

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

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Arkansas Memories

Andrew Kilgore
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford
February 25, 2020
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 in the Pryor Center archives. 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 and video recordings 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 ten 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 ten 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 17th 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.
- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing; and
 - annotations for clarification and identification.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Scott Lunsford interviewed Andrew Kilgore on February 25, 2020, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: So let's see now. Today is February the 25th, 2020.

Andrew Kilgore: It is, and it is also the last day of Mardi Gras.

Tomorrow is Ash Wednesday.

SL: Um—so let's see. I can't get that right now. Um. Andrew Kilgore. What—and your middle name is?

AK: Wilson.

SL: Andrew Wilson Kilgore, and I'm Scott Lunsford, and we're from Pryor Center in your studio here in Fayetteville, Arkansas. And we're gonna embark on an Arkansas Memories—um—interview. And just to give you an overall picture of that, I really wanna start with your earliest memories, and we'll take you up to the present day.

AK: Okay.

SL: And so I know that's a lot, and it's really a short amount of time, even though we're gonna spend all day doing this. So I really want you to tell your story the way you want it known, and I'll just try to keep you moving.

AK: Okay.

SL: Um—so we'll give you a copy of—of the—uh—of the video . . .

AK: Okay, great.

SL: . . . for you to look at. We'll transcribe it.

AK: Okay.

SL: And really, you could probably just look at the video, and if you see anything in there that you don't want in your story . . .

AK: Okay.

SL: . . . you just tell us.

AK: Okay.

SL: And we'll take it out for you.

AK: I'm pretty open.

SL: Yeah. We've had very few redactions.

AK: Yeah.

SL: Uh—but . . .

AK: My story's already pretty well known but . . .

SL: I just want you to be comfortable with all that . . .

AK: Of course, and I appreciate that, and I—I extend that same—uh—courtesy to my own—uh . . .

SL: Clients.

AK: . . . people that I photograph so—so that they're not sometime embarrassed by a photograph that—that they don't like . . .

SL: Right, right.

AK: . . . of themselves or their children, although sometimes I wish I

could do that. [*Laughter*]

SL: Okay. So—um—I always like to start with when and where you were born.

[00:02:11] AK: Okay. I was born in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1940.

SL: Okay.

AK: My parents were both born and raised in Washington, DC. My da—my dad had a job selling cement at—at that time, before the entry of—of the United States into the Second World War, and that's what brought him to Charlottesville, Virginia, for some reason or another. And we lived there until I was about two—uh—at which point my dad had—uh—joined the Navy and was traveling from base to base in Florida. He was a pilot, so he was a—he never did—he was too old, really, to be in the Navy, so he never—he never—uh—went to—uh—any of the combat zones. He just served for about two years in the—as a pilot in the Navy in the—in the United States, after which he got a job working in Miami with Pan American Airlines and did some kind of cool stuff. [00:03:12] And then when I was about four—uh—he got a job working in Chicago, and we moved to the Chicago area. And—uh—one of my earliest memories is being at a f—at a movie theater with my parents while the Second World War was still

going on, and they had this crude animation of the world globe with the United States in the middle and little teeny airplanes dropping little bombs that would create these little explosions—uh—on the map. And I turned to my mom, and I said, "Who are they trying to bomb?" and she said, "Us," which startled me. And as a four-year-old, that didn't come as particularly good news. It was—what the purpose of it was—they had—uh—light-out, blackout programs . . .

SL: [*Unclear words*]

AK: . . . all across the country, thinking that either the Japanese or the Germans might attempt to bomb us, so this was some kind of little ad for—for that. But that's one of the only memories that I—actual memories that I have that—uh—that's about the Second World War.

[00:04:32] SL: So and your father's name?

AK: My father's name was William Presley Kilgore, and my older brother was William Presley Kilgore Jr., and his son was William Presley Kilgore III.

SL: Wow. And—uh—your mother's maiden name?

AK: Was Sebastian.

SL: Uh-huh. First name?

AK: She had an earlier relative from Spain. But I—I know very, very

little about my mother's family history. I suspect the—that there was alcoholism involved.

SL: Uh-huh.

AK: And so there was—uh—there just—she just never volunteered much—uh—about her family's history.

SL: And what was her first name?

AK: Carolyn.

SL: Carolyn Sebastian. Um . . .

AK: Mm-hmm. And she kept Sebastian as her middle name—uh—all through her life, as a lot of women did.

[00:05:31] SL: So you didn't ever really get to know her parents?

AK: I did not. She—her—her father died in the great flu epidemic in the teens—uh—in the—I think, 1918 or [19]19 when she was eight years old, and then her mother committed suicide about two years after that. So from the age of about thirteen, she was a—she was a orphan raised by aunts.

SL: So that would be your mother's sisters or your father's sisters?

AK: That would be my mother's sisters. My mother's aunts.

SL: Oh, her aunts. Okay.

AK: Because she was a child.

SL: Right.

[00:06:17] AK: And—and the—uh—she—she—when both of her

parents died, she went to live with her—this is a—this is an interesting story. Her par—one of her parent—one of my mother's parents was Protestant, and the other was Catholic.

SL: Okay.

AK: And they disapproved of each other [*SL laughs*] so that after they died—my mother had a brother, and—uh—and the Catholic side of the family took her brother, and she was taken by the Protestant side, and they never saw each other again through their whole life. They were completely apart from each other. Isn't that weird?

SL: That is strange. So they no longer lived in the same house?

AK: They no longer lived in the same town.

SL: The same town.

[00:07:07] AK: And there was no—they were not allowed to have any connection at all. She never—my mother had these—she was not—she was not a—a psychic. She never would've thought of herself that way at all. But she had a couple of experiences that were very strange. She was reading—years and years later, when I was probably eight or nine, she was reading a new—a newspaper, and at the bottom of the—a column, there was this little filler without any names at all in a town in, I think, North or South Carolina. It said a person was killed in an accident who

was driving a pickup truck, and she just—that was it. That was—it was just like one or two sentences. And she saw that, and she said, "I think that's my brother." So she started making phone calls back to Washington, DC, and in fact it was her brother.

SL: She felt it.

AK: Yeah. She felt it somehow. I was—I've always been really impressed by that. My mother was—she was—uh—a very devout person, spent a lot of time in prayer, and had some pretty strange experiences that way. She w—as—I think as a consequence of her unresolved grief over the loss of both of her parents—because very soon after she lost both of her parents, the Great Depression came along. She was forced to drop out of school. She was a very, very bright student, but she was forced to drop out of school—uh—and begin to work when she was like fourteen. And she just never had a real chance to grieve the loss of her parents. [00:08:58] And at a relatively early age, she developed multiple sclerosis. She had breast cancer and a radical mastectomy and—and then eventually died in her early sixties [AK edit: seventies] of lung cancer. And she was—she just had these—but she was an incredibly courageous and active person who never let these illnesses weigh her down—uh—was

a—an active homemaker. The whole time I was growing up, she was—she never had to work. My dad made enough money during the [19]40s and [19]50s so that my mom could be a stay-at-home mother. I had a younger sister as well, so there were three of us kids. And—uh—she was a great cook. But—uh—but then later on, after we were all gone, my parents—uh—uh—developed a store, and my mother worked full-time in the store and was very successful at it, despite the fact that she had multiple sclerosis and . . .

SL: Yeah.

AK: . . . the consequence of these illnesses and stuff.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:10:08] SL: So what kind of store was it?

AK: It was a Hallmark card and party store, and the back of it had a print shop. My dad ran the print shop, and my mom ran the store. That was—they started that when I was in college.

[00:10:23] SL: Wow. Okay. So let's go back over to your father's side in the family. Now did you ever know his parents?

AK: I knew—his father died when I was an infant. He was a contractor in the Washington, DC, area. He was the contractor who built the war memorial the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the Greek amphitheater around it. He was the contra—he

was the superintendent of construction for that. And my dad used to—they lived near there, and my dad would go over there all the time when he was growing up. He was very proud of that connection. But during the—when the Depression hit, my grandfather was building—they—the family histories always said six houses. He was building six houses on speculation, and he lost everything . . .

SL: Wow.

AK: . . . when the Great Depression hit because there was no market for those houses. And it hit him really hard, and they moved to a little town in Florida and lived there for the rest of their lives. He didn't—he lived until he was, oh—well, he lived until about 1941 or [19]42 'cause there's one picture of him holding me when I was an infant, but I have no memory of him after that. I have a strong suspicion that he was an alcoholic. So the—so but I did know my grandmother. That was the only grandparent that I ever met, was my father's mother, who lived in Florida the whole time that I knew her.

SL: So but she eventually committed suicide.

AK: No, no, no. That was my mother's mother that committed suicide.

SL: Oh, okay.

[00:12:13] AK: My father's family—she—actually, my grandmother on my father's side lived to be in her eighties. But his—my father's father died probably—he was probably around sixty when he died.

SL: Uh-huh. So did she live in the same town? Did they live in the same town that y'all were living in?

AK: Never.

SL: Never.

AK: The—I—we lived in the Chicago area. They lived in Florida. My dad was a private pilot. He owned little four-seater airplanes. So when I was—until I was a sophomore high school we—our vacations usually consisted of getting in this little four-seater airplane and flying all day long from Chicago to Florida and then spending a week or two with my grandmother. She lived close to the beach on the east side of Florida. And then we'd pile back into this little airplane and fly back to Chicago.

SL: That's a beautiful thing.

[00:13:23] AK: Yeah. And my favorite memories of my father were going fly—he and I spent a lot of Saturdays out at this little airfield that had one grass . . .

SL: Runway.

AK: . . . runway, and he kept his plane out there, and the guy that

owned the little airport was kind of a buddy. And we'd go out there and polish the airplane and then take it up and fly around for a while and maybe fly little errands and stuff for people, and that was my fa—if we—we moved—when I was a sophomore in high school—the year after my sophomore year, we moved from that town in—near Chicago. It was Aurora, Illinois. We moved from that town to El Paso, Texas. My dad sold his airplane and never took up flying again after that. So I always thought that if we hadn't made that move, I would probably have soloed and become a pilot myself. But because he lo—he just kind of moved on from his interest in flying when we moved to El Paso, and so I never—I go—I think I went flying with him once after that, but that—so I never had the opportunity to go on and learn to fly.

[00:14:46] SL: Right. So we've been talking about your grandparents and a little bit about your parents. And so you—I'm a little bit confused. So you're living outside of Chicago as a child and . . .

AK: Uh-huh. We moved there when I was four.

SL: When you were four. And you left there when you were?

AK: Sixteen.

SL: Sixteen. To El Paso?

AK: El Paso, Texas.

SL: Wow. That's like day and night difference.

AK: Yeah. It's a ver—was a very meaningful change for me.

Affected the rest of my life in a very positive way. I was very much a loner growing up in the [19]40s and [19]50s in this little town. It was very white, and I was kinda the quiet, pudgy, nervous, scared, loner kid. Not a happy person at all. And I had become interested in classical music, which helped a little bit, but I just—there's a whole story around that. [00:15:56] I wanted desperately to find a way into the, you know, the school, you know, popular kids, you know, the . . .

SL: Right.

AK: So I thought if I had a radio, I could learn the popular songs, and that would give me an entrée into that . . .

SL: Group.

AK: . . . community of people.

SL: Yeah.

AK: You know, I'd be cool. So my dad got me this radio. It was a kit. He got it in Chicago, and we put it together. He went on to become an avid ham radio operator. I started listening to this radio. After everybody had gone to bed, lights out, I'd turn it on, and I'd be going across the dials. The first night I was doing

that, I heard this incredible piece of music that just totally captured me, and I listened to the whole thing. I wrote down what it was. It was Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini, and that was the beginning of my fascination with classical music and, of course, at that point in that town—did me no good at all.

SL: Right.

[00:17:05] AK: So when we moved to El Paso, we moved to a place where like 65 percent of the kids were Hispanic. There was a big Jewish community. There was a—we li—it was on the border, so there were international students from Europe. It was just this incredible change, and it just—it totally woke me up. I mean, I just flowered in this environment. And my best friend was a violinist who had been playing the violin so long and so well that he had a part-time—he wa—though he was still in high school, he had a part-time job playing in a professional symphony orchestra, and he would sneak me in through the theater door—through the door in the—where the performers entered, and I'd go up in the balcony and listen to these incredible concerts by the symphony orchestra and wonderful touring solo musicians that would come in and play a concert with them. And I met all these people that were classical musicians. And it just—it was

so—and it was the beginning of a life focused so intensely on diversity, and it affected everything I did for the next sixty years. Do I need to continue on that?

[00:18:34] SL: No, no. I was going to say, though, this is the first time I've ever interviewed somebody that spent so much time in the air [AK *laughs*] flying. I mean, I've interviewed the Younkin family. But as a child growing up you—that kinda put you in a very unique percentage of the population. I mean, not everybody was flying like that . . .

AK: Yeah. Other kids were going . . .

SL: . . . and had a plane in the family.

AK: Other kids were going fishing and hunting with their dads.

SL: Right.

AK: I never went either one of those even once. But every weekend we were going out and flying around in this little airplane. The first one he got was just a two-seater. It was this real tiny little airplane. Then after that he had, oh, maybe three different four-seaters that we—you know, he'd trade out like you do automobiles, and it was great. It was—I really loved that part.

SL: I always felt like whenever I was in a small plane that I would—I kinda—it felt like a Volkswagen Bug to me.

AK: Yeah. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: Lots of glass all the way down. It was short. You know.

[00:19:43] AK: Yeah. Yeah. And pretty—I mean, it's—they're not very wide at all, so . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . it—I mean, you're kind of touching the pilot's shoulders. And there's a, you know, a co-pilot's thing right in front of you.

SL: Yeah.

AK: So my dad would—every now and then, we'd be flying, and he'd say, "Okay, Son." He'd call me Son. [*SL laughs*] He'd say, "Okay, Son, now you take over," and I'd—so I'd be flying for a while. He—I'd do a little bank to the left or a little bank to the right. And—or I think I just got that wrong, but it was—yeah, it was great.

SL: [*Laughs*] Well, so it also—I would think it would just give you a different perspective of the planet and life. I mean . . .

AK: Yeah, maybe so. I'd never thought of that before.

[00:20:27] SL: We—I mean, when I was growing up, we'd go on Sunday drives out in the country.

AK: Yeah. Oh, we did a lot of that, too.

SL: Oh, okay.

AK: Sundays we'd do—we got in the big—my dad had a Buick Roadmaster, 1953 Buick Roadmaster, and we'd get in this—this

is a story I tell all the time, actually. We'd get in that big old Buick Roadmaster after church, and we'd just go cruising around the countryside. And we'd find some state park and we—and my parents would set up a picnic lunch, and while they were setting up a picnic lunch, I always said exactly the same thing. I'd say, "Okay, I'm going exploring." And then I'd just go off by myself and just wander around in the woods or whate—where—along the river if it was on the river, you know, just go exploring. And I use that story to explain to people what my attitude towards photography is like. You know, the—I be—this is my fiftieth year of being a photographer. And when I pick up my camera, whether it's in the studio photographing a person or out in nature or wherever, just in the front yard, I feel like I'm going exploring. And it goes right back to those Sunday afternoon car trips. And the flying, too. I think the flying definitely was a lot of—there was a big sense of exploring, only we got to do it in the air.

SL: Also, I always felt a little bit isolated above the earth.

AK: Ah.

SL: You know, I mean, it's just really you and your dad or . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . you and your mom and dad and brother and sister.

[00:22:07] AK: I think I was so isolated through my whole childhood that it didn't feel like I was any more *[laughs]* isolated than I was any other time, really.

SL: Right, right. So . . .

AK: That sense of isolation and being a loner has shaped most of my life, really, that sense of just—I live by myself now. I've lived by myself now for fifteen years, and I really like it. I mean, I—it's—I finally feel more at peace now than I ever did through all my four marriages and numerous live-in girlfriends.

SL: Relationships. Yeah, yeah.

AK: Yeah. I just never was very good at that sort of stuff, I guess.

SL: Well, it's hard.

AK: Yeah.

SL: It's difficult.

AK: Yeah. It is hard. I mean, I was married for fifteen years, and I'm very close with my stepchildren, but that's a whole nother afternoon.

SL: Right. Well, we can talk about the kids a little later, but . . .

AK: Yeah. Yeah, sure.

[00:23:08] SL: All right. So the—I kind of get the impression that y'all had a fairly comfortable living.

AK: Yes. My d—whe—we moved to Chicago in 1944. My dad had

gotten a job. He had been working for Pan American Airlines for a cup—for a year or so, and he got a job as a vice president of the Airline Pilots Association, which kind of put him into the executive level of the labor force at that—in the [19]40s.

SL: Right.

AK: And he worked there for a year or so, and then he switched—that was representing labor, the pilots. He switched to representing management and got a job with some—I can't even remember the name of it now, but some organization in Chicago where he learned how to be the executive director of an organization that represented employers. And he did that for the next, oh, twenty years at least. He—that was his job. When we moved to El Paso, it was to create and manage an association of employers. And he would help the employers to solve problems with their employees, represent them in labor disputes and help them with negotiations with unions. And he developed a very conservative political attitude as a consequence of his being buddies with CEOs and . . .

SL: Yeah.

AK: . . . employ—people that owned businesses that had hundreds of employees.

[00:25:03] SL: I would assume that most of the employees—that

these employers that he worked with, it was probably Hispanic employees?

AK: In El Paso? Yeah, a lot of them. Well, he go—one of his friends owned a big slaughterhouse, and it was right on the border. I mean, it was this big, huge factory and was surrounded by stockyards, a fence, and the river. And th—and he got me a job one summer as a gate guard at this factory, only it was a—I was the relief gate guard, so I worked two day shifts a week, two evening shifts a week, and two night shifts a week, all eight-hour shifts. It was a very vigorous summer. So during the—so from 7:00 to 3:00, on that shift, I would be at the gate, and I'd be responsible for making sure that none of the 600 almost entirely Hispanic employees were stealing anything.

SL: Oh.

AK: And then from 3:00 until 11:00, I would be on the gate for a couple of hours doing that, but then I would be—after the—they didn't have an evening shift, so after about 5:00, then it would be my job to walk through this entire huge factory with this little thingy that you would stamp to make sure—kind of ensure that I had made this . . .

SL: Round.

AK: . . . round. And I carried a pistol. That was cool. [*Laughter*]

And which I fired a couple of times. And par—and I'd go through the areas where they stored the grain. They'd have 10,000 heads of cattle in these stock yards around there, and I'd walk all around the stock yards where all these cattle were and then walk through all the whole factory where they processed all this stuff and turned it into meat that got put on grocery shelves. So that was a very weird job.

[00:27:14] SL: So a pistol. And you fired it a couple of times?

AK: Yeah.

SL: What—so in the air or . . .

AK: No. God, no. No, I would never do that. Those—you know, you fire a bullet into the air, it comes down someplace.

SL: Yes.

AK: And people get hurt that way.

SL: Yeah.

AK: So no, there was this huge mound of hay back in the back. I mean, it was as big as ten cars, just this big, huge stack of hay, and I fired the pistol into that hay a couple times, just to see what it would feel like to shoot it.

SL: See what it'd feel like. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So let's get back to your earliest memories of your home. So you had memories in Illinois of the home, right?

[00:28:00] AK: Yes. I have—my dad was also an avid photographer.

My f . . .

SL: Ah.

AK: I remember his darkroom and the smell of it. That was—when I started working in my own darkroom, that odor of my father's darkroom when I was probably eight or nine came back to me very strongly. So after my dad died—he died about 1997.

SL: Oh.

AK: And there were about ten boxes that incl—that had carousels of slides inside of them, and I inherited all these slides. And I brought them home, and I was pretty sure that they had deteriorated over time, so I never looked at them, and I stuck them in a storage area. But after a while I needed the storage area, so I got them out. And before throwing them away, I thought I oughta check them. I found like 300 images that were in virtually perfect condition from—a few of them from the [19]30s, a lot of them from the [19]40s. Pictures of my dad in his navy costume holding me as an infant. And all through my childhood, there are pictures that my dad had taken. And I can—if those would be good to have in the archive, I can give you digital copies of all those pictures.

[00:29:26] SL: Absolutely. Yeah. Yes, please. Please do. So do

you think that he developed those slides himself?

AK: He didn't develop the color slides himself, no. He did produ—he did create a lot of black and white prints, none of which—I don't know what ever happened to them. I guess my sister probably got most of those. My brother might have gotten some of them, but I don't—I have one or two of those. But the color slides were just—you know, he sent them off to . . .

SL: Kodak.

AK: They were Kodak, you know.

SL: Right.

AK: And he'd send them off to the labs to be processed.

SL: Well, what a great find for you.

AK: Yeah, it was. It was—I get 'em out—I go thr—I pull them up on my computer and look at them every now and then. I spent a lot of time editing them because I love—you know, one of my great passions is editing images. So I went through and fixed the color and took out dust spots and did everything I could to make them look as good as possible.

[00:30:31] SL: So now how old were you when you left Aurora?

AK: I was sixteen.

SL: Okay.

AK: It was the summer between my sophomore and junior year in

high school.

SL: All right. So you've got a number of years that you can remember—that you can recall living in that home.

AK: And—I do, yes.

SL: And . . .

AK: We lived in a big house. Most of the time, we lived in this big house that had been built in 1903 by a man that owned a lumberyard. So it was a really—it had a lot of wood in it. And it had a fini—not a finished basement but a basement with a bunch of little concrete rooms in it where I did a lot of exploring. And then a first floor with three little living rooms and a com—a big dining room, a big kitchen. And there were—you could come in the front door, and there were two back doors. But every time you came into the house, you had to go through three doors to get to a room. I remember that. There were all these little kind of ante—little chambers that you would go through where you'd leave your . . .

SL: Disrobe your coat, take your hat . . .

AK: Yeah, take your coat off or your . . .

SL: Boots or . . .

AK: . . . boots or whatever. Yeah, it was cool that way. [00:31:50]

And but when my mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis

in her thirties, we moved out of that house 'cause it was literally four floors. 'Cause there was a finished attic that I spent a lot of time just playing in. We didn't use the attic or the basement, but I kind of took them over as areas to do stuff.

SL: They were your adventure spots.

AK: Yeah. My adventure spots, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[00:32:18] AK: So but there were four bedrooms and that—this is a story I tell people a lot. There were four bedrooms. I had a younger sister. There were two big bedrooms in the front, and there was a big master bedroom in the back, and then there was this very small bedroom. And my older brother got one of the big bedrooms in the front because he was the oldest, and then my sister got the other big bedroom in the front 'cause she was a girl.

SL: Right.

AK: So I got whatever was left. So this is my "I'm a poor suffering middle child" whiny story that I like to tell.

[00:32:52] SL: So I'm assuming that your mom did all the cooking?

AK: She did. She was a great cook, and . . .

SL: And . . .

AK: . . . Saturdays were baking days. She would bake cakes and

pies and cookies and stuff and a big sweet roll that we would always have on Sunday mornings before going off to church. And yeah, she was—the—I remember her beef stroganoff was really wonderful, and she made a great meatloaf. But a lot of the meals were hamburger meat with some Worcestershire sauce and some other stuff. You know, the—what do they call that?

SL: Heinz 57?

AK: No. There's a name for that kind of hamburger, steak, something. [AK edit: Salisbury steak] I can't remember. Anyway, we'd have that and some peas and a salad and pie for dessert. My dad always cut—there were five of us. My dad always cut the pie into six slices. We each got one, and he got two.

SL: Of course. [*Laughter*] Was there . . .

AK: He was the breadwinner.

SL: So . . .

AK: We were often reminded of that fact.

[00:34:01] SL: Did the children help in the kitchen at all?

AK: Oh, God, yeah. From the—I can remember washing dishes er—at an age when I had to stand on a little box to be high enough to reach the—we did—Saturday morning we had to finish our

chores before we got to watch *Flash Gordon* on TV.

SL: Okay. Chores.

AK: Chores.

SL: Let's talk about chores.

AK: Lots of chores.

SL: So I'm assuming then that you probably made your own bed?

AK: Oh, absolutely. I still make my own bed every morning.

SL: And . . .

AK: Dusting, vacuuming, yard work, definitely. When I was about ten, I got a paper route. I remember when I got my first bicycle. It was a Schwinn one-speed. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

AK: Red. And soon thereafter I got my first paper route. I had, I think, ninety-six customers on my paper route, and I delivered a newspaper to them every single day after school. And then Sunday morning before church, a big Sunday paper. And I remember they paid 35 cents a week for the paper, and I had to go—when I wasn't delivering the paper, I had to go back once a week to each one of these customers and collect the 35 cents and then organize the money and go to the guy that was in charge of all the paperboys and settle up with him. I don't remember how much money I got out of it, but I remember

doing that.

SL: It sounds like that you . . .

AK: So work ethic from a ve—as long as I can remember, there was always that sense that everybody pitched in and did something.

[00:35:56] SL: How formal were the meals? I mean . . .

AK: Very. We—they . . .

SL: You were expected to be in place?

AK: We had two different kinds of meals. We ate breakfast together, and we ate supper together. My dad—we ate supper when my dad wanted to eat supper, which was almost always about 5:30 or 6:00. The number that pops into my mind is quarter of six, for some reason or another. But we alw—and you had to be there. If you weren't there, you were—you got some kind of punishment. I mean, that was—and we sat down together and it—we had a big table in the kitchen, so most of our meals we ate in the kitchen, but on any kind of special occasion, certainly Thanksgiving and Christmas and some other—if we had . . .

SL: And guests.

AK: . . . guests, yeah, we would—we used fancy China and sat in the dining room at the—with a sideboard and all the kind of fancy dining room furniture.

SL: So that's so great that they gave you household chores 'cause a

lot of kids didn't get that growing up, you know.

AK: Oh, God. We definitely always had chores.

[00:37:19] SL: Did your mom have any other paid help?

AK: That's an excellent question. I don't remember anyone.

SL: Okay.

AK: I think she might have had someone that came in like once a week or once a month for a couple of hours to do some cleaning, particularly after she got sick. I think she did have help then. But I don't remember any particular . . .

SL: Okay.

AK: . . . people. But now that I think about it, I'm pretty sure that they were women of color. My parents were—they were genteel Southern racists. You know, all that godawful language, you know, about how we took good care of our . . .

SL: Slaves.

AK: Not gonna say the word.

SL: Yeah.

AK: You—they put an *A* on the end of it. It kind of—that softened it somehow, I guess.

SL: Right.

[00:38:32] AK: But—and really, in retrospect, awful stories of what some of their relatives did to Black people in the South. My

father's family was from North Carolina . . .

SL: Okay.

AK: . . . before and—Washington, DC, in those days was a very Southern city . . .

SL: Absolutely.

AK: . . . particularly with respect to race. So in the—we're talking in the teens and [19]20s. So I—that was a—that became, in the [19]50s, a fre—in El Paso a frequent topic of conversation because the rights movement had definitely begun. And my sister and I particularly were drawn to that because it resonated with the Sunday school class that we had been going to since we were infants, you know. And that—the—all those Jesus stories, to us, suggested that it was our responsibility to love people of color as our equals and to create a change in our culture. And that diversity that I talked about when we moved to El Paso and the effect that it had on me was a big part of that. So from then on, I think I was—at—when I went to college, I remember marching in civil rights marches. And then I went to college in Indiana and studied philosophy in preparation for being a minister, and I was Presbyterian and Congregationalist and Methodist. We'd switch around from churches to churches, but those denominations all seemed very similar to me.

SL: Right.

[00:40:43] AK: And then after I got my degree in philosophy, I went to seminary for a year in New York City. And all of that was very much in this environment of the civil rights movement, and I was always much involved in that to the chagrin of my father, who was very judgmental with respect to the civil rights movement.

SL: So that created a bit of a chasm between you guys or . . .

AK: I think it did, yeah.

SL: But it was kind of unspoken, tried not to . . .

AK: Oh, we argued about it every now and then, but then we'd—my dad developed, as he got older, a kind of passive aggressive attitude towards dealing with his own feelings of needing a closer relationship with—than his children were able—or at least me—was able to provide to him. So for example, during the Clinton years, I was a big supporter of Bill Clinton and traveled with him a couple of times, and you know, we were on a first name basis, as a lot of Arkansans were, of course.

SL: Yep.

AK: But when my dad would get mad at me over the telephone, instead of saying something negative about me, he would just suddenly start talking about Bill Clinton in ways that were

offensive, knowing that it would hurt me.

SL: Yeah.

AK: It was weird. Weird, strange, passive-aggressive stuff.

[00:42:28] SL: Was he the disciplinarian, or was your mother?

AK: Oh, definitely.

SL: Dad?

AK: Yeah. I clearly remember the trips to the basement for the spankings. He never really hurt me, but it was humiliating, and [laughs] he would always say that it hurt him worse than it hurt me . . .

SL: Yeah, right.

AK: . . . which was such a bizarre thing to say. But yeah—so yeah, I mean, it was always, "Wait till your dad gets home," you know, and then the situ—whatever thing I'd done that—usually, it was my little sister egging me on until I took a punch at her . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . on the arm. I never—you know, I hit her on the arm like we did when we were kids, and she'd go and complain to my mom about it. And then it was, "Wait till your dad gets home." And that's—you know, that's the only thing I ever remember being punished for that way was—anytime I took a poke at my sister, it was always—that was an absolute, you know, that was an

absolute . . .

SL: Capital offense.

AK: . . . capital offense. That was—I mean, one of the things that we were taught from an early age was an absolute protective attitude towards women. We—any kind of violence against women was absolutely taboo. We did not do that. Our job as males was to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of our women and all women, really. And I'm grateful for that training.

SL: Yeah. Yeah, there's some goodness there.

[00:44:16] AK: Yeah. My parents were—they were really good people. You know, they had some—my dad in particular had some attitudes towards race that were uncomfortable, but then, in later life, he made friends with some people of color, and he was very proud of that, like he'd grown in some way and he, you know—but his pride in his friendship with a person of color involved a lot of condensation. Is that the right word?

SL: He—cons—well. Yeah. Well, condescending is . . .

AK: He was very condescending. He was very condescending towards . . .

SL: Condescending, yeah.

AK: . . . these new, quote, "friends" of his. He was very much the, you know, the grand guy out of it. It's bullshit. [*Laughter*]

[00:45:08] SL: So did you have—I guess you were given a radio early. So there was always a radio in the house?

AK: Oh, yeah.

SL: And was it a big console radio?

AK: We did have a big console in the [19]40s. And that was the *Lone Ranger* time. *Lone Ranger*—God, you know that music from . . .

SL: Hi-yo, Silver.

AK: . . . the William Tell Overture . . .

SL: Yeah. Uh-huh.

AK: . . . was—that still just kind of creates a thrill in me.

SL: Right.

AK: And some of the other radio shows—I was—I loved those radio shows.

SL: Out of Chicago, that'd be *The Shadow*?

[00:45:49] AK: Yeah. Oh, definitely *The Shadow*. Yeah. And there was another one that I would—[laughs] I remember. What was it? It was some kind of Captain Science or some—Captain something. I don't know. But I would—I—frequently, when the subject of old radio shows would come up, I'd ask people about it. Nobody ever had heard of it. And one time, I was with a friend of mine who had also grown up in the Chicago area. And

he said, "Andrew, that guy was just in Chicago. That was a radio show that was just in Chicago." So whenever I'd be talking to somebody from some other part of the country . . .

SL: Fayetteville and . . .

AK: . . . they'd never heard of it. It was funny. Can't remember quite what the name of that character was but—yeah. So it was a lot of radio, a lot of radio.

SL: Ever any more country-leaning things, Lum and Abner or . . .

AK: Yeah. Oh, definitely. Yeah, I do remember that.

[00:46:48] SL: And so the family would just kinda gather around the radio . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . and it was like watching the television back then.

AK: The first shows that came on between six and seven were like *The Lone Ranger* and *The Shadow* and shows that were aimed pretty much towards kids.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And then after that would be the more grown-up funny shows. I can't remember the name of any of them right now. If I heard them, I know it would really resonate, but my eighty-year-old brain just doesn't retain a lot of that.

[00:47:29] SL: So what about musical instruments in the home?

AK: We had a piano. [*Laughs*] There was always this sense of being less than with respect to my brother. My brother was about four and a half years older than me.

SL: That's good.

AK: So my mother was always trying to fix that. [*SL laughs*] So often that would backfire, and the piano was one of the definite ways in which it backfired. She just—she thought that if we got a piano and I took piano lessons, that that would give me some way of being special in the family. So after about four piano lessons, I was done with it. I didn't wanna have anything to do with it. On the other hand, my brother turned out to have a natural ear. He could sit down at the piano and just play and play songs and stuff and learned to read music and got to be pretty good on the piano. [*Laughs*] So that was not a successful venture in my mother's effort to make me feel better about myself.

[00:48:29] SL: So were they, you know, popular music, or were they more hymn-oriented?

AK: No, they were definitely popular music. I remember Tennessee Ernie Ford was popular, "Sixteen tons of number nine coal."

SL: Tennessee Ernie Ford.

AK: I used to be able to sing that all the way through.

SL: Me, too. Me, too.

AK: And, oh, "Detour, there's a muddy road ahead." Remember that song? "Detour, there's a muddy road ahead." And on the other side of it was, oh, the one about the ghost riders in the sky. Oh, God, I remember that one.

SL: Yeah. That's about a horse.

AK: My brother had a record collection, and one of the big th—I—you know, he—I'd be really interested in his record collection, but if he caught me anywhere near any of his records, I was in trouble.

SL: That's fun.

AK: Yeah.

SL: So . . .

[00:49:25] AK: And we probably got a television, oh, when I was maybe thirteen or fourteen, twelve maybe, after we'd—we lived in a couple different little towns. We lived in Chicago for maybe two years, and then we moved to Western Springs and lived there for a couple years, and then we moved to Aurora when I was in the fourth grade, the summer between third grade and fourth grade, and then lived there until the summer between sophomore and junior year in high school. So . . .

SL: So that may have had something to do with you not really ever

latching onto a particular group of friends or . . .

AK: Might have.

SL: . . . or popular because you were kind of in . . .

AK: I think it had . . .

SL: . . . in and out, in and out.

AK: I think it had a lot of different things about it. I think moving from the South to the North was kind of a big deal. I always identified as a Southerner the whole time. I mean, we moved to Chicago when I was four.

SL: Right.

AK: I always identified as a Southerner. And there was a lot of North-South tension growing up, you know. Snowball fights between the kids from the South and kids from the North. And off course, that was always like twenty to two. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right. Right.

AK: I remember just getting pummeled in those snowball fights. But I, you know, I was a Southerner. That was important to me.

[00:51:02] SL: So I'm trying to think if there was a—so you talked about kind of rotating affiliations with different congregations.

AK: Right.

SL: Churches.

AK: Right.

SL: So I'm assuming that every Sunday . . .

AK: Oh, yes.

SL: . . . you would go to church, whatever the church was.

AK: Every single Sunday. And my dad was always—he was always involved in the organizational aspects of it, you know. If it was a Presbyterian church, you know, he would be involved in the leadership, or a Methodist church or a Congregational church. My mother, on the other hand, was always a high school Sunday school teacher. I think from my earliest memories through to her pretty advanced age she was always a Sunday school teacher. And that was—when I went to seminary, I would come home from seminary with these pretty heavy theology books and stuff, and she would just consume them. She was a very bright woman and very, very fascinated by—she read Tillich and Niebuhr and other writers of that time that were popular in theological circles.

SL: So I'm assuming then there was probably a Bible that—was it prominently displayed in the home?

AK: Absolutely. More than one, yeah. We each had our own Bible, and there was a family Bible that had come from my father's side of the family that had history in the front of it. I don't know. I have no . . .

SL: Children and their offspring and . . .

AK: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Yeah, family memory . . .

AK: Yeah. Yeah. I have no idea what happened to it.

[00:52:53] SL: So were there—did y'all have kind of Bible study at the home? Was that ever . . .

AK: No. No.

SL: That—so you got it in church.

AK: It was always at—just church stuff. I don't remember ever having even conversations about religious stuff. Maybe with my mother a little bit. Certainly not with my dad, though.

[00:53:17] SL: So at the dinner tables or at the meals, was grace always said?

AK: Yes.

SL: And . . .

AK: My dad always said it.

SL: Of—it was always your father's job?

AK: Always my father, yeah, and it was always exactly the same.

SL: Do you remember what it . . .

AK: Oh, I don't.

SL: Was it a quote from the Bible or just a general thanksgiving prayer?

AK: No, it was a prayer that I subsequently have heard Catholic families say as grace. But it was a very popular, very short, like three or four sentences, "Bless this food and whoever prepared it for us," kind of, you know, "in Jesus' name we pray." And it wa—that was basically it.

[00:54:09] SL: So were you members of youth organizations with whatever church you were affiliated with? MYF and . . .

AK: Always. Always. And church camp was huge. I loved, loved church camp. I went to church camp probably starting when I was about eight years old all the way through high school, and even the first year of college I remember going to a college-age church camp. And now I go on silent retreats to—I'm goin'—at least once a year, I go on a silent retreat, and it's a lot like church camp for grownups, except without the arts and crafts or the swimming.

SL: Right. Right, right.

AK: But with a lot of prayer.

[00:54:53] SL: So did that leave you any time for things like scouting or . . .

AK: I was active in the Boy Scouts. Not—I think that I never got more than about a half a dozen merit badges.

SL: Merit badges.

AK: I was not an accumulator of merit badges and never . . .

SL: But you . . .

AK: I never advanced very far in it, but . . .

SL: Second Class was . . .

AK: And I have some very unpleasant memories around scouting as well.

SL: Oh, really?

AK: Yeah. Boy Scout camp was—I went to Boy Scout camp and church camp. I really liked church camp. I really did not like Boy Scout camp. It was a pretty—it was very much about being a tough little kid.

SL: Kind of brutal.

AK: And the other kids were tougher than me.

SL: Right.

AK: The other kids were always tougher than me. I was always—I was the last one to get chosen for sports teams and gym class and all that. I just never was very athletic at all.

SL: Yeah. I didn't go real far in scouting either. I think I made Second Class.

AK: Yeah, yeah.

SL: I was never that First Class or LIFE or . . .

AK: I think I ended up being a patrol leader, and I was awful at it. I

never could get the other guys to do anything.

SL: [*Laughter*] Yeah.

AK: I'd always come up with some plan for, "Hey, this is something we could do," and they'd always just look at me like, "Asshole."

SL: Right, right, right. There was a great drive for achievement in scouting.

AK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SL: Yeah. And that kind of lent it towards . . .

[00:56:28] AK: And the—in my scout troop—my dad took me to it. I remember that. We were also active in Cub Scouting, and my dad was a Cub Scout leader, and he was real involved in that. So when it came time to go to—graduate to Boy Scouts, he took me to my first Boy Scout meeting, and he would go whenever the dads were—you know, we would have . . .

SL: Sure.

AK: . . . times when the dads were supposed to go, and he was always—showed up for that. But I remember that the guy who was the adult leader of the Boy Scout troop was a factory worker, and my dad was . . .

SL: Management

AK: . . . management.

SL: Right.

AK: So there was a real sense of that guy being a lower-class guy.

The class system was evident.

[00:57:21] SL: So I would just assume that you guys would have a preacher over for dinner or lunch.

AK: Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, and that was always in the dining room. Yeah. That was an occasion when the preacher would come over. When—in high school, I became—I decided when I was fourteen—I remember—I have very clear memories of a particular Sunday morning. We had just joined this little Methodist church that was just starting up, and it was meeting in a grade school, in the auditorium in this grade school. And we had a young, just-out-of-seminary minister, and he wasn't very good at it. And I—this was the—I had begun to be interested in theater, or maybe I didn't realize I was beginning to be interested in theater, but I definitely was. So one Sunday morning I was clipboarding, was what I called it. I was, internally, I was being critical of the way that—in that denomination, the preacher did everything.

SL: Right.

AK: So—that's right. You're a Methodist. You know . . .

SL: Yes.

AK: . . . what that's like. So the preacher kind of read the scripture

and led the hymn singing and preached and did a big, long pastoral prayer and ran—he just did the whole thing. And this young guy just wasn't very good at it, and I was critiquing the whole deal, the sermon, everything. And I remember after the service, when we were filing out into the hallway, sud—I was having the thought, "Well, I could do better than that guy." And I suddenly had this intense feeling that I was supposed to.

SL: Ah.

[00:59:10] AK: That I was called to do that. So from then on—up to that point, I had always thought of myself as a science kid. A roh—I wanted to build rockets, go to space. But from that moment on, I thought of myself as aimed towards ministry. And a lot of my friends were kids that were aimed towards ministry, and I knew that when I went to college, I would study for the ministry and did. So in high school, I became close friends with our—at that point we were in a Presbyterian church. And my—whenever we would move from one town to another, my parents would always kind of shop around to find a church where they felt comfortable. And they were not—irrespective of denomination. So—and sometimes they would, for reasons that I don't really know, probably—God knows why. You know, they got into a debate, argument with somebody or something. But

sometimes they would just decide they weren't gonna go to that church anymore, and they'd start going to a different church in the same town. [01:00:19] But I got—I became close friends with this minister of this Presbyterian church, and he kind of mentored me towards this vocation in ministry that I felt that I was headed towards. And he gave me a book that became a very important book for me. I still have the copy of it that he gave me. It's called *A Testament of Devotion* by Thomas Kelly, and it's a Quaker writer. And there's a biographical section about the author in which they talked a lot about the college where he taught, Earlham College. And on the basis of that and on the basis of the fact that there was a writer of books for ministers that was very popular in the [19]50s who taught at that college, I decided to go to that college. And so I went to that college and graduated from that college, Earlham. And the whole point of that education was to become a minister. And then—but I was also, at that point, very much interested in acting and theater and was in a lot of plays and wanted to study acting. So the—I had my choice of seminaries to go to. I could—I was solicited by Harvard Theological Seminary and looked at Yale and—but I decided to go to Union Theological Seminary in New York City because it was in New York City. So

I went there for a year, but it turned out to be a very, very difficult year for me. [01:02:09] I studied acting while I was there with Stella Adler in her school. [Laughs] I have stories about being enrolled in a church history class and never going to it the whole semester, forgetting that I was enrolled in it, and discovering two days before the final—which the whole grade for the thing was based on the final—that I was supposed to be in this class. So the ri—the per—this was the kind of school it was. The person that taught the class had written the definitive textbook, which basically he just lectured out of this textbook. So I went to s—the bookstore in the seminary, and I looked through all the copies, used copies, of his textbook, found the one that looked like it had been the most intelligently underlined, studied the underlinings, and got a B in the course. [Laughter] But during the time that I was supposed to be in his lectures, I was downtown in Stella Adler's acting class. And my best memories of that whole year are from being in Stella Adler's acting class. She was an incredible human being, incredible acting teacher. Even today, all these years later, when I meet somebody who is a professional actor and I tell them I studied with Stella Adler, they're always impressed. [Laughs]

SL: Yeah.

[01:03:56] AK: And I did well in that class, you know, and I decided that I would go back the next semester and just study acting. But that was in 1964, the summer of [19]64. And my fa—my dad had had a bad experience in his work life. He was working in Syracuse, New York, at that time, and it didn't work out for him, and he basically got fired. So he and my mom moved back to El Paso and opened a store. That was when they moved from his job an executive to being a store owner. So I decided that instead of going back to New York and pursuing my acting career, I would go to El Paso and help my parents, which turned out to be an enormous disaster. [*SL laughs*] And just a—it was just one fight with my father after another. It was really terrible. So I decided that I would—I'd go to—I joined the navy as a candidate for the officer thing to avoid the—by this time the Vietnam war was . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . going strong. So in order to avoid the draft, I would become an officer in the navy. Thank God that did not work out. They disqualified me on the basis of the fact that I wore glasses. That was—that—many people were trying to become officers in the navy as opposed to grunts in the army. [01:05:38] So at that point I decided I would go back to graduate school and study

acting at the—at UT. They had a really good program in theater there. So I informed my draft board of this decision. [Laughs] And they just basically said, "No, that's not gonna happen at all, we're going to draft you and you're going to Vietnam and be a soldier in the army." So when they told me that I decided I would join the Peace Corps instead.

SL: Yeah.

[01:06:13] AK: So I applied for the Peace Corps, and at the time I had to go through a physical before they could draft me. So there was this period of two or three weeks where I was waiting to hear from the Peace Corps, and I was anticipating the date that I had to go in for a physical for the draft board. And during that time I was reading J.D. Salinger, *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters* and *Seymour: An Introduction*, and they talk about Zen Buddhism. I had a degree in philosophy. We'd spent maybe one day on Eastern religions. I mean, Eastern philosophy was just totally ignored in this—at—in the college that I went to. So I became fascinated by Buddhism. I had put down in my Peace Corps application—because I lived in a border town and I was surrounded by people that spoke Spanish, I had put down that I wanted to go to a Spanish speaking country so I could learn Spanish, and that would be a good thing to know. So I

put—I had put that in my application form. So while I was waiting to find out what was gonna happen, I started reading books about Buddhism and Hinduism. I became just totally—from morning—from the time I woke up in the morning till I went to bed at night, I was reading all of these books, every book I could find on Buddhism and Hinduism. [01:07:38] So I went in for my draft physical, which is a bizarre experience. You spend a whole day with about 150 other young men in your underpants, just going from station to station until, at the end of it, you're ushered into an office, still in your underpants. Everybody else is wearing suits. And you're ushered into an office in your underpants, and you're kind of sitting there like this. And they say, "Well, we can inform you that you can be—expect to be drafted. You're 1-A, and you can expect to be drafted within the next two or three weeks." And then you go put on your clothes and go home and sweat blood. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right. Right.

AK: So I left that experience. Drove home. When I pulled into the driveway—I was living with my parents at that time. I pulled into the driveway, and I could see this big brown envelope sticking out of the mailbox. And it was addressed to me, and I opened it, and it was my invitation to go to India in the Peace

Corps.

SL: Oh.

AK: It was like, oh my God.

SL: Fate smiling down upon on you.

[01:08:52] AK: Yes. No kidding. [*SL laughs*] And so that's what happened. I went to India in the Peace Corps. I was—I had my twenty-sixth birthday during the train—Peace Corps training at the University of Missouri. And by the time I came home, I was twenty-eight, and the army was no longer in—my draft board had no interest in twenty-eight-year-old . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . Peace Corp—return Peace Corps volunteers.

SL: Okay. Let's take a break. I wanna get us our food ordered.

AK: Yeah, we're right up to the point where I moved to Fayetteville.

SL: Well, I'm gonna backtrack a little bit.

AK: Oh, sure.

[Recording stopped]

[01:09:30] SL: Wanna talk about your student . . .

Bruce Perry: Rolling.

SL: . . . life.

AK: Oh, okay.

SL: So we were . . .

AK: College student you mean?

SL: Well, no, no, no, no, no. I'm talking about early . . .

AK: Okay.

SL: . . . grade school and . . .

AK: Oh, all right.

SL: So apparently you were a good student

AK: I . . .

SL: 'Cause you were able to . . .

AK: I'll tell you . . .

SL: You had your choices of seminaries to go to and . . .

AK: I'll tell you great story about that.

SL: . . . very prestigious . . .

AK: I was a very average student, didn't care about it, never liked school. And in the, I think it was the fifth grade, we had these textbooks. I think they were science textbooks, and there were quizzes in the—at the end of each chapter.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And then in the back of the book, they had the answers to the quizzes.

SL: That's correct.

[01:10:18] AK: So the first quarter we cheated, you know. We'd take these quizzes, and we'd find the answers in the back of the

book [*SL laughs*] and answer the quiz. So at the end of the first quarter, I got A's and—as opposed to the C's that I'd been having up to then, so I really liked getting those A's. So the day we brought our report cards back from home, the teacher said, "Open up your books. Tear out the answers in the back." So the answers were gone, but I really liked getting that A. So after that—and then she gave us a little talk about how to study for a quiz. After that I thought, "You know, what the hell. In for a dime, in for a dollar." So after that I became an A student.

SL: There you have it.

AK: [*Laughs*] It was just that simple.

SL: I was gonna say that your revelation that you had missed this class all semester long, and you then found a book that had a highlit . . .

AK: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . highlighted text in it.

AK: That was in . . .

SL: Yeah.

AK: . . . semi—in graduate school.

SL: That's one of my recurring nightmares.

AK: Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah.

SL: That I was . . .

AK: It actually happened to me.

SL: . . . dreaming . . .

[01:11:38] AK: I remember being in the elevator with a bunch of students who were quizzing themselves on Church History, and I was thinking, "What class is that for?" And it suddenly hit me. "Oh Jesus, I'm supposed to be in that Church History class. Oh." [Laughs]

SL: Right. Well I—in reality it never happened, it was just always a nightmare for me in my dreams.

AK: Yeah. It happened.

SL: Yeah. [Laughs]

AK: Turned out okay. Wasn't that big a deal.

SL: Well, so around the house, did your mother help you with the studies or your dad or you were [unclear words]

[01:12:16] AK: I don't remember ever sitting down with either parent to do homework. It was—homework was always something I did by myself.

SL: So you had—you became self-motivated as a student, then.

AK: Yes.

SL: And when that evolved . . .

[01:12:38] AK: The only thing I ever remember doing with my parents is the flying with my father.

SL: Or the Sunday drives maybe?

AK: And the Sunday drives, yeah. But that—I was always in . . .

SL: And of course the church.

AK: Well, we were in the back seat, the parents were in the front seat. It was like two different worlds.

SL: Right. Right.

AK: And the church thing—the same thing, you know. As soon as we got to church, the parents went off to do their thing, and we went off to do kid things, so there was always a sense of separation around that.

[01:13:06] SL: So did you ever have any interest in reading newspapers or books outside of school growing up?

AK: I re—did a lah—I read a lot, but mainly fiction. I remem—when I was growing up, I lived in this town that's like 50,000 people, 50- or 60,000 people. When I was growing up, kids could go anywhere they wanted to. I mean as soon as you were mobile, you know, you could get on the city bus when you were like eight and go downtown. It was like nobody—there was no—if you had the nickel to put in the thing, you could go anywhere you wanted to. And then when you got your bicycle, you could go anywhere you wanted to. So I went to the city library all the time. [01:13:49] And the—my first love was Greek and Roman

mythology. And I read every book I could on Greek and Roman mythology. I was fascinated by that. And then when I read all those books, I remember distinctly that they were on—there—and the children's library was in the basement. And I remember there was this bookshelf thing, and the Greek and Roman mythology was on these two shelves, and I finished all those books. And then the next shelf down was science fiction. So I thought, "Oh, I'll give that a try." Been reading science fiction ever since then. Anything with space—I tell people this all the time, anything with—when we—ever we talk about TV, I always say, "Anything with spaceships in it, I'm down for that." Except the horror ones. I don't like the horror ones. But like right now I've been watching the *Picard* series and . . .

SL: I haven't started that.

AK: I've watched *The Expanse*. *The Expanse* is one of the best science fiction things that's ever been . . .

SL: I—someone else has told me that too.

AK: A really incredibly good. But so yeah, so then I started reading science fiction and for—and then eventually I got into reading police procedurals but fiction, you know. But I would—there have been times in my life when I would read two or three a week. You know, I was a total avid reader. But almost—but

always stories. I've always been absorbed by stories, and my brain works that way. I dream in stories, and I fantasize in stories. And there's a close relationship between all those novels that I read from the age of probably eight or nine, really early.

[01:15:50] And I read—I remember when I was in the fourth grade, I was the teacher's pet. My teacher liked me a whole lot. Mrs. **Vogan**. And I—we had these workbooks, you know, and different—I can't even remember what the subject was, but behind the workbook, I would have my novel that I was reading. [SL laughs] And I remember suddenly realizing that the room had become very quiet, and I looked up, and everybody was looking at me. And she had written on the blackboard, "Shh, Drew is reading." [Laughter] And so I put my book away and rejoined the class. It was like . . .

SL: Yeah.

AK: It was not very subtle, but it was funny too, you know. Everybody laughed at me, and I laughed. It was not that big a deal. But yeah that was my deal, I was the bookish kid in the classroom.

SL: But did that . . .

[01:16:55] AK: I also liked rockets though. So I read some stuff that was non—that was science that was not fiction. But not

very much. Mainly it was fiction.

SL: It would seem to me—I mean, my experience and my children's experience with going through public schools is that the better students, the students making the better grades, kind of clump together. And then the students that weren't great students kind of [*unclear words*]

AK: I had a few friends that were like me in that regard. But mainly I just remember being very solitary until I got to El Paso. Then it was all different in El Paso because the high school I went to was so big that there were substantial numbers of kids that were like me.

SL: Right. So the sample was much bigger in relation.

[01:17:59] AK: Yeah. Yeah. So we had a Philosophy Club, you know.

SL: There you go.

AK: And it was all kids that read science fiction and liked classical music. And a couple of 'em were musicians that played in the orchestra, and I sang in the choir. I was a big—I sang in choirs the whole time I was growing up and into my—through my college career. So yeah. So there was enough of us so that we—I had a funny experience actually years later. I was photographing—you member the Shipleys?

SL: Yeah. Curtis?

[01:18:34] AK: Curtis Shipley.

SL: Yeah.

AK: I was—what was his wife's name?

SL: His first wife?

AK: I can picture her. Anyway, they had a big family reunion in their backyard, and they hired me to come and photograph it. So I was photographing this family, but bef—there were like twenty or thirty of them. But before I was just hanging out with Ellen.

SL: Ellen, that's right.

AK: And her sis—and a couple of other people, and they were talking about reunions, and high school reunions came up. And they asked me where I went to high school, and I said, "I graduated from El Paso High." And she said, "Oh you know, my sister's husband graduated from El Paso High." I said, "No kidding. What year?" "[19]59." "Me too." So she said, "Well, he's out in the backyard. Go talk to him." So I went out and talked to him. And he taught architecture. What was his name? He taught architecture in the architecture department at the university.

SL: Compton?

AK: No, it was Hispanic.

SL: Her maiden name is Compton.

AK: What?

SL: Her maiden name was Compton.

AK: No, but it was her sister's husband.

SL: Oh, sister's husband. Okay.

AK: And it was Hispanic name. He was a . . .

SL: I don't know.

AK: Can't remember. It'll come to me later on. But anyway, it turned out that he and I had been part of the same group, but we didn't either one of us remember the other one, but we remembered all—but our friends were all the same. And we talked about all—and parties that we went to, or gatherings that we went to, that we were—and—but we didn't remember each other. It was weird.

SL: [*Laughs*] Small world.

AK: Yeah.

SL: How serendipitous is that?

AK: Yeah. It was neat. And then I got to photograph his family. It was neat. They were—he moved on to some—Colorado or someplace I think.

[01:20:25] SL: So I remember you talking about the epiphany you had about critiquing a preacher and . . .

AK: Right.

SL: . . . like you could do better, and there was some . . .

AK: Yeah, I went from science to literature, you know. And after that my interest was always in literature and philosophy, and I got—my best grades were in English, and I was—although I always got A's in science too, but I was very much focused towards literature.

SL: And . . .

AK: And philosophy in particular.

[01:21:09] SL: And so before you were thinking about seminary schools, you ran across the Eastern philosophies. Is that . . .

AK: Nah, that was after.

SL: That was after.

[01:21:23] AK: That was after, way after I left seminary. I went to seminary for a year, and then I got this weird job in a church as an associ—as an assistant student pastor in Northern Vermont, and I was there for a year. And I had a, it turned out, a very stormy relationship with the senior minister there, who had persuaded me to spend a year there. I had thought I would go back to New York and study acting, but instead I stayed there for a whole year and worked in these churches and still had my ministerial deferment from the draft board. And then I went back to El Paso and . . .

SL: To help your father and . . .

AK: To help my father and mother in the store. And that didn't work out. And then that—and then I decided I would go back to graduate school in theater, but my draft board said no. And I had the experience of being acquainted with Buddhism and Hinduism while I was waiting to find out if I was gonna be drafted or go to the Peace Corps.

[01:22:31] SL: So you ended up in the Peace Corps.

AK: So I ended up in the Peace Corps in India for two years.

SL: And what do you remember of that?

AK: Oh gosh. Sometimes it's really hard to remember that in words. We were in Bengal.

SL: Okay.

AK: We were in a rice cultivation program. The Peace Corps—those early years in the Peace Corps were a circus of mismanagement. We—when I started—we—I was in this program that was supposed to—we were supposed to go to India and teach the Indians how to grow rice. [*SL laughs*] I know, it's funny already. So but it gets funnier. So the training program was—started in September at the University of Missouri, which is A, after the growing season, and B, further north than rice is grown in this country. So they—I remember they loaded us on a bunch

of—on buses and drove all day down to su—down to Arkansas, along the Mississippi River, where a lot of rice is grown. But the fields had already been harvested, so all we saw were these little dried-out little, you know, things.

SL: Sprouts.

[01:23:57] AK: Stalks . . .

SL: Stalks, yeah.

AK: . . . that had been chopped already. Besides which rice is grown in a completely different way in this country than it is in India. But they tr—they did—they tried really hard to teach us in three months how rice is grown in India. But we got to India at the end of—the middle of December, December fourteenth or fifteenth. And we're introduced to—you know, distributed out to—or—to the locations where we would be in groups of two. So I had this partner, and we are in Bengal, this little town, oh, fifty or sixty kilometers north of Calcutta.

SL: Right.

AK: And right on the border with Pakistan. It was Pakistan then. It later became Bangladesh. But the—I remember they introduced us to the Indian workers that we would be working with. And they took us out to meet some rice farmers. And I remember the look on their faces, as we looked at these rice fields, they

could tell instantly that we had never seen a field of growing rice in our lives. And we were supposed to be there to teach them how to grow rice. It was just ridiculous. So we spent a lot of time reading [*laughs*] basically.

SL: Yeah.

[01:25:28] AK: And then we would do these things like—I have this clear memory—we made good friends with Indian coworkers that really were teaching the Indian farmers newer ways to grow rice. But that's a whole nother conversation. But anyway, I remember they would take us out to go visit rice farmers. They'd have meetings of rice farmers in different parts of the area where we were working. And we'd go out with a guy that was in charge of the program working—government worker that was in charge of the program that we were supposed to be working under. And he'd explain stuff to these Indian farmers. And then he would turn to us, and he'd say, "See, and the white guy agrees with us." [*SL laughs*] And we would say, "Yes, we do." And that was our contribution. [*Laughter*]

SL: So were—but you weren't fluent in any of the languages, right?

[01:26:27] AK: They taught us—they tr—they attempted to teach us Bengali. And I picked up enough Bengali to ask where the bathroom was . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . you know, basically. I mean, I was horrible at it. And I tried really hard. As it turns out I had no facility at learning languages at all. But I, you know, I would have local people there that would work with me to try and help me to learn Bengali, but my brain just doesn't function that way. You know, I'm ve—I'm—subsequently, I realized that a big part of the deal is that I'm very visual. So while somebody's trying to teach me something I'm supposed to be hearing, I'm studying what they look like.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And I—and it took me a long time to realize that that was the problem, that that's why somebody would tell me their name and I couldn't remember. 'Cause I was busy lookin' at 'em.

SL: Yeah. [*Unclear word*]

AK: And tha—and what was—and the auditory stuff was just going right through me. So it's like people are always surprised when I don't listen to podcasts at all, ever. I watch a lot of television because I'm into the visual part of it. If I try to just listen to a c—to something that doesn't have a visual part to it, I fall asleep. I just—my brain just doesn't go there. It's weird. But anyway, back to—where were we?

[01:27:58] SL: Well, we're kind of going back and forth here a little bit.

AK: Okay.

SL: I felt like we didn't really address some of the—any of the social activities growing up. I mean we talked about church, and we talked about some of the scouting and some of that. But what about—did you have any relationships at all with neighborhood kids around the home or . . .

AK: I had—yeah. Yeah. We played kick the can a lot.

SL: Okay.

AK: Yeah. There were after-school games of gangs of kids in the neighborhood. And we—yeah, I fit in with that crew pretty well when it was just, you know, red rover, red rover let . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . Tommy come over kind of stuff. And I remember—I have some pleasant memories of that level of game playing where, you know, it wasn't about who was best at it, it was just about playing, you know.

SL: Right. Not really necessarily sports and anything.

AK: Yeah. Yeah. I tried sports and just didn't have any success at that.

[01:29:21] SL: Well, what about girls?

AK: I remember Gretchen. I had a big crush on Gretchen. I never spoke to her though.

SL: [*Unclear words*]

AK: I don't think I ever spoke to her at all. [*Laughs*] I don't think I ever went on a date until I was a senior in high school. And then I tried dating, but I was—I had—oh, I had one girlfriend that I was—we made out a lot. It was all—it was pretty innocent by today's standards.

SL: Right.

AK: I was a virgin till I was twenty-six.

SL: Wow.

AK: Yeah.

SL: So . . .

AK: Part of it because of the ministerial thing. And part of it just because of being not—it was part of—partly the time. That—you know, the [19]50s and early [19]60s. It was—a lot of us were just pretty innocent, pretty naive. But I remember just sitting in the car at the drive in and just kissing for an hour, you know.

SL: Yeah. Yes. [*Laughter*] Some of that.

AK: And maybe if you were lucky, just a little bit of touching the breast, but over the clothes, you know.

SL: Right.

AK: If you ever got inside a girl's shirt, it was like, oh, that was—[*SL laughs*] whoa. But yeah. So I had—I remember two girlfriends from—in high school.

SL: El Paso?

AK: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

AK: That—and that's it. I don't remember any other girls I ever went out with. I was awful at it. I was awful at small talk. I could not do high school small talk, you know. I always ended up wanting to talk about philosophy or, you know—and the girls would just look at me like, "What are you?"

SL: They were looking, but not listening either.

AK: Yeah.

SL: Right.

[01:31:31] AK: But I had this one girl, Janet, who took pity on me. I think—and I—she liked—I think she genuinely liked me. But she had a sense of superiority with respect to me, too. She was definitely the alpha person in the relationship. She lived inside the smelter.

SL: A smelter.

AK: Yeah. It was this huge smelter in El Paso. It was like in the city. El Paso was fifth largest city in the world in terms of . . .

SL: Square.

AK: Square feet.

SL: Miles.

[01:32:09] AK: Square miles. Yeah. It's—there's like five mountains inside the city limits. And down on the ri—and the river—Rio Grande River goes right along one edge of it, and now on the other side of the river is Juarez. So—and you can f—and the hills kind of go up like that. So you know, we're living fairly high up on the hill, and you can see out over the whole valley. And part of what we could see is this smelter and—with this huge—the tallest smoke stack in the world was inside this smelter, which was inside the city limits of El Paso. And you would—if—when you drive—drove into this smelter, it was like driving into hell. It was like, everything was black soot.

SL: Right.

AK: And there were these huge piles of just this . . .

SL: Carbon.

AK: . . . slag. It was slag.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And a couple times a day they would [*knocking*] pour off liquid metal. And from miles away up high enough, you could see, it was like firework. It was beautiful th—when they poured the

slag.

SL: Yeah.

AK: It was incredible. And I would—here comes lunch. So I would go pick—Janet lived—her dad was one of the executives at the smelter. And there—inside the smelter, there was this little pond with four or five houses where some of the executives lived. So . . .

SL: Inside the smelter?

[01:33:38] AK: Inside the smelter. So I would drive my dad's 1953 Buick Roadmaster. I would drive into the smelter to pick up Janet, and she would be walking out. She was very prompt. So she would be walking out through this totally bleak environment of soot, and shit . . .

SL: Industrial. Yeah.

AK: . . . in a bright pink dress with crinolines underneath. [*SL laughs*] You member crinolines?

SL: Yes.

AK: So the skirt would be like going out at this triangle, and she'd be walking along, you know, this pretty little package in pink [*laughter*] through this ungodly environment. I've never forgotten that.

SL: Great images. Okay, we're gonna take a break and eat.

AK: Okay.

[Recording stopped]

[01:34:33] SL: So we just had lunch.

AK: Yeah.

SL: We had Woodstone Pizza. We've held off on having coffee until just a bit later.

AK: Yeah.

SL: And I believe that we had broached the subject of dating as you were growing up.

AK: Yes.

SL: And you were talking about a date that you had with a lady named Janet.

AK: Janet.

SL: Janet.

AK: I had lots of dates with her. She was my girlfriend.

SL: Ah, okay.

AK: We went to the prom together.

SL: All right.

[01:35:03] AK: After we graduated from high school, we had a big see—we had a big graduation prom. And the tradition was that you had to stay out all night.

SL: Of course. [*Laughs*]

AK: And so we did, but we didn't do anything. I mean, we—El Paso has a lot of great places to park, so we went to our favorite parking place and just kissed until dawn basically. [*SL laughs*] I mean by the time we got there, it was already like, you know, two in the morning or something.

SL: Right. Right.

AK: So I remember going—I—the rule was whenever I went out on a date I had to—my parents would go to bed, but I had to wake up my mom, tell her that I was back.

SL: Right.

AK: So I remember going in and waking her up, and she said, "What time is it?" And I said, "Oh, it's seven o'clock." And she said, "[*Gasps*] Where have you been?" And I said, "I graduated from high school, Mom. You're not my boss anymore."

SL: Oh.

AK: She said—I said, "Trust me," you know. She said, "Okay."

SL: So she was okay with that?

AK: Yeah.

SL: That's a cool mom.

AK: Yeah. She trusted me.

SL: Yeah.

AK: But she knew that I was such a dork [*SL laughs*] that, you know,

the possibility of my doing anything that would get me in trouble was remote.

[01:36:28] SL: Right, right. That's funny. So you graduate from high school. Oh wait, that's another question I usually ask. Did you have a favorite teacher?

AK: I did. Ms. **Arm**. She was my English teacher.

SL: In high school?

AK: In hi—senior high school, yeah. And she and I were—we had a lot of after-school conversations and stuff. She was very tall. She was tall. Six feet—more than six feet tall, about fifty years old, and just a wonderful, wonderful English teacher, you know. And I really loved that class. That was my favorite class. She was a great teacher.

SL: She was probably appreciative of someone that was so enamored with literature.

AK: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: You were . . .

AK: Yeah. She was . . .

SL: . . . ferocious.

AK: Yeah, she had a—I remember that she had a great confidence in me. She would give me—I was not a great speller, and she would never count it off for spelling. And I asked her one time

about that, and she said, "Oh, you'll never have to be good at spelling. There'll always be somebody who will fix your spelling for you." And it's—I love the irony of that because as it turned out, it wasn't a secretary that would fix my spelling. It was a machine that would fix my spelling. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's right.

[01:38:00] AK: Anyway. Yeah, she was a wonderful teacher. She was my favorite. I had a physics teacher as a senior in high school who was also—it was his only year he ever taught. And he was very demanding. I remember one time—I was just kind of, you know, not working very hard in there. And he came up to me one time privately. And he said that he had looked at my records and he knew that I was capable of doing a lot better, and I better get off my ass and do—start doing better. And he used language like that.

SL: Right.

AK: And he was a popular teacher except for the kids that had powerful parents, who would get good grades regardless of whether they earned them or not. And he got into trouble because he failed some girls that were supposed to be, you know, the power elite. And they fired him.

SL: Wow. He just wouldn't play the game.

AK: Yeah, nineteen f . . .

SL: So he probably went on to better things.

AK: . . . 1958. He was a scientist. And he had been working at a lab, some government lab or something, and he, for some reason or another, he ended up teaching that year. But yeah, I hope he did fine. Who knows?

SL: I bet he did.

AK: But yeah, he was a character. I liked him a lot. Those are the only two teachers. [01:39:28] Oh, I remember one [*laughs*]*—*I remember a math teacher who—he was the opposite. I can't remember his name, but he was—he would always have a few boys in the class that were his favorites. And he—every winter he would get sick and be in the hospital for a few days. And whatever boys would go and visit him in the hospital got treated well.

SL: [*Laughs*] Wow.

AK: He was old. He was like, in his sixties. He was just this strange old man.

SL: Hey, I need to . . .

AK: And I would—I remember getting papers back with a D on it where I had answered every question right. But he didn't like the—he thought that the way that I outlined the answer was

sloppy.

SL: Wow.

AK: So he'd give me a D even though I had all the right answers.

SL: Answers. Now that's strange.

AK: Yeah. That was that guy. That was—I didn't—I was not one of his cute boys. So.

SL: That almost sounds defensive in a way, doesn't it?

[01:40:47] AK: So, anyway, I—yeah. So I took solid geometry from him, and the next class was supposed to be trigonometry and instead I took a typing class. I just didn't . . .

SL: Didn't want to pursue that.

AK: Just didn't want to mess with it.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And as it turned out—at the time, of course, we had no idea that somebody on a—that was taking those kind of courses would benefit from taking a typing class. That was for the girls, you know?

SL: Yes.

AK: I think I was the only boy in the class, actually. But as it turned out, of course, with the computer thing, we all needed to learn how to type.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And the—anybody that had any background in typing did better.

SL: Yeah. I never took typing. So I still hunt and peck.

AK: Yeah. I—if I think about it—sometimes I do a little of that, but if I think about it, I can get into my typing mode and type up something.

SL: Yeah. I'm gonna make one quick adjustment, Bruce.

BP: Yeah.

SL: This back light . . .

BP: Oh, the one . . .

SL: . . . a little bit too far forward, I think. Does that look better?

BP: Ah, shoot. It was so subtle, I couldn't even tell. Do it again, or—oh, okay. Don—too mu—back, back, back, back, back—right there.

SL: Okay. Sorry.

AK: That's fine.

BP: Yeah. You had a little shiny there.

SL: Yeah. You know, I wanted you to be pleased with how you look.

[*Laughter*]

BP: Yeah, I don't know that I've ever shot photographers shooting a photographer.

AK: Yeah.

BP: I mean, that's the ultimate challenge, right?

[01:42:28] SL: It is. It is. Okay. So, but what about drama and acting? I mean, you were attracted to that. I would think that there was some mentor or someone in that field that . . .

AK: I was . . .

SL: . . . kind of drug you into it or . . .

AK: I have a vague memory of being in an acting class in high school. And I was in a play in high school. But I didn't really get very serious about it until I was in college. I—the first year of college I went—I never applied for colleges when I was a senior in high school. So I—there was a local college there. So I went to the local college. It became Texas Western, but at the time—no, it was Texas Western then. It became UTEP.

SL: UTEP. University of Texas at El Paso.

AK: But before it was UTEP it was Texas Western College.

SL: Okay.

AK: And . . .

SL: So that's where the drama . . .

[01:43:33] AK: So I went to school there for a year, but I was just taking basic freshman courses that I thought I could get out of the way. And then during that year, I applied to transfer to Earlham. So the next year I went to Earlham, and then I was at Earlham for three years and graduated from Earlham.

SL: Okay, so where . . .

AK: And then went to Union in New York.

SL: Where is Earlham?

[01:43:54] AK: It's in Richmond, Indiana. If you drew a line from Indianapolis to Dayton, Ohio, just before you got to the Ohio line is where Richmond is. Small town. About the size of Fayetteville, probably. And Earlham—there were maybe 800 or 900 students there. Most—almost all of them lived on campus. It was a—and it was a Quaker college, but probably 20 percent to 30 percent of the kids that went there were Quakers. The rest were just anybody that wanted to go there. It was a very—it was a—there—four of the graduates had won Nobel prizes.

SL: Wow.

AK: In science or something, I don't know what. And but it was a—if you did well there, you could go to graduate school wherever you wanted to. It was that kind of small private college.

SL: Right.

AK: And the Quaker tradition was really wonderful because of the informality between students and professors. Everybody went by their first name, including the president of the college. And you could stop anybody on—and ask them a question and people would—you know, there was a very open kind of dialogue

between everybody there, really.

SL: That sounds great.

AK: It was a—there was a lot of—it was a really great place to be. It was a really good place. I had—I was dealing with problems around anxiety and—well, you know, like girls. I, you know, I can't remember—I can remember like maybe two girls that I dated very much at all during that time. I was just very isolated, I guess, in a lot of ways. I enjoyed the community there. I enjoyed the meals that we shared. I enjoyed being in the choirs there. There was a lot there that I really liked.

[01:46:09] The professor that I went there to study with, he was my advisor, and I took like five classes with him. He was a nationally well-known Quaker and religious writer.

SL: Do you remember his name?

AK: Elton Trueblood.

SL: Okay.

AK: And a lo—any minister of that era would know who that was. He was that well known. And he was a great teacher. He was a really good philosophy teacher. He—one of the—there was a small group of students that were intending to be ministers that he would meet with Tuesday evenings for a Quaker meditation. And that was probably the first time that I was introduced to a

discipline of silent meditation. Which has become a major part of my life through the years, but especially in the last ten years or so it's become a really primary focus for me. But and that was the beginning of it. And I'm still very much—although—well, should we skip ahead to when I was in seminary?

SL: We can.

AK: Or where would you like to go next?

SL: Well, we've got to cover that as well, so we can go there. Sure.

[01:47:41] AK: Okay. Afte—when I graduated from Earlham—there's a—I could—there are various different stories about that time that I could tell but—now I can't remember what I was gonna talk about. Oh, you wanted to talk about acting. The—I was in—it was not a main part of what I was doing. It was a kind of a subsidiary interest.

SL: Okay.

AK: It was something I dreamed about doing, but I didn't really make it a priority until I was a senior in college. And then I really began to focus in on it. I had a f—the head of the philosophy department—he and I never got along very well at all.

SL: Oh.

AK: It was—this was a different teacher than the one that I had gone

there to study with.

SL: Right.

AK: And he was everything that I was not. He was six foot seven.

He had been the wrestling—national wrestling champion when he was in college and was the coach of the wrestling team, and had this kind of Greek philosopher, fit body, fit mind. He was a very serious individual. And he was teaching a—when I was a senior, he was teaching a course in existentialism, and I had been given the lead in a play. And I decided to not—I realized I didn't need the course in existentialism to graduate, and I dropped out of it to give me time to work on this huge role that I had in this play. And he threatened to keep me from going to the graduate school of my choice as a consequence. He was very angry at me for dropping out of that. But I still went to where—the college I wan—the graduate school I wanted to go to 'cause he didn't have the clout, really, to . . .

SL: Do that to you.

AK: . . . to do that to me. But . . .

[01:49:59] SL: Well, just side note, what play and what role?

AK: It was a play called *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. It's a Molière play.

SL: Okay.

AK: And it was an English adaptation of it called *The Prodigious Gentleman*. And I had the lead role in it. I was on stage for the entire play except one scene. You know, it was a huge . . .

SL: That is.

AK: . . . number of lines to learn and stuff. I had a great time doing that. There was something else about that period that I thought would be interesting, but I can't remember what it was. So.

[01:50:35] SL: So what were your brother and sister doing at this time?

AK: Ah, far out. Okay. So my sister, she went to—she was two years younger than me, and she graduated and went to Emory University and studied—she was a singer. She was a great opera singer.

SL: Wow.

AK: And but got married to some guy that taught junior high band in West Texas and ended up bein' a—not pursuing her career as an opera singer. She had a great voice, though. My brother, who was four and a half years older than me, when he was a freshman in college he got his girlfriend pregnant. And that was always a big scandal, but a big secret. Nobody knows.

SL: Right.

AK: I don't even know whether his kids know. But so he married his

high school sweetheart and joined the air force, and was in the air force for like twenty-seven years.

SL: Wow.

AK: He was a career air force officer. He started out just as a lowest level airman and studied—took college courses while he was active in the air force. Got his—the air force sent him back to school but kept him on active duty while he was being a student. He graduated from college. They sent him to officer training school. He became an officer. He continued on. I think he was a fairly high-ranking officer when he finally retired from the air force. [01:52:26] One of the stories that I wanted to tell, if this is not skipping around too much. You can just stop me. But when I was discharged from the Peace Corps in India . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . because of my interest in Buddhism and Hinduism, I decided to—I was exactly halfway around the world. The difference between going back via Europe and going back via Asia was two or three dollars. I mean, it was incredible. It was half—exactly halfway around the world. So a lot of guys were going back via Europe, but I decided because of my interest in Buddhism to travel back via Asia. So I spent some time in each of several countries. It was before—it was in 1968. It was just before the

invasion of Cambodia.

SL: Right.

AK: So there was still free travel into Cambodia. So I went to Cambodia. I went to Angkor Wat and spent a week there. It was a incredible experience of this wonderful complex of ancient temples . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . in the jungle. [01:53:34] But while I was there, I realized that my—I—or I discovered that my brother had just begun his one-year tour in Vietnam. So I thought, I'm gonna fly right over Vietnam. I might as well just see if I can find him and visit with him as long as I'm here. [*SL laughs*] So whenever I tell my buddies that are Vietnam vets this story, they always think it's hysterically funny. So I went to the Vietnamese consulate in Cambodia and got a tourist visa for Vietnam and flew into Saigon in the fall of 1968. And if you know much about the history of the war in Vietnam, that was not a good time . . .

SL: That's right. [*Laughter*]

AK: . . . to be in Vietnam at all. I mean, the Tet Offensive was just a month or two away. It was—so I—but I spent a week in Saigon, and I almost got to visit my brother's base, but he flew down. He had some clout, apparently, and he flew down from his base

and met me in Saigon. And we visited there for a day, and then he flew back to Saigon, and I flew on Hong Kong. But I—the—spending the five or six days that I did in Saigon in 1968 was an incredible experience. It's as close as I ever want to be to a war zone. I didn't hear any shots being fired or anything, but the tension was just incredible. And half the people that you saw were carrying weapons. And it was just this electric atmosphere. And you know, the—apparently, you know, Viet Cong would infiltrate Saigon and throw hand grenades into bars and stuff. I mean, it was—but I—thank God, I did not see anything like that, but you knew every minute that you were there that something like that could happen. So it was a really intense experience. [01:55:43] So then I flew onto Hong Kong. And while I'd been in the Peace Corps, I had several friends that were photographers that had nice cameras, and they'd walk around with these cameras and take pictures and stuff, and it just looked really cool. And I thought, "I'm gonna stop in Hong Kong and buy a camera." Because I had \$1,400, I think, was my money that they gave me when I just got discharged from the Peace Corps.

SL: Right.

AK: So I had enough money to travel a little bit and to buy a camera.

So I went—when I was in Hong Kong, I bought my very first camera, a Pentax Spotmatic, and was real proud of it. Took—shot a couple rolls of film. And that—although it was another, oh, probably year and a half before—eh, another year before I really got interested in photography as a career. You want—shall I tell that story? Or you wanna backtrack?

SL: Yes. No, do it.

[01:56:49] AK: So I—when I got home from the Peace Corps, the country had been—had experienced the beginnings of the hippie movement. And oddly enough, even though I was halfway around the world, my own evolution had mirrored that. You know, my hair was growing out, I was wearing a beard, I was smoking dope, you know.

SL: Right.

AK: I was ready. So . . .

SL: So many were.

AK: Yeah. So the day that I left for the Peace Corps in 1966, I flew from El Paso to New York City. And I was in New York City for like a day, maybe two days, and I had some fun there. And then we were—we all—everybody in my Peace Corps group was—reported to the airport to fly together in a chartered flight to India. So from the airport, I called my mom and my dad to

say—'cause I knew I wouldn't be able to talk to them once I got to India. You know, we didn't have cell phones then.

SL: Right.

[01:57:59] AK: So it was a rare thing to be able to call someone from halfway around the world. So I—my mom was in her little Hallmark card and party store. And I talked to her for a bit and said goodbye and went on to the Peace Corps. Well, she turned around from having this conversation with me in the store, and there was a young girl there. And she said, "That was my son. He's in—he's on his way to India in the Peace Corps." And this girl said, "Oh gosh, I'd like to join the Peace Corps." So for two years, every now and then this girl would go in and talk to my mom about her son that was in the Peace Corps. So *[laughs]* wh—at—so when I got home, my mom said—told me this story, and she said, "This girl, she lives with her parents around the corner from us, and she'd really like to talk to you about your Peace Corps experience." So I went around the corner and met this girl. And I think the second time we met, we ended up making out, and it got real hot and heavy. And a few months later, I informed my parents that we were getting married. She was—I was twenty-eight. She was nineteen. She was a freshman in college. And her parents—she was experimenting

with the Bahá'í religion. My parents were s—totally disapproved of this whole deal. [*SL laughs*] They were just terrified of it, really, I think. And her parents were the same. They thought it was—the whole thing was just a terrible idea.

SL: Right.

[01:59:40] AK: So but Linda Jean and I, we did it, we got married.

We were together for two or three years. It was—I—she ended up—after we move—we moved together to Fayetteville, and then she didn't wanna be—she wanted to go to India. That was—she thought she was gonna—that I would take her back to India or something. So . . .

SL: Right.

AK: So she left and had many adventures and ended up in Alaska. And years and years, like thirty years later, I got a letter from her, and she was telling me about ha—ended up in Alaska and what it was like there and what she was doing. And she was helping with the Valdez clean up and stuff.

SL: Right.

AK: And I thought, well, that's cool to hear from her after all that time. So this was in 1990, probably. And so a couple weeks later, I remember I was painting this apartment that I'd moved into and listening to NPR on the radio. And they were doing a

segment on the cleanup of the Valdez. And I thought, "I wonder if they'll interview Linda Jean." And as soon as I had that thought, they did. [*Laughter*] And I heard her voice. And since then we've become friends.

SL: That's so great.

AK: We're kind of like Facebook friends. But she's been—she came down here to visit with me because she loves photography and she loves my work as a photographer.

SL: Right.

[02:01:10] AK: But we moved—after we got married in El Paso in 1969, it would've been, then we moved to Austin. I had this strange idea that I should become a professor of linguistics. [*Laughter*] So I lasted about—so I went to the university—I enrolled at the university in graduate school there to be a linguistics professor. And after about three weeks of it, I was totally done with it. Oh God. So I dropped out. and I got a job as a—supposedly I was supposed to be a mobility instructor in this special project for totally blind, severely retarded, institutionalized children . . .

SL: Wow.

AK: . . . at the state school in Austin for people with what we then called mental retardation. That—since then, that term is

dropping out . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . of use because of the—its colloquial use. But so I got a full-time job there and that's—and I tau—I worked in this program for a couple of years, and it was ver—it was a very creative program. The guy that ran it—it was—it had lots of funding. So we had like twenty-two kids on this unit. And about half of the people that were hired had special training in like speech therapy or mobility or something. And then the other half were just people that the director thought would be creative, interesting, make a just a contribution. I was in that category.

SL: Right.

[02:02:52] AK: So after I'd been working there for a few months, my next-door neighbor where Linda Jean and I were living installed a darkroom in her house. And she knew that I had this kind of vague interest in photography, which I really hadn't been doing much with at all. But she invited me to share the use of this darkroom. So I took my camera out to this institution where I work and shot a couple rolls of film of the kids out there, and then developed that film and put a negative in the enlarger and exposed it and slid a sheet of paper into the developer tray. And from that instant, I knew that I was a photographer. I was

totally and completely hooked on this. It was like I'd found my natural home. It was one of those spine-tingling kind of experiences that you have when you discover what you really wanna do. And it didn't hurt that some of my friends then thought that my—they liked the photographs that I had been making of these kids at this unit where I was working and gave me a lot of support for it. [02:04:15] So it's interesting as my career developed that from even the first few rolls of film that I processed myself, I was working with diver—with essentially diverse populations of people and loved that part of it of—the—photographing people that were both other than and also the same as. Which was a big part of what the Peace Corps had meant for me as well, was to discover that these people, who were as different from me as anybody on the planet could be, were really just exactly the same as me. So that—since that experience that began really when I first moved to El Paso when I was sixteen, and then continued through my experiences in college and graduate school, and then really blossomed in my experience in the Peace Corps, and then when I finally discovered my career path as a photographer immediately focused me towards photographing people in this way that explored our common humanity through the veil of apparent

difference.

[02:05:50] SL: So why Fayetteville?

AK: Ah, good. Good question. Excellent question. So I'm working in this place, and like we're dropping acid every weekend [*SL laughs*] and smoking dope all the time. And there was a circle of—there was a group of us that were just flaming hippies. You know, we're all growing our hair out. There—and we rented this big old house, and there were, oh, maybe half a dozen different people living in this house with me and Linda Jean. And you know, and going to live music all the time . . .

SL: Yeah.

AK: . . . and meeting musicians and just having a high old time. And I had a—my—after I shared the darkroom with my next door neighbor for a while, I bought the equipment and had my own darkroom in the bathroom that I would set up and—so a couple of the people that I got to know in this group were from Fayetteville. And they—and we had good times together, and they moved back to Fayetteville and said, "Come up and visit us." So when it was—I'd had enough of working in this place and was kind of ready to move on. Linda Jean and I came up to Fayetteville to visit these people. And we were here for a couple weeks and just kind of generally enjoyed the town. This was

1971. And then we went back to Austin, and I decided I wanted to go to San Francisco because that's where hippies went, you know.

SL: Hippies. Yeah.

[02:07:32]AK: So we packed up the—our VW bus and were heading off to El Paso—I mean, to San Francisco, but we went through El Paso on the way. And when we got to El Paso, there was a letter from some friends of ours that we had told about how great Fayetteville was. And they said, "We went up to Fayetteville after you told us about it, and we bought twenty acres of land there. Come and hang out on the land with us." So you know, so that was, you know, that was the big thing to do back then, you know, is . . .

SL: Sure.

[02:08:08] AK: So we—they weren't going to move up to the land for another few months. So Linda Jean and I drove back to Fayetteville from El Paso on our way to San Francisco [*laughter*] and moved into this building, this house that was little more than a shed. It had no central heating or air. I don't think it was even—had any kind of insulation in it. Had—didn't have running water. It had a well that we had to get water from. And most of the twenty acres was actually woods. There was one

pasture that had maybe three or four acres in it. It had this old broken down stone barn. And we lived there for a couple of months, and I sat up my darkroom and was serious about doing photography. And then Linda Jean decided that she'd had enough of that. And she went on. That was the end of that marriage. And I moved into town. And then I ended up—for about three years, I don't think I lived any place more than two or three months. I, you know, I was—today, I'd guess you'd say I was homeless, but I was just an itinerant hippie, you know. And I had a place to set up my darkroom, and I had a bunch of friends, and I'd camp out on somebody's floor for a while. And it was a great time. And you know, Dickson Street was just great. There was live music in three or four different venues all the time. And it was a great time. Where was I?

[02:09:58] SL: Well, the question was how you got to Fayetteville.

AK: Oh yeah.

SL: And so I'll just interject, it was—they weren't part of the—the folks that bought the land. They weren't part of the really rough group.

AK: No, no. It was a different bunch.

SL: Different group. Okay.

AK: No, no. They stayed here for a couple of years, and then they

went back to Austin.

SL: Okay.

AK: And that—I don't even know what happened to that piece of land that they bought. I lived on it ag—I bought—actually I lived on it a year or so later. Somebody who had bought it I became friends with and lived with her for a while. She had a rabbit farm there. No, not rabbits, goats. She had a goat farm there, and I helped with the goats and, you know . . .

SL: Back to the land.

AK: . . . did what hippies did.

SL: Yeah, that was the [*unclear words*].

[02:10:49] AK: There was a bunch of people that kinda moved—lived in there with her. There's a lot of stories from that period. But after I'd been there in Fayetteville for about three years I was—and just doing photography the whole time. I had odd jobs, janitor jo—I worked as a janitor for the Burger Chef for a while. And I was a dishwasher at the D-Lux for a while and just, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

AK: . . . jobs like that. But mainly jobs that allowed me to pursue my interest in photography and to hang out, you know, smoke dope, and be free.

SL: Living the dream.

AK: Living the dream.

SL: So before we go on, you got some mustache here. There. It was kind of sticking straight out.

AK: You waited that long to tell me I had pizza in my beard?

SL: [*Laughter*] Not pizza, you just had a little hair that was sticking straight out.

AK: Oh.

SL: Okay.

AK: Okay.

SL: That's better.

AK: Well, thanks. Got to look good.

SL: Okay. Well, preserved forever. [*Laughter*]

[02:11:51] AK: So anyway, but yeah, so that's how I ended up in Fayetteville, and after I'd been here for a while, I was sleeping on the floor of this woman who had become a friend. She was wor—she was a barmaid, but she was also a student in the art department. And I got to know her at—I think she was working at The Swinging Door. Pretty sure it was The Swinging Door. And she invited me to come and just hang—live in her house. So I was literally sleeping on the floor in her house. And she was interested in photography. So I sat up my darkroom in her

kitchen. And she told me about this professor—he was a painting professor, but they didn't have anybody teaching photography in the art department, so he convened—once a week he convened this little group of basically mainly painting students who wanted to learn something about photography, and it was at the same time that he actually had a studio class in painting, but he would go back and forth between these two groups and kind of help these kids with their photography. So this friend of mine told me this about this guy and said, "You know, you should just take some of your photographs and go up there to that class. He'd be happy for you to just sit in." So I did. I took a group of photographs that I'd printed and went up to this guy's little seminar. And immediately just in the first session, it became apparent that I knew more about photography than anyone else in the room. I'd studied. I'd read a lot of books and worked hard at—by that time, it had been three years that I—since I'd found my calling as a photographer, so he invited me to just kind of co-teach this seminar with him. So he would handle the art part, and I would handle the photography part. And we became pretty good buddies.

[02:13:55] So at that—that summer after that was—that class was over, that summer I got a call from him. He and I had been

going out after the class and drinking beer together and stuff. I got a call from him, and he said, "Look, I talked to the chairman of the department, and they will pay you the same amount of money that they pay a graduate student, but you don't have to take any courses for you to teach a course in photography in the art department." So I said, "Well, okay, that'd be great." So that was in 1973. And that—and for the next four years, I continually built on that until after I'd been there for three years I had—I was teaching like three or four courses each semester, different levels of photography, photography 1 and 2 and a history class. And I had some graduate students doing independent studies, and I was just going to faculty meetings. And I was just pretending that I was a faculty member in the art department. They were paying me a fraction of what they were paying the guys that had regular appointments.

SL: Right.

[02:15:02] AK: And I did not—I was not—I did not by any means have an appointment to be teaching there. So I went to a faculty meeting, and one of the faculty members stood up and said, "Well, now that we have this program of photography, we need to hire somebody with the appropriate credentials to teach it." And one of the other teachers who was a friend of mine

said, "Well, Andrew's doing a good job of teaching it." And they just totally ignored that guy. He was gone in a couple years too. So yeah, so—but it took them a year to replace me. So during that year, I—by that time, I had met Meg with her two kids, and we'd gotten married, and you know, and I had a household to support. So it was like, "Oh, now what am I gonna do?" So during the, by then, what, six years that I'd been photographing, I think three of them I'd been teaching in the university. So I had to learn a bunch of stuff in order to teach stuff. I had realized that my forte was actually portrait photography. And then I was really interested in that. And I'd learned something about the history of portrait photographers and knew that there was a way of doing it that was quite different from the way that commercial photographers did it at that time. Most of the commercial portrait photographers that were just doing stuff for families and whatnot were using inexpensive color materials that were not very permanent and that were ver—and the way that they posed families was very s—what's a good word for it? Bad. [Laughter] It was just very, very posed and unnatural.

[02:17:04] And so I just—what I wanted to do was to photograph people in archival black and white, as opposed to the inexpensive color materials, process all the images myself, make

the prints myself. And provide people with a more informal, more direct, more kind of engaged way of photographing people, not posed but still engaged with a process, and provide them with images that were archival, that would be in their—still in their family looking the same fifty years or a hundred years later. So I inven—I knew it was gonna be a challenge to persuade people to undertake this different way of having their families or their individual selves photographed. So I invented a project [*SL laughs*], and the project was called the Fayetteville Townfolk Portfolio Project. And the idea was to create an archive of photographs that represented all the different kinds of people that lived in Fayetteville during this period, not unlike what the Pryor Center is about.

SL: Right.

AK: So but it also—it gave a kind of license to doing this particular way of photographing, but it also introduced people to what that kind of photography looked like. And it worked, you know.

SL: Big time.

AK: For fifty years—for forty-five years since then—I started that in 1976, so it's been forty-five years, and I'm still doing it. And it's—I mean, a lot of changes since then. It's digital now and all that, but I've done so many projects about particular special

populations of people, people with mental retardation, people with mental illness, people with—at-risk high school kids, as well as broad, general population, all the different kinds of people that live in Arkansas. You know, it's been a wonderful forty-five years, and that's how it got started.

[02:19:23] SL: So I remember much of this 'cause I was—I graduated high school in [19]70, so I was at the university, and I'd actually taken a year of courses at the university while I was in high school.

AK: Right.

SL: And they were art courses.

AK: And that woman I married in 1973—or [19]74 actually, when we got married.

SL: It was Marty's—my sister-in-law's sister.

AK: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. So we—but I remember the darkroom down in the basement of the fine arts building.

AK: Oh yeah.

SL: There was that hole on the floor [AK *laughs*], and you'd just walk down the spiral stairway, and it was back there behind the stair.

AK: Yeah.

SL: So I remember that. And I remember—I think I—don't I

remember **Jeff Wilson**, and there were art students . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . that were wanting to take photography.

AK: Yeah. Yeah.

[02:20:16] SL: But I can't remember who the guy was that you partnered with.

AK: Oh, that's interesting.

SL: I mean, the guy that was . . .

AK: Got all that started

SL: The guy that started, and I can't remember his name.

AK: Robert—damn it. God, I can't believe this.

SL: Well . . .

AK: Watercolor teacher. Robert?

SL: Ross?

AK: Ross. Yeah. Bob, Robert Ross.

SL: Robert Ross. Your next door . . .

AK: He lives next door neighbor to me.

SL: Yes.

AK: Yeah. Now.

SL: I had him for . . .

AK: Fifty years later. Yeah.

SL: I had him for figure drawing.

AK: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: I had—I'd signed up in high school with Whitlatch for sculpture.

[02:20:52] AK: Oh yeah.

SL: But he died . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . and I got **Sweeney**.

AK: Right.

SL: And then to continue—since I had a year of sculpture, I continued with it. Wasn't really that . . .

AK: Did you take the . . .

SL: Then I got Lahiri for that.

AK: Who was Bengali.

SL: Yeah.

AK: From the place where—yeah.

SL: Yeah. So . . .

[02:21:10] AK: Lahiri, he was—one time he said—I used to—every semester I would have nude models for a few sessions, and I had this good friend that modeled for me a couple times. And Lahiri stopped me in the hall one time, and he said—he wanted to know whether she was a good model or not. And he said, "But does she have volumes?" [*Laughter*]

SL: That—it was a magic time in the art department.

AK: Oh yeah, it really was.

SL: I mean, Roller Wilson and . . .

AK: Oh, Roller Wilson was still teaching there, and he was a f—he—I used to hang out with him and **Sweeney**. The three of us would go over to the . . .

SL: The Union?

AK: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And you know, it was so much fun to just walk across campus with them because they saw everything. They would—they'd be, you know, they'd be looking at stuff and pointing out relationships, and it was just so cool. Yeah.

SL: And I, you know, I got to have Roller for painting.

AK: Oh, wow.

SL: And it was like the Renaissance.

AK: Yeah.

SL: It was—that was the method that he chose to use to spin the paint.

AK: Yeah. I saw him do—I sat in on a couple of graduate reviews that he did. And he—of all the professors that worked with the graduate students in those graduate reviews, he was far and away the best. And you know, it was such a tragedy when they

fired that guy. And they—as far as I'm concerned, the only reason they fired him was because he was so much more successful . . .

SL: He was.

AK: . . . than they were. [*Laughs*]

[02:22:44] SL: Many levels about what was going on. I'm trying to remember who the department chair was at that time.

AK: Oh, it was that big round guy with a little—with a big mustache. What was his name?

SL: No, when I first got there it was a small, thin man.

AK: Oh, different guy then.

SL: I can't remember his name. I'll think of it . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . tomorrow or . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . tonight or something.

AK: I can't remember the name of the guy that was there when I became involved there.

[02:23:13] SL: Do you remember when Roller had his students build giant fruit costumes?

AK: No.

SL: Yeah. Yeah. Jeff and **RV**. Jeff was a giant asparagus.

AK: Oh yeah.

SL: About eight feet tall.

AK: Oh, God, may—I do kinda re . . .

SL: And Robert was a banana.

AK: Yeah, I do kind of re . . .

SL: They were walking around campus.

AK: Yeah. [*Laughs*] I do kind of vaguely remember that.

SL: Jim Simmons was with us as faculty too.

AK: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Went on to do great photography work.

AK: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[02:23:50] AK: One of my student went on to be—work for the,
oh . . .

SL: Durst.

AK: Oh yeah.

SL: The chair was Durst.

AK: Yeah. That—no, that was. Yeah. When you were there.

SL: Yeah.

AK: But he died before I came.

SL: Right.

AK: And I knew his widow.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And his . . .

SL: [*Unclear words*] fantastic.

AK: . . . daughter too, I think.

SL: Yes. And his son Eric.

AK: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: Photographer too. And he worked at Collier's.

AK: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Where everyone bought their cameras and film.

[02:24:22] AK: Yeah. Which is where I connected with Bill Schwab.

I was—I—the—when I finished the Fayetteville Townfolk Exhibit, I wanted to get a grant to finish it up and produce an exi—a really, a touring exhibit. So I learned about the Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities, and I applied for a grant from them, or I contacted them about applying for a grant from them.

SL: Right.

[02:24:50] AK: And the woman who was working there, who became a good friend after we moved to Little Rock—but even then she was a good friend. But she said, "We have a very pro"—she explained to me how boards worked. And she said, "Some boards are very hands on, proactive. And that's—our board is like that. So I will tell you who our board members are that live

in Fayetteville and are at the university. And call 'em up. And you'll probably find someone on that board who will help you to write this grant proposal," because I had never done anything at all like that before. [02:25:28] So I called up a couple of guys, but I called up Bill Schwab, and he said, "Yeah, I'd love to help you with that." And he spent several evenings. I spent a bunch of evenings at his house just goin'—write—I'd write stuff, and I'd go and sit down with him, and he'd say, "Well, you know, you need to put it like this." And he taught me how to write a grant proposal. We wrote this like twenty- or thirty-page grant proposal. And during one of those evenings, he said to me, "Do you remember—do you understand why I'm helping you with this?" Something like that. I can't remember his words exactly. He m—if he'd joined us, he'd probably tell the story differently. But I said, "No," and he said, "A year ago, I was at Collier's before Christmas, and I wanted to buy a camera, and they were so busy they couldn't take the time to talk to me about what kind of camera I should get. And one of the clerks in there s—probably Eric Durst, said, 'See that guy over there? He knows a lot about cameras. Talk to him.'" And I was just in there shopping, you know, or hanging out basically. So he approached me, and he said—I didn't—I have no memory of it, don't to this

day. But he said that I spent like a half an hour just explaining all different kinds of things about, you know, single-lens reflex cameras to him and helped him pick out a camera. And a year later he remembered that and . . .

SL: Got you a grant.

AK: . . . reciprocated by getting me started in this process that ended up with several grants and several projects. And now, forty-five years later, another project.

[02:27:11] SL: He's been working on grants for the Pryor Center.

AK: Yeah.

SL: He's gotten some.

AK: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. He's just remarkable.

AK: Yeah. And decided to share that money with me.

SL: Isn't it great?

AK: Yeah. It's amazing.

SL: Yeah. It is.

[02:27:25] AK: What a life, God. So this year I will have my eightieth birthday, my fiftieth year of doing photography and my thirtieth year of being a sober alcoholic.

SL: Congratulations.

AK: Which is another thing we can talk about if you want to.

SL: Sure. I know several people that are in AA . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . and do AA. I'm assuming you probably do the same thing.

AK: Yeah. I—you know, I was—I came back—I started drinking when I was in seminary. I had a friend who was . . .

SL: That's not uncommon, is it?

AK: No [*laughs*], not at all.

SL: Okay.

AK: So I had never—I had drank a few beers when I was in college, but never—I don't think I ever drank more than two in a row. I was—and that was very occasional. I just . . .

SL: Right.

AK: It—at the little Quaker college I went to, that just wasn't a thing, you know.

SL: Right.

[02:28:19] AK: So when I went to seminary, I met this guy who was in the—he was a musician and he—the Union had quite a extensive music department for people studying religious music and organ playing and stuff. So he had a bottomless bottle of Johnny Walker Black. So I just started drinking scotch with him every afternoon. And I—the first time I remember being really drunk was during that year. And then when I was in the—in

India in the Peace Corps, and even before then, I'd started drinking pretty regularly. And then in India in the pe—even in training—I smoked my first joint when I was in training for the Peace Corps. And then in India, we had all kinds of . . .

SL: Consumables.

AK: Consumables. Yeah. And hashish from Nepal and alcohol, just weird alcohol. Indian alcohol is not a—but lots of it, you know. So when I came home, the whole hippie thing was pretty much centered around smoking dope and taking acid.

SL: Right.

AK: And drinking beer, you know, and that be—just became a regular thing. Years later I would discover that—after I got sober, that there was a history of alcoholism in my family. That is was not—although I didn't know anything about it because the generation that raised me didn't drink. Well, my dad drank when he was in his eighties, but when I was growing up, there was no alcohol in the house at all. It was very taboo as a matter of fact. I—and in retrospect, I think it was taboo, and I think a lot of the secrecy around the generations before that, the history that I was never told much about . . .

SL: Right.

[02:30:29] AK: . . . was because of the amount of alcoholic drinking

that had been part of that. You know, my f—my pare—my mom losing both of her parents when she was a child—I'm certain that alcohol played a part in that. My grandfather on my father's side dying when I was an infant. I'm positive that alcohol played a part in that. So when I got to the point where I was drinking every day and smoking dope every day for year after year, it gradually became a very destructive force in my life. It affected my career as a photographer. It definitely affected my marriage. Meg and I drank together. You know, I—in a way I feel sad about saying it, but the truth is that Meg drank alcoholically her whole life. As did her fam—her mom and dad both. So when that marriage ended, I was—I decided that I would—that was in 1988. And we had moved to Little Rock in 1981 to continue all this exhibit-length work with grants and whatnot. So in 1988, when that marriage ended, I just decided what the hell, I'll quit drinking and smoking dope and just see what that's like. Kind of a health thing.

SL: Right.

[02:32:07] AK: Well, within a week of that decision, Meg had left, Kathryn had left, Jack was gone. Within a week of that I was in the most profound depression of my life. I was just heartsick. If I'd had a gun I'd've killed myself. I was just—it never occurred

to me to link that to the fact that I had quit drinking. I thought I was just depressed because of the changes in my life at that time. And I didn't drink or use for, oh, a year or so. And then I started drinking again. And I moved back to Fayetteville the next year, in 1989 towards the end of the year. And I was drinking a little bit. I started to reestablish myself in Fayetteville, photographing people here and picking up kind of where I'd left off career wise. And I had quit—I decided—I remember I was in a program about overeating or something, and I was abstaining from sugar, and I decided that alcohol was a sugar, and so I quit drinking again. So I quit drinking. And a couple of months later, a friend of mine—it was Christmas Eve, and a friend of mine said, "Hey, you know, let's go to St. Paul's Christmas Eve service." And I said, "Okay, well, let's do that." And she said, "I think I'd like to go to an AA meeting before that, do you wanna go with me?" And I thought, "Oh, well, what the hell." So I think I remember asking her, "Is it an open meeting?" meaning, you know, can who people are not alcoholics go? And she said, "Sure." So I went to this meeting, and [laughs] four of the people that I had partied with through the [19]70s were sitting there looking up at me like, "Hey, good to see you finally." [Laughs]

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

AK: And I—and from that very first moment that I entered the room, I realized that I was in the right place, and I haven't had a drink or used any drugs since then. So that's—that was thirty years ago.

SL: That's a beautiful thing.

AK: And that's a real important part of the Fayetteville story for me, because the program of recovery in Fayetteville is a very powerful one for a lot of people. But it's something that we're not supposed to talk about. So I think we should probably leave it at that as far as that part of the story is concerned.

[02:35:00] SL: Okay. We're can leave it at that, but I'm very appreciative of the program myself. I mean, I've never joined AA, but I know several people that are in it and . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . have had great success with it and . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . turned their lives around and became better people.

AK: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: And that's really kind of the bottom line.

AK: Yeah, absolutely.

SL: Yeah. It's really a good thing.

[02:35:21] AK: And it ties in with a lot of things. It's like over the years—from the—whe—let's go all the way back to 1968.

SL: Okay.

AK: Whe—you know, I visited my brother in Saigon, I went to Hong Kong, from Hong Kong I went on to Kyoto.

SL: Okay.

AK: Met up with a Peace Corps fre—buddy of mine in Kyoto. We went together to Tokyo, found a little Japanese style hotel that you could stay in by the week and settled in there. And we stayed there for about six weeks. I had been studying yoga while I was in India, and I'd visited several different Buddhist sites there and was still pursuing that interest. I met this young couple who had been to a Zen monastery, a three-hundred-year-old monastery, and knew that there was gonna be a ten-day silent retreat there. And they—if you got an okay from the Roshi, the head of the monastery, then you could join this silent retreat. So I journeyed out to this place and met with the Roshi. And he gave me permission to go to the silent retreat. So a few months later, or a few weeks later, I went out there and was there for this ten-day, totally silent, Zen Buddhist retreat in this wonderful three-hundred-year-old monastery. It was just an incredible place. And after a few—a week or so after that retreat

was over, I got on a plane and flew back to El Paso. [02:37:18]
And from time to time, I would have an opportunity to do some meditation. I ler—I did—I got initiated into TM. I, you know, I didn't have any connection to the Christian church at all, but I had a lot of opportunities to meditate with people, to continue my practice of yoga, but it was very much kind of an off and on kind of deal. [02:37:53] In 1981 my career as a photographer had got to a point where if I was gonna take it any further, I needed to be some place where I had more access to the kinds of resources that would make it possible for me to do exhibit length projects on special themes. So at that point I and my family, we all moved to Little Rock, where I was very successful and popular as a photographer and did several different exhibit length projects and did quite well. But the whole time I was still drinking and smoking dope every day. And then as I described—where was I going with this? Damn, I had a particular thing in mind, and I've—and it's slipped right out of my brain.

SL: We got started on this through—we started—opened the door with AA.

AK: Yeah.

SL: But so we decided we weren't going to talk anymore about that.

AK: No, yeah. There was something else I was going for. Anyway,

we—that was—there was something particular that I . . .

SL: Well, you had—we had also acknowledged, you know, the Jones's history of alcoholism and . . .

AK: Yeah. But it wasn't . . .

SL: . . . you and Meg were drinking together.

AK: Yeah. It—yeah. It wasn't that. Oh, no. Meditation is what it was.

SL: Yeah. Okay.

[02:39:34] AK: So now I remember. So we went—soon after we moved to Little Rock, we were living in the neighborhood of the Episcopal cathedral there. And I—we met a bunch of people and became friends with them. And I realized that what they all had in common was that they were members of the Episcopal cathedral. So I thought after not—after having been separate from the church for fifteen years at that point, I thought, "You know, maybe I should check that out." So I called this friend of mine, and he said, "Come and go with us." 'Cause I didn't—I knew the Episcopal Church was different from any of the denominations that I had had experience with growing up. But they just did stuff differently, kneeling, and you know, and the way they took communion, and it was just—seemed different. And I didn't wanna look stupid, you know, basically.

SL: Right.

[02:40:38] AK: So I called this guy, and he said, "Well, come and go with us." So I went with him. And my mom had died just a few weeks before that. And I think that was part of the whole deal, 'cause she had been such a regular church goer. So I was sitting there—I remember it so clearly—with this guy during this Episcopal service. And there's a point in the Episcopal service where the—when the priest is doing the communion part of the service where he turns around with the bread and the wine, and he says, "The gifts of God for the people of God." And when he said that, I felt that someone squeezed my shoulder like that.

SL: Oh.

AK: And I thought, "Who's that?" And I turned around. There was no one behind me.

SL: Course.

AK: And it was an incredible time. And soon after that, I met a woman, Jane Wolfe. Her husband was the director of the Arkansas Art Center, and she was a spiritual director in the cathedral.

SL: Townsend Wolfe?

AK: Yeah. Yeah. Jane Wolfe was the . . .

SL: Yeah.

[02:41:48] AK: And I started going to meditation groups with her, and I kind of discovered that there was a tradition of meditation in the Christian Church as well as—that was a mirror of what I had picked up in Hinduism and Buddhism. And so over the years, I've been able to resume and pick up and deepen my experience as a contemplative, as a meditator, in the context of the faith that I was brought up in while still celebrating and continuing my fascination with Buddhism and Hinduism and the people who are active contemplatives in that—in those traditions. And to—you know, we've come to a time in the history of the contemplative experience in America, where—when I first became interested in this in 1966, I was only able to find a half a dozen books on Hinduism and Buddhism in the whole of El Paso. Today, it's everywhere. And this whole movement of meditation, both in Christianity and in the Eastern traditions, have really blossomed in this country. So that's—ten years ago I went on a silent meditation at a Roman Catholic monastery that was, in so many ways, the mirror of the one that I'd been to years before in Japan in a Zen Buddhist monastery. And it somehow got me over the hump into a regular daily practice of meditation. So now at the age of almost eighty—I'll be eighty in a few months, my life is about photographing, is

about continuing to practice this art form in as deep and spiritual a way as I can as a bridge between people, and also to have a community of people here that I can meditate with every day.

SL: It's chill—gives me chills. [AK *laughs*] So you know, I . . .

AK: So help me out. What do we need to go back and—I've skipped a bunch of stuff.

[02:44:39] SL: We'll get back to it. But I wanna—as long as we're transcending [AK *laughs*], I read in one of your books your sense of eye contact, and . . .

AK: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . it is something that you discovered while taking the portraitures that you've done.

AK: Yes.

SL: And you sense . . .

AK: I call it the ministry of the gaze. And somebody pointed out to me that that could be misinterpreted. [*Laughter*] But what I meant was gazing deeply into someone else's eyes and being able to see that what the Quakers would call the Divine Spark, you know, that presence of God in another person.

SL: It's almost like—I read it to be an opportunity to witness the God within someone and you giving the God that's in you . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . in a way.

AK: Absolutely.

SL: So it was an exchange.

AK: Yes.

SL: And I found that so perfect.

[02:45:49] AK: Without having to say it, without having to put it in words so that you don't have to get into any of that stuff. "Well, that's not what I believe." You know, none of that.

SL: Right.

AK: Just this immediate experience of presence.

SL: So I . . .

AK: There's a part in the Bible that I really love where the—where Jesus is explaining to his disciples that he's gonna leave them. But he says, "But where I'm going, I'm gonna—I will prepare a place for you, and you will be able to come and join me there." And one of the disciples says, "Well, we don't know the way." And Jesus says, "I am the way, the life and the"—I can't remember the rest of it. But anyway, I—what I see, what I hear there is exactly that thing, that, you know, it's this living presence that exists between you and me that is the way to that place where we're going.

SL: I was so thrilled to read that for a number of reasons. One,

when people ask me about doing interviews and stuff, I tell them
it's the eyes, it's the eye contact . . .

AK: Oh yeah, absolutely.

SL: . . . and maintaining the eye contact, or it's not a conversation.

AK: Yeah.

SL: And it takes two.

AK: Yeah.

SL: Constantly sending and receiving. And that the moment that
you lose that eye contact, you have to start over.

AK: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: You know, you just have to come back to the . . .

[02:47:17] AK: I mean, in 1980 we used to—my studio was on
Dickson Street across from the Restaurant on the Corner, and
we used to go over there all the time for lunch. And I was over
there one time, and I met this young kid. Somebody introduced
him to me, and they said, "Oh, this guy's a photographer.
You're interested in photography." So this young kid who was
just starting out, he said, "Well, what do you like to photograph?
I like to photograph barns." And I was being flippant, and I said,
"I like to photograph eyeballs." So then I said, "Well, why don't
you come over to my studio across the street and hang out with
me?" So we went over there, and there was a—there was some

other people there that were—I had a lot of pictures up all over the place. And I was talking to these other people, but this kid was like standing behind me. And just loud enough for me to hear, he said, "You do photograph eyeballs." [*Laughter*]

SL: That's right. Well, it's a universe there. There's a . . .

[02:48:20] AK: It was like he got it. It was like he got it, you know.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And that—you look—I tell people all the time, look around, look at these—all these pictures in here. And in every one of these pictures, that person in there is reaching out to you through his eyes.

SL: It's the soul. You catch a glimpse, that spark. It's really . . .

AK: That sense of another person that's—who's—the reality of that person is as real to them as the reality of your own person is to you, and you can somehow make that leap.

SL: It's breathtaking, anyway.

AK: It is, yeah.

SL: I tell people I've got the greatest job in the world.

AK: Yeah, exactly.

SL: Because we just . . .

[02:49:07] AK: Yeah. I tell people that too.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And I get to do it as long as I'm—as long as I can stand up, I can keep—if I'm in a wheelchair, I could still do it, you know. I could—as long as I can make eye contact with somebody and work a camera, I can continue to do it. And I—when I photograph people, basically what I'm trying to do is to introduce them to that sense of connection through the eyes and then just quickly put the camera up there and take a picture of that connection as it's going on, or even talk to them about, "Now just look into the middle of that lens, but with the sense—just remember that I'm looking at you through it. So we're kinda making eye contact through that device so that we have a record of it."

SL: I think we're in the kind of same business.

AK: Yeah, absolutely.

SL: I really do. I think it's pretty close.

AK: Yeah, absolutely.

SL: Okay. I've got a couple of things.

AK: Okay.

[02:50:12] SL: So you went to seminary school. And now tell me again exactly what was the name of that seminary school.

AK: Union Theological Seminary.

SL: Union—and so ordinarily, I've always felt that when someone

goes to seminary school, they're preparing themselves to become preachers or pastors or priests.

AK: As I was, yeah.

SL: And so did you ever do—have that role? Did you ever become . . .

[02:50:38] AK: I did briefly. I didn't—I dropped out of seminary because I wanted to pursue the acting thing and I—but I didn't have any money. So there was a program in Northern Vermont for the summer where you could go and work as a minister.

SL: An assistant minister.

AK: And they said, "You know, you get room and board and a car. And at the end of the summer, you'll have \$500 for your education." So I thought, "Well, I'll do that, but I'll use the \$500 to go to acting school." So I went up there, and I was working in this setup where there were five churches. There was a senior minister who would do the big church and one of the little churches, and then the student minister would do—would preach and lead the services in one or two of the other churches. So this guy persuaded me to stay for a year 'cause he [*doorbell rings*—I told him . . .

SL: That's your people, isn't it?

AK: Is it four thirty?

Sarah Moore: No.

SL: No. It's three ten.

AK: Whoever it is, tell them to go away.

SL: [*Laughs*] Oh.

AK: It's probably a UPS truck.

SL: Oh.

AK: I'm a big Amazon Prime guy.

SL: Yeah.

AK: Where was I?

SL: Well, we were talking about your preaching role.

AK: Oh, yeah. So . . .

SL: Taking the \$500 and . . .

AK: Yeah. So I was in—so I was—so I had a year of preaching and leading services and doing that. And then I—and then instead of going, as I said before, instead of going back to New York, I went to El Paso to try and help my parents. And . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . then the Vietnam War happened and everything else changed. But I—people have often said to me, you know, "Why did you leave the ministry?" And sometimes I'll say, "You know, I don't think I ever did leave the ministry. I just found other ways to express that calling."

SL: That's exactly right.

AK: And I—yeah, and I feel that. You know, I feel that the work that I do as a photographer definitely has that sense of spiritual connection to—the words are—seem inadequate sometimes. Often.

SL: And that's a big clue that it's important.

AK: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] I . . .

SL: When you can't describe it.

AK: And in the last couple years, I've even focused more and more—I—every—almost—six days a week, I meditate with other people in the late afternoon or early evening. Tonight I have a group that I meditate with at St. Paul's. Sunday afternoon, I have a group that I started of AA people that come—that get together to meditate together as part of the eleventh step. The eleventh step says, "We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God." And then three days a week, I have a group at St. Paul's that meets at four o'clock to meditate for an hour. And on Wednesdays I have a good friend that's in hospice care at home, and a couple friends of mine and I go out to his house to meditate with him and his wife. So I have all these people, but it's all silent meditation, but we all feel deeply connected to one another. It's a r—and it's gotten to the point

where the services that involve a lot of words are difficult for me anymore. You know, tomorrow's Ash Wednesday, and I think I'm gonna try and give the wordy services another shot. But the odds are that I'll just go back to the—all the silent groups that I get to go to.

SL: Well, it reduces the clutter.

AK: Yeah. [*Laughter*] Exactly.

[02:55:23] SL: So the other thing that I was thinking about—you know, I go to—I typically go to the Catholic church with Claudette 'cause she's Catholic.

AK: Oh, far out.

SL: And we're usually out at the river, and we either go to a service in Yellville or we come back here and go to the night service up at the school.

AK: St. Thomas?

SL: What I've—and tell me if I'm wrong on this, but it looks like to me that nearly all of Christianity, the churches, I mean, all the institutions, different flavors, they follow the same script every Sunday. Whatever the topic is on Sunday, it's the same topic across all denominations.

AK: Not all of them, but most of them, yeah.

SL: I find that . . .

AK: Yeah, there's a . . .

SL: . . . kind of remarkable. And I . . .

AK: There's this thing called the lectionary so that several—the Episcopalians, the Lutherans, certain—the Catholics, and to a certain extent the Methodists, maybe the Presbyterians, I'm just not sure, they all read the same scriptures every day.

SL: Yes.

AK: All d—all year long.

SL: Millions of people.

AK: Millions of people. And if they're not reading the same scripture, most of them are saying the same at the Lord's Prayer at least. So there is definitely a commonality there. Yeah.

[02:56:57] SL: So my question is, it seems to me that there is a commonality in the silence as well.

AK: Oh God, yes. And it's . . .

SL: And so it's like we're trying to get to that commonality . . .

AK: Yeah. I . . .

SL: . . . as best we can and know how.

AK: There are several books—I get up every morning about five, and I ree—I make my coffee, and I read for about forty-five minutes, and then I meditate for forty minutes. And the mor—my morning meditation is solitary. My afternoon meditation is with

a bunch of other people. But those books that I read in the morning—ha—right now, I'm reading a book by Pema Chödrön and—who's a Buddhist teacher, and I'm reading a book by Mary Margaret Funk, who is a Roman Catholic nun. [*SL laughs*] And you could take a paragraph of one and put it in the other one, and it would—you wouldn't notice that it was from a different tradition altogether because they're talking about exactly the same thing, which is a relationship between our truest self, our deepest sense of presence, and clutter. That—when you said clutter, I thought—that's why I laughed [*SL laughs*] 'cause all those thoughts . . .

SL: Right.

AK: . . . are just clutter. So whether you're doing it in a bah—Buddhist monastery or you're doing it in a Roman Catholic monastery, you're dealing with the same experience.

SL: Yeah.

AK: 'Cause, you know, there's not a Catholic universe and a Buddhist universe.

SL: Right.

AK: We're all living in the same universe. And that's—that deep sense of presence is what it is.

SL: Well, how beautiful. [*Laughter*]

AK: I'm a little bit surprised that we got this far into this part of the experience, but you know, it's who I am, really.

SL: Well . . .

AK: And who you are.

[02:59:07] SL: Well, you can see who you are by these photographs.

AK: I dearly hope so.

SL: Oh, there's no question. The—you know exactly when you are looking at Drew's work. It's just . . .

AK: Yeah. People tell me that.

SL: It's the truth.

AK: I have to . . .

SL: I—there's a consistency there . . .

AK: It's a gift.

SL: . . . that's never boring. It's not like, "Oh, it's just another Kilgore?"

AK: Yeah.

SL: No, there is something eking out . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . of that [*unclear word*] thing . . .

AK: It's a gift in the truest sense of a gift. You know, it's—you know, I was—I screwed up so many things in my life. So many things

in my life. And then I—you know that Paul Simon song, "One Trick Pony?"

SL: Yeah.

AK: I totally identify with that. I've got this one thing that I get to do that people love.

SL: Yeah.

[03:00:02] AK: And meanwhile, you know, I can't—there's so many things that I just can't do worth a damn. *[SL laughs]* So many things. I was a horrible Peace Corps volunteer. Just—I just was—I managed to stick it out the whole two years, and that's about as much as I can say for myself as a Peace Corps volunteer. And I was—you know, I failed at seminary. I was—you know, by the end of my first year in seminary, I was suicidal. I mean, it was—there's so many things in life that I have not been good at, but I get to do this one thing, and it's just incredible, and it's a gift.

SL: It is.

AK: It's not anything I earned, that's for damn sure.

SL: Well, it's the gift that everyone gets.

AK: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's available for everyone.

SL: Yeah.

AK: But I lucked into a way of sharing it with people with this weird

little machine called a camera.

SL: [*Laughs*] Yeah. Us too. I mean . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: You know, I don't run as much camera as I used to. I mean, I did camera work [*unclear words*] for twenty years.

[03:01:16] AK: Sometimes I like to ask people, you know, if you look at the last thousand years, what do you think the most influential invention is that's changed the human race more than anything else? Polished glass.

SL: Yeah.

AK: Before polished glass, the universe was just what you could touch. The clouds—God lived on top of the clouds, you know. We had no sense of what the world was really like. The tiny world—we had no sense of what was going on in the tiny world. But when we discovered polished glass, we went almost immediately to microscopes, where we discovered this incredible universe of teeny, tiny things, too small for us to see, and we discovered telescopes, and we discovered this enormous universe that we live in, and it's changed everything.

[03:02:21] SL: There's two things in my business, my career, that have not changed. Polished glass. I have [*unclear words*] polished glass. The other one is the diaphragm speaker.

AK: Right. The hole.

SL: Pushing air.

AK: Yeah.

SL: You know, and it's gotten more and more sophisticated too.

AK: Yeah.

SL: It reduces things that we don't hear that dogs do.

AK: Yeah.

SL: [*Unclear words*] really aware of that. I mean, it's—it takes—those—I me—they don't change.

AK: You mean the diaphragm in the lens? No.

SL: No, the diaphragm in the speaker.

AK: Oh, oh, oh, yeah, yeah.

SL: Pushes air.

AK: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

SL: You don't have sound without the diaphragm.

AK: Yeah, of course. Now I see what you mean. Absolutely.

SL: And you don't have an image without the glass.

AK: Yeah.

SL: So I'm always looking . . .

AK: When you said—I'm a photographer, so when you said diaphragm, I immediately thought of the . . .

SL: Yes. I understand.

AK: . . . of the aperture.

SL: Yeah. Mm-hmm. But no, I'm right with you on that.

[03:03:20] AK: A lens is just a sophisticated hole. The—you know, it's like—five hundred years ago, some little Italian guy had a building that he kept stuff in behind his house, and it was whitewashed on the inside and on the outside. And he went in there one day and realized that there was a little tiny hole in the door. And when he stepped aside from that hole, he realized that on the whitewashed wall opposite that hole, there was an image. And then he realized that it was the image from outside. And then not long after that, he realized that if he took that little hole and put pieces of glass on either side of it, that he could control that—the way that—the brightness of that image and whether it was the same—bigger or smaller. And that was . . .

SL: Yeah.

AK: . . . the beginning of all of it.

SL: Yeah. Makes me think of cameras here.

AK: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

AK: Exactly.

SL: Well, let's take a break.

AK: Okay.

SL: And reassess where we are and what we wanna do next.

AK: Okay.

[Recording stopped]

[03:04:31] SL: We've had a pretty good time.

AK: Yeah.

SL: But you did mention to me at our break that we should talk about Jack.

AK: Yes.

SL: So—and we can talk about Kathryn and—I mean, and this is not unusual in our interviews. We—I always throw out, is there anything you want to say about . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . or to the kids?

AK: Yeah.

SL: Because these are the folks that are gonna inherit what we're doing here today.

AK: Yeah.

SL: And I think we should . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: I offer that out to everybody.

AK: Yeah.

SL: I think we should address that if you like, if you're comfortable.

[03:05:07] AK: Yeah. No, I—actually, I like to talk about Jack. I've even thought about the possibility of writing a book that would be kind of half about Jack. The name that I think of is *Jack and the Silence Within* and talk about my experience with Jack and my experience as a meditator. I don't know why it feels right to put those two things together, but they've come together even as we've talked here. So the first time I ever met Meg, I was living in an old farmhouse with a couple friends of mine south of West Fork. You know where the Woolsey Bridge is?

SL: Absolutely.

AK: Well, it was across Woolsey Bridge and almost immediately to your right, a big old farmhouse up on the hill. You could see it from the highway.

SL: Yeah.

AK: So I didn't have a car then so—and my darkroom was in town. So I would frequently get a ride into town with one of my friends that lived out there. But then when it was time to go home, I would just hitchhike home. And the first time I ever met Meg, she picked me up. She had Jack and Kathryn and the car, she was driving a little Volkswagen Bug, Beetle. And I think from the first moment I looked at her, I fell in love with her. And Jack and Kathryn were in the backseat, and they were two and four.

[03:06:47] And she drove me all the way out there, although she lived in town, which I guess indicates that she liked me too. And I didn't know what to do about that. So a few weeks later, she picked me up again, drove me all the way out there. And so not long after that—I think I had acquired a car by then or borrowed one, I'm not even sure, but she was living in a house with a bunch of people. And she and Jack and Kathryn had a bedroom in the back, and some other folks lived in the front. I can't even remember who it was now. But I went to see her to see if I could develop this relationship, but it was just too weird with all the people in that house and everything, and I didn't—you know, I was still very awkward around women. So a little time went by and—oh, no, that isn't how I met her. Oh, I totally forgot. No, I met her—I was living with a woman out in the country. She had this little shack that she was living in, and she and Meg were friends. And the first time—and one weekend—I'd been living with her for about a week, and Meg and the kids showed up. And there was a creek down the way. And this woman took Megan [AK edit: Kathryn] and Jack down to the creek, and Meg and I just sat there and talked for a couple of hours and just made a wonderful connection. And then it was after that that she saw me on the highway and picked me up

and gave me a ride. [03:08:37] I forgot about that part. Yeah. We were hang—we hung out naked a lot in those days. And I remember when she came, I was wearing a towel [*SL laughs*], a kind of a biggish beach towel wrapped around me. And I never did put on any clothes. I just sat around and talked to her in this towel. But then a year or so later, this woman that I'd been sleeping with, I introduced her to my best friend at the time. And a year or so later, she married him. And so Meg was the maid of honor, and I was the photographer. So we both got there early. It was out at Devil's Den, and they had rented a cabin. And so the—they were—the bride was down at the cabin. And I went down there to, you know, take some pictures and kinda hang out. And Meg was there, and I remember—'cause she was the maid of honor. And I remember I just went over and stood next to her and basically stayed standing next to her for the next several years. [*SL laughs*] But we had a wonderful romance in the beginning. It got kinda weird at the end, but in the beginning it was really wonderful. And Jack and Kathryn were just amazing. By the time that I—oh yeah. So at this wedding, after the ceremony and stuff—and I'd taken pictures and there was—and everybody was just dancing, Meg—and I just started dancing with Meg, and we just danced with each

other without—tot—just completely, just the two of us, just the whole time. Finally she said, "I have to go home because I told the babysitter I'd be there at a certain time." And I said, "Okay, let's go." So I went at home with her. [03:10:43] And her cousin was babysitting. What a great guy he was. I can't remember his name right now. He committed suicide a couple years later. Anyway, so the next day, I went and got my stuff and moved in with her. [*SL laughs*] And that was it, you know. She li—she had this little house in West Fork, and we lived there for about a year, and then we moved into Fayetteville. And we lived—over the years, God, we lived in a bunch of different places. But and while we were in—just a few weeks after I'd moved in with her down there, I was—I answered the phone, and it was a mutual friend of ours who taught in the Montessori school and had taught—and had worked with Jack. And I had been aware that Jack was kind of a handful, but he was three, you know. But I answered the phone, and I was ta—chatting with this woman, and I told her that I had moved in with Meg and I was gonna be with her, you know. And she said, "Well, what about Jack?" And I said, "Well, what about Jack?" She said, "Well, you know, he's got some really serious problems." And that was the first time that it was kind of put out there that

Jack was different. And he was only three, which was interesting. [03:12:19] But over the years I had a wonderful relationship with Jack in so many ways. He was an incredible subject. I photographed him a zillion times all through his life, even through—close to the end. And he always—whenever he was—worked with me, we were always like partners. We were colleagues, and he would just put everything he had into it, sometimes in ways that were pretty crazy because he was crazy. And he—his IQ was measured at 168. He never finished his sophomore year in high school. He always had problems. He never—he just never could—one of our favorite stories—one time—he was teasing some kid—he was like in the fourth grade, and he was teasing some kid about his thing. And his teacher said, "Jack, I don't ever want to hear you use that word thing again." And that became a big family story. But he—Jack—he was always getting in trouble. He organi—when he was in grade school, he organized a recess into a war with half of the kids being against the other half of the kids. He was just a mess. He started drinking when he was probably fourteen. And I think we went to a wedding, and he swiped a bottle of—big bottle of wine and went off with another kid and drank it all and got loaded. And then he just started getting crazier and crazier. We were

living in Little Rock, and he was just constantly getting in trouble. Got in trouble with the law. And at that point he could be very threatening and violent. He was violent with Meg and I both and I'm sure with Kathryn, although Kathryn was reluctant to talk about it very much. She gave a beautiful little eulogy after he died that acknowledged who he really was. He was also one of the most physically beautiful human beings I've ever known.

SL: Absolutely.

[03:14:48] AK: And very loyal. You know, I still—every now and then I have friends that will call me up and just wanna talk about Jack a little bit, the people that knew him most of his life. And still think about him all the time. And he started—when he was about sixteen, he started getting more and more psychotic. And we—ah—he got into trouble with the law, and Meg and I went to the officer that he had to talk to and told her that we were frightened of him. So they put him in the mental hospital for forty-eight hours, and he charmed the hell out of the psychiatrist, who said there was nothing wrong with him, which—patently wrong. And then he got into trouble again, and we got him in a rehab program that he was in for about four months. And then got in trouble again. And I mean, he was

just constantly freaking everybody out.

[03:16:08] SL: He was always... My times with him were always centered around something that Marty and Gary were doing.

AK: Ah.

SL: And he would come to that.

AK: Yeah.

SL: He was always very, very quiet.

AK: Oh yeah.

SL: Really quiet. And there was a—I always felt there was a darkness to him, but I never was able to get very close to him, but it seemed like he was respectful around a family gathering with everybody there.

AK: Yeah. I think in a lot of ways he was.

SL: I don't know if he liked it that there were so many souls around him or what, but . . .

AK: Yeah.

SL: . . . I never really felt threatened by him.

[03:17:00] AK: It's really hard to describe. I remember one night when he was probably sixteen or seventeen. I did everything I could for him. I, you know, I fixed up rooms for him, so he could have some privacy. He chain smoked. He started chain smoking when he was fourteen or fifteen and chain smoked

pretty much the rest of his life. Yeah. Put that down for me.

[03:17:32] And one night, Meg and Kathryn had—we were living in Little Rock, and Meg and Kathryn had come up here, and I was stoned, you know, and I was—I started watching TV while the sun was still up. And then the sun went down, and I didn't bother to turn on any lights. So I was just in this room by the light of the TV screen. And he was in his own room, and he came in with a machete and just started dancing around the room in this very ritualized way. And he danced over to me, and he brought the machete down so that the blade was like a half an inch from my forehead. He did stuff like that all the time. Scared the shit out of me.

SL: No kidding. I understand.

AK: But I always really loved him dearly as well, you know. So there was . . .

SL: There was something very attractive about him.

AK: Yeah. Very charming when he wanted to be.

SL: Yeah.

AK: But he also had a really weird, total lack of ability to discern the truth. So he could be standing with something in his hand, and you'd say, "Jack, what are you doing with that in your hand?" And he'd say, "I don't have that. I've never seen that." And

you're looking at it, you know. He just had this weird sense around . . .

SL: Disconnect.

AK: . . . around telling the truth, you know, he just—truth was a different thing for him somehow. [03:19:10] I—after the family kind of all went their separate ways he—I was still living in Little Rock, so it must have been in 1989 right before I moved back up here, I got word that he was in the hospital at Baptist Hospital. He apparently had attempted to commit suicide by cutting into his arms. And whenever you do that, they are forced to admit you. And they—and instead of admitting him for a couple days, they admitted him for a couple of weeks 'cause that was Jack, you know. People fell in love with Jack. So I—and Kathryn flew down here from New York, and she and I both went to see him. And the sy—and we were talking to the psychiatrist before we saw him, and I—and she said to me—and this was like years after I'd first begun this relationship with Jack. Maybe not quite twenty years at—since I first started to know Jack. And she said, "Well, of course he's paranoid." And it was like, "Oh." It was like a whole bunch of things just kind of fell into place. I had been so threatened by Jack that I had never seen how frightened he was.

SL: Vulnerable he was. Yeah.

AK: And that was the enormous—that was a big moment of change in my relationship with Jack. I stopped being so frightened of him at that point and began to have some sense of empathy with him around how much the world just terrified him, you know. But his way of responding to that was to become threatening. [03:21:06] If somebody said to me, "You know, we found out that Jack murdered somebody," I would not—I'd be horrified, but I would not be surprised. But on the other hand, if I found out that Jack had risked his own life to save somebody else's life, I wouldn't be surprised by that either.

SL: Right.

AK: He was just such a—you know, if he came in the room and there were twenty people in the room, everybody would immediately become aware of the fact that Jack was in the room.

SL: Absolutely.

AK: And he didn't have to say anything.

SL: That's right.

AK: He just had this incredible electric atmosphere around him.

SL: And he—I'm sure he was aware of that.

AK: Yeah.

SL: 'Cause he could see how people revolved around him.

[03:21:56] AK: Right. Yeah. But instead of giving him strength, it frightened him. It terrified him, really. And that—you know, when I did the project about the people at St. Paul's lunch thing, we called that The Twenty Doller Bill Project because when we—I wanted to photograph that population of people. Sometimes when I create these projects, it's because I want to find out something. It's not because I know something, it's because I wanna know something. So I wanted to understand more this population of people.

SL: Right.

AK: So we were—I was having a conversation with the person that was working with me then and another friend about how we would persuade those people to be photographed. And we kind of all hit on it like, "Well, duh, we'll pay them." So the way we did that project is once or twice a month, I would put ten twenty-dollar bills in my pocket, and I would go over to—and set up at the north end of the parish hall by one of those big north facing windows.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And I would go out and look at the people there and find people that I wanted to photograph. And I'd say, "We're doing this special project, and we'll—I'll pay you twenty dollars to be a

subject and let me take your picture." And almost everybody would say, "Sure." And the deal was that twenty dollars for most of those people made a real difference in their life for a day or two.

SL: Absolutely.

AK: And we photographed over 300 people that way. So we paid out over \$6,000 to people during that project. About a third of that just came out of my pocket, and the rest of it—people would find out about the project, and they'd just slip me a couple twenties, or I'd go check the mail and there'd be an envelope with five twenties in it. And everybody called it the Twenty-Dollar Bill Project. It was really neat. [03:24:11] But at that moment, when that woman said about Jack, "Well, of course he's paranoid," what I realized was that that whole population of people—that's what they have in common is paranoia as a clinical term. Whether they've got PTSD from wartime experiences in the military, or whether it's a woman that was abused as a child or a young woman, or regardless of who it is, all of those people are paranoid to the extent where they can't tolerate being in close proximity with other people for very long at all. So that means that they're pretty much incapable of being employed because they just can't be—unless they have

some kind of job where they're just totally alone, they just can't be working with other people. And they can't—most of them can't sustain relationships because they just—they become frightened, you know, they're—that paranoia often gets expressed as anger, so they become frightening to people. Sometimes they become actually dangerous to people, but that danger comes out of fear. It doesn't come—you know, the people that are just outwardly aggressive are successful, you know. They're the Trumps of the world. But the people who live in desperate poverty all the time are often in that poverty because of their just . . .

[03:25:56] SL: Disability?

AK: . . . uncontrollable fear of other people.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And that was certainly the case with Jack I think all of his life.

And I, you know, I—Jack lived to be forty-four. One of the great, guilty sadnesses of my life is that the last time he called me up, I didn't take the call. I let it go to voicemail. And a few months later I, you know, I was at an AA meeting, and I got back here at about eight thirty, and a friend of mine was sitting on the front porch that I didn't expect to be there. And she was there to tell me that they had found Jack's body. And the only—

she worked at St. Paul's. Amanda, you know, Dan's wife, Dan Robinson's wife.

SL: Yeah.

[03:26:56] AK: And they didn't know—they'd found something in Jack's room that suggested St. Paul's. So they went over to St. Paul's and they—somebody at St. Paul's—Amanda was there I guess. And she knew—recognized that it was my son, Jack. And so they came over. And the detectives that came over a little bit after that said that a friend had gone to check on Jack and discovered that he had died during the night in bed. And they—when the detectives went there, they found heroin and syringes in the room. They didn't know whether or not he had used the heroin, whether he had died of an overdose, or if his heart had just stopped. And they said, "If you ask for it, they'll do an autopsy. But they have to send the body to Little Rock, and it takes a few weeks. And it just makes everything a lot more complicated." And they said, "We're okay with just putting down that he died of heart failure and letting it go at that. And you can go ahead with services or, you know, whatever you want to do with his body." So I agreed to take that course. And we—and Jack was cremated, and I arranged for the—you know what the Columbarium at St. Paul's is? I arranged for his ashes

to be in one of those little compartments.

SL: Yeah. I've seen it.

[03:28:43] AK: Yeah. And Meg's ashes are over there as well. Did you come to Meg's service?

SL: I did.

AK: Yeah.

SL: It was the most emotional service I've ever been to.

AK: Yeah. They—you know, at—when Meg died, Duke, her current—the deal with Meg—and this is an interesting thing to include in this story. When I met Meg, she was, I think, twenty-three. And she had Jack and Kathryn who were two and four at that point. And she told me that she had had—she had been living in Washington, and she fell in love with this guy that was in the Navy, and they got married, and they had these two kids, and then that marriage fell apart, and she decided to move back to Fayetteville 'cause that's where her grandparents lived.

SL: Right.

AK: Her parents, I mean.

SL: Yeah, and her grandmother.

[03:29:43] AK: And her grandmother, yeah. So when, fifteen years later, when our marriage ended, she went back to the guy that she—that was the biological father of her children that she'd had

that first relationship with as a teenager and remarried him and lived with him for the rest of his [AK edit: her] life. So whe— after she died—she was sixty-seven, I think, and had been smoking—chain smoking and drinking vodka pretty much right up to the end. Her interior just melted basically is what kind of happens. But Kathryn called and said that Duke, her husband, asked that—he remembered the service that I arranged for Jack at St. Paul's, and he asked if I would arrange a service for Meg. So that whole service was something that I designed specifically for Meg, knowing so well what Meg would've been able to tolerate 'cause she hated the Church. And you know, part of the reason that she left—the stated reason she left our marriage was that I had been—I had rejoined the church and I—and it had become such an important part of my life. And she just thought I had—she thought that I had literally gone insane, that people—she thought that people that were active in church were crazy, that that was an insane thing. She had some odd ideas.

SL: Right.

AK: But so I designed that whole thing with everybody sitting in a circle and there not being any sense of anybody being better than anybody else and the . . .

SL: The kids singing.

[03:31:48] AK: Oh yeah. Yeah. And then I turned over chunks of it to Marty, and she arranged some of that part of it, you know, that . . .

SL: Yeah.

AK: Yeah, it was—I was—you know, it—everybody had an opportunity to say something. Marty's things that she said were just incredible. I—and I was just about to offer something when they drew it to a close, which was an odd feeling, but it was appropriate. It felt right, you know, that I just—that I had made my contribution to the memory of her life and the celebration of it. It means a lot to me that, you know, the four of us that were in that family for fifteen years, that half of us are gone in many ways because of alcohol and, in Jack's case, drugs. And both of those people, their ashes are in that church where I go practically every day. I'll be there in a couple of hours.

SL: Yeah.

AK: And I frequently will go through that Columbarium and kind of say a word to each of them.

SL: It helps.

AK: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[03:33:32] AK: It does. There's a—you know, when you've been

around for a long time and you look back on all that—all those events, all the way that things have worked out with the contemplative stuff and the art stuff and the family stuff and the, you know, and the early childhood stuff and the school stuff and all those different things, it all becomes interrelated. It all becomes kind of part of one thing. I guess your life, you know.

SL: Yeah.

AK: But it's so deeply connected with everyone else. One of the stories that I like to tell—when I was in India being a failed . . .

SL: Peace Corps.

AK: . . . Peace Corps volunteer . . .

SL: Yeah.

AK: . . . one of the things that I did do—they had a project called a School to School Project. And what you'd do is you'd find some school or—in the area where you were that needed to build a building, and the Peace Corps volunteer [Peace Corps organization] in the states would find a school in America where the kids would raise the money to build the building in the country where the Peace Corps volunteer was. So I found a community that wanted to build a building onto the school that they had. They really needed to expand the space to have more classroom space. So I got that going and so—and it worked.

And so I would go out to this community, but it was about ten miles away from the town that I lived in. So when I could, I would take my bicycle out there, this weird Indian one-speed bicycle. And it—but other times I would take the bus. So the bus would only go within about a mile of the town where I was working with these people. [03:35:41] So one summer, I—during the hot, dry part of this year, before the monsoon starts, when the temperatures get up into the 120s, and there's what's called the Loo, and it's just this powerful, steady, constant wind that blows in one direction. And you can, I mean, you can literally lean into it. And it's—and it hasn't rained in months, so everything is totally dried out. And this wind will just suck the moisture right out of your body. So I had gone out to the school, I had walked across the fields to the town and worked with the people there for an afternoon. And then I'd walked back across that hot, dry wind. And I was squatting in the—I was wearing Indian clothes by then, and I was squatting in the dust by the side of the dirt road. And there was this little tea wallah there, this little guy with a little teeny, like hot thing and a little burner. And he would heat water and milk and make tea. So when I—I squatted down next to this guy, and he gave me some water to drink, and then he made me a tea. And I was

sitting there, squatting there, looking down the road, waiting for the bus to show. And I see this kind of stick figure, you know, appearing out of the heat mirage. And it's this little teeny guy, and he's got this huge basket on top of his head. And the only clothing he has is literally a rag tied around his . . .

SL: Privates.

AK: . . . privates.

SL: Yeah.

[03:37:28] AK: And he co—he walks up and he sets the jars down—the basket was just this big basket and it was filled with little teeny, empty bottles that somebody probably paid him enough to eat for a day off of it. You know, he's a what they call an untouchable, you know, a super low-caste person who just survived from day to day. And he squatted down in the dirt next to me. And I looked at him and the callouses on the bottom of his feet were so—and barefoot, obviously—and the callouses on the bottom of his feet were so thick that you could see these like quarter inch deep cracks in the callouses. And I thought as I looked at this guy that—halfway around the world from where I was from that he was as totally different from me as a man could be on this planet. He was like, you know, no education at all, just this super low-caste guy, completely and utterly

different from me. And as I sat there and I experienced this person, what I experienced was not the difference. What I experienced was the sameness. What I experienced was that deep sense of self, that just that awareness of the body you're in and the environment that surrounds you and the breathing in and breathing out, and just that sense of being alive. And that it was exactly the same for him as it was for me. And that the differences between us were nothing in comparison with the common experiences of life that we shared. And I've never forgotten that guy and that experience of a common humanity that isn't just a nice idea, but is a deeply felt experience of being at one with someone who's different.

SL: That's a great gift for being in the Peace Corps.

[03:39:57] AK: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: I mean, people join the Peace Corps for a good reason . . .

AK: Yeah. I make fun of the fact that . . .

SL: . . . but all of a sudden . . .

AK: I make fun of the fact that I was a failed Peace Corps volunteer, but the reality is that those experiences that I had for that two years have shaped the whole rest of my life.

SL: There you go.

AK: So and I think made me a much better person than I would've

been without it.

[03:40:28] SL: Okay. So what about Kathryn?

AK: Kathryn. Kathryn is one of the great loves of my life. Ka—the weird thing is, you know, Jack was c—for as crazy as Jack was, Kathryn was sane. She was—she's—I don't think she's—I don't know. I think she probably has a glass of wine once or twice a week with her friends, if that. She's married the love of her life. She met him in college. He was born and raised in New York City. Jewish. They dated for several years. She realized there was something stopping them from going forward suddenly. And then she realized it was her—the fact that she was not Jewish. So she got a bunch of books on Judaism and read them and just told him, "Look, I'm gonna become Jewish, and we're gonna get married." So that's what happened. So the way that it worked with the community that he was part of is that they got together with the Rabbi, and the Rabbi said, "Okay, well, you two are gonna spend Tuesday evenings with me for a year." So once a week for a year, both of them sat down with the Rabbi and learned about Judaism. So—oh, look, we have a friend.

SL: You were talking about Kathryn. She had to listen.

AK: Yeah. [*Laughs*] So, you know, she went to [*cat meows*] Cornell University. She—when she took the SATs and stuff [*chime*

sounds] that they take and—oh, is that—is it four thirty?

SL: Probably. We can finish this tomorrow.

AK: Okay.

SL: But I do want to say before we leave that she is also one of the most beautiful humans I've ever seen, too. She—I thought her beauty was . . .

AK: Kathryn? Oh yeah.

SL: Yes.

AK: Oh God. Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Gorgeous.

AK: Yeah. Gorgeous and still is.

SL: Yeah.

AK: Yeah, in so many ways. Yeah.

[End of interview 03:42:34]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]