

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

University of Arkansas
365 N. McIlroy Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72701
(479) 575-6829

Arkansas Memories Project

Governor Mike Beebe
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford
February 12, 2008
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.
- All geographic locations mentioned in the transcript are in the state of Arkansas unless otherwise indicated.

Citation Information

See the Citation Guide at

<http://pryorcenter.uark.edu/about.asp#citations>.

Scott Lunsford interviewed Governor Mike Beebe on February 12, 2008, in Little Rock, Arkansas. The second part of the interview with Governor Mike Beebe was recorded on March 17, 2008.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Today we're at the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock, Arkansas. I'm Scott Lunsford. We'll be talking with Governor Mike Beebe. Uh—it is February the twelfth, two thousand and eight. And Governor, I'm gonna [going to] ask you that it's okay with you that the Pryor Center—The David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History is recording this videotape of you today.

Governor Mike Beebe: Absolutely.

SL: It's gonna reside in the Special Collections Department in Mullins Library at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville campus.

MB: Surely.

[00:00:31] SL: All right. Well, thank you very much. Um—I like to start at the very beginning [*MB laughs*]*—uh—uh—I like to start with your earliest memories. But first, I wanna [want to] talk a little bit about—uh—where and when you were born.*

MB: Well, obviously that's before my memories.

SL: Mh-hmm.



[00:00:48] MB: But I—I can relate what's been told to me—uh. I was born out in the country, frankly—uh—in—they say on the birth certificate it's Amagon, which is a town of ninety-five people in Jackson County in northeast Arkansas—about six or eight miles east of—uh—Newport. But actually it wasn't in Amagon. It was about two miles north of Amagon. Uh—it was at my great-grandmother's—uh—residence, if you wanna call it a residence. It was—they say it was a—one of those old tar-paper, shotgun kind of—uh—rural country houses—uh—that they said was—uh—on an old railroad dump. Uh—it was a farming community—uh—fairly—uh—fairly remote. Uh—I guess that's why a doctor couldn't get there. Uh—but I was actually delivered on December 28, 1946, by my great-aunt, who wasn't much older than my—uh—than my mother. Back in those days, I think it was not uncommon for generations to have twenty, thirty years' difference between the oldest child and the youngest child. ?And? my great-aunt was my grandmother's baby, baby sister—uh—not much older than—than my mother. Uh—but any—in any event—uh—they say that that's where I was born and—uh—that's the circumstances. One interesting

note—my aunt—my great-aunt, whose name is Ila Adcox, and who I—as I indicated, delivered me—claims that the umbilical cord was [*laughs*] wrapped around my—uh—my neck when I was born and that I was very purple or black in color because ?of? lack of oxygen, and so obviously she did a good job in gettin' [getting] rid of the umbilical cord. [*Laughs*] Uh—and so I'm here. So that's—uh—that's the story. Uh—Amagon, Arkansas—little, bitty town—really, outside of Amagon. My great-grandmother's—uh—uh—place. Uh—allegedly—uh—I think my mother'd moved to Detroit [Michigan] and been back and back and forth and—because all of her folks were from—uh—that part of the—part of the world in the Jackson County area. And she was visiting her grandmother at Christmas—uh—and obviously I was early.

[00:02:53] SL: Well, now—uh—what was your great-grandmother's name?

MB: Maudie. *M-A-U-D-I-E*—uh—and—uh—it was Junior. *J-U-N-I-O-R*. Uh—Maudie Junior. So . . .

SL: That's—that's an interesting last name, Junior.

MB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: And—um—was she from that part of the country?

MB: Apparently so. Uh—I know that—uh—my mother and my

grandmother—uh—were all from—uh—the Jackson County area. But—uh—whether my great-grandmother was born there or merely lived there, I don't really know.

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: Uh—I know that that was her home when I was born, and I think she lived there for quite some period of time. I think they were, in effect, sharecroppers. Uh—they—they were folks that worked for the landowners and—uh—lived in those tenement housing that—uh—usually was provided back in that day and age for—uh—for people who were sharecropping. Whether or not she was a sharecropper or whether my great-grandmother was a sharecropper and actually owned—uh— whatever that place was is—I—I don't know. But—uh—I do—I've seen pictures—uh—they said, of—uh—what that old place looked like. It was—uh—it was—uh—probably—uh—trying on a lot of people [*laughs*] at the time.

[00:04:10] SL: It was tough, wasn't it? Tough time.

MB: Yeah, yeah. But, you know, it was not uncommon. That's the way a lot of Arkansans were.

SL: Uh-huh. And this's 1946.

MB: End of 1946.

SL: So—uh—World War II is done.

MB: Right.

SL: Um—lots of GIs coming home—uh . . .

MB: Right.

[00:04:25] SL: GI Bill [of Rights]—a lotta [lot of] people hittin' [hitting] the education system all at once. Uh—it was a— probably a—uh—just an influx of activity—postwar activity back then.

MB: Well, I assume so. Uh—you know, I never knew my dad [Lester Kendall Beebe]. Uh—to my knowledge I never saw him—uh—and he certainly was not around. My mother [Maedene Louise Quattlebaum Beebe] had me actually as a teenager, and so she had to quit school—uh—didn't finish high school. And back in those days, the—uh—you know, the—the options for—uh—single moms were pretty limited in terms of bein' [being] able to go get an education or—or—uh—go back to school and—and learn a skill. And so she was blessed with a great personality and—uh—and, obviously, a hard work ethic. So she did the only thing she knew how to do with those skills and without an education. She was a waitress all her life—uh—waited on tables. We lived in lots of places—uh—but—uh—she—uh—made a livin' [living] and supported me on a waitress's tips because, as you know, waitresses don't even make minimum wage. So they were

expected to, I suppose, to—uh—to live off those tips. And—
uh—you know, she never had a car in her life. Never drove.
Never had a driver's license in her life. Uh—but—uh—she was a
hard worker.

[00:05:44] SL: So—um—you said that she was living in Detroit?

MB: Mh-hmm.

SL: And you all li—lived in . . .

MB: We went back to Detroit after . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: Apparently after I was old enough to travel . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: . . . according to what they've told me. Uh—then we went back
to Detroit, or she went back to Detroit. And I lived in Detroit
and Chicago [Illinois] and St. Louis [Missouri] and Festus,
Missouri, and—uh [*SL laughs*—Valley Park, Missouri; three
places in Florida; Houston, Texas; Alamogordo, New Mexico;
Tuckerman; Newport. I think I went to five different schools in
the fifth grade alone. So, you know, it was a—it was nomadic.

SL: Do you—um—uh—d—you said she had family in Detroit?

MB: Well her mother [Madge Kaminski] had actually moved to
Detroit—uh—and I'm not clear whether it was immediately after
the war or before the war or during the war.

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: But it wasn't uncommon, I don't think, for people in Arkansas to move—uh—up north and particularly to Detroit where—uh—I think, the automobile factories had turned into armament factories . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: . . . during the war. And I think there was a lot of job opportunities. And—uh—so my grandmother—uh—my mother's mother—had moved to Detroit, and obviously, I think she went with her—uh—because she was a—she was still a child in effect.

[00:06:50] SL: Uh-huh. Do—um—did you ever meet or know your grandfather on your mother's side of the family?

MB: No. Uh—I had a step-grandfather on my mother's side of the family who I knew and who was there from the time I was born. So—uh—my grandmother had—had married—uh—a man named Michael Kaminski, which—who she had met in—in Detroit. Uh—and he was—uh—there before I was born so . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: . . . he's the only one I ever knew.

[00:07:19] SL: And—um—do you remember much—how long were—were you in Detroit?

MB: Well, you know, I have—uh—fleeting memories. It's hard to—

and when you're young—when you're that age—when you're two, three, four, five years old or one . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: . . . uh—you know, there are a lot of things that you obviously can't remember, but then there are fleeting moments of things that you can remember. It's hard to really understand how much of it was—uh—in what chronology because we were in Detroit, left Detroit, back in Detroit. Uh—so the crystallization, I guess, of those memories in terms of a time frame would be hard—uh—to describe. I can describe randomly and sorta [sort of] stream of consciousness what I do remember. Uh—I remember that in—uh—in Detroit in those days, a bar was like a café—uh—particularly in the ethnic neighborhood. Uh—and she lived right in the—in the middle of—uh—a Polish neighborhood . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:08:15] MB: . . . and—uh—and it was right—fairly close to downtown. It was—uh—I have good memories of that—fond memories of that. Uh—but the bar was not just a bar, it was a—it was a eating establishment and a gathering place and sort of a—the block or two-block or three-block area—uh—in effect, community center. That was—that was just the culture and the

ethics. So I can remember bein' in a bar . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: . . . drinkin' [drinking] milk and eatin' [eating]
cheeseburgers . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: . . . uh—or eatin' somethin' [something]—uh—as I was small. I
can remember—uh—eh—bits and pieces of—uh—the places
where—uh—we stayed or where my grandmother lived. I
remember the address and the telephone number, surprisingly
enough. They imbued that in me at some age. Uh—it was 2744
Military Avenue in Detroit and—uh—the telephone number was
Tashmoe 63615. Now why you remember stuff like that is—uh—
probably a mystery. But—uh—whether I lived there
continuously, and when I was one and two and three years old,
obviously I don't know and—and don't remember.

SL: Uh-huh.

[00:09:23] MB: I do remember—I—I seem to recall going to part, if
not all, of the first grade in Detroit. I do remember goin' [going]
'to kindergarten in Chicago. So obviously I had . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: . . . been to Detroit, gone to Chicago, gone back to Detroit at—
at—at some time. I can remember the second grade was in

Valley Park—uh—Missouri—or at least some portion of the second grade. I really have no recollection of where I was in the third and fourth grade. Uh—could've been Detroit, could've been Chicago, could've been St. Louis. Uh—but it's kind of funny that . . .

SL: It is.

MB: . . . and there's a in gap there between . . .

SL: There's a gap.

MB: . . . the second grade and—fifth grade is really where the memories coalesce and—uh—and where there's a—there's a continuous pattern of remembering.

[00:10:04] SL: So—um—d—do you have any—um—uh—I'm s— Detroit and Chicago are two really big cities. Probably—were they similar circumstances as far as—um—I—I mean, you're downtown in Detroit. I can imagine . . .

MB: Oh, yeah, I lived in the slums.

SL: I can kind of imagine that.

MB: We lived in the ghettos. Wherever we were . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: . . . it was—uh—I mean the nicest place was probably where my grandmother was li—and step-grandfather was livin' in Detroit. Uh—and—and when I say nice, I mean it was—uh—uh—it was a

fairly large—uh—row house, I guess you'd say.

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: That's—that's—that's the recollection that I have of it. But I mean none of these places were suburbs or—or white picket fences or back yards. They were all apartments or row houses or tenements—uh—because that's just where we lived. And so—um—whether it was St. Louis or whether it was—uh—Chicago or—or whether it was Detroit . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: . . . my recollection is that they were all inner-city—uh—tenement or apartment-type dwellings.

[00:11:14] SL: Um—I guess by that time heating oil was—the—there was plumbing for heating oil. There was no longer coal burning . . .

MB: Actually . . .

SL: . . . stuff or . . .

MB: Actually it was coal, as I recall, in Detroit. Uh—I have a recollection of them having a basement—actually having a coal bin in the basement and actually shoveling coal into a—into a furnace. I don't remember shoveling coal, but I remember seeing it.

SL: It was messy, wasn't it?

MB: I'm sure it was. [*Laughter*] I'm sure.

[00:11:42] SL: You know—um—uh—last week we were interviewing
[former University of Arkansas law school professor] Al Witte . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . and we spent six and a half hours with that guy.

MB: Yeah, he's funny.

SL: What a great guy. And we got about a third of his life done.
We're gonna have to go back . . .

MB: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

SL: . . . another couple of days.

MB: Yeah.

SL: But—uh—he talks—he has vivid memories of coal, but he's a lil—
he's older than you.

MB: Yeah, mh-hmm.

SL: Um—I think he was—uh—living in Erie, Pennsylvania. And he
remembers the conversion from coal to heating oil and—but how
the women just loved that.

MB: Sure, because the dust was gone and . . .

SL: Dust was gone.

MB: . . . nastiness.

SL: They had—any time—uh—um—they had the clothes on the line,
the Hammermill Paper [Company] mill would send off a horn

when they were about to . . .

MB: Sure.

SL: . . . spew a bunch of smoke out, and they'd have to run out and get their clothes.

MB: Mh-hmm.

[00:12:26] SL: Um—so let me think—what about—um—do you remember—um—entertainment at all when you were early—I—did you have a radio in the . . .

MB: Oh, yeah. I ca—I can remember [*SL coughs*]*—uh—we had television in Detroit and—uh—I can remember—uh—records—45 rpm [revolutions per minute]—78 rpm records.*

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: Uh—I can remember listenin' [*listening*] to records. Uh—I can remember—uh—watchin' [*watching*] television—uh—cartoons—uh—local—I can remember a local—uh—cartoon show when I was a little kid called Barney Bear[1939-1954]*—now—uh—in Detroit. Now why would you remember? But I'm sure it was a local . . .*

SL: Well, it was probably a great show.

MB: Purely a local thing. [*Editor's Note: Barney Bear was produced by Metro Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc.*] Yeah. [*SL laughs*] Something that—that you look forward to every day but . . .

SL: Well, it probably had more to do with shaping your personality than you know. [*Laughter*]

[00:13:19] MB: Well, I tell you what did form—uh—at that time—uh—either in one of the various, I—I'm sure, stays in Detroit—uh—my allegiance to Major League Baseball was—is to the Detroit Tigers.

SL: Well, let's talk about that.

MB: And—uh—it was obviously formed at an age when—when I was there—when exposed to that. And so I'm to this day a huge Tiger fan.

SL: Do you remember—um—uh—black players on the baseball teams early?

MB: No, no. Well, ye—not when I was really young. You know—uh—I—Jackie Robinson was the first black player, and I was probably seven, eight years old, I think, when—maybe nine—when all that—uh—when that occurred.

SL: That was Brooklyn Dodgers, right?

MB: Yeah. Uh—and—uh—I don't remember—uh—any black players early on . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: . . . uh—for the Tigers but obviously—uh—later I do.

[00:14:13] SL: Yeah. Um—well what about—um—the ethnic mix

and the cultural mix in the city? What—what were . . .

MB: Well, at that time . . .

SL: . . . the relationships like?

MB: At that time—uh—you know, in Detroit my recollection is that the—there wasn't as much ethnic diversity—uh—that I was exposed to as there was later in life in St. Louis, for example.

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: The reason being—and when you're young—when you're preschool—uh—when you're a little kid, you probably don't wander ver—very far out of your own neighborhood—uh—although I do remember—uh—going to a park, which I thought was forever away 'cause we walked. And—uh—as an adult I later looked it up on Google and on a map. It was very short—just a few blocks [*laughter*] away. But, you know, everything's bigger when you're a child so . . .

SL: You bet. You bet.

[00:15:02] MB: Uh—but it was—uh—it was more homogenous in terms of—uh—the ethnic diversity in—in Detroit as it—when I was really small. Again I said it was a Polish neighborhood—ethnic Polish neighborhood.

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: Uh—but it was mostly white—mostly—uh—a lot of Polish—uh—

ancestry in there. Uh—even though my family wasn't Polish, my step-grandfather was. And so I assume that's the reason that—he'd worked at a—at a truck manufacturer—uh—up there in Detroit. And so—uh—I assume that's why we lived there. Now subsequent to Detroit and obviously—uh—I lived in the—in the hood in St. Louis and there was a huge mixture of black and white.

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: Uh—so—uh—and I don't remember much about Chicago, other than bein' in—uh—in kindergarten in Chicago.

[00:15:51] SL: Um—your—uh—step-grandfather—uh—did you get to spend much time with him at all?

MB: Yeah. You know, I have fond memories of him—uh—because, see [*laughs*], everything's kind of cyclical—uh—way later on in life, on up when I was in college—uh—they had long since—my grandmother and step-grandfather had long since moved back to Arkansas—actually lived in Jonesboro. They actually lived and died in Jonesboro so . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: Uh—I have lots of memories and lots of time—uh—older—high school—junior high school, high school, and—and certainly college . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: . . . uh—remembering—uh—my step-grandfather and my grandmother.

[00:16:29] SL: Let's talk about—eh—I'd really like to linger on these early years. [*MB laughs*] I—I'm—can you just—can you remember your very first memory of your mom—what she was doing or what the circumstances were?

MB: No, no. I—there's no crystallization of my—of what I would say was my very first memory of my mother. Uh—I mean she was just always there, you know, like mothers are.

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: Uh—and where and when that was—uh—I really don't know. I—and again it's hard to actually place chronologically all the fleeting memories when you're a child.

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: Wa—was that when you were three years old or four years old?

SL: Well, yeah.

MB: Or was that when you were five or six? Were you in Detroit or were you in Arkansas, or were you in Chicago, or where were you? Eh—I don't—I don't have—I know for a period of time when I was young and livin' in Detroit with my grandmother, my mother was very ill and in the hospital. She spent a long time in

the hospital. I think she had significant complications from my birth. I know she never could have any other children. And I think—uh—part of it—bein' born without a physician and . . .

SL: You bet.

MB: . . . in—in—in a rural setting. And—uh—for whatever reason, I—and so I—I am told that for—uh—some period off and on she spent a lot of time in the hospital, so that I was actually living with—uh—with my grandmother . . .

SL: Grandmother.

MB: . . . as the primary—uh—caregiver.

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: I also recall or seem to recall that—uh—she may have had tuberculosis, and that may have been why she was gone and quarantined to some extent when I was small.

[00:18:08] SL: Um—let's go back to the radio. Do you . . .

MB: Radio.

SL: What do you remember listenin' . . .

MB: Well, I—you're so interested in all these . . .

SL: I am.

MB: . . . in—in all these—uh—things that I think—uh—people remember when they're very young, particularly as it retain—as it pertains to music. I remember a record—uh—as a little, bitty

kid called—uh— "The Little White Cloud That Cried" [released in 1951], by Johnnie Ray.

SL: Hmm.

MB: Uh—way back probably in the early [19]50s—uh—maybe late [19]40s. I don't know. Uh—and, again, you'd have to go back and see when that—uh—when that record came out to try to place it in terms of—uh—of when I'm talkin' [talking] about. That might actually help me to know when that was. But—uh—I remember that. I remember listeni to that record over and over. Uh—what I remember about the radio is listenin' to—uh—the Tigers. You know, my step-grandfather would listen to the—to the Tigers, and of course, sometimes you'd—you'd—uh—I—I really don't recall early on seein' [seeing] 'em [them] on TV. I remember seein' the Lions on TV—the football Lions.

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: But I don't much recall seein' the Ti—the baseball team on TV—uh—early, but I do remember the radio. Uh—I remember a Frigidaire. Uh—I remember the—the insignia—Frigidaire—on an icebox . Isn't that funny?

[00:19:28] SL: It is. Did—di—uh—were there—uh—grocery deliveries or . . .

MB: Well that's another interesting thing. She [*laughs*—I can

remember two separate places on Military Avenue where my grandmother lived. Uh—I don't remember as much about the first one, and that wasn't the address I gave you. That was the second one.

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: And obviously I was a little older at the second one. I remember the first one was upstairs, so you had a long flight of stairs. It was almost just an enclosed stairway like an outdoor stairway, but it wasn't outdoors. It was enclosed. I mean it wasn't like a stairway where you'd see—you could see other parts of a room. It was just a narrow stairway leading upstairs to where she lived. So that was the first place. The 2744 Military was actually behind a grocery store.

SL: Okay.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:21] MB: And I can remember hanging out in the grocery store. It was a little neighborhood grocery store.

Joy Endicott: Could we—just a second? Someone's phone is ringing.

MB: It's mine.

JE: Okay.

MB: Do you want a time-out?

SL: Sure.

JE: I'll let you take it or finish.

SL: I guess you have to have that on, don't you? [*JE laughs*]

MB: Well, don't—I'm gonna turn it off.

SL: Okay.

MB: If it's a crisis . . .

SL: They'll come get you.

Matt DeCample: I can hold them out here if . . .

MB: Yeah, okay.

MD: "[The] Little White Cloud That Cried" was 1951. [*Laughter*]

MB: Listen to him. [*Laughter*] He's amazing.

Trey Marley: I had it right here, too.

MB: He's amazing. [*SL laughs*] You're eavesdropping on this conversation.

MD: I am. I apologize. [*Laughter*] [*Jokingly*] I'm under instruction from the NSA [National Security Agency]. Thank you.

[*Laughter*]

SL: He's been great, by the way.

MB: [*Whispers*] He's real good.

[00:21:02] SL: Yeah. Are we back?

TM: Yeah, we're back.

SL: Okay. So let's see now. Where were . . .

MB: We were—grocery store.

SL: We were talking about the grocery store.

MB: Yeah. There was a grocery store and a little driveway next to the grocery store that led back to the house that my grandmother lived in that was immediately behind the grocery store. It was not on the street. It was behind the grocery store. I have a vague memory that the house was owned by the people who owned the grocery store and that my grandmother and grandfather rented that particular house. But again that's a vague memory and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: . . . could be wrong, but that's my recollection.

SL: Kinda [kind of] convenient.

MB: Oh, yeah. And I hung out there. I mean, you know, I was a big help. I'd stock somethin' once in a while and [*SL laughs*] sweep once in a while. And I'm sure I felt like I was really contributing [*laughs*] to the cause.

SL: Well, you pro—[*MB laughs*]*—they probably loved having you around.*

MB: Yeah, I think—you know, those were warm memories. Those were not bad memories. I had a lot of bad memories, but that—those weren't bad. That experience—that memory from that

place was mostly positive.

[00:22:15] SL: Did your grandmother just—was she a stay-at-home mom? Was she—did she . . .

MB: My recollection—it—well, she worked more of the time, but my recollection of that time frame is she was there. Now if she wasn't there [*laughs*], you know, I don't remember. I think she was stay-at-home during that time frame. I can tell you that during that time frame, I know she stayed at home and took care of other kids because I know there were—there was a young boy a year or two younger than me named Frankie, who she regularly babysat for—daycared for or what. They didn't have formal daycare back then but—and so to that extent she was stayin' home. Yeah. And, in effect, that was her job if she was doin' that for someone else for pay.

[00:22:59] SL: Were there any musical instruments around the houses that you remember?

MB: Nah.

SL: Guitars, pianos . . .

MB: No, I later did the guitar but early on, no. I don't remember. Not there. Now [*laughs*] very early on at my aunt's house—not my great-aunt. My mother had two brothers and a sister.

SL: Okay.

MB: They're all dead except the oldest, which is an aunt, which is the sister. My mother was the youngest. There was a girl, boy, a boy, a girl . . .

SL: Okay.

MB: . . . that my grandmother had and—my mother being the very youngest. My aunt and the only one still alive is the very oldest. Kind of amazing.

SL: It is.

[00:23:39] MB: She was a devout member of the [Faith] Assembly of God church . . .

SL: Okay.

MB: . . . in Tuckerman. They lived in Tuckerman all their lives. That was the one anchor that my mother kept coming back to—between—I had numerous stepdads. That was my mother's—I think that the one thing that she needed helped in was judgment of men. She had that great personality and great worth—work ethic, but she had difficulty with men, I'm sure, because we had a—I had a number of stepdads. And that anchor back in Tuckerman where her sister—my aunt lived was someplace we always came back to. She was, in addition to being a devout member of the Assembly of God church, a pianist. She had a piano in her—and again that was a sharecropper's house. She



and her husband—my uncle—were dirt-poor sharecroppers. I can remember the houses. You could see chickens through the actual boards in the floor where they lived—takin' baths in No. 2 washtubs. There was no indoor running water. And this is when I was older. This is on up there where I have good memory, so I've kind of skipped on you but we can go back as you . . .

SL: Okay.

MB: . . . as you want. But outhouses—all of that stuff. But that was the piano, and she played the piano. She had two sons, the oldest of which played the piano. And that's the only musical instrument I remember as a child.

[00:25:11] SL: Do you—would they gather around the piano and sing hymns or . . .

MB: Yeah, they—of course, what I remember is playin' on it, actin' like I [*laughter*] knew what I was doin', which, obviously, I didn't. I mean—but, you know, when you're a little kid—I don't know—what, six, seven, eight years old . . .

SL: Right.

MB: Five years old. There's a piano there. Nobody's usin' it. You pl—you peck on it. Which is what I did. What I do remember—I don't much—I don't remember my aunt really playin' the piano much, if any. What I remember is my cousin, her oldest son,

playin' the piano.

SL: Mostly hymn pieces or . . .

MB: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah, they had the hymnals right there on the . . .

SL: Rock and roll wasn't . . .

MB: No.

SL: . . . in that house.

MB: No. Well, I'm sure it was with the boys. They just probably didn't do it around their mother. [*Laughter*]

[00:25:59] SL: Well now you talked about having a number of stepfathers. Was there any of the stepfathers that you could relate to or that had any . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . kind of influence on you?

MB: Well, yeah. Yeah, I think so. One in particular that she ended up marryin' twice, as a matter of fact. His name was Bob Bailey, and he was from Tuckerman—from that area—was one that I have the fondest memories of and that I thought was the kindest and the one that probably had the most positive influence on me. I can remember he's the one that taught me how to throw a baseball—catch a baseball. He was, I think, a—an avid baseball player when he was younger. He actually worked for

McDonnell Aircraft, which really was the occasion for some of those moves. St. Louis is where they were headquartered, and now it's McDonnell Douglas [Corporation], but at the time, it was McDonnell Aircraft. And then when we ended up in New Mexico, and when we ended up at Fort Walton Beach [Florida] near Eglin [Florida], both of those moves were with him and occasioned by his job with McDonnell Aircraft—near [United States] Air Force bases.

[00:27:15] SL: [*Sighs*] You did so much movin' around. Let's talk a little bit about—what do you remember about the school or schools in Detroit?

MB: I remember a yellow slicker raincoat. [*Laughs*] I remember goin'—walkin' to school in one of those vinyl-type raincoats that little kids used to have. It was yellow. I was sure proud of that, and I thought it was really neat. And I think what they call galoshes or those boots that . . .

SL: Rubber.

MB: And I have a strong recollection of that. I have a recollection of a brick—old brick school that was multistory but not much else.

SL: No remarkable teacher . . .

MB: No memories of a teacher. Nah, nah.

SL: . . . or favorite subjects early on or . . .

MB: Nah, nah. And, you know, that's kind of weird because I—you know, so many people will tell you their first grade or second grade or third-grade teacher—I don't really know how much of that is the product of having lived in one place, and when you're in the fourth grade, somebody says she was your first-grade teacher, and she's still there, and so you get to know her, and so it's a flashback, and you think you remem—or how much of that is someone really remembering their first grade? I don't. I don't. I don't have . . .

SL: Same way in Chicago—you don't . . .

MB: Chicago was a—and again there are bits and pieces. What I remember about Chicago is a hard, rubber airplane—toy airplane—a big, black—you know, one of the—made out of rubber but so hard that it wouldn't bend—like a [Boeing] B-29 [Superfortress] or somethin'—World War II kinda airplane. And I have that memory. I ha—that's what I [*laughs*] basically remember about Chicago. And the fact that I went to kindergarten there is somethin' that was told to me after the fact, not something I specifically recall. I have some vague memories, I think, of a room where we—obviously, I guess, where we lived because I remember that airplane.

[00:29:21] SL: Well, let's talk a little bit about the religion and

church involvement. Was there much of that?

MB: We didn't have any. No, we didn't.

SL: Zero.

MB: No. The church involvement that I had basically—I can remember two times, or two sets of times. Obviously whenever I was back in Tuckerman with my aunt when my mother had gone there, either between husbands or moves or jobs or whatever the case may be, there was a significant amount of church attendance and religious influence because she was very active, and we went, or I went. I don't remember whether my mother went or not. And then I remember as a—as part of my fifth-grade year when we were in Florida, and I don't remember whether it was Fort Walton be—I mean, Fort Lauderdale or Daytona. It was one of those two. I can remember Bible school. That's not true. There was three. I can remember Sunday school in Florida—Bible school in Valley Park, Missouri. I remember learning and memorizing, for example, the twenty-third Psalm in Florida. I still ha—the Bible I took my oath on as governor was one given to me in the fifth grade in Florida. So there were periodic episodes of church activity, but they were sporadic.



[00:30:43] SL: So let me think now. Your mom—let's talk a little bit

about your mom.

MB: Sure.

SL: Because this seems to be a remarkable woman to me.

MB: She was a remarkable woman. [*Clears throat*] She had a—almost a charisma. If you can say—I mean she was uneducated—never finished high school. So I mean with those kinda handicaps, to have the kind of personal magnetism that she obviously had, I think, was just a tribute to her God-given, natural ability. Because wherever she worked, people loved her. Wherever she worked, people were attracted to her. In later years she worked at a place called Grandpa's [Restaurant] in Jonesboro. And all of the college kids still talk about her that were from that genre—from that time frame. She—I mean she'd sneak 'em a free piece of pie if they looked like they were hungry. She was just that kinda person. And they still talk about her. People come up to me all the time. "I knew your mother. She was a wonderful person. She waited on me every time. That's who we wanted to wait on us when we went in the restaurant." Well, it was that way all the way back. So she had that infectious personality. She was a very pretty woman, and she obviously was a hard worker. But she did not [*laughs*] have good judgment when it came to men obviously.

SL: Well, it sounds like she had a huge heart.

[00:32:16] MB: Well, I think she had a huge heart, and I think she was a lioness about me. I mean she was very—if she had a dime, I got nine cents of it. I mean she was very protective, and she was a very good provider within the parameters of what she had to provide with. She was frugal. She'd do without before she'd see me do without anything. So she was a very generous, magnanimous, giving, loving person with a great personality.

SL: Strong.

MB: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

SL: To move around that much.

MB: You know, two things . . .

SL: Okay.

[00:32:57] MB: Two things that really come to mind—strong and prideful. And almost too much pride. If there were programs, she wouldn't take advantage of them. And there weren't really any. But if—I mean she was—she wanted to do her own thing. She wanted to support herself. She didn't want—and when—I think she had to fall back on my aunt's place there at Tuckerman, I think it really bothered her, and she wanted out as fast as she could get out to be self-sufficient. That's a strong impression that I have to this day is her streak of prideful

independence. Notwithstanding her limitations and notwithstanding the lack of education and what that really caused in terms of limiting her options. She still had that strong sense of independent pride.

SL: You know, her lack of education—it had to have made her emphasize that . . .

MB: No question.

SL: . . . for your benefit.

MB: No question. You know, sometimes you—it's what you don't have that you appreciate the most. And since she didn't have much education, she knew the value of it because she got to see the other side of it when it wasn't there. And so since she valued education so much, she wanted to ensure and instill in me the significance and the importance of obtaining a good education and—so that my options would have been much greater than hers. And she was obviously successful [*laughs*] in that regard.

[00:34:28] SL: Well, did you enjoy school as a youngster? I mean do . . .

MB: Oh, yeah, I . . .

SL: I know you don't have a lot of specific memories but . . .

MB: Well, I do later on. From the fifth grade on, I have real specific

memories all the way through. I mean I can walk you through everything from the fifth grade on. The fifth grade's a little jumbled, but generally I can walk you all the way through it because there was some more stability in there. There was less of that movement. That was part of it. And obviously as you get older, you remember more. I don't have any negative memories about school. Most of it was, you know, it's—everybody went. That's what you did. So I never seemed to have much trouble in school in terms of—I didn't work very hard and made okay grades or really sometimes very good grades. And I can remember call not exhi—exerting a lot of effort [laughs] and still doin' okay.

SL: You—and these were all public schools . . .

MB: Oh, yeah. [Laughs]

SL: . . . you went to?

MB: Oh, yeah. There were no reform schools or private schools.

[Laughs]

[00:35:33] SL: [Laughs] So what was it that happened in your all's lives around your fifth-grade year that kind of stabilized and you . . .

MB: Well, the fifth grade was the most unstable.

SL: Okay.

MB: And then in the sixth grade it started to stabilize. The fifth grade—I went to five different schools as I recall. I can name four of the five—or I can name four of the five places, and the fifth place I'm fairly sure of, but I'm not sure whether it's Daytona Beach [Florida] or Fort Lauderdale [Florida]. That was that one particular stepdad. That same particular stepdad in that same year, we were in Houston, Texas. I can remember, for example, Sputnik.

SL: Okay.

[00:36:21] MB: And I was in Houston, Texas, when Sputnik happened in—what was that— October [19]57, I guess it was.

SL: That sounds right.

MB: And so I have a specific memory of being in—I have a specific memory of stealing a little Cadillac car and having to take it back—stealing it out of a classroom and feeling bad about it, tellin' my mother, and she made me walk back to school before they closed up and take the car—the little toy car back. I have [*laughs*] that recollection.

SL: Did she go with you, or did she . . .

MB: Nope, nope.

SL: . . . make you face that alone?

MB: I did that alone. She trusted I would do that, and I did. I can

remember that stepdad beating me with willow switches from a willow tree. I remember him turning a table over on my mother and slicing her hand open. He was one of the worst. He was the—probably the meanest and most sadistic of any of the stepdads that I had. So that was in Houston. Then we were back in St. Louis. I'm sure she left him. Part of that was in—and I don't know the chronology but she—I'm sure—I feel like what happened—she came back to Tuckerman—went to school in Tuckerman for little while in the fifth grade. In that independence found a place to live in Newport, ten miles away. I went to school in Newport in the fifth grade. And then at some point moved to—married Bob ?Bailey? and moved to St. Louis, and I remember living in an apartment in St. Louis. I remember what it looked like. It was upstairs as well. I can remember that was the year that Gil McDougald hit the line drive and hit Herb Score right in the head and like to killed him and ruined his baseball career. I remember the [St. Louis] Cardinals and Harry Caray and all those names then—you know, Red Shandees and [Raymond] "Jabbo" Jablonski. [Laughter]

[00:38:14] SL: You got 'em.

MB: And all those weird names. I remember all that. But that was the fifth-grade year and two different stepdads, five different

schools, four different states. And that was perhaps the most unstable year. But then from then on—are you wanting me to go on from—in terms of the chronology of . . .

[00:38:34] SL: Well, let's talk about all this movement goin' around.

Your mom didn't drive, so was all this by train and bus or . . .

MB: Yeah. Well, exactly—train and bus. You know, I can remember as a kid ridin' trains with her. I can remember ridin' buses. I remember the coldest I think I ever was, was in the Fort Wayne, Indiana, Greyhound [Lines, Inc.] bus station, changin' buses. I don't know how old I was—obviously old enough to remember that. But I remember that was as cold as I can ever remember bein' was in Fort Wayne, Indiana—still remember to this day. Whether I was four years old or eight years old, I don't remember.

SL: Do you remember much about the trains back then?

MB: Yeah. Yeah. You know, I didn't know there were such things as Pullman porters and things like that [*laughs*] until later because we were just in a regular train car.

SL: Right.

MB: I can remember—I can remember Wabash. Wabash Railroad. Not necessarily "The Wabash Cannonball" . . .

SL: Right.

MB: . . . but the Wabash Railroad.

SL: Right.

MB: I can remember riding a train from New Mexico one time to Kansas City [Missouri], and I don't remember where we went from Kansas City. It may have been Detroit after that. I can remember Detroit to Chicago several—I mean, Detroit to St. Louis several times.

[00:39:46] SL: Where in New Mexico were you?

MB: Alamogordo, which is way down—it's about eighty-five miles north of El Paso, Texas, and it's down by White Sands [National Monument, New Mexico] . . .

SL: Right.

MB: . . . Los Alamos—down in that area. And Holloman Air Force Base is there, and . . .

SL: Yes.

MB: . . . and one of my stepdads worked for—as I said, worked for McDonnells. And so that was really the first house we ever live—I ever remember living in—"house" house—in a neighborhood with a yard and a driveway and a garage or a carport. I mean that—I have really good memories about that. And we lived there in the sixth and seventh grade. Two years in a row livin' in one place—that was really different. [*Laughter*]

SL: Really, you probably didn't know how to act when you weren't movin'.

MB: No, I mean I—you know, it was a very happy time because, I mean, you had a hou—I had a bicycle. And you just rode all over town. I mean, it was a friendly and a safe place in my memory. I mean you just—you had all kinds of freedom. Bicycle gives you all kinds of freedom, you know, when you're—and a real house with a real yard, you know. It was almost . . .

SL: I've actually spent some time in New Mexico in that area looking for treasure . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . on the White Sands Missile Range.

MB: Sure.

SL: So I'm kind of familiar with . . .

[00:41:01] MB: You know where Alamogordo and Cloudcroft, Tularosa, all that stuff . . .

SL: Yeah, yeah, yes.

MB: Yeah.

SL: Great state. Great . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: What do they call it? What's it called?

MB: Land of Enchantment.

SL: Land of Enchantment, it is. Ancient, ancient . . .

MB: Oh, yeah.

SL: . . . sites out there.

MB: Yeah.

SL: A lotta history. Well, let me think. I hate to jump up to the fifth grade, but I think we're headed that way and sixth . . .

MB: Well, I mean, I remember . . .

SL: Or the sixth grade. You . . .

MB: I remember Vickie Lynn Jarrett, a girl in the second grade, that I just thought was the prettiest thing I ever saw. Don't remember anything else about her [*laughter*] but—and I think that was in Valley Park. So that's back. But I'm pretty sure the second grade was in Valley Park. As I told you, I don't remember the third and fourth, but it coulda been anywhere. Coulda been Detroit, coulda been St. Louis, coulda been wherever.

[00:41:55] SL: So you had—you never really had any close, childhood friends 'cause you . . .

MB: No, they were . . .

SL: . . . movin' around all the time.

MB: They were—[*laughs*] yeah, they were—not until high school. Now, you know, you'd make friends in whatever school you went to. I mean when you move around, you're the new kid in school

all the time, you either learn how to talk, you learn how to fight, or you learn how to run. And I was a pretty good talker. [*SL laughs*] I mean you had to . . .

SL: There you go. That probably has—serves you well now.

MB: Oh, yeah. [*Laughs*] And, you know, that sort of, I think, upheaval and change can make you or break you. I mean you can—you know, kids do that all the time. I mean we—it's not an uncommon phenomenon. I'm not unique. There are probably lots of kids that could say just—relate the same kind of stories that I'm telling. Some of 'em make it, and some of 'em don't. And who knows what causes some to come out of it stronger and the better for it, and who knows what causes some of 'em to come out of it scarred and headed in the wrong direction with all sorts of hang-ups and problems?

[00:43:10] SL: You talked about the one stepfather and the switch. What about in the schools? Did you ever face any corporal punishment . . .

MB: Oh, yeah.

SL: . . . or see that? You got in trouble in the school . . .

MB: Sure, I did.

SL: . . . from time to time?

MB: Sure, I did. Sure, I did. I tell a funny story—way on up into

high school—I don't know if you want to jump to this now.

SL: Well, we can go to a funny story. That's good. We'll come back to that, too.

[00:43:30] MB: I mean this was when I was a senior at Newport High School. And we had the prettiest young teacher you ever saw, and she was a substitute teacher in trigonometry because our trig—for a long time—because our trig teacher—major illness, so for like two or three months, we had this substitute teacher. She was barely outta [out of] college. So, you know, I'm what—sixteen, seventeen years old? And she's twenty-one or twenty-two or twenty-three years old and just gorgeous. And she's married to a coach who was not gorgeous. [*SL laughs*] He was a great guy and a great coach, but he wasn't Brad Pitt. But they were married, and under those kind of circumstances—and he was young. I mean he was fresh out of college. He was a little jealous, okay? And I don't blame him. And all of us guys—all us seniors and probably juniors and everybody else—we just had this huge crush on his wife. Her first name was Liz. And well in trig class—I started calling her Liz. You know how you—I was flirtin' with her. I was a senior, you know. What's wrong with that?

SL: Right.

MB: And she told her husband, the coach. And I walked into—I was walkin' down the hall one day, and he said, "Come over here and bend over." I said, "What'd I do, Coach?" He said, "Just bend over." And he hit me as hard as I've ever been hit with a paddle, and I've—you know, I've got my share of licks, but that's the one [*laughs*] I really remember. I mean he hit me really hard. And he said, "If you ever call my wife by her first name again, I'm goin' to do that every time I see you." And I said, "Yes, sir, Coach." I never called her [*laughter*] by her first name again. [*Laughter*] But, yeah, there was corporal punishment back then. Yeah, you got the board. You got hit. Not near as much as there was in a fraternity in college, but you got hit.

SL: Yeah. Parents were kind of supportive of that, too. I mean they saw . . .

MB: Corporal punishment?

SL: Yeah, they kind of saw . . .

MB: Oh, yeah.

SL: . . . the need for that or they . . .

MB: Sure. I mean it was—you know, it was socially accepted. It was commonplace. It was the time.

[00:45:47] SL: Okay, let's get back to sixth grade.

MB: All right, you want to go back to sixth grade?

SL: Yeah, and you . . .

MB: I remember that teacher, name was Mrs. Benson.

SL: What'd she teach?

MB: She was the whole sixth grade.

SL: The whole sixth grade.

MB: We didn't have multiple—you didn't move from class to class in the sixth grade back . . .

SL: And where were you? Is this in . . .

MB: Alamogordo.

SL: Alamogordo.

MB: New Mexico. Mh-hmm.

[00:46:09] SL: And, you know, I'm assuming up to that point—you may not recall, but your mother had to have been on top of you gettin' your homework done and studyin' and all that. I mean did you . . .

MB: I'm—I guess. Again, I don't have much recollection about it. I don't have much recollection of havin' difficulties, and I don't have much recollection of the specifics of school in those early grades in terms of what you learned, what you didn't learn, or was it difficult or was it not difficult. I have more memories of the movements and places and—you know, I'm not an interview where I can sit here and say, "I went to Hope School from the

first grade" . . .

SL: Right.

MB: . . . "to the eleventh grade, and I can remember all this stuff.

And the corner grocery was always the corner grocery, and we used to go play in this creek or that creek." And what happens when you live in one place for any length of time, a lot of that memory is a flashback. A lot of that memory is somethin' that's—I believe, come to you as you mature and as you're older. And then either you are told or you continue to see some of the same things or landmarks or activities. And then your mind tells you that that's what you did when you were much younger when you can't remember. I don't have the luxury of that because we weren't in one spot through those early years long enough for me to be able to have any of those flashback memories from later years.

[00:47:34] SL: Sounds like to me that a lot of your education was just in the movement. *[MB laughs]* Just . . .

MB: There's no question that you . . .

SL: That you learned a lot about the world . . .

MB: Absolutely.

SL: . . . and about how the world works . . .

MB: Absolutely.

SL: . . . through movement . . .

MB: Absolutely.

SL: . . . rather than sitting in one room and having it brought to you.

MB: Exactly.

SL: You were out there in it.

MB: I was in it and, you know, lots of different environments—lots of different cultural settings. You were talkin' about ethnic diversity, and Alamogordo is about one-third Hispanic, one-third African American, and one-third white in the school. So I mean it was St. Louis—a lot of ethnic diversity in the hood—in the neighborhood, much less in school. And you—when you went anywhere, you walked.

[00:48:19] SL: Back in those hoods, would—did you ever feel threatened? Did you . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . ever get in a situation where . . .

MB: Sure.

SL: . . . you knew you were in danger?

MB: Sure.

SL: That you had to move quick and . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . respond correctly or . . .

MB: Yeah, there were times. 'Course [of course], you know, I—it wasn't a situation where you were afraid of a knife or a gun. It was a gentler time. What you were afraid of is gettin' beat up, but you weren't afraid of bein' shot or stabbed, or at least, I don't remember that. In today's world, you know, kids are subjected to so much more potential violence in terms of weapons than—my—than I recall we were. Worst thing I think that happened to us is we got beat up.

[00:48:58] SL: So you experienced some of that one the streets?

MB: Oh, yeah, sure. Absolutely.

SL: That's a comeuppance. [*Laughter*]

MB: Well, yeah, it's part of the rites of passage. Or at least it used to be part of the rites of passage.

SL: Well, I don't know that—I don't know that that's just a real . . .

MB: Common thing.

SL: . . . common experience for all the kids. I mean, you know, I had a few fights when I was growing up. But I could probably—maybe two.

MB: Yeah.

SL: And those were never kind of imminent . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . you know. It was—but then I was in one place my whole life

so . . .

MB: Yeah.

[00:49:42] SL: Hmm. So in sixth grade you're in Alamogordo?

MB: Right.

SL: And you have a—you finally have a teacher that you can remember.

MB: I have a teacher I remember. Her name was Mrs. Benson.

She's a—I remember bein' on the safety patrol. That was a big deal, you know, where you had the little thing and a badge.

SL: Sash.

MB: I mean that was a position of authority. That was pretty neat. I can remember the playgrounds—played Civil War all the time.

SL: Civil War.

MB: Yeah.

SL: That's interesting.

MB: Yeah, that's what I recall playin'. And different people were different folks. I was always [Confederate general] Stonewall Jackson. [*Laughter*] I don't know why. You know, during that period of time, I was very fascinated with history—did a lot of reading on my own about history and particularly Napoleonic history—developed a deep and intense interest in Napoleonic history—all history—primarily military history in general but

specifically Napoleonic history and read voraciously almost anything I could read on Napoleonic history. And it continued for—all through early years.

SL: What do you think sparked that?

MB: Don't know—don't have a clue. I remember in Alamogordo I saw *War and Peace* [released in 1957], the movie. With Henry Fonda and Mel Ferrer. And I remember the score was real—you're talkin' about music—I remember the score from the movie—the musical soundtrack from the movie was something that really, I think, affected me. I really liked and got it—obtained that 33 1/3 [rpm] LP score. You know, it had a—I mean it was a movie score. It was really good.

SL: This was 1960 . . .

MB: No, no, this is in Alamogordo. It would've been the fall of, I guess, [19]58.

SL: [Nineteen] fifty-eight. Okay.

MB: [Nineteen] fifty-eight or [19]59 . . .

SL: Right.

MB: . . . 'Cause we were there two years.

SL: Okay.

[00:52:01] MB: So it was either sixth or seventh grade, but I

remember it was in New Mexico. I remember that's where I got

a set of *World Book Encyclopedias*.

SL: Wow.

MB: Still own 'em. Still have 'em. White ones.

SL: Yep.

MB: I think from a travelin' salesman. And ?that? opened a whole new world, you know? And so that sixth grade was really somethin' I recall with an emphasis on reading and history—just out of pure interest, not because somebody told you to or made you.

SL: You know, when you latch on to reading like that—when the [snaps fingers] light kind of clicks—my mom used to say, you know, "books are your best friends"—that opens up a lot of doors.

MB: Yeah.

[00:52:50] SL: And other areas as well. So what about your math and your sciences?

MB: I was terrible in math.

SL: You were?

MB: [*Laughs*] I hated it. I just hated it. You know, I did it. [*SL laughs*] Like, in high school I had algebra I, algebra II, geometry, and trigonometry. I mean it wasn't like I took somethin' easy. And in science, I had general science in the

ninth grade and biology, chemistry in the eleventh, and physics in the twelfth. So I had all the hard stuff in both math and science, but I didn't have any illusions about goin' into that, you know. I was a history and liberal arts kind of interested guy. And my aptitude was, I think, in that direction as opposed to—in math I—math wasn't easy for me. You know, I made B's, but I had to work a little harder in math in—to do that—B's and C's . . .

SL: Yeah.

MB: . . . than I did in something else.

[00:53:49] SL: So let's talk about Napoleon just a little bit.

MB: What do you want to know?

SL: What—do you think it was just the military side of it that . . .

MB: I don't know.

SL: . . . got you?

MB: I think to a large extent, it may have been like the Tigers. It may have been at a time in my life when my mind and my environment and my maturity was ready to attach to something. It was—may have been the movie. It may have been somethin' that we were studyin' in school. It may have been—I have no specific catalyst that tells me, "This is what triggered my interest in Napoleonic history." But I do remember that it was triggered,

and I do remember it first being triggered, to my recollection, in New Mexico.

[00:54:33] SL: Were you playin' baseball then?

MB: Yeah, I got my nose broke. [*SL laughs*] Catching.

SL: That was . . .

[00:54:40] MB: I used to be a little, fat kid at about that age—you know, I grew out of it. I was not fat, and then I got fat, and then I wasn't fat. But I was a catcher, and I had a nose—my nose was broken off of a foul tip when we were just messin' around, and I didn't have a mask on. I remember playin' both sandlot and Little League baseball. I played seventh-grade football in Alamogordo, New Mexico. I can remember to this day a drill—you're talking about corporal punishment—I can remember to this day a drill where you fired off one at a time on a count, and the coach swung his cleated foot and either got you in the rear end or you got out and fired up—fired off the line fast enough to avoid it. It was a drill obviously. It wasn't—'cause he'd go down one at a time. I remember riding a bicycle home from football practice and havin' a terrible wreck that hurt me in a place you ought not be hurt [*laughter*] on the bar . . .

SL: Yeah.

MB: . . . 'cause the front wheel came completely off a bicycle. Isn't

that funny how—and I remember that comin' home from football practice. They were the Alamogordo Tigers. I remember that. You know, we'd go to the high school games. We were seventh graders. I don't even remember when we played. I remember more about practice than I do playin'. I'm not sure. We might have just played scrimmages. But I remember goin' to the high school games and seein' the high school players. And, 'course, after the seventh grade we left there.

[00:56:24] SL: Was anything to do with church while you were in Alamogordo?

MB: Hm-mm.

SL: No?

MB: No.

SL: You know a lot of times, there's that church element in athletics as well—there's ancillary . . .

MB: Not so much then.

SL: . . . organizations. Uh-huh.

MB: I think that's a product of a much later time. At least that's my recollection.

SL: You talk about the musical score for . . .

MB: *War and Peace*.

SL: . . . *War and Peace*.

MB: Mh-hmm.

[00:56:46] SL: What about popular music? Was there anything happening . . .



MB: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I can remember—the first record I remember havin' was *El Paso* [released in 1957]. You know, Marty Robbins?

SL: Mh-hmm.

MB: "Out in the west Texas town of El Paso" . . .

SL: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:56:58] MB: Now that's when I was out there. As I say, the first record I ever—when I started collecting records and having your own—what you call a record player. We didn't call them stereos back then. But I remember Jimmie Rodgers—you know, "Honeycomb" [released in 1957] and "Tender Love and Care" [released in 1960]. I bet you've never heard that song—TLC—"Tender Love and Care." It was on a Roulette [Records] label—white label. You don't remember Roulette probably, either.

SL: I do remember Roulette.

MB: Do you really?

SL: Yes. Uh-huh.

MB: All right. Well, yeah. And countless records bein' collected during that time. Johnny Horton—"Battle of New Orleans" [released in 1959].

SL: New Orleans. You bet. Yeah.

MB: All that stuff. Yeah.

SL: Tennessee Ernie Ford.

MB: Oh, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[00:57:36] MB: I remember Tennessee Ernie Ford before

Alamogordo. I remember Tennessee Ernie Ford in St. Louis because my mother liked Tennessee Ernie Ford, and he had a television show [*The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show*, 1956-1961], as I recall. And she liked him, and she liked to hear him sing. She liked Johnny Mathis and Tennessee Ernie Ford and Jimmy Dean. Now why—what do they have in common? I don't know. But anyway I can remember "Sixteen Tons" [released in 1955].

SL: "What do you get?"

MB: "What do you get?"—listenin' to that. I have a specific recollection of that song and him singing that in St. Louis—in an apartment in St. Louis. I remember that there was a [*laughs*] weird bathroom in that apartment, where the actual commode was up on what looked like a throne. [*SL laughs*] Don't ask me why. I mean we were—it was a rental place obviously and . . .

SL: I'm sure it was to accommodate the plumbing.

MB: [*Laughs*] I have that recollection.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

TM: Scott, let me change tapes.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[00:58:35] SL: You know what? One thing I forgot to have you do, and this is what we do with everybody. We ask you to state and spell your full name.

MB: William Jefferson—no. [*Laughter*]

SL: You had me.

MB: Mike Beebe. *M-I-K-E B-E-E-B-E.*

SL: That's it.

MB: Well, no, it's actually Mickey Dale, but if you use that, I'm gonna take the [*laughter*—take my signature back on your form.

SL: Okay, that's a deal. [*Laughter*] That's a deal. [*TM coughs*]

MD: Just so you know, Scott—nine thirty is when the first photo op group comes. We've got about forty-five minutes until they're here.

SL: Okay. All right. We'll do forty-five minutes here. Where were we? I've forgotten.

JE: Sixth grade.

MB: We were in sixth grade, I think—with periodic flashbacks and flash forwards. Which, you know, if you're just tryin' to do it in

just pure chronology, it doesn't work because you have memories that start at this that trigger somethin' that's . . .

SL: That's right. That's right.

MB: . . . akin to it later on, like you were talkin' about corporal punishment. [*Laughs*] It jumped us all the way up to senior in high school.

SL: Now—and also, you know, oral history is not considered a s—a real science. It's—the memories are fallible, so you're not really accountable . . .

MB: Good.

SL: . . . to anything that . . .

MB: Good.

SL: You know, it's your memory.


MB: Good, good, good.

SL: And we know it can be fallible so . . .

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

SL: That's all right.

JE: Critters?

 [00:59:51] SL: Joy wants me—did you ever have pets growing up?

MB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Okay, here we go. [*JE laughs*] Yeah. Well, let's go back.

SL: Okay.

MB: Way, way back. I apparently loved animals to the point I killed a whole bunch of chickens. [*SL laughs*] I don't obviously remember this, but when I was very, very small in Tuckerman at one of those sharecroppin' places where my aunt and uncle lived and those two cousins, which really was the only outside family we really have now even—apparently I was—wandered out into a chicken coop and was squeezin' and lovin' the chickens to the point that there were several that I choked to death. [*Laughs*]

[01:00:30] Obviously I don't remember that, but they said I was lovin' on them to the point that they weren't makin' it. I also remember—I don't remember, but they tell me that durin' that same time frame, I came runnin' in the house talking about the bugs had me, and I was covered with cockleburs. I thought a cocklebur was a bug, you know. I was—'cause I hadn't lived on a farm. I was probably, what, four or five years old, [*unclear word*] six. But in terms of pets, we actually had a skunk in New Mexico, in Alamogordo, in that first house and called him Stinker Bill. [*Laughter*] And he died in the operation to remove his odor glands, you know, because, I mean, I—my stepfather, I think, found him on the road or found him somewhere as a little bitty baby skunk, and we kept him. I mean he was the cutest thing you ever saw—kept him out in the garage in a little kind of a

storage room out in the garage. I don't ever recall him stinkin' the place up or sprayin'. And then apparently when he had to be a certain age—get old enough to go have the operation to remove his scent glands [*laughs*], so that he wouldn't accidentally ruin your whole house. He apparently died.

SL: Hmm.

[01:01:52] MB: I remember that. I remember a little terrier named King during that same time frame—little dog—little brown terrier that was one of those busy dogs, you know.

SL: Hmm. A little wiredhair.

MB: Darting—yeah—darting to and fro. That's the only pets I remember as a kid. Obviously we've got German shepherd now. I'm a big German shepherd fan. I love German shepherds. I always wanna have a German shepherd.

SL: I think I met . . .

MB: Mosel.

SL: Yeah, yeah. He's pretty lovable.

MB: Yeah. Oh, yeah, wouldn't bite a biscuit. [*SL laughs*] Looks fierce. But since—almost twelve years old now. Gettin' slow. Gettin' a little slow.

SL: Okay, so let's get—you are—you had a couple . . .

MB: Still got me in the sixth grade in Alamogordo? Is that where

I am?

SL: Yep.

MB: Okay. What else do I remember? I remember—I told you about the bicycle. I think the address I can remember was 607 Dewey—*D-E-W-E-Y*. I think that's where it was. I remember friends—neighbors that were friends of my mom's and stepdad's, and he apparently—they worked together. His name was Lockett. They had a girl a year or two older than me and a boy a year or two younger than me. It seems like there was another boy, but I can't—anyway they lived right around the corner.

[01:03:35] SL: Did you all do family barbecues together?

MB: Yeah, I remember my—talkin' about memories—I remember in the summertime, the late-night show—like what would now be Johnny Carson time. Or—Johnny Carson—?I mean?, he's gone. [*Laughs*] Jay Leno time. Ten thirty, after the news. There was a—the late-night movie came on one of those stations—I'm sure it was out of El Paso—called Starlight Theater. And I remember in the summertime watchin' that almost every night—whatever the movie was, you know. There [*laughs*] wasn't a lot of options, you know.

SL: Right.

MB: You didn't have but three channels or two channels. I remember

playin' in the yard. I remember it bein' kinda idyllic—you know, kinda suburban—first suburban experience I think I ever had. It wasn't necessarily suburban. It was small town. But it was like a neighborhood, so it felt suburban.

[01:04:35] SL: What about second languages?

MB: What about it?

SL: I mean did you start pickin' up . . .

MB: No. I didn't start speakin' second languages till I took four years of French—two years in high school and two years in college.

SL: Okay. I just didn't know if . . .

MB: But, no, I didn't assimilate any Spanish in New Mexico.

SL: Okay. [*TM clears throat*] So out of New Mexico you go back to St. Louis—is that . . .

MB: No. Sixth and seventh grade are both in New Mexico. Eighth grade's in Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

SL: Okay.

MB: Eglin Air Force Base.

SL: What happens there?

MB: We live there—go to the eighth grade there.

SL: And a house? You had another house or . . .

MB: It was a mobile home, as I recall. We lived in a trailer, which I'm sure was a rental. I remember not the ocean but the back

bays. You know, like the inland waterway. I remember playin' in what I guess you'd call a bay or an inlet that—where it wasn't surf, and it wasn't green, and it wasn't ocean even though Fort Walton's on the ocean. It was, like, in one of those bay inlet areas which is, I'm sure, was close proximity to where we lived. I don't remember where we lived, but I remember goin' to the eighth grade.

SL: Do any fishin'?

MB: You know, I don't recall doin' any fishin'. No.

[01:06:02] SL: After Florida, you're in Newport?

MB: Yeah. My mother divorces Mr. Bailey. Or leaves Mr. Bailey or whatever for the second time 'cause we were married to him twice.

SL: Right.

MB: She was married to him twice. And moved back to Newport. First moved back to Newport and lived in what's called the Dorsey Apartments. Again in the ghetto. [*Laughs*] Right there on the verge of where the African Americans and the white part of town was. And again this was back in nineteen—what, [19]61, I guess. And so it was just still a segregated—relatively segregated society. But, you know, I lived in both worlds in terms of bein' right on the cusp—under the bridge—the old

bridge, just about—down there was where the Dorsey Apartments are on Second Street in Newport. And went to the—that—we moved there in the summer. Actually moved to Tuckerman and stayed there for a little while—again with my aunt because I remember watching the 1960 Democratic Convention—[John Fitzgerald] Kennedy and [Lyndon Baines] Johnson on a snowy, little, ol' black-and-white TV in my aunt's house in 1960 at—before we moved to the Dorsey Apartments in Newport sometime—obviously that same summer because when we started school—when I started school in September, we were living in the Dorsey Apartments.

[01:07:33] SL: That broadcast affect you in any way?

MB: You know, the strange thing is I's for the wrong guy. I'm a huge Kennedy fan. But I wasn't in the summer of 1960. I mean, you know, I just finished the eighth grade. You're subject to all the prejudices that exist, and there were huge prejudices back then against Catholics. And against Yankees. And so I was inundated with that—I don't know whether it was from my uncle or who—cousins or just the people in general, but I remember bein' for Lyndon Johnson during the convention and was disappointed when he lost after the second or third ballot or whatever it was—remember thinkin' that that was a—you know, that was the only

convention I can ever remember where there was some degree of suspense. I suppose there was suspense. There was to me as an eighth grader—just—somebody that just finished the eighth grade. But I remember that I was for Lyndon Johnson for—in retrospect, all the wrong reasons, which is really ironic because it was JFK, I think, that really lit my fire about public service and politics. So—and it didn't take long. It was probably within six or eight months after that convention, I became a huge Kennedy fan.

SL: Well, LBJ had incredible influence in Texas and New Mexico, in that area of the country.

MB: Sure.

SL: And so you were probably familiar with that . . .

MB: May have been. May have been.

SL: . . . whether you were really aware of it, his presence was felt . . .

MB: Right.

SL: . . . in those communities.

MB: Right.

[01:09:04] SL: So it seems to me that you must have—y—beyond just being comfortable with poor folk and depressed areas, you were in those areas. It seems like to me that's probably instilled

in you a comfort level with that kind of—those challenges that those people face.



MB: Yeah. Well, I think it creates a lotta empathy. And a lot of understanding and—which, I guess, empathy really is. The ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and understand where they come from and how they think about things. I think all of that created a broad set of experiences that you factor into your being that helps you at least understand some things that you might not otherwise understand. [01:10:06] And so, yeah, I'm fairly comfortable in virtually any economic situation, good to bad and anything in between. Understanding some of the difficulties people go through. Understanding the trials and tribulations of single parents—particularly single mothers and what they go through with their children to try to do the best they can. Understand what mamas have to go through tryin' to raise boys without a father figure or without a male figure around. You know, all those things that it seems to me, as I said earlier, are not unique to me. There are countless, countless families or partial families that deal with that every single day. And somethin' all of us need to be more sensitive to because it's a real significant segment now of our population. Back in those days, there was a stigma that doesn't exist today

for the kids, I think. And I can remember wantin' to change my last name, so it'd be the same as my mother's 'cause her's was always changin', and I remember one—I remember writing down different names in different schools, you know. Obviously it wasn't that way on the permanent record. I guess it wasn't. But I can remember usin' the name that she happened to be usin' at the time because of the stigma of having a different name. You know, that was the *Leave It To Beaver* [1957-1963] age.

SL: That's right.

[01:11:33] MB: That was the *Ozzie and Harriet* [1952-1966] age.

That was when . . .

SL: Ward and June [Cleaver] and . . .

MB: Yeah, there's a mom and a dad and a boy and a girl and whatever in the neighborhood and one car. And you went to church, and you went to the drive-in, and you did all those things that—and that was the culture of the time, at least in a kid's mind, if you weren't that, then there's somethin' wrong. And so I can ha—I remember having those thoughts of havin'—wishin' my name was—would change or using a different last name, so that the stigma would not necessarily attach. That's about the only negative stigma I can remember really. There

may have been others, but that's about the only thing from a psychologically negative standpoint that I recall.

[01:12:20] SL: So pretty soon after the Democratic Convention, you actually move into Newport. And you're in the Dorsey Apartments and . . .

MB: Right.

SL: Now you're . . .



MB: Ninth grade—Newport—makin' new friends, meetin' new people. That's, I think, when it started this embracing I talk about about the families and the people in Newport—to help raise me. My mother, I guess, initially worked at what was called the Midway Sandwich Shop, which was a—you know, a restaurant. But it wasn't a great big restaurant. And in those days—well, and I guess even today—if you're a waitress and you're dependent on tips, you need to work those hours that are most conducive to gettin' the most tips. Plus, she wasn't a morning person anyway. So she didn't go to work till shortly before the lunch hour, and she'd work till ten o'clock at night and through the dinner hour. Well, you know what kind of freedom that affords a red-blooded American boy. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

[01:13:28] MB: I mean I had the streets, you know, and could run

the streets. Fortunately the temptations weren't there. There weren't drugs. There weren't knives and guns, as I said. The worst that happened was you got caught drinkin' beer or gettin' in a fistfight. But I did have that kind of freedom because she wouldn't be home till ten, ten thirty—whatever time her shift was off at the restaurant. And there developed a series of friends' homes where I was always welcome. They'd always have an extra plate ready to set if I showed up, and it was kinda understood. I mean there were houses where there was a mom and a dad and two kids and a dog and all that stuff. And they would provide some of those mentoring—we didn't call it mentoring, but that's what it was—opportunities where they'd stick a plate there and say, "Go wash your hands and sit down and eat." And—now my mother always would want me to come to the restaurant and eat. But, you know, how often do you want to do that with your mom, you know [*laughter*], when you're a kid? [*Laughs*]

SL: When you're at that—that's right.

MB: When you're at that age. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's right.

[01:14:39] MB: And so—and they'd always say, "Are you gettin' your homework? Are you payin' attention to your mother? Are you—

it was a kinda small town—Newport. It was the kinda place where if you—somethin' happened, usually the word got back, so they weren't ashamed or afraid to tell your mother if you did somethin' wrong or—and so that was kind of the environment. Particularly in ninth grade, Bob Stanfield was a close friend. His house was a house about four blocks from those Dorsey Apartments. And his daddy was a optometrist, I believe, or a dentist. And he was a doctor. They called him Doctor, is what I remember. And we—I spent a lot of time there, and Bob and I went to Detroit that summer—it was two—the summer between my ninth and tenth grade—after my ninth grade year, get on a dang bus and go to Detroit, Michigan—stayed with my—I had an uncle that lived up there. Went to four or five Tiger games.

SL: Oh, that's a big time.

MB: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Big trip.

[01:15:45] MB: Yeah, it was a big trip. Anyway ninth grade—you know, what do you wanna to know? I remember . . .

SL: Ninth grade is still in junior high or . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . is that part of the high school?

MB: Well, they're together, but it's still junior high.

SL: Yeah.

MB: It's attached, if you will. On the same campus but . . .

SL: Separate still.

MB: Yeah. But separate. Yeah.

[01:16:09] SL: So sports . . .

MB: Nah, not . . .

SL: . . . in Newport?

MB: Not really. You know, I played a little basketball. Wasn't any good. And ran a little track. I remember running the eight [hundred] eighty [meters] at the [Bill] Wilson Relays. But, nah, I wasn't—I actually grew—I grew two inches after I got outta high school—my freshman year. I was a year younger than everybody else. I started kindergarten in Chicago as a four-year-old or somethin'. I was still seventeen years old after my first semester in college.

SL: I was gonna say when we were talking about your earlier school days—I was kind of calculating . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . what year it was.

MB: I was very young.

SL: And you were a couple of . . .

MB: And, you know, boys mature more slowly than girls, so I was

behind in age to most of my classmates, and as I said, I was about five ten, I guess, when I graduated from high school as a sixteen-year-old kid. And weighed probably a hundred thirty-five [*laughs*] or forty pounds—skinny. And then in my freshman year in college, grew two inches and—just because it was . . .

SL: It was time for you . . .

MB: Seventeen, eighteen years old . . .

SL: . . . to grow. Yeah.

MB: . . . you know.

[01:17:24] SL: Yeah. Was history still your favorite . . .

MB: I think so.

SL: . . . deal in Newport?

MB: I think so. You know, I—we were kinda—by the tenth grade I started runnin' around with a different group of kids than what I'd run around with in the ninth grade. And they were kinda the cool kids [*laughs*] if you know what I mean, you know. Kinda the in-crowd—kinda the class officers and the athletes and all that stuff. And the memories then start to really expand in terms of what you did [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Right.

MB: Or what you shouldn't have done. But in terms of schooling, it's less about—there's a whole lot less about—emphasis on reading

and studying and academics as there was social life. My social life started to occur with that change starting in the tenth grade to the different circle of friends, who were much more social than the circle of friends that I had in the ninth grade.

[01:18:29] SL: Right. They were probably still decent students, though.

MB: Oh, yeah.

SL: I mean, usually if you're . . .

MB: Yeah, none of us flunked.

SL: . . . team leaders in . . .

MB: Yeah, none of us flunked.

SL: . . . in school. Yeah.

MB: It was just—I think it was the time when the hormones and the juices started flowin' . . .

SL: You bet.

MB: . . . to the point that you're thinking a whole lot more about social stuff—girls and all that other socialization and less about academics.

SL: Yeah. So . . .

MB: And they were all pretty stereotypical, red-blooded [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah. So you probably—you started going to dances.

MB: Yeah, yeah. And again the freedom existed. You know, we

had—and I wasn't alone. We had—one of the neatest men I've ever known was a widower—a physician who had two adopted sons my age. One was six six and three hundred and twenty pounds, and one was about six feet and about a hundred and eighty pounds. They were same grade, same age—adopted.

SL: Yeah.

[01:19:36] MB: Wild. [*Laughter*] Spoiled. And he worked all the time. He was a house-call, old-timey doctor in the hospital there in Newport and in—and when he was through with eight hours a day or whatever in his office or at the hospital, then he'd get in the car and go to make house calls till ungodly hours. And we hung out at their house, and it wasn't just me and those two boys, it was—there was a cadre of us. Sometimes there were a lot of girls. I remember we had a party there one night, and the sheriff raided it. His daughter was in the top of one closet, and his niece was in the top of another closet tryin' to hide, you know. [*SL laughs*] People were scatterin' ever—I mean we weren't doin' anything but drinkin' beer . . .

SL: Right.

MB: . . . which was illegal 'cause we were, what, sixteen . . .

SL: Right.

[01:20:21] MB: . . . seventeen years old. But that was the

[laughs]—I remember those hangouts and those kind of places. That wasn't the only one. There were several places where—all boys' houses where we'd congregate, if you will. And then there were the girls' houses where you'd go to from time to time and, you know, where they'd congregate. And yeah, you'd go to dances, and you'd have parties—early [19]60s kind of stuff. You were talking about music—you know, that's when Steve Stephens had his dance show on in Little Rock. One of those Little Rock stations [KTHV] where—it was kind of a local version of Dick Clark's . . .

SL: Dick Clark.

MB: Yeah.

SL: Yeah—*American Bandstand* [1956-1989] kind of thing.

[01:21:04] MB: Yeah. And, you know, that was the age of—that was—there was a rockabilly and crossover age in there—late [19]50s and early [19]60s.

SL: That's right. Ronnie Hawkins.

MB: Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks.

SL: Bob Riley.

MB: I don't remember Bob Riley. I do remember . . .

SL: Or Billy [Lee]—not Bob. Oh, what . . .

MB: I know who you're talkin' about . . .

SL: Yeah, yeah.

MB: . . . because they talked about him recently.

SL: Yeah.

[01:21:30] MB: I don't remember the Riley guy. I do remember, obviously, Ronnie Hawkins. In fact, Ronnie Hawkins used to come to the Silver Moon [Club], as I recall, on New Year's night—not New Year's Eve, but the night of the first. Also, as I recall, you had to be thirteen to get in the Silver Moon in Newport. They would not let twelve-year-olds in.

SL: [*Laughs*] Well, that's probably for good reason. [*Laughter*] I don't know what they'd do.

MB: But I mean, it was pretty wide open.

SL: Yeah.

MB: I mean, as a fourteen-, fifteen-, sixteen-year-old kid, you could go into Silver Moon.

SL: Right.

MB: You may or may not get served a beer, but you could be in there. I remember gettin' my life saved one night by Billy Moore. I've told him this story forever—the rough, tough, famous quarterback . . .

SL: Yeah.

MB: . . . for the Razorbacks back in the . . .

SL: Yeah, you bet.

MB: . . . early [19]60s.

SL: Yeah.

[01:22:13] MB: And Ronnie Hawkins was there playin' that night.

And I was dancing with this lady who was, you know, early twenties, and I wasn't doing anything wrong and—I mean we were just out on the dance floor and her husband slash boyfriend—whoever he was—who was in his early twenties and a lot bigger than me took offense at somethin' and was gonna take care of me, which he could've easily done [*laughs*], I'm sure. And this guy who I knew of but obviously didn't know me from Adam was there with a number of other Razorbacks because they followed Ronnie Hawkins from place to place.

SL: You bet.

MB: It was Billy Moore. And he told the guy that he wasn't gonna bother me unless he went through him—went through Billy Moore—at which point the guy and his girlfriend left. I've been a big [*laughs*] Billy Moore fan ever since.

SL: Sounds like you may . . .

MB: Oh, we—sometimes I was the kinda kid my mother didn't want me to run around with. [*Laughter*]

[01:23:10] SL: Well, I'm startin' to see a pattern here of maybe the

women kinda get you in trouble from time to time.

MB: Oh, no.

SL: No.

MB: Not any more so than anybody else. I mean it was a
[laughter]—no, it was a—it was—I was normal like everybody
else, and you know, you had crushes on girls, and it lasted three
weeks or six weeks or nine weeks or until . . .

SL: Until they broke your heart. [Laughs]

[01:23:32] MB: Yeah, until a new song came, or usually when I had
a crush on somebody, they never reciprocated. So it was
[laughs] . . .

SL: Yeah.

MB: . . . unrequited love, you know [laughs], as far as I was
concerned. It—she never felt the same way, I'm sure. But, you
know, that's just part of being a boy and growin' up in that kinda
age. Nothin' remarkable or spectacular. It was a good town. It
was a good place. It was a good time. And it was stability that
I'd never known. You know, those two years in New Mexico was
the longest period, but one year was with a stepdad, and the
next year was without. So even though there was two years in
the same place, there was some instability in the personal life.
But, you know, Newport [vocalized noise]—I mean that was—I

stayed there four years. I was there ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade—that was home, and the longest I'd ever been anywhere. And so it was a pretty neat place.

SL: Well, you were talking about how the sheriff's daughter and niece were [*MB laughs*] at that party. You know, those were days when the sheriff knew the kids.

MB: Absolutely. Oh, yeah. Well, the sheriff might whip you.

SL: Yeah.

MB: Might take a belt off or a paddle. Wouldn't send you to the court—wouldn't arrest you—wouldn't put somethin' on your record—just beat the devil out of you and [*laughter*] make you quit. I'm not sure that's not the best way to go sometimes.

[01:24:53] SL: Well, and you know, again the parents appreciated that kind of stuff.

MB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: And they appreciated the help.

MB: Absolutely. Absolutely.

SL: It was kind of a—almost "It Takes a Village" kinda thing.

MB: Exactly.

SL: Yep.

MB: Exactly. That's what it was.

SL: I wanna get back to Ronnie Hawkins.

MB: Okay. "Forty Days" [released in 1959] . . .

[01:25:08] SL: Do you remember his at all? Do you remember him on stage?

MB: No, not really. You know who I remember on stage? His drummer, Levon Helm.

SL: Okay.

MB: Because it's the first time I ever saw anybody twirl drumsticks while they were playin'.

SL: Yeah.

MB: I mean you see it now all the time. You know, the guy's twirlin' the drumsticks and—but that's the first time I'd ever seen it—saw it at the Silver Moon, and I thought, "Gosh, that guy's the greatest guy in the world on the drums" [*laughs*] just because he could do . . .

SL: I . . .

MB: He was pretty good and still is.

SL: I can tell you he still is.

MB: Yeah.

SL: He is one of the greatest.

MB: But I had an album before or after my first—and it seems to me like I saw Ronnie Hawkins a couple times at the Silver Moon. But—either before or after—during that time frame—got a

Ronnie Hawkins album—played thing, I think, till we wore it out—would love to have it today—don't know where you can get a copy of that or love to have a CD of it. *Ronnie Hawkins Greatest Hits*, I guess. I don't remember what it was, but it had "Forty Days" [released in 1959] and "Ruby [Baby," released in 1960] and . . .

SL: "Mary Lou" [released in 1959].

MB: "Mary Lou." All those songs on it. Yeah. Yeah, pretty neat.

SL: Well, you know, he was a Fayetteville product, of course—Huntsville.

[01:26:13] MB: Yeah, you know we had John Tolleson here two weeks ago. We had a huge party here. You know who I'm talkin' about?

SL: No, I've known John. Yes.

MB: We had . . .

SL: He married the girl across the street from where I grew up . . .

MB: We had a huge party here two weeks ago. Had three hundred fifty people here. It was a fund-raiser for the Mansion. It sold it out. They oversold it—three hundred was all they were supposed to be able to stick in there for his concert, and he got out on that piano in the grand hall and sang and played. And all those folks that were at the U of A [University of Arkansas] from

[19]55 to [19]65—particularly Sigma Nus [Sigma Nu Fraternity] but all sorts of fraternities and sororities—all the—all those folks were back havin' the best time. And many of them hadn't seen each other in forty years, and they were here listenin' to Johnny and—a great fund-rai—a great success.

SL: Well, you know, they were rivals in north . . .

MB: Yeah, that's the reason I mentioned it. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

MB: One of 'em was the Shamrock and—played at the Shamrock.

One of 'em played . . .

SL: Rockwood Club.

MB: Rockwood. Yeah.

SL: Yep, yep. [*Laughs*] Well, I just . . .

[01:27:07] MB: Incidentally you're talkin' about music in that genre—when I was in the ninth grade living in the Dorsey Apartments, there was a guy living in the—there were separate buildings. There were four apartments in each building, but there were, like, a set of four or five, six buildings. And living in one of the next buildings over was a young man—single guy—named Al Bruno from Quebec, Canada. And the significance of Al Bruno was he was the lead guitar player for Conway Twitty. And that was, I guess, at a time when they were gonna be down

and not touring. Conway Twitty's bass guitar player was Joe Lewis, who was from Newport, Arkansas. So even though Conway Twitty was Helena or wherever he was, Al Bruno lived in Newport for a short period of time with—well, he didn't live with anybody, but I'm sure Joe Lewis's bein' from Newport influenced Al to be there. Al started teachin' me the guitar. And—it didn't really take much. I think I was too immature to stay focused. It was after I got out of law school before I really started tryin' to play the guitar. But I think the preliminary interest was garnered or generated by Al Bruno, who was the lead guitar player for Conway Twitty.

SL: You probably didn't . . .

[01:28:29] MB: Now you're talkin' about music—that was the time frame where a Conway Twitty was number one on the country charts and number one on the pop charts.

SL: Yes.

MB: And the same song crossed over—whether it was Johnny Cash or Roy Orbison or Conway Twitty, you know. He sang, "It's Only Make Believe" [released in 1965], and you know, that was a top hit. Elvis [Presley] would do that. Elvis would have a country song that would be on the top of the country charts. It would also be—and they just crossed over. I mean, you couldn't really

tell what was country sometimes and what was popular music. And then it started to change with the Beatles in that time frame. But music was a big part of a kid's life.

SL: Well, it's a big part of Arkansas history.

[01:29:17] MB: Yeah, Highway 67 and that whole road up and down through there with the Ronnie Hawkins—I saw—we saw Jerry Lee Lewis at the Silver Moon. We saw the Kingsmen. They said Elvis was there, but that was long before me. He'd all—you know, by the time I was in Newport, he'd long since made it big and was off in the Army and been back for that matter.

SL: All those small rooms were a big part of—you know, you had . . .

MB: Porky's Roof Top. King's . . .

SL: Well, you know, Louis Jordan was from Brinkley. You got—you had—oh, what's the lady guitar player that . . .

TM: Thornton.

SL: [Willa Mae "Big Mama"] Thornton. She was the first time that a guitar was out in front of the band, you know. *[MB laughs]* And she was black . . .

MB: Oh, I didn't know that.

SL: . . . and doing that. And those were big influences on B.B. King.

MB: Sure.

SL: And B.B. was playing around the state . . .

MB: Sure.

SL: . . . back then, too.

MB: Sure. And you had the "Silver Fox" [Charlie Rich].

SL: [*Laughs*] Yes.

MB: "Behind Closed Doors" [released in 1973] guy from Colt.

SL: "Behind Closed Doors." Yes.

MB: What's his name? [*Laughs*]

JE: Danny Franks?

SL: No, no, it's—oh, I can't believe I can't know this. It's a relative of the Boswells. Oh, gosh, I'll think of it later. But I thought of Billy Lee Riley. It was Billy Lee Riley . . .

MB: Yeah, Billy Lee Riley.

SL: . . . not Bob Riley.

[01:30:36] MB: Well, you remember you had the Browns from Arkansas.

SL: Uh-huh.

MB: Jim [Ed] Brown.

SL: Yep.

MB: That's a record I remember—"Little Jimmy Brown"—from New Mexico along with "El Paso" and along with the Jimmy Rodgers stuff and all. "Teen Angel" [released in 1960]. Do you remember Mark Dinning and "Teen Angel"?

SL: Absolutely. "Teen Angel." You bet.

MB: [*Laughter*] All that soapy stuff from back then, you know.

SL: I know. I know.

MB: And they—it would have one or two instruments instead of a whole orchestra and [*laughs*] . . .

[01:31:04] SL: Well, I mean, you know, the combo—again, that kinda stuff has its roots in Arkansas.

MB: Yeah.

SL: The reduction of the combo.

MB: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Yeah, three- and four- and five-piece combo.

MB: Yeah. Well, you know, Elvis kinda really took it to that level when he had [William Patton] "Bill" Black [Jr.] and those folks, and he had, what, a bass and a guitar and a drum, wasn't it— and that was it?

SL: That's right.

MB: And made . . .

SL: That's right.

MB: Made a lot of money.

SL: Were you—need him at the moment?

MD: That was Charlie Rich.

MB: Charlie Rich.

SL: Charlie Rich.

SL: Thank you. You know, you can come in here and sit.

MD: Oh, no, that's okay. I'm doing [*unclear word*].

SL: He's so good. You might hire him on steady. [*Laughter*]

MB: Hmm. Yeah. Get rid of this piecework, huh?

SL: Yeah. [*Laughs*] So . . .

[01:31:50] TM: You know, I'm kinda curious of settin' a little bit

bigger scene about the Silver Moon. It sounds like a—quite a hub.



MB: Well, Silver Moon was the place when—in the early [19]60s that was the mecca for nightclubs in Arkansas, I think—that, and the 11/70 [Club] down at Hazen were the two that had a big reputation. There was a place in West Memphis called the Plantation Inn, I think, that also had a little bit of a reputation. But none of it rivaled the Silver Moon in terms of the draw of the stars. I mean you—when you talk about Elvis Presley and Ronnie Hawkins and the Kingsmen—"Louie, Louie" [released in 1963] . . .

SL: You bet.

MB: And w—and Jerry Lee Lewis. I mean they were pullin' into the Silver Moon in Newport, Arkansas, the top three and four and five recording artists in the world at the time. I mean that was

crazy. That was unbelievable. The Kingsmen were there when they were havin' the number-one hit. Jerry Lee Lewis was real famous. Now Elvis li—was a little different. He was there early and before he got to be huge. But those other folks—I mean they were there when they were in the prime of their popularity. So the Silver Moon was a gathering place. And apparently it was a favorite haunt [*laughs*] of the Razorbacks. I'm sure [University of Arkansas head football] Coach [Frank] Broyles didn't know that at the time. But I mean I saw Claude Smithy, who was from Searcy, who died—you remember the offensive lineman who died at Texas A&M [University, College Station, Texas] from, I think, an aneurysm was there. Obviously Billy Moore. Lots of football—lots of Razorbacks followed it, but they were usually following Ronnie Hawkins or somebody like that to the Silver Moon. But it was a big deal. It was a place where the stars went, or at least we thought that.

[01:33:40] SL: So how big a room was it?

MB: [*Laughs*] You know, it's like everything else when you're that age. It's a lot . . .

SL: A lot bigger.

MB: . . . looks a lot bigger than it really is. You know, I don't how big it was. I'm sure in the daylight with the lights on, which I never

saw, it was much smaller. But at night with tables and lights and—it looked big enough that you could put a couple hundred people in there.

SL: Yeah. Full bar and . . .

MB: You know, I don't ever remember anything but beer.

SL: But beer.

MB: If they had a full bar, we didn't know about it.

SL: Never saw it. Yeah. [*Laughs*]

MB: Yeah.

SL: It was in the back.

MB: [*Laughter*] Yeah. We didn't know about that sort of stuff.

SL: Right.

MB: But they told stories about throwin' dice and gamblin' and all that. I didn't see that either but they—that's where—that was the story.

SL: Okay. So let's—is—are you good with that?

TM: Yes, great.

[01:34:27] SL: Okay. The—back to Newport High School.

MB: Yeah.

SL: What was that like?

MB: [*Vocalized noise*] It was good. I mean, it was a—you know, I had a good circle of friends. Let's see, I was associate editor—or

coeditor, I guess, of the annual—was the stage manager of the junior and senior plays—was—had a good set of friends—always had someplace to go and somethin' to do. Didn't have a car, but most people didn't. You either—we had one friend that had his own car. Everybody else—if they had parents that had a car, and I didn't—on Friday night or Saturday night they'd—you'd try to figure out who could get the car.

SL: Right.

MB: [*Laughs*] And . . .

SL: And who's pitchin' in for the gas.

[01:35:27] MB: And you all piled in one car.

SL: Right.

MB: And you went to the Dairy Queen [International Dairy Queen Inc.]—we went to Paul's Dairy Queen. I mean, that's where you went. You went to Paul's Dairy Queen. You hung around in the parkin' lot, and you'd drive up and down the street, and you'd get in a girl's car if a carload of girls drove up. I mean there was all that Richie Cunningham kind of a li—*Happy Days* [1974-1984] kind of life . . .

SL: Yeah.

MB: . . . is what it was. It was music and drive-ins and socialization—it was pretty innocent. [*Laughs*]

[01:35:58] SL: Had a drive-in theater? Any drive-in theaters?

MB: No.

SL: So you had a . . .

MB: We had a drive-in theater, but we didn't do it.

SL: Yeah.

MB: We didn't go there. First of all nobody had a car that they would just keep to themselves and a date.

SL: Right. Right. You had . . .

MB: [*Laughs*] I mean if you had the car, you had six guys in it. You didn't have any choice.

SL: If you were at the drive-in theater, you were probably there with your parents.

MB: Yes. [*Laughter*]

SL: So you're—you were still really interested in history at that point in time?

MB: Yeah. You know, I'm—obviously I'm still interested in history, but there's a socialization period. The summer then between my junior and senior year, I started working at Kroger's [The Kroger Co.]. I got a summer job, and it was an old, old Kroger store down by Front Street, and they were—they had just finished building a brand new Kroger store several blocks away. It wasn't downtown—on Walnut Street. And I got a summer job at

Kroger's stocking and then moving the store and opening the new store. So I was part of the—a ground crew, if you will, on the opening of the brand-new Kroger store. And so then I continued to work there all through my senior year. After school and on weekends, I worked at Kroger's. And then that next summer—so I worked from the summer of my—after my junior year all the way through high school and till I started college, I worked at Kroger's. That inhibited a lot of that social activity because every afternoon I was at work, and every weekend I was at work. So there was still some social activity. But I mean, you know, we'd work till nine o'clock, ten o'clock on Saturday night, which inhibited your [*laughs*] activities.

[01:37:52] SL: Yeah. Any of your mom's frugality take hold for you? Did you save your money?

MB: Oh, I—I'm frugal to this—I'm fiscally conservative. I'm notoriously frugal—not only in my personal life but my public policy life as well. We will err on the side of being conservative about money, both personally and professionally.

SL: So you were able to save some of your money? You were startin' to think in terms of college?

MB: Yeah. Yeah, you know, it was saving money, her saving money, and it was a Arkansas Rural Endowment [Fund] student loan.

Arkansas Rural Endowment association was a student loan or—it still exists. And the interest rate was virtually nothin'—like two percent. And they didn't even start—you didn't have to pay it back till you got outta school. And they didn't even start runnin' the interest on you until you got outta school. So I mean it was a—and so I went to college on a series of me workin' and my mother workin' and savin' money and a student loan. If there were scholarships, I didn't know about them, or I certainly didn't earn one.

[01:38:58] SL: And this was at Arkansas State [University, Jonesboro]?

MB: Right.

SL: [*TM clears throat*] Tell me about that campus in those years. What was that like?

MB: It was a wonderful time. I truly love and enjoyed Arkansas State. Frankly a fraternity, I think, really helped me out. Back in that day you couldn't pledge a fraternity until you'd completed the first semester of twelve hours of at least C average or better, which was a huge incentive especially for a kid that wanted to be in a fraternity. In the summer before I went to college, a whole group of members of the Sigma Pi Fraternity at ASU ended up comin' to Newport because they had one or two fraternity

brothers from Newport. And over at this house I was tellin' you about—Dr. Ashley's house where the—there was a lot of freedom [*laughs*]*—*we used to play . . .

SL: Lot of learning. [*Laughs*]

[01:40:00] MB: We used to play cards, you know. I mean y—if I was workin' and I got off for lunch hour, it's just two blocks from the Kroger store—I'd run over there, and we'd play cards. And this bunch of guys that were college guys—some of them seniors in college. I mean, you know, twenty-one, twenty-two years old were there, and I developed a friendship and relationship with a lot of them and obviously wanted to join that group of people when I got to college. And they wanted me. I mean it was a mutual thing. We all developed a pretty good kinship, and so if you wanted to belong to that fraternity, you better make your grades. So that was additional incentive, I think, you know. And when you're a kid—first time away from home, living in a dormitory by yourself, first exposure, and I'm still just seventeen years old. It could've been easy to lose focus, flunk out of school [*laughs*]*—*just go dead south. And I think a whole lot of what kept me focused was the incentive of makin' my grades, so I could belong to that fraternity. And then obviously it sustained itself from that point on. [01:41:18] Provided me with

leadership opportunities and involvement activities in the school and on campus, huge intermingling of social life and academics. I—you know, I didn't study very much. I did enough to get by. I had two-six [2.60 grade point average] each semester of my freshman year, which was, what, three B's and two C's in five courses. My sophomore I really was havin' a good time, and it was, like, a 2.03. It was way down. But from my junior year on I never made below a three-point [3.0]. In fact, I think I had one semester of a four-point [4.0]. So, you know, it becomes a matter of maturity—aging. I read a—saw a deal on TV where they said the male brain—they said the frontal lobe of the brain is where judgment comes from, and the male frontal lobe does not, on average, mature until age twenty-five, which, I guess, is why the insurance companies rate boys up so high until age twenty-five. But I think it applied to me as well. It took—my first two years, I had a good time—enough studyin' to be in the fraternity and to make it but just enough. And then by the time I was a junior, decided I wanted to go to law school. So it was time to go to work and . . .

SL: So . . .

MB: Anyway, no—didn't work during school—worked summer.

Summer between my freshman and sophomore year, went back

to Newport and lived with Dr. Ashley. And that—and dug a ditch. A girl that was one of our runnin' buddies in high school's daddy was the manager of the s—Newport Water [Commission] and sewer system.

SL: Okay.

[01:42:55] MB: And she was goin' to get me a good job. And she did. I dug a ditch behind a backhoe—laid a sewer line all summer. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, now . . .

MB: But it was a [*laughs*] job and one I needed. And then, you know, the next summer I was construction. I built a rice dryer all night long—night work because, you know, the concrete going up on a rice dryer you have to do it twenty-four hours a day. You can't ever stop, and that concrete has to continually be wet on top of—and then harden gradually with new wet on top of it so . . .

SL: Now, what was it you were building?

MB: A rice dryer. You know, where they store . . .

SL: Rice dryer. Don't know what—no.

MB: . . . rice? Those huge silos and huge—Riceland Food[s, Inc.] rice dryer over in Jonesboro. And so I worked the night shift. And if you could survive first few days as a wheelbarrow man, which

?just? kill ya—se—wet cement in a wheelbarrow—fast as you can go and pourin' it in a form and goin', back and get another load. Then you could graduate to being a steelman, which is when you put in the steel reinforcing rods—the right ones in the right forms in the right walls. That was a lot easier, and I made it through those first several days on a wheelbarrow where I could get elevated to the steelworkin', and that was a lot better. Best summer job I ever had was the next summer. I was park superintendent at a local city park. It was my job to get there in the mornin' and open the park up, unlock the gates, get the baseballs and softballs and all that stuff out and sit in a lawn chair all day [*laughs*] and watch 'em. Greatest job in the world. [*Laughs*] It was a great job. [*Laughs*]

[01:44:34] SL: Well, yeah, that sounds like a good job, but it also sounds like you're [*TM clears throat*] maturing . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . as far as . . .

MB: Sure.

SL: . . . what you're seeing what's around you.

MB: Sure.

[01:44:46] SL: And you're talkin' about—you mentioned the decision to go to law school—I guess, your junior year you'd decided to

do that.

MB: Yeah. Well, actually, it goes—I think that was the full appreciation that I had to go to law school to do what I wanted to do. I wanted to go in the FBI.

SL: All right. We're gonna stop right here.

MB: Okay.

SL: 'Cause I think you've got a little call to do out there.

MB: All right.

SL: But I wanna get back to that.

SL: Thanks.

[Tape stopped]

[01:45:08] SL: Okay. We were at Arkansas State University. You had gotten into a fraternity, which was working the way those fraternities were . . .

MB: Designed to work.

SL: . . . designed to work—to keep you in school.

MB: Give you . . .


SL: Keep you motivated.

MB: Focused.

SL: Focused. [*Laughs*] And you had gotten to your junior year, and your grades were startin' to climb. The grade point was climbing. Your interests were getting a little bit more focused.

MB: Right.

SL: You had decided that you were probably gonna to head toward law school. Now . . .

[01:45:46] MB: Well, all that was precipitated by the fact that way
 back, even in high school, I decided I wanted to go in the FBI.

SL: Now what made you decide that?

MB: You know, I don't know—typical kid stuff about law enforcement—probably some Ian Fleming and James Bond stuff. [Laughs] And Ian Fleming was—you know, the James Bond movies and the Ian Fleming books were popular at the time. That probably was a contributing factor to, I guess, sparking my interest. I actually remember having an interview with Estes Coleman, who was a FBI agent in Jonesboro. He actually came to Newport, interviewed me in the police department, and had an interview set up—interviewed me in the police department in Newport because of my interest in the FBI. What I found out was he thought I wanted to go be a clerk or somethin' out of high school. What I wanted to be was him—you know, an actual agent. And he broke the very sad news to me. "Well, you gotta have a law degree or an accounting degree." And since we've already established that math wasn't one of my areas of interest, the accounting degree was kind of out the window. [SL

laughs] So in the back of my mind, the law school was implanted even then. But, you know, my first two years in college when you're a freshman or sophomore—I told you I made two two-sixes my freshman year in college and less than that my sophomore year in college—focused to the point of bein' in the fraternity but not focused to the point of gettin' into law school. And then starting in my junior year, I never made below a three-point, and obviously had more interest in goin' to law school—at least more serious interest in goin' to law school—still with the intent to pursue the FBI. And so, you know, in the fraternity everybody knew that. So that was back when [attorney] F. Lee Bailey was the rage, so they started callin' me "F. Lee Beebe" [*laughter*] in the fraternity.

[01:47:58] SL: You know, when your grades start to improve like that, a lot of times professors become a little bit more involved in your s—life.

MB: Well, you know, I had three professors that I can remember that were just extraordinary—made good impressions on me. Two of 'em were in law school. One of them was Al Witte in law school. One of them was Dr. [Robert A.] Leflar, who was the penultimate, I guess, professor. But the one in college was not one that was a junior or senior professor, he was actually a

freshman—a history professor named Dr. Dew—D-E-W. And he made you feel like you were actually fighting the French and Indian War, like you were there. So I mean—so in terms of professors in undergraduate school, the one that probably stands out in my mind was not one that was a junior or a senior professor, but one that was actually a freshman history—Western Civ professor.

[01:48:55] SL: Sounds like he kinda rekindled your fascination with . . .

MB: History?

SL: . . . history . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . from the fifth and sixth grades and that kind of . . .

MB: Yeah, it—probably, but I'm not sure it ever totally dwindled. It was probably on the back burner as socialization took over. But in terms of academia, it was always still probably—geography and history were always—and I really like science, not to the extent that I like geography and history. But much more so than math. [*Laughs*] So, let's see, we've talked about all those summer jobs. We've talked about the fraternity. We talked about the grades.

[01:49:37] SL: Social life in college?

MB: Yeah.

SL: What was going on there?

MB: Well, I dated a girl who was my first wife [Dawn Butler]. We got married—never had any children. We were married about nine years. But married the summer between my junior and senior year in college. In fact, her daddy is still kinda like my daddy to this day. In fact, we—Ginger and I named our son after my ex-father-in-law. The middle name, which tells you as much about Ginger as it does about anybody that she was willing to do that. But she knew about the relationship that I had and still have with my ex-father-in-law. But we dated from probably second semester of my freshman year—really all the way through college. So there was a break or two in there where . . .

SL: That sounds great. That's very impressive, and that speaks very well of family relations.

MB: Well, see, since I . . .

SL: Past and present, that . . .

MB: Since I never had a dad, I was really attracted to her family and particularly her dad who was and still is a very good figure for me. He's old now, but he's still very alert—very active. I wanna say he's in his mid-eighties, but he's still very much an active person.

[01:51:24] SL: So you're thinking in terms of law school to get yourself into the FBI.

MB: Yeah. [*Laughs*] Well—and what happened to change all that—well, first of all, I go to law school, and for the first time in my life, I'm really studyin'. [*Laughter*]

SL: You had to.

MB: I mean, they'll ?just? scare you to death—just absolutely scare you to death. And since you only have one test a semester in law school. One test per course, and that's at the end. So I mean you spend, what, four months in a semester doin' all this stuff and havin' your head torn off daily by people like Al Witte and those professors—you know, *The Paper Chase* [released in 1973] kind of phenomenon from the movie where you're constantly called upon by a professor or scared to death you're [*laughs*] gonna be called upon and embarrassed in front of the entire class, you know. And the class is a hundred and fifty people. I mean it's not small classes. You've got one class, whether it's contracts or torts or whatever it might be, you're there with all your classmates. And—now later on in upper-division courses where the courses change quite a bit. There's . . .

SL: Well, there's attrition, too.

MB: They flunked out—they try to flunk out—they did back then—half the class by the end of the first year. And did a pretty successful job of doin' that. But I ended up, I think, fifth in the class.

[01:52:43] I ended up at—I was the editor in chief for *The Law Review*, which as you know is the—Barack Obama claims he was at her—at Harvard [Law School, Cambridge, Massachusetts].

But he wasn't at the University of Arkansas. [Laughter]

SL: I hear that.

[01:52:57] MB: But I got a summer job obtained by that father-in-law I was telling you about. They lived in Pangburn. So I got a summer job in Searcy for the law firm that ultimately ended up bein' my law firm, but obviously at the time, it was Lightle and Tedder.

SL: Yes.

MB: And they had a young associate named Jim Hannah, who's now the chief justice of the Supreme Court and . . .

SL: Of Arkansas.

MB: Of Arkansas, yeah. Ed Lightle was a Harvard undergraduate graduate—one of those rare phenomenons back in the day, back when—I mean he was an older gentleman then. He was in his midsixties, the stereotypical Southern gentleman—the Sid McMath types, with the manners and had been a state senator

for about eight years and decided—and voluntarily quit bein' a state senator—didn't get beat or anything. Which I suppose helped kindle my interest in politics. But in any event, he was a interesting guy because he had—after he got out of Harvard, his daddy was a lawyer, and he read the law and passed the [Arkansas] Bar [exam]. So he was a lawyer and had never been to law school. Then he went back to law school. Then he went to the University of Arkansas [School of Law] law school and got a law degree after he was already a lawyer—after he had already passed—which you could do back in the [19]30s. [01:54:24] And a lot of people that were lawyers and never been to law school—they just worked in a law firm, read the law, learned enough about it to pass a Bar exam, and, presto, they're a lawyer. But he wasn't satisfied with merely bein' a lawyer and merely havin' a law degree. He decided he needed to know more than that, so he went back to law school. Cecil Tedder was a mid-[19]50s, I think, or early [19]50s graduate of the University of Arkansas Law School. And those were the two partners in a law firm that I got a summer job with and loved it, just loved it. Got to do all the gofer work—grunt work. Cecil had a murder case that he was appointed to for an indigent. And I spent a lotta that summer goin' all over the place

interviewing witnesses. The guy ended up bein' guilty and found guilty, but still you had—you provide him the best defense you can, and Cecil was doin' that. But no tellin' how much value in terms of just man-hours he got out of me doin' the kind of investigative work that was just taking witness statements and—r—fell in love with that law firm and fell in love with those—with that—with Searcy—with the community of Searcy and changed my mind about what I wanted to do in my life. And so it was that summer job that actually occasioned my changin' focus from wantin' to go in the FBI to really maybe practicing law. The next summer—well, let me go back . . .

SL: Okay.



[01:56:00] MB: Let me go back. I started law school in [19]68, and I had already joined the [United States] Army Reserves out of college. And, 'course, you never knew if you were going to get called to Vietnam. You never knew when you were going to get called to active duty. I mean it was really kind of an up-in-the-air thing. And so I started law school and made it long enough to watch the Tigers beat the Cardinals in the 1968 World Series. Remember I told you I was a big Tiger fan. And my father-in-law a big Cardinal fan . . .

SL: Okay.

MB: . . . who called me and gave me grief [*SL laughs*] when the Tigers were down three games to one, and then the Tigers won the last three games to win. I never will forget that telegram I sent him. I sent him an actual telegram full of alliteration. I remember it to this day. "Terribly Terrific Tigers Trounce Timid Tweeties." [*Laughter*]

SL: Tweeties. [*Laughs*]

[01:56:54] MB: But in any event, not long after the World Series, which would've been October, I was called to active duty. So I had to quit law school after, what, six weeks, I guess, of law school. And I went to Fort Benning, Georgia—basic training. Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, and Anniston [Army Depot, Anniston] Alabama, for ordnance and chemical warfare. And then back to Fayetteville after about a six-month period of active duty, sometime in about mid-March or April. Well, you can't start law school again until September, so you got [*laughs*]—better go get a job. Learned a valuable lesson. There was a fellow named George Billingsley, who ran Cooper Communities. A neat guy.

SL: Yeah.

[01:57:48] MB: But they had in the newspaper—and by then I was, what, twenty-two years old, I guess—twenty-one, twenty-two

years old—and they had an ad in the newspaper for a assistant bartender at one of the country clubs at Bella Vista.

SL: Okay.

MB: And no experience required. They'd teach you.

SL: Yeah.

MB: Because you weren't the head bartender, you were gonna be an assistant bartender. And so I made an appointment and went to Bella Vista to interview for that job. And George Billingsley's who I interviewed with, and he said, "Well, what do you have to have?" And I said, "Whatever you want to pay." And when it was over, he said, "You're not gonna get the job, and I wanna tell you somethin' that you need to remember." He said, "The next time you go for a job interview and somebody asks you what you've gotta have, you need to tell 'em somethin'. And don't ever tell 'em again that, 'Just whatever you're willing to pay' 'cause that won't get it." A lesson I never forgot, particularly since the job I did get was at the end of the chicken line at the Campbell Soup [Company] factory . . .

SL: Soup.

[01:59:02] MB: . . . making Swanson TV chicken dinners all summer when it was a hundred and two [degrees] outside and a hundred and forty inside with all that grease and fryin' all that chicken.

And I can tell you to this day, it takes a lot hotter fire for the dark meat than it does the white meat. [*Laughter*]

SL: Okay, now wait a minute.

MD: I do need to break in, Governor. We've got somethin' that's come up that we need to—need you to look at, Governor.

MB: Okay.

SL: Okay.

MD: We'll just be a minute.

SL: That's all right. You all do what you need to do.

MB: Part of the hazards of the job.

SL: That's fine.

[Tape stopped]

[01:59:32] MB: A super project under Amendment 82.

SL: Yeah?

MB: Yeah.

TM: Did we mention the father-in-law's name?

MB: Houston Butler.

TM: Okay.

JE: [Unclear words]

SL: I was kinda leavin' that up . . .

MB: Sure, it's Houston Butler.

SL: . . . to you. Okay. All right. We were talkin' about your—

the—your law firm experience.

MB: Yeah.

SL: And exactly where did we leave off? We'd gotten through that . . .

JE: Chicken line.

[02:00:00] SL: Chicken line and George Billingsley. Let me tell you now. [*MB laughs*] I've done a story on George Bill—a video on George. I've met Boyce and all their children, and I know quite a bit about George Billingsley. He was quite an amazing man. I can tell you that if you'd gotten that bartending job, you would've—there would've been lots of personalities around you all the time.

MB: Yeah.

SL: They were very proud of that bar.

MB: Yeah.

SL: Of that country club.

MB: Yeah.

SL: And they poured a lot of effort to keep that going . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . and they engaged a . . .

MB: Well, I didn't get the job. I got to cook chickens.

[02:00:34] SL: [*Laughs*] Well, that's interesting. So do you think

that it was because you wouldn't name your price . . .

MB: I don't know.

SL: . . . that you didn't get it?

MB: I don't know. That's the only real comments he had, so I don't know if that had a connection to it or not.

SL: Well, so did . . .

MB: May have been [*SL phone rings*] that I was gonna be temporary. I mean he . . .

SL: Oh, shoot. Did—I'm gonna get rid of this. Excuse me. Did you follow his advice the rest of your life?

MB: Yeah.

SL: And it—and he was right?

[02:01:05] MB: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] Yeah. Well, even to the point of the offers after law school. [*Laughs*] I followed his advice. It just didn't work. [*SL laughs*] You know, the next summer I had a job with the Treasury Department. I didn't know what a big deal it was when I went up there. There were apparently only two interns all over the country that were given summer internship jobs with the US Treasury. A kid from Rhode Island and me. And [*US Representative*] Wilbur Mills got that through my father-in-law. You know, Wilbur was Wilbur to everybody in Arkansas. He was Mr. Chairman as chairman of the Ways and

Means Committee to everybody in Washington [DC], and stronger than mustard, which—there's a funny story about that. I got that summer job working for the [Office of the] Tax Legislative Counsel, which was a group of about fourteen lawyers that were in the—that was in the Treasury Department, and they wrote the regs for the tax code—totally not my cup of tea. However, it was a great summer job. And the first week or so I was up there, the Tax Legislative Counsel, who was the head of that section that I was interning for, said, "You wanna go to the Hill?" I didn't know what "the Hill" was. I said, "Sure." [SL laughs] [02:02:30] So he got his little briefcase, and we went down the hall and went to his boss's office, who was a deputy undersecretary of the Treasury, and we waited on him. He got his little briefcase, and we went down the hall to his boss's office, who was the undersecretary of the Treasury. And he got his little briefcase, and the four of us—the undersecretary, the deputy undersecretary, the Tax Legislative Counsel, and ol' Mike get in this little bitty elevator that was on the west side of the Treasury Department—east side of the White House—that I could've been there all summer and never found this elevator. It wasn't very big. The four of us barely could cram in there. [02:03:02] But it opened into a little

courtyard on the west side of the—between the White House and the Treasury Department with this big, long, black limousine and the chauffeur openin' the door. Well, that road was open then—East Executive Avenue, between the White House and Treasury was a street you could drive on. And that was also the place where the tours lined up in the morning to go in the White House. So there was this line of people all the way outside the gate goin' into the White House and goin' through the tours. And, of course, they're always looking for somebody important or somebody famous, as tourists do in Washington. And so we bounce out of this little elevator, and the chauffeur opens this door of this big limousine behind this wrought-iron gate—little, small courtyard where this limo is, and all these people in the line are strainin' to see who these folks are. And the undersecretary slides in the limo, and the deputy undersecretary slides in, the Tax Legislative Counsel slides in, and ol' Mike slides right in there with 'em. And so we pull out and head toward the Hill. And on the way over, the undersecretary said, "And you're from Searcy?" [*SL laughs*] And I said, "Kinda." And he said, "And you're the chairman's nephew?" Well, if I'd only known how to answer that a little better than I answered, no tellin' what kind of summer I woulda had. But instead I said, "Oh, no, sir."

And I rode back from Capitol Hill in a taxicab. [*Laughs*] Another good lesson, I think. You could've said, "No, I'm not his nephew, but you know, we're close." [*Laughter*]

SL: "We talk every day."

[02:04:46] MB: Didn't work. Didn't work.

SL: Yeah.

MB: I didn't say it. Didn't work. And—but it was a great summer. I got to see the other extreme—from the small-town law firm the previous summer to the bureaucracy in federal government work and obviously opted for the smaller town. And as the editor of the *Law Review*, and bein' a little bit cocky or maybe a lot cocky, I thought, boy, I'd demand all kinds of money. Gettin' outta law school. And I actually had—it was a seller's market. There were a lot of people without jobs, and I actually had three offers—one in Jonesboro, one in Prescott, and one in Searcy. And the worst offer of the bunch was the one in Searcy. I was righteously indignant that they would offer me seven hundred dollars a month, and the others were in the eleven-hundred-dollar range, you know. Which was a lot of difference back in 1972 . . .

SL: You bet.

[02:05:33] MB: . . . when I got out of law school. And so I was just chagrined. And Ed and Cecil said—by that time, Jim Hannah had

become a partner, and Ed and Cecil said, "Well, we're not paying you as much money, but your opportunity for advancement's better here, and you'll be a partner here before you are at any of those other places. And so I swallowed my pride and took the lesser money. And they were right, and it's the best decision I ever made. Never looked back. You know, within a few years, Ed retired or semiretired, and Cecil and Jim became judges. We got a new judicial district, and Cecil Tedder became the circuit judge. Jim Hannah became the chancellor. All of a sudden, I found myself as a senior partner in a well-established law firm. We'd continued to hire younger people, and all of a sudden, it became my law firm. Talk about serendipity. And we had lots of big cases. I had lots of big—I broke the state record on the largest verdict. Then I broke my own record. So . . .

[02:06:35] SL: What was that? What were those on?

MB: Well, the first one was a wrongful death of a man who was a lineman for a rural electric, but he also had chicken houses and was a—grew chickens as a side or in addition—for additional income. Had a wife and four little kids up around Heber Springs. And died of what ultimately turned out to be cyanide poison from cellular plastic insulation, made by Celotex [Corp.], on the inside of a chicken house that they marketed for use—exposed in

violation of their own research and development warnings because there were no building codes in rural America, and they could get away with it. So that was four point one million. That was a—that's a three-hour story all by itself. We don't have time for that but . . .

SL: Okay.

[02:07:28] MB: About four or five years later [*clears throat*], there was another case where a grandmother and her little fourteen-year-old granddaughter—a little cheerleader—were both killed by a tractor-trailer truck carryin' chicken guts that was operating in a very reckless manner. That was four point six million. And then we had a lot of the seven hundred fifty to a million dollar cases during times when that was worth, what, four–five million dollars today, I guess.

SL: You bet. You bet.

MB: Very successful law practice, and we had—and we were—typical small-town, well-rounded practice. We represented three banks, and we represented a lotta the businesses. Different lawyers did different stuff. I mainly didn't do any of that stuff after the first six or seven years except major litigation—major trial work. But was interested then—got interested in pol—well, goin' back further, I was interested in being on the ASU Board [of

Trustees], and didn't know that you had to give money to a governor [*laughs*] to be considered, you know. [*Laughs*] That's the way most of those people got those appointments was . . .

SL: Right.

[02:08:34] MB: . . . they'd helped 'em, or they were friends or whatever. [*Laughs*] And so [Dale] Bumpers was governor, and you know, he was a pretty contrary cuss anyway. He didn't [*laughs*] necessarily go by all the rules in terms of—I mean he's a ne—I just adore Dale Bumpers—just a great, great guy. And Ed had been out of the Senate, but still had a lot of his old colleagues and friends were still senators. So we started campaignin'. I started campaignin' to—for a appointment to ASU board. I was twenty-five, twenty-six years old, and didn't know Dale Bumpers from that wall. And certainly he owed me nothin' and—but through a combination of some of those senators writing in my behalf and an interview I had and the fact that one of my fraternity brothers was Archie Schaffer [III], who ended up bein' chief of staff for Dale, and through a combination of all those things, ge—got the board appointment as it—and I looked like I's seventeen years old. I mean I was young—two years out of law school—1974—and looked like I was less than two years out of law school. Probably still makin' seven hundred dollars a

month or seven fifty.

SL: Right.

[02:09:48] MB: And Bumpers appointed me to the board. I remember goin' to the first national meeting, and they thought it was really neat that somebody in Arkansas would put students on a Board of Trustees. [*SL Laughs*] Used to wear glasses sometimes without any prescription in the lens, so I'd look older, so people would think [*laughter*]*—wouldn't want to use me as a lawyer because they thought I was a kid, just lookin'. But that obviously triggered some interest in politics. That was my first exposure to anything with regard to the legislature. And then I decided to run for the [Arkansas state] senate. That was a—and there were—that was fraught with a lot of problems. Walmsley had been—Bill Walmsley'd been the senator for—that represented the Searcy area, and he'd gotten opponents the previous two elections from Searcy. And Searcy was growin' much faster than Batesville and was gettin' pretty big, and so the demographics were changing where it favored somebody from Searcy as opposed to someone from Batesville. And so during redistricting, Walmsley got rid of Searcy. [Laughs] Redistricted it out of his district—threw Searcy in with Stuttgart. And there was an older gentleman named Bill Hargrove, who*

was the incumbent senator from Stuttgart. I remember Frank White was quoted as saying—he was governor—and he was quoted as saying, "Nobody from Searcy can ever get elected to that district." He didn't like that. He favored Searcy not being thrown in with Arkansas County and Prairie County and all down through there. But I guess it was the secretary of state and the attorney general at the time—I guess that was Steve Clark . . .

SL: Mh-hmm. That sounds right.

MB: . . . and Paul Riviere, I guess. I don't remember. Anyway, they outvoted Frank White, and they threw Searcy in with Arkansas County and . . .

SL: I kinda remember that.

[02:11:38] MB: And so I started runnin', and worked hard from the middle of [19]81, and about February of [19]82, right before the filing start—period started, Senator Hargrove pulled outta the race. You know, we had more people than they did, obviously, and so he pulled out of the race. And I'd been working for seven or eight months, and even though several other people, particularly from Stuttgart, looked at it, they decided it was too late, or they didn't want to start it. So I got elected without an opponent.

SL: There was a dinner, though, that was kind of . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . pivotal to . . .

MB: That was pretty neat.

SL: . . . to Senator Hargrove . . .

MB: That was pretty neat.

SL: I mean, I think there was . . .

MB: Yeah, we attribute it to that. The dinner was . . .

[02:12:22] SL: Okay, tell me about that dinner.



MB: Well it's an event. It's not a dinner.

SL: Well, okay. [*Laughs*]

MB: It's the [Gillett] Coon Supper. The Coon Supper is in Arkansas County. That was in Senator Hargrove's home county. Area he had represented. And Marion Berry, who was not then involved in politics—he was a farmer—a pharmacist by education but a farmer by his actual vocation—never been in political office—didn't have any desire to be in political office. Now today's world when he's a congressman it's hard to believe that. But that was the case then. But he always had a preparty before the Coon Supper at his house, which was right across the street from Gillett High School, where the Coon Supper—excuse me—was held. And so I went down there. I didn't know Marion Berry, but we were invited and we went down there—Ginger and

I did. And went with Fletcher Sullards and his wife. The significance of that—Fletcher was assistant superintendent at Searcy—friend of mine—but had been a coach at Gillett years before. Knew half of Gillett or three-fourths of 'em. Originally from Arkansas County around the DeWitt area—he and his wife—so they had a lot of family ties. Was a very popular figure in Gillett. Well, back in those days—you know, first of all, I didn't know what I was doin'. It was my first political race, so we wasted a lot of money and bought those metal buttons. You know, that—"Beebe" buttons that people would put on and wear once and then throw on their dresser and never wear again.

[02:13:51] SL: But very collectible.

MB: Collectible.

SL: The metal ones are . . .

MB: Collectible but . . .

SL: Yes.

MB: . . . but really not very utilitarian.

SL: Right.

MB: Not a very wise expenditure of monies. But—and we didn't have the stick-ons back then so—any rate, we had a sack full of these Beebe buttons, and so we go to Marion's house for this party and Fletcher knows everybody there, and he introduces me to all

these folks. I'd met some of them because I had been doing this for six or seven months but not near as many as Fletcher knew. And he started sticking these Beebe buttons on everybody's coat or shirt or whatever. And so when the party's over, and it's time to go across the street to the school for the big Coon Supper—a thousand people or whatever there—all these people show up with these Beebe buttons on in my opponent's home county.

[*Laughs*] And it wasn't long after that till—about a month later, he pulled out of the race. Now what correlation that may have had is anybody's guess, but we tell it—Marion takes credit for it.

[*Laughter*]

[02:14:49] SL: Well, that's a great story, and it also kind of points to the old-timey politics. The . . .

MB: Yeah, yeah. You know, Arkansas is famous for the personal politics. The politics of personality. The politics of getting to know the candidates and, ultimately, the elected officials—the politics of more one-on-one and retail—selling yourself or subjecting yourself, as the case may be, to the voters. You know, we're not totally dependent on the television screen for all of our contacts with the voters. You know, it changes, obviously, as you get bigger and bigger, but Arkansas still is a retail politics state. The people want to see you, touch you, talk

to you, hear what you've got to say, let you hear what they've got to say. And this was, I think, a raw example of that kind of retail politics.

[02:15:54] SL: Well, also you had a guy on your team that knew everybody . . .

MB: Yeah, you know, it's . . .

SL: . . . and it was a signal—it was as much a signal . . .

MB: Sure.

SL: . . . that, you know, "This is who I'm gonna go with."

MB: Sure.

SL: And out of respect to that person . . .

MB: Sure.

SL: . . . a lot of people come on board . . .

MB: Sure.

SL: . . . because . . .

MB: I mean, yeah, they didn't care one way or the other—most of 'em probably. But as you say, out of respect for the person that they did like and who was committed, it caused their allegiance to attach.

SL: Okay. Now, I wanna get back to the ASU board in a little bit.

MB: Okay. [*Laughs*]

[02:16:28] SL: But I wanna go back to Fayetteville.

MB: Okay.

SL: We're going to backtrack just a little bit.

MB: All right.

SL: And we're gonna go back to law school.

MB: Mh-hmm.

SL: And you've mentioned two professors. Al Witte and Dean Leflar.
He was dean then.

MB: He was not dean. He was doc . . .

SL: Who was dean then? It was . . .

MB: Ralph Barnhart.

SL: Barnhart. Ralph. Well, but Professor Leflar, of course, was
world renowned at that time. Can you give me any personal
stories that you . . .

MB: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: . . . experiences that you have with each of those gentlemen?



[02:17:00] MB: Well, let me tell you that Dr. Leflar was the total
opposite of Al Witte. Both of 'em were great professors. Both of
'em were very influential to me, but totally different. Dr. Leflar
spoon-fed you. He almost acted like he was a sixth-grade
teacher and probably the best pure teacher I've ever had
anywhere. And it was pure spoon-fed. If you listened, if you
took notes, if you cared enough to pay attention, he would pour

information in the top of your head in an elementary, slow, and not necessarily entertaining way. You learned it because you were scared to death of him. [*Laughter*] Because of his reputation and because of his demeanor, he was intimidating in a different way than Al Witte was. He was dry and slow and meticulous but so well respected, so knowledgeable, and had such a knack for teaching. He was spoon-feeding you information, and if you just paid attention, you absorbed it like a sponge. He was probably the best pure teacher I've ever seen in any venue. [02:18:17] Witte, on the other hand, [*clears throat*] was intimidating from the standpoint of his acerbic wit, his caustic personality, his quick wit, and his unconventional willingness to do everything. You know, I didn't see this, but they always told the story that he jumped over that jury rail box in the courtroom one time when somebody gave the dumbest answer. He always—every day somebody the dumbest answer he ever heard. [*SL laughs*] And somebody allegedly gave one of those dumb answers, and dramatically he ran and jumped over the railing and hid behind the railing of the jury box that was in the old courtroom at the law school and then peeked out over it, chagrined over the stupidity of some poor freshman's answer to some probably innocuous question. But he was so

sharp and so quick and entertaining. Now he was entertaining. Entertaining from the standpoint of tearin' somebody else up as long [*laughs*] as it wasn't you. It was always entertaining to watch 'cause you never knew what he was gonna say. And he was very bright and so also a very good professor. He got a lot of what he got through sheer wit and entertainment and intimidation from a different perspective 'cause he would—both of 'em would embarrass you if you weren't ready. Both Leflar and Witte would embarrass you. They found that, I suppose, a good teaching tool, that if you don't want to get embarrassed in front of all your peers, you better know what you're doin' before you come to class. But they would embarrass you in a different sorta way. Leflar would embarrass you in a quiet, fatherly, grandfatherly, scolding kind of way. Witte would embarrass you just by makin' you look like a fool. [*Laughter*] Wasn't anything paternalistic about Witte's approach.

[02:20:11] SL: Were the—did you have any social opportunities with those two guys? I mean I know . . .

MB: I did later . . .

SL: It was not uncommon for them to go out and be in the places where the students were and . . .

MB: Yeah. You know, Leflar was notorious for likin' girls, they said.

Even when he was . . .

SL: Horrible flirt.

MB: Yeah, horrible flirt when he was seventy-five years old. He was just—'course, we didn't have many girls. I think we only had three girls in the class, you know. Nowadays it's over fifty percent, but we only had, I think, three female students in the whole class—maybe four. So more often than not, it was somebody's girlfriend [*laughter*] that Leflar was talkin' to at a social event. There was a little of that—not much. More social events with Witte, who would—you could go drink a beer with Al Witte. And then there was a—they used to have this skit that was so funny in law school, and the one when I was a freshman was the one I truly remember that utilized local talent—musical talent from the law school. Not me. I was not a participant in the skit, but enjoyed it immensely, and Witte was a big part of that.

[02:21:23] SL: All right. Before we get back to the ASU board, what about Fayetteville at that time?



MB: I thought it was the end of the world when I went up there. You couldn't get there. [*Laughs*] There—I mean—and you couldn't get any television. The only tele—you could get a station or two from Tulsa [Oklahoma]. There was no Arkansas connection. I

think if there was an Arkansas newspaper it was, like, the Pony Express got it up there. So I mean it was a foreign environment in the late [19]60s and early [19]70s to somebody from Newport or ASU or eastern Arkansas. And I mean it was an all-day journey by car to get back anywhere close to your family or your friends. So initially it was a lonely place. Now it didn't take long for it to grow on you, and you know, it's a beautiful place, and obviously after a while, you really take to it. But it was remote compared to what it is now. We didn't have cable. We didn't have satellite dishes, so you didn't get Arkansas news. You didn't get Arkansas television. [02:22:32] It was a fairly isolated place, which really speaks to the incredible, entrepreneurial abilities of so many people like Sam Walton and J. B. Hunt and Don Tyson and some of those folks to build those empires—those captains of industry that built those huge corporations, employing all those people in a place that was remote and really wasn't conducive or didn't lend itself to being a crossroads mecca transportation-wise or any other way. It's just really unusual that they would have that kinda success. You remember Mazeppa Pompazoidi?

[02:23:14] SL: Dr. Mazeppa Pompazoidi and his *Uncanny Film*

Festival and Camp Meeting [1970-1973]. Absolutely. [MB

laughs] Teddy Jack Eddy, Judy Judy, Mr. Mystery.

MB: Wasn't the same guy that was Mazeppa Pompazoidi—he was on, I guess, a late-night Tulsa TV station.

SL: Yeah.

MB: Wasn't he the same guy that ended up being on *Hee Haw* [1969-1993] . . .

SL: Yes.

MB: . . . or one of those programs that was so funny that . . .

SL: Gailard Sartain. "G-Aillard S-Artain." [*MB laughs*] I was right there with you, buddy. [*Laughs*]

MB: I remember those days. You know, I mean, that was—that—and the point was that's where we got our television. From Tulsa.

SL: Yeah.

MB: Not from Little Rock.

SL: That was a great, great show—late night Friday nights. It'd go for four and six hours.

MB: Yeah.

SL: You'd have old movies and . . .

MB: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . he'd take this big break.

MB: He was insane.


SL: Seven Up [Inc.] was his . . .

MB: Very entertaining.

SL: Very insane. What was—Coach Chuck and his Six-hour Boys.
[*MB laughs*] I remember 'em all.

MB: Yeah.

[02:24:14] SL: [*Laughs*] That was good. Well, and Dickson Street
and Razorback football.

MB: Well, let me tell you about Razorback football. I saw [former
offensive line backer] Jerry Mazzanti and his wife, who is a tall
woman. She's not as tall as Jerry Mazzanti, but she's tall. Well,
the two of them had seats next to me in the "Great Shootout"
 game—the [University of] Texas-[University of] Arkansas game
of 1969. And I used to work those games because you—they'd
pay you ten dollars to usher if you were [*coughs*—they went to
law students. Law students were ushers. And we got ten dollars
to usher, but in the second half you could go sit down and watch
the game 'cause you only had to usher the first half. Well,
[*laughs*] that game we decided it was too important to usher.
We were just gonna go to the game, and sat next to Mazzanti
and his wife, and nobody ever sat down in that game.
Everybody stood up the whole game. In the first minute, my
seat was gone. Between Jerry and his wife, they had expanded
in their excitement and exuberance and partying to the point

that they had [*laughs*] just knocked me completely out of my seat. [*SL laughs*] But I remember [President Richard M.] Nixon comin' in on the helicopter. I remember the cold snow flurries and gray day. I remember the excitement. I remember [flanker] John Rees catchin' that first pass. I remember— [quarterback] Bill Montgomery's still my favorite Razorback. I mean just a—I just—he was—what a leader Bill Montgomery was.

SL: Yeah.

[02:25:54] MB: But I remember the disappointment. I cannot believe to this day that Darrell Royal threw that pass on fourth [down] and two [yards to scrimmage line] to [Randy] Peschel, the [Texas] tight end, Street threw that pass thirty yards downfield, and they ended up winning the game by one point. [Editor's Note: Texas quarterback James Street threw the ball to Peschel. Darrell Royal was the Longhorns' head coach.] That was a pretty sick feelin'. But I will tell you, the two most exciting athletic events I have ever seen personally in my life, where the atmosphere was so electric it was almost like you could cut it, was the Texas-Arkansas football game in 1969 and the U of A-ASU basketball game at Barnhill [Arena] in 1987 in the NIT [National Invitational Tournament]. Those were the two



most intense athletic events I have ever seen—for everybody involved. You know, Frank [Broyles] said he wasn't at the ASU-U of A game. Well, he left at halftime. [*Laughter*] He left. He couldn't stand it. He left at halftime.

SL: Right.

[02:26:45] MB: Reynie Rutledge and I went up there to the gates.

He said, "I don't ever want to see that again." I said, "Reynie, what's—you're crazy. It was great. Everybody loved it." You know, the whole state was watchin' it. Dave Woodman did it on statewide TV. And Reynie said, "I've never been more drained in my life." He said, "I don't physically ever wanna [*laughter*] go through anything like that again. But this Texas-Arkansas football game was the same way. I mean, it was just physically draining and fifteen to fourteen [15-14], game of the century, national television, number one [Texas] versus number two [Arkansas], president of the United States there. But, yeah, Razorback football? Yeah. Back in the day when there were just the two sides. There wasn't a bowl around the stadium. There weren't—there were little bitty bleachers on one end zone as I recall. But, yeah, a lot of fun.

SL: Well, it just dominated the—it did a lot with the culture—the Fayetteville culture back then.

MB: Sure. Still does.

SL: It still does.

MB: Yeah. Bobby Crockett and I were in law school together, and you know, he's a—I remember him catching that pass in, what, [19]64, [19]65—beat Texas. Actually caught several of 'em going down the field in that last drive.

[02:27:56] SL: He—boy, yeah. That—those were great years. Let's get back to ASU.

MB: Okay.

SL: You get appointed.

MB: Yeah.

SL: Kinda the kid . . .

MB: Kid, yeah.

SL: . . . trustee of the . . .

MB: That's right.

SL: . . . of ASU.

[02:28:09] MB: And it was really important because the longtime president of ASU had announced his retirement. And, frankly, the main job of a Board of Trustees is to pick a president.

SL: Yeah.

MB: And then if you're good, you don't try to be the president.

[*Laughs*] You act like a board of directors and let the president

be the president. And if he can't do the job you fire him, but you don't try to micromanage. Although a lot of board members don't ever understand that.

SL: Now you mentioned that Archie [*MB coughs*] was a fraternity brother. Archie Schaffer. So that was your—that was probably your strongest connection to . . .

MB: Who knows?

SL: . . . Dale Bumpers.

MB: Archie says so. [*Laughter*]

SL: Okay, so you're sitting on that board but then they . . .

MB: And we have to hire a new president because Dr. [Carl] Reng had announced his retirement. So I thrust in at, what, age twenty-six or whatever I was to a major r—and there was only five members on the board. It's unlike the U of A board with ten members, so . . .

SL: Right.

[02:29:06] MB: . . . you got twenty percent of the total vote. One vote on a five-member board's big. And we ended up hiring Ross Pritchard. I did not vote for Ross. I did publicly, but privately I supported Gene Smith but—Larry Brewer and I supported Gene Smith, and Ross Pritchard, who was—scored the first touchdown incidentally in War Memorial Stadium, was a

Rhodes Scholar, All-American or all-somethin' for the Razorbacks. Halfback for the Razorbacks. Rhodes Scholar. And was hired as president and was president for three years.

[00:29:42] SL: Like most public votes, y'all showed a unity for . . .

MB: No.

SL: Oh, you didn't?

MB: Larry refused to do it.

SL: He did?

MB: It was four to one [4-1].

SL: Okay.

MB: Publicly it was four to one. It was three to two [3-2] privately and four to one—I showed support publicly and unanimity. But there was no unanimity. [*Laughs*]

SL: So when the governorship changes . . .

MB: Yeah. Well, that's another irony. You know, my little brother here in the fraternity is [founder of Home Bancshares] Johnny Allison. And Johnny's a great guy—close friend of mine. Johnny's one of those few guys that I've known that really does have charisma. [*Laughs*] [Bill] Clinton is governor, and Clinton kicks me off the board and appoints Allison. [*Laughter*] Appoints my own little brother to take my place on—then I wanted to be reappointed ?to it?. 'Course, Clinton always said

later it was the best thing that ever happened to me 'cause it made me mad ?to decide?—made me decide to run for office. That's a rationalization on Clinton's part.

[02:30:40] SL: Yeah, right. So what did happen? You get off the board, and you start . . .

MB: Yeah, I got off the board and—I mean there was a hiatus. That was [19]79, so I just decided to start running for the Senate in [19]81, so there was a two-year period that there was no appointed or elective or a race, for that matter, involved in politics. You know, I was just practicin' law and doin' things that you do in a small town.

SL: So a few weeks after the Coon Supper, you . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: . . . you don't have an opponent anymore.

MB: Yeah. Well, I think it was the end of February that he announced he was gonna pull out and [*laughs*—I'm not sure I should tell you this story, but it's a great story.

SL: Tell it.

MB: Somebody needs to write it down.

SL: Okay, here we go.

MB: Somebody needs to write it down. It involves Nick Wilson.

SL: Okay.

MB: The famous or infamous Nick Wilson . . .

SL: Yes.

MB: . . . as the case may be. When you do a ten-year census and a ten-year redistricting, inevitably somebody—some incumbent gets hurt.

SL: Yep.

[02:31:46] MB: Some incumbent gets helped. And usually the powers-that-be within the [Arkansas state] senate have extraordinary influence on those one or two of those three members of the reapportionment board, which is governor, attorney general, and secretary of state. So to think that the governor, secretary of state, and attorney general all by their lonesome make these decisions on where the new boundary lines are going to be for senate districts is naive. It's—a whole lot of that decision makin' is deferred to by one or more of those folks to members of the Senate as it is in any human relationship. And inevitably people get hurt. Well, they decided—the powers-that-be—to not take care of two people. One ended up bein' my opponent, Mr. Hargrove, who was thrown in with Searcy, and I'm sure didn't wanna be because of our growth, and ultimately it led, I think, to me bein' elected. Well, the other interesting one was I told you Walmsley wanted

shed of Searcy. And he lived in Batesville, so they put Newport in. Walmsley had enough stroke to get that done. They put Newport in there and—but just cut Tupelo in southern Jackson County, out where Jim Wood lived, who was the incumbent—fairly young incumbent senator—and threw him in with Clarence Bell. Well, he couldn't have beaten Claren—you know, he didn't know any part of that district, and Clarence Bell was strong as mustard. So Jim Wood says, "Well, I'll show you. I'll just move from Tupelo back to Newport," where he used to live and where he had a business and run against Walmsley. Nobody thought Jim Wood could beat Bill Walmsley. I mean Bill Walmsley was a star, you know. And Jim's a good guy, but he didn't have the star quality that—in terms of bein' articulate and bein' a lawyer and all those things that—and no—in any event, nobody thought Jim Wood could beat Bill Walmsley. [02:33:42] Well, the ticket closes. I'm elected. Back then most of those races are decided in May in the primary. My phone rings, and it's Jim Wood, and I knew Jim but not well. And Jim Wood said, "Do you know how they select a joint budget in the Legislative Council and joint audit?" I said, "Jim, I don't even know what Legislative Council, joint budget, and joint audit are. I've just been elected because no opponents filed. I've never served. I don't know." And Jim

said, "Well, let me tell you about it. And let me tell you a story." He said—and this is the way it used to be selected back in the day. B—they still use the old six congressional district lines back when we had six congressmen for that. And you caucused, so that senators living within the boundaries of a certain congressional district would vote on who in that caucus got to be on council or audit or budget. Could be on all of 'em back then. They didn't spread it out much. [*coughs*] He said, "Let me tell ya a story." He said, "When I was a freshman, there were only three of us in the old second congressional caucus—Jim Wood, Bill Walmsley, and Nick Wilson." He said, "And it came time for us to caucus, and the secretary of the senate announced what rooms each district was going to caucus in, and I got up ready to go." He said, "Now I really didn't expect much." He said, "I'm a freshman, you know, and you got—Walmsley and Wilson were veterans, but it was the way they went about it." He said, "I got up, and they said, 'Nick, are you ready to go caucus?' And Nick looked at me and said, 'Jim, Bill, and I already have, and you're first alternate on everything.'" Now doesn't that sound like Nick?

SL: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

[02:35:29] MB: And it really got to ol' Jim. He was severely irritated about it. So he tells me this story, and he says, "I'm gonna beat

Walmsley. And when I do, it's just gonna be me and you and Nick Wilson in this caucus. You can have whatever you want. I'll take whatever you don't want." And I said, "Sure, Jim."

[*Laughter*]

SL: Yeah.

MB: I mean I don't even know what budget and . . .

SL: Right.

MB: . . . and council are . . .

SL: Right.

MB: . . . at this juncture. First of all, I don't think he can beat Bill Walmsley.

SL: Right.

MB: Lo and behold, he beats Bill Walmsley. And so after the election the phone rings, and it's Jim. He said, "Do you remember what we talked about?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "You gonna stay hitched?" And I said, "Yeah." So [*laughs*]
— so they're still—they're having this huge division in the senate. We have eleven freshmen come in with me, so it's a—virtually a third of the senate. And you've got this huge division between the Knox- [Nelson] and Max- [Howell] led crowd versus the Nick and his crowd, which had been severely diminished 'cause they beat Walmsley and some of his other allies. And so [*laughs*]

everybody's courtin' the freshmen 'cause there's so many of us.

I ended up much closer to Knox, obviously, than I did to Nick.

SL: Right.

[02:36:42] MB: But what really sealed the deal was a few weeks into the session, they announced to go to the caucuses, and Jim says, "Let me handle this." [*SL laughs*] So Jim walks up to Nick and says, "Nick, Mike, and I have caucused, and you're first alternate [*laughs*] on everything." Now this was the guy that was one of the leaders of the senate and who never forgot. Well, he doesn't mad—he's not mad at Jim. Turnabout—he understands that you get what you give or you give what you get.

SL: Right.

MB: And so he's not mad at Jim. He's mad at me because I've done somethin' to him, and he'd never done anything to me. So that creates, I think, the initial enmity that existed between Nick and I that lasted obviously all our . . .

SL: Right.

MB: . . . all our careers. We were—now I will tell you this—he's a terribly talented person. He was very, very bright—hardworking. [*Laughs*] He just had a lot of other issues. [State Senator Jerry] Bookout described it probably better than anybody, and

Nick would laugh about this, I think, if—maybe he wouldn't.

[*Laughs*] I don't know—especially now. But Jerry Bookout said, "You know, Nick is a charming and engaging fellow. He's the kind of guy that would invite you with him to the corner drugstore for an ice cream cone. What he didn't tell you was you were gonna knock off a liquor store on the way." [*Laughter*]
And so that's . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Yeah, a few details.

MB: That was a—that was always an issue. But that story, I think, precipitated the initial animosity that existed between Nick and I. I tried to get along with him for a year or two after that. It became very apparent that it was impossible.

[02:38:24] SL: You know, back in those days, the Democratic primary pretty much . . .

MB: Sure.

SL: . . . determined who was gonna be in office.

MB: Sure.

SL: The—but what's interesting about your career, in particular, is the lack of opponents.

[02:38:41] MB: Yeah. You know, I didn't have an opponent in that initial one. And then for twenty years never had an opponent in the senate. Then I ran for attorney general—I don't think this

has ever happened—didn't have an opponent, either Democrat or a Republican, for an open seat—totally open seat. I don't think that's ever happened. So when I ran for governor, the pundits and the columnists and the critics said, "Well, he never had an opponent. He doesn't know how to run a race. He doesn't know how to stand up to the kind of scrutiny. He doesn't know how to stand up to the attacks. Doesn't know how to raise money. Doesn't know about the endurance." You know, who—well, it worked.

SL: Well, what they were discounting was your remarkable record of putting people together and . . .

MB: Well, I think part of the reason—you n—I didn't have an opponent after that first one was I spent that first couple years campaignin' like I was gonna have one. Because I didn't have an opponent, I continued to travel that district and continued to try to be responsive to the needs of the people in Stuttgart, in DeWitt, in Gillett, down in Arkansas County, where they were use to having their own senator and no longer had him. I went out of my way to try to be accessible, present, responsive, and ultimately ended up in what was a campaign without an opponent for about two years. And then even after that, continued to try to be responsive in physically being there quite

a bit.

SL: Oops. Oh, thanks. [*Laughs*] Well, you ate that up. You loved doing it.

MB: Mmm. Loved the senate. Sure did. Loved the senate. Loved politics. Loved the interaction. Loved—you know, the thing that always—I got the most satisfaction out of when I was a senator was knockin' a door down for somebody who couldn't otherwise get the door open. I mean that's where you really get the biggest amount of satisfaction. I mean and . . .

SL: You got an example of that?

[02:40:47] MB: Well, there were lots of instances of bureaucracy that—and they're not bad people, they're just sometimes busy or inattentive or sometimes you get some that aren't as committed as others. And I mean you'd have somebody who couldn't get an answer on a driver's question or who couldn't get a form from the health department or who's—couldn't get to see their son in prison or who—whatever the case might be, they were shut out in effect by government or by somebody in a department or couldn't get a response in a timely manner. And about half the time, people ask you for stuff they didn't deserve. [*Laughs*] They were wrong. I mean they were askin' for something they shouldn't get or that they weren't entitled to or that was goin'

beyond the pale. But it—you know, maybe half the time they would—there'd be legitimate requests that they were entitled to receive an answer to or some assistance on. And, 'course, part of your job—part of my job was to try to separate those and decide what was somethin' that somebody was asking for that was justified and what somebody was asking for that was unreasonable or unjustified. And if it was justified, then makin' that phone call and gettin' that response and getting that service to that constituent was a high—created a high for me. That's really was [*laughs*]*—that really . . .*

[02:42:08] SL: Mh-hmm, that's what it's about.

MB: I mean, that's what it was all about. And—because see, I was there. I was one of those have-nots. I was one of those guys on the outside. I was one of those guys who didn't have a dad and who didn't have access or didn't feel like I had access to those halls. So when you're in a position to be able to knock that door down for somebody that was just like you, it gives you a heck of a sense of satisfaction. Did me. Still does.

SL: Yeah.

MB: Still does.

[02:42:40] SL: Well, I think you're almost a poster child for education.



MB: Well, a poster child for education and the American dream. But again it's not unique. I'm not unique. There are thousands of other Americans grew up like I did or that are growing up just like I did who have the same obstacles that I had—the same issues to address and the same impediments to overcome. So I'm not some unique guy that's one of a kind. There are thousands just in the same shape. Now the beauty is that education is the way out of that sort of limited circumstance, and the American system rewards merit and hard work and education to the point that you can achieve a lotta stuff that in other societies in the world's history you could've never hoped to achieve. So it's a combination of education and the system in America that allows merit to be able—and hard work—to be able to be rewarded.

[02:43:53] SL: You know what I've seen in the past decade or so, I mean, you know, we've always heard, "Get a good education. Try to keep the kids in Arkansas." But what I've seen lately is the acceptance of a good education and supporting the education system as an economic engine for the state. It makes money.

MB: Well, that was the theme upon which I ran for governor.

SL: Yeah.

[02:44:21] MB: And it's still the priority of my administration, and that's the tie between economic development and education. They are inseparable. And I tell a story that without elevating the quality of education and without being competitive educationally in every aspect, whether it's from preschool to the end of life and everything in between, because it's all so interconnected—you won't be able to attract the kinds of jobs that require those higher educational skills that obviously you wanna have for your people. So you've got to elevate the quality of education and the output and, in effect, the proliferation of some of those educational opportunities to a greater and greater segment of your people. But if you do that without simultaneously addressing the economic development issues, then all you're doin' is creating a farm club pool for some other state. You're educating people to go to Atlanta [Georgia] or Dallas [Texas] or Chicago or somewhere else to get a good job. So you don't want to do that either. So while we elevate education, we have to simultaneously elevate economic development opportunities, so that you can marry the two, and they are—you can't address one without the other. [02:45:26] A fellow down in Helena named Joe Black [president of Southern Bancorp Capital Partners], an African American, taught me a

great lesson a number of years ago when I was attorney general and when he was describing what they were havin' to do to try to change some of the places in the Delta. In that case, he said he had five issues you had to address simultaneously. You cou— if you addressed four of them and not the other one, it wouldn't work. Well, on a statewide scale the same thing applies to education and economic development. If you address one without the other, it doesn't do you any good at all. If you address economic development without the education, you're not gonna have the work force necessary to be able to attract those jobs. If you address education without economic development, you're not gonna have the jobs here. You're just educatin' people to go somewhere else, and you're spendin' your resources to send your people to provide economic stimulus in some other part of the country. So you have to do both simultaneously. And you're right. That's what we've seen more and mo—I hope you're seeing more and more of it. I preach it as often as I can. Talk about it—talked about it last night in a speech in Hot Springs—to a Fifty for the Future—in Hot Springs. It is a fact of life that we have to engrain in our people to the point of bein' so redundant they probably get sick of it— education, economic development go [*claps hands*] hand in

hand, and they ought to be our top priorities.

[02:46:39] SL: Well, there's some kind of study about for every dollar you spend on higher ed, you get X dollars returned within the state. And it's pretty phenomenal. It's . . .

MB: Yeah.

SL: And also the education—higher education lends itself toward better or cleaner industries.

MB: Sure. Well, you know, the options and the opportunities for the kinds of jobs that we will be fighting for are such that it requires a greater and greater degree of higher education. [Thomas L.] Friedman in his book, *The World is Flat [A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century]*, made a statement that India and China know what they're gonna be doin' twenty years from now. They're gonna be doin' what America's doin' today. The trick for America is to figure out what we're gonna be doing ten years or twenty years from now that nobody else has figured out yet, which means you've got to stay ahead of everybody if—with those new types of jobs. You know, yesterday I was at UALR [University of Arkansas at Little Rock] at their engineering and technology—groundbreaking for the new building, and we were in with the—those top scientists in nanotechnology, and they're talkin' about—we were lookin' at atoms—actually in a microscope

looking at atoms of gold. Well, at least they said it was an atom of gold. It could've been—I took their word for it, but they're able in these minute particles, reducing things to nanotechnology in different applications, to do things like attach some of this stuff to cancer cells and kill the cancer. I mean, it's just amazing. Without destroying the other cells. So it's that kind of higher education—research, new applications, new work—that it will be even more needed in the future for the competitive kinds of jobs that the people in this country are going to have to have.

[02:48:34] SL: You know, we kinda just . . .

TM: Scott, we need to change tapes again.

SL: Okay, let's—no, it's . . .

MB: And what time is it?

SL: It's five minutes to eleven.

MB: It's a good time to stop.

SL: Do you wanna? Okay.

TM: Yeah.

[02:48:45 End of Interview]

[Transcribed by Cheri Pearce Riggs]

[Edited by Jessica Hope Amason]

[Edited by Sheila Czech]

[Formatted and reviewed by Catherine Roth Baker]