don't you have a . . .

JF: But it's true.

SL: I don't know that that's true.

JF: Oh, come on now.

[04:44:09] SL: What about—don't you have a job spoiling grandchildren or—don't you go about . . .

JF: What?

SL: . . . spoiling your grandchildren in any way?

JF: I don't know what that means.

SL: You [*laughs*] . . .

JF: We have set aside money for—you know, what do you call it—a—what's the number of the fund? Helping them, you know, acquire something . . .

SL: Oh, I'm—I was thinking more in terms of buying them candy

when they shouldn't have it.

JF: No.

SL: And . . .

JF: No.

SL: No?

JF: I can't do that.

SL: You don't?

[04:44:37] JF: And I don't do enough of that. It—it's sad 'cause I'm not around them enough. In a sense, I don't know them. I mean, I'm a stranger. Even if I see 'em several times a year, you just are. Do you have grandchildren? You don't yet.

SL: No, not yet.

JF: No, no. Well . . .

SL: Still waiting.

JF: . . . I hope they live close to you. How old is your oldest child?

SL: Thirty—he's thirty-two now.

JF: Okay, well, it's getting ready. But Trey's got kids, and I don't know whether his are spoiled by grandparents or not.

TM: Yes. [*Laughter*]

[04:45:13] JF: No, I can't—I don't think I've spoiled them. I think I would do it more. I have a sense that Ed is more restrained, "You don't wanna spoil children."

SL: Yeah.

JF: And you can't give 'em candy anymore. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's right. That's right.

JF: I mean, because that's not good for them.

SL: Well . . .

JF: So I'm not saying . . .

SL: . . . spoiling 'em's not good for them either, but . . .

JF: That's not spoiling, but I . . .

SL: . . . that's kinda the classic American role for [*JF laughs*]
grandparents, though—at least . . .

[04:45:39] JF: Like giving gifts. You admire them. You have to
admire your grandchildren . . .

SL: Yes.

JF: . . . no matter what.

SL: Yes.

JF: They—'cause that's what your role in life is.

SL: There you go.

JF: And yes, I certainly do admire them, and I've given them gift
certificates to Barnes & Noble.

SL: Good.

JF: You know, things like that.

SL: Those are good.

[04:45:55] JF: Yeah. And I think I would do a lot more, but I've got somebody who's always—[*laughs*] there. You know, you have to be careful.

SL: Yes. Uh-huh.

JF: But no, we—I look forward to seeing them. I'd like to see them more often.

[04:46:11] SL: So what's the future for you and Ed? What . . .

JF: Well, let's see. I'm eighty years old. [*Laughs*]

SL: You guys are traveling some, I know.

JF: Yeah. I—well, we don't have any major plans. I have a—we have a place in Santa Fe, and when we bought it a long time ago—it was over twenty years ago—it was sort of like the Buffalo River property. You know, you just feel a need to spend time in a place. And he—I said, "You know, I don't know whether we oughta buy this or not." He said, "Well, if we don't like it, we'll sell it." But we're the kind of people [*laughs*] that stay in one place, so—[*laughter*] after all these years, it's still there, and we'll be out there. We don't go out as often as probably we should or might. But there are a lotta things that go on there that don't go on anyplace else.

SL: Yeah.

[04:47:18] JF: And that is their—we were living in Pine Bluff at the

time, and if you want anything cultural, you either have to help provide it [*laughs*] or go someplace else. And there was the opera. There was chamber music. There was—there were art galleries. There're museums. There's beautiful land. You've been out there?

SL: Yes.

JF: Yeah.

SL: Yes, it's unbelievable.

[04:47:41] JF: And so you know what I'm talking about—wonderful sky. And all these things just, you know, seem so ideal, and so I've been very fortunate in a lot of ways. I really, really feel that way. I still have to convince people who knew me a long time ago that there is life beyond the Mississippi River. [*Laughter*] But I don't know how you do that. I mean, you know, just sitting here visiting with you and some of your—the staff—it's just amazing what you're doing and what David and Barbara have done to establish a center to document life here in Arkansas. And I—and to be among the chosen is just something I never anticipated. I think that—what I've said often is virtue is its [*laughs*] own reward—that things that we do, we do for our own pleasure or our own need, not to be noticed, not to be rewarded. If you are—well, sometimes that's nice. Sometimes

you don't want, you know, the attention. But you work because you want to. And, I don't know, I wanted—one thing I'd—I thought I would like to do is to—if I were gonna take a big trip again, is to circumnavigate the Black Sea. For some reason that appeals to me, because it touches upon the Ukraine and Turkey and—I don't know what else it touches, but it goes—I don't know my geography [*laughs*] that well.

[04:49:23] SL: Well, there is a—there is kind of a cradle kind of thing about it. I mean, there is—it is the center of—maybe not quite the exact center of civilization, but it certainly puts you over there in that neighborhood . . .

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . of ancient, ancient . . .

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . activity.

JF: The origins. [*SL makes smacking sound with mouth*] Yeah.

SL: Yeah, that's interesting that you're drawn to that.

[04:49:54] JF: Well, I was—we were on a tour, and I heard about it from some people who were planning to take a trip like that, and we went to Antarctica several years ago. I'd never been on a cruise, and we went on a ship, and it was wonderful because you didn't have to carry your luggage [*laughs*] from one place to the

next. Or sleep in a different bed every night, and that turned out to be very appealing. And I've often thought that I wanted to go to Finland, but you know, I've traveled a lot and—or it seems that way—enough for me. And there's something wonderful about being in a community that you care about.

SL: Yeah.

[04:50:41] JF: I'll tell you where I'd like to be if it weren't so far away—in Bentonville, not far from Crystal Bridges.

SL: Really?

JF: Yeah.

SL: Well, you oughta come up, and you oughta . . .

JF: Buy a piece of land. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, I mean, there—you know—sure. And this would be a good time to do it 'cause the prices are down.

JF: Yeah. Well, I can't look after anymore [*laughs*] property.

SL: Well . . .

[04:51:01] JF: But—no—but I think that's a great place to be in the future. That area. And you got, what, a good airport there, and you got a lot of development. The university has grown, and great things are going on.

SL: The Pryor Center is up there.

JF: The Pryor Center is up there. [*SL laughs*] Right. Right. And

what's happening with Crystal Bridges and the—Moshe Safdie, the architect, to bring something special to it, too. What I guess most of all I think about is that I hope that there is some resolution of the world's problems. I don't know whether there ever will be, but I have four grandsons, and I think I don't want anymore draft. I don't want them to have to deal with the world's problems or make the sacrifices that a lot of other people have done. Your kids have escaped it.

SL: Mh-hmm. I'm hopin' the pendulum has swung.

JF: Oh, I don't know.

SL: I—I'm—I hope we're outta that business.



[04:52:04] JF: I think another thing happened, too, when I got married and certainly coming from very different backgrounds, growing up after the war—becoming—coming into adulthood, it was Wendell Willkie and one world. But there was a great feeling that we all belong to the same world. We may have come from different backgrounds, but we all have to be together. And I think I had that value that developed, and I have friends, too, who married—you might say, either outta their faith or out of their [*laughs*] part of the country. [*Birds chirping in background*] And that was something new, I think . . .

SL: Yep.

JF: . . . that came with the war. Certainly, soldiers married people in other parts of the world and brought them here. And those of us who did not do that still felt it was important to bring people from different backgrounds together. So that's in part what that attitude—how I accommodated the idea of coming to [*laughs*] this part of the world. [*Laughs*] Or marrying somebody from here.

[04:53:14] SL: Well, June, I have to say that this part of the world, I think, is . . .

JF: Hmm.

SL: . . . a touch better 'cause you guys did—have done what you've done. So . . .

JF: Well, we just thank you. But I think that it was—it—there was an opportunity for somebody with some energy. It was like my kid that dug the holes. [*Laughs*] You ask why he did it? [*Laughter*] I don't know why I did it. I didn't have a vision or a purpose, but I just had a shovel . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . and it had to be used. Yeah. So I don't get any credit for that. It was just someplace where I could dig a hole. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, you've uncovered some good things.

JF: Well, I've . . .

SL: And certainly planted some . . .

JF: . . . made it deep. [*Laughter*] Yeah.

[04:53:55] SL: Well, is there anything else? [*Coughs*]

JF: Oh, I—listen, we've covered—I—[*clears throat*] I feel as if we've—we—we've touched on too many things, but I'm grateful for the chance to talk about some of these things. I've written about them. I'm sorry, in a way, that I didn't go on—continue to go to school. Maybe not in the area in which I started, but to get more involved academically with the arts. But maybe, like you, we'll get back to using our hands again.

SL: I think—you could probably still do that. I know Barbara continued to take art courses, too.

JF: Mh-hmm. Well, her life was . . .

SL: And she loved 'em.

JF: . . . so different. I don't know how she managed. You know, if you travel or move around that way, how you . . .

SL: She'd just do it a semester at a time. Just sign up for one semester and . . .

JF: And was she in one place long enough to do it?

SL: She would go to—I think she ended up doing UCA.

JF: Really?

SL: Doing some courses at UCA.

JF: Mh-hmm.

SL: And some here at Little Rock. And she did art history courses in Fayetteville.

JF: Wherever she was, she took advantage of that.

[04:55:10] SL: Mh-hmm. And sometimes it would just be an audit. It wasn't . . .

JF: Yeah, I have . . .

SL: She didn't care anything about the credits. You know, she wasn't aft—pursuing a degree, but . . .

JF: Right.

SL: . . . she had an interest, and so it didn't really matter. It only bothered her if she missed a cour—a class.

JF: Yeah.

SL: You know, she'd make as many as she could.

[04:55:31] JF: Well, I tried auditing a class this year in medieval history. And I'd—I was outta town. I just couldn't keep up with it, and I just dropped out. I thanked the teacher for letting me audit the class. And maybe I'll try it another time.

SL: Well, do some art history.

JF: Huh?

SL: Do some art history.

JF: This was art history.

SL: Oh, it w—medieval art history.

JF: Medieval art. Yeah. I went back.

SL: That's pretty dark. [*Laughter*]

[04:55:56] JF: Well, I have—I use the Teaching Company. Are you familiar with those?

SL: Hm-hm.

JF: They're a series of tapes, and the—they're a series of lectures that are done by college professors . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . who are recommended, you know, as being very good. And I think that originally it was just the series of lectures, but now they're adaptive. I mean, there may be thirty lectures in the series.

SL: Wow.

JF: Half-hour each. And I walk on that treadmill up there . . .

SL: And listen to that.

JF: . . . and listen to that. So yeah, I think that's worthwhile.

SL: That's great technology.

JF: It is. So . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . I don't know if I have anything to add. I don't know—

you've—I covered the whole thing.

[04:56:35] TM: How bout I—*[clears throat]* your trip up Fuji?

JF: Oh! *[Laughs]*

SL: Oh, yeah. There's a mountain.

JF: Oh, goodness.

TM: And how that came about.

JF: Well, that's part of this whole family thing about undertaking challenges. *[Laughs]* I think I would rather—if somebody asked me, I would probably say I'd just rather stay at the hotel. *[SL laughs]* But what happened was that Ed had wanted to climb Fuji when he was in Japan. That was thing—sorta thing that all Japanese are supposed to do. And at some point in their life. And my son, Andy, again, got hold of this and said, you know, "You've got to do it." *[SL laughs]* So they made plans to go. Andy had some time off in August, which is the hottest time of the year, and he was gonna take his kids. And I thought about going, and I wasn't sure I wanted to go, and then my granddaughter, who was fourteen at the time, said, "We need a woman because I may wanna go shopping, and they won't go shopping with me." So *[laughs]* I said, "Okay." And I wasn't thinking too much about that, but I already knew that if I went, I would climb. So we got in what shape we could get in, and we

went to Japan. Andy made—helped make the arrangements, which was good. [04:57:57] And we started our climb at the—we spent one night there, I think, to get a little bit acclimated, and we just started climbing. [*Laughs*] We knew something about it, and we had made reservation at what they call a hut, which was I don't know how far up, but there are a series of huts on the mountain where you can stay. And we just kept going. And my grandkids were wonderful. A sixteen-year-old boy and a fourteen-year-old granddaughter. And, course, they could've just run up that mountain. But they would run ahead and sorta see what the land was like, and they would, you know, accommodate us. We sorta brought up the rear. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

[04:58:38] JF: But we did make it to the top. It took two days. We didn't go up in one day. And there were a lot of people climbing that mountain. Just amazing. You know, all ages.

SL: And it was beautiful. It was great.

JF: No, because it . . .

SL: It was . . .

JF: . . . was cloudy. [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh.

JF: We never saw the valley. [*Laughter*] It was totally shrouded in

gray. Then we got to the top. I think it was either raining or misting. And then coming down was the most difficult part, because there was a lot of scree, and I could not get a footing, and the only way I made it [*laughs*] down—I think I had Isaac on one side and Andy on one elbow just to keep me erect, so I could move my feet. I didn't know how to walk in that scree. And they just sort of ran—the kids ran down the mountain. [*Laughter*] There's no problem. But it was a good bonding experience with those kids. I never had spent that much time with them. They were never—I don't know what it was. We invited them—you know, wanted to bring them here and hold—you know, just have 'em. They never came by themselves. I don't know exactly why their parents—[*laughs*] they don't have grandparents in Dallas. But we were never allowed to have them here by themselves. So this was wonderful to spend time with them, you know, with nobody else interfering. And I think my son was pleased, too, that we had all done that. So that was Fuji. And, of course, Ed has climbed Kilimanjaro with three of our four kids. I don't know if he told somebody about that. Did he tell you?

SL: He didn't tell me. Hm-hm.

TM: He talked about it yesterday.

JF: Did he?

SL: Yeah.

[05:00:21] JF: Okay. So he did that. [*TM clears throat*] And then they took us to Mount Whitney, and then last summer two of my [*laughs*] sons decided they would climb Rainier. They were gonna take a climbing course first. It was Andy and his son, Isaac, and then David went along, too. And Andy quit out bef—quit before [*laughs*] they got started, and it—just too much. This is in July. And David went up part of the way and said, "No, this is not for me." Isaac went all the way to the top—Andy's son—[*laughs*] and came back. And he's got the bug on. I hope it wears itself out. But . . .

SL: He wants to climb all the time now.

JF: I hope not. But he did do that. So the climbing—and then Ed started that because he took three of the—I could've gone, but I didn't want to. And Eric was at college. But he took three of the four up Kilimanjaro, and they made it to the summit.

SL: Wow.

[05:01:35] JF: Do you know Robert Johnston from . . .

SL: I don't.

JF: . . . from here. He went, too. I think that's—that was it. But that's quite something. There was a newspaper account of that,

which may've been scanned in. I think Roy had that, and [*SL sighs*] so that was it. And I'm not a mountain climber. [*Laughs*] I don't wanna be one when I grow up. [*Laughter*] I don't know what I wanna do. But I need to get organized—all those pictures now that I started going through them to sort 'em out in—into boxes and give 'em away.


SL: Well, there you go.

JF: Document my life.

SL: We've done something for you then.

JF: Oh, God, but I got all this stuff to clean up. [*SL laughs*] I don't know what I'm gonna do. But you don't—you've got pretty much whatever you needed to ask me, I suspect. Is there anything else?

[05:02:22] SL: I think—well, I'm [*TM clears throat*] was gonna ask you if there was anything else that you'd like to say or talk about that we haven't?

 JF: No. I think that—I think—I hope I can become more generative, too. I think I—of working with younger people and encouraging them, too, in things that they want to do. And I told you before—growing old is an interesting experience. I don't consider myself old. I am in terms of years. And people look at you differently. You reach a certain age, and they wanna help

you across the street [*laughs*] or something like that. But I think some of that is true, that you reach a certain age, and people don't expect you to be involved in certain things. I think my voice has held up fairly well, so that if they talk to me [*laughs*] over the telephone, they don't have any idea of who I am or what I look like or what my birth year is. But I think I have found that you—for a woman—and I don't know whether Barbara's had this experience or anybody's talked about this—I'm sure her situation is different. But when you walk into a room, you have to exude personality if you wanna get any attention [*laughs*] from people, because if they just look at you and see you, they have certain preconceived notions about the way you should act or the way you're going to act. And I think there is some truth to the idea that women at a certain age don't need to be heard, but they're there to provide support or to give money or contribute in that way. I'm talkin' about people who have it or they—or people think you have it. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right. Right.

JF: There's a difference, you know.

SL: Yeah. Uh-huh.

[05:04:03] JF: I don't know why I'm bringing that up, but I've been involved in a number of things where this is what you're called

upon to do. Mh-hmm.

SL: Well, I mean, I think . . .

JF: There's . . .

SL: . . . the philanthropy side of things—you know, I think there's some folks that are prone to that, and some that are not. I mean, usually, it seems to me, I mean, I—I've been involved in some fund-raising.

JF: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

SL: And if someone's passionate about something, and they see it as a good thing, it—I don't know. I guess there's a difference tween those that are asking for money and those that have money. And there's—I don't know how the two ever get together, or I've never really understood that. But I do understand that people make gifts for the things that they feel like will make a difference.

JF: Yeah.

[05:04:59] SL: And for some, it's advantageous for them to do that, and for others, it's just strictly blind passion to make it . . .

JF: It's wonderful. No, but—you know, I think, too, I think I've been more prone to share. I—I'm—I feel I'm a generous person. Or at least I have that reputation. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well . . .

JF: But I also like to be a hands-on kind of person. And I served on this Mid-America Board for nine years, which I enjoyed very much, but I just resigned—Mid-America Arts Alliance.

SL: Now have we talked about that? I don't know that we've talked about that.

JF: I don't think so. I don't think so.

SL: Well, let's about that for a second. [*JF laughs*] We can talk about one more thing.

[05:05:40] JF: Well, I work with Mid-America. It's a consortium of six Midwest states, and their arts councils contribute money. The money is pooled. And it is operated to provide resources for venues, museums, organizations in the visual and performing arts for—in the six-state area, basically, at a reduced price to make these things more readily available. For instance, they'll mount an exhibit, and they may borrow some of things from a museum or a gallery or something, and then offer it at a fairly decent price. [*SL takes a drink*] What they consider affordable—to museums, organizations, colleges in the area—six-state area. And they keep those resources, you might say, in circulation.

JF: And the board just met twice a year, but I'm—sorta was a very hands-on person or like to be. And it was difficult because I

think the staff didn't expect at some point the board to do anything but to raise or—money or to give it. And I just grew a little weary. [*Laughs*] I'd done what I could do, and I think it does, for the most part, a good job. But it was frustrating, too. And it took time and money to belong.

SL: Yeah.

[05:07:12] JF: Do you know Don Munro?

SL: Don Munro.

JF: Have you interviewed him?

SL: No.

JF: He's another one you've got to interview.

SL: Okay.

[05:07:22] JF: I—I'll tell you why. He is involved in all sorts of philanthropical—philanthropic work. He runs a shoe company called Munro Shoes.

SL: Okay, now wait a minute. I . . .

JF: Have you got him?

SL: I—we—no, we have not had him, but I do know this name.

JF: Don Munro. He's on—I nominated him to this board. He's on the board, and he's—he loves everything he does. [*Laughs*]
He . . .

SL: And he's here in Little Rock.

JF: No, he lives in Hot Springs.

SL: Okay.

JF: Yeah. He may—he used to have a house here, too, but he's from Hot Springs. And he's—has shoe factories in the state. [Laughs] And little—there aren't very many . . .

SL: It seems like I may—it seems like I know something about him. I . . .

JF: You probably have. He's . . .

SL: I've heard some . . .

TM: [Unclear word] break.

SL: Kay.

JF: Yeah, we're about finished, aren't we? [TM clears throat]

[Unclear words]

SL: We can be done if you wanna be done.

[05:08:14] TM: I was gonna ask if . . .

JF: Right.

TM: . . . if you know—we'll get this turned around here—do you know about the characters on the thing behind you—on the art behind you? Do you know what it says? [Laughter]

JF: It's a story about a turtle. [TM laughs] You know, those are ancient characters. It's an old screen. And I've asked contemporary Japanese, "What does it say?" And they don't

really—they're not sure about the characters. But the story is about a turtle or something or other, and I think the theme of it is "Only God knows." I guess it's a poem. [*Laughs*] But I'm sorry.

[05:08:50] TM: Oh, that's fine. And how old is it, please?

JF: It was probably early 1800s. Yeah. Mh-hmm. So it's Japanese, and it's old. And when we created this space, I wanted [*laughs*] a screen on that wall, and by golly, we found it. I like calligraphy. I think it's, I mean, it's artistry but it's language.

SL: Yes.

JF: It's communication. So it just fit perfectly. [*Laughs*]

SL: It's in great shape for being that old, too.

[05:09:23] JF: Yeah. Well, it's got a few little nicks in it, and it—I worry about—it's insured, but there's nobody here that could repair [*laughs*] it. So if . . .

SL: Yeah.

JF: . . . I don't wanna have it repaired. But I . . .

SL: Well, it's beautiful.

JF: Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, it is—it's—if you know anybody ever that is interested in screens, and particularly, somebody who knows the—the characters—the old characters. Yeah.

SL: Have—we've got a photograph of it, don't we?

TM: I'll get a better one.

SL: Yeah.

[05:09:53] JF: Get one and see if—I don't know if we've got anybody up in Fayetteville who might know it, but I haven't found anybody here. Or around. [*Laughs*]

TM: I think it's neat that it's a poem, and it tells the whole story with what . . .

JF: I think that there's a little something behind it.

SL: Here, let's [*Lots of shuffling sounds, microphones being moved*] . . .

TM: Twelve characters, huh?

JF: Yeah. [*More shuffling sounds*] Got it. [*Laughs*]

TM: Go ahead.

JF: It says, "Calligraphy screen by Shomikansai Ananka, painter and calligrapher mentioned in *Roberts' Japanese Painters*." That's the screen. "Floating world. Translation. Place where turtle lives, clean and strong—transforms into dragon, chanting poem. The floating world is the sea where the weeds grow. Overall, colloquial meaning is 'God knows.'"

[05:10:55 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]