

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

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Arkansas Memories Project

J. Alan Adams

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford

July 24, 2018

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Objective

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

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio and video files, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <https://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; and
 - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Scott Lunsford interviewed J. Alan Adams on July 24, 2018, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: J. Alan Adams. You have found yourself in the memory vault at the Pryor Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The worst part about this experience is you're gonna have to be lookin' at me for a number of hours today. So . . .

J. Alan Adams: Fair enough.

SL: . . . apologize for that [*JAA laughs*] inconvenient truth but . . .

JAA: I'll pretend it's your brother, who [*SL laughs*] I knew well.

SL: There you go. [*JAA laughs*] I—there you go. And I'd be happy to talk with you about Porter any—at some point, but—um—today's date is July 24, 2018. We're in Fayetteville, Arkansas, at the Pryor Center for—uh—Oral and Visual History. And we're gonna be talkin' about your life. And thi—ah—and I want to stress that this is your interview. So don't feel like you have to limit yourself to what you wanna talk about. I will say that your books are remarkable. And they're fun reading, especially for someone that . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . was born and raised in Fayetteville. Um—but that stuff is already out there. So I'm—we're really interested in your life and the things that you saw and that you experienced and—um—so that's kind of where I'm gonna keep us on the chronology of that.

JAA: Okay.

[00:01:15] SL: Uh—now this stuff you will get a—a what we call a preliminary copy of this interview. It'll be on a little flash drive. It'll be yours. Um—and then we'll be transcribing the interview, and when that's done, you'll get a copy of that. And before we post, I'll call you and make sure you're okay with what you saw on—on the—uh—on the flash drive and—um—the transcript. Or if we're—if we decide to post without the transcript while it's being—'cause that's the hardest thing we do is the transcript. It takes the longest.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Um—we'll post this on—on our website, so it'll be available for the whole world.

JAA: Right. That . . .

SL: So . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: So what I . . .

JAA: I don't think I have any secrets.

SL: Well . . .

JAA: I—at least—uh—my wife doesn't know if—maybe I do.

[*Laughter*]

SL: Well, we just wanna make sure that you're pleased.

JAA: All right.

SL: And it's your—it is your gift to the Pryor Center for you to be here and donating this—this interview . . .

JAA: Yeah . . .

SL: . . . so . . .

JAA: . . . what—I see a bottle of water there. Is that for me?

SL: That's for you.

JAA: An—during the interview?

SL: Yes.

[00:02:17] JAA: Because I can feel . . .

SL: That's for you . . .

JAA: . . . feel the—uh . . .

SL: We can open it right now.

JAA: What comes back when I come back to Fayetteville is all my childhood al—allergies.

SL: Oh, is that right?

JAA: Yeah. Well, when you grow up in a greenhouse, you've got a

choice . . .

SL: Oh, that's right.

JAA: . . . of who—what to be allergic to.

SL: Okay.

JAA: [*Laughs*] And there's a lot of things in there. Calendula's one of the worst things. You know, those things smell terrible.

[00:02:35] SL: Is that right. My—my wife has a pretty good green thumb—um—so she does more of—more of botanicals than I do.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: But—um—so anyway, I—I guess what I'm trying to tell is—is is that if there's anything that you don't like that you would like the rest of the world to hear or see, you just let me know, and we'll—we'll take that out of whatever . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . we post. But we'll keep all this original stuff and preserve it forever.

JAA: Okay.

SL: So if you're okay with all that . . .

JAA: I'm fine. Yeah.

SL: We're gonna go ahead and keep goin' on—on this.

JAA: I'm ready.

[00:03:11] SL: Okay, well, great. Thank you very much. So—um—

where I like to start is where and when you were born.

JAA: Well, it was in 1936—uh—my father had just helped build the rock house down next to his business on 800 South School Street, which was a greenhouse called Ray's Flowers. And I was born in the City Hospital, which was about three blocks up . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JAA: . . . School Street. And—uh—Dr. Lois Hathcock was the man who brought me into this world.

SL: Yep.

JAA: And—uh—it was such a hard job that my father used to tell me when he first saw me, he said, "Oh, I've got a deformed child."

SL: Oh, no.

JAA: An—and—uh—so he asked a nurse. And she said, "Well, Ray, it just took a lot of forceps and stuff—that's—those are temporary injuries that will go away. Don't worry about it." So I'm not sure what I looked like, but I must've looked pretty bad.

[Laughs]

SL: Probably bruised up pretty . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . good with . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . the forceps. Yeah.

JAA: But no, that was 1936, and then we lived in that house—uh—next to the greenhouse—uh—south of the hospital until I was about two years old, and then we moved to the historic district near the Washington Elementary School.

[00:04:22] SL: So—um—what was your father's name?

JAA: Marvin Ray.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JAA: And he went by Ray, just like me. He didn't ever—he never used Alan—or, I mean, Marvin. Just like I never use James. And so he was Ray, and I was Alan. And I don't know why they—they do that. But it was kind of interesting. My birth certificate initially said James Alan Adams II.

SL: Mmm.

JAA: 'Cause that was his father. And he and his mother, I guess, he and my mother, I should say—uh—were talkin' about it. Said that really is not really what we wanna do. We wanna give him his own name. And so they actually went by, and on my birth certificate, they tried to change the name, and the registrar, nurse, whoever it was, said, "Okay, I'll just scratch this out and write in the right name." He said, "Don't I need another birth certificate?" And she said, "No, it's fine." [*Laughs*] And so—so I have a birth certificate with two names on it. One of 'em's

scratched out. But anyway. Arkansas was not too concerned with the legality of things back in those days. [*Laughs*]

[00:05:20] SL: Yeah. They misspelled my wife's middle name on our—uh—marriage certificate. And it's funny in today's world for security reasons, for flights and all that stuff . . .

JAA: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . you have to—to get a TSA, you have to have three documents . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . with the exact . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . spelling.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: And so now she's gotta go back and reapply for a passport . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . in order to get . . .

JAA: The thing.

SL: . . . a third . . .

JAA: That's what—the world we live in, you know.

SL: It is.

JAA: Too bad.

[00:05:46] SL: It is. Okay, so—um—uh—and your mother's maiden

name?

JAA: Was Kays. Uh—she was born in Clovis, New Mexico.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JAA: And they moved to Fayetteville—uh—in nineteen—I think 1932 or so. Uh—and basically—uh—her—her lineage is part Indian. Her grandmother was full-breed Cherokee, I think, if I got my research right. And her name was Georgia Ann Kays, and—uh—she used to say that they called her Georgia because that's where her ancestors used to live, and of course, that was the northeast corner of Georgia, which was the Cherokee . . .

SL: Nation.

JAA: . . . ha—nation. That's right. And so she did not participate in the Trail of Tears, but some of her ancestors may have. But there's not too much documentation. If you go to try to research the records on that, you're not gonna find that much. It's mostly hearsay. [00:06:42] But she—um—she was a Viva, and she had eight siblings. Uh—her youngest sister next to her was Corin who may—who married Hayden McIlroy, and so Hayden McIlroy and I became childhood friends. But she—uh—you know—uh—she was a jolly—and I think Hayden used the same term when you interviewed him a few years ago. But typical grandmother. The best thing I remember—the funniest

thing I remember with her was in that house next to the greenhouse before we moved up to—uh—511 Forest. And she was tryin' to help me do some fireworks, and I had found some used fireworks leftover from the Fourth of July. They were in the attic. Just two or three things. One was a rocket, and one was a Roman candle.

SL: Sure.

[00:07:32] JAA: The—and I said, "Can we go shoot these off sometime?" And she said, "Sure. Let's do this." So I forget what it was. It was nowhere near the Fourth of July. But we got a bottle, and we put the rocket in and lit the fuse, and it went up there pretty good. Shot off. Then we had the Roman candle. And she said, "Well, since the rocket was lit from the bottom and it went off this way, we must have the Roman candle like this and light the fuse close to us" . . .

SL: Oh.

JAA: . . . "and it'll come out the other end" . . .

SL: Oh.

JAA: . . . "just like the rocket will." [*Laughs*] Okay. You know where I'm goin' with this.

SL: Yes.

JAA: She had a m—a belly full of hot fi—uh—that's not really hot fire,

but she said, "Oh! Whoa!" She dropped the f—dropped the thing and ran into the house and—uh—that was—uh—not as dangerous as it sounds, I don't think, but—uh—shooting the Roman candle toward herself was—uh—[*SL laughs*] typical of the kind of silly things that she would do. She was a fun lady.

[*Laughs*]

[00:08:21] SL: That sounds good. So—um—what about your—uh—father's siblings?

JAA: Well, my father, again, was the middle of the middle of the middle. He was the fifth child of nine.

SL: Wow.

JAA: And he was, I think, met—mo—I'm no psychologist, but I think most of his behavior can be explained by the fact that he had to be special to get recognition from his father because it was always Roy who had the Adams—Roy flower shop south of the square here who got, you know, the first set of golf clubs, the first tennis racket, the first keys to a car and so forth. And of course, then the younger siblings—uh—bi—he had a young—his youngest brother was called Bill and—uh—so—it's—uh—he says that he probably spent more time with his father than most. In fact, they would sit in the front of their house across from the veteran's hospital, which used to be—they—highway 71. Major

thing. And look at cars on Sunday afternoon, and they would see maybe five or six. [*Laughs*] You know, it was not . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . not very crowded. But—uh—he had—yeah, I don't know if you want me to name 'em all, but his—uh—his older sister was Roberta. She married Harold Parker in Little Rock, and he became a big insurance person.

SL: Right.

[00:09:39] JAA: And—uh—then there was—uh—Rob—uh—that was a, yeah, that was Robbie. And then Roy was the oldest son, I guess. She was the oldest daughter. Roy started the Adams Flower Shop on Block Street here, which used to be across from the filling s—uh—up from the fire station one block north of the square. And then Bert, the th—the second boy, third child, ended up bein' a florist in El Dorado, Arkansas. And—uh—and then—uh—there was—uh—well, Maree and Mettie, and then—uh—Paul and Ray and—uh—Bill and so forth. But anyway—uh—he was probably—uh—as a middle chi—I'm no psychologist, but I guess a middle child has certain behavior predicts of—predictable problems. And—uh—he—uh—I guess he was that. But he was basically—uh—well, you want me to go very far? I can tell you quite a bit about his younger years if you wanna

hear that now.

SL: Sure.

[00:10:38] JAA: He—uh—he went to the same Washington Elementary School that I did because we'd moved to the historic district. He went to the same Fayetteville High School that I did except for my senior year down here, which we didn't move to our new Fayetteville High School, which has now been totally engulfed by . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . sou—by [*laughs*] modern stuff. But then—uh—he basically—um—went to the university for two years and came home one day and said to his parents—uh—"I'm gonna go to West Plains, Missouri, and start a flower shop." This was totally out of the blue.

SL: Now this is your father.

JAA: This is my father. And why he—why he was motivated to do that, I don't know. His older brother Roy had gone into World War I about 1918.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JAA: Not too long before he went off. But he basically is now buried in the veteran's cemetery south of town because of his active duty in World War I.

SL: Right.

[00:11:31] JAA: But course, he got all the notoriety and so forth and came back and got, you know, the ability to start a flower shop here, so he didn't wanna compete with his brother. And so West Plains, Missouri, the way he did it—he heard somebody who was a traveling salesman talk about how West Plains, Missouri, didn't have a flower shop. And all of the funeral directors out there had to get their flowers from Springfield . . .

SL: Ah.

JAA: . . . Missouri. And so he called and checked with the florist over the—with the—uh—mortuary people in—uh—West Plains, and they said, "Yeah, he's right. We don't have any local supply for flowers." So he said okay, he's gonna do that. So he took—he started with—ah—about forty dollars in his pocket. He said he walked up there around the bank for several hours before he had nerve enough to go into the bank 'cause he was afraid of bankers. Why, I don't know. But he opened an account. They found a saloon that had been closed, and this was in 1927. Gettin' pretty close to 1929, you know.

SL: Right.

JAA: The economy was . . .

SL: The Depression.

JAA: . . . gettin' ready to go downhill.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:12:34] JAA: But—uh—he actually rented this saloon. And it still had—the bar still was in it. So he would actually offer ice cream and Cokes to the customers who would come in to buy flowers because . . .

SL: That's so great.

JAA: . . . it was there and why not? Well—and he didn't have a car, so he had to make hand deliveries during the lunch hour. He took his lunch hour break, and he'd—if he had—lucky enough to have any orders, he would walk out and deliver them. Uh—he—uh—he basically—um—you know, was by himself. And he was homesick as all get out as the middle of the middle of the middle child probably would be. And—uh—so he—the worst thing about it was when he got a hand-knitted sweater from his mother for Christmas, and he could not get away and go home for Christmas, and said, "I'm not sure this is gonna work out." Well, partially it worked out. There was a small college there at the—in West Plains. I think it was Western Missouri State Teachers', something like that. But they had dances, and they had—you know, and they needed corsages. They needed the—so he had a little bit of—uh—business from them. But it was nothing like the

University of Arkansas.

SL: Right.

[00:13:39] JAA: Because when I got old enough to deliver flowers to the sororities at the University of Arkansas, that was the best job in town because [*SL laughs*] I would take—boxes of flowers would have individual names on them, and when I walked in the door of any sorority, I was inundated by screaming ladies looking for their flowers [*laughter*], and I was right in the middle of all of this. And so that was a pretty good seat.

SL: Dream come true.

JAA: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[00:14:00] JAA: So but anyway, that's—just—I skipped a generation that on you—that's—that's—uh—going back to West Plains, Missouri, he finally found somebody to sell the flower shop to. He actually had made a little money because—uh—be—he sold it for about what—ye—well, what he'd paid for it was not much, but he had never, you know, bought a car, he'd never had any overhead to speak of, he never hired anybody to work in the greenhouse, and so he came back to—uh—Fayetteville, and his older brother, Bert, also did not wanna stay in Fayetteville and compete with his older brother Roy—uh—and had gone to

Oklahoma, and it was a Depression town, oil town, everybody was losing money. He said, "That's a terrible mistake. I gotta get outta here." Before he married—uh—Ray's older sister, Marie. And so they went down to El Dorado, and when Bert knew that Ray had come back from Missouri, he said, "Hey, Ray, come down here. I need your help because I've got a storefront on the square of El Dorado. I've also got some greenhouses on this—outskirts of town. And—uh—business is not all that bad. The oil business down here is still keepin' the economy high—uh—and so forth." [00:15:12] So he went to El Dorado. And they built a miniature golf course to be—by the greenhouse, which it only cost a quarter to play eighteen holes, which is a—you know, in the economy at that time, some people could afford. And—uh—he—uh—you know, stayed down there for a couple years. And he found when he got down there that his older sister—uh—med—Mettie, who's now Mettie Stewart, the wife of—the mother of James and Charles Stewart, who are well known in Fayetteville.

SL: Hmm.

JAA: Ah—she'd been down there because Bert and his wife had lost their first child. An infant. And he knew that the—he—you know, he wanted to help, they needed help, she was distraught

and so forth. And so he went down there and stayed for two or three years and got the greenhouse going and was about ready to come back. Uh—but then—uh—he had some girlfriends. And his brother Bert's—called him the Squire. [*SL laughs*] He said—you know, because he was—he was fancy free.

SL: Right.

[00:16:15] JAA: And so he basically he tells this story even—even at the—the last year of his life, I think he probably would've told it if somebody asked him. One of the people he dated in El Dorado turned out to be, later, the mother of Donna Axum, who became the first ameri—Miss America from Arkansas. I think she was the first. But anyway, I always tell my friends, I missed being Miss America by just that much. You never could tell what might've happened. But he used to—that—I don't know if he—I don't know if she's still alive. I would doubt it.

SL: Donna? Yeah.

JAA: I'm—is she?

SL: Mh-hmm.

JAA: Well, anyway—uh—she may not like that story. But [*SL laughs*]
Ray—Ray liked it. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well.

[00:16:55] JAA: So—so finally when he came back, he came back

because I told you while ago, the veteran's hospital was gonna buy the property that his father had just built a house on. Was a—thought he had found his retirement home because he had a big piece of property overlooking highway 71 north right where the veteran's hospital is now, and he had room for growing trees and landscaping and planting flowers and . . .

SL: Sure.

JAA: . . . putting up a greenhouse, and he was ready to go, except when the government came and said, "This is the property we have to have for the veterans of World War I. They need more hospitalization. See what you can do with your property." And then McIlroy, Hayden McIlroy came to his rescue, and ended up giving—giving the property across the street, in effect, of that rock house, which exists today.

SL: Yep.

JAA: Which Allen Ray was called back. His father said, "Look, I need somebody to manage this building. I can't do it. You gotta come back up here and be sure that—uh—you can—uh—you know, guide the—uh—stone workers, masonry, the plumbers, everything. Just get somebody who's good who knows what they're doin'." And course, in that day, you could get ten plumbers for a dollar and a half an hour, and that was great

wages because the Depression was right around the corner, and he had no trouble finding people to work for him to build that house. And the fact that that house is still there today is amazing because he did. [00:18:13] But then, this was 1932 about the same time that the Kays family moved from—uh—Clovis, New Mexico, to Arkansas, And they did it because Viva—a—Viva, the grandmother, mother's mother—uh—this is Ruth Kays's mother [*laughs*] used to say that, you know, sh—had—his mother had a vision that—half Cherokee—that they should move to where Chief Sequoyah was venerated. They did. And that's why they ended up in Fayetteville. And that was about 1932. And to make a long story short, they sort of met each other at church. They sort of—uh—became interested—they had common interests—uh—and she used to come out and watch him—he—supervise the construction of that house out there on—uh—North College Street. And they were married in 1934, and then he turned around and built the almost similar house out of the same stone quarry in—on South School Street. And—uh—they—uh—you know, were married in 1934. And then I was born 1936. So what was the question? [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh, well, we were—we were talkin' about your dad's side of the—of—the family, but . . .

JAA: Oh, okay, I—well, I can . . .

SL: Let's talk about your mom's side of the family a little bit now.

What . . .

JAA: Okay.

[00:19:33] SL: Um—so did you know—did you ever meet your mother's mom?

JAA: Yeah, that was—we called—that—my mother's mom was the one who bounced around to her children. She had two siblings in Baytown, Texas.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JAA: Uh—she had two—two—she had, you know, she had the mac—she had Corin McIlroy and my mother here, and she had a couple sons—there was Dan Lee and—uh—I think he ended up as a car salesman in Little Rock later.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:04] JAA: But they—yeah, I got to know her. She's the one, my mother's mother was the one who shot herself in the stomach with the Roman candle. [SL laughs] So you know, I—yeah, I got to know them very well. And unfortunately my mother was the serious one. She—it was interesting. My mother was also the middle of about eight children.

SL: Okay.

JAA: They got two middle children married to each other. Now that—I assume that's good. I think the psychiatrists say it works better on a marriage if the oldest one—if the oldest partner in one family marries the you—the youngest in another for—husband and wife . . .

SL: Oh, is that right?

JAA: I read that somewhere. Two middles normally don't get along together.

SL: [*Laughs*] Two many issues.

[00:20:44] JAA: And two firsts certainly don't get along together because each one was used to ruling the roost. But anyway. So it—you know, was a happy marriage, and Viva was the one who actually died in Baytown, Texas. I remember the day that she died. My sister Janet was home at 511 Forest. And they got the call from Baytown, Texas, that she had passed away. And she had been—when she stayed with us in Fayetteville, she was always sort of there for Christmas and there for, you know, babysitting and so forth. And she was not a piano player, but she did learn one song. And she could sort of pick it out by ear on the piano. And it was "When they ring those golden bells for you and me. When you cross the river"—da da da da da. So

I'd—I could sorta do it pretty well. I used to play the piano for the Baptist church. In the evening, not in the morning when they had a serious service, but in the evening. We used to—I used to do piano with Freddy Miller, who was a friend of mine in high school. But the—what I was doing, I was sitting at our Hammond organ that we had just gotten my mother shortly before she died. Her Christmas present—she'd always wanted an organ. My father bought her a Christ—a organ present, but this was Christmas of 1949, and she died January 1950. So she got to sit at that organ maybe two or three times before she was too weak to sit. She died of cancer on the eighth of January. But I p—I'd—you know, when Janet came in and told me about Viva's death, I said, "Remember this song? This is what she used to play." And I got through about two stanzas and Janet had to leave.

[00:22:29] SL: Yeah. Too much. So that was—it was a Hammond organ.

JAA: Yeah, it was a small electric Hammond organ.

SL: Did they have the B-3 by then?

JAA: I don't think so. I'm not sure.

SL: Yeah, that . . .

JAA: I don't remember that.

SL: Is tho—that predates B-3 a little bit.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: I would think.

[00:22:45] JAA: But it was funny. We had a lady who used to live with us when mother was so sick. Her name was Irene Nickell, and she was from near Elkins out east of town. And she was from very poor family, but my father—she knew—my father knew she needed help financially and so forth, and he said, "Look, Irene, if you will promise me that you will graduate from high school, and I'll give you time to study for it, you can come and live in the house. We have an apartment in the basement, and you can cook and help my younger three daughters" . . .

SL: Mm-kay.

JAA: . . . "Janet, Anne, and Camille." Which she did. And she's been a dear friend ever since. She ended up marryin' Max Alexander. They both became missionaries to Thailand and spent most of their career in Thailand.

SL: Wow.

JAA: And they're back now, and he died about two years ago, and she's living, I think, in Jonesboro up in . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: . . . Northeast Arkansas. But her two daughters—two of her

daughters, I should say, came to Annapolis about six months ago and stayed with us for two or three days and visited and, you know, they knew all about us, and we knew all about them.

SL: That's fun.

[00:23:51] JAA: But that's another one of those—it's kinda interesting because the same sort of thing happened when the McColloms—I haven't told you the story of how the McColloms got to Arkansas after they met each other in the—in Albany, New York, but we can do that later if you wanna go on. Where are we? *[Laughs]* You—me be—what was your question?

SL: Well, I'm—we're—I'm kind of tryin' to get some portraiture from your grandparents. Now do you remember any conversations that you had with your grandfather?

JAA: No. That was one of the drid—my grandfather died in 1939. This was Adams. Ada—James Allen Adams. And my father was always disappointed because he used to ask me, "Don't you remember Granddaddy who saw this and did this and did this?" And this was maybe two or three years later when I was more—like in the first grade.

SL: Right.

JAA: But I have to be honest and say, no, I really don't remember him. And I—and as I mentioned, the other grandfather, who

was Kays . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . wasn't even mentioned by anybody. So that grandfather, you know, was sort of out of the pen—question. But the Adams grandfather was called Jim Adams. He came down and got a job with a—with the son of Sephronia Clark, who married McCollum, Robert McCollum. So Robert McCollom got there—have I told the story about their award for the property in Northwest Arkansas from the Black Hawk War?

SL: Hm-mm.

[00:25:26] JAA: I have to back up, then. You can . . .

SL: That's all right.

JAA: . . . get this right.

SL: That's fine.

JAA: Okay. Robert McCollom met Saphronia Clark. And if you really wanna get imaginative, I have some records out there that said Saphronia Clark's lineage can be traced back to Francis Jones, son of William I.

SL: Wow.

JAA: Wow. So I must be in line for this somehow. *[Laughter]*

From . . .

SL: There's royalty here.

JAA: From—yeah, there's royalty here. You can bow, but not now. But anyway, when you get that kind of stuff off the web, you have to take it with a grain of salt. But it was turned out that everybody was named Jeremy Clark, and Jeremiah Clark. You can go back. Here's about a thirty-year difference. Here's another Jeremiah Clark. Go to thirty, another Jerem—so you got—very easy to get back to the 1500s. Now getting back from the 1500s back into the 1200s is a little bit—little harder. But in the web you can do it if you wanna Google it.

SL: Yeah. [*JAA laughs*] I know. It's amazing.

JAA: There's . . .

SL: It's amazing.

[00:26:17] JAA: But anyway, they—kay, so his father brought him—this is McCollom. McCollom brought Robert McCollom, who is then about fifteen years old, to Albany, New York, to get a job because of the Erie Canal opened. So many things to do.

SL: Yep.

JAA: They were there, and they found out that Sephronia Clark had a father who was—I think this is true, but it's a good guess because Clark used to be spelled Clerk, and it used to be spelled Cleric, and it sort of—the name sort of came with the position as you go back and se—that's why I gave up searching the

history—the real records for those. The names change. And it used be spelled with an *E* on the end of it. But the other Clarks in this country, like the Clark of William and Clark who investigated the Northwest for . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . Jefferson. But they—but anyway, they came together as a family, and it turned out, according to my story, and I'm cheating, here. This is . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: The book on apple blossoms that I wrote.

SL: Yeah, that's all right.

[00:27:20] JAA: But anyway, he, I think, was a cleric in the Episcopal Church, but he was too liberal for the English tradition. Of course, the Episcopal Church took over from the English . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . Church, and so that was another story in itself. But basically, they went to Indiana just to have an experience and see out West. They wanted to go, so they went as far as Albany on the Erie Canal, and then he went south and got on the national road, part of it. Part of it was fixed all the way to Terre Haute, Indiana. And so they got out that far, and they had some very interesting experiences, but basically that's another story.

They came back to Albany, and they said, "Look, we're going to move west. There's more opportunity there." And it turned out that Robert's—Robert McCollom's father was ready to go back to New Jersey. I'm—not New Jersey, New Hampshire.

SL: Kay.

[00:28:15] JAA: Sorry. New Hampshire—because his wife wanted to go back to New Hampshire, so they weren't gonna go West. They—that's for the kids. Let the kids go west. Okay. And so they ended up in Terre Haute, Indiana, or the area northwest of Terre Haute, Indiana. And so finally, after the Black Hawk War, Robert McCollom married Saphronia Clark. Now Robert was living in Illinois at the time because they couldn't find enough work in Indiana, so they crossed the river, and they went to ne—crossed the boundary went to Illinois. And in about eighteen s— [18]31, I guess, he got a notice from the Illinois militia. "Greetings." [SL laughs] "We are perhaps under attack from the Black Hawk Indians in Iowa. They seem to be wanting to come back across the Mississippi River. We have to be prepared. Notice that—be all—be ready to be on immediate call to have your horse and your rifle ready." That's why we have the gun laws in this country because when you were in a militia and asked to be called up, you had to bring your own gun.

SL: That's right.

JAA: You [*laughs*] couldn't get a gun issued.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: And you—at the gun store. But anyway, that happened. He was drafted into Illinois militia because the Black Hawk went—the Black Hawks were not able to grow their corn in Iowa. They were starving. So they were bringing their women and their children and crossing the Mississippi River, and Illinois went berserk. It is not a happy chapter of American history. It's not. [00:29:51] But the Black Hawk War, you can read about it. You can Google it. But it was a terrible massacre. And but basically Robert McCollom was in the Illinois militia at the same that Abraham Lincoln was. It was the only time that Abraham Lincoln served on active duty in a military capacity in his entire career. I don't think they were in the same company. I don't think they knew each other there.

SL: Right.

JAA: But anyway, it was a close kind of . . .

SL: But they were ensnared in that . . .

JAA: . . . close encounter of—yeah, the . . .

SL: . . . piece of history.

JAA: . . . the first kind. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[00:30:18] JAA: So anyway, after the Black Hawk War, they went back home, and about four or five years later, they got a notice s—from the government saying, "You have been chosen by lottery to be paid forty acres of free land in the Boston Mountains in Northwest Arkansas for your service in the Black Hawk War."

SL: Wow.

JAA: That was a—by chance, totally. And the reason that I'm sitting here today is because he won a lottery for the payment of his service in the Black Hawk War. Strange. And they said, "Do we really wanna go to Arkansas?" I mean, you know, come on.

SL: It was . . .

JAA: This was before 1861, but not much before 1861 by the time all this happened. They finally bout—probably about the mid-1840s or 1850, early 1850s, they did decide to come to Arkansas. They came down the Arkansas River. They came up to Lewisburg, which is near Morrilton, and if you don't about Lewisburg, you should look it up. It's a fascinating Arkansas history. There's a painting down in Morrilton of Lewisburg. It's no longer a town. It's totally disappeared. But they—it was—for the time that they—they had a hospital, they had a library, they

had several churches, and they stayed there in Lewisburg for two or three years because the property that Robert had won was up here in Washington County, but he had to stay near the Mississippi River because he was selling apple tree cuttings and apples themselves when they ripened. And his brother, who stayed in Northern Illinois was, in effect, growing the apples for him, sending—or taking the cutting, sending them down, and he spent his time on a wagon in southwest—or—Arkansas and went into Texas tryin' to sell these trees. And eventually sell—when he got his own trees established, he had an orchard. So basically, he, in effect, commuted over that Pig Trail, which was still—not called Pig Trail, but as he mentioned, "there's nothin' on it but pigs." [Laughter] [00:32:20] And he would come up in the—after wintertime and then spend his time trying to claim his property. Now he went into the courthouse, and he showed them the paper. They said, "Well, the actual grant will come later signed by President Pearce," which he—which I have a copy of, which didn't come till later because the government was slower then than it is today.

SL: Right.

JAA: But so he said—but there were some warnings. He said, "There may be squatters on that land." And he went in to call—"Yeah,

I'll—yeah, I know that piece of property. There's a squatter. But we can't help you. You've gotta deal with him yourself." So okay, how do you get rid of a squatter? There's several ways to get rid of squatters. There's also several ways to get killed tryin' to get rid of squatters.

SL: Yep.

[00:33:04] JAA: But that was the—there was another, you know, chance. They finally did. Their third son, Ransom, was born when they were down on the Arkansas River in Lewisburg. And when they finally moved up to Fayetteville, he had cleared his land of the squatter, he had built a small cabin, which I have a picture of, as a matter of fact.

SL: Good.

JAA: It's incredible. And basically, they started living there, and the third son, Ransom, was my great-grandfather. The middle son was called Albert. He perished in the Civil War.

SL: Okay.

JAA: The first son was called William. He was in love with a girl from West Fork [*SL laughs*] whose father was a dyed-in-the-wool Union supporter.

SL: Uh-oh.

JAA: And so anyway—you gotta read the book. Don't—the—get . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: It goes—yeah, and so basically, I get off the subject. I'm sorry.

[00:34:10] SL: No, no, no. You're—this is fascinating stuff, and—so what about—now is there a grandparent that isn't talked about in your family?

JAA: Well, except for Mr. Kays. That would be the one who was not talked about. That would be Ruth's father.

SL: And so is that a mystery why that's repressed?

JAA: Well, it is to me, and I think, you know, I think—well, I'm just guessing. Yes, it's a mystery. Yeah. I—what I used to do with—when I was playing catch with myself throwing ping—throwing golf balls against the step on the front porch . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . he would come and watch me. We didn't have any conversations. He just said, "How are you doin'?" I'm sure—"I'm fine," and but I was—I just kept throwin' the ball, and he kept watching, and then he walked away. That was I—that was t—you know, I don't know why it was like that, but that was just something, I guess, the way I've been told that that is somebody who you don't want to become friends with, so I sort of ignored him. I'm sorry that—I . . .

SL: Wow.

[00:35:15] JAA: But there was other tragedies, though, in that family. His oldest son was Jim. Jim Kays. Ended up working for Hayden McIlroy Sr. in the bank. And their only child, Carol, when she was about ten years old, was watching some boys on her new shring—swing that they'd just installed in their backyard.

SL: Right.

JAA: Hadn't been set in concrete yet. And there were some teenage boys who were sort of trying to see how high they could swing it. They shoudn't've been swingin' on it in the first place, but it tipped over and broke her neck. And so she's buried now out at Fairview Cemetery. But that was the, you know—he and his wife couldn't handle it. And they, in effect, you know, sort of dropped out of society. He was relieved from his job at the bank and so forth, and they—they had—they actually lived just a block from us. They lived on Park Street. After this happened, they moved there but . . .

SL: It's hard . . .

[00:36:24] JAA: My father would try to call and talk to him, and he was always so inebriated, even in the middle of the day . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . that they just couldn't even communicate.

SL: That's too bad.

[00:36:32] JAA: So that was a very sad, sad story. But most of the Kays, I think, were more acceptable 'cause—well, as a matter of fact, when I was at the Naval Academy, three years after I came there, there was a midshipman called Buddy Kays. They called him Buddy Kays. I'm not sure who he was, but I say—you know, I looked him up, and I said, "Are you the right Kays?" He said, "Yeah, I—my father was, you know, Lee Kays." Lee Kays was one of the younger brothers of my sister. And he said, "Yeah, I'm here as the"—'cause his father was a career army—I think he was a lieutenant colonel at that time. And one of the saddest things of my career is I think I didn't do a good job of counseling. Course he—I was not his counselor. I was not asked to do it. But he loved to play 150-pound football. He was a good football player. But he was too little to play for the navy varsity. And in those days, they played usually Ivy League schools. Ivy League had a lot of . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . players who were the same thing. They were good football players, but played in high school, but you know, that was about it. And so basically, Buddy Kays put football before academics, and unfortunately he had one of the instructors that was in my

department, which I will not name. Better to not name that—who was a stickler for extra work. He would come to class with the assignment plus a stack of papers for extra reading. And I know why he was doing that, but I—let's don't go into that.

[00:38:10] But he—but anyway, sometimes you get a bad draw. Every college student should realize that not every teacher is the same, and you are gonna have a few teachers who don't seem to be fair, who seem to be—have favorites, who seem to want to talk about one part of the subject longer than the other part of the subject, but you're all gonna take the final exam together. I mean, there're all sorts of conflicts arise. At the Naval Academy, there used to be a common curriculum before I came.

SL: Sure.

[00:38:39] JAA: And the one attraction to it, for me, was that they were getting ready to modernize the curriculum so that they could have accredited, designated engineering and science degrees. And what drove this was basically the threat of the Russians and the space race. And they knew that they had to upgrade their—if they were gonna get students who were the—the same students that Cal Tech and MIT and Carnegie Mellon and so forth were lookin' for, the Naval Academy wanted them,

too. The only way you're gonna get them was to have a curi—
and equivalent or almost equal curriculum.

SL: Right.

[00:39:14] JAA: And so what—they began hiring young, wet-behind-the-ears, young Ph.D.s like me, actually. [SL laughs] And this was in the mid-[19]60s. The first academic dean at the Naval Academy was Dean Drought, who came from Marquette, and it was amazing what he could do. Because before he came, every student went through the same curriculum at the same time. They could all march to class because everybody was going to the same classroom. Or the same building—the same classroom. And so that kind of lockstep curriculum is good from a military standpoint, but it's not good from a educational, you know—high end—dividing—if you're gonna be good in chemistry, you don't necessarily have to be good in calculus, okay. But you have to be good in molecular stuff. And if you're gonna be a mechanical engineer, you don't necessarily have to be good in—well, I don't know. I can't generalize. You have to be everything when you're a [laughs] mechanical engineer. But they didn't have credited mechanical engineering. So one thing we did as young faculty members is to go ahead and establish—I came from Purdue. A lot of people came from MIT and from

Illinois and from other places. And so we'd all been through the upgraded—because they'd been through the same problem.

They—all the schools, you know—NSF started pouring money into the engineering schools wu—especially after Sputnik was orbited and the Russians had demonstrated that they were up there ready to go.

SL: NSF, National Science Foundation?

[00:40:47] JAA: Yeah, National Science Foundation, right. I think the Sputnik went up in 1957.

SL: I remember.

JAA: I believe I'm right. And I went to the Naval Academy in 1960 ish. So basically the, you know, the—I guess my—well, I got off on this. Buddy Kays spent so much time playing football that he failed his technical classes. And unfortunately, if anybody would've ever been a good career officer, he would be. And I have lost contact with him.

SL: Oh.

JAA: And I'm hoping that—he probably went to OCS because he had a father who was an officer in the army. And I'll bet you he's probably now a retired colonel or somewhere doin' something else with a thirt—twenty-five or thirty-year career behind him because that was—he's had time to do that. I don't know what I

could have done at the time because one thing—well, when you start hiring a lot of civilians, they wanna be sure that you have academic freedom. That's almost as important as to have voting freedom, you know.

SL: Right.

JAA: You know the text book, and you know the syllabus, but if you want to emphasize this or deemphasize that or you feel more comfortable teaching this instead of that, you're gonna do that.

SL: Right.

[00:42:02] JAA: And so the various sections are not gonna be necessarily right the same. You're gonna have one teacher that's a much better teacher than another person, so if you happen to draw a bad prof, then you've gotta make up the difference. And so for future college students, just grin and bear it and knuckle down and do it yourself. That's my advice because you can't always get help from somebody else. Ther— speaking of the University of Arkansas. I'm getting way off here. But I'm remembering it, so you better let me [*laughs*] tell you.

SL: Absolutely.

[00:42:37] JAA: When *i* was in college, I went five years because the lady in there that I was hoping to marry was a year behind me, so I had to wait—had to have an excuse to wait five years

because she was graduating later. So I was in advanced ROTC.

SL: Kay.

JAA: And so basically, that—we can talk about that in—at a later—in a later interview. But when I went through the engineering program and waiting for her, the fifth year, I had some spare time. So Dean Branigan, who was dean of engineering at Arkansas said, "Look, pal, I know you've done well in your courses, and I want to give you a TA"—that's a teaching assistant.

SL: Right.

JAA: Normally that was only given to people workin' on master's degree.

SL: Right.

JAA: But he said, "I've got a space for you, and there's an office, and there's a new faculty member called Francis Deaver." And I sorta grinned. I said, "Well, how many people—how many men have I known called Francis?" Well, there were a few. There was a Francis Gwatney who taught English down here . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . at the old Annapolis Senior High School. And I fo—I think Francis Gary Powers, the pilot of the U-2 spy plane, I think, was Francis. But anyway, that was an interesting name, but Francis

was there, he had just gotten his Ph.D. from Minnesota, and he shared an office with me. And he was telling me about his World War II duty in submarines in the Pacific. When I got to the Naval Academy, the first superintendent was Admiral Jim Calvert, who had been the first—who'd been a commander in the—during the war in submarines. And then surfaced at the pole—he wrote a book. He was the first commander of a nuclear-powered submarine to be able to surface at the North Pole by breaking through the ice, and he wrote a book about it.

SL: I can remember that.

[00:44:22] JAA: At the first reception I went to, I was talkin' to Admiral Calvert, and he said, "Oh, Arkansas? You've graduated from Arkansas." I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Did you ever know a man named Frank Deaver?" I said, "I sa—I shared an office with Frank Deaver." He said, "He served with me on my submarine in the Pacific in World War II, and he was the comedian clown. [SL laughs] And we all knew Frank Deaver." And he said that he was, you know, one of the best sailors I ever had on board with me. And small world, huh.

SL: Small world.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: And I think Frank Deaver's parents had a lumberyard or something up to Springdale, I believe. But he died, now. And he—and you know, I know a lot—my wife's brother in law was also a navy submarine commander in those stinkpots, those diesel-powered submarines that—I think a lot of people have young—have early deaths that probably, if you wanted . . .

SL: Exhaust.

JAA: . . . to, could trace it to the environment in those submarines that were . . .

SL: Yep.

JAA: . . . in operation in World War II.

SL: Yep.

JAA: But you know, they've gotten a lot better. But you know, you have to do what you gotta do.

[00:45:34] SL: Let's go back to your earliest childhood memories of the house that you were raised in.

JAA: Okay.

SL: Tell me about the house.

JAA: Well, that was the rock house that was built sort of as a model from the veterans—across the street from the veteran's hospital house.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: It's the same quarry, same stone. You can look at the pictures, you can see the similarity. That house also—well, had a secret attic in it, and that's where I had found the fireplace—the fireworks that Viva and I tried to shoot off. That's—that was at that house. I had—used to have a dog about every six months because we lived on Highway 71, which didn't have many cars, but these dogs did not know how to stay out of the street. And course, you didn't leash dogs in those days, they just went wherever they wanted to go.

SL: That's right.

[00:46:20] JAA: And so I remember very much my fir—mainly because of the picture that you have in there shows me reaching down to try to pet a little dog, which was my first dog. I was in a high chair. So I remember that. The—you know, I had pets that seemed to always come and go very quickly. I had the upstairs—bedrooms were upstairs, and my sister, Janet, who I just stopped by in Little Rock to see the day before yesterday, was four years younger than I was. And we had the stairs that went up and then went up halfway and bent at a ninety-degree angle, went up the other way, and under that plat—that platform there halfway up the stairs, there was a crump—a ground floor closet that you would keep vacuum cleaners and brah—boots

and . . .

SL: Right.

[00:47:09] JAA: And so I don't know why I did this, but my sister never lets me forget it. [*SL laughs*] I—we'd gotten our first electric vacuum cleaner.

SL: Okay.

JAA: And I knew where it was, and I said, "Janet, come in here, I wanna show you something." Into this closet. You have to get down and crawl into it because it's under the stairs. And she was a little leery, but I said, "It's okay." And so I got her in there, and I shut the door, and it became pitch dark, and I switched on the electric vacuum cleaner. And [*laughs*] it—I don't think she's been the same . . .

SL: Scared her to death.

JAA: . . . since—it scared her to death. I, you know, I don't know why—I didn't know I had that shu—you know, bent in me, but she remembers that very well 'cause I was talking to her in Little Rock. She's now in one of these continual care facilities. I said, "Janet, you're younger than I am. You shouldn't be here." And she said, "I know. Let's go." And of course, she's locked in. She can't go.

SL: Right.

JAA: 'Cause she just moved to a continual care facility. And it's a much better place than she was previously, but life gets tough at certain ages and I—you know, I hope she's gonna be okay.

SL: Well, that's hard stuff. It's—you get restricted pretty quickly.

JAA: Yeah. You have to for . . .

SL: By the . . .

JAA: . . . your own safety.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Yeah, you have to.

SL: Yeah.

[00:48:23] JAA: But anyway, that's, you know—I remember that scooter trip down the hill from Campbell school. I remember goin'. . .

SL: Now wait a minute. The scooter . . .

JAA: I'm back at my—I'm back at the house before we moved to 511 Forest.

SL: Oh.

JAA: What—with—the fow—house that my father built two years before he married my mother and two years—or four years before I was born. And so the—you know, the memories are fairly thin, but the one I said with the scooter coming down South College Street where Jefferson School . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . was. I guess it's not the Jefferson School anymore but . . .

SL: No, it's actually some kind of community center, now.

JAA: Is it? Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[00:49:03] JAA: Okay. Well anyway, remember a lot of Vacation Bible Schools.

SL: Ah.

JAA: One of our dear friends, and I seem to have every friend associated with a tragedy. But anyway, Mr. and Mrs. Walter McWhorter lived on West Lafayette Street about two—about halfway between that white house that we moved into when Alan—when Ray was eight years old and the Washington Elementary School. And they were in First Baptist Church, and they lost both of their children early with accidents. One was a car accident. Opened the door on the wrong side, and a car hit her as it wa . . .

SL: Oh my gosh.

JAA: And so we sort of became their adopted children. And Mee Mac and Mr. Mac they were called. And they were also prob—my son—she probably taught me my Sunday school class every year because she must have been moving along with me. [*Laughs*] I

don't why she—all—or maybe there are just not that many different Sunday school teachers in those days. But Mr. Mac, Walter McWhorter worked for the Ozark Grocery wholesale.

SL: Kay.

JAA: Plant. And where that was was just across the street from where the Walton Performing Arts Center now is down at the—on Dickson Street . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . when you begin to cross the railroad tracks right there on the left before you go up the hill.

[00:50:20] SL: Yeah, there was a hotel there.

JAA: I think there may have been. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: There was an ice plant there, which I used to . . .

SL: Yep.

JAA: . . . have to go pick up ice for my father, which you had to get a pair of tongs and pick up a twenty-five pound of dry—of ice and take it back . . .

SL: There's a spring right there.

JAA: Yeah. And I'd take it back to the greenhouse and put it in an icebox, we called it. Not a refrigerator, the icebox.

SL: Icebox.

JAA: [*Laughs*] Yeah. All right.

SL: Yeah. We had those, too.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[00:50:43] JAA: So we would go to the wholesale place, and this is the—my sisters, at least—I've got three sisters and a half-sister. Janet and Camille were all born at this time. And this was before my mother died. And he would take us down to the wholesale grocery store and take us upstairs and play on the boxes where they were just being stored or were—you know, were—and the thing was antique. It wa—it had a big wooden door that you had to lift up alon—with pulleys and then enter the elevator . . .

SL: So it was kind of a warehouse elevator.

JAA: It was a—oh, yeah, it was a huge warehouse.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Yeah. And so basically I'm not sure you—even today what made it go up. [*Laughs*] You had to pull on a rope, but something happened.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: But you got upstairs, and that was big. And also Mr. McWhorter, skipping a few years, still always was a parent-like figure to us. One of my graduation presents from Fayetteville High School

from my father was to take his panel flower delivery truck and drive it to California.

SL: Wow.

[00:51:51] JAA: And I drove it with a friend of mine, Alfred Taylor, who played basketball with me and was the manager of the football team. Great friends with Al Taylor. And so we put a mattress in the back of that panel truck and headed west on 66. We know now what the highway—the—you know, the 66 is—the history itself.

SL: Highway 66.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: That's right.

JAA: We had all the stops, you know, from all the two-headed calves and the fake dinosaurs and *[laughs]* . . .

SL: Absolutely.

JAA: . . . everything else you'd wanna see.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JAA: But anyway, that was my first experience, really—well, my second experience. My father brought me to Colorado Springs when I was eight years old to go to the International Rotary Convention. And that's another story, too. But Al Taylor and I—you know, we thought we'd cook our own food. We'd bought a

little charcoal thing and . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . we'd stop at the side of the road. That—and sleep in the truck. That lasted for about two days, and we said, "This is not [*laughs*] not the way to go." So we had a second—we had a plan B, and we'd brought enough traveler's checks, which people now, they don't know what a traveler's checks . . .

SL: That's right.

JAA: . . . are. Traveler's checks to be able to afford to spend at a few motels. So we became motel spenders after about halfway to California all the way back. We saw a lot of things. Went to Yosemite. Went to the Grand Canyon. Went to, you know, San Francisco and, you know . . .

SL: That's a lot. That's a lot of road.

JAA: Yeah, yeah. We—the northern route—southern route, come back northern route, yeah. We spent about two weeks, I guess, doin' that.

[00:53:20] SL: Did your house have running water in it?

JAA: Which house?

SL: The s . . .

JAA: They . . .

SL: The stone house . . .

JAA: Oh yeah. Yeah, over by . . .

SL: . . . on South College.

JAA: The green—yeah. In fact, the white house on West Lafayette that we first moved into, which was on Lafayette Street right—now—it now matches up to the University Baptist Church property. It's right there on West Lafayette. That—but—have I told you the story about the flower business or did I tell . . .

SL: Yeah, but we can get that on—I mean, I know it's in the book but . . .

JAA: It—that's what . . .

SL: . . . it's a great . . .

JAA: Well . . .

SL: It's great hearing it from you.

[00:53:52] JAA: All right. Well, anyway, when the mur—when they moved into town—this is—they—this is Nora Bell McCollom and James Allen Adams with the wrong spelling on Alan. My gre—my grandfather. Moved their family into Fayetteville from Cato Springs, in that area where—the land where they had gotten because my great-grandfather—great-great-grandfather . . .

SL: Lottery thing.

JAA: . . . fighting in the Black Hawk War out on . . .

SL: So that was actually out on Cato Springs road, that property.

JAA: Yeah, in fact the cemetery out on Cato Springs—cemetery where a lot of these people I'm talkin' about are buried.

SL: Kay.

JAA: And so what the—where—what—tell me where I was. Where—I'm gonna go back out.

SL: Well, you were talkin' about the flower . . .

[00:54:36] JAA: Okay, the way the flower business was formed.

Thank you.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: That 306 West Lafayette. You can't go look it up—it's—today—it's there—we drove by it yesterday. It's still there. Same house. And the only problem with that house, it did not have enough room to grow flowers and bushes and trees and gladiolas and beds and . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: That's why they had bought this veteran's hospital location and moved there before the government kicked 'em out, and that goes back to the other rock house. So back to . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . the Lafayette Street house. After two hou—two days of being in the new house, lady knocked on the front door. And my father, Ray, happened to be the one to answer the door. And

the lady said, "I'm here to pick up my flowers." And he said, "Well, we don't have any flowers." She said, "What do you mean, you don't have any flowers? I get flowers from you every month." You know, she's on sc—I—oh, I say, "You—talkin' about the lady who sold us the house. We bought—she doesn't—no longer own this house." So he told my father, well—she told my father, "Okay, go up into the bathroom and check and see if you find any." And they were just beginning to learn what indoor plumbing was.

SL: Yeah.

[00:55:45] JAA: You know. And I'm not sure if they'd even used it yet, in all honesty. I don't know. They'd only been there two or three days. But he went into the bathroom, and he found, in that wall hanging tank, which is—gives you the head necessary to flush the . . .

SL: Gravity.

JAA: . . . toilet with this chain. Gladiolas were spit there—were—that was the way they kept 'em fresh. Kept 'em in that—whether they used it to flush the toilet, I don't know, but they used it to keep fla—gladiolas fresh. [*Laughs*] And so basically that was the beginning of the flower shop because when Jim Adams, my grandfather, came home, he said, "If they wanna buy flowers,

we'll sell 'em flowers." And therefore my Uncle Roy became Adams Flower Shop, Uncle Bert became Adams Flower Shop in El Dorado, Ray Adams became Ray's Flowers in f—South . . .

SL: Fayetteville.

JAA: . . . School Street. And actually Paul was a brother, younger brother of Ray who actually started with Ray. The initial business card of the flower shop down south said "Ray and Paul's Flowers." I didn't know this until I started doing research on this—and I don't think my father mentioned that to me.

SL: Right.

[00:56:51] JAA: I don't know why. It probably didn't last more than a few weeks because I think Paul said, "Hey, there's an easier way to make a living [*laughs*] than be a florist." And he went to work with the Arkansas Agricultural Department and had to do with pine tree plantings and . . .

SL: yup.

JAA: . . . seedlings and spose—he dealt his work. So just having to worry about pine trees was much easier than having to worry about roses and gladiolas and pansies and tomatoes and whatever, you know. So he became a non—he's not in my list of florists from the Adams fam—but there were three serious florists and that's—it all started from that white house on

Lafayette Street.

[00:57:29] SL: Were there qui—I'm goin' back to your memories, now. Were there musical—any musical instruments in the house that you grew up in?

JAA: Well, yes. I probably progressed more than others, but we all had to take piano lessons. That was a rule. And of course, my mother had the organ just for a few weeks before she died, but that was our first organ. But I took music lessons from two people. Both of them were at the intersection of Lafayette and College. Right there just a block from the Washington Elementary School. One was Mrs. Gregg, and one was Mrs. Humphreys.

SL: Kay.

JAA: Mrs. Humphreys' son was flyin' jets in Korea. And that's when I first became aware of the fact that, hey, wait a minute, you know, that's gettin' pretty close to home. She—he was about four or five years older than I was, but still. Anyway. So we had recitals. W—at several of the churches, we had recitals. And usually not too serious recitals. I remember Stanley Williams and I once tried to play a duet [*laughs*] at a recital, and we got about three majors down, and we made a mistake, and we were laughing, and so we stopped, and we said—Mrs. Humphreys

said, "Start again." Well, I started where we were. Stanley started from the beginning [*laughs*] of the piece, and it was a total disas—I don't think we ever finished that performance. [*Laughter*] But anyway, yeah. It didn't bother us. I think it bothered her. So it—but yeah, I used to play the piano at church on Sunday nights. Not on Sunday mornings. Normally—oh, there is a story that been—come up later about Sunday morning when I met Ginger. But it was—you know, Freddy Miller was also in high school with me, and he was a good piano player, and so sometimes we would play dual pianos. They had two pianos in the Baptist church. And the Baptist church are very forgiving about some things. [*SL laughs*] One is playing bad piano in church. [*Laughter*] You . . .

SL: Thank goodness.

JAA: You get to a little more secular problems, they're not so forgiving, but that's—you know, so be it.

[00:59:40] SL: Let's talk a little bit about church and religion.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: In the home. Did you all keep a Bible in the home?

JAA: Oh yes.

SL: And . . .

JAA: Oh, yes.

SL: And di—were there ever any informal or formal bidle—Bible studies in the house?

JAA: Well, there had to be because Josephine Scaggs, as I mentioned, lived with my mother, and she ended up goin' to Nigeria as a full-time missionary.

SL: Right.

[01:00:09] JAA: We had Vacation Bible School every summer. And we had to lee—Ginger can still—Ginger still—she didn't go with me, she was in Russellville, but she still, when she can't sleep at nights, lists Bible verses in her head. You know, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . Deuteronomy, da-da-da-da-da. And she can get through all sixty-six verses sometimes before she goes to sleep. [*Laughs*]

SL: Wow.

JAA: So she paid more attention than I did in—growing up. Because one of the painful experiences was my father used to send us to Siloam Springs Baptist Assembly.

SL: Yeah. I've been there.

JAA: Yeah, you been there. Been there done . . .

SL: I went there.

JAA: Oh, well, you know exactly what I'm talkin' about.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: You know, no mixed swimming pools. No . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . you know . . .

SL: Yeah, on Highway 59 I think.

JAA: Yeah. And [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

[01:00:52] JAA: Well, anyway, that was not a happy summer. And I had a lot of other friends. We used to learn how to skip church. So I was just about as effective at skipping church as I was going to church. [*SL laughs*] Because . . .

SL: That's terrible.

JAA: . . . you know, I—and as a matter of fact, to give you a heads up, the last fifteen years, Ginger and I have been attending the Unitarian Church in Annapolis because theologically we've just kind of reached a crossroads. And the Southern Baptist Convention was hijacked by a bunch of . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . nuts, in my opinion.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: So anyway, but we still play the piano. Ginger and I used to— for Unitarians, they'll take anything. [*SL laughs*] So sometimes

we were in charge . . .

SL: That's . . .

JAA: . . . of the music on Sunday. And so we had to sometimes on Labor Day weekend and Fourth of July weekend and Memorial Day weekend, nobody wanted to come to church, much less play the piano, so we would volunteer to play piano duets. So we got fairly pro—sufficient. And we called ourselves Ginger Ale [*SL laughs*] because she's Ginger, and I'm Alan.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: So it was ging—I still . . .

SL: That is so good.

JAA: . . . have a business card if you'd like to see it [*laughs*] as a matter of fact.

[01:01:56] SL: We'll have to scan that. Yeah.

JAA: Yeah. Right. But anyway, the—so yeah, so religion was important, although skipping church was also important. Ronnie Morris and I—Ronnie—I could tell you a whole story about Ronnie. His father was Dwight Morris. They lived in Mount Sequoyah. They ended up selln' their house to the First Baptist Church for the next ministers came on. But he played football with me. In fact, he was the only football player I ever played with who ended up in professional football league. He played

Canadian football for about ten years.

SL: Wow.

[01:02:25] JAA: And I can tell you a long story about that if you'll
wanna bring that up later.

SL: Okay.

JAA: But what—one of our favorite places in the Baptist church—my
father knew what we were doin' because he had all of the ushers
looking out for him. [*Laughs*] But we would sometimes go to
the first hymn and then have to suddenly go to the bathroom.

SL: Of course.

JAA: We would go out the back door and past the restroom and keep
walking. And we would head for Collier's Drug Store. And that
was the best place to go to church on Sunday then to—that we
ever had because we had a couple of ministers, and I really
should not mention any names, but some ministers are good,
and some ministers bad. We always were very envious of the
Methodists half a block away. Especially—I will mention Dykes.
Reverend Dykes . . .

SL: Sure.

JAA: . . . was super. And . . .

SL: I . . .

JAA: . . . they had . . .

SL: That's where I went to church.

JAA: And they had super girls, good-lookin' girls. Better than Baptists. [*SL laughs*] And so we—another thing we—every time we had an excuse to—we had to go to church, we'd say, "Hey, Dad, they're havin' really good service down at the Methodist church. He's preachin' on la-da-da-da-da-da-da." He'd let us go. He's not gonna force us into being Baptist. But we spent a lot of time at Collier's Drug Store.

[01:03:27] SL: Soda fountain.

JAA: Yeah. [*Laughs*] That's right.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: So yeah, I think that, you know, his raising was very religious. His father, who died when I was three years old, was also very religious. And I think I probably—if I disappointed my father in any way, it would probably be my insouciance to some of the religious . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . theology that doesn't make a lot of sense to me. But . . .

[01:03:57] SL: When it came time for—well, first of all, did your mom do all the cooking?

JAA: Until she got sick, yes. She did. She had some very good recipes from her mother we called Viva, Mrs. Georgia Ann Kays.

And except when my father had her in the greenhouse. When we lived fifty feet away from the first greenhouse, and he had a big order of—for weddings or for funerals or so forth, sometimes she did not do the cooking, she went to help her husband. And therefore we had—before Irene Nichols came to live with us after she'd gotten sick, even before she got sick, we still had some help that would help come in and do even cooking for the kids and look after us as children because my father had, you know, a lot of irons in the fire.

[01:04:49] SL: So let's talk about the help. Were they African American or . . .

JAA: Yeah, okay, you talkin' about the residential help.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JAA: Yeah. They—yeah, they were young, like Irene. Most of them were farm girls. Most of them were loving an excuse to have a job in the city. And they were mostly, you know, very hard working. You know, work ethic, and some of 'em were older. Some of 'em like Irene were younger. But as I say, that's a short period of time there. I mean, you know, I didn't really know who was cooking until I was five or six years old.

SL: Right.

JAA: It just was on the—always on the table. And it—by the time I

was ten years old, my mother was deceased.

SL: Right.

JAA: So I—and I know i—Mrs. McWhorter—she's the one that filled the gap before Irene Nichols came most of the time. And she used to fix us goldenrod eggs. That was her favorite thing. That was kinda like eggs on toast except with a yellow sprinkle around it [*laughs*] on top.

SL: Right. Yeah.

JAA: Goldenrod eggs. So but yeah, some of her . . .

SL: Sounds good.

JAA: Some of her recipes have survived, actually.

[01:06:02] SL: Yeah. Well, when it came time for the meal, what— were there specific times that you had to be seated at the table?

JAA: Yes. Yes.

SL: That you were expected to be there.

JAA: Yeah, until . . .

SL: While the meal was . . .

JAA: Until I was . . .

SL: While the meal was warm.

JAA: . . . in college. See, I—in college, I was also living at home because it was only a . . .

SL: So close.

JAA: . . . twenty-minute walk . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . to get to campus. But yeah, there were dinner times. Yeah, everybody was expected to show up. It was not, you know, just come in and not . . .

SL: Haphazardly.

JAA: . . . have—yeah. Haphazardly.

SL: It wa . . .

[01:06:33] JAA: There were certain things that we refused to eat that they had to tee—in fact [*laughs*], Ginger—the first time that we had Ginger over when I was in college, now, for a cris—for a Sunday dinner—in fact this was so old—so recent that my stepmother, who my father married two or three years after my mother died. She was from Virginia. But she had sorta taken over the household. But not the cooking so much because she'd worked in the bank. She'd never married before. She was an old maid.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: So they were a lot of problems with that. But anyway. And in fact—maybe this is tellin' a story out of class. But there were a lot of people in the Baptist church who said, "Hey, Ray, this young girl would be a perfect substitute, a replacement for Ruth.

He—she goes to church, she's religious, she's a Christian, she's a—talented, she"—and he said, "No, no. I couldn't do that with all these people I know." And so it happened that we used to go about two or three times a summer to Ridgecrest, North Carolina. That was another religious exposure. The . . .

[01:07:44] SL: What happened there now?

JAA: What happened there now. You—well, what happened there, why you had—it was almost like Siloam Springs upgraded. You went to a lot of ch—they had a lot of revivalists come through who were like Falwell . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . and like Billy Graham. You mean, this was first class people. These were not just the, you know, podunks in Arkansas that
[laughs] . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . would preach on anything. And so yeah, it was a place to meet other Christians in other parts of the country and to have Bible class and Bible study and also some athletics. In fact, we played—Ronnie Morris, who I mentioned, and I played on a softball team from Texas because they needed a few extra players, and that was a good excuse not to have to go to church
[laughs] actually. But anyway, my father met his step—his new

mother, my stepmother at Ridgecrest, North Carolina.

SL: Oh, okay.

[01:08:39] JAA: And without a whole lot of research. This was a spiritual led—say go there and God will find you a mate. If you don't one of these nice young Arkansas girls because they're already here and you don't wanna do that, maybe the Lord will lead you. Now that's all I wanna say. [*SL laughs*] I think . . .

SL: You weren't . . .

JAA: Yeah, I think that, you know, I think that asking the Lord to do stuff that you can do yourself is not the right use of religion. Do it yourself. That's what you got a brain for. And I tell my friends, "You think you're praying. When you pray, the only person who's gonna hear you is that brain in your head, so you better be sure you're listening to what you're praying about." But I—that's not a Christian theology. That's a heathen [*laughs*] theology.

SL: Yeah. Yeah, there's all . . .

JAA: But anyway, you grow ou—you gotta change. You grow into it. You know, I was much more comfortable in the Unitarian church because we welcome gays and lesbians. In fact, in our choir we had several gays and lesbians. Some of the most dependable, most talented, most dedicated people I've known have been the

wrong gender mix, but I just—I—until you know somebody, you shouldn't judge 'em is my opinion. [01:10:00] We also had some tough cases. We had this one guy even scared me a little bit, but I got over it. He used to always come—he, I think. He used to always come to church in a very short skirt, but I know he had to be a man because his legs were the ugliest things you ever saw. [*Laughter*]

SL: Gosh. So he . . .

JAA: But anyway, he, you know—so you—we didn't know whether to call him sir or ma'am or what but . . .

SL: Now this is Unitarian or . . .

JAA: Yeah, Unitarian church.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: But I got to know him sometime. But we have a garden area in the church. I was walking with him to the parking lot once after church just talking to him. And he was saying—he was identifying all of the plants and the trees as we passed in the garden, calling 'em by their scientific names. "You know this is this, and this is this." I said, "No, I didn't know that. They—my father was a florist." He was, again, very intelligent and brave enough to come to church and show his sexuality, whatever it was, and you know, I have no clue. But you don't have to judge

these people. You know, some of the most—some of the best singers in our choir were gay. And some of the best members of our church were. And you know, performing marriages—many of the churches that relied on the Unitarian churches when they had questionable—mixed-marriage questions would come to the Unitarian church. We were sort of their scapegoat and . . .

SL: Sanctuary.

JAA: Yeah, and the church hasn't burned down yet. *[SL laughs]*
Well, it's come close. We've had banner in our yard in the last two or three years that says Black Lives Matter. And it's been torn down about as often as it's been put up. They have to replace it about every three months.

SL: It's hard, isn't it?

JAA: Yep.

SL: That's really strange stuff.

JAA: Yeah.

[01:11:52] SL: Okay so you're at the table for the meal.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Was grace always said?

JAA: Yes, it was. Yes, it was. And it's . . .

SL: And was it your father that always . . .

JAA: Usually Father—yes. And it was not—my father—you know, it

was usually a simple thanks—let us give thanks for this food from all who—blessings flow—you know, it was a very short grace, but yes it was, and sometimes the children would be asked to do it, and we would always take the easy way out. You know, God is great, God is good, let us thank him for this food, Amen. But that counted. That's okay.

SL: Yeah. [*JAA laughs*] Randall Ferguson told me in his interview he used to use "Jesus wept." [*Laughs*]

JAA: Yeah, the shortest verse in . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . the Bible. Yeah. Well, that is also one of the first verses I learned in Sunday school. Yep. [01:12:43] But y—it's—you know, I think religion is marvelous for well being, and if it serves a purpose, more power to you. But another thing—I was at my sister's house in Russellville yesterday.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: She drove me by a house which three days ago, after the storm, there was a lightning strike in the yard two blocks from her house. It killed a very young man who had three young children.

SL: Oh.

JAA: And he was standing between two trees, and you could still see

the mark on the tree from the top to the bottom where the lightning . . .

SL: Came down.

JAA: . . . electricity struck. Yeah. And in the church—and I guess it was yesterday. We were talkin' about this yesterday at afternoon. But anyway, Camille was talk—maybe it was—I don't know what—at church. But the soothing lesson was—from their pastor was—to his wife, "Be thankful. God just looked down and saw that your husband was having trouble, and it was time for him to come up and be with me. So I came down and got him." Now that kind of god, you can't get—I don't wanna be in the same universe with that kind of thoughtless, meaningless—you know, that's not a message that softens my heart. I'm sorry.

[01:14:05] SL: Right.

JAA: And I don't know how she felt about it. I think it probably did her some good and if it did her some good, and if she believes that, fine. But we still gotta get together. We still have to live together. But I've seen both sides. And so when you have two daughter-in-laws, one of which is a Hindu from Mumbai, India, and the other of which is a Japanese Buddhist from Hokkaido—two of the most loveliest women you ever wanna meet, and I am so fortunate to have them as my daughter-in-laws, but you can't

worry too much about religion. And it was—fact, it was the Hindus, really, that influenced most of the later religions. There's a verse in the Hindu scriptures that said—that says, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." Go read the first chapter in John. That—word—my—word verbatim, and that came from the Hindu scriptures. It came from scripture written three or four hundred years earlier than it appeared in our Bible. And so I've had to learn a little bit about that—those religions, and I admire the similarities. It turns out that—we're gettin' off the subject, aren't we? [Laughs]

SL: No, this is good. No, we're not.

[01:15:21] JAA: Yeah, well, it turns out that—this is research I've done for my next book because it's called *Coming Together*, and it's because of these different dis—religions and discipline that have come together in my family. But the—you know, the Hindu religion used to be very similar to Christianity before Constantine had his convention in two—2012—whenever it was they did—you—Christians get together and decide what you believe.

SL: And decided what was gonna be . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . in the Bible.

JAA: What was gonna be in the—and—because—and—before that—there are verses in the Bible that I have run across—I can't quote them for you right now. I can't remember 'em. But anyway, Jesus once said that John the Baptist was a reincarnation of Elijah. Talk about Hinduism.

SL: Yeah.

[01:16:12] JAA: That's [*laughs*] that's Hinduism. And basically this n—these ideas about—these unscientific ideas about, well, resurrection and ascension and so forth came from Greek mythology that—lot of the fundamental Christians insisted be part—and that's when that division took place and Constantine said okay—that was one of the things they decided not to believe, and that became Gnosticism. That became the Gnostic gospel. Elaine Pagels has written several books about what they were writing about and—pretty good. [*Laughs*] I mean, the Gnostic gospels have a lot of truth and a lot of, you know, worthwhile stuff in 'em. So again, Christianity does not have all the solutions for everybody, but it does have all the solutions for some. It's a pity that it couldn't have some of the solutions for some of the people and let them look elsewhere for some of the other solutions for some of the other people.

SL: Right.

[01:17:10] JAA: But yeah, so we—but we, as I say, we managed the music for fifteen years in the Unitarian church, as I mentioned, and we finally found—we found some—we found Brian Ganz, who has played in symphonies all over the world. He is doing all of the comp—all of the music that Frederick Chopin has written during his lifetime. He's coming out with several volumes, and he's that kind of piano player. He's the ultimate. And he more than once has agreed for us on a Sunday, which we haven't done it too much, to play the piano. Just sit down and play the piano. Play for the hymns, play for the offertory, you know, and then sneak in a Mozart [*laughs*] . . .

SL: And it's . . .

JAA: . . . minuet every once in a while. And so, you know, it's . . .

SL: What a blessing.

[01:17:57] JAA: Yeah. I agree. What a—yes. What—and but let me tell you another sad thing. One of the—our closest friends in the Unitarian church, our Unitarian church was named Winters. And she was one of the five—just a minute. One of the five people shot in Annapolis two weeks ago in her newspaper office.

SL: Oh, no.

JAA: And she was the one who picked up the garbage can when they cut—when the gunmen entered the Times office since her desk

was near the front door. And she had just been to a lec—to a study on what do you do if you have a shooter come into your work study. Here are the options, you know. If you can get a window, go, if you can hide, hide. But as a last resort, approach the man because perhaps you can detract him or distract him. And she picked up a trash can, held it in front of her, and started yelling, "Stop, stop, stop," and he killed her.

SL: Wow. What a sacrifice.

[01:19:05] JAA: Well, she had two graduates of the Naval Academy. She has—she had—you know, she was in charge of the Red Cross. She had volunteers doing this. She was, you know, she was not too concerned about whether a person believed in Jesus Christ. She was as soon—concerned about person helping their neighbor. And being some—making a difference.

SL: Making practice.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Wendi Winters. There's been a petition they've sent to Donald Trump saying, "Donald Trump, this person was a hero. Should be recognized as such." That'll probably get about as far as [laughter] . . .

SL: Yeah, first of all, he won't . . .

JAA: That's—we're not gonna . . .

SL: He won't read it, for one thing.

JAA: I did not come to Arkansas to talk politics. Don't—chan—I'm
sorry I mentioned that.

SL: Well.

JAA: Okay. Nother subject. [*Laughs*]

[01:19:50] SL: Well, you know, all this politics stuff's—touches
everybody, and the divide is so . . .

JAA: You're talkin' politics again.

SL: I know.

JAA: Don't . . .

SL: I know.

JAA: New subject. [*Laughs*]

SL: And we get accused of being kinda political here, but you know,
it is affecting lives in a real way.

JAA: Sure, it is.

SL: And if—and the re—and it is going to continue to affect lives
even after he's done.

JAA: Well, s . . .

SL: Yeah. I mean, he's . . .

JAA: Most presidents can say that, I guess.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: But yeah. Good or bad.

SL: Well, and—so we'll . . .

JAA: Okay.

SL: Anyway. I'm with you on that page.

JAA: Yeah.

[01:20:27] SL: So, all right, so let's get back to the daily life at—in your childhood. So did you have chores? When you were growing—did you have . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Were you responsible for some things around the house?

JAA: Well, around the house I had to clean up my own room. I built model airplanes. Had to get 'em out of the floor. I would hang 'em from the ceiling with twine and so forth.

SL: Yeah, sure.

JAA: And keep that—but most of my duties were down at the greenhouse. You know, I would come home with my father for lunch, and there it would be. I didn't have any duties or any responsibilities of either washing dishes or preparing lunch or doing any of those women [*laughs*] things.

SL: Right.

JAA: Because my father had first dibs. And so yeah, I had plenty of—you know, my father—sometimes I would come—I ye—I played

football and basketball. And when you got to that mixture of seasons, end of football, beginning of basketball. We would have basketball practice before school and football practice after school. Sometimes I would come to basketball practice at seven o'clock in the morning and had been working at my father's flower shop since four.

SL: Wow.

[01:21:38] JAA: Because he was busy. He had a busy fu—he had to get the flowers out by ten o'clock, there's a funeral and so forth. And so you know, it was, you know—one of the most fun parts about funerals was when I got old enough to drive, which was thirteen, by the way. There was a special—a le—if you go to the judge, and that judge knew my father at Rotary Club [*laughs*], you could get licensed because it was necessary for your business. And if you were gonna go out of business unless this thirteen-year-old could drive your delivery truck, here's your exemption. [01:22:10] So my first driving lesson or driving ability was tested when he told me to go to Muskogee, Oklahoma, and pick up a panel truck filled with poinsettias. And I did it. By myself at thirteen years old.

SL: Wow.

JAA: So anyway. It's not who you know, it's what you know. You

know. [*Laughs*] But I never had a wreck. I take it back, I did back up once into a parked car, and we called the guy, and paid him off a little bit, but that was the only one I've—I think I remember. But yeah, no, g—the flower shop made a hard worker, I think, out of me if nothing else. You know, just watching my father. My goodness, what a workaholic.

[01:22:53] And I think he became more so after my mother's death in 1950. But anyway. He was on the Fayetteville School Board for twenty-four years. And he was on the school board the year that they integrated Fayetteville High School. And his old friend Virgil Blossom—he used . . .

SL: Yeah, sure.

JAA: . . . to be a neighbor and had gone to Little Rock, ha, ha, ha, Hello, Virgil. You handle the north—with that thing . . .

SL: North Little Rock, wasn't it?

JAA: Yeah. Well, yeah, well, it was the Faubus/Eisenhower confrontation appeared on the steps of Central, Little Rock Central High School. But they . . .

SL: Oh, that's right.

JAA: . . . they were able to get through integration with only one lady holding a protest sign with five black students walkin' in the front door of Fayetteville High School in 1964. 1954.

SL: Fifty s . . .

JAA: They—[19]54. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: I graduated in [19]53. My high school football team did not have to put up with cancellations by other teams who failed to play us. The next year, Van Buren would not play us. I think somebody in Missouri would—did not play. And I was always . . .

SL: Harrison.

JAA: I was—yeah, I was at William Jewell College, so I was away from it, but you know, I guess you got to go through it, but where would we be today without Black football players? [*Laughs*] In the cellar, that where we would be.

SL: Well, any of the athletic . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . disciplines.

[01:24:17] JAA: Oh yeah. You know, as I say, you know, Dr. Leakey, the anthropologist from, you know, Cambridge University, seemed to thi—hey, looks like we've all, you know, started out as Black in Africa. It looks like the first native humans must have been Black. They couldn't have been anything else. So who's the minority here? [*Laughs*] You—I don't know.

[01:24:42] SL: Yeah. I'm tryin' to think who I was talkin' to that—
oh, it was Martin Steele. Did you ever know Marty Steele?

JAA: I'm not sure I do.

SL: He went through all that. All of the racist kinda stuff with African
American athletes.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Staying in gyms, not allowed to . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . stay in a motel or . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . in the restaurants refusing service and threats, you know,
and it was . . .

JAA: Yeah, well, I—in my first assignment in the air force as a
lieutenant in the air force—actually it was my second
assignment. It was a remote assignment up at what they call
the Pinetree Line in Ontario, Canada.

SL: Kay.

[01:25:23] JAA: Pagwa River. And i was the—there were two
commu—there were supposed to be three communication
officers up there. It was a radar site, and we were looking for
Russian bombers coming over. And the electronic maintenance
officer slot was never filled because they were old enough to

know that they knew how to—but they knew how to avoid such an assignment as Pagwa River. I mean, it was in the middle of nowhere, you know, a—it was hard to get out. But anyway, so we had two lieutenants, communications and radar, who were supposed to be workin' underneath the communications officer. [01:26:00] Never had a a communications officer. That bill went unfilled. So the—whoever had the highest seniority of the two lieutenants was the electronics officer. Communications. Well, it turns out when I arrived in Pagwa, the other officer was Lieutenant Malachi. He was the radar officer. I was the communications officer. But I had more seniority than he did, so I became his boss. He was a Black American—with a name like Malachi, he had to be.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: From Purdue University. And I had to run interference for him quite a bit, and that was the first eye opener that, you know, this integration thing is not simple. But he was talented. But it turned out that before I got there—I got there in January of 1960. In the fall of 1959, there had been a mid-air collision. The Interceptor pilot in the F-102 was being controlled by 637th AC&W squadron. That was us. And they ran into a B-47 that was flyin' out of North Little Rock, Arkansas.

SL: Wow.

JAA: And they killed the crew. And the pilot. I think there were one or two crews that may have survived, but the pilot did not.

[01:27:22] And so when I got there, thankfully after I got there, I became the communications officer who had to answer all the questions about why did this happen. Why did the communication not know where the airplane was? Whose fault was it? Whose scope was under control? Course most of that was directed to the controllers who were, you know, operating. And Malachi had done a good job. And the radio—they came back and checked the radio sound, all the HF, VHF, UHF. Stuff was workin' fine. It was not traceable to any lack of communication. So I could ride on his coattail. Even though then I became in charge of this stuff, fortunately I missed all the investigation. [01:28:02] One person who did not miss all the investigation was our new commander, who had been there less than a month. And the very week this mid-air collision happened, he was in Ottawa trying to get more support for maintenance on some of the equipment that was not working. Well, you could see it comin' down from SAT command, from ADC command, from the generals to the colonels to the—it came down to our major, who wasn't even there. And he was the one

who took the brunt of this mid-air collision accident, which nobody really knew why it happened. They investigated all the angles, and they say, "Just must have been pilot error, or it must have been"—you know . . .

SL: Controller error.

JAA: Controller error, yeah.

SL: Right.

JAA: Or it must have been communications error. [Laughs]

SL: Right.

[01:28:47] JAA: Right. We got off the se—but I was able to watch that happen. And I watched this poor base commander, who was probably one of the better ones, sweat it out and you know, talk to me—what he'd probably done wrong in his career—'cause he knew what was coming. He was relieved of his command. And I think probably kicked out of the air force because that accident happened on his watch. And that's the way the military works.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: If it's on your watch, too bad. You're responsible. And so probably if anything made it realize that I didn't really wanna be a career military officer, it was that. I still had about a year and a half to go from that assignment, but after I got out of that

assignment, I went back to Duluth fighter squadron because they needed a communications officer, and they knew I only had seven or eight months before I was gonna be released. My three-year obligation came out. And so basically I went back there. [01:29:41] But the SAGE system would be being implemented. And the SAGE system is a semi-automatic ground environment. *S-A-G-E*. It's where the computers controlled everything. The computers looked on the scope, and they can control what was friendly, and what was enemy, and what the interception should be and who—what airplane should tackle what, you know, tack plane. And at that time it—I realized that what they were doing in the 343rd squadron and in fact all the squadrons who were playin' these games—they were tryin' to implemate the airborne radar sensing capability to do away with all these ground radar—the ground radars could identify something coming, but as far as actually doing the intercept—once you got within radar sight or—air-to-air radar sight—should be the computers on the airplane because they were much faster than tryin' to, first of all, figure it out on the ground and then transmit it to the people in the . . .

SL: Distance.

JAA: . . . airplanes and say . . .

SL: Just distance alone.

JAA: . . . turn right or turn left, watch out there's . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . somebody on top.

SL: Right.

[01:30:41] JAA: And so basically I spent a lot of my spare time over in the SAGE center because that's where I was really assigned to, but they didn't want me because they knew I was gonna be gone in seven months, and I couldn't even learn what I needed to learn in seven months. But I got a lot of interesting information. And it turns out that these people—it was an MIT device—computer system. But we were—they were doin' it jointly. They were tryin' to check to see if the computers aboard the aircraft in the nose of the F-102s and then the 106s later on could in fact produce the same intercept information as the established ground-to-air system, which was the 637th AC&W squadron. And they were having trouble. They were never sure. And I said, "Now wait a minute." We were the second air-to-air collision. One happened off South Carolina earlier in that same time. How do they know that it's not the computer on the airplane that's givin' the wrong information? Or who is the pilot following? Is the pilot following the ground direction from

the AC&W squadron, or is he following his . . .

SL: Own.

JAA: . . . airborne scope? And they say, "Well, they check back and forth. They check to be sure they're the same." I said, "Okay, what were they lookin' at when this midair happened?"

[01:32:02] SL: Don't know.

JAA: Don't know. That was the second time I realized I didn't wanna be a career [*laughs*] air force officer. You know, that—also General Curtis Lay, you know, he's the SAC. Biggie wiggie. But he was actually promoted to something else. He was really not involved. But it sounded like he was involved because somebody had to pay.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: And it was our base commander had to pay. And it was—there are a lot of other stories that go with this. If you want 'em, you can read the book. But . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: . . . I promise not to advertise my book. [*Laughter*]

SL: No, you know, your books are quite remarkable. And they're very . . .

JAA: Well . . .

SL: They're fun to read, and we can talk about . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . them at length comin' up. But I wanna stay back at your
early . . .

JAA: Stay back . . .

SL: . . . childhood.

JAA: . . . in my early je—okay.

[01:32:53] SL: So . . .

JAA: Well, we can—yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: I don't . . .

SL: Most of your chores were at the greenhouse. So you didn't
make your bed. You didn't do the dishes. You didn't dust
around the house.

JAA: Well, I made my bed if you count that [mimics pulling up sheet]
as making a bed.

SL: Right.

JAA: Yeah, I would take the pillow and put it up at the top and then
put—yeah, put the sheet . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . over the—yeah.

SL: Well, at least you did that.

JAA: Yeah, I did that. I didn't leave it 'cause I knew that—yeah.

Usually—sometimes we had a young lady who would do that. But no. My problem was it's just gonna be unmade again. Why make it up? I was down in the basement. Had my private room. Nobody was gonna see the room except for me. I had my airplanes hangin' from the ceiling. It looked fine. [Laughter]

[01:33:31] SL: You had your own little . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . child cave.

JAA: Yeah. I had—and I had a back door escape that I could . . .

SL: There you go.

JAA: . . . get into. Especially when I was in college and I—they pretty much let me come and go as I pleased because my sisters were the ones who needed the attention. And they learned how to handle the kitchen duties very well . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . and they did.

SL: Well, that's the way the culture was back then.

JAA: Yeah. Sure.

[01:33:54] SL: So as far as—so there was a piano and, eventually, an organ in your all's family musical realm. But were there—were—was the music that happened in the house, was it hymn-based, or was it more secular? What . . .

JAA: Well, it—well, those of us taking music lessons, and that was all of us at one time, that was pretty much all secular.

SL: Right.

JAA: You went through John Thompson's red books that—you . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . went up from the beginning up through the end. And it was pretty much, you know, laid out for you. But we did learn, practice hymns. And I say when my mother's mother died in Texas, who used to come and play "When we gather at the river" or wasn't—maybe that's not it. Whatever.

SL: In the garden.

JAA: G—yeah, well, whatever. You know. We would sometimes sing and so forth, especially when everybody got hepped up with a revival. But that—those revivals also that used to be so popular—I guess maybe they still are. I'm not gonna tell you some of the stories that happened. That's— probably should not tell. [01:35:03] One thing that got my bov—my father was always a deacon as well as always a school board member. As— always a member of chamber of commerce, as always whatever else there was to take up time. But the—what—let's see. The . . .

SL: Well, we were startin' to talk about revivals.

JAA: Yeah. Right. The revivals that he had to deal with as deacon of the Baptist church was unpaid long-distance telephone calls that these . . .

SL: Revivalists.

JAA: . . . revivalists [*laughs*—I could—I'm tryin' to think of a better word. Revivalists would leave town. And sometimes—Virginia has some even wilder stories of down in Russellville of what some of the revivalists would leave behind in their track but, no, that is a profession that is very easily misused.

SL: Abused.

JAA: Misused. Yeah.

[01:35:58] SL: Yeah. Yeah, so the revivals that you experienced, were they always in the church, or were there tent revivals elsewhere?

JAA: They were like—well, no, they were in the church.

SL: Okay.

JAA: Physically in the church . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: . . . but they were not given by people from the church, within the church.

SL: Right.

JAA: They were traveling salesman and—you know.

SL: Right.

JAA: And with all the stories that go with traveling [*laughs*] salesman. Yeah, but and so—yeah, the, you know—they were normally a week long, and you know, it was just a tradition. And sometimes you were glad to have them. There was one minister who I will not name, who was one of these minister durin' our high school that Ronnie Morris and I liked to bail out on. Go to mo—Collier's Drug Store. Because he was not very interesting to put it nicely. And he was elderly. And my father had been on the selection committee to help choose him. And his excuse was—he says, "Well, you know, [*SL laughs*] the Lord just realized that the church needed a minister to the adults because pri—we spend most of our time tryin' to administer to the children." And this person could not do that. He was not doin' it to the adults, either, but [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Right.

[01:37:07] JAA: But anyway—that was the justification of hiring this bi—and we—in the—and we sort of envied the Methodist. Always felt sorry for the Methodists. When they had somebody as good as J. L. Dikes, he had to leave. Whether he's good or bad, you know, there was a rotation in here.

SL: Absolutely.

JAA: And they were gonna be sent another minister come hell or high water and come good or bad, and at least the Baptists had some say in the matter, but they could sometimes make a bad mistake.

SL: Right.

JAA: And we had some funny things. And yeah, there's—*[laughs]* these things come flyin' back. But no, you said this was gonna be put on national television. I don't wanna tell some of these.

[01:37:46] SL: Well, not national television, but *[JAA laughs]* it'll be on the web, so . . .

JAA: Yeah, I know. That's the same thing.

SL: It is the delivery of choice these days . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . really. So well, let's talk about . . .

[01:38:02] JAA: Let me tell you how I met my wife.

SL: Okay, but . . .

JAA: Is it all right?

SL: I'm not—you . . .

JAA: That gets a—you're not . . .

SL: . . . haven't gotten through high school yet.

JAA: Okay, I . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: I'd have to jump to—okay, okay. Back to high school.

SL: Well, what . . .

JAA: Okay, what . . .

[01:38:12] SL: Let's—I even wanna go further back.

JAA: Oh, okay.

SL: So you went to Washington Elementary, right?

JAA: Right. Right.

SL: All right.

JAA: All right.

SL: So did you have a favorite teacher there?

JAA: Yes. Yes. Mrs. Grouch. [*Laughs*] Figure—Scouch, something like that. But no, the—my best—you opened the door. Here's my best story.

SL: Okay.

JAA: Problem—the elementary school.

SL: Okay.

JAA: Sixth grade . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: . . . we got to the sixth grade—elementary school, I mean, had—grades one through four were on the first level. Five through eight were on the second level. Washington Elementary School.

SL: Okay.

[01:38:43] JAA: And so basically the fifth or sixth—sixth grade, I think it was, always had an operetta. Always had to give an operetta. And so that was music, you know, introduction to music. We had to do a singing little type show and put together an operetta. And everybody had to be a part of it.

SL: Sure.

JAA: So I—one of the roles was for singing—somebody was going to pick up pawpaws—there's a song that goes, "Where, oh, where is dear little Willie? Way down yonder in the pawpaw patch."

SL: Pawpaw patch.

JAA: "Pickin' up pawpaws, put 'em in his pocket." That had to be sung as one part. Nobody wanted to do that because it was really a female part. Well, I got picked up as part—and one thing I could not do is sing. [*SL laughs*] I could play the piano sometimes. I could play the French horn. I tried to play the French horn in high school and started playin' football instead. But I was the ang—of Wee Little Willie. In fact my mother tried to find some pawpaws. She had to go to North Carolina—they don't really grow pawpaws—popeyes today, but they look like big bananas.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: They're big banana. So she actually got one from somewhere, I

don't know where, and showed me what a pawpaw was. But what I—what we used in the play were just these little bananas, which were sort of rotten because they'd been lying on the stage [SL laughs] for two or three days [laughs] durin' our rehearsal.

SL: Right. Right.

[01:40:06] JAA: Okay, so that was my job. So I had to go over. I had a pillowcase, and sing and pick up the "pawpaws" and say where, oh where—and where I—well, I didn't sing it. They had the chorus singin'. "Where, oh where is Wee Little Willie? Way down yonder in"—that was me. Well, from then on, I was Wee Willie. [SL laughs] And when I was in high school, Wally Ingalls, who used to announce the radio . . .

SL: Yes.

JAA: . . . football games . . .

SL: Yes.

JAA: . . . came down and watched our practice. And he said, "Oh, you're Wee Willie." He said, "Okay. I'll let everybody know that." So he broadcast all our football games, and every time I got the ball, it was, "Wee Willie's off tackle, Wee Willie's on five yard line, or Wee Willie's this," and my mother—grandmother, Mrs. Adams, grandmother, my father's mother, listened to the radio all of her life trying to listen if I ever got to play football,

and she never realized that I was playing football.

SL: That you were the guy with the ball.

JAA: I was Wee Willie. [*SL laughs*] And when I was in—let me skip one more over time. When I was in college, I was the cadet colonel of ROTC, so I drove the convertible that—during the homecoming parade.

SL: That had the queen.

JAA: Had the . . .

SL: Beauty queen.

JAA: Ye . . .

SL: Whatever.

JAA: Not the queen, the honorary female air force ROTC cadets.

SL: Yeah. Yeah, okay.

[01:41:21] JAA: Okay. So I had that one in the car. And Ann Whitfield's husband, who worked for Whitfield Oldsmobile Pontiac . . .

SL: Right. Motor company.

JAA: . . . or whatever it was. Agreed to let us use one of his new 98 Oldsmobiles if I would be the driver. "Don't let anybody else drive it, and whatever you do, don't let the girl sit on the backseat up high because if you accelerate more than you have to, they're back, okay? They're gone." So I qualified—I—he

said I could do that. So I drove that, and that was kinda fun.
[01:41:52] When I was elected to the hall of fame in 2008, we drove around the square in a parade, and there was some little girl over in front of Montgomery or whatever off by Lewis Brothers said, "Hey, it's Wee Willie!" [*Laughter*] I said, "No!" It, you know—this was fifty years ah—how can that happen? Fifty years after I got outta high school, I'm still Wee Willie by somebody I haven't seen in fifty years, I don't know. And I checked with my sisters. I said, "Who in the world could that have been?" They gave me—said two or three possibilities that it might have been. But anyway, I've always been Wee Willie to my athletic friends, at least. And that's a pre-high-school story that's stuck with me all, I guess, all the way through life. I haven't been called Wee Willie yet in this trip, but we'll see.
[*Laughs*]

SL: Well, you're not out of this room yet. [*Laughter*]

JAA: Yeah.

[01:42:46] SL: So Wally Ingalls. You know, I had Mary Ingalls for speech and debate . . .

JAA: Oh, okay.

SL: . . . and drama, and she and Wally would come over to our house often, you know, so . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . I knew the Ingalls pretty well as growing up . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . as a kid. How are you doin'? Are—do you need—do we need to . . .

JAA: No.

SL: . . . take a break?

JAA: I'm fine.

SL: Okay, good.

JAA: I'm—you know, I'm gonna take some more water here.

SL: Okay.

[01:43:09] JAA: But I—losing my voice. Well, let—if you let me go up to high school it's easy. My favorite teachers were Bernice Kearns and Louise Bell.

SL: Miss Bell is like legendary, and she was all of my sibling's favorite teacher.

JAA: Yeah. Yeah. English, me, too. In other words, I still today—any time these radio announcers end their sentence in a preposition, I cringe. [*SL laughs*] Like, "He didn't know why he did that for." Or "He didn't know where he was going to," or you know, I say, "Come on, man," and then, you know, it's—and also, you know, some other language that—well, nobody knows what subjunctive

case is, either. And we've just forgotten about . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . subjunctive case. You know. If he were going to—no, no. If he was going to. [*Laughs*] So yeah. Mrs. Bell's made a big difference on me. And she worked very closely with the principal of the black school here in town to integrate Fayetteville High School. It was her—it was not my father as president of the school board who got the integration done, it was Louise Bunn Bell who did it because she worked hand in hand with her counterpart in the black school, and that's why it happened the way it did.

[01:44:20] SL: Yeah, I heard that she had meetings with the students.

JAA: Yes, I think she did.

SL: About . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: About what—how to behave or what would be expected, you know, and how to adjust to . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: You know, and I guess there was some economic reasons for integrating, too. I've . . .

[01:44:41] JAA: Yeah. Well, my father explained those to me. He

said they had to send these high school students every week to Eureka Springs. That was the oh—the nearest high school, black high school, that they could use. So they paid for the transportation and—those black students—to and from home. Leave on Monday, come back on Friday. And just the savings of not having to do that was a big difference.

SL: Yeah.

[01:45:08] JAA: And also my father told me a very interesting story.

He said during this integration problem—and I was not home at the time. I was at—this was—where was I? Well, I'm not sure.

Somebody fro—I think it was either *TIME* or *LOOK* magazine.

Some national magazine reporter came to his house, knocked on

the door, identified himself, and said, "I wanna talk to you all

about how you all successfully integrated Fayetteville High

School whereas Little Rock is having all these problems." And

my father would not talk to him. He said, "I have no comment.

Nothing to say. Nothing."

SL: Hmm.

JAA: And I said, "Dad," a few days later, "why didn't you talk to him?

You could've been famous. You could've been in the national

news." He said, "No." He said, "Ignorance is bliss." He said, "I

don't want people to know that we've integrated Fayetteville

High School. And I'm not gonna tell 'em." And of course, the word got out eventually because football teams wouldn't play 'em and—play us and everything else, but he got through that initial "here-they-come-through-the door, everybody get out and raise hell." That didn't happen in Fayetteville.

[01:46:12] SL: Yeah, it was very quiet and very calm.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Well, I don't know if what my father's restraint had anything to do with that, but it may have.

SL: May have.

JAA: He kept it out of the national news for a while. Maybe three days. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. I've got a friend, African American friend—Deffebaugh, Phil Deffebaugh, tha—and I've shared a football locker with him.

JAA: Yeah. Okay.

SL: But he's been doing interviews with African American families here in Northwest Arkansas. And what's unusual is that they have stayed. The African American community has grown and the s—they just stay. The families stayed. They didn't run off . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . during the integration crisis or any of the strange stuff that was going on across the nation but . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: They had a home here. They felt comfortable here. They felt accepted.

JAA: Yeah. That's all it takes.

[01:47:11] SL: Yeah. So I'm quite proud of Fayetteville High School and . . .

JAA: Yeah, I am, too.

SL: . . . and your father . . .

JAA: Yeah, well, I . . .

SL: . . . for being involved in that and getting that done.

JAA: Well, I'm sure my father—talk about, you know, like father like son. I think probably that influence has influenced me more than probably anything in my own behavior. Yeah. But I haven't learned to be quite the workaholic that he is. He really worked himself to death. Well, not really. He lived to be ninety-one years old.

[01:47:40] SL: Well, I can't imagine the amount of work that it takes to write the . . .

JAA: Well . . .

SL: . . . volume of books . . .

JAA: . . . my . . .

SL: . . . that you've written.

JAA: My wife complains, too. She said, "You won't get off of that computer." I say, "you know, I need to do—pay some bills."

[Laughs]

SL: Yeah. Well . . .

JAA: No, she reminds me—she gives me a hard time.

SL: There are avenues of being a workaholic.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: I guess what I'm . . .

JAA: Well, that's true.

SL: . . . saying. You—the method, the stuff that you've chosen is quite remarkable amount of . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . work. [01:48:05] We'll talk about the books later. Okay.

So back to . . .

JAA: Okay.

SL: . . . Washington Elementary grade school.

JAA: Back to Washington? Okay, yeah. I've gone through—okay. My favorite—the people who taught me to play basketball. And I really played—I played basketball more than I played football. I

earned nine letters in Fayetteville High School, but only two football and four basketball and three track. Is that nine?

[Laughs] That—maybe two track.

SL: Sounds right.

[01:48:37] JAA: But anyway. I think that the—well, the athletic things kept me after my mother's death. Benny Winburn. Harry Vandegriff.

SL: You bet.

JAA: Glen Stokenberry.

SL: Yep.

JAA: Those people really were my father. And it was—I think without that I would probably been a different person. I think so. And I was no star by any change. I got the Randall Osbourne Award I think because my father was president of the school board.

[Laughs] I always accused him of that because there were a lot better athletes. Now maybe academics, but I was really not that good in academics either. [01:49:25] But you know, like Ronnie Morris and Larry Head and Bob Jolly. Freddie Brooks . . .

SL: Bob Jolly. He's—he was a neighbor of mine.

JAA: Was he?

SL: On Mount Sequoyah.

JAA: Okay. Well, those guys—those were a—those guys were good.

And . . .

SL: Well, he was tall. And coo—and yeah, who was the other?

JAA: Larry Head was a very tall tight end. In fact, when I was . . .

SL: Was there a Cooper boy, too?

JAA: Cooper?

SL: Yeah. It must have been—we must have been playing on the—
there was a Cooper boy, too.

JAA: Yeah, okay. I don't recall.

SL: Okay.

[01:50:01] JAA: But yeah, anyway, I think the coaches probably had
a big influence. And to tell you how silly it could be with not
having a mother—I never will forget this. Very embarrassing.
This was at freshman basketball practice. Was in 1950. I was
on the freshman team. Didn't even have a JV team. It—you
know, I was just learning. In fact, one of our biggest
disappoints—I'm gonna change the subject for a minute—was
the day that Jim Blair came out for our basketball team. Jim
Blair lived just catty-corner across from the campus . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . on School Street. And he would go home every day and
read. And come back, you know, and it—I said, "Maybe if this
guy could really play basketball. He'd be" . . .

SL: Big.

JAA: . . . "add six inches to the height of our team."

SL: Yeah.

JAA: And he couldn't 'cause he'd never played basketball. He'd always spend all of his spare time with the books . . .

SL: He read every book . . .

JAA: . . . always be a lawyer.

SL: . . . in the public library.

JAA: Yeah. [*Laughs*] I know it. So that—probably good, you know, really.

SL: Yeah.

[01:50:58] JAA: But one time I had a sore toe by—my toe was—felt like it was bleeding after basketball practice. And so talked to Benny Winburn. I said, "Man," I said, "my—I may have hurt my toe or something." So I took off my sock, and he looked at my toenail. He said, "When was the last time you cut your toenails?" I said, "Well, I don't know." He said, "Well, the reason your toes hurt is because your little toe is—toenail is ku" . . .

SL: Digging in.

JAA: . . . "scratching the—digging into your other next adjacent toe, and it's bleeding." I mean, you know, come on. I n—I guess I

needed a mother to tell me to cut my toenails. I just never occurred to [*laughs*] to take care . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . of the details like that, you know.

SL: It's the little things.

JAA: Yeah, the little suggestions. Li—yeah. "Have you combed your hair? Have you parted it?" You know. But yeah, it's—I think my sisters probably had ti—tougher time growing up without a mother than I did. But . . .

SL: Well . . .

JAA: . . . mothers are good.

[01:51:58] SL: Let's talk about Benny Winburn. I mean, I knew him fr—'cause when I was in Fayetteville Public Schools, he was a principal at Woodland Junior High School.

JAA: Hmm. Okay.

SL: And so I got to know him pretty good. We—and then he moved to the administration building, and he had us paint a portrait of Woodland Junior High School.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: There were three of us that worked on—it was a big painting. And he had it hung in the administration building for—I don't know. A decade or so. I . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: I was always so proud that the . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: My eighth-grade art was hanging in the administration building.
I always got a very supportive presence about him.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: He . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: He was in a position of authority.

JAA: And he . . .

SL: But I never felt like I was . . .

JAA: Yeah, no, and he . . .

SL: You know, in any . . .

JAA: He would always help people. He could tell when they were in
trouble. Just like my toes. [*Laughter*] He . . .

SL: Yeah.

[01:53:00] JAA: He'd be glad—and he cut 'em for me. You know,
he's like . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: But yeah, it's—yeah, Benny Winburn—in fact, his wife, Mildred?
Margaret? Mildred.

SL: Mi—wh . . .

JAA: Mildred. Mildred win . . .

SL: Mildred, I believe.

JAA: I think so.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: She sold the house for us finally. When—after my father died, I ended up sort of managing the house, and we rented it for a while till I got out of the air force. Finally she sold it for us.

[01:53:21] And so she's been very close to the family. We saw her at our reunion just last fall at the reu—high school . . .

SL: She's doing okay?

JAA: Yeah. She is. Yeah, she's, I think, retiring from the real-estate business, finally. But yeah, no, it's a—Benny Winburn was a ve—the most down-to-earth person you'd ever wanna see. And we used to travel, you know—when we'd have an away game, and away game means going to West Fork, you know. *[Laughs]*

SL: Yeah.

[01:53:53] JAA: No one had any transportation for us or anything.

We'd often have volunteer cars. And he'd get two or three fathers to volunteer, and they'd drive us down. And it was kinda fun to go on those trips, you know. We'd play these schools like Prairie Grove and, you know, fay—whatever they are, single A, double A, whatever schoo—small school. Some pretty good

basketball players. It only takes three players to make a good basketball team. The other two can just pass.

[01:54:20] SL: So you were a guard?

JAA: I wa—my role on the basketball team—I think the only time that I got hot was at West Fork once during a tournament. And I—I don't know what I was doin' right, but they were playin' a zone defense, and Freddy Brooks was always bringing the ball down the court, and he would feed me, and I would just shoot. You know, I think I shot eight shots in a row in the first half. And I remember the second half—sort of situation kept coming, but for some reason, Freddy started passin' the ball to the right.

[Laughs] And this was the next year. Van—this is when Vandegriff was coaching. So it must have been—it was JV team, it was not Benny Winburn. But anyway. I think Freddy was doin' because probably the whoever was on the right had complained [laughs] that he was bein' left out . . .

SL: You gettin' all of the . . .

JAA: . . . of the game. Yeah, that's right.

SL: You gettin' all the shots.

JAA: You gotta get him involved in the play, by all means. But usually, you know, I was happy to score six or eight points a game. You know. I would have happy to feed somebody else

because they had a much better chance of . . .

SL: Closer to the . . .

JAA: . . . scoring. They'd get closer to the goal than I could.

SL: Yeah. Right.

JAA: Because I was usually outside. And made a lot of embarrassing mistakes. [01:55:28] I remember one time—where was it? Bop-bop-bop-bop-bop. Must've been in Muskogee or something. We were playing, and I was—we were set up—they were takin' the ball out under their own basket. And I was s—playin' back on defense. We were tryin' to guard the baseline. And right by me is a pi—off—this opposing player said, "Hey. Wait. Wait a minute. It's my turn to take the ball out. Give the ball to me. I'll take it out." Well, they didn't take it out, they gave it to him right at a basket, and I stood there watching, not expecting him to shoot, and he got—that was the most embarrassing defensive play [*laughs*] I've ever made in my life. I believed that guy. He really, you know—I thought he . . .

SL: Don't wanna ray . . .

JAA: He's gonna step out of bounds and throw in, I didn't have to guard him for a minute. I could, you know, think about something else. Didn't work.

SL: He picked that up in the [*JAA laughs*] neighborhood games.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: I don't think that you're coached to that. Maybe you are.

JAA: Well, I don't know. No, I think you do. But I think most of these Black athletes pick up a lot of stuff in their summer games. You know, the leagues in Annapolis. If you wanna see some good, free basketball, go to the summer games in the parks an Annapolis. It's just not amateurs. They bring some of the best basketball players in the world down there to play against the local opposition. And it's a pretty high-level basketball game. They play it all year round, I think. You know, that's why they're so good.

[01:56:53] SL: So what about track?

JAA: Track. Ok . . .

SL: I'm assuming you ran the 100 . . .

JAA: Yes. in . . .

SL: . . . 440, 220.

JAA: . . . fact, I helped set the state track record in the 880 relay in 1953.

SL: So . . .

JAA: It was—Conway. We were down in Conway on a track. Yes. Speed I had. I ran the 100, I ran the 220, I ran the 440 relay, and the 880 relay. And then at the end of the track record,

everybody had shin splints after the end of the day, and the coach would say, "Okay, one more race, who can run the mile relay?"

SL: Oh.

JAA: That meant 440 around for everybody. And I more than once by default had to run that blasted relay. But you know, our state record down at the 880 relay at—and that was interesting because Ronnie Morris was supposed to be one of the four. I have the picture at home. The four were Freddy Brooks, Bob Jolly, Larry Head, and me.

SL: Wow.

JAA: Where was Ronnie? Well, Ronnie had developed shin splints or something or was—had a leg injury and complained that he couldn't do it at the last minute. And I don't know if it was either Freddy or Bob that was the inserted fourth person.

[01:58:06] SL But it made a difference.

JAA: They must've made a difference. Yeah. Now to be honest, we were runnin' against a team that had no Black athletes on it. This was 1953.

SL: Right.

JAA: The very next year our record was broken. [*Laughs*] So you know, you gotta put everything else in perspective. Have you

seen any of the track lately on TV with these NCAA track meets?

My gosh . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . the speed and who—man . . .

SL: Unbelievable.

JAA: . . . even in the women.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: I mean, tha—you know, that's a whole different league. That's—gets . . .

SL: It's science.

JAA: Incredible. Well . . .

SL: Science, I think.

JAA: It's evolution [*laughs*] is what it is.

SL: Well . . .

JAA: Something is.

SL: Yeah, I th . . .

JAA: It's—but anyway. Yeah. I'm glad I was running track in the [19]50s and not in the [19]70s. I would not have done well.

[01:58:52] SL: What about football?

JAA: Football. Football I didn't start playing until I was a junior. I only played two years in football. But my friends kept buggin' me. "You gotta come out for football." The reason I didn't play

football is because I was in the band for Mr. Willis. And I played the French horn. And that was the toughest two years of my life because I didn't like the French horn. I had to carry it school because he wouldn't let me leave it in the band room. And there used to be a grocery store—if you go from Root Auditorium, if you walk down School Street one block down the hill on that northwest corner there's still an office there, building of some sort. Used to be a grocery store.

SL: Okay.

JAA: And the grocery store man would let me leave my horn in his corner overnight over the weekend so I wouldn't have to pick it up and bring it back—so I wouldn't have to practice [*laughs*] and also bring it back and carry it all the way from 511 Forest 'cause it—you know, I was short and little, and that big bell thing on the case kept hittin' me in the knee, and it was a . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . hard thing to carry.

SL: Yeah.

[01:59:54] JAA: But anyway. Our—basically we went to Hot Springs for our annual competition. And the other two French horn players were the Johnson brothers, Hoot and something, I can't remember.

SL: Hod.

JAA: Hod. Hod Johnson and his brother Hoot or whatever. Maybe.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: I can't remember.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: They were a—in fact, I saw them on my induction into the . . .

SL: Hall of fame.

JAA: Hall of fame. They were there. They were there. I hadn't seen them in fifty years, but I swear—buy anyway, we were playing something called Light Calvary Overture.

SL: Okay.

JAA: It's kind of a high level classical piece.

SL: Yeah.

[02:00:31] JAA: And the way it goes, it starts out with the trumpets goin' daaaaa, da-da-da-dada-dadaaa, da dada-da-da-da-dah.

SL: Yeah, okay.

JAA: The next part it's the French horns who have to do that very same thing by themselves, together. Mr. Willis said, "Alan, you just wait and let the br—let he Johnsons [*laughs*], Johnson brothers . . .

SL: Hold back a little bit for that section.

JAA: No, no, "You just put the horn up to your mouth and let them

play it." That's what he told me. He said, "You can't play those triplets. You know, that's hard."

SL: That's funny.

JAA: And so they screwed it up. It was so embarrassing that Mr. Will—I forget what ha—I guess we kept going, but we did—bi—we had dropped from the high scale to the lowest scale of our evaluation. We—before we got through six measures. [*Laughs*] And I said, "I really can't—you gotta realize in life what you can do and what you can't do. And I really can't play this French horn because my heart's not in it." And the very next year—it was Johnny Miller. He was a friend of mine who—he lived south of the greenhouse about a block. Don't know what his father did but . . .

[02:01:29] SL: Did he end up having a rock-and-roll band?

JAA: I don't think so. I . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: I think that was Ronnie Hawkins.

SL: Yeah, well, Ronnie, of course. Yeah.

JAA: [*Laughs*] Yeah, right.

SL: Right.

JAA: But anyway, Ronnie was in my Sunday school class at the First Baptist Church. You never know that. And as a matter of fact—

this is jumpin'. Your ski—your teachin' skill. One time when I was coming back from my air force assignment in Washington and gettin' ready to go to Canada for my year of remote duty, I stopped in Tulsa, Oklahoma, called Ronnie on the phone, he said—Ronnie Morris. He said, "By the way, Ronnie Hawkins is in town at the Cimarron Ballroom. Let's go hear him." We did. My gosh. He was drivin' a white Cadillac with a white trailer, and he had more girls hangin' on him behind the stage that you could shake a stick at. I said, "This is [*laughs*—this is our Ronnie Hawkins?" And you know, and basically he got kicked out of the se—what's the Rockwood hall—halfway up to the golf course on the left?

SL: That's the Rockwood Club.

[02:02:22] JA: Ru—yeah, Rockwood Club. He was tryin' to play there one night in high school. And they said, "You're so bad, you're outta here. Leave." He said, "You can't kick me out. I have a contract." They said, "Nope." He said, "If you kick me outta here, I'm gonna come back and buy this thing out from under you, and you're gonna be the first one I fire." He did that.

SL: Yep.

JAA: About five years later.

SL: Yeah. [*JAA laughs*]

JAA: So Ronnie Hawkins was in our high—Ronnie Hawkins is another good product of the Baptist church Sunday school. He was there. He used to come. But how'd we get off on Ronnie Hawkins? [*Laughs*]

[02:02:52] SL: Well, we were talkin' about Miller. I thought that name conjured up a . . .

JAA: Oh yeah.

SL: Johnny Miller.

JAA: Johnny Miller.

SL: Yeah, th—for some reason that hit a musical bell to me, but you're—I think I was thinking of Bobby—or not Bobby—Johnny Roberts.

JAA: Okay. Well, Johnny . . .

SL: Down in Little Rock.

JAA: . . . Miller—I'm not sure what Johnny did, but I think he moved to Texas before he graduated.

SL: Okay.

JAA: . . . from high school. I don't think he graduated with us. I think he—his family changed jobs, and I think he left. But . . .

[02:03:23] SL: Well, now as far as Ronnie Hawkins goes we—I don't know if you looked at our interviews, but we've got two interviews with Ronnie.

JAA: With Ronnie.

SL: Yeah. And of course, I believe Porter or Gary wu—or maybe both used to bounce for him at the Rockwood Club.

JAA: I don't doubt it. Yeah. That could be.

SL: And actually, we're tryin' to—I've got a friend, Dayton Stratton's son . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . is tryin' to get a group together to buy the Rockwood Club and open it as kind of a music-dinner-rock-and-roll-museum kind of thing.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[02:04:01] JAA: Well, we've had several—Ginger and I have done several Elderhostels. They don't call 'em Elderhostels any more. It's Road Scholars and . . .

SL: Yeah, and . . .

JAA: But anyway, in Canada, okay, we've done a lot of things. We've done some theater and some music and some curling, even. We learned how to curl in Canada. And now that they do it in the Olympics, we know what that is. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JAA: But basically every time we get into—a lot of Canadians are

there, we always ask, "Do you ever know or heard of Ronnie Hawkins?" They say, "Oh, you mean the Hawk. Of course we've heard of Ronnie Hawkins."

SL: He's like the Elvis.

JAA: But he was the Elvis Presley of Canada, for Pete's sakes, you know.

SL: That's right.

JAA: He's so mo—he's more famous than all of us athletes put together times ten. [*Laughs*] So you never know.

SL: Yeah. I talk to him, oh, probably once every two or three months . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . on the phone.

[02:04:49] JAA: Really, well, you member where he lived? If you go up Maple Street across the railroad tracks on that bridge, he had a house on the right there, just on the west side of the railroad tracks. I think . . .

SL: Yeah, he was a—you know, he was contemporary with my sister, Barbara, as well.

JAA: Oh, okay.

SL: And he told me one time he never even tried to date Barbara because—and a lot of the guys didn't try to date Barbara

because they were terrified of my father.

JAA: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] Well, maybe the same true as my sisters because Ronnie, who married Anne, the middle sister, has been the only one who's stayed with her, as a matter of fact. The other ones have had divorce problems. He said that one requirement for anybody who wants to date any of my daughters is they have to work in the greenhouse for me for at least a week.

SL: That's a good idea.

JAA: And it—and I'm not sure if he's just kidding, but some of 'em did. Ron Edey did, I know, because he ended up marrying my sister, Anne. But yeah, fathers are important in selecting mates. But anyway, yeah. It's . . .

[02:05:58] SL: Okay, now wait a minute. Who was it that married your sister.

JAA: Ron Edey. He's . . .

SL: Edey.

JAA: . . . from southern ar—*E-D-E-Y*. Yeah.

SL: Okay.

JAA: He was s—they met at the University of Arkansas. He got a degree in electrical engineering. He almost spent an entire career with IBM. He retired, came back to Little Rock, worked

for Acxiom in Conway for a few years. And in fact when my youngest son graduated from Virginia Tech, I said, "Why don't you call Ron and ask him if there's anything at Acxiom." He did, and there was, and he went to work for Acxiom in Conway. And he had a degree in geography. But geography—now they say what—"Don't you know all the state capitals? What—*[laughter]* why you wanna study geography?" But that's data. Data analysis and satellite data interpretation and plotting and graphing and—that's all geography now. It's a high-tech . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . major. And it's done him very well because he's stayed with it, and he's changed jobs a couple time, but yeah, it's—thanks to Ron Edey, Alan Ray got his start in—my youngest son—in geography.

[02:07:06] SL: Now so he married your sister.

JAA: Yes.

SL: Did she ever—did she teach?

JAA: No. No, she didn't. Anne—I don't think she ever did. No. I don't think so.

SL: Okay.

JAA: He—she—I think probably she worked down in the greenhouse for my father more than any—you're very lucky to get away

from him. I mean, you know, I think that the—all the children had—he had first dibs on all the children.

SL: Right.

JAA: And so I, you know, I was with him in Little Rock. They picked me up as we landed in Little Rock, and we went out to see her sis—older sister, Janet, my younger sister. And spent the day with 'em. But if we're any indication at all, the moral for that story is always marry an engineer. [*SL laughs*] If you're the daughter—if your daughter is dating people as a fa—if you're the father—seemed to work in our family. Because Ginger and I—Ginger, my wife, Ginger, and Ron's wife, Anne, have been the only two of the family of four who have stayed with the same mate since day one.

SL: Wow.

[02:08:08] JAA: And I guess the engineers are just so dull [*laughs*] they—or so satisfied with the status quo or something. I don't know why it works, but the match works.

SL: My son got a degree—a dual degree from Lehigh. He's engineering. He got a degree in engineering and English.

JAA: Yeah, well, that's interesting.

SL: Which is kind of unusual.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: But they have that kind of arts and engineering . . .

JAA: Right.

SL: . . . degree there.

JAA: Well, smaller colleges can do that. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: That's good.

SL: Yeah. So I know a little bit something about engineers.

JAA: Yeah, well, it's this . . .

Sarah Moore: Excuse me, you guys, lunch is here.

SL: Well, we should just go ahead and take a break.

[Recording stopped]

[02:08:52] SL: J. Alan, we went for like two and a half hours without a break, and that's very unusual. I mean, sometimes we'll go an hour and a half or maybe two, but . . .

JAA: Yeah, well . . .

SL: . . . we . . .

JAA: . . . sometimes I had to take—teach three courses back to back without a break except maybe a five minute, you know, change the class s—participation. But yeah, I'm used to that.

SL: Okay, well, we'll do better this time around. We'll take a few more breaks and not be so brutal.

JAA: Well, just stop me from talkin'. That'll be the first tell.

[*Laughter*] That'll be the first step.

[02:09:23] SL: Well, anyway, I was tickled just thinkin' about how long we went and all the stories that we've heard this first part. Now I think we got pretty well into high school. And we talked about track, and we talked about basketball.

JAA: We talked about band.

SL: We talked about band.

JAA: How disastrous it was.

SL: We got Benny Winburn in there. A little mention of Harry Vandegriff . . .

JAA: Yep.

SL: . . . in there, who was another favorite guy in my life. But we ki—I broached the subject of football, but somehow or nother I think we ended up talking about track. I'm not sure how we got—so the football—course, by the time I came along, the Razorbacks were king.

JAA: Yes.

SL: As far as sports go, football.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Razorback football was the sport when I was growing up, and . . .

JAA: Yeah, me, too. Yeah, had—you know, Clyde Scott and Bill

Walker and all those players were, you know, on everybody's mouth.

SL: Yeah, now Doug Walker ended up—they were in competition.

JAA: Yeah, I think Doug Walker's SMU, wasn't he?

SL: Right.

JAA: And Clyde was here in Arkansas.

SL: Here.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Ah—course, Clyde's greatest story is he was at the Naval Academy.

JAA: Yes, he was. Yeah.

SL: And was assigned to escort Miss Arkansas, and fell in love with her and followed her back to Fayetteville.

JAA: Okay, well, I—my knowledge didn't go that far, but I—that's interesting. [*Laughter*]

SL: It's so—it's always the women, isn't it?

JAA: Yeah.

[02:11:05] SL: Well, so he—tell me about—who was your football coach?

JAA: Harry Vandegriff.

SL: Right. And you said you got most of your playing time your senior year.

JAA: Yeah, starting as a junior. A few things I remember. The one positions I realize I did not want to play—we were playin' Van Buren down at their stadium. And it was my junior year. And I normally hadn't gotten to play too much, obviously, my first year out and the first two or three year—or two or three months. But he said, "Okay, Alan, the linebacker was hurt, and I need you to get in there and substitute linebacker." Well, I was always, I thought, an offensive player, but course you went both ways in high school.

SL: Yep.

[02:11:55] JAA: You return punts, you return kickoffs and those—that was the things I used to do. But linebacker? Totally different experience. And man, I didn't quite know how to do it. I—in all honesty, I'd never practiced as linebacker, but he was giving me some playing time, so why not. First two plays were okay. But then somebody came right at me. I said, "Well, I guess I've gotta hit this guy." And boy, did I have a headache. I, you know, I—he was big, and I was pretty small for a linebacker. I don't know where he . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: Coach Vandegriff got this idea of linebacker me. But anyway, I—after doing that for a series of downs, I was happy to go back to

the bench. And I concentrated more heavily on runnin' the ball in kickoffs and punt returns and so forth. Even kickin' extra points I would do before I would be a linebacker. [*Laughs*]
Whatever.

SL: Well, that's kinda strange because really, when you kick off returns, punt returns, and even just plays from the scrimmage as a running back, you're liable to get hit pretty hard.

JAA: Yeah, it's not the . . .

SL: Pretty big collisions.

JAA: . . . same, though. Yeah, but when—yeah, that's true, but it seems to hurt more when you do the initiation on the hitting [*SL laughs*] instead of just try to avoid it. Because you—if you know it's comin' you can usually, you know . . .

SL: Shift your weight a little.

JAA: You can s—yeah, you can usually soften the blow. But you can't do that when you're tryin' to tackle somebody. [*Laughs*]

[02:13:14] SL: Yeah, I understand. I understand. So how was the season your senior year?

JAA: It was pretty good. We were, I think—I have to look at my . . .

SL: Yearbook.

JAA: . . . yearbook to be sure, but I think it was about 7-3, I believe.

SL: And what year was this?

JAA: [Nineteen] fifty—the fall of [19]52. And then the track season was the fall of [19]53, which is when we set our state record. But we put one of our best games—and I was at—playing—I think—I guess it was musko—no, it was du—Daniel—one of the Tulsa schools. And we played in Kelley Stadium, you know, where the . . .

SL: Well, yeah.

JAA: . . . University of Tulsa plays. Big stadium.

SL: That's a big stadium.

[02:13:59] JAA: Well, and then it wasn't all that big. They've made it much bigger since then. But yeah, sometimes we'd play a pretty good game, and sometimes we would struggle. The hard game I also remember playin' hist—Harrison we played in ice storm. And . . .

SL: Wow.

JAA: . . . then I was also just a junior, and then I was returning punts. But then you got to sit on a bench for another ten minutes and let ice trickle down your neck. And then . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . some didn't get—they get the ball back and kick it again. I think we gave 'em a zero to zero. It was impossible to play football on a sheet of ice, but I don't think anybody scored, as I

recall. But a lot of kicko—lot of punt returns. [*Laughs*]

[02:14:39] SL: Well, just on a personal interest of mine, I've come to learn that you played with my oldest brother, Porter.

JAA: Right.

SL: So do you remember much about . . .

JAA: I remember the first touchdown I ever scored, and it was as a junior, and the play was left 44 on two. And Porter was right in front of me. He was the offensive line that took the defensive player off to the side and left a hole wide enough to drive a truck through. [*SL laughs*] It was a short play. It was only a forty-yard game. But he—I don't think anybody even touched me. I think I just walked into the end zone. But that was, thankfully, due to Porter.

SL: I—you know, I have a football experience with Porter. Touch football. And he roll blocked me.

JAA: Oh. [*Laughs*]

SL: One time, and I'm serious. I went up in the air and came back down on my head and got—and he knocked me out.

JAA: Wow.

SL: And it happened so quickly. And people I've talked to about Porter were always amazed at how quick he could be.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. I don't know if you were . . .

JAA: I guess that's right.

[02:15:52] SL: Also you didn't happen to be at the game where he blocked a punt, do you? You would've remembered this.

JAA: I guess so. Yeah. I—perhaps so. If I were tryin' to return that punt, I would've been far away. I may not have known who blocked it [*laughs*] because he was probably forty yards away from me, but I don't know. What happened? What's the story?

SL: Well, he caught the punt in his gut.

JAA: Oh, he blocked it and caught it. Oh, okay.

SL: And ran for a touchdown.

JAA: Oh, okay. Well . . .

SL: And I'm sure you would've remembered that.

JAA: I think so. Well, I didn't return every punt, so you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . I could've missed that one. But anyway. I—that would be an unusual play.

SL: Yeah. Well, okay. So I just thought I'd personal family stuff.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: And I devour anything that has to do with my . . .

JAA: Yeah, right.

SL: . . . my family.

JAA: Well, I'm sure—when—I'm curious how old was he when he passed away?

SL: Thirty-two.

JAA: Thirty-two. That's awfully young.

SL: Or maybe thirty-one.

JAA: That's awfully young.

SL: He was young.

JAA: Uh.

SL: Yeah.

[02:16:53] JAA: In fact, I guess he was one of the first football players of all my team that I was aware of that didn't live that long.

SL; Yeah. Yeah, I didn't really know him until he got back from the air force. And I remember when he came home, he got out the, probably, the one taxicab in Fayetteville, and I member him hollering from the driveway, "Is this 503 Assembly Drive?" 'Cause I think maybe he had left when they were still out at Lunsford Avenue, and we had moved to . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . to Assembly Drive.

JAA: Up Assembly Drive. Yeah.

SL: Right. And I just thought that was so funny that my own

brother, who I didn't even know, [*laughter*] was asking if this was the right address.

JAA: Yeah. Well, what was his ailment? Why—how wa . . .

SL: Leukemia.

JAA: Leukemia. Had he had it for a long time? Did they diagnose . . .

SL: No.

JAA: . . . it early?

SL: He had it for—he went from . . .

JAA: Hit him fast, huh?

SL: Pretty fast.

JAA: Wow.

SL: I guess maybe two or three years, max.

JAA: Wow.

SL: Yeah. It was early. It was hard. [02:17:58] Well, all right, so unless you think of something from grade school and i—you mentioned that grade school was one through four on one floor and five through eight on the other.

JAA: Right.

SL: When I was at Washington, it was one through three and four through six.

JAA: Six. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Right.

SL: Because they had a junior high school . . .

JAA: Right.

SL: . . . at that time. But so if something comes up in your memory that you wanna talk about that involves those years, we can go back to it.

JAA: Okay.

SL: We've had this kind of habit of going forward, but we're about to go forward in a big way now, so if something comes up while we're talking you wanna go back . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . feel free to do it. I'm always interested in the oldest story, of course.

[02:18:46] JAA: Yeah. Well, of course the—I remember the leaving Washington Elementary and entering Fayetteville High School in the ninth grade. Course that was the year that my mother died.

SL: Tough.

JAA: In January. And I remember Mr. McWhorter, I mentioned him earlier, that they were always sort of fill-in mother and father because they were missing their two children deceased early. And my father was always at the greenhouse, and you know, my mother had just died, so he was taking me to school, and trying

to tell me, you know, trying to console me a little bit, and help—let—I can remember when he let me out at the school. This was, you know, shortly thereafter. And it took me a while to really find a reason to wanna do anything, really. I had to be motivate—and it was the f—as I mentioned before, the football coaches and—and trying to—I'm back in high school already, I can see, but tryin' to march—before I went out for football as a freshman-sophomore in the Fayetteville High School marching band, sometimes in the mud, sometimes in a rough field that hadn't been mowed in two weeks, it was hard to play the French horn. [Laughs] It kept goin' out of my mouth. And then I just, you know—I knew I was in the wrong profession on playin' that thing. It culminated in what happened in Hot Springs.

[02:20:19] But yeah, changing to football, I think, probably was the best thing I could've done for camaraderie and for challenge and for physical development. I was growing much faster then, and I was changing as a person and doing so without a mother. And I think that evolvment has turned me into what I am today for better or worse. And bands are good, but sometimes football's better. [Laughs]

[02:20:45] SL: Yeah, now what role was it that McWhorter—he was just a friend of the family?

JAA: Yeah, see, they had lost their chil—they were in Baptist church. She taught my Sunday school class probably three or four different years.

SL: Oh, that's right.

JAA: She must've been followin' me through it, you know.

SL: Right.

JAA: So we saw them every Sunday, and he did his—and he always helped us go to the Arkansas Razorback football games. He would, you know, keep us up to date on the schedule and tell us the best way to drive there before the interstates were available and also helped us plan this trip to California. Alfred Taylor and I goin' to California. He had all the maps and all the national forests, the national, you know, parks and so forth. And he always got involved in that kind of way, helping with advice, and so they were also very, very helpful to a family. Especially, I'm sure, to my younger sisters, who . . .

SL: Oh.

JAA: . . . needed . . .

SL: There's that.

JAA: . . . needed lot of help.

[02:21:41] SL: Yeah. Well, see, I know a McWhorter—I grew up—I went to school with a McWhorter, and his father was fire chief at

one point. I don't know if any of his sons.

JAA: I don't ever—he mentioning that that they . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: . . . were related to a fire chief. Never came up.

SL: Okay. And see, what was the other name that you mentioned?

Taylor.

JAA: Oh, yes.

SL: Did he. . .

JAA: Alfred Taylor.

SL: Did they live on Garland?

JAA: No, he lived on North College. You member where the Dairy

Queen used to be . . .

SL: Absolutely.

JAA: . . . on North College?

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Next house on the right. Just up the hill on the right.

SL: Right.

JAA: He lived in a two-story house. And we played basketball together on the Washington Elementary playground all the way through junior high and—I mean, not junior high, but eighth, ninth, tenth grade.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: And one thing he did do, though—he—one time—roots—in the Root Auditorium, I remember we—it was I guess a freshman or sophomore level basketball game. He was driving toward the basket, and you could hear a crack. He . . .

SL: Oh.

JAA: . . . collided, and he broke his arm. And it was—he—and his arm was not broken. It was dangling.

SL: Oh, gosh.

JAA: You could tell it was broken. I mean, my gosh. And so that was the end of his basketball for that year. You know . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . he had to live in a cast. But it was his right arm, and he came—still came out and learned how to shoot and dribble and everything left handed.

SL: That . . .

JAA: And it pro . . .

SL: . . . made him a stronger player.

[02:23:06] JAA: Yeah, the following year a much stronger player.

Yeah. Sometimes bad things make good things happen.

[Laughs]

SL: Another door opens.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: That's right.

JAA: That's right. But he still lives in, I think, Pine Bluff. He still li—
he went to work in Arkansas as an industrial engineer and
stayed in Arkansas. Ginger could tell you the name of his wife.
I think it was Polly. I might've—but I better not try to guess . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: . . . [*laughs*] I'll probably be wrong.

[02:23:34] SL: All right, so let's say you graduate from Fayetteville
High School.

JAA: Right.

SL: And you go to the . . .

JAA: Williams . . .

SL: . . . University of Arkansas.

JAA: . . . Jewell first off—the fo—the one year mandatory away from
home was the freshman year, and that was William Jewell
College in Liberty, Missouri. And I saw right away—it turned out
that I was in—they didn't have a special dorm for football
players. So it turned out that I was in the end of the dorm with
a lot of football players. And it was noisy and rowdy. And I
could see by their size that—I sure was glad I was not tryin' to
play football in college. [02:24:11] But when track season
came along, I said, "maybe I could do this." It had been, you

know, eight months since I'd really tried to run. But one of the track players say, "I hear you set a state record in Arkansas in the relay. You oughta come out and try out for William Jewell track." I said, "Okay, what do I have to do?" He said, "I'll tell you what, I'll just race you. We'll have a race. 440 around the track one time." Well . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] 440's . . .

JAA: . . . having run the mile relay . . .

SL: . . . a pretty good . . .

JAA: . . . I knew that was not the race you wanted to run by choice.

But and I hadn't really worked out. I was not in shape. So we started, and first 220 yards, we were neck in neck, but that was about it. You know, it started showing. And I was trying to put out as much as I can tryin' to keep up with him, but the separation distance was increasing exponentially, you might say. And about three-fourths of the way around, I knew I was not gonna make it without losing my lunch, you know. I—this was not good. And so I stopped, and I said—he turned around, and I said—you know, gave him the high five and hands up, he won, and I headed for the door. I just barely got there before I lost it. [*Laughs*] And so that was my one extent—one try out for college level athletics of any kind. That was end of that.

[02:25:24] But no, William Jewel was, you know, it was fun. I had a few friends who grew up in Kansas City, and they had weekend parties and dances. They would invite me to go with 'em. I met a few interesting girlfriends. And but it was—knowing that I was gonna go back to Fayetteville at the end of the second semester, there was really no reason to get serious or too involved with anybody.

SL: Right.

JAA: And so that's basically—I probably spent more time in academics that last half of that last semester—in chemistry we had a very good graduate student assistant who was there basically to assist in chemistry and get the labs right. And that was a big help. Thus, the one subject I did not very quickly pick up. Physics and mathematics was duck soup, but chemistry for some reason was more difficult.

SL: But that strengthened your chemistry . . .

JAA: Yeah, it—having—that was the one course where going to a small school with a lot of attention available any time you needed it for extra instruction—because Alfred Taylor, who went to the University of Arkansas as a freshman was already immediately in classes of 150 to 180 students, and this—those chemistry and physics and mathematics classes. And I had

exactly the opposite experience and did well in two. Not so well in three. Well, I got—I made a B in chemistry. But anyway, it—I learned a lot more chemistry at William Jewel than I would've learned at the University of Arkansas.

[02:26:57] SL: So you mentioned that this was a requirement that you spend your freshman year away. What—whose . . .

JAA: It was . . .

SL: . . . requirement . . .

JAA: My father said that you—thou shalt, you know, not m—pass go, you know, until you do this. And he was gonna pay the bill, and we got to choose our school, and that's just what he wanted us to do. That was one of his . . .

SL: That's . . .

JAA: . . . raising the children to adult—I don't know if our mother's death had anything to do with that. I don't know—remember when he first had this idea. I think he'd probably talked to somebody who'd done the same thing. But William Jewell was a, you know, liberal arts college, and it was, you know, you had to live in a dor—finally what I was able to do was to change to the other end of New Ely Hall, that was the hall, and get away from that football team. Because I used to have to go study—especially on weekends, if I wanted to study, I had to go there

anyway because—get away from their, you know, pep rallies.

[Laughs]

SL: Right.

[02:27:59] JAA: They had their own individual pep rallies for the their games coming up. So I helped a lot on learning how to study with a group and working with a group. And so I, you know—in retrospect, I think it was one of the best decisions that he ever made.

SL: Yeah. We did the same thing with our kids. I think it makes 'em a lot stronger.

JAA: Yeah, I do, too.

SL: Except they went for four years or five.

JAA: Oh, they stay—four or fi—okay.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Well, he had three other kids to worry about so one year of— for—be paying for room and board just over—but it was enough.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: It . . .

[02:28:35] SL: All right, so you come back to Fayetteville.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: And now you're at the University of Arkansas.

JAA: Right.

SL: And, I'm assuming you're also working at the greenhouse?

JAA: Oh, yes. Yeah. Quite often early in the morning just like in high school.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: You know, he'd get me up—most of the important work of florists is done by eight o'clock in the morning because it's usually for an early funeral or early reception or something. And so yeah, I—yeah, he kept me out there. As it became more demanding, I begged out as the courses got more advanced and, you know, I had more labs and so forth that was important to, you know, work on it. So he finally let me go. Then he had the girl—the boyfriends of my sisters, I think. That's where he got the idea, hey, here's another source [*laughs*] for free labor. He used them instead of me.

SL: I love that that he required a week of work. [*Laughter*] I really like that.

JAA: Yeah.

SL; Yeah, that's good.

JAA: Well, some of the times it ended up more than that because he paid them. It was not free. I mean, he paid them for working, and some people, you know . . .

SL: Liked the money.

JAA: . . . took advantage of it. Yeah.

[02:29:43] SL: Yeah. So had you—when did you get your first interest in engineering? What kind of . . .

JAA: I, yeah, I think I always had it. Having Mrs. Kearns as a math teacher in high school—and she was an excellent teacher, and I think I really enjoyed the math and the physics. And I think that—you know, I didn't really know what engineering was until I got my summer jobs at the University of Arkansas. That's another story. I had th—I went down to Crossett, Arkansas, and I worked for paper mill because my mother's younger brother, Paul Kays, was down there and was workin' with the company, so he fixed me up. [02:30:30] Next summer I went to work for Boeing airplane company as a student engineer. And the next summer I worked at Interstate Oil Pipeline down in Southern Louisiana by Raceland-Thibodaux in—south of New Orleans. So that was three different types of engineering. Some of them I really realized I didn't think I would like. Like the paper mill at Crossett . . .

SL: That's a bad smell.

JAA: Bad smell, number one. And the trouble is the refuge of—for that bad smell comes from, often, ran under a little bridge underneath the sidewalk on the way to the dining hall. And

[*laughs*] so by the time you got to the dining hall, you really weren't very hungry. And—you know, and so basically, that kind of manufacturing, you know, is routine, to say the least. I mean, you know, they had me interviewing the equipment that had been installed in the last five years to be sure they had their blueprints upright so I'd have to, you know, check it . . .

SL: Has belts.

[02:31:30] JAA: Yeah. So that was a little tough. The Boeing experience was much better. There were two professors, Imhoff and Gleason, who worked there every summer, and they said, "Hey, we think we can get you in up at Boeing this summer. Why don't you go. We'll give you a car ride. We come home every weekend. You can ride with us and go." So that turned out to be very successful. I met Bob Robbins, who is a test pilot for the B-47s. Got to be on a first-name basis with him. In fact, he chose me to give the thank-you address to the final banquet on behalf of the other college students who had worked during the summer just because he knew me, I guess, and that was his job to do it. Not that I was a better speaker [*laughs*] than anybody else. But he did give me special—"Hey, I'll tell you what I'll do, you're gonna have a refilling—refueling"—sorry—"exercise this weekend where we're going to have a KC-135

refuel a B-47. If you'd like, I'll put you right there in the same position as the operator of the gas tube that has to direct it into the fuselage right in front of the pilot as they begin to pump gasoline, fuel, into the B-47."

SL: Is this . . .

JAA: "While in flight."

SL: . . . in air.

[02:32:43] JAA: In air. Yeah. While in flight. And so I have a picture of that. In fact, it's in the book. It'll be there. And it was interesting to be right there where that picture was taken. There was a photograph—photographer with us and two or three other of the students, and that was a real picture, that was not a made-up—we were there. And again, though, it was eye opening to see that many of the engineers were spending most of the day with a supply manual open, reading a book in an open supply manual because they didn't have anything to do. And they were, in effect, hired because Boeing was competing for a major contract in the next few months, and one of the things that they had to win was how many employees do you have available instantaneously to work on this new project?

SL: Right.

[02:33:37] JAA: And they were so—they were stacking the deck with

these poor engineers who [*SL laughs*] wanted to engineer who had to read a novel [*laughs*] between their supply manual . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . to look like they were being busy. That didn't sound like a good place to work. That was sorta bad. The whole idea of this government contract or military game that had to be played—no, that was another engineering. Went to Interstate Oil Pipeline company the next summer. Thibodeaux, Raceland—have you ever heard of those places?

SL: Yeah.

JAA: They're actually . . .

SL: Thibodeaux . . .

JAA: . . . real places.

SL: . . . for sure.

JAA: They're down there south of New Orleans.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: I didn't know anything was south of New Orleans [*SL laughs*] except the Gulf. But anyway, that was a fun engineering job. We were doing cathodic protection. And we would go out in a rowboat and find this submerged pipeline. Check the cathode that—to—pack to the pipe so the cathode protects—that means—you install cathodes to the pipe so that the current goes

from the pipe to the cathode, and then the cath—it's the cathode that disintegrates, not the pipe. So it's—so you have to replace those cathodes . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . because they disappear. [02:34:38] And so going out there doing that with Roy Smith. He was the engineer doing it with me. and he'd take along his crabbing . . .

SL: Ah-ha. [*Laughs*]

JAA: . . . back then. He would pull up cla—his lunch—he didn't have to cook a lunch because there were so many crab beds that we were in the middle of that he could get down and pull up the crabs in a bucket and shell 'em and eat 'em for lunch. Well, I took my sandwiches. I mean, you know, if you're a fish lover, fine. But yeah, that's one thing—and another was the coffee down there. My gosh, that coffee they serve in cups about that tall [indicates two inches with fingers], and that is the strongest stuff. It'll knock your pants off.

SL: Right.

JAA: And I really didn't drink real coffee much less that. So there were so—a few culinary advice things that were interesting. [02:35:19] And it was my first introduction, of all things, to a gay bar.

SL: Okay.

JAA: Because the—I had found a place to stay. Guess what? My father found a place to stay in a room with the Baptist minister in Raceland, Louisiana, because his son had just been inducted into the army, he had a spare bedroom, hey, what else but—and so basically to help pay for my rent, I played the piano for him at his little church. It probably could hold fifty people. It was a really tiny . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . little church. But anyway, his wife said, "You've never been to New Orleans?" I said, "No, I've never seen it." He said, "My sister lives in New Orleans. I'll call her up, and she can take you out on the town and show you New Orleans." Said, "That's fine. That sounds good. Tell me where to go. Give me the address." So I went there. And so this young girl—she was about my age, actually. She said, "Well, what would you like to do?" I mean, well, what do you say? "What's in New Orleans?" I mean, I knew the, you know—I didn't know what to say. Well, she said, "Have you ever been to a gay bar?" I said, "Nah. Gay bar? You mean, is that one that's having fun?" [*Laughter*] You know, what's a ga . . .

SL: You didn't really . . .

JAA: "What's a gay" . . .

SL: . . . say—did . . .

JAA: I did. I grew up in Arkansas in the Baptist church.

SL: Okay.

[02:36:35] JAA: I didn't know what a gay bar was.

SL: All right.

JAA: Okay. But she said, "Now whatever we do, I'm gonna hold your hand when we go in there, and if I squeeze it, you turn around and follow me out there as fast as you can." I said, "Okay." I—the—what this. So [*SL laughs*] I didn't know what I was looking at. I swear I did not know what—I—I mean, all these guys were in there. And they were just drinkin', it looked like. It was a smoky place. I lik—I was glad to get out of there just because of the smoke if nothing else.

SL: Right.

[02:37:01] JAA: But she asked me when we got outside the door—said, "did you see that man in the corner?" Said, "No, I didn't see [*laughs*]"—I didn't see anything except smoke." But anyway, that was not very successful. But anyway, she—we—you know, she was very nice, and she showed me some of the famous places in New Orleans. The Andrew Jackson . . .

SL: Café Du Monde.

JAA: Yeah, the Andrew Jackson on a horse.

SL: Right. Right.

JAA: And that kinda thing. [02:37:24] So we saw the, you know, the sights, and then I drove back. So that was my one blind date in Louisiana. But so and then I had—oh, that was not the full time. One thing—another thing I had to do that summer was go to summer camp because I had signed up to do advanced ROTC, so between my junior and senior year, I had to go to summer camp. And that was the same summer I was in Raceland, Louisiana, so I got—I had to drive from Louisiana to Laredo, Texas. That was the air base where we had our summer camp.

SL: That's pretty big drive, isn't it?

JAA: Yes, that's two- or three-hour drive. I found . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: There was another one—somebody came down from Little Rock who was going—cadet who's in ROTC with me. So yeah, I had some company. But yeah, it was about three-hour drive. [02:38:11] And you know, I was in trouble before I came because [*SL laughs*] I got there, and they were in—tryin' to be like they are at the Naval Academy. You know, first day, "Okay, everybody stand up, brush up." You know, brush that—you know, eyes on the road, whatever. And this comp—this man

who was—this—he was just a captain. He was gonna be my commanding company officer. And he was in shorts. And I had never seen an officer in short pants before. And I thought it was the funny—I didn't—so he was tryin' to say, "Okay, what do you know, what's this, what's this, hey, how do you direct this drill, what's the command?" And [*laughs*] I was just laughing at him [*SL laughs*], so I had more demerits before I got through the gate than I would get the rest of the summer. But I was out there marchin' with a rifle before I even unpacked my luggage. [*Laughter*] But anyway, that was my start with Laredo, Texas. Now notice that we were out for—quite often we'd parade next to the fl—the runways, you know, but it was hard to find a flat place in Laredo, Texas that doesn't have a bunch of sage grass and . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . cactus and [*laughs*] stuff growin'. But anyway, it was interesting to see all these officers come out in T-33s, which is the training jet airplane, and take off, come back an hour later with these boxes and cases of bottled stuff. And so what they were doing is they were flyin' over Mexico . . .

SL: And [*laughs*] buyin' . . .

JAA: . . . and importing . . .

SL: . . . liquor.

[02:39:38] JAA: Yeah, tequila.

SL: Tequila.

JAA: Illegally. Without paying taxes on it. This was the US Air Force
[laughs] doin' this, so again, I say, "Wait a minute, this"—but
anyway, so you know, we—it was not very serious camp. We'd
get out there and be parading. And so we had a new command
that we devised. It was called route step march. And route step
march means that everybody does their own thing. Some
people do a right face, some people do a counter attacks—
counter, you know, counter about face, some people would a,
you know, side step. Somebody people do at ease. [Laughter]
You know, and then . . .

SL: What'd that look like?

JAA: It looked terrible. It looked like total chaos. And then we had
the reverse was route step here. And so everybody was
supposed to reverse what they had just done, come back and
end up in the same formation. Well [laughs], it killed about ten
or fifteen minutes from our boredom, but it—you know. Nobody
ever said anything to us about us. And this guy in his short
pants, I have no idea where he was, but I doubt he was out
there in the hot sun. [Laughter] Even with his short pants, I

don't think he would take too many hours of that. But that was about—both—about the most un—well, unenjoyable place.

[02:40:48] And we did have a weekend off, and that also was—I was glad I had my Baptist roots that weekend. Because they let us go over into Laredo Nuevo in Mexico.

SL: Okay.

JAA: And they warned us. They say, "If you lose your ID card, here's the number to call because you won't get back into the United States unless you have some extra ID. And if you get approached by ladies of the night, don't encounter them because blah, blah, blah, blah, blah"—got a little lecture on . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: You know, venereal disease . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . number 102. And so we went over there, and that, again, was almost as bad as the gay bar. [*Laughs*] The stuff that I'd never seen before goin' on was goin' on. So I grew up fast that summer. And I was wonderin' if I had chosen to do advanced ROTC wisely. But it turned out that, well, I knew I had to stay another year at the—Arkansas because Ginger would not graduate for another year, so why not because I always wanted to fly, and if I thought I could fly, that would be better. I could

forget all this other nonsense that was going on. And so that was my junior year. My senior—can I go on? My senior year?

SL: Yeah, sure.

[02:42:07] JAA: Okay. Let me back up. Let me back up to my sophomore year. That's the most important.

SL: Okay.

JAA: Sophomore year.

SL: You're here.

JAA: I'm—sophomore year at the University of Arkansas. Yes. I did not pledge any fraternity except Theta Tau. Theta Tau was the engineering profession fraternity.

SL: Okay.

JAA: In Theta Tau you could work with people. And I always ate with the house mother because she lived in the house. It's—in those days, all fraternities had to have a house mother.

SL: Right.

JAA: And nobody wanted to sit with her, so I was happy to sit with her. I had two grandmothers. I knew how to handle a grandmother. And so it was okay. I did some intramural game. I played some football, touch football intramurals. Played for the Baptist Student Union, actually.

SL: Right.

JAA: And that was fun. Played basketball. But didn't have any dates at all. And so in my junior year, It thought, "Okay. I think I'm fixed. But I think"—I got an invitation. This is unheard of. You normally don't get an invitation to join a social fraternity if you're already a junior.

SL: That's right.

JAA: I mean, you've al—yeah. But I did from Sigma Nu, and it was because, I know, that Charles Stewart, who is my cousin who lives here in town was a Sigma Nu, and he put the bug in somebody's ear. I think he did that.

SL: Right.

[02:43:25] JAA: And so I said—they—"We need you for our—we need you for our football team, you know. You—come pledge Sigma." I say, "Wait a minute. I've already got a house in town. I'm only six blocks away. I don't need a place to stay." But they said, "You don't have to stay except on hell week. Hell week you have to come in and live for a week. [SL laughs] You know, we can mistreat you. But other than that, you're fine. You come to the meetings on Monday night. Okay. We'll do that." So one of the first things we did was we had a tea—I guess it was called a tea fight, or we had a social mix with the Zeta Tau Alphas.

They just pick out a fraternity and pick out a sorority, and you all

go to have a little dance in the afternoon to meet.

SL: Right.

JAA: People.

SL: Right.

[02:44:00] JAA: So okay, I said, "You're pleag—you're pledge, you're snake, you're Sigma Nu. Go to this—yea—you have to go to this dance."

SL: Okay.

JAA: At the student union. At the old student union over there.

SL: Yeah, beautiful old student union.

JAA: Yeah, the beautiful old student union. Right. Right there in just north of the Old Main. And so I did. And so I was sitting here watching the people dance. And I wasn't sure I really knew how to dance that well anyway. But somebody—she—Ginger was from Russellville. Ike Allen Laws was from Russellville, and he was a Sigma Nu already. And they had been told that to—look, these plebes aren't dancing. You get 'em out on the dance floor. Alan lee—Alan's over there in the corner. Okay. So Alan Laws was dancing with Virginia Faulkner because he knew her from Russellville. And he came over to me. He said, "Hey, Alan. This is my girlfriend from Russellville. But you can dance with her one time." [SL laughs] Okay. And so here it is.

SL: Yeah.

[02:44:54] JAA: So we—said we didn't dance, we just sorta wiggled and talked. What's your father do, what's my father do, and so forth, so on.

SL: Right.

JAA: So that was the first meeting with Virginia Faulkner with a warning to leave her alone, she's not in your territory, and if you—I'm your big brother and . . .

SL: Hands off.

JAA: . . . if you come into the Sigma Nu house having messed with her [*laughs*], you're meat. That was the unsaid discussion. Well, anyway [*SL laughs*], I thought that might've been the end of it except two or three weeks later I was at—these one of these accidental things in life. You know, you wonder like—how—if it hadn't happened, like winning the lottery for my great-great-grandfather to come to Arkansas because he fought in the Black Hawk War. You know, I—how obvious is that. But anyway, Ginger—I didn't know this, but she normally came to the Baptist church because she was in the Baptist church in Russellville. And on Sundays when she was up—not up too late on the previous Saturday night, she would get up and come to church. She didn't do it every time, but once a month, maybe.

And it just so happened that the regular piano player, who was a good piano player, was not gonna be there on Sunday, and Emil Sonneman's . . .

SL: Sonneman.

JAA: Sonneman. Mother of me—Emil Sonneman. Gladys Sonneman was her name.

SL: Yep.

JAA: The organist was Gladys Sonneman. She . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . had—her daughter was Emil Sonneman.

SL: Yeah.

[02:46:08] JAA: And so he said, "Alan, I want to you play the piano with me on the hymns. Practice these and just play along as the congregation sings. You don't have to do any special things, but it helps to have both the piano and the organ because they're used to that." So I said, "Okay." So this was just by accident that it would happen on a Sunday when Ginger happened to come to church. And she came down after church. She said, "Hey, didn't we meet at the Sigma Nu Phi part"—I said, "Yeah, we did." And she said, "Well, I didn't know you played the piano so well." And I said, "Well, I'm substituting. I'm not the real piano player." Blah, blah, blah, blah. But anyway, that was the

indication that I needed to date this girl. And I called half a dozen times, it seemed like, maybe more. Every time, she already had a date. She was bah—she was dated up for the rest of the semester, for Pete's sakes, so I finally said, "Okay, give me your schedule [*laughs*] for next year. I'm gonna make an advance date, and we'll have to have it then so I can get on your dating ske"—she said, "I don't even have my calendar for that year yet," you know. "I can't put you"—I said, "Yes, you can. Just put me down and then transfer it." So we got our first date on—it happened to be a Rice University basketball game, and it was on Friday, January the 13th in 1956.

[02:47:24] SL: Is that the men's gym?

JAA: Seven. Huh? At Barnhill Fieldhouse.

SL: Oh, at Barnhill.

JAA: Yeah. No, no, no, no, no. No, I'm sorry. No. No, this was the nu—the new one that's now the old one. They've built two since this time. They built—they first rebuilt Barnhill first, and that's still there, I think.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: And then next to it there's the new one which kee—you know, handles the bigger crowds.

SL: Right.

JAA: But anyway, so they—basically we finally did get that date. And in fact, that date has turned out to be special to us because we also got married on June the thirteenth, 1958, and many other things have happened on Friday the thirteenth. In fact, there was a Friday the thirteenth just last month if I can . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . [*unclear word*] back. And so that's kind of our special day, and it was because of that accidental forced introduction by Ike Alan Laws of his—quote—"girlfriend" from Russellville that led to where she is out there right now.

[02:48:23] SL: So did her former boyfriend approach you at all?

JAA: No, he did not, because Ginger said, "He was never my boyfriend in the first place." [*Laughs*]

SL: Ah.

JAA: He was pullin' my leg.

SL: Ah.

JAA: But she had a lot of others that did—I mean, well, not—we competed. She was—ha—probably four or five boys who were still tryin' to break into that dating schedule. And she was going to socials at the Pi K A house and the Kappa Sig house and I—you know, the competition was serious. [*SL laughs*] And so I'm not sure how it all worked out, but it finally all worked out after

about a semester of struggling. She agreed to be pinned, and the Sigma Nus came over and sang underneath her window and I—they brought roses from the . . .

SL: Oh.

JAA: . . . from Ray's Flowers, as a matter of fact. [*Laughter*] I gave her the flowers, and so it was all sold, and so finally she agreed to be, you now, my steady. And we were pinned. And it made the Arkansas student newspaper. Letting everybody know that Ginger's no longer available. [*Laughter*]

[02:49:27] SL: Well, so how long did y'all date before you . . .

JAA: Well . . .

SL: . . . got married?

JAA: . . . about two years. Yeah. This was . . .

SL: Yeah, that's . . .

JAA: Yeah, this was . . .

SL: . . . reasonable.

JAA: . . . in the beginning, yeah, of—I think that June—January date with Rice University was—I guess it was 1956, and then we were married in ju—in June of 1958. So two and a half years.

[02:49:52] SL: Now, her parents were here in town, right?

JAA: Yes. Her parents were in Russellville.

SL: Oh, they were in Russellville.

JAA: Yeah. She lived in Russellville.

SL: So . . .

JAA: And she grew up in Russellville.

SL: Oh, okay.

JAA: And her parents was—well, her father was a jeweler. My father was a florist. We had a free wedding.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

JAA: Her father gave me a big price on the diamond ring, and my father contributed the flowers and brought 'em down from Fayetteville, and we got in the Baptist church in Russellville and did the thing. And it—we were pretty well matched, you know. Fathers were individual business dealers. Joe Faulkner was active in the Lion's club. My father was active in the Rotary Club. They were both members and deacons in the Baptist Church. You know, it's about as good a match as you can get as far as experiences are concerned, so it worked. Yeah.

[02:50:41] SL: Well, so I wanna—tell me the details on how you asked her to marry you. [*JAA sighs*] Or maybe I should start with how you asked her to be pinned.

JAA: Yeah, well, I guess that that's right. [*SL laughs*] Once the pin is—why don't you wait tomorrow and ask her that? [*Laughter*]
Yeah.

SL: Okay.

JAA: I—yeah. I think she—her version might be more accurate than mine.

SL: Okay. All right.

JAA: It must have been—yeah.

SL: I won't put you through that wringer.

JAA: Yeah, no. I—yeah, I don't think—yeah, I don't know when she's felt that she was obligated or attached to me that much, but it was one of those things that sort of evolves, and it evolves fairly quickly, and you know, we went to Gabilee together, we went to concerts and the—in the Barnhill Field House where the orchestras had to compete with that rotating exhaust fan . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . that was up in the—and it bomp, bomp—during the con—in fact sometimes the conductors would do—raise up and conduct the fan because it was overriding their music. But that—they finally got out of there. [02:51:40] But another interesting thing that I did with coaching and with football. George Cole . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . was my best friend growing up in Washington School. We used to go to Washington Elementary School and shoot baskets and play one-on-one, play horse, you know, the whole big thing.

And sometimes Coach Cole would get us into the Barnhill Fieldhouse during holidays, and we would have the—and that's where the university played in those days.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: And . . .

SL: It's a dirt floor, but they brought in the—they set up the basketball floor, right?

JAA: No, this was Barnhill. Barnhill had—was built as a basketball floor. Or—Barnhill was up on the hill.

SL: Oh.

JAA: Next to the library.

SL: Oh, okay.

JAA: I—and be—it became a museum, and now I think it's even . . .

SL: Oh . . .

JAA: . . . something else.

SL: . . . we call that the old men's gym.

JAA: Yeah, the old men's gym, yeah, was the varsity feel—was the varsity basketball court . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . in nine—in fact, it also was where Fayetteville High School played in—the state high school champion basketball teams when the Trumbos, Bass Trumbo and . . .

SL: Alice?

JAA: Alice Trumbo, yeah, and those guys were really good, and they did well. We were about a year or two behind them, I think, and didn't do as well going all the way to the state as they did. But yeah, so, you know, we—and she was very active. She was designing her own clothes, she was giving style shows, she was doing—tough, you know—the fact that I could break into her social calendar, much less her dating calendar, was, I guess, in this—in the cards, maybe. Don't know. You never know. I did something right. Probably a lot of things wrong, but [*SL laughs*] this worked out fine. [*Laughs*]

[02:53:20] SL: That's a good thi—that's a good love story. So how was it meeting her parents?

JAA: I think it was well. I think because of my father and because of our church affiliation, and because of the fact—you know, we had talked to each other about these—her—the—you know, dating and talked—we had a—found for a possible mate—met her parents, went her—down—went down to Russellville and stayed in her guest bedroom for a while in her house. And they must have trusted me because her bedroom was right next to the guest bedroom, and it was between her parents' bedroom and the guest bedroom. Have you got that straight? So . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . yeah. It—but there was no e—there was no—back in those days, you were sort of trained and educated that there are certain things you did and certain things you didn't do. And I think we had both sort of, you know, expected the same sort of behavior. Seemed to work.

[02:54:20] SL: So it was probably unlikely, but did you talk with her father before you asked her to marry her? [JAA sighs] Or was the cat out of the bag, kind of?

JAA: Yeah, I—before—probably not before, no. I talked to her father about gettin' me a good price on a ring. [Laughs] But after we decided to get married. But no, he was—see, he had—they—she has an older sister, ten years older.

SL: Okay.

JAA: So he had been through this marryin' off your daughter bit.

SL: Okay.

JAA: And in fact, she had married a Naval Academy graduate.

SL: There you go.

JAA: And so he was prepared to realize that daughters leave home and this was the normal thing. So he was very cooperative and very enthusiastic. I didn't have any, you know, real confrontations or like having to work in his store for a week or

something [*laughter*] like that. He didn't require any of that.

SL: I love that about your dad. [02:55:20] Well, so does she graduate from college?

JAA: Who, Ginger?

SL: Uh-huh.

JAA: Yeah, we waited for that extra year. We actually took a course in astronomy together from Davis Richardson . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . who is a math professor.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Who also was a Rotarian. He also knew I played . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . the piano. And so she was very afraid to do that. She said, "That is spherical trigonometry, and I can't possibly take that course," and I said, "Well, don't worry, it won't be on the final exam. I'm sure. You just learn"—but she did better than I did. She made a better grade [*SL laughs*] on the astronomy course. I think we both got a B, but her B was much higher than mine. But we actually—actually, one time we were out on a date, and I'm sure that we saw the aurora borealis. You normally you don't see the night lights that far south, but the . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . the atmosphere is right, and I'm sure we must've seen 'em.

[02:56:12] We drove—this was probably nine or ten o'clock.

We drove out to Davis Richardson's house, which was about a block north of the student union, knocked on the door. He was probably in bed—say, "I think we see the aurora borealis. Come out and look." He came out. He said, "Well, you do." [*Laughs*] I think he was in his bathrobe or—the fact that we would have the gall to do that. But yeah, and then—so yeah, she came and when I was granted my officer status and she pinned the b—lieutenant bars on me and so forth. And you know, I was the cadet colonel, so she was, you know, involved in all of our social events and the social—the air force . . .

SL: Oh, in the army . . .

JAA: . . . ROTC ball.

SL: . . . thing.

JAA: Yeah. All that stuff. So yeah. You know, we had a very active senior year even though to me it was really an add on. Like I didn't have to take astronomy.

SL: Right.

JAA: I just took it because she was there.

SL: Right.

[02:57:06] JAA: And I'd already finished most of my courses except

the next advanced ROTC course. That I had to finish. And I still think I wanted to fly. And but I had had a couple of steps in the way. I'd flown over to Tinker Air Force Base, had the physical, could do everything except that depth perception test where you sit—this is well before computers. You sit at one end of a room. You have two sticks that are wired to—down—two other sticks, vertical sticks, at the other end of the room, and they slide like this on different slips, and you're supposed to hear and rotate—and there's some gearing in between so you can't sorta look and do this kind of thing and get the same distance between your hands and the same distance between the rods at the other end. They had to get them within a certain alignment so they looked like they were the same distance . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . from my—with my depth—it was a measure of depth perception. And I failed it. Said, "Do it again, we'll take the best." I failed it. I knew I had problems 'cause when I was at Wichita, Kansas, in my summer job, I had spent most of the earnings that I made that summer taking flight lessons 'cause I wanted to learn how to fly, and I was willing to pay for it myself.

SL: Right.

[02:58:19] JAA: And it was a small little airport and a triangular—

triangle landing gear, so it was easier to land for us all. But there was a powerline, for some reason, at the end of the runway. And why you would ever put a powerline at the end of a runway of an airport is beyond me, but still. I wasn't gonna get close to that powerline. This was on landing. And I never could see that I was low enough to get down onto the runway. And a couple of times my professor, my teacher, who was next to me, would have to stall slip the airplane and get it down to the runway so that I could land it after coming over too high because of those powerlines on there. But to me they looked like they were safely [*laughs*] far enough away or—I just wanted to not be very close to them. And so he said, "You better all—you better have your eyes checked before you—if you wanna keep taking lessons and get your flying lessons, you better—you might need glasses. You better get some new glasses or you might need some eye something." But this was before LASIK surgery. This was before . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . you know, we used to have the same problem with some of the midshipman. And then when LASIK surgery came along, everybody had LASIK surgery, and everybody had good eyes, you know.

SL: Right.

JAA: That's solved that problem. [02:59:24] But this was before all that. So anyway, I was in advanced ROTC. I was—you know, as cadet colonel tryin' to help with all the social events and all the, you know, paray—and this is the story of the homecoming driving Whitfield's car around the homecoming—you know, that deal. So it was a fun senior year. And having a teaching assistant position as a fifth under—year undergraduate from Dean Brannigan, you know, to me, you know, the—Francis that Admiral Calvert knew. So you know, it . . .

SL: You had a whirlwind senior year.

JAA: Yes. Even with a minimal course for engineering. I had about three engineering courses that were not completed but—and with ROTC. Yeah, it was a be—it was a light load, yeah. So I had time to arrange the ROTC things and do the reports and do the fitness reports and do all the other stuff that you had to play like you were doing, you know.

[03:00:24] SL: So what was the contractual obligations you had?

JAA: Three years.

SL: Three years.

JAA: Back in those days.

SL: After . . .

JAA: If you don't go rated—and after the second time of failing my depth perception, they finally said, "Well, we can't really put you in a flight position. You've either gotta choose between navigator school or just becoming a non-rated officer and take your chances." And I didn't really wanna fly in the back seat of an airplane that I couldn't fly. Navigation school didn't sound good.

SL: Right.

[03:00:59] JAA: So I said, "Okay. I don't think I have any more ambitions to become a pilot, and therefore not a career air force officer. Just let me put out my duty." And so I was assigned to the Air Defense Command.

SL: To which command?

JAA: Air Defense Command.

SL: Okay.

JAA: ADC. That's what led . . .

SL: Oh.

JAA: . . . to this AC&W squadron and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . tryin' to intercept and . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . havin' a midair collision and . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . all that stuff. I've . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . sorta told you most of that story.

SL: Yeah.

[03:01:23] JAA: Very quickly—my first assignment was in Othello, Washington, in the 25th air d—30th Air Division. And that was a 637th ACD and squadron out in the middle of the Columbia Basin near—past—south of Fairchild Air Force Base at Spokane. And then the next one was the one up into Canada with the remote assignment where the midair collision happened, and I had Lieutenant Malachi with me as . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . communications officer—or radar officer. And then back to Duluth, Minnesota. And so then I went to Purdue. So after three years in the air force, I went to Purdue. But if you wanna hear a harrowing story on how that happened . . .

SL: I do.

[03:02:04] JAA: Okay. What was happening in the summer of 1961, you member? The Berlin Wall.

SL: Oh.

JAA: The Berlin Wall was going up. They were closing down Berlin.

They were separating into two cities, and everybody went to general quarters. And I was supposed to leave—my three-year obligation was up on the ninth of September, but since I had entered the air force from Louisiana, I had three days of travel time to get back to Louisiana, even though I was not going Louisiana, I was going to Lafayette, Indiana, where Purdue University was. So I was supposed to get out right before Labor Day. And had to take the travel time and get there just in time to register for Purdue. And so Labor Day was—well, let me go back one more—two or three more weeks. [03:02:59] Bout the first of August—middle—maybe middle of August, there became a order—air force wise. Nobody leaves. All terminations are canceled.

SL: Oh.

JAA: If you're on duty, you stay on duty because we may be in war in two weeks with the Germans who were doin' crazy things in Berlin. Okay. So I was stuck in Duluth, Minnesota. But before that time, then, before that order came out—it was right before the holiday coming up with Labor Day. There was a moving company that had a half load of trucks going into the Midwest. And they said, "Hey, I see you've got a small load from this Lieutenant Adams. Can we pick up his group and fill our truck

and take it with us, and we'll drop it off in a supply. We'll play—we'll pay for the" . . .

SL: Money.

JAA: . . . "temporary storage" . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: . . . "until he gets there." They said, 'Okay, go ahead.' So there I was with one uniform with no furniture that we ow—at least the furniture that we had bought. No, you know, almost nothing because we were expecting to leave.

SL: Right.

[03:04:06] JAA: As soon as the vacation was over. As soon as Labor Day was over. Well, then this order came through, and we couldn't do it. So they were say—"If you think you have a—if you think you have an emergency or a hardship or something, here's how you apply to get a waiver." And I had a great staff sergeant. And he'd done this before. He said, "I'll tell you how to write it. Here's your—here's what you say, here's who you write it to. Okay, let's get it"—we immediately got the appeal, and I went through my officer who was a personnel officer, told him what we were doin'. He said, "That sounds fine to me." It was nice that I was on his bowling team. [*SL laughs*] So he knew who I was. It helps to be physically active.

[03:04:42] SL: Hadn't talked about bowling.

JAA: Yep. Bowling, yeah. No, that—it—there was a bowling team.

Yep. And my staff sergeant was one of these bowlers, and so was the personnel officer that we had to go through. So I was lined up to do this. Waited for three or four days, and nobody replied, nobody reply—even—no—nobody said anything. Nobody was gonna put their foot there—no—step out on a limb to make a decision.

SL: Right.

JAA: It could affect their career.

SL: Right.

JAA: They didn't care about mine. And so I said, "Hey, how do I get my stuff back from Indiana? How do I move it?" Say, "Well, we can't move it. You don't have orders to go from Indiana to Minnesota. You've gotta pay for it yourself. You know, we can't move it. We don't have the authority to move it." It was ridiculous. So I got on the phone, and I called, of all places, Senator Fulbright.

SL: Ah.

JAA: Because I used to date his daughter. Every summer, they would come home to Doug Douglas's house.

SL: Right.

JAA: Which was two blocks from my house.

SL: That's right.

[03:05:40] JAA: And basically I, you know, Senator Fulbright would give me ten dollars to take both Betsy and Bosie, his two daughters, to the county fair, and that was in the days when the senate recessed before September. You know, they didn't run all the way into late fall. And so I knew them very well. And the—in fact, Roberta Fulbright, Senator Fulbright's mother, wrote one of the most dearing, tender letters to our family when my mother died. But so she was—and Ray Adams used to give her flowers for all sorts of things, so we have more thank-you notes from Roberta Fulbright [*laughs*] than most anybody. We could for—start . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . start a museum of thank-you letters from Roberta. But I called. The answer—the person who answered the phone in Washington was Betsy, the oldest daughter of Senator Fulbright because she was home already for the . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . Labor Day holidays. It was a Saturday. Monday was the holiday. I explained to her what happened. Betsy said, "How can they do that?" I said, "Well, they're the air force. They can

do whatever they want to do." And she said, "Well, can't you have an exception or a waiver?" I said, "No, the—apparently not." She said, "I'll talk to my father. But he's playing golf this weekend. He's gone off to play golf. But he'll be back on Tuesday. A—lay—Monday's a holiday." So on Tuesday afternoon—and I have a copy of this TWIX—there was a message that came through that says, "From the president of the United States" . . .

SL: Whoa.

JAA: . . . "release Lieutenant Adams from active duty, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah"—[*laughs*] can you imagine? And now that's why I—that's how I got to Purdue. That's how I got my Ph.D. That's how I'm sitting here in this chair today because of that very unlikely event.

[03:07:26] SL: Wow. [*JAA laughs*] That's great.

JAA: That's . . .

SL: That's really good.

JAA: . . . strange. That's almost more unlikely than winning the lottery to win four hun—four—forty acres in, you know, Cato Springs.

SL: It's so great that, you know, that originates from Mount Nord.

JAA: Yes.

SL: Here in Fayetteville.

JAA: Well . . .

SL: You end up gettin' a note from the president.

JAA: Yeah. Well, in fact, speaking of Mount Nord that—there's another short story, if you don't mind.

SL: Okay.

[03:07:54] JAA: I took an Elderhostel when I was down cleaning the house after my father's death. He left enough mess to clean up because he'd tried to move everything from the greenhouse to his backyard at 511 Forest. He had glass, he had pots, he had flo—he—other stuff.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: It was a mess. And so most of it had to be thrown away. It had very little—and so I was there tryin' to clean up the house. And I'd been there for—I took—I had to take leave from the academy to do it. And I said, "Wait a minute. Thi—I need a break." There was a Elderhostel scheduled that next week to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Fulbright Scholarship program.

SL: Kay.

JAA: At the University of Arkansas.

SL: Yep.

JAA: I signed up, and I went to it. And so basically, having that

exposure to the Fulbright Scholarship was another reason that, you know, I, you know, felt that I had done the right thing. And it was interesting to, you know, I run—I ran into Betsy a couple times down at the performance center there down on Dickson Street. You . . .

SL: Walton Arts Center.

JAA: Walton Arts Center. Yeah. [03:09:05] But anyway, yeah, we—it's been a touch-and-go career, let me tell you. I—so many things that should've happened didn't happen. And normally wouldn't happen.

SL: Right.

JAA: And so theologically, you can explain that if you want to.

[Laughs]

SL: Well, in this case I think it was of your own volition that . . .

JAA: Well . . .

SL: . . . you had good fortune.

JAA: Yes, well, I—first thing I did when I got to Annapolis, I called Senator Fulbright and said, "Can I come over and thank you?" And they said, "Oh, yeah, please come over for dinner, you and Ginger," and we had dinner with Senator and Mrs. Fulbright. By that time, Betsy was back in school. Can't really—you know, I could never carry on a love affair with somebody goin' to school

in the East. And thr—all through high school because every summer in high school, Betsy and Bosie would show up. And you know, it was—and in fact, on this Elderhostel—that's one thing I was gonna say. On this Elderhostel of Fulbright's fiftieth year, there was a tour of Fayetteville offered by this co-ed who didn't know diddly flip about Fayetteville.

SL: Fayetteville.

[03:10:16] JAA: She just been hired to work. And she was on the bus, and she had her thi—her itinerary and said, "This is so-and-so and this is so-and-so" and tellin' the bus driver what to do, and I said, "Hey. I grew up in this town. Would you like for me to take over your tour and tell the bus rider where to go?" and he said, "Oh, would you do that, please?" [*Laughter*] So I said, "All right. Here's where—what"—I said, "What I wanna show you is, first of all, I'll show you where all my girlfriends used to live." [*SL laughs*] I'll show you where I first kissed the daughter of Senator Fulbright. I'll show you the driveway where it was." As we drove by there, everybody in the bus rushed over to one side like they would seein' a bear . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . in the [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yellowstone—yeah.

JAA: Yellowstone . . .

SL; Yeah.

JAA: . . . or someplace. And so we went up to Mount Sequoyah, and I showed 'em where the favorite place to park was and you . . .

SL: Cross.

JAA: . . . know, I just too—[laughs] . . .

SL; Yeah.

JAA: And so I totally messed up—well, we did see some of the stuff that was on the schedule, too. [*SL laughs*] But anyway, that was my day of taking over the Elderhostel program.

SL: You could probably still conduct a bus tour of Fayetteville.

JAA: Don't know. Not—maybe. It's different. It really is different.

[03:11:21] SL: Yeah. Well, okay. So you're not on the deployment list anymore. Potential to . . .

JAA: No. I'm not—you mean deployment for military?

SL: Yeah.

JAA: No, no, I resigned my commission. After goin' through all that, I went to the reserve office in Lafayette, Indiana. I said, "Do I really have to go to these summer reserve meetings now that I finished my active duty?" And they said, "Well, yes you do unless you wanna resign your commission." I said, "I resign. How d—where do I sign?" Because I wanted to concentrate on

graduate school. I didn't want to have to take a week off every summer and go to some camp or something. And so I—that affected a lot in my—I could've done that. Some people do that and are never called up to do anything except go to summer camp, and then their retirement annuity shows a big increase because . . .

SL: Yeah. Sure

JAA: . . . you stay on active duty. I didn't really realize that at the time. But I think I'm just as glad. I had so much trouble gettin' out in the first place, I think I thought I'd let well enough alone and just be kinda civilian.

SL: Right.

JAA: Which I did.

[03:12:22] SL: Okay, so how do you end up in Annapolis?

JAA: Well, back in the—you know, graduated from the Purdue in about 1965.

SL: Okay now wait, let's talk about going to Purdue before we graduate from Purdue.

JAA: From Annapolis. Okay.

SL: Okay.

JAA: Okay, well we got oh—we got in the car with all of our belongings already in West Lafayette, Indiana. We drove to

West Lafayette, hoping that our married-student quarters that we had assigned and reserved had not been given away to somebody else as a no-show because we were late. And fortunately, it was still there. So we moved into our apartment at 126 Marshall Drive. And I went over to the department of—head of the department of mechanical engineering, Richard Grosh, told him that I was a little late, I'm sorry, but here's my letter of application to Purdue. I'm here to begin my graduate student. He said, "Who are you?" I said, "Adams, James A., right here's my letter." What I had done, I had applied to Purdue from Canada.

SL: Oh.

[03:13:41] JAA: And they had sent me the letter of acceptance back, but I had never even been on the Purdue campus. I had never done through an induction problem—I didn't even know where the mechanical engineering building was. And Grosh didn't know who I was because the people who had processed my acceptance had not forwarded the information to the mechanical engineering department. And he said—he talked to his secretary. He said, "Sally, go over there and see what's goin' on and find out why we didn't get this information on Lieutenant Adams," who's now no longer Lieutenant Adams. And they

realized that it had been their mistake in the admissions office. And so the thing about it is, would there even be space for me as a graduate student? Turned out that not only that there was a space for me, there was a research assistant space for me.

SL: Good.

JAA: And I was given the job of designing a blow-down supersonic wind tunnel for use in the undergraduate laboratories in the heat transfer courses at Purdue University the very next week.

[03:14:46] SL: Puh. [*Laughter*] Did you think you'd bitten off more than you could chew?

JAA: Ah, well, he—Grosh asked me, he said, "What do you know about supersonic flow?" I said, "Well, I know that a shockwave is created. I know that, you know, you can break the sound barrier and you—it affects the steering and the Mach number is, you know, about—Mach number one's around 900, you know, or so, miles per hour." And he asked me a few other questions about math. He said—see, I had taken graduate courses in mathematics from the you—to the University of Texas through the Air Force Institute of Technology program, which allowed you to take college-level cou—correspondence courses. So I had taken courses while at Pagwa River because at Pagwa River after you serve your active duty for the day, what do you can do?

Well, you can drink beer. You can play cribbage. You can play darts, or you can play poker. That's about it. Well, two out of the four things were not so bad. But after I've done that, I r—I would go back to the room, and I worked through a course in complex variables, differential equations, advanced algebra, advanced calculus, and actually also, quite by accident, one of my NCOs at Canada had married a German wife when he was in Germany, and he himself was fluent in German, and I signed up for an introductory course in German. Why? I don't know. I just thought I—sounded like a fun language to learn. He was an excellent tutor. And it turns out that—I didn't even know it at—you had to gratif—you had to satisfy a reading requirement in at least one foreign language to get your master's degree at Purdue. Well, okay. Grosh asked me that. I said, "Well, I have taken a course or two in German." And he said, "Say something to me in German." I said, "Warum? Ish verstehe nicht," or something like that. [*Laughs*]

[03:16:40] SL; What does that mean? What did he . . .

JAA: Why, I don't know it.

SL: Oh, okay. [*Laughter*]

JAA: Well, so anyway . . .

SL: He liked that, I bet.

JAA: Yeah, well, anyway, he said, "Your grades look good." You know, I had good grades. I had A's in most of these, and complex variables was one of the courses you were supposed to take as a graduate student at Purdue University. So he—you know, he had no problem that I was qualified. The admissions office had done correct work, but they had just forgot to—since my application came through, I guess, a different window from Canada, it got shelved. That's one good luck. Ginger, in the meantime, was working for a job. Looking for a job. As a wife with no children.

SL: right.

JAA: She got a Ph.T. Put her husband through, you know.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

JAA: And so she had gone to several people who said, "Well, wait a minute, you're"—she had gone to a department store. She had gone to a secretary job. She said, "You're too qualified. You'd be bored doin' this job. You've got your B.S. and your—you know, tho"—and she said, "They're—I see you're a home ec major. We have an opening in the men's dorm for food service." And Ginger said, "Oh, I don't like food service. I did everything artistic. I was in fashion design and clothing design and art"—see, she wanted to go to New York and work as a fashion

illustrator. That's what her—before she met me, of course.

[*Laughs*] She gave all that up for some reason. And so basically, you—the—she actually—what it turned out is—they—she finally said, "Well, let me look at it." She went over to talk—Mrs. Haney, who was directing the men's quadrangle. That's a huge quadrangle at Purdue University right at the end of the football field. And they feed the football team in one angle, and they serve all these other people, and she'll tell it—I'm sure she'll talk to you tomorrow about some of the funny things that happened as food supervisor.

SL: Kay.

[03:18:30] JAA: But as food supervisor, a food supervisor, she was an employee of Purdue University, not just a graduate student. And as an employee of Purdue University, she got a B sticker, which means you could park anywhere on par—perk—campus that did not require an A sticker. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

JAA: I couldn't park anywhere on campus. I had to walk.

SL: Oh.

JAA: But I could drive her car, which is my car, which had a B sticker on it. So I not only had a job as a research assistant, I had a parking . . .

SL: Parking spot.

JAA: . . . place which was even more valuable [*laughs*] because I could park in the garage right behind the ME building. So you know, we've been lucky.

[03:19:07] SL: Yeah. So how did graduate school go?

JAA: Well, I had an office with four people. And boy, were they good. One was Warren Stevenson. The other was Louis Burmeister. Louis Burmeister was a graduate of Kansas university. Fluent in Russian.

SL: Wow.

JA: And you know, and knew mathematics from here to Sunday. And his only main emphasis was to go back and be a professor at Kansas University, which he did. Warren Stevenson was a Purdue graduate. It's very unusual for an undergraduate at Purdue to be . . .

SL: In graduate school.

JAA: . . . accepted at—you can study graduate school if you want to, but you gotta go somewhere else if you want a job, basic—a Ph.D. . . .

SL: Right.

[03:19:57] JAA: But he had taken a lot of extra courses in optics in physics. And basically was very knowledgeable in the

interferometer measurements of fringe shifts and optical quantities that applied to engineering. And they didn't have an optics option in mechanical engineering at Purdue. And so as soon as he was graduated, they say, "Well, we'll make an exception. You can do this." It turns out that he was sitting right next to me during our graduate studies, and he was designing a Mach-Zehnder interferometer [*SL laughs*] that we were going to build. In fact, we went to Wright Patterson Air Force Base and learned how to build one from the, you know, from Wright Patterson air force people. And so basically it was his intelligence on how to do that that gave me an instrument that I could use to do my own research and my own measurements doing my own problem, already having the optical instrumentation available. You know. [*Laughter*]

SL: That's pretty serendipitous.

[03:21:02] JAA: Yes. Well, and in fact, where we got that idea that it was over there—Professor Eckert from the University of Minnesota, who had done one when he was working for the German air force in World War II. He was one of those scientists that were captured in Berlin before the . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . Russians got there.

SL: Right.

JAA: And we got him out and came to the United States. He became—the university of medicine. He wrote a book in—by Eckert and Drake, on heat transfer, and he had an agreement with Purdue University to come down and be a visiting professor four or five times a year and help the graduate students who were having work on related instrumentation. And he came and talked to us, to Warren Stevenson and I, and told us what work needed to be done in this kind of research because he knew what he was doing because he had done it for the Germans. [Laughter] You know.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: So how 'bout being in the right place at the right time just to—you ask me a question, I'm there. You follow me around, you'll be okay. [Laughter]

SL: That's way cool.

JAA: Yeah. Okay, so, we got through Purdue. Now, well . . .

[03:22:07] SL: Well, now wait a minute.

JAA: Okay.

SL: So you were at Purdue for how long?

JAA: Four years. And that's also fast. It takes two years to get a master's. It usually takes two to four years to get a Ph.D. on

top of that, after that. But my major professor then was Major Mc—Peter McFadden, had been offered a job as deanship at Connecticut University, which was his alma mater. And so he knew he was gonna leave in about a year after my third year or so. He said, "Look, I don't wanna leave you stranded because if I leave, you're gonna have to start over with a new academic advisor to do your thes—research. I don't wanna do that to you, so let's put every effort we can on this particular research and get it done in another year." And so he was willing to hold my feet to the fire and basically get it done. [03:23:01] And not only—one thing I was not able to complete—they wanted you to not only finish your research, do your dissertation, and have your examination and so forth, you needed a published paper on your results. He said that, "If you will promise me that you will publish this paper within a year after you go to the Naval Academy, I will sign off on you. And then I can go to Connecticut, you can, you know, go to US Naval Academy, and we'll be home free." And that's the way it worked. I did publish a paper. And I found a midshipman with me to help me do the math and write the paper up on the paper, and do you know where he was from? Purdue University.

SL: Wow. [*Laughter*]

JAA: And where did he grow up? Lafayette, Indiana.

SL: Lafayette, Indiana.

JAA: [*Laughs*] What are you gonna do? And he woul—he was a junior at the Naval Academy and became my first Trident Scholar. And if you have Trident Scholars at the university, you've had the best midshipman around because they do excellent work. And in fact if you have, when you go up for promotion to the next rank, if you have Trident Scholar A, B, C, D, on your resume, you go to the top of the list. That's the way to get promoted at the Naval Academy, work with the Trident Scholars. [*Vocalization*] [*Laughs*]

[03:24:19] SL: I don't se—and—how do you think you had all this comin' to you? I mean, ha . . .

JAA: Well, there's more.

SL: Okay. [*Laughs*]

JAA: There's more. How much time you . . .

SL: Let's go.

JAA: Okay, here we go. In nint—I went—so I was at the academy. I went to—well, how did I get to the academy? I could've gone to the University of Missouri, the University of Arkansas. Dean Brannigan was still there. He was willing to hire me back. Colorado State University, and the Naval Academy. Or I

could've gone to industry to work for Carrier in New York. Those were my five options.

SL: Yeah.

[03:24:54] JAA: I went to Colorado State. They said, "We have to be upfront with you. You see those mountains out there, the Poudre Mountains, the Poudre Canyon, the Rockies?" He said, "That's part of your salary. We have so many higher level universities in Colorado and so little industry that our tax support is minimal. So not only will you be expected to teach, you will be expected to generate at least 40 percent of your salary with research contracts."

SL: Oh.

JAA: I said, "Well, okay, but let me look around for a while." I'm sitting in a beautiful place, beautiful thing—and I knew that it was an excellent place to go to raise kids because these school systems were outstanding. They had so many real educated mothers or wives of professors that wanted to teach elementary school or high school.

SL: Sure.

[03:25:46] JAA: That was tough to turn down, but I had to look around. Arkansas—been there, done that.

SL: Right.

JAA: You know, I—Missouri, they were willing to hire me. But again, the Naval Academy was really interesting because they were trying to accreditate their step—lock-step system and tryin' to be able to get university students that were comparable to those that could qualify to get into the major universities.

SL: Right.

JAA: In science and technology. And we were gettin' ready to rebrick Ulver Hall, which is a brand new \$20 million—at that time, \$20 million was a lot of money. Not today so much.

SL: Well, yeah.

[03:26:26] JAA: But anyway. And so we were gonna be involved in the design, implementation, new labs, new offices, new building, new majors, everything. It was really an exciting thing. And also I had another friend, Bruce Johnson, who was with me at Purdue. We had taught some of the same courses together and taken some of the same courses together. And when he was in the navy on active duty, he had actually taught at the Naval Academy as a junior officer. And so he was planning to go back to the Naval Academy all along. I didn't know this. We'd had social things with him and knew him as friends. Went to the same church, actually. But he said—called me up on the phone one day. And I was mid down to makin' a decision between

Missouri and Carrier air conditioning. [*SL laughs*] He said, "Where you think you're gonna go?" I said, "Well, see, these look like the two best." He said, "Don't go anywhere until you come look at the Naval Academy." I said, "Well, okay, I'm flyin' out to talk to Carrier next week anyway. I can just grab a flight down to" . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . "you know, Baltimore and do that."

SL: Right. Right.

[03:27:30] JAA: Which I did. I went down and gave the same presentation that I'd given to Arkansas and Colorado State, you know, the same research, what I'm doing, where I'm going. And so—and again, they—you know—well, I guess I should tell you this. This is kinda strange. The dean said—this Dean Drough, who had come from Marquette. He said, "Well, where do you think you're gonna go? What are your offers? How much? How much they gonna pay you?" He was right upfront. "How much they gonna pay me."

SL: Right.

[03:28:05] JAA: I said, "Well, these are the offers." Said, "The best is from the University of Missouri." He said, "Well, that's maybe more than we can pay our assistant professors, but what are

your other experiences?" I said, "Well, I actually taught with a professor at the University of Arkansas when he was gone on travel and trips. He was a Ph.D. from Minnesota, but I would lecture—give his lecture for him when he was out of town. I graded all of his papers. I did some lab work development for him, I did the lab that was so—so basically, I was teaching. And also then at Purdue, I had teaching assi—a research assistant for two years, then I had a teaching assistant for two years where I actually taught the undergraduate courses, full blown. And that's about it." And he said, "I tell you what. Our assistant professor salaries are not competitive what you been offered, but you've had enough teaching experience that I can give you a job as an associate professor." Even though I've never been an assistant professor. I said—he said, "How much is that?" He said, "Well, about \$11,500." That was at least a thousand more than . . .

SL: Than Missouri.

JAA: . . . any of the other offers. This is 1958, remember.

SL: Right.

[03:29:26] JAA: So I said, "Okay. Sign me up." [*Laughs*] And then—now next story. Three years later I was in the officer's club, officer's faculty club, talkin' to this chemistry professor who

happened to be a Rotarian. And we were talking, he said, "Doctor Adams, how old are you?" I said, "I'm thirty-two." He said, "Well, Rotary International is sponsoring a professional exchange of people to go to another country and stay for two months and be entertained and wined and dined and educated about their culture and so forth, and we have one scheduled for Germany in about two months. Would you like to apply?" I said, "Well, how much German do you have to know?" [*SL laughs*] I said, "Well, we'll—they'll be some people on there that know quite a bit, but you probably, you know—not much. How much do you know?" And I said, "Well, I've taken two term correspondence courses. "Oh, well, that's probably all you need. [*SL laughs*] But I don't know. I'll let the committee decide."

SL: Right.

[03:30:30] JAA: So I went to the local—the professor at the Naval Academy that taught German and sat in on one of this classes for a while. He gave me his textbook in German, and I studied that for a while, and I basically wrote a s—request for admission to this program in German and learned it and learned how to pronounce it, and when I appeared at the committee, I first said, "I am not fluent in German, but I've been studying German, and if I wanted to give this information to the Germans, here's how I

would read it." And I read it, and it was in German. And the—
so anyway, long story short. I was one of six people accepted to
go on a full expense play—paid trip to West Germany in 1968.
There was Robin Freer of the Freer Art Gallery family in
Washington. There was a man who worked for the German
Embassy. Those were—there was a German professor of a small
college in Western Europe. There was a pharmacist, and there
was a chemist, and there was me. Two of those six could speak
good German. The other four of us sort of fell on a scale
between zero and one. [*Laughs*] But I probably was the better
of some of those.

[03:31:41] SL: Right.

JAA: And so they put us on an airplane, flew us into Northern
Germany. This was a Rotary exchange thing. We were wined
and dined and learned very quickly that Germans were the head
dog in Germany. The German Rotarians had money. We sort of
had a contest to see who would be picked up by the most
expensive car. [*SL laughs*] And if he just had a BMW or
Mercedes, you didn't have a chance because they were driving
really expensive cars. And so it was interesting—and you'd live
in homes—whoa. Woo. German first-class homes. We stayed
in this one home named Rickmers. We were right above the

Elbe River in Hamburg. And we'd watch the freighters come into the harbor. And he would sit there and say, "Well, wait, let me lower this window so you can see better." The whole side of the house lowered like an elevator into the ground and opened up his side of his . . .

SL: Wow.

[03:32:41] JAA: And he said, "Now let's see. See that first and third over there? Those are mine." "What do you mean?" "Oh, I own those." "Oh." [*Laughter*] And so that was typical. We—when they saw in my resume that I was—had been cadet colonel of ROTC at the University of Arkansas, that was sort of a misleader because they didn't—all they read was colonel.

SL: Right.

JAA: They didn't know what ROTC was. They didn't know what cadet meant. They, "Oh, hey, here's a colonel. We gotta outrank him." My first visit in Hamburg was at the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr. That's the naval that—the army—[*unclear words*]. General Rickmers, who, I'm sure, was very surprised when he picked me up in his car and I was just a thirty-two-year-old kid, and he thought I was gonna be a colonel.

SL: Right.

[03:33:31] JAA: But anyway, but he was very gracious. It was their

fault, not my fault. Anyway. And so he showed me around the military establishment and so forth. And then we went up to Kiel, and at Kiel, same thing happened. I was hosted by the Rotarian named Von Vogenheim. Wilhelm von Vogenheim. And he happened to be, in the World War II, captain of the cruiser that was protecting the Bismarck before he was told to leave because they had lost one of their rudders because of an attack from the Royal Air Force, and that they would be okay. And in effect, they had a lot of airplanes coming—world war—it—the airplanes that sun—the British airplanes that sunk the Bismarck, this huge . . .

SL: Ultimate battleship.

JAA: Yeah, ultimate battleship. Did so because they were flying canvas-colored biplane—canvas-covered biplane bombers with one torpedo under the fuselage flying very slowly right off the water. They were Japanese made before World War II.

SL: Mitsubishi.

JAA: Yep. And there's been studies about how in the world could planes like that sink the Bismarck. Well, first of all they were flyin' so slowly that the automatic tracking computers couldn't follow them. Their big, huge guns were designed to shoot other big ships that were miles away. They couldn't shoot low enough

to the water to reach them. And so those guys had a free trip right up to the side of the hull . . .

SL: The hull.

JAA: . . . of the Bismarck.

[03:35:10] SL: Yeah.

JAA: And blasted it [*laughs*] out of the water. Can you imagine? And so he was there, and he—the—how gentle and kind and receptive—it was—you know, we were at war with these guys, you know, fifteen years ago.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: I mean, how can this be? And the same thing happened when I was in Japan, as a matter of fact, but that's another story. With my son gettin' ready to marry a Japanese. But . . .

SL: We'll get that in a little bit.

JAA: Yeah. [*Laughs*] But anyway, that trip to Germany changed my life because I was certainly—realized, hey, I have confidence. I can talk to these people, and four years later I wrote a letter to Cambridge University asking for a sabbatical leave, which I received, and they received me as a valid researcher for sabbatical leave at Cambridge university. I would've never had the guts to do that had I not been to Germany. [03:36:04] In fact, another thing, I went to Hermann Schlichting who wrote

this heat transfer book. And they were having protests in Hanover at the time because they—students didn't feel like they were having enough teaching and everything was done by teaching assistants, and they weren't getting the first signif . . .

SL Right.

[03:36:19] JAA: And we talked to Hermann Schlichting about this.

And he said, "Well," he said, "if you go to an opera, would you like to hear the main opera singer, the ?colasante? or whatever—sing her" . . .

SL: The diva.

JAA: . . . "song, or do you wanna hear twenty moderate singers tryin' to do the same thing?" And we say, "Well, of course you wanna hear the ace." "Well, that same thing in the teaching classroom." He said, "I can lecture so much better, and I know so much more than any of these assistant teachers you might wanna hear that you could"—but you know, that's what he—that's how he defended his position. The students didn't like that expla—the student wanted to have—they'd be willing to go for the younger, more, you know, more attention, you know, more specific learning, extra instruction, whatever you had.

SL: Right.

[03:37:03] JAA: But that's the—that was the argument that was

having. Intro—we saw these students protesting when we were at Hanover, and suddenly they stopped. These were Germans. They were out in the middle of the street. And suddenly, somebody realized that they had stopped because there was a red light. They had come onto the intersection, and they all stopped for the red light, waiting it to turn green [*laughs*], and they were protesting, trying to shut down the traffic, and finally they realized, oh my God, and they started going again before the light turned green. But it's amazing what you're—you know, you—once you get the ?grutlichkeit? into your system, it's hard to get it out. So the—lotta funny things happened. Lotta funny things happened. We were in Kiel, we were in—went on to *Gorch Fock*, the big square rigger training ship in the German navy. They took us out . . .

SL: I'm unaware of that, but . . .

JAA: . . . to the North Sea. But it's a big tri—it's kinda like the ship, sailing ships, the square riggers that we have here.

SL; Yeah.

JAA: For training. And you know, it's a—well, as I say, that European experience led to the Cambridge University experience, which then led even yet again, ten years later, to a exchange professorship at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth

on the Dart River, and I think Ginger's gonna talk about that some, too.

SL: Okay.

[03:38:22] JAA: Okay, we lived there in the house overlooking the Dart River in the house that the corners—in an apartment—offices had been laid by—the cornerstone laid by King Henry II. [SL laughs] And you know, and Dartmouth had a lot of people there before us, you know.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: The Prince of Wales had been there as a cadet, Colonel King Henry V and King Henry VI had both been there as cadets and studied, so I was walkin' in the footsteps of pretty good guys. And also they had an exchange program with the United Arab Emirates, who would come, and the UAE students were there, they paid full tuition, they had plenty of money in those—in fact, they pressured that those students who owned Lamborghinis to leave them in the UAE because they didn't have enough parking space. [Laughs] But they didn't know English very well. Some of 'em. And so I had to teach while—everybody drew a section of these one semester. I had to teach a section in thermodynamics of ship propulsion. And I—basically there were maybe half of the students in there who understood enough

English to follow me. But everybody attended like they did. But I knew that these people who did understand it would teach these others in the evening and bring them up to speed using, you know, the Arabic language or whatever they . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . they used. And so that was a very interesting experience.

[03:39:38] In fact, I had—we got along well because they had a special prayer room for the Muslim community, which was just those people, actually, and they let them have this for their own devotions and for their own prayer, but they actually invited me to come to one of their prayer meetings. And they would talk about the difference between Sunni and Shia and the Islamic faith and so forth, and the only thing I had to do was take off my shoes and sit there and listen. Nobody at BRNC had ever been asked to do that.

SL: Wow.

JAA: What they had been asked to do, since most of 'em were all teetotalers, they did not drink, they were in charge of the bar on social events. So they forced these people to learn how to [laughs] . . .

SL: How to fix drinks.

JAA: . . . mix drinks. Yeah. And so forth. And so really, that was

interesting. And I have several standing invitations to come to, you know, to the United Arab Emirates and visit these people, but I guess that'll never happen. [03:40:41] But you know, and another interesting thing that happens—the *Gangut* was a Russian training ship when I was at Dartmouth. This was in 1994. Came and got permission to anchor in the Dart River and pay a visit to BRNC. And the two captains got together and said, "Hey, we've got these people together. Let's have a pass-and-review ceremony, and let's let them do it together." And I have a photograph taken from my office down on this parade field of a squadron of British cadets marching behind a squadron of Russian cadets with their fists clanked and their legs straight and doin' . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . their thing. And that's cooperation. That's peaceful coexistence. So there's hope. [*Laughs*]

SL: There's hope.

JAA: There's hope. And so anyway, another interesting thing—you want me to stop, or you want me to go.

SL: Have we gone an hour?

JAA: No, I don't know. I didn't see what time it . . .

SL: Have we gone an hour, Sarah?

SM: Yeah, we're actually a little over an hour and a half.

SL: Okay. Let's take a break right now.

[Recording stopped]

[03:41:47] SL: Jay, we've covered a lot of ground pretty quickly here in the past hour and a half or so. So let's kind of step back through what we've talked about and what we need to cover. What else we need to cover. So we got you through—well, as far as universities go, a number of higher education places. And I—let's see, where did we end up?

JAA: Well, we didn't say too much about Cambridge. And a lot of interesting things happened at Cambridge because . . .

SL; Okay, well let's . . .

JAA: . . . I was there . . .

SL: . . . talk about Cambridge for a while.

JAA: Cambridge University was, you know, a crème de la crème as far as, you know, universities. And so basically I was accepted, I think, to do my sabbatical there because I was doin' a lot of time sharing, computer aided design lecturing in the classrooms. And that time sharing then, back in [19]72, was a new concept. It had been started at Dartmouth College by Kemeny and Kurtz, and the—this Admiral Calvert I mentioned at the Naval Academy was one of the first presidents to get in bed with them and say,

"Hey, can you help us out? We'd like to do the same thing."

And he made an agreement with Dartmouth College to provide the personnel assistance to install the GE computer that was needed to run the time-sharing system at the Naval Academy, and that led to a lot of—it led to my first textbook. It led to a lot of research opportunity, and it led to goin' to Cambridge University on sabbatical.

[03:43:21] SL: Tell me what time sharing is.

JAA: Okay, time sharing is the initial—back in time—back when computers started, first of all, it was the ability to different computers to share the same mainframe.

SL; Okay.

JAA: And so you shared that computer compel—capability, and then you would basically—it was the introduction to the—using like the web. It was the precursor to everybody getting onto the same file, same access, and so forth. But it started out with just the time sharing, and you would have individual keyboards to time—it—you—running the same computer, the GE system. Was time shared between as many people—grubs as you could put on it. And it was—it—you know, it's—what it replaced was the giant central mainframe computer where you would have a bunch of IBM cards punched that were that thick, and you'd have to take

'em over and leave 'em a day overnight so they would run your computer program, and you go over and pick 'em up and come—that's what it took. That's what you deleted because you could do all that now by timeshare and do it in almost real time.

[03:44:25] SL: So are they—are there slices of time for each computer that's connected?

JAA: No, it's—no, no, it's—no, it's in—it's basically—well, it depends on—if you're doin' it a really high-level, high-memory requirement, there might be. But the—in an educational environment, the requirements really are small as far as this. And so you could basically assign a computer assignment to every student in class, he could go to his own individual computer and run the solution and get the results and turn it in the next morning as opposed to IBM card punching, which would've taken two or three days to go through that process because normally when you do that, you get your printout back, and it has several dozen mistakes.

SL: Right.

JAA: So you say, "Oh my goodness." You gotta do it again. And so the . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . iteration gets pretty lengthy.

SL: Right.

JAA: And so that was a major ups—major step forward. The Dartmouth time-sharing. And the Dartmouth College gets credit for it because Kemeny Kurtz, in effect, was their Ph.D. thesis. They did it. They showed us how to do it.

[03:45:27] SL: Okay so then how does this relate to your time at Cambridge?

JAA: Well, the time at Cambridge I think because I was going to be working on my—I was gonna be completing my first book on computer-aided time analysis, heat-transfer analysis, which had a bunch of timesharing programs in it, and starting on the second one, which was computer graphics for mathematics—mathematical elements of computer graphics. And so I was gonna give a few guest lecturers to the students, to the engineering students and also, basically, work with the researchers there at Cavendish lab and the maths lab there at Cambridge University, and they were publishing papers in the same area of this computer timesharing. And even more so in the mathematical elements of the computer graphics, which was the next step in the computer evolution where you started doing these three-dimensional things of having, you know, displays of entire ships with computer databases. So you'd go in and

manipulate 'em and change 'em and so forth. And it changed everything. And that was—it needed faster computers. It needed a lot of things to happen, both hardware and software. [03:46:33] But I—you know, they never told me why they invited me. But it was interesting. One thing I knew I was for real—this was news to me. Every morning at eleven o'clock throughout the engineering college, they had elevensies because it was eleven o'clock. And what elevensies was was nothing more than coffee hour. But they looked upon it much more—in fact, it was so formal and so required that I actually got a letter from the dean the week I came inviting me to attend elevensies at the college. In effect, he invited me to come to coffee hour, which would look to us. But this is where all the faculty got together and, you know, they knew they were gonna be there, they didn't try to leave phone messages or call 'em on a com—whatever. They just waited until eleven o'clock the next day, and you could usually work out whatever you needed to see them for, and that's what it was for. And it's a very formal way of doing it. And the way the coffee was served is that they had a man in a white jacket [*SL laughs*] and you—and he knew how much cream to put in your coffee, and in England, you always put the cream in first and the coffee second, not the way we do

it. And when I was there, it took him about two days to remember that I didn't want any cream in my coffee, I was a strange bird, so I took mine black. So I had a black cup waiting for me every morning. [*Laughs*]

SL: How cool is that?

JAA: Isn't that—it's interesting.

[03:48:02] SL: So how big of gathering was it? How many bodies were there?

JAA: Bodies? Oh, probably twenty-five, thirty.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: The faculty in the engineering complex, you know.

SL: Right. Okay.

JAA: And so it was enough. It was not overwhelming. It was not so much that you couldn't find a spare table or spare chair to break into a conversation and talk to somebody . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . about something. And my host was Tony Nutbourne, and I'm rea—I'm sure the reason they li—they paired us together was that he'd been in the Royal Navy, and so we had a naval contact. But he was now teaching and lecturing as a guest lecturer on a permanent basis, not really a guest, in basically mathematics and physics. But the crav—the curriculum and the

program at Cambridge is quite a bit different than it is here, so it's kind of hard to compare one to the other. But it's, you know, it's well established in the—it was a treat to be involved. And I was invited, actually, to—during Memorial Day—they call it Remembrance Day, where everybody wears a poppy on—you know, in remembering the death of the wars. And I was invited to head table to a couple of colleges, which means that you had to wear your gown, academic gown, to eat in, which is [*laughs*] kinda hard to do and not make a mess. But they wanted me there sort of to represent the American forces and the contribution that have made—had made in World War II. And I also wonder recently whether they would still do that today. I'm not sure. [03:49:44] When I was at Britannia Royal Naval College, I was invited to be the one to give the toast to the Queen. And that was very easy to do. You had to say five words. You had, "Mr. Vice to the Queen." That's all I had to do. But the symbolism of that was significant between the Americans and the British. And so that was a highlight.

SL: Well, maybe as long as our president didn't have anything to do with it [*JAA laughs*] we could still be [*laughs*] . . .

JAA: Now you're talkin' politics again. That's another—okay, what I wanted to talk to you about, though.

SL: Okay.

[03:50:16] JAA: When we were at vir—well, when it happened again—you talk about accidents. You know. I was again at the officers and faculty club. It was a lunch. Somebody was—the dean's assistant was talking about the fact that this year the exchange between Britannia Royal Naval College and the Naval Academy might not happen because they couldn't get any faculty members who were willing to leave their office, leave their home, leave their work duty, leave their pets, leave whatever to do—be gone for a year. And it rotated. Each—one year would be humanities type courses from political science, English, history, government. They next year it would be technical between math, science, chemistry, physics, and so forth. So this was the year for technology. And the man at the officer's club was saying, "Well, it looks like we're gonna have to cancel that after several years because we just can't find a volunteer this year. You know, people are still workin' on their dissertation, they're still working on research, they still have obligations with summer-type stuff." And so—"Well," I said, "Wait a minute. Do you have to be eligible for sabbatical leave to apply for this?" And turns out I was because it'd just been basically seven years since I . . .

SL: You had come on.

[03:51:30] JAA: Yeah. And they said, "Well, not really, but it helps." But I said, "Okay. Let me talk to Ginger. Let me get"—he said, "Better do it this week 'cause we have to answer them at the end of the week." Well, Ginger sort of said, "Why do we need to do that again?" But then she thought. Said, "Well, the kids are in college. Or Alan Ray is in Virginia Tech, he's taken the dog with him, our Jack Russell terrier."

SL: Yeah.

JAA: "No reason to stay home. Let's go." And we changed homes and offices. And I mentioned, his home was a large country estate where you looked out on fields of sheep, you know, bra—grazing on the pasture line. You know.

SL: Right.

JAA: And then the office, as I mentioned, was in a building the stone—cornerstone of which was laid in 2002 by King Henry V. No, King Henry I, sorry. And so it overlooked the courtyard where you had this parade that I mentioned between the Russians and the British. But also another very interesting thing happened. [03:52:32] We were not too far from the coast, obviously. The Dart River runs right into the gulf—right into the Channel, English Channel. And basically we had heard of the

Slapton Sands disaster in 1944. Which had happened right there at Dartmouth. Slapton Sands was on the English Channel about, oh, five or ten miles at the most where my office was at BRNC. And to make a quick story rev—history review, what had happened was Eisenhower had wanted a practice invasion of Normandy. It turned out that Slapton Sands had a topography which was very similar to Normandy. It had a breach area, then a sort of a lake area behind that, and then more beach area, so you had to sort of land between two water bodies, and you had to learn how to do this. They were gonna have a real practice, live ammunition with bombs falling and guns firing to get these people used to the smells and heat. And they actually removed 30,000 local residents from Southern England in order to make this division to do—this practice thing possible. And so when it got underway, there were four main troop carriers, and people were doing landings and getting into boats and trying to get onto the shore and do four—and by accident there were some German E-boats. Now an E-boat is not a U-boat. A U-boat is a submarine. And E-boat does shoot torpedoes, but it was something that was allowed to be built after World War I. The treaties allowed them to build these kind of boats. And they evidently accidentally stumbled onto this invasion going on at

Slapton Sands. [03:54:29] And they actually thought it was live—you know, they thought they'd join in the party. I mean, heavens, everybody's shootin' guns at everybody. Let's go get 'em. And they attacked. And then the Americans had no clue what they—totally confused. They didn't know who they should shoot at. Was this real? Was this practice? What in the world was happening? It was so dis—such a disaster that the Germans were shooting for real. They actually sunk two of the landing ship—large cruise ships that were loading ships onto the shore, plus they damaged severely two others. And the death toll was over eight hundred.

SL: Whoa.

JAA: Eight hundred killed in that afternoon. And basically the—you know, it was total chaos. And what they had to do, finally, they had to quickly bury the dead in mass graves, unmarked, because they didn't know who else was coming. They had no idea if this was the invasion of Germany they'd been expecting for so long after the Battle of Britain. You know, and so nobody knew exactly what they should do, what they should move. So it turns out that Slapton Sands that happened in [19]44 because the Normandy invasion happened in the spring of [19]44, the real one, and so this was the fiftieth anniversary. We went to BRNC

in [19]93 and came home in [19]94. But in [19]94 they were havin' the reenactment and anniversary—remembrance. And some of the boats that were participating had participated in the 1940 retreat, okay, from the—from Germany, from France, and brought the people back in the—can't even think of the name. What's the movie we just saw?

SL: Dunkirk.

[03:50:16] JAA: Dunkirk. Thank you. *[Laughs]* The Dunkirk. All right, so then who—so here we are fifty years later remembering this tragedy, and Ginger used to walk down in the gardens of Dartmouth when she'd become an expert in how drive a Ford through the narrow lanes and miss the hedgerows, and she was being fairly confident. And so she ran in to a middle aged man once down in the city of Dartmouth walking a Jack Russell terrier. And she says, "Oh, I love Jack Russell terriers. Our son has taken ours to Virginia Tech. We have one at home. Can I pet him?" "Sure, you can." So discussion. And she said, "Well, he vol—he seemed to wanna volunteer." He said, "My father was an American. And I'm sure you never it—would know. I'm not sure really what his real name was. He told my mother his name was Peterman, but I'm not sure that really was his name." But he was one of those military soldiers that fit the description

of being overpaid, oversexed, and over here. And he had fathered—his mother had, you know, had given birth as a result of ya—mating with this soldier, who she thought would come back and marry him after the war was over. Never heard from him again. They don't know if he died or if he —we—died even in maybe this practice invasion of Slapton Sands because that happened very shortly thereafter. Could be. In fact, he walked his Jack Russell out on the beach near Slapton Sands usually once a week just in case he might be near his father.

SL: Right.

[03:58:04] JAA: So basically where are we? The Slpaton Sands memorial was, you know, kind of emotional and interesting. But one of the things that has happened since then was that some deep sea—some scuba diver actually found some British. They—in a sunken tank, Sherman tank . . .

SL: Kay.

JAA: . . . that would been—had been one of the tanks that they were tryin' to land durin' the Slapton Sands practice.

SL: Right.

JAA: And he agreed to—well, he got the government to allow him the permission to raise it and bring it ashore and to leave it there on the shore, the Slapton Sands, and basically the way we saw it so

often is if you go down there—it was very near a fish and chips place where we used to always go for fish and chips, so it . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: We always saw it. So I would al—sometimes stop and just meditate. Just think, I missed this war by maybe ten or twelve years. Had I been born ten or twelve years earlier, you know, I could be out there.

SL: Right.

[03:59:05] JAA: You know. And so the Slapton Sands was never admitted by the you—by the Americans for a long time. They kept it secret. It was only, I think, 1987 or something when they finally, in Arlington, put up a memorial to the Slapton Sands victims. They kept it out of the press for that long. Because once the Germans had seen it, they knew what it was. They could tell the invasion topography, and they could pretty much predict where they were planning to invade, so any secrecy that they were hoping to hold from the Germans, probably gone. And but they went ahead and—as we know from history, went ahead and go—did it. And got away with it. But that's a bit of history that we learned, but it was brought about mainly by a little dog called Jack Russell terrier. And we used to go to the Jack Russell Inn, a place where Jack Russell—he was a reverend.

He was a minister. Ja—he bred dogs on the sideline. He came up with the Jack Russell breed. And he actually, you know, has a restaurant, he has a place where his birth was. You can—it's on that part of the historical English tradition stuff. So we had to go see that. We had to go and eat at Jack Russell Inn. So the Jack Russell part of history is a very important part of us because of that experience . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . with that owner of that Jack Russell who had no idea who his father was. [04:00:30] And so anyway, that's probably enough about that. A—Cambridge University—I could go back, you know, ten years and talk about the Cambridge University experience a little more. But the appreciation of the American contribution—there's an American cemetery at Madingley Road at Cambridge, which is very well done. Most people see the one in France. Not too many come to England and see the one in Cambridge. But you know, the relationship, I just hope that this current political situation doesn't destroy the appreciation and the love and devotion that the countries have for each other.

SL: Yeah, the presentation in France is unbelievable. And you know, when we were there, everywhere we went, there was so much appreciation for America.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: In France.

JAA: Yeah.

SL; For their role.

JAA: Oh yeah.

SL: I mean, it was really touching to have . . .

[04:01:32] JAA: Yeah, it was, yeah, it was. Yeah. As I said, it was also in England where I was given recognition. And I think it was because I was from the Naval Academy. Maybe they just went—took it by alphabetically. [*Laughs*] Ask the first name they came to to come sit with 'em at dinner and say a word or two about the American contribution. But anyway, it was one of those other accidentally—actually overheard a conversation at the officer's club at the Naval Academy that opened up possibilities that you never would dream.

SL: Right.

JAA: Would happen.

SL: It's the little thing.

JAA: Yeah. And you know, I learned that I did not know how to play badminton because they play badminton like they do in the Olympics. You know, whop-whop-whop-whop-whop-whop-whop-whop.

SL: Yeah.

[04:02:14] JAA: I tried to play badminton. I—you know, even the dean, the civilian dean of our engineering department played field hockey. And you say well, that's kind of a female game. What the heck. No, no, no. They played field hockey like the Indians played field hockey. The ball never touched the ground. They would run down the field on the—with the ball on the edge of their paddle.

SL: Right.

JAA: You know, never touchin' the ground until they wanted to hit it. You know, whole different league. And squash. My goodness. I played well at squash at the Naval Academy. I won a oh—a runner-up trophy once in racquetball. But the squash courts are bigger than ours, and the balls are softer. And so the effort to play squash in England is ten times the . . .

SL: Times as . . .

JAA: . . . effort to play squash here. You can't wait for the ball to bounce off the back corner. You've gotta go there and get it.

SL: Get it.

JAA: [*Laughs*] And when you're almost . . .

SL: Always running.

JAA: . . . sixty years old, that begins to be feeling. You begin to feel

it. Yeah. You do.

[04:03:11] SL Okay, so I know what we have not begun to touch on, and that is yours and Ginger's efforts on these books that you guys have published.

JAA: Yeah.

SL: And first of all, I wanna know how or—can you recall what it was in your life that made you start thinking about writing those books?

JAA: Well, it was my cousin, Joey Stewart, who found the letters that had been written between 1850 and 1920, I guess, from the family, between . . .

SL: Hus . . .

JAA: Clot—Clark, Saphronia Clark and her husband, Robert, when they got that award for bein' in the Black Hawk War and came to the Arkansas. And I was able to also look at the Arkansas census report nine—1861. By 1861 R—McCollom, Robert McCollom had gotten his forty acres of grant in about 1842, about twenty years after the black—ten years after the Black Hawk War. And by 1861 he had not forty acres, but he had 120 acres. He had two or three horses. He had several other assets of, you know—and basically he mentioned the birth of the family in it's in—I can give you the—all—it's in the book. It's in the—I

can give you the number in the tax records if you wanna look it up. But basically it said that Robert McCollom was born in New Hampshire. Saphronia Clark was born in New York. Their first two sons, William and Albert, were born in Illinois. And their last son, Ransom, was born in Arkansas. And they gave the dates. So sh—and then I had these letters found by cu—my cousin, who had written to these people at the various positions. So we could pretty much validate that we know—knew the time and knew when the letters were written, and most of the letters before 1860 were "When are you gonna get out that slave stake?" [SL laughs] You know, "How much longer you gonna stay in that slave state? Get the hell out of there." You know, and but that—but anyway . . .

[04:05:48] SL: So when in your life did you have these letters in front of you? When did this interest—what was—what year did you start them?

JAA: Oh, I've had—yeah. Those have been give—I think it—that started—well, I had 'em, and I had 'em file—I didn't have time to look at 'em well before I retired. Because those letters had been available since, I would guess, in the 1870s—1970s, sorry. I keep losin' a hundred years. I'm sorry, 1970.

SL: That's all right.

JAA: But then basically retiring in 1998 from the Naval Academy first gave me the opportunity to go back and reread and see. And it seemed like that—you know, I didn't have all the data, obviously. You never can. But there were enough of these records like the census reports and like the letters from these people and at certain times, certain dates. I think, "It looks like it's pretty well done." And what gave me the idea to—the—what gave me the motivation to do it was a little—there's a little-known research—maybe it's not little known, but people are doing—have done research on white rats in a maze. What they have shown—they—takes the first rat—first time it takes a white rat a long time to figure out where the food is. Keep putting it back—tries. But after he learns it, then he can go to it the first time. You take an offspring from that white rat, put him at the end of the maze, he will go to the food the first time. In other words, you know things when you were born that you don't know you know.

SL: That's right.

[04:07:22] JAA: And so when I come to a stopping point, and I say, "I wonder why he did that or what caused that," and I wake up at four o'clock in the morning, and I say, "Oh, obviously. I know what it is." And I don't know if—where that nay—that thought

comes from, but I—might well come from my genes or when I was born. I might have brought it into this world without even knowing it. That may be true, it may be not true. It may be like some of my theological arguments. [*Laughter*] It may be farfetched. But anyway, that, I guess was—I would kid Ginger about "I've gotta get up before I forget this because I may not know where it is" . . .

SL: That's right.

JAA: . . . "in the brain cells again." So I'd get up at four o'clock in the morning and start writing this stuff. And that was the way I did it. I found it—course, my father used to get me up at four o'clock to go to work at the greenhouse, you know, so I was used to—that was nothing new as far as routine.

[04:08:12] SL: There's not stopping a workaholic, is there?

JAA: [*Laughs*] That's right. And so it's, you know—but now my next—my last book on coming together—I'm—I don't have letters, and I don't have much personal information on the families of my two lovely daughter-in-laws, the Japanese lady and the Indian lady from Mumbai. Naomi and Saffryn. Naomi and Sheetal. Saffryn's the daughter. Sorry. So I've done a little research, and I've come up with some interesting ideas, but this one's gonna have to be pretty much on me. I don't think I

can blame knowing stuff from these points that I might have come into the world with because I don't have the genetics.

SL: You don't have genetic connection, yeah.

JAA: I don't have those—yeah, I don't have those connections but they . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: Whatever it is that bri—that transfers from one generation to the other, probably don't have it. But anyway, this'll probably be my last effort at writing books because this takes us up to our paren—our children's families.

SL: Right.

JAA: That's a good place to stop.

[04:09:25] SL: So about how long does it—I mean, did each of the books take about the same length of time?

JAA: No. No, I probably wrote the first three books before I published the first one because I had no idea where one would start and one would stop. I had no idea how much information I would have here. And I did shift, as in the process of writing—I'm glad I hadn't published the first one because I found something in the third that should've gone in the first one. And so it was hard to get it right. So I think basically I probably worked ten years on the first three. But then I published 'em fairly quickly. And I

probably spend maybe—well, Ginger will say I spend more, but maybe twenty-five or thirty hours a week, counting the hours at Starbucks. You know, usually two or three hours every morning at Starbucks. But that's been very useful because so many people now know what we're doing, and they know where we sit, and they come and ask how the book's going, and then they have, "Hey, have you ever thought about this?" Or, "My grandmother did that." You know, they—it's a perfect place to get some other ideas that might be better than mine. So
[laughs] . . .

[04:10:38] SL: Yeah—so there is some fiction in your books, right?

JAA: Yes. There has to be some fiction unless you say that my mental ideas were there all along, so I didn't have to fictionalize them.

SL: [Laughs] Right.

JAA: But that's my white rat story.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: But no, yes. When you have dialogue, it has to be fiction. And all novelists have this problem. I mean, you're gonna—you can't just say A, B, C, one, two, three. You gotta have somebody say—have a conversation. Have a reaction to what's just happened or what's been said. And you have no idea how that

would come out. You have to visualize what it might have been. And that's fiction. And so these—you call these novels historical fiction, which sounds like a misnomer, a contradiction . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . .in terms. But you can't call it fictional history. [*Laughs*] You gotta call it historical fiction, right? And so the history is true, but the . . .

SL: Conversations.

JAA: . . . behavior between it and what might have happened and what might have happened is never recorded in the history, is sup—is supposition. Okay. [04:11:54] But it's made to fit the boundary conditions. And I know the boundary conditions about birth and date and deaths and letters and stuff so that the fiction basically is easy to write. The doc—the language, the, you know between two people—well, I got to this latest book—I was tryin' to write about the courtship between my older son, David, who had spent two years at Obihiro after he graduated from Stanford and fallen in love with this cabin attendant from the All Nippon Airlines, ANA. And he basically went back after he was working on his master's degree at UCSD coming back from two years in Obihiro teachin' English to the students. He started writing again to Naomi, Naomi Iwasawa, who he'd briefly seen in

Obihiro, and she had briefly seen him a couple of times. She'd seen him try to play hockey, in fact, because a Japanese student invited him to play hockey. He can play hockey about as well as I can play hockey. [*Laughter*]

[04:13:01] SL; yeah.

JAA: But anyway, and she thought he was a terrible skater because she was so good that she had almost trained for the Olympics in the speed skating action . . .

SL: Wow.

JAA: . . . in spay—in Japan. She was also a pitcher for the Japanese softball team, so she was a good athlete.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: But anyway, they started—she had gone to Tokyo to begin to try to qualify to be an ANA attendant. She had to improve her English. She on—could only fly domestic because she needed more English to fly the international flights, which was a blessing in disguise because that kept her in Japan. [*SL laughs*] And so she was—you know, David went back to Tokyo to work for the industrial bank of Japan for a branch that lease—rent, bought, and leased airplanes, commercial aircraft back to their own—back to the airplane industries. They actually owned the airplane, and they would lease them to, you know, Japan Airlines

or whoever was flyin' 'em.

[04:14:00] SL: Okay, now wait a minute, are we trespassing on Ginger's stuff, here?

JAA: We might be. Yeah. [*SL laughs*] We might be.

SL: Well, why don't we . . .

JAA: Okay.

SL: Why don't we try to get back to—let's talk about your first book.

JAA: Okay, first book.

SL: And your second book.

JAA: All right.

SL: And your third book, and your . . .

[04:14:19] JAA: All right, first book starts out with some fiction.

SL: Kay.

JAA: Okay. I knew that the Clarks were usually clerics. I knew that the English—that—the English church is—had become the Episcopal Church after the revolution, and I knew that the Erie Canal had opened in 1825. And so I knew that, therefore, the people who had ke—the McColloms obviously came from Scotland.

SL: Right.

JAA: That name was obvious. So they—I started them in New Hampshire at the turn of the century, 1800. I didn't try to

advance it farther, although I do have—been in correspondent with another person who's in—claims that the initial McColloms were spelled with a *U* and not a *O*—*C*—it's *L-L-O-M* or *L-L-U-M*.

SL; Yeah, I think I member that.

JAA: And he's got a series of tombstones which indicate these people. And these people were actually kicked out of England, these McCollums, which I don't think are the same, but anyway, he thinks they might be. But the time's okay because of previous generations. And they were kicked out of England and—for religious—what's the term? Well, they were—for religious reasons, whatever they might have been. Sent to America. And the ship was diverted because of a storm, and they ended up landing where they didn't expect to land. I think the captain had the authority to sell these people as slaves.

SL: Whoa.

[04:16:01] JAA: Okay. And according to this other research. This is not in my books. I think that he still may be off on a tangent. But anyway, that—those people would've been extricated from English and their—they were kicked—they know the date when these people were kicked out. And they were named McCullums, and the McCullums, you know, went on to be certain things. But basically, my McColloms became fairly prominent in New

England, in New Hampshire, and in Connecticut, and so forth. And I think mine probably—whether they came actually on the date when I started the book in the early 1800s, and it started in New Hampshire, I don't know. But they were—I had to get the Clarks and the McColloms together. And the Clarks are the ones, if you wanna really stretch the imagination, you can take the Clark family and it si—from Henry Clark, who's the father of Sephronia Clark, who is my great-great-grandmother. See, everybody in his ha—family was Jeremiah. His father was Jeremiah Clark.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: So you—you've—did I see—say this already?

SL: Yeah.

JAA: You go back . . .

SL: That—keep goin'.

[04:17:18] JAA: Oh, we said that. Well, you can go back generations all the way to the 1500s, and you go Jeremiah Clark, this, this, this, this, you know, back. And you get back to about the, you know, 1500. But then according to Wikipedia, [*laughs*] okay.

SL; Kay.

JAA: Okay. It's possible to relate Saphronia Clark's great-great-grandmother going back seven or eight more generations to

Joan, the princess of Wales, the daughter of Edward I. King Edward. Now if you wanna believe that, you can. But I—I'm not about to try to find—because the problem with that is, the Clark name changed in the process. It went from . . .

SL: *E-R* . . .

JAA: . . . no *E* on the end to *E* on the end to *A-I-C* on the end because these were the cleric, and that back, back, back. I don't have that ability to research that. I'm sorry, I can't do that. But there is a—it's kinda fun to think that you might be an ancestor of, you know, Joan.

[04:18:28] SL: Have you ever done the cotton swab on the DNA?

JAA: Yes, and it's totally useless.

SL; It is?

JAA: It is for me. Since I had done so much, I already knew more than that cotton swab told me. They simply gave me a pie chart and say, "Hey, 20 percent of your ancestors lived here and" . . .

SL: Oh.

JAA: . . . "30 percent here and so on."

SL: They don't give you any of the . . .

JAA: No—well, now I think they might. Somebody was saying . . .

SL: Some tree.

JAA: There's a new one who gives you twice as much information.

And maybe now they're willing to, but you're gonna reach very quickly a point where they're gonna charge you for it.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: 'Cause they're in it to make money.

SL: Right.

JAA: And there's no way to check the veracity of what they give you. So you're at their mercy. I don't really trust it.

SL: Well.

JAA: I'd just soon make it up. [*Laughs*]

[04:19:07] SL: Well, it's . . .

JAA: With my own . . .

SL: It does make for good . . .

JAA: . . . boundary . . .

SL: . . . story.

JAA: . . . conditions. Well, with my own boundary conditions, Okay.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: And if I wake up some morning and something tells me that "You're totally wrong, Adams. You know, it should've been this way." Okay. Then I'll have to go back to my publisher and say, "Can I do a second edition?" [*Laughs*]

SL: Right. Right.

JAA: But yeah, so—I'm tryin' to think of some examples. Basically,

when we started some—in my first book—you asked me about a first book. Okay. Robert McCollom did not like to go to church. Robert McCollom, my great-great-great grandfather. But he did go once or twice and found that Saphronia Clark, the daughter of the cleric who was at that church—and it was Episcopalian now, not Church of England.

SL: Right.

[04:20:00] JAA: Because of the revolution. They got sweet upon one another as one would say, so basically you generated a few conversations—this but—before the letters. The letters didn't start until about twenty years later when they actually got into—but there were some letters—when they wanted to get married they both went to—they first went down the canal—Robert McCollom—with Clark because Clark had gotten into some theological trouble with his superiors at the church in Albany. He wanted to be more liberal. Okay. He was two hundred years ahead of his time. And so they wanted to explore the West. Well, the West to them was to go as far as Indiana. That's pretty far West from Albany, New York, but you—you know, they had the Erie Canal. They went down to the National Road, parts of the National Road were finished. They ended up in Terre Haute. And the Clarks both—I'm not sure they would've come at

the same time, but I have them traveling on sort of stagecoaches when they get on the National Road, sort of basically together as a family. But they get there, and Henry Clark from a preacher who was in New Harmony—and if you know the history of New Harmony, Indiana, it was about these religious people who had escaped the . . .

SL: Persecution.

[04:21:22] JAA: Yeah, the persecution in the throes—they wanted to start their own version . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . .of church. And they did. And that—New Harmony's a very interesting place. But basically there was this person who had had to even leave New Harmony because he couldn't stand all the boundary conditions placed upon him. And he had gone up and started his own campground, i.e, Siloam Springs. Siloam Springs Campground. And he would allow his pe—traveling people who were giving their sermons or their theory or theology that traveling, you know, preachers the right to rent his facilities 'cause he had the campgrounds, he had the pavilions, he had so forth. And that's—he was making good money because this was the second one—the great second revolution of religious thought that came out about that time. There's another name for it. It

escapes me right now. But I made a lot of stories up because I had been in a church, seen a lot of evangelical revival type people come through.

SL: Enlightenment maybe?

JAA: Enlightenment I think is the word, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[04:22:40] JAA: And somehow Enlightenment—remembering my childhood exposures to these guys, these—doesn't sound like the right word, but I think it was Enlightenment, you're right. And so he does this, and he starts a fairly successful endeavor. And in fact, when he died, he left a farm to Saphronia, who was now living in Arkansas. And his—her younger brother was his—wa—who was Henry—Ransom Henry McCollom—and he went by his middle name, too, so his tombstone says Henry McCollom—stayed in Indiana when she was in Arkansas. And he would keep writing to her. These are the letters I have. This is true. He was writing to say, "Your farm is being overrun by not having the proper type of fences. You need to do something. You're renting it out to people who are not paying you and so on. And I'm trying to look after it for you." This was her younger brother. And she was saying, "Well, I hate to sell it because my father gave it to me. I might have to come back to Indiana, I

never know, the way things going"—you know, and so anyway, that was pretty much fictional possibility because I had nothing, really, to document that the revival aspect. Although it was pretty good that there was a lot of revivalism going on and a lot of different denominations tryin' to convert, and there were a lot of customers out there, and so I think it fit what was going at that time of American history. [04:24:15] And so they finally, then, were able to get married. He was in Illinois when he got drafted into the militia, and that led to the Black Hawk . . .

SL: Black Hawk . . .

JAA: . . . War, and that was 1882, so they had to wait till that was over, but after that was over, they went back to Illinois. They did finally get married. Her ill mother, who she was sort of staying home, did pass away, and so that released her from her family obligation, so they finally got married, and they had two sons in Illinois, William and Albert. [04:24:46] When this unexpected letter came from the government saying that you have been awarded forty acres for you participation in the Black Hawk War Illinois militia—and be advised that you might have squatters, you might have this, but it's yours. You can claim it. You have to pay the taxes, you have to occupy it. And so let us know what you're gonna do. They went. Okay. They stopped

at Lewisburg. Most people in Arkansas don't know where Lewisburg is because it's no longer there. It's near Morrilton, but there is a—right by the train station in Morrilton, if you go to the little museum there in the train station, you'll learn all about Lewisburg. And there's some paintings—and I have a picture of one of the paintings in here—that show you that Lewisburg was, you know, pretty upscale for that time in Arkansas, for Pete's sakes, you know. [04:25:34] They had churches, they had hospitals, they had, you know, civilized things goin' on. And so they had to stay in Lewisburg because Robert was getting cuttings from the apple trees that he had planted in Illinois on his brother's farm, and he was shipping them to him by ship.

SL: Arkansas.

JAA: On—down the Mississippi and up the Arkansas, and he could get to 'em. Then he could put 'em on his wagon and go over the Pig Trail. And it may not have been the Pig Trail at that time, but he said that a lot of pigs [*SL laughs*]*—he wrote letters about all the pigs. [Laughter]* So it should be called the Pig Trail if it were not. But anyway.

[04:26:07] SL: So did all that stuff end up in Lincoln and Prairie Grove or . . .

SL: Well, apple growing was very big in Lincoln and Prairie Grove.

Fact, they had a brand of apples called the black apple, which I don't know if it's still there or not. But Robert McCollom did most of his marketing in Western Arkansas and Northeastern Texas. And there are still apple blossom festivals in Northeast Texas, I'm sure, which are using the orchards that Robert McCollom made possible.

SL: There was a—it seems like I've got images of really huge barrel making and dry—apple drying facilities.

JAA: Yeah. I think you're right . . .

SL: At the turn of the cent . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: Like 1900s or something.

JAA: Yeah, I think so, yeah. I think so.

SL: Yeah.

[04:27:04] JAA: And I think that—you know, and app—he was not alone in his apple producing. It turned out to be a pretty, you know, popular and, you know, suitable thing to do. But yeah, you had to preserve the apples. The rails came into Fayetteville about 1881, 1882.

SL: Okay.

JAA: And so that opened up the possibility of shipping apples all over to the surrounding state areas. And in fact, that's one thing that

my father, Jim Adams, did when he was in Arkansas. It's kinda interesting the way they came into Arkansas, goin' back in my anniversary—my father was Ray Adams, his father was James *A-L-L-E-N* Adams, and they called him Jim. So I call him Jim so it won't confuse me. His father was *A-L-L-E-N*. They emigrated from Kentucky. They came into Carthage, Missouri. He—and in Missouri, somehow was inducted or forced into the Union militia. Civil War. And he never understood why. It ended up se—bein'—he just thought he was joinin'—well, I don't think he knew who—which [*laughs*] side he was joinin' on because they were just across the street from one another in Missouri . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: It was, you know, everybody . . .

SL; It was crazy.

JAA: . . . for himself.

SL: yeah.

[04:28:28] JAA: And so he basically had come into Arkansas as a member of the cavalry. Just like Ransom had, or just like Albert had for the Confederacy. And he was then—after the war, he'd actually served some time with the Union cavalry in Fort Smith. And down around where Albert was incarcerated when he was captured at the end of the Civil War as a Confederate. And I

have a sketch of the prison in Little Rock in—where he died as a Confederate prisoner.

SL: Wow.

[04:29:08] JA: And the tombstone that they put up on his behalf without the body because they never could find his body because it was buried with two or three other people, and they moved everything when they were building the capitol of . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . the state of Arkansas. And so that's an interesting story to write. And most of it is factual, but I had to put a little bit of supposition [*laughs*] supposition in there.

SL: Well, it reads better.

JAA: It's got—yeah. It's gotta read better but—because, you know, they were my relatives, and I think they would probably said what I would've said in this situation. That's where a lot of it comes from. If I put myself—I've written it—put myself in this situation. Now, what would you say to What's-his-face in behalf of—you know, response to what—'cause some of the funniest things in the book we have these letters from this guy, I think, Mr. Mills. He came to visit the McColloms in Fayetteville, right here in Cato Springs. And he lived in Ottumwa, Kansas, which is almost up to Kansas City . . .

SL: Wow.

JAA: . . . because Saphronia's younger sister, Rosetta, had married Hamilton Smith. And Hamilton Smith was a very talented man. Hamilton Smith and—was in Ottumwa. He was tryin' to establish a university. It was called Western Christian University. It did exist for a while. He was saving people from mass murder in places like Lawrence, Leavenworth, Kansas, because in his town of Ottumwa, he invited people to come in and have refuge in his place. [04:30:56] And everybody was using Rosetta's house, which was Saphronia's younger sister, sort of for their own purposes to get this town started. Ottumwa no longer exists. Ottumwa never made it. And the reason is that Hamilton Smith, I think, if you read the letters that Rosetta wrote to her sister, was murdered by two unknown men because you read the legals—transcript, which Rosetta had done, and she went to court, tried to explain—two men met Hamilton Smith before he was getting ready to go back to Terre Haute, I think, but anyway, to try to get some extra support for his activities in Ottumwa, Kansas. The story that goes in the court was Hamilton Smith saw a squirrel in a tree. These two young men visiting him had their shotguns. He said, "Loan me your shotgun. I wanna go kill that squirrel." He walks around the

back of the house. They hear a gunshot. Nothing else happens. Few minutes later they walk around, and they find that Hamilton smith is dead. Shot. Well, they were saying, "Well, maybe he was blowing the smoke out of his gun when it went off." But there was only one shot.

[04:32:16] SL: Yeah.

JAA: If he'd shot the squirrel, he couldn't be alive—I mean, you know, but . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: It doesn't make any sense. It's just—it's a simplistic murder mystery. You could put it on TV and nobody would believe it because it's so obvious. But any—and so basically, he actually was murdered, I think, but the judge said accidental death. So Rosetta had lost all of her investments, all of her—her husband. She—Rose—and she—and Robert was try—Robert McCollom in Arkansas, right here, was tryin' to send her help, care packages, to survive. And this is all the way to Kansas City. And basically, one of the first shipments that they made, they thought that Rosetta had received it. They found out in—later, several months later, it never had come. Somebody had absconded with it. It got stolen. So he said, "Okay, you know, William and Ransom, saddle up, get the wagons ready, we're goin' back to

Roberta—to Ottumwa, and you're gonna take these apples and take these [*unclear word*] and take this meat and everything, and you deliver it. And if anybody comes and approaches you, shoot the damn people. You know. They're probably renegades, or they're probably Union soldiers, or they're probably who knows what."

[04:33:36] SL: Wild, wild West.

JAA: Yeah. Well, it wa—well, yeah. Because the family that they rescued from the can—bloody Kansas has a name for a good reason. That's what they call it. Bloody Kansas.

SL; Right.

JAA: But this was not a place to live. They would shoot you for whatever reason. But like ha—and I think they shot Hamilton Smith.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Probably for the reason that they didn't want all that high falutin' education college in their vicinity. You know, that would destroy their whatever. So that's an interesting—and that was a hard part to write, but when I'd—get back to my initial story. This Mills guy had visited in the McCollom's farm south of Fayetteville for a few weeks, and he was going back to Ottumwa. And he said, "How you gonna get there?" And he said, "Oh, I usually

walk. I can get there. [*SL laughs*] It's no problem." And he writes a letter back with his experiences of tryin' to walk from Fayetteville, Arkansas, to Ottumwa, Kansas. And he has to cross rivers. He has to find a place to sleep. He had to find something to eat. [*Laughs*] And he said he almost—you know, he sounds like he almost died more than once just because of the elements he was dealing with. And he was also one of these people in Ottumwa that they were sending relief to because they knew he had been—made it back. But the letters about the di—and I didn't make this up. This i—these are letters from this guy tellin' about his trip by foot from Fayetteville back to Ottumwa, Kansas.

SL: Wow.

[04:35:10] JAA: And so that you can read with a little faith that it's right. But he was a—he—and they had heard that a few months after he got there, lightning had struck his house and burned it all . . .

SL: Oh. [*Laughter*]

JAA: And you know, I mean, this guy—incredible. He's hangin' in there, but I don't know how much longer he was able to do.

SL: Wow.

JAA: Yeah. So anyway, yeah, that's the upcoming—well, no, that's

basically in book one. Yeah. That's near the end of *Apple Blossoms*. So I had a lot of funny things to write about and a lot of unbelievable things to write about and sev—a few things to supp—is all—suppose that might have been happening. But you know the end. You know how it's gonna come out. You know the beginning. So you—if it goes this way or this way, that doesn't make a lot of difference. I know where I'm going. I know what the result is, so it's not a fake history.

[04:36:05] SL: Okay. What about the second book?

JAA: The second book is *Frog Gigging*. And in England, most people look at you with a blank stare if you say frog gigging. I say, well, you have to grow up in Arkansas to know what frog gigging is. And you know, yo—the frog—you take a spear or a gig, and you take a light, and you go out, and you shine the light in the frog's eyes, and when he's frozen, you gig him. And you get a pan of 'em, and you come back and cut off the legs and cook them in cornmeal. They taste like chicken for breakfast the next day.

SL: That's right.

JAA: What you're tasting is corn meal. [*Laughs*] That's—but that's frog gigging. And so *Frog Gigging*, as you can see, is basically the story of Albert McCollom, who was the middle child of Robert

and Sefronia when they moved from Illinois into Arkansas. He volunteered to be in the cavalry. He was in Stirman—Stirman's from Fayetteville—Colonel Stirman's branch of his sav—cavalry. He—and basically his story is how he spent Civil War. He was in Prairie Grove battle. His cavalry was cut off. He came back to Fayetteville, probably West Street. He wanted to avoid the square because he knew the Union might be there. And they were burning—but it was the Confederates that were burning things as they left tryin' to keep the Unions from . . .

SL: From getting . . .

JAA: . . . getting it.

SL: . . .any of the stuff. Yeah.

[04:37:27] JAA: But anyway, he came back, and he walked in down here at the homestead of the McColloms and all—his wife, Saphronia almost had a heart attack, but I made that up. I don't know if that's true or not. But what would you expect if you knew your hus—your chi—your son had been fighting in a war in Prairie Grove, and Prairie Grove lost [*laughs*], you know, and you expect him to come walking back unhurt? Reason he was able to do that was because he got separated from the regular unit that was retreating west through Gravette and coming in that way, and they were gonna re—meet again at

Devil's Den. That was their stage for recuperating and restaging. And he could get to Devil's Den from here a lot quicker than they could from out there in the eastern part . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . of Arkansas. So he stayed home for a while. But then he went back, and when he went back, they ended up being shipped—he went back with his horse until they got to eastern Arkansas, and they couldn't feed the horse, didn't have enough feed for them. It was hard to get 'em across the Mississippi River. They sent 'em back home. They said, "Don't worry, your horse will be taken care of." Never heard from the horse again.

SL: Of course.

[04:38:41] JAA: Until . . .

SL: Oh.

JAA: . . . about three months later, he happened to be in the fence in their gar—in their farm. He was back! Like Lassie come home. You know, he—nobody knows how he got back and who brought him back and—you know, but the horse made it. Unfortunately, Ransom did not. But he was caught in several of the classic Tennessee battles that you can read about if you want to. Ginger doesn't like to read that part of the book. But he was caught in the Vicksburg Siege for forty-four days with Grant

advancing from the east and the navy with the navy ships on the Mississippi River that pounded 'em from the west. And he had always suffered from the chills. All—several of his letters represent how the chills had come back, and he was sort of in bed for two or three days, but he's all right now, and he's comin'—but you lie in those foxholes with the rain and the mud and the shells bursting above you for forty-four days, you're not gonna be too well. [SL laughs] But he did survive. [04:39:47] And he was captured, but he was then traded. And you know, in the Civil War, when you were traded, you were paroled, which means you can not go back and fight until you're exchanged for an equal number of Union soldiers who had the same treatment. And that was the honor system. I can't believe how that worked. Course the Confederates did not always believe it and use it because the battle of the—in the Chattanooga in Tennessee showed later that there were several survivors of the Vicksburg Siege that were back in fighting which had not been corru—had not been, you know, transferred for.

SL: Right.

JAA: But he was able to come home. And he needed to come home. He had an—probably had pneumonia.

SL: Ransom?

JAA: No, Albert.

SL: Oh, Albert.

JAA: Albert.

SL: Kay.

[04:40:33] JAA: Ransom's my great-grandfather.

SL: Okay.

JAA: Albert came back, but ran into Stirman again in a pool hall. [*SL laughs*] Now probably not in the pool hall, but Stirman, you know, Stirman made it back, and somehow Stirman did not find his way back to his unit in Mississippi because he had come home for a similar reason. And they had a home up here on College Avenue, you know. You can read about Stirman. His house was right there next to the Church of—what is it?

SL: Church of Christ?

JAA: What—what's the church just a block down from the Baptist Church toward town on the West side?

SL: Yeah. First Christian.

JAA: Yeah. Christian Church. That's it.

SL: First Christian.

JAA: Christian church. And so then basically . . .

LS: Now that's not the original First Christian church.

JAA: No. No, no . . .

SL: But yeah.

JAA: But—yeah, no. but anyway that—from now, I think, his house was there.

SL: Right.

JAA: Maybe even before the church might've been built.

SL: Right.

JAA: But that's the location of where the property was. [04:41:26]

So anyway, so how do you get him back? We know that he died—now we start at the end. The end of the story is, he dies of an undiagnosed illness—the fever, they called it—in a Union prison in Little Rock. We know the date. How did he get there? Well, he had written his letter from Fort Smith a few months earlier sayin' that, "Sounds like they're gonna move us to Little Rock. We're fine. We haven't met the"—you know, the people that tend to attack anybody anywhere. They were sort of glad to be protected by the Union soldiers even though they were incarcerated in jail. So basically my story is that Stirman, who knew how—he was sort of being the spy but doin' it from here, and he knew that there—Union was gettin' ready to come up to Shreveport on the Red River, the Battle of the Red River and this battle—there was gonna be some conflict goin' on, and he was not sure that the Confederates were aware of what the Union

was gettn' ready to do. Even Farragut, after he finished with Vicksburg, turned around and was gonna come up to Shreveport on the Red River. Turned out his—many of his boats didn't make it because the river was not deep enough, but that's another story. [04:42:42] And so they had the situation—so I had to say—this is not—this is—I have no documation—documentation of. That they ran into each other in the pool hall on East Dickson—all—[SL laughs] west—yeah, East Dickson Street—weh—yeah, East Dickson Street. And they recognized each other. And Stirman said, "Hey. Have you been exchanged for yet?" And he said, "I don't know. I've been gone too long. I don't know if I can go back or not." He said, "Well, you can go back as a spy, but you gotta be careful. And we got these records of the movements of these Union plans to move up into Shreveport, and on the Red River. You've gotta get these to the Confederate forces to warn them because they're still several weeks away." So he and a friend, actually, from Fayetteville, were given the ability, and somehow they were captured very early, even before they got to Fort Smith. And my supposition is that Jane Wilcox's—Jane Wilcox was the sweetheart of William. The Union—Jane Wil—father was the Union sympathizer. W illiam told Jane, told her father, that Albert was coming, and

I'll bet you it was that father, the Union father, who arranged for them to be captured before they got to Fort Smith, knowing that if they got much farther and were discovered as spies, they didn't have a chance in hell of surviving. That's my theory. I have no proof that that might've been the case. But for— anyway, they were captured, somehow. They ended up in prison in Fort Smith, and then they were shipped to Little Rock, and then that was the end of it. He didn't make it past that. So we know he was in Fort Smith. He have letters from him in Fort Smith. We know he was in Little Rock. We have letters from Little Rock. We know he died. We have letters from friends who wrote to his parents because he'd asked 'em to.

[04:44:38] SL: That's it.

JAA: What else can you do? [*Laughs*] Okay. Well, anyway.

SL: Well, you know, one of the stories that I found fascinating in—I think it was in *Under Glass*—is talking about the McIlroy Bank.

And early Fayetteville . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: And . . .

JAA: With Stark.

SL; . . . all the shenanigans . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . at the bank.

JAA: Well, it was—yeah, it was the Union officer Stark who got the McIlroy bank in trouble.

SL; Yeah.

JAA: Because he—and he absconded with the funds. And it took McIlroy Sr. about three or four years to recover from that loss, financial loss, as I read the history.

[04:45:18] SL: Well, now what was the story about the wagon of gold?

JAA: Yeah. The wagon of gold.

SL: Down on the Mulberry somewhere.

JAA: Yeah. I read about that. I didn't really find a convenient way to work it in. There were some other gold stories that were easy to document. The Indian agencies from Washington, to try to compensate the Native Americans for their land that had been purchased . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . was go—was headed—did have a shipment of gold on the Arkansas River that the ship blew up, and they were able only to recover a fraction of that, but that's a different story totally.

SL; Yeah.

JAA: Yeah, I don't know about this gold here. I don't know. I . . .

SL: Left it to come back later and get it, and it was . . .

JAA: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Right.

SL: This is . . .

JAA: Yeah, that's right, that's . . .

SL: Hayden's . . .

JAA: Hayden . . .

SL . . . grandfather.

JAA: Yeah, right. That's right. Yeah. I just—yeah—I remember that, but I didn't have a way to put it into the Adams events in history.

SL: Yeah.

[04:46:31] JAA: 'Cause you know, I think basically Hayden McIlroy had a brother who lived over basically on Pig Trail over there in that county in Arkansas. And I think I have pictures of him when they went out West to do some vacationing and so forth. But he—you know, there were a lot of stories with McIlroy family. And I'm not—I guess it was Hayden's grandfather who had a half-breed Indian wife. And this is when they were still living here in Arkansas, I think. Or maybe it was before they migrated to Arkansas, but anyway, he had an Indian wife that he just had gotten tired of. And he put her on a horse and gave her a couple of bags of gold and hit the horse on the rump, and off

she went. [*Laughs*] And that—so gettin' rid of Indian spouses was not too hard to do in those days, apparently.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: But you have to take that story with a grain of salt, too, but . . .

SL: Right. It . . .

JAA: That's the only McIlroy connection that I sort of got in there because that all happened well before my mother's sister got involved in the McIlroy story.

[04:47:46] SL: Right. Gosh, I thought I'd read that story in your book about the wagon. But I guess I read it from somewhere . . .

JAA: Well, now it—you know, there again, it—things that I have written . . .

SL: There was gonna be a . . .

JAA: Yeah.

SL: . . . run on the bank.

JAA: Yeah. I think maybe I did write that, and he hid it, right?

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Is that it? Okay. I think somewhere that story came out. I—yeah. I guess you're right. I need to go back and read my own books. [*SL laughs*] I been writing them too fast. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, you've written a lot.

[04:48:19] JAA: Yeah. Yeah, that's what Ginger tells me. Yeah, I— well, I—it's a lot easier than writing—well, it's a lot more difficult than writing textbooks. I wrote three textbooks before I left the Naval Academy. And those are so much easier. Well, first of all, you write those from the left side of the brain. You're simply doing the analytical . . .

LS: Right.

JAA: . . . scientific stuff, mathematics. Whereas novels you write from the right side of the brain. You get all these conflicting story. Because when you write a textbook, you write chapter one—it's done. Nothing can happen to change chapter one because the equations are right, the assumptions are right, the boundary conditions are right. You can write chapter two. But in a novel you do that, and suddenly in chapter three, you're writing about somebody who died in chapter one. And so [laughs] now you gotta go back and do the whole thing over again.

SL: Right.

JAA: It's hard. It's much harder to do. But—and you do forget, even within the same book, much less three books downstream. I—that was probably what I should do is to reread them. But then the trouble is if you reread them, then you say, well . . .

SL: Then you wanna get right . . .

JAA: . . . do I wanna . . .

SL: . . . back in . . .

JA: Yeah, do I . . .

SL: Yeah.

JAA: . . . wanna do a revision or second edition or . . .

SL: Right.

JAA: . . . whatever. I think probably, you know, we'll wait and see how this one comes out with the children.

SL: Yeah.

[04:49:43] JAA: Okay. It's four o'clock.

SL: Well . . .

JAA: You can wrap it up. [*Laughs*]

SL: Okay. All right.

JAA: I'll answer any more que—see, you're supposed to be answering—asking me questions. I haven't heard a question.

[*Laughs*] Yes, I did. I just heard one about the McIlroys. I'm sorry.

SL: Well, I've . . .

JAA: Okay.

SL: I've tried to clarify a few things.

JAA: Yep.

SL: The—I guess—I'm tryin' to think if there's something that we dropped that I would know that we've dropped. I'll tell you what's gonna happen. We're gonna wrap this up, and you're gonna think . . .

JAA: Oh, always. Always. And I know right now I know where it is. It's written down on my notebook that I've been workin' on for the past few weeks.

SL: Yeah.

JAA: Things that I wanted to cover. I'm sure there' are half a dozen of 'em in there that we've totally bypassed.

[04:50:32] SL: Are you worn out?

JAA: No.

SL: Well, do you wanna grab the book, and maybe we can go another thirty minutes?

JAA: Okay. Let me just see if I'm right. Let me see if can find some other things . . .

SL: Okay.

JAA: . . . I have not done.

SL: All right.

JAA: Are we leaving the camera here.

SL: Sarah—Yeah. We'll be right back.

[End of interview 04:50:52]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]

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